

“Untitled”

By Vijval Satheesh Kumar

In the bustling city of Shrufton, there was a young boy, Adham. With a childly imagination in his mind and dreams as vast as the sky. Adham was not anyone special but just a normal boy in the populated city. One fateful day, while browsing through the dusty shelves of his grandmother's attic, Adham stumbled upon a dusty leather book that read “DO NOT OPEN” in bold words, and that made him open it. As he flipped through its damaged and horrid pages, he read about the legend of the Onyx Staff which is a very ancient relic that can possess unbelievable powers and is worth a fortune of 80 million shrufis. Interested by the tale, Adham's heart quickened with excitement. The thought of embarking on a grand adventure to uncover such a treasure buried a fire within him that burned brighter than any star in the night sky. Even though he really wanted to find it, the ancient people buried it about 150 yards below ground with a thick layer of hard diamond. Adham now thought he couldn't do it, but he could if there was a team of adventurers to join him on his quest. Among them were his closest friends Lynda, an adventurous soul with a knack for navigating the wilderness. Along with Omar, a loyal companion whose courage has no bounds. Together, the trio set forth on their journey into the unknown, their hearts filled with courage and their minds brimming with visions of what lays ahead. Through dense forests and winding trails, they ventured. Each step brings them closer to the mysteries that awaited them. As they ventured the untamed wilderness, Adham and his companions faced countless trials and problems.

From perilous cliffs to raging rivers, each obstacle seemed to test their resolve and strengthen their bond as they relied on one another for support and guidance. They loved their expedition where they encountered exotic creatures, flying islands and colorful snow. These experiences served as memories of the magic that surrounded them and fueled their determination to press onward. Finally, after days of exploration, they arrived at the center of the jungle, where the ancient temple stood covered with moss and surrounded by stone sentinels beyond the dense foliage. They cut through the lush with a machete and stood in front of the temple. They breathed deeply with trembling hands, they stepped inside, their eyes mesmerized by the artifact. Within the depths of the temple, there was the Onyx Staff, a magnificent artifact sitting on a holder, its power capable of destroying the earth. As Adham reached out to claim the treasure he had sought for so long, a sense of awe washed over him, filling his heart with a sense of achievement. Yet their triumph was short, they soon fell into a pit and found themselves confronted by a stone sentinel that was alive. With greed in his eyes and evil in his heart, the sentinel sought to guard the Onyx Staff, no matter the cost. They couldn't fight so they quickly stood on top of each other and climbed up the pit, they emerged victorious. The Onyx Staff safely in their possession once more. Adham touched the Onyx Staff and a rustling sound came in his ears and a vision in his eyes of the creation of it and how it took one-hundred years to perfectly carve the platinum shaft, ferrule, and the stone holder. He didn't tell his crew anything of the vision and ignored it. Exiting from the temple, Adham and his friends shared a moment of quiet reflection. Though their journey had come to an end, the memories they had forged

together would last a lifetime, a testament to the power of friendship and the strength of the human spirit. Returning home to Shrufton with the magic compass, Adham was greeted with cheers and applause, his mother's eyes filled with tears of pride as he presented her with the legendary artifact. Even though the treasure was priceless, it was the difficulty to find it that held the true value. And so, as the sun set below the horizon and the stars twinkled overhead, Adham and his friends gathered around a crackling fire, their laughter mingling with the gentle rustle of the wind and the city's folk music. For in that moment, they knew that no matter where their adventures may lead, they would always have each other.