

Portals and Magic

(story commission)

It was a rather stressful morning for Zack, a young alchemist who, later that day, would perform one of his most important demonstrations. For the young bird with red and white feathers, and wings adorned with beautiful black and gold plumes, the evening demonstration held the power to change his life forever. Despite being an alchemist, Zack couldn't pass up the chance to elevate his name in the hall of fame among all beings who manipulated magic, spells, and enchantments.

Like many others, Zack had spent the last few months developing a method to teleport matter over great distances, as requested by the lord emperor. The war was dangerously approaching the kingdom's borders, and the emperor was seeking more efficient ways to move large quantities of troops and resources from the heart of the empire to its edges. Naturally, there would be a substantial reward for anyone who could provide the means to achieve these objectives, not to mention the fame and glory of being honored with a noble title.

Throughout the empire, various inventors, magicians, sorcerers, and alchemists were working day and night to be the first to satisfy the imperial demand. It was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity, a chance to receive not only a noble title but also to ascend in social class. This unique chance made the young, slender bird impatient, anxious, and unable to wait. His audition with the kingdom's emissaries was that afternoon, but Zack wanted to ensure everything would go smoothly, so he opted to conduct one more test before his grand demonstration later in the day.

Wearing only a blue loincloth emblazoned with his alchemy shop's crest and a belt carrying basic potions of stamina, mana, and tonic elixir for health, Zack walked across the stage in the storage area of his shop, where he had conducted previous attempts. What the young bird was attempting was more than just dangerous—it was off the charts. Zack was an alchemist at heart, knowledgeable about various types of potions, from the most commonly used in the West to the rarest elixirs of the East. Creating potions and manipulating their ingredients was his specialty. But manipulating magic... not so much.

Unfortunately, Zack couldn't achieve his goals without using magic. And not just magic, but the dangerous blend of magic and alchemy. Countless magicians and alchemists before Zack had tried their luck at creating the perfect harmony between magic, the pure brute force of nature, and alchemy, the art of manipulating nature's elements. Very few

succeeded, and the names of those who did were immortalized in history. Zack desperately wanted to join them in the hall of winners.

Carefully walking through the storage area of his potion shop, the red bird reached the space he had reserved among various wooden crates containing a wide range of ingredients. There, he inscribed the magical words within the circles on the floor. Although Zack admittedly wasn't as fluent in reading mystical scrolls as he would have liked, his idea was quite simple. He would use the finest ingredients his shop could procure, transcribe the mystical texts onto the floor with the best surface indicated, using the finest and most expensive ingredients for the powder to demarcate the lines of the inscriptions on the floor. With some luck, he might be able to recreate the ancient and lost magic of portal creation!

For centuries, no magician or sorcerer had successfully used portal magic. When attempted, the portal often didn't transport the user any significant distance, frequently opening the exit portal just a few centimeters from the entrance, which was quite humiliating for the caster. In the worst cases, it resulted in the traveler's death or complete disappearance, as if they had been erased from reality.

Zack's case wasn't entirely bleak. The young bird had conducted his own experiments with his theory and made considerable progress, successfully opening small portals through which he could transport small amounts of matter and objects with extreme precision. Now, Zack had to dare to transport more substantial items over a greater distance. That was exactly what he was determined to do that morning.

Anxiously walking and meticulously checking that all his magical circle inscriptions on the wooden floor of his shop were still in place as he had left them the night before, the red bird began making the necessary fine adjustments to the inscriptions to attempt a material jump over a greater distance. If everything went well, he would teleport himself to a village not far from the frontlines where the most costly confrontations were occurring. This village was tens of thousands of kilometers from his current village deep within the empire's borders.

Promptly, Zack altered all the scripts, even going so far as to review the powder composition once more to ensure nothing would cause any anomalies in his journey, especially since this time, the bird would use himself as the test subject. However, despite his meticulous preparation, Zack overlooked a new wooden crate left in the storage space of his shop the previous night by his best friend, Lawrence.

Lawrence, a lion with an exemplary physique, stood almost twice as tall as Zack, figuratively speaking. Lawrence was tall and muscular, making him perfect for the role of an imperial guard or knight. However, he had found his calling as a merchant, which allowed him to earn far more imperial pounds. His impressive physique also helped; no one would dare to confront or rob a merchant with arms as wide as their waist. Furthermore, his muscles provided the extra strength needed to move crates of goods effortlessly from his carriage to his clients' shops and vice versa, as he had done in this valuable delivery for his dear friend Zack's shop.

Zack had known Lawrence for so long and trusted him so completely that he had even given the lion the key to the storage room of his shop. This allowed Lawrence to enter and make deliveries at the best times or under the cover of night to deliver rare products and spices that neither the bird nor the lion intended to declare to the local imperial emissaries, thereby avoiding excessive taxation on such items. Zack's trust in Lawrence extended beyond the commercial and professional aspects, considering the lion his first choice to inherit his beloved alchemy shop should his plan succeed and he be elevated to nobility by the royal court.

After efficiently checking all preparations, with the book of enchantments in hand and positioned at the center of the circle with newly altered and freshly drawn inscriptions made with new magical powder and spices from the East Indies, Zack began to read and recite the magical texts on the page before him with enthusiasm, clarity, and a composed pause to ensure nothing went wrong. If it was difficult to read the texts alone in the back of his shop, one could only imagine how much the bird would be sweating nervously when surrounded by a small audience of imperial emissaries. Nevertheless, it didn't take long for the lines drawn with the powder on the wooden floor to start glowing. Soon, Zack's eyes began to shine in harmony with the lines, and the bird felt his mana and vital energy being drained from him. At that moment, Zack remembered he should have taken a large mana potion before attempting such a feat, but it was too late. The red bird was in the midst of the incantation, and before he could do anything, he saw the purple portal opening before him in accordance with the lines on the floor. But the young alchemist hadn't anticipated that he would faint from exhaustion, having nearly all his mana drained, and unfortunately, his numb body fell forward, passing through the portal, which immediately closed, leaving no trace of what had transpired.

In the midst of freefall, Zack began to experience a new layer of strange sensations. Something was definitely wrong. Unlike previous times when he had performed short-distance jumps, the bird now felt a strong sensation of being crushed. It was as if his body was being pressed from all sides by an invisible force, compressing and squeezing him while he felt an extreme emptiness in the space immediately around him. It was as if his body were being... compressed? Zack couldn't tell. Despite being a bird and in freefall, the alchemist felt so exhausted from having almost all his mana consumed by conjuring the portal that he could barely see where he was going or, rather, in which

direction he was falling. Before he knew it, the young red bird, dressed in a blue loincloth, hit the hard ground with a soft thud, losing consciousness immediately upon impact.

