

Tom stared at the gate as the crowd continued to pass him. He had to go that way; he just knew it in his heart. He felt he could again feel the strings wrapped around his heart, pulling him towards that mountain. Suddenly a shadow seemed to fall upon him. The museum gave way into a world of darkness and a voice seemed to reach through the blackness, calling him, "Come to me child, up the mountain's heart, through wind and the wild, where your journey starts. Knowledge and wisdom are my key, for that is what you seek. Now come and climb the path to me, below the mountains peak."

Tom felt himself falling but he could not see to save himself. Hands grabbed him under the armpits and a new voice pierced the darkness.

"Tom are you okay?" It was Sophie's voice and as she spoke, his vision began to clear. Indistinct shapes loomed over him, but he was certain he was back in the museum, supported by his friends. As his vision returned completely, he realised that he was alone with his friends and a concerned looking Nicole. The rest of the class had moved on and Tom could hear them busily tucking into their food.

With Price's help, he stood slowly, "Yeah, I think I am." He moved on legs that were like jelly towards the door and slowly opened it. His eyes widened and then he sighed at the lack of an alarm. The gate now stood in front of him. He half expected it to swing open, but he knew now that he was not dreaming.

"We need to go up there." He said as his power reached out and pushed the metal gate open.

"Why?" Sophie asked behind him, nerves clear in her voice.

"The ghost." He replied, "The one the tour guide has spoken about. He was in my dreams. He's been guiding me to this point. Our answers are up there. We have all felt something on this island and I think it is linked to this figure."

Tom could feel them all silently staring at him. He turned to face them, each looking apprehensive. Nicole was the first to speak, "It could all be nothing."

"You said that the forums mentioned Curamber. That proof that aliens came to this planet was on this island. The archway might just prove that." He looked deep into her eyes and begged, "Please."

"I do feel something." Sophie piped up, "But I'm not sure I want to know what it is."

"I will look after you." He whispered to her, "Nicole?"

She seemed to battle something inside herself, but she eventually sighed, "The reason I was so eager to come on this trip was to see if I could learn something." She took a deep breath, "I think we need to go up there."

Tom finally turned his attention onto Kat and Price. Kat was shaking her head slowly, but Price just had his eyes locked onto his best friends.

"I used to believe your dreams would turn out to be rubbish. I might just use this to prove it." He showed off his braces with a toothy grin.

Tom patted his best friend on the shoulder before taking his first steps up the path. He was thankful to hear four sets of feet following him as they passed the first bend. The white posts continued all the way up the path, only broken by the occasional track that cut off into the trees. Evidence of mud slides and rock falls were everywhere, and they tread carefully along the road that seemed to get ever steeper. Sophie stopped as they reached one turn that was clear of trees. The museum was

visible below them and the blue sea beyond that. She sighed, "We could just be normal kids down there. Instead, I'm trekking up this stupid volcano."

Tom was sure she would have run off then if she could, so he took her hand in his and looked into her bright blue eyes, "The answers are up here, I know they are."

They all sighed as they continued up the final march. The path ended suddenly, halfway to the mountains peak. There, a sheer rock face met them and carved into the rock was a great opening, with four finger like archways above a large open door. Tom at first stared at the carvings, truly the same ones from his dream. The four towered church, the dragon, the two birds locked in battle and an eagle flying over woodland. A grip on his arm made his attention fall. He hadn't noticed the figure sitting motionless by the open doorway. It wore a great, brown, travel stained, cloak that covered black clothes. The clothes themselves, looked like they belonged in the Victorian era. The brown hood was cast over the figures head and his head was bowed so that only cracked blue lips could be seen. A walking stick rested upon his lap and even though the figure did not move, Tom was sure he was studying them.

It was Sophie's hand that had gripped him, and she whispered nervously, "It's him, the one the tour guide spoke of."

"Maybe it's a prop." Price whispered but that thought died as the figures head swivelled slightly to regard him.

"I think he's on our side." Tom said as he moved to take a step towards the figure. Sophie's arm gripped him tighter still.

"Tom, I'm scared, please let's go back."

The others were nodding their heads, their nerves clearly visible in their eyes.

"How can we not go forward?" Tom asked her. He had never really wanted to know what he was, but he wanted to know what his dreams meant, whether they were real or just fantasies of an overactive imagination, "We need to know what this all means."

"How do we know we will actually find the answers in here?" Nicole asked, the fear giving her a stutter.

"I just know okay. Trust me."

Tom took another step forward, pulling himself free of Sophie's grasp. His feet seemed to gain strength as he passed the figure, who neither spoke nor moved. Slowly Tom heard the others following him and they were on his heels as he passed under the archway. Fire seemed to pour through him as a blue light emanated from his skin. There was a sound, like a walking stick striking hard rock, that made Tom turn around. Behind the four of his friends, the figure stood but it was at his friends that he gaped. The same blue light seemed to flow off them as well, but it flowed most fervently from their eyes, so that none of their irises could be seen. Another click made Tom's focus shift again. He finally looked at the figure who was stood now in the threshold of the door. His head was raised, and bright golden eyes stared at Tom but the skin around his face was dead and rotten. Blue lips were twisted into a smile, a smile of triumph. Slowly, with a nod in Tom's direction, the figure faded.

