

Untitled
by Aiden Chen

The boy woke in darkness. He laid on the cold, hard floor staring into the empty darkness, rubbing the sleep from his eyes. What had happened? He rubbed his eyes again, and stood. He let his eyes adjust to the darkness, and saw that he was in a sort of ditch. A hole twenty feet in diameter and twice that in depth. Looking up, he marveled at the starry sky, its hues transitioning from blue to purple as sunset approached.

Gradually, panic seized him. What was he doing here? He scratched his head, and for some reason he couldn't remember how he'd gotten here. In a fit of desperation, he yelled out all the names of all the people he knew, even the people he didn't like. He pounded at the walls of his earthen cell, dirt grinding beneath his fists. He did this until his voice was dry and gone, and his hands were raw and bleeding from punching the rough walls so much. The boy looked up and saw that it was already night. Then, he turned around and saw a glow.

He could've sworn the light wasn't there a moment ago. Intrigued, he cautiously approached the source of the light and realized that it emanated from below. Almost like... almost like a mythical, magical glow. He looked over, and found himself staring at what apparently was a hole within a hole. There was another narrow ditch dropping down the corner of the pit. A rusty old ladder that looked like it might fall apart any minute clung to the side of the smaller ditch, which looked like it went on another good thirty or forty feet.

Everything in him warned him not to step down. Danger! His mind seemed to tell him. Danger! But despite the boy's situation, curiosity gnawed at him. He couldn't resist the urge to explore. He put his foot down testily on the first rung of the ladder. It held, He slowly eased himself downwards. The ladder held firm. The trusty ladder held all forty feet down. As the boy neared the bottom, the more the temperature went up. When the boy's feet reached the bottom, he was slick with sweat. He examined his new surroundings. The floor was stone. A single torch lit the small room, which was the size of a large closet. There was only one door. Behind it, he could see a soft purplish glow pulsing, a stark contrast to the melancholy light from the lone torch. Curiosity made him swing open the door.

Immediately, incredible pain seized him. Somewhere inside him, he knew he had just triggered some magical defense system. It felt like some invisible force was pulling his body apart, stretching on both ends. He collapsed to the floor, and saw incredible treasures around him. Chests of gold, racks of bottled liquids, and what appeared to be a broomstick hovered in the air. His last thought was knowing that he'd never get to explore it.