A good number of hours passed while the young bird lay unconscious on the floor, his body naturally replenishing the mana that had been consumed. Unfortunately, being unconscious, Zack missed the opportunity to analyze his surroundings in advance before the dawn. If he had, the alchemist would have realized he was amidst an immense and vast wooden surface that closely resembled the storage room floor of his own shop. In fact, everything around him bore a striking resemblance to the storage room of an alchemy shop much like his own, although somehow, everything was different. The first notable difference was the absurdly colossal and grotesque scale of every item and piece of furniture, from the crates to the table Zack used for experiments, notes, and mixing various items for his daily work.

However, Zack himself was in no state to notice any of this, still unconscious on the wooden floor of a shop now resembling Mount Olympus designed for gods. Yet, as the sun rose and hours passed, something would inevitably awaken the small bird. Starting as distant sounds accompanied by a slight tremor in the floor, relatively powerful yet distant vibrations began to shake Zack's body and everything around him. These rhythmic and constant tremors, along with the distant sounds of impactful explosions, gradually increased, as if approaching the tiny bird's location. It wouldn't be long before the young alchemist finally woke from his mana-deprivation-induced coma.

"Ah! I'll never make the mistake of using all my mana like that again," Zack muttered to himself, raising an arm and bringing a hand to his head, exposing the beautiful feathers of his wings to the small world around him. Still very disoriented and waking up, the young bird had yet to focus on his surroundings, the gigantic objects, or even the distant earth tremors steadily approaching him.

The second thing that came to Zack's mind was to use the potions he always carried with him for unexpected situations like this. Removing a blue mana flask from the belt that kept his blue loincloth in place around his waist, the bird removed the cork, saving it to reseal the flask later, and almost immediately, Zack could feel his energies returning. It was as if he had drunk an energy drink that acted infinitely faster on his body.

Only after placing the empty flask back in its compartment did he notice his immense surroundings. Even in the dim light, Zack could almost immediately recognize the space around him as the storage room of his alchemy shop. However, everything was resized

to absurd proportions, and beyond that, there was something else—something in the air that made the place feel strange in ways the bird couldn't quite describe. It was a sensation that brought more than just a feeling; it was as if the entire reality was somehow wrong.

Regardless, the bird had no time to dwell on this, as his senses were overwhelmed by the now-unignorable distant tremors and thuds. Massive thuds followed by more thuds drew Zack's attention to a monolithic wooden structure that could only be described as a door. From Zack's perspective, it looked like a divine structure. Worse still, the gigantic and nearly deafening thuds were coming from behind the door until, suddenly, the tremors and explosions ceased.

Zack's mind raced. It wasn't hard to add two and two together and conclude that if what he was looking at was a door, and if the powerful thuds he was hearing were footsteps, judging by the door's size, it must have been designed for equally colossal beings. The young alchemist didn't need to imagine for long, as the hollow, resonant clicks of the lock mechanism on the door's handle echoed, and the door began to open! A resonant rumble sound was produced by the great displacement of air from such a gigantic monolithic structure. But none of this compared to the figure that now stood revealed behind that very door.

Dressed in light clothing, a short purple loincloth, a hooded purple tank top, and long purple cloth extending to mid-thigh, with a utility pouch strapped to his right thigh, stood the imposing, titanic, and monolithic figure of an anthro lion. His appearance and physique left no doubt—standing in the doorway was Zack's best friend, Lawrence!

To say that the lion boy had transformed into a colossus would be an understatement. From Zack's perspective, Lawrence might as well have been dozens of kilometers from end to end now! From the base of the pink pads on his fingers to the top of his round, feline-like ears. Truth be told, the only thing that allowed Zack to see his friend's face since he was on the floor of the store was the fact that he was a bird and avians are known to have excellent distance vision. After all, avian birds, flying as fast as a car on a highway in the clouds and all; having excellent long-distance vision was a must-have. If it weren't for that, Zack would barely be able to see much beyond the knee level of the giant hovering in the doorway of his store's storage room.

The fact that the titan hovering and dominating the horizon was his friend brought a shred of comfort to the massively frightening scale of the situation Zack now found himself in. Perhaps it was the only comforting detail that the little alchemist had in the midst of the harsh reality of being minuscule on the floor in front of his best friend's colossal form. However, once again, the details didn't hold up, and even his feline friend

seemed strange; in addition to the fact that Lawrence was gigantic now, he was wearing all purple clothes, which was a color Zack had never seen the feline use in his daily life at any time he could remember in his mind. In addition to the color, that type of outfit, so light, loose, and at the same time clinging to the body in a somewhat anatomical way, was more reminiscent of the costumes of the warriors and knights of the kingdom than a typical merchant's costume, which was what Lawrence would usually be seen wearing. All of that was like pieces of a giant puzzle, pun intended, that didn't fit together.

But the little alchemist couldn't even afford to spare a comma of his time and his thoughts for such trivial details, at least not right now; especially as he watched from a distance the giant, feline-like god raise one of his paws from the wooden floor and thrust it forward. It was a step! Lawrence was taking a step forward. His first step into the storage room at the back of the store. Obviously, the distance between the muscular lion and the table was insignificant, something that only a handful of steps could cover, at least from Lawrence's point of view, of course. From the point of view of the tiny, insignificant bird tens of miles below, it was as if his giant feline friend could cover the same distance in a single step that Zack would take long minutes, if not hours, of flight to cover.

Zack was graced with the imposing sight of the sole of the feline's right paw rising in full, projecting forward and putting its huge, sweaty, and heavy pads on display for the minuscule and insignificant world below his being. The bird could even see how the fabric of that long loincloth silk stocking, which had an opening at its tip for the giant's toes to be exposed to the world, was stretched to its maximum in the tiny space between two toes of the giant's right paw as Lawrence's toes expanded in preparation to make contact with the floor again. It didn't take long and the show was soon over, with a powerful THUD Lawrence successfully completing his first step inside the room. Zack, in turn, followed the extension of that pillar of pure muscle made lion legs, having to twist his neck and move his head to be able to see with wide eyes the rest of the titan's body projecting upwards from his person, clearly moving in his direction!

The sight was intimidating and brought with it a clear sign. Zack should get out of there, since his friend Lawrence was clearly moving towards him. However, it was too late now. Only in the time it took the tiny alchemist to look up and analyze the imposing shape of his best friend's well-exposed body, a second thud occurred. Lawrence's left paw had rested on the same longitudinal axis as Zack's, only a distance of several kilometers away to his right. Even so, the impact and the feeling of being so close to the falling feet of a walking giant was no less depressing; quite the contrary. It made the little bird feel more than ever the tremendous earth tremor that a single step of his giant friend could cause in the world around him, at the same time as a strong gust of hot air was expelled from the area just below the impact site and thrown in the direction of the tiny bird, translating into a strong gust of wind as a result of the immense displacement

of air that such a colossal object causes when moving in that way. All of this was caused by the simple walking of the giant lion.

Despite receiving all those clear signals, Zack was still so perplexed in his reality that he hadn't even considered the need to leave that place yet. And in the end, by an almost mystical coincidence and thanks to his avian vision, the young alchemist also ended up locating something that only helped to break his mind even more that day.

