Chapter 10
Runaway Five on the Run

Paula and I speedily made our way through Peaceful Rest Valley and arrived at Twoson around dusk. Paula practically dragged me behind her as she rushed to the front door of Polestar Preschool. She opened the door and stepped inside; while the classroom was devoid of the many scurrying kids I had seen before, Paula’s mother and father were standing at the back of the room, examining a scrappy-looking wanted poster with Paula’s picture on. As we walked into the room, the two turned to face us, their eyes lighting up like fireworks at a parade.

“PAULA!” the pair cried as they ran towards us, bulldozing me out of the way and absorbing their daughter into their arms.

“Oh, my sweet little girl, you’ve come home to us! I promise, I’ll never let this happen ever again!” Mrs. Polestar said.

“Oh, my sweet little peach, I’ll never let you go!” Mr. Polestar said, squeezing Paula even harder.

“Hey, thanks you guys, but you’re kinda choking me here!” Paula said as her face turned blue. Her parents released her and she took a deep breath.

“Sorry about that. It’s just, we were so worried about you! We didn’t even know that you were kidnapped until a little while ago. We asked everyone in town and nobody knew where you were! I thought I was gonna have an accident!” Mrs. Polestar said.

“Well, I’m glad that you guys were worried about me, but you really don’t have to be so anxious. I mean, do you even know me? I can take care of myself just fine. This was just a rare occasion where I needed someone else’s help. And Ness here really got me out of a jam,” Paula said, pointing to me. Her parents suddenly grabbed me and began hugging me vigorously.
“Oh Ness, you’re our hero! Our daughter means the world to us, and I don’t know what we would’ve done without your assistance!” Mrs. Polestar said.

“Oh Ness, you’re a truly exceptional young man! I’ll give you anything you want as thanks for saving Paula!” Mr. Polestar said. When the two saw that they were choking me, they released me from their bear hug.

“Its, *wheeze*, no problem, Mr. and Mrs. Polestar. I was just, *cough*, doing my duty. Y-you see, Paula and I are two of the Chosen Four, a group of four kids who are destined to defeat an all-powerful evil. In order to defeat this evil, we must travel around the world and collect the eight Sanctuary Melodies from eight sacred spots scattered across the planet. We have already collected two melodies, and I feel we must leave Twoson to find the rest.”

“I’m sorry if all of this has come as a surprise to you, but you must understand, our quest will decide the fate of the world. For this reason, even though she just got back, Paula must travel with me for a while. I don’t know how long it will take us to complete our adventure, so I hope you will be patient while she’s gone,” I explained. Mr. and Mrs. Polestar huddled together and mumbled quietly to each other. After a minute, Mrs. Polestar smiled and turned to me.

“That’s ok, Ness. We understand your situation. Before she was kidnapped, Paula mentioned something about an adventure and Eight Melodies, so this is no surprise. Although it doesn’t make me happy, I will allow Paula to accompany you on your journey to save the world,” Mrs. Polestar said.

“And hey, don’t think of this as something negative! Think of your quest as a massive summer vacation across the globe! You’ll get to see exotic places and make exotic friends! It’ll be fun! Besides, this will be a great learning experience for Paula. By the time you get back, she’ll be armed with the wisdom of the world!” Mr. Polestar said enthusiastically. “However, I think it’s a tad late for you two to set off on your quest right now. Why don’t you guys rest here for the
night, and in the morning, pack your things and get going. You can
sleep on the couch, Ness. I’ll go and set it up for you,” Mr. Polestar
said as he entered the dining room.

“I don’t know about you, but I’m pretty tired after all that’s
happened recently. I’m gonna go get some shut eye. See you in the
morning Ness,” Paula said as she also entered the dining room.

“Come on Ness. I’ll show you where the bathroom is,” Mrs. Polestar
said as she grabbed my hand and led me through the dining room
door.

After I did my usual nighttime routine, I put on my pajamas and
-crashed on the couch that Mr. Polestar had set up for me.

