“There you are my little adventurer! Did you have any luck finding Picky?” my Mom asked as I entered the house. I was silent, still recovering from the loss of Buzz Buzz. “What’s wrong Ness? Is there something that’s bothering you?” Mom asked sweetly.

“Errr, well, it’s... a long story. You might want to take seat,” I said. Mom took my advice and sat down on the couch, after which I sat down beside her. I then told her about Pokey and I’s search for Picky, our encounters with Buzz Buzz and the Starman Junior, and the death of Buzz Buzz. I also described the quest that Buzz Buzz had instructed me to embark on; I assumed that she wouldn’t want me to go.

“Oh, dear. Is this true?” she asked.

“Yes. Every bit of it,” I replied quietly. Mom then got up and walked over to the window by our dinner table. She stood there for a good while, clearly deep in thought.

“Ness, have I ever told you that you would grow up and do great things? Or, a better question, have you ever believed me when I said that you would do great things?” Mom asked.

“I, uhh, well... I, I don’t know. N-no, I guess,” I answered, my head clouded with many thoughts.

“Hmmmm, well, how about I tell you this. You may not be grown up, but I still believe that you will do great things. I believe that YOU, Ness, will do amazing things. Plain ol’ Ness. The average kid who likes to play baseball. The only reason you consider yourself as such is because you’ve never been able to truly find who you are, living in this tiny house and going to school every once in awhile. But now, I believe this may be your chance to find yourself. A chance to do great things. A chance to get out of this cramped place and explore the world, all
while meeting many new people and making many new friends. This is your chance, Ness. Do you think it is correct of me to assume this?” my Mom asked, walking back over to me.

“I, I, I…” Mom placed a hand on my shoulder.

“No matter what happens, no matter the struggles you may face, I will always love you. You are my natural born fighter Ness, and I know that are capable of this task that has been set before you,” Mom said. I stood up and gave her a big hug.

“Now, I shouldn’t delay you anymore. Go upstairs and get everything that you think you will need for this journey,” Mom commanded. I nodded to her and bolted upstairs. In my room, I filled my backpack to the brim with everything that I felt I would need; toiletries, spare clothes, and any food that I could find went into my pack. I ended up leaving enough room to fit eight more items, just in case I found or bought something useful. After feeling sufficiently packed, I heaved my backpack onto my back and headed downstairs. Tracy had came down while I was packing and was sitting at the table chewing on a fresh cookie.

“Hey big bro! Mom told me that you were going somewhere for awhile, so I guess that means that the girls and King are gonna take over the house!” Tracy said playfully. I couldn’t help but chuckle as my Mom came over to me.

“Before you go Ness, you should really call your Dad and tell him what’s going on,” Mom said as she pointed to house phone. I went over to it and dialed my Dad’s number.

“Hello? Oh, good morning Ness! What’s happening?” Dad asked. I told him about my recent experiences and the adventure I was about to set off on. “Oh! Is that so? Har har, I guess you’re takin’ after your old man, going off and doing things at such a young age. In fact, when I was your age, I (blah blah blah) and then (blah blah blah). Pretty cool huh? ‘Work to exhaustion when you’re young.’ Have you ever heard of a weird saying like that? Well, regardless of if you have or not, I know that you are strong and will be fine doing whatever you
have to. Just in case you need to buy anything for any reason, I have deposited $1,000 into your bank account, and if you want to withdraw any money I give you, just find an ATM and use the ATM Card I gave you. Now, if you are all set, I think you should begin your quest. Good luck m’boy, and be sure to call Mom or I whenever you can!” Dad said enthusiastically.

“Ok Dad, I’ll see you soon. I love you! Goodbye,” I said as I hung up the phone. Mom approached me and pulled me into a hug.

“Good luck on your adventure, Ness. I will be rooting for you the whole the way,” she said with a smile. Tracy came over after she finished another cookie.

“Hey, don’t forget about me big bro! I’m rooting for you too, and I’ll help you anyway I can!” Tracy said, hopping happily. I bent down and gave her a hug. I then walked over to a sleeping King and gave him a hug too.

“Worf! Worf! (Aww, don’t be sad about leaving Ness. Just think of it as going for a reaaaallllly long walk. Without a dog.)” When I released King, I walked over to the front door and turned towards my family one last time.

“Goodbye everyone! I promise that I will come back a stronger and better person,” I said assuredly. I turned towards the door, took a deep breath, and headed outside, to my destiny.