Running desperately across the vast expanse of smooth, flat wood were two other micros? Two beings as tiny and insignificant as himself. Zack couldn't hear them as they were a distance of a dozen blocks ahead of him, but with his keen avian vision he could see the expressions on their faces quite clearly. Such expressions were of pure desperation. The two micros were running hand in hand, one of them pulling the other ahead and taking the lead, while the other who was being pulled was wasting a lot of his focus and time by constantly looking back.

The Step alchemist continued to observe the despair of that pair of tiny creatures until a glorious shadow loomed over his being. Not only did the shadow of Lawrence's immense and sprawling body dominate the horizon above Zack's head, the shadow that was forming and projecting itself just above his location was now formed by the imposing and overwhelming sole of the giant feline's right paw approaching.

Zack was graced with a front-row view of the central pad of his best friend's imposing paw. Being so tiny and watching that pad approach in slow motion due to the adrenaline coursing through his body, the little alchemist could see all sorts of dust and debris falling from the pad to collide with the wooden floor. The duo of micros running the distance Zack had previously observed were now already suffering the consequences of being much closer to the epicenter of the doom apocalypse, as they were located right under the giant's impending heel! The heel was approaching them at full speed and, as it was the first part of the paw to make contact with the ground, both Zack and the micros themselves knew they were doomed. And amidst a thunderous THUD, the lives of those two micros were completely erased from the history of existence as if they had never even existed in the first place. Being so small, their tiny bodies would not even be able to leave any significant mark on the immense expanse of the giant's heel, nothing that Lawrence's body could not erase with a simple twist or rub of his soles against the floor as he adjusted his weight or posture.

Although the fight was over for that pair of micros, for Zack the fight for survival in the face of the imposing presence of a giant being was just beginning. As the rest of the lion's immense paw lowered, the bird realized that more and more the horizon line above his head would be dominated by the sight of his friend's incoming toes displacing

the air around him as they approached at full speed, generating a resounding roar and making the entire environment around poor Zack increasingly agitated.

The poor bird was so terrified and paralyzed with fear by this time that he didn't even consider moving or even trying to fly away from there. Although, even without knowing it, this would possibly be his best decision that day, since if he tried to fly there was a good chance that the air displacement would simply carry him under one of those imposing toes or into the space of the folds between the joints where Zack would be crushed after being treated by his best friend's body as nothing more than a tiny speck of dust.

But that would not be his luck today. As if in an act of benevolence from an all-powerful and merciful god, Zack found himself almost perfectly centered in the spacious space between two of the giant lion's toes until the world around him was violently shaken by the impact caused by those same toes finally resting on the wood around him. BOOM! The sound was much worse and infinitely louder than when Lawrence was simply walking around Zack. At the same time, the earthquake caused was so great that the tiny bird even had a short blackout for about two seconds. And the moment he opened his eyes again, Zack found himself surrounded by two colossal mountains made of the sides of his friend's toes.

Immediately in front of him, Zack could see a purple wall made of pure silk fabric. It was the finish of the giant feline's sock, as he had noticed earlier. However, seeing that same fabric infinitely closer, as it was now, brought a new sensation. Each individual fiber of the fabric that for someone of Lawrence's size should be soft and subtle, for Zack was like an immense, thick, and wide bridge support rope. In addition, it would be impossible for the little alchemist bird to ignore a toe ring attached to the toe immediately resting on his right side now. The piece of jewelry made of the purest gold was absurdly gigantic, and yet for Lawrence it was just a small detail, a small ornament amidst the vastness and impressiveness of his body. The toe ring that Zack was admiring now was indeed of such a colossal scale that even an entire village could fit inside its circular surface, just as medieval villages were actually designed to be inside churches or noble castles. In this specific case, the toe of a giant played a central role of adoration in this scenario here.

But, to Zack's surprise, it wasn't long before, after a few moments admiring that gold ring, probably containing more gold than all the vaults of his native province could ever dream of containing, the micro alchemist was able to see something that made Zack doubt his immaculate avian vision. The micro even blinked his eyes in disbelief, twisting his neck and standing on tiptoe, but his eyes were not playing tricks on him and not telling lies. Zack was really seeing an entire village mounted around the surface of that gold ring, encrusted in its finish and protected by a transparent dome of some kind.

Worse! Inside that dome and amidst that miniature village, Zack could see other beings, as tiny as himself, apparently going about their day and doing their chores. The sight of that situation unfolding before his eyes only brought more doubts about what was really happening in this place instead of bringing answers. Zack was on the verge of questioning his sanity, since everything he had experienced since he crossed that portal seemed more like a strange dream than reality. Although everything that was unfolding around him was very real, perhaps even more real for the small and frightened bird.

Though Zack found himself in extreme peril—trapped in a valley flanked by immense, heat-radiating walls that could close upon his tiny form at any moment—his mind was a whirlwind of confusion as he mentally debated his next move. Unbeknownst to him, high above and far beyond the imposing table's edge, Lawrence, the gigantic lion, was beginning what he believed to be just another ordinary workday.

Lawrence, completely unaware of the drama unfolding beneath his muscular frame, casually picked up his notebook to review the day's orders. He had no inkling that even as his feet remained planted on the wooden floor, the smallest shifts of his weight and minor flexes of his muscles had catastrophic effects on the tiny being struggling for survival below. Zack could feel the wood creak and groan ominously with every slight movement of those colossal feline thighs towering above him. He watched in dread as the enormous toe pads expanded and retracted, mere inches away from crushing him, their musky odor filling the air around him.

With no information about what was happening or many options at his disposal, Zack reached an obvious conclusion: he needed to fly towards the massive structure embedded in his friend's toe ring. Without hesitation, the young avian took flight. It wasn't until he was airborne that the full scale of Lawrence's appendage dawned on him. Despite his proximity to his friend, Zack realized that the distance from the space between Lawrence's toes to the golden side of the toe ring took him several minutes to traverse—a testament to the vast size disparity between the two anthro boys.

As Zack approached the enormous golden structure, it began to resemble less a toe ring and more a monolithic, futuristic city. It wasn't hard for him to spot structures akin to large city gates marking the entrance to this... city? Despite his best efforts to remain calm and avoid panic, the sheer alienness of the situation was undeniable for the little bird. Upon landing before the colossal gates, Zack was promptly confronted by two guards. Claiming to be a traveling alchemist who had lost his way, he faced no suspicion, his attire lending credence to his story. However, one guard's comment momentarily left Zack speechless: "Did you come from one of the northern cities?"

Zack's heart raced; he had no idea what that meant. Were the northern cities allies, enemies, or neutral? Should he tell the truth about nearly being crushed beneath the toe pad of a giant feline? His mind raced through these questions in mere seconds as cold sweat formed on his brow. In the end, he timidly replied, "From the ground..." The guards exchanged puzzled glances but shrugged it off. "Too bad, I was hoping to transfer to one of the northern piercings. They say it's less humid up there."