I awoke early in the morning and quickly got dressed. The Polestars
had all woken up before me and were hustling about, doing a variety
of things. Mrs. Polestar was tending to the kids in the preschool; Mr.
Polestar was cooking some bacon while reading a newspaper; Paula,
who now donned a red dress and braids, was packing a small
suitcase with things like extra clothes and toiletries. Around noon,
Paula and I said our goodbyes to Mr. and Mrs. Polestar and headed
out of the preschool.

We decided that our next destination would be the town of Threed,
to the north of Twoson. The path to Threed was a long, linear road
surrounded by trees on one side and a cliff face on the other. We
patiently walked along the road, discussing things that came to our
minds.

“So, what do you think of Twoson? It’s a pretty nice town, eh?”

“Yeah, I think so. I still prefer Onett, but that’s just my personal
bias.”

“Does Onett have a theater?”

“No, but does Twoson have an arcade?”

“Let’s just say that each town has its own quirks. Look, I didn’t even
notice that we were at the end of the road ‘cause of our pointless
rambling,” Paula said as we approached a curve in the road. The curve led straight into an ominous tunnel, the one that connected Twoson to Threed. We entered the tunnel and began heading through it when I abruptly felt a cold sensation sweep over my body.


“Y-y-yeah. It’s like I just walked into a freezer,” I responded. Out of nowhere, a ghastly voice cried out.

“Gooooooo baaaaaaaack… goooooooo baaaaaaaack, orrrrr y’lllll beeeeee sooooooooorrrrrry,” the voice moaned.

“W-what was that??? …I-I don’t know about you, but I’m getting a sudden feeling that someone, or something, doesn’t want us to pass through here,” I said frightenedly.

“Um, d-don’t be so scared, N-Ness… It’s probably just a hippie trying to scare us into eating healthy… That doesn’t really make a lot of sense, but… Well, I don’t know. Let’s just keep trucking,” Paula said as she pushed me forwards. Despite being thoroughly spooked, we ignored what the voice said and continued through the tunnel. Just moments later, a white tattered sheet appeared out of thin air and looked at us with glowing red eyes. “I saaaaaaaiiiiiid, gooooooo baaaaaaaack!” the sheet shouted. Suddenly, about a dozen more sheets emerged from the walls of the tunnel and surrounded us. I pulled out my bat to try and fend off the spectres, but found myself covered by the haunting figures. My vision went black for a moment, and when it returned, I found myself standing back on the outside of the tunnel. Paula had also blacked out and was standing beside of me.

“W-w-was that a ghost?! D-did a bunch of ghosts just drag us out of that tunnel?” I said, shivering from the encounter.

“That s-s-seems to be the case. Great. Just great. Now what? This tunnel is the only way to get to Threed from Twoson and it’s being occupied by unfriendly spirits. What’re we gonna do?” Paula said with
a look of frustration. I peered around aimlessly, trying to think of a solution to our conundrum, when a beefy guy with a moustache jogged up beside of us. The man was at least 6 feet tall and wore a pair of thick sunglasses and a filthy red tank top. “Oh, hiya Butch! What brings you here? I hope you didn’t want to go to Threed, because the way there is blocked by a group of ghosts,” Paula said, gesturing to the vacant tunnel.

“What? Ghosts?! Don’t talk about ghosts near me, it makes me nervous... Anyways, I’ve been lookin’ around for you kids all mornin’! Mistah Everdred asked me to find you and a kid wearing a red cap and tell you to go to him. He’s got somethin’ important he wants to give ya,” Butch said, wiping his forehead. “He also said that you guys had to hurry or else he was gonna leave and take the important thing with him.”

“Is that so? I wonder what Mr. Everdred would want to give us in such a rush. It might be something that can help us get rid of the ghosts in the tunnel! Come on Ness, let’s go to Everdred before he takes off to who knows where!” Paula said as she grabbed my hand and pulled me along behind her. We ran down the road and arrived at Burglin Park. We knocked at Everdred’s front door and were soon greeted by the face of the bandit himself, grinning a large yellow smile.

