

# Contridia



By Jordan D.

# Contridia

## Intro

Once, long ago, the world was different from what you and I know it today as. Beings had not had enough time to evolve into what we are today. What roamed the earth then was a race of beings a bit like humans, but more like rabbits than us.

They had two legs, which were covered with a thick sticky grey hair that wound around their scrawny legs inside like a dirty cloud had rained itself clean there. They lived in towers above ground. They often grew long beards, and wore no cloths as we do today. But instead, they used large amount of black mouse skin to bind their hair to their legs. After this process, they resembled zebras. They moved on all fours when running, they lumbered unsteadily on two legs when walking, and could leap up two 100 feet in a single bound. They, of course, did not think this uncommon at all.

These beings called themselves the Contrins. They lived in two countries: Ardland, and Einia, which were also states.

## Chapter 1

It was a normal day for the state of Emery, and Contrins were seen for miles around leaping out of the sky, seemingly from nowhere. It was a bit cold, like thousands of beings at once had run out of wood for fires. All things seemed in order except one Contrin was hiding on the underside of its house.

This man (just to refer to something comparable) was to be sent to the dark forest near Oldtown, and he would have to live there on his own for the rest of his life, slowly forgetting how to speak and what he was, and retaining just one trait from before, anger.

Eventually, this man realized that no-one was searching for him down on the ground. He let go of his house, and fell. He was going to the local shop. On the way to the emery shop, he ran into few people, who greeted him "morning Bill!", "hi Bill!" or the occasional "hi. What's your name?", for he knew quite a few Contrins. His name, did, loosely translate to Bill. As Bill walked slowly to the store, he envisioned finding a lawman on the road and being forced away to that terrible dark forest.

No-one had ever gone into that evil place and lived to tell of it. That was why places like Oldtown, Arkson, and Ison Bay built walls separating these bordering states from the darkness that dwelt in the slimy trees of the dark forest. Of course, he ran into no-one law related. He knew not of what he was

sentenced for, but he suspected that it was something one of his father's fathers had done. The Contrin government was strange and punished not the person who did the crime, but their son, or their son's son, depending on the crime. This one must have been fairly serious, as banishment was one of the worst punishments one could have, besides execution of course.

Bill, who wanted but a bag of flour, arrived at the store about 7 minutes after leaving his house in the sky. The Contrins did not have any kind of money, but used the system of barter. Bill had brought a trilobite fossil, which he happened to know that the store owner wanted. In the store owner's eyes, this was about as good as three bags of flour. Bill tried to be discrete while trading, but he couldn't help noticing wanted signs on the back wall that had his name on them. He waited impatiently for the owner to return with his flour, and then gave the owner the trilobite.

The owner quickly stuffed the rock in his pocket and said, "thank you, come again."

Bill scurried out the door, and then ran straight into, as bad luck would have it, the mayor.

He fell back, spilling flour in his leg hair and beard. The mayor, who was crouched over at the time, closed his eyes disappointedly. "Bill, you know the right thing to do this

morning was to come to the law house," said the mayor. "But you didn't. You hid." He paused to brush flour out of his beard. "Since you already are to be banished, I will not mention this to the council. Now come with me, Bill, or you will-"

But he didn't get to finish his sentence, because at that moment, Bill blurted out, "You won't get me!" and with that he bounced away.

The mayor smiled. He had not told Bill that the reason he was crouched over on the ground was because he had been setting a snare. The mayor watched as a rope at his feet that was tied to the store quickly unwound. Half a mile away, in the middle of a jump, Bill was tugged back, and he fell flat on his face. He was knocked unconscious as the mayor used his powerful legs to yank Bill back. As he was pulled along, many a Contrin thought "what?" The mayor hauled up Bill onto his shoulders, and went jumping toward the Contridia Bridge.

## Chapter 2

The next thing that Bill knew, he was lying on the deck of a small raft secured to a moving rope. On the horizon, he thought that he saw Contridia as a speck of green dust. It was night, and the moon shown bright in the starry night. It would have been beautiful, had Bill been paying attention, but his mind was on his head, which had a nasty bruise on it, and how scared he was. He knew what this was.