Not wanting to linger longer than necessary, Zack walked through the gates with a forced smile, striving to appear as normal as possible. He succeeded, and in doing so, gleaned a valuable piece of information from the guard's comment. It was safe to assume that the "north" referred to other parts of Lawrence's body where similar city-like structures existed, possibly within other piercings. Thus, Zack began to piece together the vast, intricate world spread across the body of his gigantic feline friend.

Yet, Zack was far from satisfied. He had gathered some clues, but everything still seemed surreal from his perspective. As the bird walked through the streets, alleys, and squares of this "small" village nestled within the toe ring of his feline friend, he occasionally forgot that he was inside another person's toe ring due to the size and complexity of the village and its buildings.

Zack might have been a good alchemist, but he was a terrible detective. Approaching and questioning people he had never met was unimaginable for the small bird. Thus, the young alchemist restricted himself to wandering through the village's parks, trying to overhear conversations in search of any clues about what was happening. To his astonishment, everyone seemed to discuss ordinary daily matters, mostly involving issues related to their little world within the toe ring. It was as if people openly ignored the reality that their entire existence—their lives, homes, shops, and commerce—was confined within the toe of another person! This was deeply disconcerting to Zack.

However, soon something happened that could not be ignored. Lawrence had finished reviewing the day's orders and was now rummaging through various crates and boxes in the store's storage room, searching for the right ingredients to concoct the potions and vials required to fulfill the day's orders. At that moment, a tremendous audible rumble spread through the village. Zack watched as the residents around him scurried to prepare, while he, not knowing what to do, ran to a nearby cantina just in time to witness through the transparent roof the world outside spring into motion. The giant lion was walking, and with each step, the small village was shaken, though less than one might expect given its size and location. At that moment, a stranger approached Zack. "Impressive, isn't it? Were it not for the enchantment of our lord, Lawrence, this entire place would have crumbled under the slightest flex of his toes. You're not from around here, are you? I recognize a new face when I see one."

Turning to face the owner of the gentle voice addressing him, Zack saw a young cowgirl with light fur and pink spots, her hair equally pink. "My name is Muffins, but you can call me Muff. I own this cantina. Nice to meet you."

"Hi... I'm Zack," the bird replied, having to look slightly down to maintain eye contact with the slightly shorter cowgirl.

"Nice name, Zack. So, what can I get you today?" Muff asked, waiting for Zack's response, though he had no idea what to order or how he would even pay, not knowing what currency was used in this place.

"Ah... I... I don't have any money," the young bird said softly, his voice tinged with embarrassment.

"An ale on the house," Muff replied, walking behind the central counter of the cantina and gesturing for the bird in a blue loincloth to take a seat. A free drink was something no one could refuse, so Zack politely sat on the wooden stool and rested his arms on the counter. It wasn't long before the cowgirl returned with a large mug of ale for the new customer.

Zack took a sip of the drink; it was good. But before he could allow himself to drink more, he knew he had to seize the opportunity to learn more about this overlord Lawrence. "So, who is this Lawrence?" he asked.

Muff looked at the strange traveler and laughed while cleaning the inside of an empty mug with a cloth. "You're adorable ~" she responded, seemingly indifferent to the bird's question or assuming Zack was joking. The bird blushed with nervous embarrassment, feeling foolish. The last thing he wanted was to attract this kind of attention, making the other residents see him as mentally unstable.

"So, about the northern cities, I heard the environment there is more pleasant than here in the south," Zack tried again, attempting to sound casual and taking another sip of his ale.

Muff nodded in agreement before adding, "Yes, that's true, or at least that's what everyone says."

Zack felt relieved; the conversation was heading in the right direction this time. He then asked, "Do you know anyone who came from there?"

Muff paused for a moment, as if organizing her thoughts. "I think there was a bat, a warrior or something like that, who said he came from the navel. He mentioned a plan to return there, but I haven't seen him for days."

Zack finished his drink with a sense of relief. He now had confirmation that the northern cities referred to other piercings on his friend, the overlord Lawrence's body, and that people had been able to travel between these various piercings.

As soon as Zack left the cantina, the giant feline's walking and the accompanying tremors had ceased. Lawrence was back at his work table, focused on his tasks, with not a shadow of a thought given to the mundane lives of the beings inhabiting the adornments on his body. Zack, meanwhile, felt a strange hand grab his shoulder just after he stepped outside and started walking through an alley between the buildings around the square. "Shh! No sudden moves or I'll slit your throat, bird." The first thing that crossed Zack's mind was that he was about to be robbed, and since he had no money, his assailant might just kill him out of sheer villainy. But to his surprise, nothing of the sort happened. The gruff voice behind him continued, "I heard your conversation in Muff's cantina and know you're not from here. I can give you what you're looking for, but it will come at a price."

Zack's eyes widened. Was he dealing with some kind of underworld broker? It seemed so. But he quickly focused on the last sentence from the stranger behind him.

"Can I at least turn around?" Without receiving an objection, the alchemist slowly and bravely turned to see who was behind him. A hooded figure, barely visible, but Zack could make out canine features and fur in shades of white and brown. The figure also held an enormous machete, as long as a forearm and sharp enough to cut through thoughts. "So, what's it going to be, bird?" The hooded dog demanded an answer, machete in hand, maintaining a safe distance from Zack in the deserted alley.

"Ah... I don't have any money... but..." "Then we're done here." The hooded figure started to move away, ready to disappear into the shadows of the dark alley when Zack insisted, "Wait! I... I can pay you another way! I'm an alchemist! I make good potions!"

The mysterious figure stopped upon hearing this, a tense silence hanging between them until the hooded dog spoke again. "How good of an alchemist are you?" Zack was being

challenged to prove himself. Though he had built a solid reputation in his homeland, here he was nothing more than a stranger. "Look, I'm not from here, but... give me a place to work, and I can synthesize anything you need." The alchemist responded confidently, staring into the darkness of the hood that concealed the dog's head and face.

A longer silence ensued, feeling like an eternity, until the strange figure spoke again. "Follow me, and I'd better not regret this." The dog turned and began walking, always maintaining a safe distance from Zack, who struggled to keep up. The dog clearly knew the paths through the village's alleys and backstreets like the back of his paw, while Zack fought not to get lost. Soon, they approached what appeared to be a tavern in a considerably rundown part of the village. The tavern itself was uninviting, and Zack began to question his past choices.

The hooded dog stood in the doorway, holding it open with the machete close at hand. "Guests first," he said, making sure Zack entered first but not without giving the bird a good look at the canine's body features now that his long coat was lifted by holding the door. Zack couldn't ignore the numerous daggers and sharp objects the dog carried, ready to attack his enemies even from a distance. This only reinforced Zack's determination to remain calm and cooperative.

Inside, the tavern was chaotic, with crates and wooden boxes piled on tables and dust covering everything. There was no other living soul present, except for a slender, tall bat. A bat! Immediately, Zack remembered the strange bat the cowgirl had mentioned. Could this be the same one?