The crisp morning air embraced me as I closed the door behind me. I was about to head into Onett when I remembered that Lier X. Agerate wanted me to come to his house when it turned daytime. Figuring that it wouldn’t take much time, I headed back up the cliff trail and arrived at Lier’s shack. I knocked on the door and was greeted by the face of a big liar. Uhh, I mean Lier.

“Hiya Ness! I’m glad that you remembered to come back here. Now I can show you my discovery in private. Come on in!” Lier beckoned. I carefully stepped into the man’s rickety shack. I had never been in Lier’s house before, so I thought that it would be filled to bursting
with old garbage. I was completely wrong, as Lier’s house contained only a decrepit bed with torn sheets and a dresser with the paint peeling off. However, there was one thing in the house that immediately caught my eye; there was a tremendous chasm in the middle floor, with a rope tied to a peg leading into it. “You know how to climb a rope, right Ness?” Lier asked.

“Wait a minute! You want me to go down there? In that dark hole?” I said, frightened at what could possibly be down the hole.

“Don’t worry friend, there’s nothing down there that can hurt you. It’ll be a little dark, but I have lamp so that we can see. Go on then,” Lier directed. Swallowing my anxiety, I carefully grabbed onto the rope and slowly climbed down the abyss. It was pitch black when I hit the bottom, so I waited for Lier to come down with his lamp.

“Here we are,” Lier said as he turned on his light. The light illuminated the cave, and I was now able to see just how much Lier had been digging. Well, it quite a lot, to say the least. “Ok Ness, follow me; oh, and watch your head too,” Lier said as he walked ahead, with myself following behind him. We walked for a little while until we entered a room that seemed to already be lit up.

“Alright, Ness. What I am about to show you must remain a secret. You got that?” Lier asked, his stern expression returning. I quickly nodded, not wanting to get on his bad side like I did before. “Now, feast your eyes upon the result of my hard labor.” Lier moved out of the way to reveal a glorious golden statue of a humanoid figure clutching a dagger, taller than even Lier himself. As soon as I laid eyes on the statue, I suddenly got an incredibly bad feeling, as if the statue was staring into my soul.

“W-w-wow Lier. That’s uhh, some statue you got there,” I said, trying to pry my eyes away from the figure.

“You like it? I think that this statue is a sign of great treasure hidden in this area. And yet, this statue kinda gives me the heebie jeebies.” Lier took a look at the statue and shuddered. “Oh well. I’ll
keep digging around to see if I can find anything. If not, I’ll just sell this statue to someone with loaded pockets. Heh heh,” Lier chuckled to himself. “Anyways, I can see that you are a bit uncomfortable being down here, so I’ll take you back to the surface. Follow me.” Lier turned his lamp on and walked out of the room. As I followed him, I turned one more time to look at the statue, and saw a sight that made my heart skip a beat. The statue was looking directly at me, with its eyes glowing a dark red. I zipped out of the room and ran directly into Lier. “Woah there pal, what’s the big idea?”

“Err, uhh, nothing, I tripped. That’s all. I tripped,” I said, trying to keep calm.

“Ok, whatever you say,” Lier said nonchalantly. We reached the rope and climbed out of the creepy cave back into Lier’s house. “Well, that’s all I wanted to show you,” Lier said, subsequently peering over at my backpack. “Are you going camping or something? Or are you taking a trip?” Lier asked. Not wanting to repeat my entire story for third time, I quickly made up something to tell him.

“Oh, I’m, you know, just going for a little hike around Onett, that’s all,” I partially lied.

“Hmm, ok. It’s good to get out of the house once in awhile, especially in the summertime. Remember to eat plenty of garlic and workout to stay strong; if you do that, then you’ll be ready for anything, just like me,” Lier gloated. I stepped out of the shack and waved goodbye to Lier. With that occurrence out of the way, I sped down the cliff trail and headed on the path to the main town of Onett.

The town of Onett was one of the smaller towns occupying Eagleland, not even stretching for a mile. It had several shops, an arcade, a police station, a hospital, a hotel, and sitting in center of the area was the town hall. Naturally, I knew this place like the back of my hand, as it was one of the only places I knew. However, in all my years of living there, I had never once heard of a place called Giant Step, the first sanctuary location I was told to go to by Buzz Buzz;
because of this, I made collecting information about this place my first objective. I strolled about the town, asking any person I met about Giant Step, to which all of them replied that they had never heard of such a place. I also knocked on the doors of all the houses in the area, and I still got the same answer. “Giant Step? Never heard of it.” After walking around for about an hour, I got hungry and decided to hit up my favorite burger joint, simply referred to as “Onett Burgers.” I loved hamburgers, and still do, so this was a place I visited often. I ordered an extra large double cheeseburger and took my seat at the spot that I normally sat. About five minutes later, a man wearing a blue suit and bowler hat came and sat down beside me.