The mayor must have dragged him all the way here, and then laid him out on this uncomfortably small raft like butter on bread. What he was directed by must have been the Ardland detention conveyer. (A.D.C.) Bill couldn't remember how he came to meet the mayor that day, but he knew that he was on his way to the dark forest.

As he thought of this, the island of Contridia grew further and further away. This was what he remembered before he drifted off into an uneasy sleep full of dreams of the dark forest. He was awakened by a sudden jolt. His raft had hit another. It was not on the A.D.C, but floating besides it. Laying on it was a beautiful white crystal the size of Bill's thumb, and glistening even though it was still night. It was tethered to a heavy rock by a long white chain. The crystal itself looked to be from the mines of Greed, (which was a state in Einia) for it gleamed red with power. Bill knew that many Contrins had died

for less than this. He thought of the possibilities. This could get him and his whole family cleared of all crimes. He could harness it to create his own island, and his own race of beings. He reached out for it, and then drew his hand back. *Should I take it?* he thought to himself. *Maybe I shouldn't. Others could do better with it than I.* He turned away.

Suddenly, as if being controlled by an irresistible force, he swung like a hitter's bat and grabbed the crystal with both hands. Immediately, he fell back stiff as a board, eyes wide open, white glowing chain swinging from between his fingers. The chain did not behave like a normal one, though. It wound its way around Bill's wrist until barely any of it was visible. For hours the rafts stayed the same, only changing by moving farther away from the other raft. The rock anchored the raft with the chain on it. The only one thing that could be noticed and only when one looked close, was that the chain on the unmoving raft was weaving itself into some kind of glove. Bill's hand glowed red with the light of the crystal. The sun was rising over the sea, and if Bill had seen it, he would have seen both that it was remaining dark on the ship, but nowhere else, and that Contridia was no longer seen on the horizon. Slowly, Bill began to twitch. Eventually, he stood up. His eyes began to narrow, and he closed them.

When he opened them, he was no longer brown eyed. He was black eyed. His pupils were not only black, but grey, and the rest, was pure black. Slowly, he sat up. Almost drone like, he unclenched his fist. The palm of his hand was pure red. He pointed at the distance and suddenly it exploded in lava. A great hissing noise was heard for miles around, as the water turned the lava into obsidian. On the top, rock formed. It was an amazing sight. It was almost as if a snake had risen out of the murky depth and shed its skin there. Fish were stranded on the shores of this rapidly cooling island. Then the strangest thing happened. The fish's fins turned into legs, and they grew arms, and they grew, and they began to resemble men. They changed color and all. With this, whatever had taken over Bill's body (for how could a Contrin do that) leapt onto the shores of this island and collapsed.



### Chapter 3

When Bill (and it really was Bill) came back to his senses, he was not at all where he remembered being. He was on the shores of an unknown island, with a bunch of strange creatures like small-legged-standing-no-haired Contrins. He could not feel his hand. He tried to move it. It worked. He pointed at one of the bald Contrins, and said, "You there. Where am I, and who are you?"

Unexpectedly, a burst of flame shot from his hand and lit up the animal. It burned for about 2 seconds before becoming crisp, black, and lifeless. Starting with the top of its head, it began to fall into pieces which exploded upon hitting the ground. Bill looked shocked and stared at his hand intently for a good five minutes before he was assured it was not going to fry him to a crisp. He quickly tried to take off the glove like thing he was wearing. No matter how much he pulled, Bill couldn't get it off.

He suddenly found in his memory something he had not seen before. Strange words floated through his mind. He knew nothing about them, yet he knew exactly what they meant. One was a death spell and one a summoning spell. But they all were spells. Almost drone like, and without knowing what he was

doing, Bill pointed at a rock and muttered, “Garak norbrok rock livadus.” (In his mind, this meant: guardian summon, rock live.)