"Please, have a seat," the bat, with vibrant dark purple fur and white inner fur and hair, said softly. Zack sat at a round wooden table, facing the bat who stood on the opposite side. "So, you're another one?" The bat asked. For a moment, Zack wondered if the bat was some kind of magician who had ended up in this situation in a similar way to his own. The bat continued, "I can tell by the look in your eyes that you didn't come from any of the 'cities' scattered across this colossal beast's body." Zack listened, but he was growing increasingly impatient and restless; another piece of the puzzle was falling into place. This strange bat, whoever he was, hadn't come from any of the northern 'cities.' But still, nothing indicated he could have come through a portal like Zack had.

"Where are my manners? I am Kumikiu. And you?" "Zack," the bird replied, speaking calmly but with a hint of suspicion. "I regret that you feel somewhat uncomfortable. Having spent much of my life enduring the harsh realities of a micro wandering the ground of this world dominated by giants, I neither had the money nor the means to rent a better place in this village. Hence, I made use of this abandoned tavern as a refuge."

At least now Zack had a full picture of whom he was dealing with. Kumikiu, apparently another denizen of this bizarre and strange world, seemed to have once lived on the floor of Lawrence's shop and now found refuge in this toe ring. Zack concluded it was safe to assume that this bat might have reached the village in much the same way he had, as both were winged creatures with the advantage of flight.

"I understand... uh, your hooded friend here mentioned a plan to travel to the cities further north..." Zack decided to take the liberty of questioning the two strange figures who had brought him to this equally strange and isolated environment. Kumikiu, the bat, simply smiled in response to Zack's bold initiative. "Straight to the point, eh? I like that. Well, to answer your question, yes. And before you ask how and why, you know very well that life for those of us on the ground and in the outer world offers little beyond the threat of being crushed under a giant's careless step. Moreover, after spending the last few weeks in this moribund village, it's clear this is one of the least privileged cities on the body of this beast. The locals here are not exactly open to outsiders or willing to give us legitimate jobs. Unless, of course, you're willing to join the local mercenary clan."

The bat ended his monologue by pointing his leaf-shaped nose toward the hooded canine, whose arms were completely covered by his coat, likely resting on the blades he carried at all times. "So, as you know, the plan is to seek a better life in the northern cities." Finally, Kumikiu seemed to have finished speaking, waiting for any reaction from Zack, his eyes fixed on the bird.

"Okay... so, how can I help?" Zack responded. "Well, you have wings, so you can help by taking turns carrying the doggy here as we fly north toward the next piercing on this beast's body. We'll fly at night while it's sleeping to minimize incidents with its movements. So, I suggest you rest now because we'll depart as soon as it lies down." The bat said, and immediately the canine mercenary spoke up. "He claims to be an alchemist." Kumikiu's eyes sparkled at this news. "An alchemist! Excellent! We'll need stamina elixirs and anything that boosts our endurance. Even though this colossal feline will be lying down, we still have to cover kilometers to traverse the length of its legs, and I do not plan to set up camp on any part of its filthy body!"

It was becoming clear that Kumikiu harbored a certain inferiority complex in relation to the giants that dominated this world. Despite the apparent deep disdain he held for them, it didn't seem that they were entirely ignorant or negligent toward the micros. After all, none of the structures built into rings or body piercings used as cities and villages by the micros seemed to be their own work. It implied that the macros themselves must have built them to provide shelter for the tiny beings that shared the

world with them. However, how the micros established their societies across the bodies of the mighty colossi was entirely their own responsibility.

The day passed swiftly as the trio made their final preparations for the journey. Zack improvised to create his best stamina potions for the trip. As nightfall approached, the gigantic feline left the potion shop and headed home. Within minutes of arriving, Lawrence stripped off most of his clothes and lay down on his large, king-sized bed. In mere moments, the lion was sound asleep. The trio of travelers was ready and prepared; Kumikiu and the mercenary had planned and organized everything, including an exit from the toe ring that avoided the main entrance, thus bypassing the guards.

Before they knew it, the three micros found themselves before the monolithic, gigantic toe of Lawrence, stretching as far as their eyes could see. Zack and Kumikiu took turns carrying the team member who couldn't fly. Even with flight, the journey was long. The first leg of the trip was uneventful, with the bat carrying the canine mercenary as they flew over the expanse of Lawrence's right foot, pausing briefly around the heel. Zack took in the surroundings, marveling that just the day before, he had stood beneath the imposing shadow cast by this very sole.

Calm and immobile, it barely resembled the force of nature capable of crushing cities or entire provinces, as Zack had experienced earlier. But as if to remind the tiny micros of their vulnerability now that they were exposed and without the protection of the toe ring, Lawrence moved slightly in his sleep. The giant lion didn't shift much, but it was enough to make his paw reposition slightly, reminding the trio of the lethal danger they faced every second they remained on the body of a titanic god.

The trio continued their flight through the night, the journey over Lawrence's shin being mostly handled by Zack, who carried the canine mercenary in his arms. It seemed almost intentional, as the length of Lawrence's shin was considerably greater than the breadth of his foot. By the time they reached the knee, the young alchemist was exhausted. Zack even considered spending the night right there, but his companions quickly reminded him that such a decision would be suicidal. When dawn broke and the giant lion stirred, they would be in grave danger.

Despite his exhaustion, Zack had to agree and continue the journey up the lion's body. From now on, however, it would be the bat's turn to carry the non-flying member of their team, giving him a taste of what Zack had endured. This change came just as they prepared to traverse the imposing, muscular thighs of the feline.

As far as Zack could recall, Lawrence had always had an enviable, muscular physique. However, seeing those same muscular thighs from a nanoscopic and absolutely minuscule perspective invoked feelings and sensations toward his best friend's body that he had never experienced before. Especially considering that Zack was almost walking on or at least flying close to the surface of one of the lion's muscular thighs. To Zack's right was the continental expanse of the giant feline's left thigh, and even in complete repose, Zack could see with remarkable clarity every muscle group extending across the magnificent expanse of just one part of his best friend's body.

This realization instilled in him a profound sense of insignificance, knowing he was less than a particle of dust compared to another man's body. This feeling was only intensified when Zack turned his attention forward, towards the immense stretch of golden skin and fur leading to the great feline's waist. Just thinking that all the heat emanating from the ground beneath him and the slight scent of feline sweat entering his nose was the natural aroma of his best friend's body brought strange sensations of affection and submission to the tiny avian's mind. Yet, as potent and impactful as these feelings were, they paled compared to the sight awaiting them kilometers to the north.

After several more hours of flight, the trio stopped to rest on the upper section of Lawrence's right thigh's adductor muscle, right next to a mountainous bulge exuding masculinity. The three tiny and insignificant males briefly contemplated the prominent mound, covered in purple silk. The loincloth that Lawrence wore, his only piece of clothing during sleep, did little to hide the contours and form of his masculinity from the world around him. It certainly did a poor job of separating the poor micros from the feline's male power.