“Ah! Paula my dear! It’s good to see you that have returned safe and sound!” Everdred said as he pulled Paula into an awkward hug. “Come in, come in, make yourselves at home!” Paula and I entered subsequently Everdred’s tiny shack; the place was very dirty, with cigarettes and beer cans lying about, and the entire room smelled like ash and alcohol. Everdred took a seat in a worn-out recliner as Paula and I sat down on a musty sofa. Everdred took out a cigarette and lit it up before speaking. “So, *puff*, what brings you kids to my wretched little piece of Earth?”
“Huh? You don’t know why we came here? I thought you were the one who sent that huge muscular guy to bring us here,” I said, choking on the smoke that filled the house.

“Oh. Yeah. Forgot about that. *chuckle* Anyways, now that you have rescued Paula from the clutches of the Sappy-Sappyists, or whatever they called themselves, I can safely tell you something rather important. And I’m not kidding about this being important, so listen up!” Everdred said as he flicked his blunt into a nearby ashtray.

“Recently, thanks to some underground channels, I have learned that the source of the Sappy-Sappyists’ madness was a brilliant golden statue of a humanoid figure. According to Mr. Paintcars, the mayor of Sappy-Sappy Village, the statue has the ability to create illusions and fill the minds of whoever it chooses with terrible and deceitful thoughts. This statue is incredibly dangerous, and in the hands of someone evil, could cause mass mayhem and destruction. For this reason, I have taken it upon myself to destroy this statue once and for all.”

“First, I’m going to go to Sappy-Sappy Village and swipe the statue. Next, I’m going to carry it undetected to the city of Fourside, and when I get there, I’m going to have a professional demolish it in a glorious fashion! It is truly a foolproof plan. However, it is also a perilous one, and, if for whatever reason I do not make it back to Twoson alive, I want to at least know that I did something useful with my life. Here kid, take this, I no longer need it,” Everdred said as he handed me a fat stack of cash.

“What?! How much money is this, and why are you just going to give it all away?” I asked.

“Looky here chum. Although it may not seem like it, I am actually a very old person, about 60 or so. All my life I’ve been stealing things from people for no reason other than to satisfy some weird craving that I have. But now that I feel my life could be on the line, I want to actually do something with the stuff that I’ve stolen. That’s why I’m putting in you charge of that thick wad of bills, which holds about
$10,000 or more. All of the money that I’ve stolen... this month. I’m sure you guys will find a much better use for those clams than I would have. Anyways, I don’t have much more time to spare, so I’m gonna grab my junk and head to Sappy-Sappy Village. I wish you guys a thief’s luck, and if you don’t ever see me again, just remember the name, Everdred, ok? See ya!” Everdred said as he grabbed a knapsack and headed out the door. For a moment, Paula and I stood still and stared at the enormous gift Everdred had left us.

“That... that’s a LOT of money. What’re we even going to do with that much dough?” Paula asked.

“I don’t exactly know, but I have this strange feeling that we should keep this money separate from the money we usually carry on us. I’m going to put this wad of bills in my backpack for now, and I suppose if we come across something expensive that we want to buy, we’ll use this cash to pay for it,” I said, stuffing the money in my pack.

“Well, we now have a good amount of money for our journey, but that doesn’t solve our ghost problem. We’re still in the dark about how to get to Threed,” Paula said, discouraged. I took a moment and thought of the ways we could get through the tunnel.

“Hey, wait a minute! Doesn’t Twoson have a bus station? We can take the bus to get through the tunnel!” I said encouragingly.

“Woah, I didn’t actually think about that! Good idea Ness! To the bus station, away!” Paula said as we exited Everdred’s house, leaving it vacant.

We arrived at the Twoson bus station and waited for the bus to pull up. A few minutes later, a long, silver bus stopped at the station. A bunch people emerged from the vehicle along with a stout man wearing a driver’s uniform and a displeased expression. We approached the man and asked him when the bus would depart for Threed.
“You wanna go to Threed? Ha ha ha, I’m sorry, but I’m afraid that’s not an option at the moment. You see, there are a bunch of ghosts inhabiting the underpass that goes into Threed, and when I tried to drive my bus through it, the ghosts surrounded the bus and teleported it back outside the underpass. Look, I said I’m sorry, but there’s really nothing I can do about the supernatural. Now, this may not be true, but I’ve heard a legend that states that ghosts are afraid of loud music. If you can find a car that plays reeeaaaallly loud tunes, the ghosts might leave you alone and you could be able to enter Threed. Heck, maybe you should get the Runaway Five to drive you through the tunnel, since they’re plenty loud. Good luck trying to get them out of the rut they’re in though; you’d think that with a name like Runaway Five they would be good at running away from stuff, but I don’t ever see them running away from that huge debt they have on them! Heh heh heh!” the bus driver chuckled as he walked away.