“Hey pal. Are you the kid who’s been askin’ around for a place called Giant Step?” the man asked.

“Why, yes I am,” I replied. “Name’s Ness. Would you happen to know anything about a place called Giant Step?” I asked, hoping that this man knew at least something about the elusive spot.

“Well Ness, while I don’t know anything relating to Giant Step myself, I do know that the boss of the Sharks knows somethin’ about it.” The Sharks. I remembered that Pokey had said that the cops had gone to deal with the Sharks on the night of meteorite crash. Apparently they were some new gang that consisted of a bunch of young punks. They must have been pretty nasty if they caused enough trouble to avert the attention of the police away from an extraterrestrial object. “That’s a bit unfortunate for you, bucko. The Sharks are a vicious group, they are. I’d hate to see a kid like yourself head into a dangerous situation like that, but I suppose it depends on how much you want that information,” the man said truthfully. I wasn’t even a day into my adventure and I had already found myself heading into danger.

“I really need to know about this spot, mister. Do you know anyway I can speak with the Sharks’ boss?” I asked.

“Ehh, I’ll tell ya this much; the Sharks’ boss commonly hangs out at the Onett arcade. I heard that Sharks made it their base of
operations. If you want to go into enemy territory, you'll need to equip yourself well. I've noticed that you have a bat, but that thing looks like it could break if you sneezed on it. The drugstore has a better one for sale, along with some other neat junk, like bracelets that can supposedly increase how resistant you are to bodily harm,” the man described. I finished my meal and stood up from the table. I pulled out my wallet to pay for the meal, but the man halted me. “Meal’s on me mac. Save all your money for stuff that you want buy at the drugstore. Be careful though, the Sharks are a rough set o’ hooligans. I heard that they gave some kid a serious owie when he tried to play at the arcade,” the man cautioned.

“Alright mister, I'll be careful. Thank you for the advice and everything else!” I said as I walked towards the double doors of the shop. When I exited, I headed over to the drugstore, which stood right next to Onett Burgers. I entered the store and withdrew $100 off of my bank account from an available ATM.

“Hello sir! Will you be buying or selling on this fine day?” the cashier asked.

“Hey there, I would like to buy one tee ball bat and one cheap bracelet please,” I replied. The cashier went away from the counter and came back with a shiny silver baseball bat and a bracelet that looked like it was made of plastic.

“That'll be $80 sir,” the cashier stated. I took out 80 smacks and placed them on the counter. The cashier quickly snatched up the money and stuck it in the cash register. “Oh, is that a used bat you have there? If it is, I'll it buy off of you for $14.” I gave the cashier my old, cracked bat and in return he gave me 14 clams. “Thank you for your business sir, please come again,” the cashier said. I took my purchased goods and exited the store. On my way to the arcade, I sat down at a park bench to put on my bracelet, which was supposed to protect me in some way, and then continued on my way to the arcade.
The Onett arcade was a yellow building that stood south of the town hall. I had fond memories of playing addicting arcade games for hours at this wonderful place. It was usually packed with excited kids and bustling parents, but now, it was eerily vacant. The smell of danger permeated the vicinity like the smell of steak in my kitchen. I took a deep breath and stepped into the arcade. Instantly, I was greeted by the faces of several dark figures wearing strange body suits. One of the figures, wearing a green body suit and hopping on a pogo stick, came over to me.

“Hey there little meat. You must be new here. Ya see, this is our arcade, and nobody else is allowed. Feel free to show yourself to the door, if ya know what’s good for ya,” the figure said intimidatingly. I cleared my throat and stood up tall, trying not to look weak.

“Are you guys the Sharks? If so, may I speak to your boss, please?” I asked, attempting to remain calm. The Sharks looked at each other and then burst out in insane laughter.