From their point of view, the three micros not only had to contend with the magnitude of another man's genital organ but also with the heat emanating from that massive volume and the potent, virile scent of the male feline that Lawrence naturally produced around his groin area. The trio could hardly hide their reactions; the sheer load of pheromones produced in that section of the leviathan's body was so overwhelming that it clouded the minds and discernment of the tiny beings around him. Had they not been extremely fatigued from flying the entire length of the lion's immense thigh, they might have continued their journey without stopping so perilously close to another man's reproductive organs.

However, the three micros venturing across the immense giant's body had failed to notice that they had fallen behind schedule. The light of dawn was already beginning to break through the frame of Lawrence's cabin window, and before the two winged micros could fully recover and resume their journey, they heard a thunderous and powerful roar. It seemed to come from all directions, shaking their very bones. It was simply Lawrence yawning! The divine giant feline was waking up! Despair fell upon

the trio as they realized they had wasted too much time or had not efficiently calculated the time needed to traverse even the lower body of such an absurdly divine being in size and presence.

Now it was too late. The giant's imposing musculature began to move, muscles and tendons flexing slightly as the giant lion prepared to raise his upper body and sit up in bed. The bat, who had been the mastermind and leader of this small expedition, was the first to panic. Without a second thought, he spread his wings and took flight toward the lower abdomen of the giant man, aiming to reach the piercing in his navel as quickly as possible. Zack, meanwhile, was paralyzed, watching in awe as those massive mountains of pure muscle that formed his best friend's physique moved and flexed as if alive. Indeed, they were.

It didn't take long for the entire abdomen of the giant feline to begin slowly rising into the air, imposing itself like a gigantic vertical wall of muscle, fur, and body heat. Kumikiu, caught off guard mid-flight by the sudden movement, collided fatally with the rock-hard structure of Lawrence's lower abdomen muscles.

Zack and the mercenary left behind were not in a better situation. Soon enough, the consequences of the giant feline's movements reached them, forcing them to lose their balance. As the giant's body adjusted to its new posture, the inclination of the upper inner thigh where both micros were standing became steeper. Looking to the left, they could clearly see the immense bulge of the feline, a massive wall of warm fabric imbued with Lawrence's virile sweat scent, approaching them at an alarming speed. The space between the giant's legs was diminishing by the second. Soon, standing on the musculature of the giant's thigh became impossible as it turned into a steep, massive wall of pure muscle.

The first to suffer the consequences was the cloaked canine mercenary. Unable to react in time amidst the deafening and disorienting tremors caused by the various muscle groups of another man's thigh and groin in motion, Zack could only watch, semi-traumatized, as the canine slipped and fell into the ever-narrowing space between the giant lion's right thigh and the enormous bulge that barely contained the magnitude of his male package. Even if the young avian alchemist had wanted to rescue the canine, he wouldn't have had time. Not only were the body parts of his friend in motion, but the space in that region was rapidly diminishing, light was fading, and the sweat, humidity, musk, and body heat of the giant feline were reaching overwhelming and insurmountable levels. Soon, the conditions in such an intimate area of an omnipotent feline would become inhospitable for life. Zack had no choice but to fly towards light and fresh air to avoid the same fate as the canine—being crushed to death between another man's thighs and bulge.

Despite avoiding the worst, the bird was still too close to his friend's bulge. Near the upper curve of the warm and clearly moist fabric, close enough for the virile scent of male feline to cloud his thoughts, Zack looked up only when a great shadow fell over his surroundings. The hills of pure muscle that made up Lawrence's abdomen, and far in the distance, his chest, were suddenly covered by the approaching palm of the giant feline. Unconsciously, and still half-asleep, the giant moved his left hand to caress and adjust his bulge, forcing Zack to flap his wings frantically to avoid being squeezed, crushed, and rubbed between the lion's fingers and the fabric of his purple thong. Maneuvering skillfully in mid-air, Zack managed to avoid the impact of a broad, giant finger, large enough to crush an entire village. A resounding thoom, followed by a deep rumble, could be heard as Lawrence's finger rubbed along the curve of his bulge. Zack knew his friend had no idea of his existence or presence, yet it felt almost as if the giant feline was teasing him, trying to make it clear just how masculine and powerful he was. This feeling was solidified when one of the feline's fingers casually moved beneath the thong's elastic, lifting it effortlessly.

Zack's nostrils were bombarded with the potent, virile odor of his best friend's feline masculinity, this time coming directly from the source! It was as if a cloud of salty, masculine vapor escaped through that "small" opening and rushed towards the avian. For a few seconds, the young alchemist glimpsed the lush rainforest of pubic hair extending from the upper groin region of the giant feline to the hard, erect base of what he could only assume was the fully erect penis pressing against the fabric of his friend's thong. Lawrence was definitely experiencing a typical case of morning wood, trying to soothe his needy phallus by gently caressing it and readjusting the member within its musky, moist fabric confines before slowly withdrawing his hand. But not before allowing Zack to see what appeared to be... other micros? Desperately clinging to the tops of those enormous trees, which were, in reality, nothing more than individual pubic hair follicles dominating the landscape of his titanic friend's groin.

Unfortunately, as soon as Zack laid eyes on those poor micros, the giant feline's equally enormous fingers withdrew from inside his thong. The fabric snapped back into place against his waist and the curves of his imposing body with a resounding thud! A strong displacement of air, carrying even more of Lawrence's fresh, manly scent, hit the bird as the giant feline's body shuddered while he stretched further, now extending both arms behind his torso. This forced his belly and entire abdominal ensemble forward, showcasing a display of pure muscle and masculine dominance for the lone surviving micro near his waist. Zack, now the sole survivor of the initial trio, could see with extreme clarity from his vantage point the vast expanse of his friend's treasure trail and, miles above, the golden piercing gently swaying near his navel. With no other option and knowing that now Lawrence was awake, the giant lion could rise and move out of bed at any moment, the young bird had little choice but to fly toward that navel, fearing being left dangling from any part of his divine friend's body as he went about his morning routine, utterly unaware of the countless tiny lives lost with each insignificant movement he made.

Zack had never flown so fast in his life. Though the distance from the treasure trail near someone's groin might seem trivial, from the perspective of a micro lost amidst the body of a mega macro, it was enormous! But with luck and considerable stamina, Zack managed to land near his friend's belly button piercing, just in time for the tremors and intense rumbles to intensify further. As Zack wasn't yet inside the mystical barrier protecting the village embedded in Lawrence's belly button piercing, he endured the terrors caused by the intense G-forces as the mega macro feline rose from his bed! Now that Lawrence was standing, towering over the insignificant world around him, Zack could feel firsthand the absurd change in altitude compared to the previous moment when the giant lion was still sitting. The air around him had even become rarefied! This made the bird look up, futilely trying to glimpse his friend's face and imagine how Lawrence could even breathe with his snout and nostrils so far above, seemingly miles high.

Any attempt to approach the face of the glorious feline would require infinitely more planning. If Zack were to be stranded further north, outside the body piercings of his giant friend, the air might be so rarefied for a tiny being like him that he would risk fainting as soon as Lawrence stood up.