In a whirlwind of black stone, the rock rose and morphed. In a moment it was a suit of amour, but it seemed to be breathing. With a lurch, and a step back from Bill, the black suit creaked towards him. As it got nearer, Bill flinched and closed his eyes. When he opened them, he realized that he was wearing the suit. He sat down to consider the possibilities. He could do anything. It was mind blowing. He realized that the crystal must be controlling him at points. Half of him thought that this was his way to gain power, but half of him thought he should cut his hand off.

As if from nowhere, a voice inside him arose. It seemed to be a rusty old thing that he had left untouched inside him for so many uncountable years. Yet, although it was old, it was a bold, almost sly voice. It instructed him to make a kingdom with these new creatures. It told him to change his plain name and make something more evil out of it. For the moment he chose to ignore the voice. For the moment. The men were still changing. Larger they grew, past the height that they should have been. Hunched, almost bent over they became. Their arms grew longer and sprouted six more fingers per hand. Their heads swelled and changed to a sort of transparent blue. Their

eyes narrowed until they were only slits in an enormous forehead. Bill saw all this as he looked in awe.

He, with a jolt, realized that he needed to stop them before they overpowered him. Deep within his mind, a string of strange words floated up. They loosely translated to stop all spells. Aloud, he spoke, “Wedlee zoonna shun” all of the strange beings looked straight at him. He held up his hand in a fist and they cowered back in fright. Their heads turned green. It would have almost have been funny, if Bill hadn’t been closing his eyes inside of the armor.

The biggest strange being hunched a little higher and spoke. “Are you friend or foe?”

Without knowing what he was doing (and feeling like he was stuffed into a corner of his mind) Bill raised his hand and a spear of grey sprang from the ground. “I am your master.” He yelled. With a thud, he slammed the spear into the ground and, a loud lurch, the island began moving. It moved slowly at first, but picking up speed quickly. Instantly, Bill collapsed.

Long he lay there, looking only at the ground, noticing every grain of sand through his (still red, for some strange reason) tired eyes. In his mind’s eye, he was some dark wizard who called himself Rohmbo. A weird twisted wizard he was. He was bent on destroying only one state: Greed. The crystal that had turned him evil had come from that state. A strange evil

feeling to just summon all his power and destroy Contridia and everything else grew and grew inside him. It took all his contained will to stop it from taking him over. He knew he was being driven mad, and eventually he was forced to use the crystal to stop himself. He staggered onto his feet, and exhaustedly walked to the side of the island. In the water, he saw his eyes. He gasped. They were no longer black, but they were stained grey.

## Chapter 4

Spinning around, he saw that the island was expanding. He found a spear in his hand, which was glowing red. The rocks were growing into walls, the walls into rooms, the rooms fusing into halls, the halls into houses, and the houses into a castle. Soon, the island (which was now over 50 yards at least each way) was completely covered with an intricate castle towering up for over 8 stories and topping itself with multiple towers. Its color was not the grounds. It was a metallic purple that was shifting the color it shined from green to yellow to red and repeating. This gave it an almost hypnotic effect. By instinct, Bill strolled to the main gates. A nearby rock sprang up and opened them then returned to normal. Bill realized that the spear he was holding must have cast more spells than he had recently thought.

Meanwhile, the island was moving faster than anything. In less than a second it came to an abrupt halt, and Bill fell face forward into a beast. It toppled onto the castle wall. Bill scrambled up and saw why they had stopped. They were located in a Contridia dock. With a few strange looks and a thump from his spear, he forced the smaller island from the bigger.

“What’s that?” was the most commonly asked murmur on that dock at the time.

Their speed resumed and the dock crowds dispersed. Within a moment they had slingshot past contridia and were in the middle of the ocean. With a sudden transformation, the land made a wave going inward and that made all the animals fall to the center. Then it turned into a floating pyramid by pushing all its edges down and pushing its center up high. As it did this, the castle settled its color at grey. It also grew huger than anything Bill had ever seen before, like vines on a fence, only quicker. It sprouted extra hallways on long metal plumes that shot off the side of the hill.