“What, you don’t know who the Runaway Five are? Why, they’re only one of the most popular bands in Eagleland! We recently had the honor of the Runaway Five visiting the Chaos Theater here in Twoson, but I’ve heard that they got themselves into some trouble with the theater manager and now have a massive debt to pay off. I don’t know if they have the time to drive us through the tunnel to Threed, but it’s worth a shot. We would also be able to see them perform in concert, which is a humongous honor! Come on Ness, let’s head to the Chaos Theater!” Paula said as she sped away from the bus station, myself exhaustedly trailing behind her.

Paula and I soon arrived at the Chaos Theater; a decently large black building that stood at the southern edge of Twoson. Plastered all over the building were a bunch of advertisements for the Runaway Five and other bands. We were about to enter the auditorium when
two men came out of its front doors. The men both wore snazzy suits, ties, and hats, with one donning the color red and the other green.

“Ya see Lucky, I told ya that openin’ umbrellas indoors was bad luck! ...Hey look, some young fans o’ da Runaway Five! I bet dey want our autographs!” the red man said.

“Ya think so? I think dey just wanted to go in da theater,” the man in green retorted. The men walked up to us and abruptly shook our hands.

“Hower ya doin’ today kiddos? The name’s Gorgeous!”

“An’ I’m Lucky! No, dat’s my name.”

“An’ we’re da lead singers of da Runaway Five! Ever heard of us?”

“Well, it’s kinda impossible not to have heard of us. After all, we are famous!” Lucky took a second to examine us. “Say... Ain’t you da psychic girl dat everyone around here talks about?” Lucky asked.

“Yep! My name is Paula Polestar, and I’m a huge fan of your music! I’m so glad that I get to meet you guys in person!” Paula squealed.

“Heh heh heh, ain’t dat nice. A long time fan of our work! I’ll tell ya what, for bein’ such a dedicated follower of da Runaway Five, I’m gonna give you and your boyfriend two backstage passes to da Runaway Five’s next concert. This is huge honor, a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity! Consider yourselves, LUCKY! Hehehehehe! *smack* Ow! What was dat for?” Gorgeous asked after Lucky slapped him in the back of the head.

“For bein’ such a pain in my hat, dat’s why. Anyways, we gotsta get prepared for our next show, so you kids go on in and get yourselves a drink or somethin while we get set up. Remember to stop by our dressin’ room after da show to have another chat with us!” Lucky said as Gorgeous and he walked back into the theater. Paula looked down at the passes Lucky had given her.

“EEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEE! I can’t believe the lead singer of the Runaway Five just gave me, I mean us, two backstage passes to their show!!! This is the second greatest day of my life! Second only to the day I was rescued by you Ness!” Paula said with a sweet grin. I
decided I would not mention the fact that Lucky had called me her boyfriend. “Wait, did they say that the show would start soon? Come on come on come on Ness! Let’s go get seated for the show! Come on, why are you always so slow?!” Paula said as she zipped through the door. I couldn’t determine how she always had so much energy, but it was probably due to the fact that she was skinny and I was not. Tiredly, I took a deep breath and lously followed Paula into the theater.

The interior of the theater was as cold as ice and looked very old and worn down. The wallpaper was torn and dusty and the carpet seemed as if it hadn’t been washed in a decade. The main area of the theater was a circular room with two doors, not counting the entrance; one led to the concert hall and the other led to a room labeled “Manager’s Office”. We approached a counter that was standing beside of the door to the concert hall and were asked by a clerk to present our tickets. Paula showed the clerk our backstage passes and he allowed us to enter the hall. The hall was an exceedingly large room that contained a wide stage and many tables and seats for the theater’s patrons. Paula and I took a seat at the cleanest table we could find as the lights began to dim.