“Ahahahahahaha! Is this some sort of joke? You march into our territory holding your little baseball bat and then ask to see our BOSS? What’re you, nuts? There ain’t nobody who gets see the boss of the Sharks, not even the Sharks themselves! Come on boys, let’s show this runt how we deal with wiseguys!” the Shark called to his colleagues. Two Sharks, still laughing hysterically, stepped out of the crowd. One Shark was wearing a purple body suit and was holding a hula-hoop while the other had on a grey & white striped shirt and was wearing a helmet with a shark fin taped to it; the helmet-wearing punk also had a skateboard shaped like an arrow in his hand. I took a step back, bat at the ready, anticipating their assault.

The three speedily charged at me, which I dodged by quickly ducked behind an arcade cabinet. Thanks to my dodge, they missed me and all fell over on top of each other. Taking advantage of the situation, I grabbed the pogo stick the green Shark was riding and threw it at
the purple Shark. It hit him square in the face and sent him reeling back.

“What the hey! That’s fightin’ dirty! That’s our job!” the skateboard-wielding Shark yelled. He hastily jumped up and tried to ram me while riding his board. I reflexively moved out of the way, and watched the Shark crash into one of the arcade cabinets, cracking the screen and planting himself on the ground. All that was left was the Shark who had previously ridden on a pogo stick, which he no longer had.

“N-n-no fair! I don’t got no weapon! You can’t just beat up a guy if he’s defenseless! Even I’s got standards!” the Shark mumbled. I stepped forward with my bat poised to strike the Shark if he made any sudden movements. “Ok! Ok! I give! Here, take the key to go see our boss! All I know is that he’s a million times stronger than all of us combined! Retreat everyone!” the Shark shouted. On command, all of the Sharks ran upstairs to the second floor, with the green Shark turning around to throw me a small key and a rude gesture. I caught the key and peered down at the two remaining Sharks. They were knocked out cold, but I knew they were fine, and I felt triumphant at the sight of the first victory of my journey. I looked around the arcade and spotted the door that led into the fenced off yard behind the arcade. I carefully approached the door and inserted the key into the lock. I then unlocked the door and stepped out into the backyard.

The yard was mostly empty, aside from two things; a tiny shed and a man with long blonde hair, fashioned into a shark fin, wearing a crimson suit.

“Who goes there? If that’s you Lewis, I already told you that I don’t like hockey!” The man turned around, revealing a face covered by thick sunglasses. “Oh... who do we have here? A young boy? Not one of my crew? That means you must have gotten the key from one of those morons. I told them not to keep fighting with the random utensils they find in their basements! Ahem, anyway, I assure you that
an occurrence like this is few and far between, so I applaud you for your accomplishment. The name’s Frank, you are…?"

“Uhh, I’m Ness, sir, and I’ve come here to ask you about something,” I answered honestly.

“Oh. So you’re not a police officer, and all you want to do is chat? You are quite the character, Ness. Alright then, out with it, what do you want? I am a very busy man, with very little time,” Frank said.

“I, uh, wanted to ask you if you knew about a place called Giant Step,” I said. At the mention of Giant Step, Frank’s eyebrows shot up.

“G-Giant Step? How do you know about that place?” Frank turned away for a moment. “Well, this changes everything. I no longer see you as just a strong boy. I now see that you are a strong boy with great amounts of knowledge, for only a select few know of illustrious Giant Step. I’ll tell you what, if you can defeat me in battle and prove that you can hold your own, I’ll let you know about Giant Step. Deal?” Frank asked. I thought for a second, and considered my options. Frank appeared to be far stronger than any of the Sharks in the arcade, and yet he would only tell me about Giant Step if I were able to beat him. I saw no other choice but to accept Frank’s challenge.

“Deal. Come at me, you crook,” I said with way too much confidence.

“There’s a good boy. Now, let’s get down to brass tacks,” Frank said as he pulled two objects from his golden locks. I quickly noticed that the objects were knives, a massive upgrade from the hula-hoops and pogo sticks of the other Sharks. “Now THESE are real weapons. En garde!” Frank shouted.