Bill strutted to the entrance, which was intricately engraved with goblins and medieval wars of the past and future. Humongous doors stood before him. They were still hanging open, to the disappointment of the expectant living rock. Directly inside was a great cavern with two double staircases on either side of a larger one that led to an overhang above what led to a hallway. On both sides surrounding a giant door that dwarfed the entrance, two cages contained giant snakes that hid in the crevices and jumped at any unauthorized person. Perched precariously on the roof, were griffins that were twice as big as a man. On the walls were immense paintings of indescribable things. Not that they were bad, though. Bill stood uneasily knowing that this great castle was his. He strolled around to the snake cages. Surprisingly, (though not to Bill) the snakes did not attack. The double doors faded.

Not just disappearing, but slowly fading from existence. Within seconds, however, it was transparent enough to pass through. Bill supposed that this door would only let him and a limited amount of others through. Passing through these gates felt like passing a cold wind or a curtain, while it was simultaneously passing through you.

On the other side of the door was a room large in size. Cages lining the walls kept large animals, not only animals we know today, but other things like strange four eyed amphibians that had large pools of water in their cages, or bipedal giants that took up a whole wall. The strangest thing about the cages, however, is that when you wanted to get passed them, they disappeared. (Luckily, so did the animals.) Also, the cages themselves were not some kind of bulky thing, but thin wires that were obviously electrified because the animals rarely touched them, and when they did they jolted back.

Suddenly, and unexpectedly, Bill collapsed. He jolted on the ground several times like a fish out of water. Strangely, his form flickered. Not like just flipping from one form to another, but like something that had no form that had taken over another's body. He flickered several times more, than stopped. Not as a Contrin, but as nothing. But there was something. There was a heavy sort of feeling that there was something

there. Bill, or what used to be Bill, was almost seeable because of this feeling being so strong.

However, this form lasted only momentarily. Then Bill returned into consciousness. He decided to do something very selfless, that under other conditions he would never do. This strange decision was forced upon him because of what happened when he changed form. As this happened, he had seen himself. Not like bending over and seeing your legs, but physically being forced out your own body by some creature and seeing what it was doing, feeling what it was doing, but not being able to do anything about it. Ironically, for the first time he noticed that he was going grey in his beard. His decision was to lock himself up in one of the rooms of this castle. He knew this decision wouldn't last for very long, as he was already starting to change his mind.

But before he could, he forced himself out the door of the large room, up the staircase, and through another door at the top. From there, he could not remember all of the twists and turns he made before, at last, he reached a window. The castle was growing ever more immense, and even as Bill stood there and gazed he filled himself with self pity as he felt the labyrinth of a mansion expanded beneath his feet. He turned, and forced himself into a room as small as a regular one in an everyday home. A food slot on the wall told him that he was in nothing



more than a prison. He sighed deeply. He might stay here forever. He shut the door. It was locked from the outside. He sat on the bed that overlooked the vast island. Forming beneath him was a vast garden. He must have been on a plume, for the walls of the garden continued underneath him. He would be here for a long, long time. Several miles away, a second island appeared.