Tom felt something suddenly be drawn through him and he looked down as the blue light was pulled from his and his friend's body. The light reached the floor and then spread from them all across

veins carved into the stone. It flowed into the centre point and illuminated a new symbol. Tom's mouth went dry as he stared at the burning tree. It was etched into the stone, now glowing blue.

Lines of blue worked up the walls and from four points, great beams of blue light met above the burning tree.

"WHAT?" Price began but he was cut off as the light suddenly shot downwards towards the symbol. The hall rumbled slightly, and Tom felt like he could hear mechanisms churning beneath the stone.

"I think we need to go." Kat said nervously and strangely quiet, "We are in enough trouble as it is."

"I...err...agree with...Kat." Price stuttered.

Tom stared at the shifting floor as Nicole walked around, spinning to stare at every detail, a mesmerised smile upon her face, "Can't you feel it? The answers are here. Don't you want to know what we are?"

"I do?" Said an eerie voice, only slightly like that of Sophie's.

Tom span to stare at her. She was stood like a statue in the chamber, blue eyes still burning with that light where it had left everyone else's. She had a strange, euphoric smile on her face, and she moved her head as though someone else was speaking to her, learning from her.

"Sophie are..." Tom did not finish as the hall suddenly became silent. Then with a grinding noise, like something first moved after many years, a pedestal rose from the centre of the burning tree. Tom stared at it; his mouth dry as he saw the perfect indent of a hand upon the stone. His feet moved towards it as he barely heard the protests from the others.

"TOM DON'T!" Kat screamed, the only one he heard apart from Sophie's queer, "Touch it."

Tom knew this wasn't right, knew that he should not touch the pedestal, but he had to, he had come this far, and he knew that if he did not, then something much worse would follow. Slowly he stood in front of it, and he smiled. The indent fit his hand perfectly. He knew then that this was where his whole life had led him, where his dreams had led him. Slowly his hand raised and though his mind screamed for him to stop, he placed his hand upon it.

A scream escaped his lips as the stone seemed to dig into his skin, pulling at the energy inside of him. He stared at his hand that became white, with thick lines giving the impression of scales. His veins suddenly seemed to flair red and then the chamber groaned. The blue light became streams of fiery red, casting strange shadows in the ominous light. Deep rumbles echoed through the hall and with a crash the far wall crumbled, revealing a molten lake. The room became stiflingly hot, but the walls absorbed most of the heat so that it only made Tom sweat. He pulled at his hand as the lake began to boil, great chunks of stone moving unnaturally through it, joining together, and spinning upon the surface.

Tom pulled at his hand and the stone suddenly released him. He crashed into the warm floor, scraping his hands as he fell. He looked at his right one, bleeding slightly but at least it looked back to normal. He stood, watching the others, who all moved towards the door. All apart from Sophie, who still stared dreamily into the molten lake. What was once the blue light was replaced by the same ominous red. Suddenly, she screamed and covered her ears. A trickle of blood ran down her nose and Tom was sure that it smoked slightly. Once again everything stopped, including Sophie's scream. She swayed on the spot and stared at Tom, "He's coming now."

"What do we do?" Nicole asked from the door.

Tom stared at the lake and then looked back towards Sophie, unsure what it was that kept her on her feet, "Price, carry her." He ordered. He was too small, but Price was built for it.

Price charged towards her and as his hand touched hers, her eyes rolled backwards and she slumped into his arms, seemingly unconscious.

"Oh my god." Kat said, running over to her best friend, "Is she breathing?"

"Yes." Price said, "I can feel it."

Price tapped at Sophie's face, but it did nothing more than leave a red mark upon her sweat soaked cheeks. He lifted her with a grunt and charged out of the chasm. Tom stayed, staring around the walls, desperate for some indication into what he had just done. He came here for answers, there had to be some for him.

"Come on." Nicole said as a great plume of poisonous fumes shot upwards from the lake, choking Tom.

She ran towards the exit and slowly Tom followed. He stopped though on the threshold and turned back. It was like his dream, the chasm filled with smoke, and he was sure he saw, stood on top the lake, the cloaked figure. He was staring at the lake, beckoning something upwards. Suddenly it seemed that he noticed Tom's gaze as he lifted his head and looked right at him, golden points showing his eyes, "I'm sorry." A voice whispered in Tom's mind, "Look to the sea. Help is coming but it had to happen this way." No words came to Tom's lips as the figure again turned his attention to the lake, "Leave now Mr Lita."

An impulse to run filled Tom's mind and he charged out into a fresh, warm breeze. The volcano rumbled and a great slab of rock, like a door, fell in place over the archway but ominous noises came from within. Turning, he ran as a cloud of smoke covered the sun.