Before long, the world around Zack began to tremble with the giant lion's steps. With a final glance downward, the bird saw the vast distance from the lion boy's navel to the ground, so great that there was even a delay of several seconds between the impact of the giant lion's footfalls and the sound reaching his ears. Additionally, Zack could see the gentle sway of Lawrence's bulge from side to side between his legs. He had nearly forgotten, since it was no longer visible from his height, the tiny toe ring far below between his friend's toes, where his adventure had begun.

Without the risk of being crushed or kicked off, Zack immediately entered the main gates of this new village. Although the piercing located in the lower part of the giant feline's navel was infinitely smaller than his toe ring, the village inside seemed much larger to Zack. The structures, buildings, and houses in this new village were far better planned and organized than in the previous village. The standard of the micros living here appeared superior to those inhabiting the lower regions of the giant feline's body. Zack had no difficulty entering the main gates of this belly button village. He wondered if this would be a recurring pattern as he continued north on his gigantic friend's body.

Taking a moment to catch his breath, Zack found himself once again at square one. He was a stranger in an unknown village. At least now he could say he came from the southern villages and had ample experience navigating the body of the god-like Lawrence, even if only during the night. It was clear that attempting to traverse the infinite expanse of Lawrence's body while the divine being was awake was impossible.

But Zack couldn't dwell on this now. He definitely wasn't venturing back outside the protective barrier of the belly button piercing anytime soon.

In the end, Zack had to spend several days living in that part of his beloved friend's body before he could continue his journey upward. Each passing day made Zack question the point of trying to communicate with Lawrence. It was as if the mundane nature of daily life was making the bird gradually forget that he had once been a colossal being like the giant feline or even that he and Lawrence had ever been friends. Lawrence seemed more like a god, a divine force of nature, than a being Zack could simply befriend. But day after day, Zack had to push such thoughts aside. His best bet was still to reach the face of that divine lion, catch his attention somehow, explain what had happened, and use the potent ingredients from his real-size alchemy shop to reverse his bizarre situation. Even if Zack hadn't yet had the time to stop and reflect on the strange world he now inhabited.

Day after day passed, and this time the young bird was more successful in integrating into the society of this new village. The society here was much more collaborative than the previous one, allowing Zack to be accepted enough to gather resources and set up a small potion stand, where he could gather supplies and, most importantly, develop new potions before continuing his journey north on the divine feline's body. Zack was determined to travel alone this time, not revealing his plan to anyone. However, he didn't stop gathering information. The young bird made sure to collect all possible information that could aid him on his incredible, long journey. He became much more familiar with the particularities of his best friend's body than he could have ever imagined. Zack learned that Lawrence had, besides his navel piercing, five other piercings in different parts of his impressive body. Two were located on each nipple, one on each side of his lower lips, one long ring-shaped disk from one nostril to the other, housing the capital of the giant feline's body. This piercing, in particular, was Zack's final destination to better observe his friend's routine before attempting his final mission to catch the giant's attention. Lastly, there was a piercing inside one of the giant feline's ears, exclusively housing the clerics of this intriguing society. This last piercing was very small and extremely difficult to inhabit or access.

Once Zack felt he had gathered all the necessary information, he set his plan into motion on the following night. Though it had been weeks since he had been transported to this strange world, the bird did not lose hope. As soon as the gigantic lion lay down in his bed, the young alchemist took to the skies, hovering over the vast expanse of the imposing feline's body once more.

That particular night, it seemed that young Lawrence had exerted himself a bit more on his walk back to the cabin. The giant feline's body was slightly warmer than usual and a bit sweatier as well. This difference was imperceptible to Lawrence or anyone of his

size, but it was impossible for Zack to ignore. He had to endure the conditions that stretched across the divine and feline expanse.

As soon as he stepped outside the body of the giant feline, Zack felt as though he were entering a dense, humid forest. Lawrence's abdomen was especially sweaty. The small bird wondered if his giant feline friend had perhaps exercised on his way back, though he had no way of knowing. Zack would have to deal with the aftermath regardless. Just imagining how the fur on Lawrence's abdomen must have been made the bird recall the conditions he had faced the previous night when he first encountered his friend's body in all its glory. He remembered seeing those poor, tiny micros, as small as himself, lost and subdued in that jungle of pubic hair around his friend's groin. Remembering the potent scent of a male lion emanating from that area and imagining how much stronger that sweet aroma might be now, with the colossal feline even sweatier than before, sent a chill down the small alchemist's spine.

But Zack quickly pushed those thoughts from his mind. Beating his wings, he took flight northward. It didn't take long for the bird to soar over his giant feline friend's navel. It was a daunting sight; from Zack's perspective, that navel was like a massive crater leading to the depths of his friend's body, so dark that even his excellent vision, which could see beyond the reach of any normal individual's sight, could not discern much beyond the small golden sphere housing yet another of the countless cities within the giant lion's body. It was humbling to realize that his existence was so minuscule and insignificant that if he were to fall into the depths of Lawrence's navel, it might take days, weeks, or even months to climb back out—if he could return at all. Zack couldn't help but consider the possibility of an indeterminate number of nano-micros meeting their fate in the depths of the giant feline's navel.

Despite the daily shock of learning more and more how he was nothing in this new world, a member of a caste of individuals who could be considered less than germs and relegated to living in absolute ignorance on the body of another person, Zack remained steadfast in his plan. Somehow, he believed he could reach his best friend's face and stimulate the giant lion's senses in such a way as to capture his attention. Or he would die trying. The rest of the journey was uneventful, marked only by Zack flying alone in the dark night, subjected to the odors, aromas, and heat of his friend's body. As he flew close to the great valleys and mountains that formed the glorious muscles of the giant feline's abdomen and chest, Zack observed the casual movement of this landscape as Lawrence breathed in his deep sleep. Eventually, the bird landed on top of one of those mountains, which were nothing more than the ridges of the feline's chest muscles, to rest. He had the luxury of observing the deep valley between the ridges, which would represent hours of climbing for a micro of his size who wasn't fortunate enough to possess a pair of wings like his own.

As the first light of dawn began to filter through the window of Lawrence's cabin, Zack was still approaching the giant feline's chest. When the young bird finally reached Lawrence's nipples, he was confronted once more with a sight that defied his understanding of reality. It was difficult for a being of his stature to comprehend how a single part of his friend's body could be so overwhelmingly huge and grotesquely colossal. The pink tip of the young feline's nipple, even while Lawrence was asleep and far from aroused, was absurdly gigantic, extending upwards into the air for hundreds and hundreds of meters. Zack had landed right on the areola of the giant feline's nipple and could see, standing at the base, how this appendage of his friend's body could very well be mistaken for a mountain, rivaling even the highest peaks he knew in his world. And, at the top of that peak, there was another piercing, another village housing and sheltering hundreds of thousands of nano micros like himself.