## Chapter 5

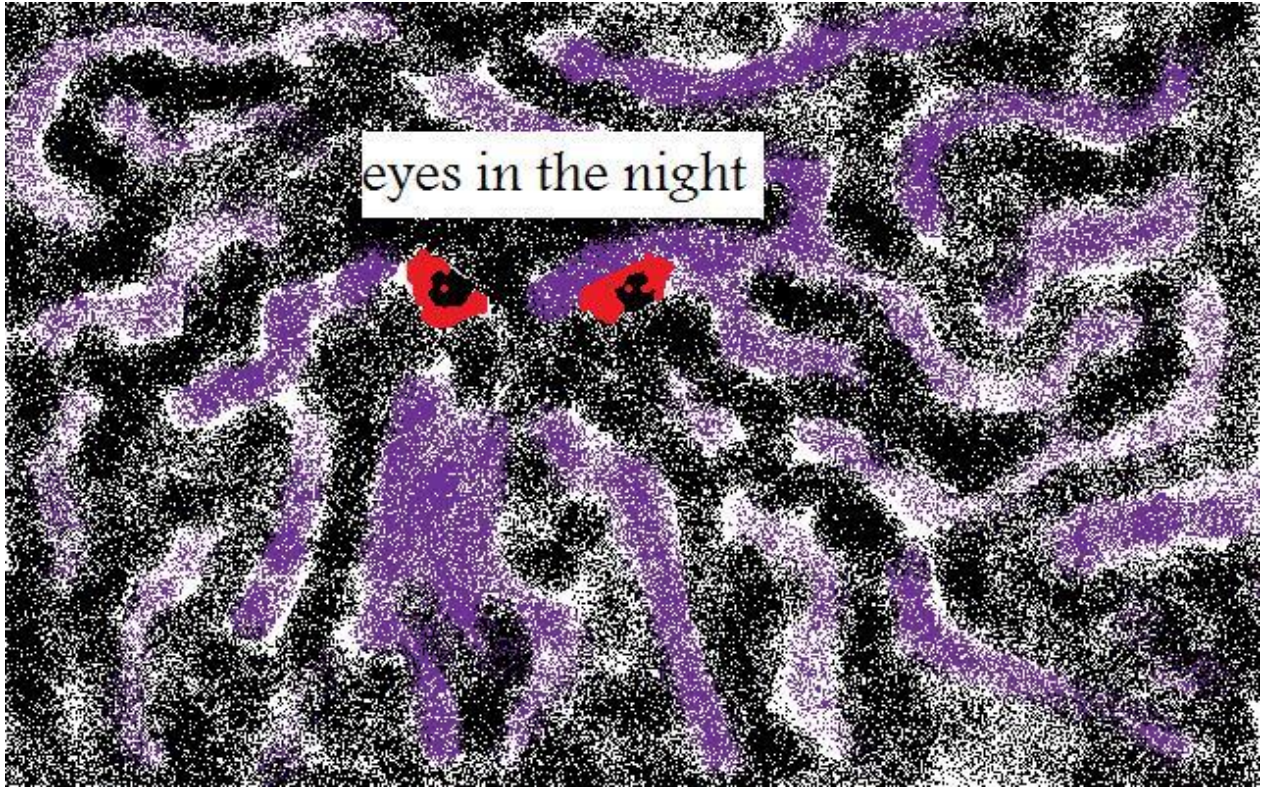
On this island, in a small hut was another strange person with just as much power as Bill. He was a bent over wizard watching the effects of the red crystal. He and his apprentice lived in this hut, and had for their entire lives. Unfortunately, the apprentice had no powers. He wanted with all his heart to be like the wizard, who was all powerful. The wizard's name was Rohmbo. He used to use his powers to enforce terrible things upon the poor Contrins. He smiled at the sight of the ever expanding castle. He knew what was making the poor lad lock himself into the maze of hallways. He too had once been subject to the crystal's power. That was why he had sent it out to sea.

"Master, what is happening?" asked the inquisitive apprentice, whose name was Jordan. He was looking above the door into a jail like room.

From the window a massive shape of purple and black was swirling out.

"That," Rohmbo replied, "is what controls that man inside that castle. Once it controlled me as well." At this Rohmbo's smile faded from his face. "It is the crystal of Greed."

## Book 2



### CHAPTER 1

Rohmbo pushed back his cloak and pulled out a thin strip of metal about thirteen inches long and pointed it at the sky. It flew out of the wizard's grasp and into the air. About twenty feet up, a long point of blue shot up out of the wand and expanded around the island. It was a force field. "To protect us." Rohmbo explained.

From beyond them, they heard the glass on the room of the mansion window snap and shatter. It looked like rohmbro had put the force field up just in time, for a little Contrin in old torn robes had just jumped out the cracked window. Its eyes

fumed purple smoke in rage. Jordan felt that if his master was not there that he would be destroyed by those powerful eyes.

The wizard put a hand on his apprentices shoulder to distract him from the Contrin. “Come, boy. We must move away from that accursed island.”