Frank Fly
Crafty Crime Lord

Frank quickly lunged at me, swinging his blades wildly. I bolted away from Frank, who chased after me. When I got far enough away, I pulled out my bat and turned to the criminal. I swung my bat at Frank,
who swiftly blocked my blow using his knives. “Ah, so you also have a good weapon. This is should be interesting.” Frank assumed a tactical stance and rapidly swung his blades, to which I attempted to block with my bat, but failed and received a searing gash across my stomach. Frank stopped and sniffed the fresh blood on his knife, and then turned to me with a menacing smile. Down but not out, I rushed at Frank, swinging my bat in an adrenaline fueled rage. Frank tried to keep up with me, but wasn’t quite fast enough and received a firm whack on the side of the face. While Frank was reeling in pain, I took my chance and swung my bat at his gut, connecting with a fierce blow. Frank clenched his stomach and fell backwards, dropping his knives on the ground. I hurriedly kicked the blades away so that Frank couldn’t fight back. I stood there, covering the gash on belly as Frank gradually sat up on his knees.

“Heh. Heh heh,” Frank mysteriously giggled to himself as he struggled to stand up. “That was pretty good, my youthful adversary. But ‘fail-proof’ Frank can’t be beaten.” Frank stumbled over to the small shed standing in the corner of the yard and opened the doors. Contained inside the shed was a hefty handmade robot. The robot had tank treads and two mechanical arms, one of which was pointed toward the sky; the robot also had a window in middle of its “chest”, revealing the robot’s cockpit. Frank then hobbled behind the robot and entered the cockpit. “Puff puff puff. This is Frankenstein Mk. II, and he’s your worst nightmare,” Frank spouted.

**Frankenstein Mk. II**
**Massive Mechanical Monster**

Frank pressed something inside of the cockpit and turned on the robot. Frankenstein generated a burst of steam as it began to roll towards me. Still wounded from the first battle with Frank, I didn’t
have much more strength left. I moved out of the Frankystein’s path as quickly as I could, narrowly avoiding a powerful punch from the robot’s huge fists. I walked around the behemoth and tried to damage it with my bat, but it was no use, as the robot’s armor was too strong. Seeing that I couldn’t do anything to the Frankystein directly, I searched around for another way to defeat it. That’s when I spotted Frank’s knives gleaming at the end of the yard; yet, before I could make a move, the Frankystein grabbed the back of my shirt and chucked me across the lawn, sending me into the surrounding fence. I felt blood trickle from nose as I struggled to regain focus of my surroundings. To my horror, I saw the Frankystein heading straight for me.

“This is it, Ness old boy! Say goodnight!” Frank yelled with a nightmarish grin. With my last remaining energy, I dove for one of the knives lying on the ground, avoiding the Frankystein’s attack in the process. As Frank attempted to turn the robot around, I spotted the robot’s fuel tanks sticking out of its back. Using more of my baseball intuition, I pitched the knife directly at the tanks. The knife collided right in the middle of one of the tanks, causing the tanks to violently burst into flames. The explosion sent Frank flying out of the machine and onto the green grass. He appeared to have been knocked out by the impact. Victorious feelings flooded my body as I watched Frank’s shark fin hairdo bend over onto his soot-covered face; however, the feelings of triumph soon subsided as I realized that I was slowly bleeding to death. I felt cold as blood leaked from my stomach and nose. I thought that it was the end, and slowly closed my eyes… until I remembered Buzz Buzz’s words.

“For the sake of yourself, your family, and the entire universe.” I remembered the promise that I had made to him, that I would never give up, no matter the circumstance. As the memories rushed through my head, I suddenly felt a powerful feeling welling up from deep within myself. It was a feeling unlike any other that I had ever felt or knew. I don’t know how I knew what to do, but when the deep feeling faded, a
phrase suddenly came to my mouth, and an indescribable urge forced to me to say it.

As soon as I these words exited my being, a green energy burst forth from my hands and surrounded me. I instantly felt the gash on my stomach recede and the blood dripping from my nose cease flowing. I felt like a brand new Ness, as if I had been born again. I stood up and took a nice long breath, feeling refreshed as the air entered my lungs. After I regained my composure, I remembered Frank, who was lying unconscious on the ground, and once again said the life-giving phrase. I shouted. The green energy once again emerged from my hands and enveloped Frank, healing his injuries. After a second or two, Frank began to stir, and eventually sat up and looked around.

“N-Ness? Where I am?” Frank asked weakly.

“You’re in the arcade’s backyard. You lost,” I said as pointed to the destroyed Frankystein. “I believe that you owe me something.” Frank looked at the wrecked robot and back at me. A strange smile then formed on his face.

“So. That’s it then. ‘Fail-proof’ Frank is now just ‘failure’ Frank. As the victor of this duel, I think it is high-time that you get what you came here for, Ness,” Frank said as he slowly got up from the ground. “Let’s talk about Giant Step.”