“Ooo, we’re right on time! I’m so excited!” Paula said as she shook with glee. Suddenly, Gorgeous’s voice sounded off from behind the closed curtains on stage.

“Ohhhhh yeaah! Have we got a show for you tonight! Dat’s right, it’s da Runaway Five! Try not to wet yourself, ‘cause we’re putting on a fiery performance for you today folks! Oh baaaaaaaaabbbyy! Let’s get dis party started!” As Gorgeous’s voice echoed into nothingness, the curtains opened and two spotlights shined brightly, revealing the two lead singers of the Runaway Five. They began to snap their fingers and walk to the edges of the stage. The two quickly spun around and pointed to the darkness at the center of the stage,
signalling for a light to turned on, unveiling the rest of the Runaway Five; a saxophone player, a keyboardist, a drummer, and a bassist. Strangely, despite calling themselves the Runaway Five, there were six people on the stage.

The instrumentalists started to play a jazzy tune as Lucky and Gorgeous danced about the stage, occasionally tossing things like roses and tee-shirts into the crowd, causing it to go wild. After a few minutes of this same pattern, the song ended and the two “singers” gave one final bow before heading back behind the curtains. The crowd cheered passionately for the group, with Paula taking the award for the loudest attendant of the theater, nearly deafening me with her cries. When the cheering stopped, most of the people in the theater got up from their seats and departed; however, Paula and I headed in the opposite direction, to a small door being guarded by a man in a neat black tuxedo. We showed him our passes and he moved out of the way, giving us access to the Runaway Five’s dressing room.

“Wooo weeee! Now dat was a performance!” Gorgeous said as he took off his red jacket and tie. Lucky and he turned to us when they heard the sound of the door opening. “Would ya look at dat! It’s da two crazy kids from outside! How did you get in here, da door’s blocked by a security guard. I oughta fire dat slacker! Nah, I’m just bein’ facetious. Welcome to da Runaway Five grand dressin’ room! It ain’t as grand as da name implies, but I suppose it does da job well enough.” I took a second to look about the area; the Runaway Five “grand” dressing room was nothing but a small square room with a couple of lockers and some chairs. Not quite as “grand” as I imagined it would be.

“Now dat you guys are here, let me introduce ya to the rest of the Runaway Five!” Lucky said as the rest of the band members lined up to greet us.
“Heya, I’m Nice,” said the drummer, a large dark-skinned man with a grizzly beard.
“G’day, my name is Okay,” said the bassist, a lanky man with a thick moustache.
“Salutations! The name’s gravy, I mean Groovy!” said the saxophone player, a stout man wearing sunglasses.
“Aloha! My name is Phil, but most call me Keyboar,” said the keyboard player, a man with a fair tan and dreadlocks.
“Wait a minute, if you guy’s are the Runaway Five, then why are their six people in here?” Paula asked, wondering the same thing that I was.
“Well, you see, I’m not actually an official member of the Runaway Five,” Keyboar said. “I’m actually Nice’s little bro, but if I am able to make it to their concerts, the group allows me to play with them! It’s truly a fantastic opportunity!” Keyboar said, hugging his console.
“Aaaaan’ dat’s da team! With all of our talents combined, we are able to create spectacular shows for everyone to enjoy! Da only problem we have is dat we’re pretty bad at handling our money. Dat’s why we’re stuck here at da Chaos Theater, ‘cause we were tricked by da manager into signing a contract dat we can’t get ourselves out of. Unless we suddenly gain, I don’t know, $10,000, we’re gonna be stuck performin’ at dis lousy place for all eternity,” Lucky said gloomily.
“Anyways, dat’s enough about our troubles. What brings you two here?” Lucky asked.
“Well, it’s a long story, but let’s just say that we need to go to Threed in order to save the world,” I said.
“Save da world? Dat’s a pretty tall order! I would’a never guessed dat some ordinary-lookin’ kids like you would be tasked to save the world. Anywho, gettin’ to Threed is a piece of cake; all ya have to do is go through da tunnel to da north of Twoson and batta-boom, you’re there,” Gorgeous said.
“That’s the problem; when we tried to cross through the tunnel to Threed, a gaggle of spirits appeared out of nowhere and teleported
outside of the tunnel. We tried to take the bus through the underpass, but the bus driver said that the bus was also unable to get past the tunnel. However, the bus driver told us about a legend that states that ghosts are afraid of loud music, and he suggested that we ask you guys to drive us through the tunnel. So, if it’s not too much to ask, could you guys drive us to Threed?” I asked desperately.