With that, he made a pushing movement with his arm and the island began to move just as the other Mansion Island. The island flew away with much speed and stopped at another island much bigger than theirs. In fact, this island was Contridia, a large city whose main export was fish. With a wave of his hand, Rohmbo summoned his wand from the sky. The force field fell as the wizard and his apprentice walked onto the island of Contridia.

“Have you seen a Contrin with a weird hand?” he asked the dumbfounded Contrins. A large one pointed to where a cloud of purple smoke was gathering. Rohmbo whispered to Jordan, “At least they know what is happening.” Then, aloud, he yelled, “Go home. You will not notice the cloud, and you will stay in your houses.” He waved his wand as he said that, and the Contrins just hopped away, with a look in their eyes as though they were being controlled.

A shattering from behind the wizard made him spin around. A huge skull had appeared over the horizon. It looked like it was laughing.

“Oh dear...” murmured Jordan. “We must leave at once.” Rohmbo stated as he pushed apart the force field like a curtain.

He jumped through and motioned for Jordan to follow. A moment later, they were running along with two dozen glazed contrins, who had been told, or rather willed by the wizard, not to notice the cloud, or the giant skull. Ahead was an old brown stone temple with no door. It had some words in its walls. As Rohmbo paced, he muttered some strange words that he had said when he created the force field. His wand pushed through his cloak and flew above the temple.

They walked in the temple. The wizard sat down, so the others did also. The door was suddenly covered with a watery substance that flowed from above but stopped at the ground. A whistling was heard as the wand sliced through the substance. It jumped out of it and flew into Rohmbo’s outstretched hand. “Now let me tell you about the thing that controls that... thing.” He said.

## CHAPTER 2

“It all started a good long while ago, back when the Contrin society was young and slavery was fresh. And yes I have used de-aging potions, which are not easy to make, thank you very much. I was a slave for a wealthy man in the state of Greed. He was wealthy because he ran a fairly large mining facility on his own property. He had mined up many gems and rare metals, and even discovered some, but he doesn't come into this story. I worked in his mine, and what a mine it was. Starting with a low entrance held up with rotting wood, it continued to get grander and grander with every foot. By halfway in, intricate carvings were engraved into the obsidian supports and the tunnel was lit by incandescent crystals lining the walls. We worked with pick axes mostly, except for the demolition experts, who exploded with precision. I was a pick-axer. One day, or maybe it was night, it was hard to tell... anyway, one day, I was working in my own chute off to the side of the main mine, when I suddenly struck something that I couldn't mine through.”

At this point, most of the Contrins were murmuring, and peering outside through the force field, and there was something outside worth looking at. The skull had stayed in its position, but the purple and black cloud was growing larger and larger, and coming closer and closer.

“Enough!” broke the wizard’s voice and the watery thing over the door (the force field) grew black, not blue, so the Contrins couldn’t see through it. “As I was saying,” said Rohmbo, directing the attention toward himself again, “My pick-axe hit something that I couldn’t mine through. Of course when that happened we were supposed to go around, but it was an especially hot day and I didn’t feel like it. I decided to dig just barely under it. Of course I knew I would get in trouble, but I thought that if I went back and gradually made the ground’s angle slightly less and less than the angle would feel the same, but would take anyone under the hard thing.”

The Contrins looked at Rohmbo blankly.

“SO I WENT UNDER IT. So I did what I just said and it worked, but when I was just below it, something fell on my head from above. I was knocked unconscious, but the last thing that I saw was a glow of red.” A Contrin who had been talking to his friend, named Matthew, looked up, because the wizard was staring at him. He grinned.

“YOU WILL NOT SPEAK WHILE I AM TALKING!” the wizard screamed. The Contrin opened his mouth to talk, but then his face twisted in agony as he slowly disintegrated.

“As I was saying,” started the wizard, brandishing his wand like a sword. “I blacked out and didn’t wake up for a while. In fact, when I woke up, all the crystals in my hall had gone out.