Despite the grandeur and majestic beauty of the feline, Zack knew he was running out of time. Not only was the sun rising outside that immense cabin like Mount Olympus, but also, as if to remind the tiny micro of his insignificance and the fleetingness of his time, the gigantic feline let out a resounding yawn. The yawn was impressive even when Zack had been much farther south on Lawrence's body, but now, being so close to its source, it was overwhelming! Had Zack been flying near Lawrence's lips at that moment, he might have been vaporized by the sheer power of his friend's vocal cords' vibrations. But despite his dwindling time, the young alchemist knew he couldn't afford to rest. Zack didn't want to spend another night in yet another strange community, dealing with the staggering reality of being an outsider again. He didn't want to seek refuge in another micro village. Despite knowing he was short on time, the young bird pressed on.

Taking flight again, Zack headed toward the giant feline's neck, deciding to bypass the towering wall of flesh and skin that was his friend's nipple. He traversed the massive, concrete-hard expanse of Lawrence's chest. At times, Zack could even hear the powerful sound of the sleeping lion's heartbeat, a constant reminder that he was traveling across a living being. The space between the giant's chest muscles was almost like a vast valley from the young bird's perspective, a ravine where all the sweat and oil produced by the feline naturally collected. Zack had no desire to approach that canyon, knowing that the quantity of sweat accumulating there could easily soak his wings and hinder his journey.

Before long, Zack was nearing his friend's neck. It was terrifying to realize how Lawrence's throat extended to the base of his chin like an immense wall of pure muscle. Even more frightening was the thought that just the lower jaw of the feline could crush an entire province! The mere idea that dozens of cities could be lost and scattered across the giant feline's tongue within the confines of his mouth made Zack shiver, pressing his lower beak against his upper one. Indeed, even though Zack would never come to know this, within the enormous, warm, and humid cave of Lawrence's mouth, there was

another piercing in the middle of his tongue, hosting a whole community of micros who would never have a chance to explore any other part of the divine feline's body, unlike Zack, who had bravely ventured across it over the past weeks.

In record time, the tiny bird flew over the length of the lion's neck, but not before witnessing another display of absolute power. Lawrence simply swallowed a bit of saliva. That involuntary act caused the muscles of his esophagus to contract and move the viscous lump of saliva down his throat, generating a loud, thunderous gulp that created turbulence in Zack's flight path. For the feline, it was a simple act. For Zack, it was terrifying to know that if he had been climbing the surface of Lawrence's throat, he could have been crushed by the lion's Adam's apple when it moved abruptly to push the saliva down. Fortunately, it didn't take long for the young bird to navigate around the continental chin of the feline. Zack now had a clear, unobstructed view of Lawrence's monumental snout, flying along the lower chin of the feline until he approached the giant, fleshy lips. Every living being would naturally feel discomfort approaching a large predator, as they were natural hunters. But now, the situation Zack was experiencing took these factors to the extreme! He wasn't just near a gigantic predator; he was about to fly so close to the lips of this giant feline! Worse still, Zack felt so exhausted that he had no choice but to land on the warm, moist surface of Lawrence's giant lips to rest his wings.

As Zack landed, he could feel the natural moisture of Lawrence's saliva seeping into his talons and legs. The air was heavy, laden with the strong scent of the beautiful feline's breath—a potent mixture of meat and fruit, likely remnants of his last meal. Lawrence had two circular piercings at each corner of his lips. Standing amidst the wrinkled terrain that constituted the feline's lower lip, Zack could only marvel at the protective dome encasing the nanos living there, wondering how they managed to lead such tranquil lives on the surface of another being's lips. The young alchemist could only imagine the sensation of going about one's day while the gigantic feline casually sipped a drink or bit into a succulent steak, unaware that an entire city could fall into his meal without him noticing the slightest change in taste or the minor addition of "seasoning." Little did the small bird know that he wouldn't have to imagine this for long, as he was about to receive a direct demonstration from the colossal titan he still considered his best friend.

In his deep sleep, Lawrence yawned unconsciously. For a slumbering god-like feline, it was a simple, casual, and entirely unconscious act—but not for Zack. For the tiny bird, it meant another firsthand experience of the divine power his best friend wielded. As Lawrence's lips began to part, the world around Zack started to tremble as if under a massive earthquake. The wrinkled wall of skin above his head, Lawrence's upper lip, moved away, revealing an awe-inspiring sight. Towering, mountain-sized teeth of pure white keratin dominated the horizon, followed by the immeasurable, dark, and humid depths of the feline's mouth. It was a breathtaking view, literally, as Lawrence inhaled

the cool night air into his warm, wet mouth, drawing in every minute particle unlucky enough to be in its path. Worse still, Zack could see saliva droplets, large enough to flood entire villages, falling from the feline's mouth. Huge columns of viscous saliva connected Lawrence's mouth roof to his absurdly gigantic pink tongue. Zack saw all this before he was forced to cling with all his might to a small metal structure on the outside of the feline's lip piercing as a grotesque volume of air was sucked into the beast's esophagus! The whole event lasted only a few seconds, but for Zack, it felt like hours. Worse yet, as Lawrence finished yawning, he awoke fully from his deep sleep, and his first action upon opening his eyes was to lick the surface of his lips.

Zack felt his soul leave his body for a brief second as he saw the powerful, expansive lips of the giant feline part once more, and this time, the tip of Lawrence's tongue emerged, moving out between his lips. Lawrence's entire tongue could cover an entire imperial province with room to spare. Only the tip was needed to lick his lips, but even that tip could crush cities and sweep entire mountains off the map—or at least, it seemed that way from Zack's perspective. The young alchemist had no time to seek the safety of the protective dome of the piercing. Quickly, he drank a large vial of stamina potion in less than a second, tossed the vial aside, and began flying as fast as he could away from his friend's face. He could hear the imposing, thunderous sound of the massive tongue approaching every second. Barely escaping, Zack experienced the most tense moment of his life! He looked back to see that monumental piece of tongue radiating heat and moisture, rubbing over the giant piercing with a strange mix of delicacy and brutality before it retreated back into the depths of Lawrence's mouth, taking with it everything in its path. Zack felt immensely grateful not to be among those things carried away.

With speed and agility, the small bird flew upward, passing over the giant feline's upper lip and making his way toward the immense snout of the lion. This would be another risky passage in his adventure, not only because he was approaching the cavities leading to the deepest parts of his friend's body, but also because Lawrence's nostrils posed a greater danger. Zack could easily be sucked in like a speck of dust, forever stuck among his friend's nasal hairs or worse, drown in Lawrence's nasal mucus and become part of it. Fortunately, the young alchemist flew with precision, passing through the immense corridor between the giant feline's nostrils and finally landing on the golden surface of the final piercing in his long and arduous journey across another being's body. He arrived just in time to witness with a mix of terror and admiration the giant blue eyes, as large as gas giant planets, opening and gazing deeply into the horizon. Watching this scene, only one thought crossed Zack's mind: "How am I even going to communicate with a god?" The tiny nano micro, increasingly doubting the reality of his previous life, began to wonder if everything he had experienced in the months leading up to this adventure had actually existed or if it had all been merely a vivid dream.

The end.