“Hmm, dat’s a pretty sticky situation you’ve got on your hands. While we would happy to transport you to Threed, singin’ and dancin’ along da way, we have our own problems. Ya see, when I said dat we were stuck here at da Chaos Theater, I really meant dat we’re not allowed to leave Twoson whatsoever. If we set just one foot out of da Twoson city limits, we’ll be in for it with da fuzz. I’m sorry to say kids, but unless ya can convince da theater manager, Mr. Poochyfud, to discontinue our contract, there’s nothin we can do to help ya,” Lucky said sadly. I thought for a second about how we could convince the manager to release the Runaway Five, and I remembered that Lucky had said something about needing $10,000 to get out of their contract.

“Mr. Poochyfud you say? Alright, we’ll go have a little talk with this ‘Poochyfud’ and see if we can’t convince him to let you guys go,” I said with a confident smile.

“Heh heh heh, I appreciate your generosity kid, but dat Poochyfud is colder than a snowman covered in liquid nitrogen. I highly doubt you will be able to change his mind, but go ahead and give it a shot anyways. I wish ya luck!” Lucky said as Paula and I walked out of the room.

“Ness, why do you have that huge grin on your face? Is there something that I should know?” Paula said with a suspicious look on her face.

“Hmm hmm hmm, you’ll see. Just wait. When we confront the theater manager, let me do all the talking. I’ve got this covered,” I said as we approached the manager’s office and entered it.
The manager's office was a tiny cubic room that contained only a few chairs and a large wooden desk; sitting at said desk was an obese man wearing a green suit and fedora examining some papers.


"E-excuse me sir. My name is Ness, and I'm here to speak to you about the Runaway Five," I said, intimidated by the man's large stature.

"WHAT'S THAT? YOU CAME TO TALK TO ME ABOUT THE RUNAWAY FIVE? HA! THOSE GUYS ARE A BUNCH OF SUCKERS, I TELL YOU WHAT. THEY SIGNED THIS CONTRACT WITHOUT READING THE FINE PRINT, AND NOW THEY'RE STUCK AT THIS THEATER UNTIL THE END OF TIME, OR UNTIL THEY CAN AMASS ENOUGH MONEY TO PAY OFF THEIR LOAN. BUT THAT WILL NEVER HAPPEN, BECAUSE I DON'T PAY THEM MUCH, AND ALL OF THE SALES FOR THEIR CONCERTS GO DIRECTLY TO ME! THE LAST TIME I CHECKED, THEIR DEBT SAT AT A WHOPPING $10,000! TO PUT IT IN SIMPLER TERMS FOR YOU REPSULSIVE YOUTHS, THAT'S A LOT OF CASH! NOW, WHAT DO HAVE TO SAY, LITTLE MAN?" Poochyfud said, staring at me with a vile expression.

"W-well, you see Mr. Poochyfud, my friend Paula and I really need to go to Threed for important matters, but the tunnel is inhabited by unpleasant ghosts who won't let us pass. We were wondering if you could let the Runaway Five leave Twoson long enough to drive us through the tunnel," I said.

"WHAT? LET THE RUNAWAY FIVE LEAVE TWOSON? ARE YOU DAFT, CHILD? DID YOU NOT JUST HEAR ME SAY THAT THE RUNAWAY FIVE CANNOT LEAVE UNTIL THEY'VE PAID OFF THEIR $10,000 DEBT? UNLESS YOU JUST HAPPEN TO HAVE $10,000 TO SPARE, THE RUNAWAY FIVE WILL REMAIN AT THIS THEATER AND IN TWOSON FOR THE REST OF THEIR MISERABLE LIVES! BAH, SUCH IGNORANT CHILDREN," Poochyfud said as he groomed his neck-beard. Paula approached me from behind and whispered in my ear.