They had been put out by the owner of the mine. I felt a great pain in the middle of my head. Then I saw a glowing red chunk of rock on the ground in front of me. I was suddenly urged to grab it. I tried to resist, but its raw power was too much for me. I was forced to grab it and then I blacked out. When I awoke for the second time, I was laying on a gigantic field of debris. Huge chunks of mountainous rocks were scattered all over and I could hardly see the sky. The ground was burned all around me, and I apparently was the only survivor. The crystal was glowing in my hand, and I assumed that I had caused the explosion. I was obsessed by this new power, and I soon found that the crystal, itself, was the only thing that could alter itself in any way. I used itself to polish and carve it. Of course I then realized that this was not a stone that gave me powers, but a stone that taught them to me. I wrote them down in a book, but eventually, I began to lose control of the crystal. I would find myself destroying buildings in the night. But one day it went too far. It murdered someone.”

There was a gasp of awe.

“After that incident which I’m very sure that you wish to hear, though I do not think that you should be able to bear it, I realized that the crystal was evil. Since I had all the spells written down, I figured that I could do more good without it. One day, when I was not controlled to destroy something and it



was becoming harder and harder to keep out of those fits as they became more frequent. I took the crystal in my hands, walked to the beach, and threw out the crystal as far as I could manage into the sea. I am sorry to say that I saw, where it landed, a raft spring up from the water. I have never seen the crystal again until now.”

There was a moment of general awe, and then, as the wizard made the force field clear again, a general gasp. The great purple and black cloud was right outside the entrance to their temple. “Oh dear...” muttered the wizard.

## CHAPTER 3

Rohmbo raised his hands and made a slashing motion with them, and almost at the same time, a path cut through the center of the black cloud. A force field made a domed pathway underneath a sunless sky of black and dark purple. Every five or six feet along the “hallway” was a skylight that burrowed up through the sea of purple smoke. This provided an eerie yet bearable purple light that gently lit the hallway. Around a corner of the hallway (and there were quite a few bends and turns branching off from the sides of it, rather like a labyrinth) the Contrins and Jordan could see the dark opening of a building; the tunnel had left paths for the Contrins to get to their homes through.

The wizard said, “There. I have saved you. Now go home.” His voice turned darker, magical, even. “You won’t ever notice this in your natural life. Nor will your grandsons or their grandsons. Go home!”

With that, all of the contrins stood up and walked out into the hallway and turned this way or that until all that was left was Jordan and the wizard. Jordan turned to Rohmbo and started to say something but he was cut off when the wizard waved his hand over Jordan’s face. Jordan’s face seemed to wipe of any emotion and he walked off through the tunnels. What Jordan knew and the wizard didn’t was that Jordan had,

when he had saw the purple cloud for the first time, put a spell on himself to prevent being controlled by any amount of magic.

He was but pretending to be under the wizard's influence. Soon, despite Jordan's efforts not to get lost, he found himself in utterly unknown corridors. It was getting dark, and, by instinct, Jordan walked between two houses and into a little teepee that was wedged just under the tunnel's roof and off of the side of the corridor.

Inside were two small boys sleeping under a rag. One was a year or two younger than Jordan himself, and the other much younger than that. They both had black, strait hair that obviously hadn't been cut for a long time.

## Chapter 4

Jordan sat down in a corner of the teepee and tried to sleep. Out of the corner of his mind, Jordan could remember slipping a magic book into his pocket. That could come in useful later. But for now, Jordan started to sleep. He dreamed very vividly about two heroes rising against the great purple cloud. Their silhouette shined against the dark cloud. Suddenly they cast upon it a cube. It glowed momentarily, and the cloud evaporated.

“Hey! You! Who are you? Get up!” came a voice. It didn’t seem to come from either of the heroes.

“Hey!” Jordan heard as he jerked awake. Even before he opened his eyes he could feel cold hands on his shoulders.

“Get up! Now answer me! Who are you?” came the voice.

Jordan opened his eyes and found that he could remember the day before. He saw the older boy in front of him. With a sudden jerk, Jordan realized that they weren’t Contrins. They were, like him, human. Of course at this time, it was rare to find a human, so it was strange having three in one place.