"(Ness, are you gonna do what I think you're gonna do?)"

"(You bet I am.)" I mumbled as I reached into my backpack, pulling out the fat wad of bills that Everdred had given us. "Hey, Mr. Poochyfud. Do you think that this is enough to cover the Runaway Five's debt?" I asked smugly as I presented the cash. When
Poochyfud laid his eyes on my offering, they seemed to almost pop out of his head. He quickly snatched the money from me and sniffed it intensely, possibly checking to see if it was counterfeit.

"This is, what is, how even, what in the, i-i-i... I don't know what to say. This is a legitimate stack of $10,000. I have no clue how such insolent youth could have gotten hold of this wealth, but, I suppose, a-a-a deal is a deal. Here, I'll dispose of this contract," Poochyfud said as he stuffed one of the papers sitting on his desk into his mouth, chomping on it furiously before swallowing it. "*URP*

*GAG* The, the runaway five are now free to go. *COUGH GAG* I hope you got what you want, you impudent rat. *COUGH*" Poochyfud coughed as he sipped from a cup sitting on his desk. Paula and I hi-fived each other before heading out of the room and speeding over to the Runaway Five's dressing room.

When we entered the dressing room, the Runaway Five were occupied doing an assortment of activities; Lucky and Gorgeous were playing chess, Nice was tapping out a beat on one of the lockers, Okay and Groovy were eating some doughnuts, and Keyboar was stroking his key board, for... some reason. The band turned to look at us as we came in.

"Heya kiddies. How was your talk with Poochyfat?" Lucky asked, simultaneously checkmating Gorgeous. I turned to Paula, who gave me a confident smile, before turning back to the group.

"Well, this might be a little hard to believe, but... you guys are free to go," I said plainly. The Runaway Five sat there silently for a moment, looks of disbelief and shock on the band members' faces. Suddenly, they all burst into cheer and glee, rushing forward and absorbing Paula and I into their arms.

"Oh yaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaaah! Dat's what I'm talkin' about! Da Runaway Five are back in business!" said Gorgeous.

"You guys are amazing!" said Nice.

"You blokes are bloody killer!" said Okay.

"You kids are hip, you kids are hop! There ain't nothin' you kids are not!" said Groovy.
“You peeps are the true fans here! You should take my spot on the team!” said Keyboar. After the members spoke their praise, they released us, much to my contentment.

“Excellent! Just excellent I tell ya’s! Dis is quite da monumental feat, if I do say so myself. Listen kids, if there’s anything, I say anything you want, just say da word and we’ll provide it for ya,” Lucky said as he placed a hand on my shoulder.

“Well, my original request still applies. Could you guys drive us to Threed?” I asked.

“Oh yeah, dat’s right. Dat’s why you came here in da first place. *cough* Anyways, you said you want to go to Threed? Dat’s easy-peasy! We already have a van parked behind da theater, and no ghost is gonna dare attack us ‘cause of the power of our catchy tunes! Come on boys, let’s go get da van started up!” Lucky beckoned as the rest of the group grabbed their gear. Paula and I followed behind the band as they exited the theater and approached a rusty black van with the words “Runaway” printed on the sides.

“Heh heh, I wonder if this hunk-a-junk still works after all that time we were stuck here. I’m the driver of this group, and I’ll get you dudes to Threed in no time. Climb in, but watch your step, there’s a lot of stuff lying’ around in there,” Nice said as he jumped into the driver’s seat. Paula and I entered in through the back with the rest of the Runaway Five, with the exception of Keyboar, who, due to his status as an unofficial member of the band, opted to follow us using his own method of transportation, a dinky scooter. Lucky closed the van’s backdoors as Nice started it up with a lurch. After a second, the van began to move and pulled out from behind the Chaos Theater. The van accelerated, and before we knew it, we were heading down the road to Threed. The band members sung and played their instruments loudly as we entered the tunnel to Threed. Through the van’s windows, I was able to see the chilling sight of some ghosts clinging to the sides of the vehicle before flying away, afraid of the music
produced by the band. After what seemed like an eternity, the van finally emerged from the other side of the tunnel, entering into the town of Threed.