Jordan stood up. “I am Jordan, former apprentice of the wizard. Now tell me, who are you, who woke me?” He said, brushing dust off of himself.

In response, the elder child stood up and said “I am Camoran, and this is my brother. He is called Marcus. Now why have you, who obviously conjured a tent, taken our teepee?”

“To this, I have no answer, except that it had slipped my mind, Camoran.” Jordan replied desperately.

Suddenly Marcus looked sadly up at him. “We don’t have parents. But I believe that I speak for the both of us when I say that anyone who has been abandoned like us can stay with us. And Jordan, why is the world darkened?”

“Shush Marcus, you know we don’t talk to strangers.” Camoran half whispered.

Jordan, with a glance toward the older boy, replied to the younger, “Well, Marcus, that is a combination of the wizard who’s ‘apprentice’ I am, and a man that I don’t believe that you have heard of.”

Marcus looked confused.

“I will explain,” Jordan began. “About who the wizard is, who made this dark cloud, and how I believe you can help right the wrongs of this world. First of all, the wizard is an old man who knows almost everything. He got his power from the very thing that is making the world dark. It was the crystal of greed. The crystal of greed is a stone mined from the earth many years ago. It shows the power to change the world, and can control

people, turn contrins into demons, even. Once it controlled the wizard, but he threw it away before it could control him. Somehow, this Contrin who is doing this, whoever he is, came across the crystal before it could be lost. It has quickly taken control of him, and hopes to use his knowledge and the wizards, and even, if it has any, it's own, to destroy its own country and ultimately the world. I need you to help me defeat the dark cloud. But who am I to be trusted? Just a person who showed up in your tent."

Marcus stared blankly back. "As my brother said before, you may stay in our tent if you were abandoned, but you must prove that the thing that darkened the world is bad before we will help you defeat it."

Jordan looked around for a moment, and then picked up a very fat rat that had been lying in the corner of the tent. The rat looked frightened. "Do you two see this wisp of purple smoke that is coming from the corner of the tent? That must be a leak in the force field. Let me show you what this cloud outside does to all living things." Jordan stated in reply.

Then, he threw the frightened rat into the wisp of smoke. As it inhaled the dangerous vapors, its eyes became clouded. It squeaked one last time, and laid down dead on the ground.

Camoran picked up the corpse of the vermin by its tail and flung it out the opening of the tent. "We'll help you. If that

thing out there wants to do this to everyone, then I'll stop it with you."

Marcus stepped forward out of his older brother's shadow. "I will help. For I see now the great menace which we face."

"Then let us be off, into the dark fog to protect all of Contridia, all of Ardland, all of Einia! Let us stop by the wizard to ask for something to protect us from the powerful mist, and to be granted exit of this air dome. Come on!" Jordan stated as he briskly walked out the door of the tent.

## Chapter 5

Jordan then realized how many twists and turns he had taken to get to the tent of Cameron and Marcus. With quite a lot of hollering back and forth to get the three travelers to the same place, they made it all their way to the temple where the wizard was sitting, meditating.

“Rohmbo! We need provisions to defeat the dark cloud. Supply us with the things we need and we will destroy, or capture securely at the least, the crystal of greed. First, we will need protection from the mist of the crystal.” Jordan requested.

“Well, that I can supply for, if you leave me alone.” The wizard said calmly.

Three gas masks appeared at their feet.

“Now leave.” The wizard instructed.

Jordan started to raise his hand to argue that they had no means to contain the crystal, but he found an orange cube in it. An indent in one side held a fingerprint scanner.

“Now Jordan that container is made to only open to your finger. Once you have found the crystal, put it in that to contain it. But first, you must leave.” The wizard said without so much as raising a finger. “You will find a exit from the dome on the other side of the temple.”



Jordan, Marcus, and Cameron trudged over to a door at the far side of the large temple where the wizard had told his story. As they went, they put on their gas masks. Each of them was surprised to find the visor heavily tinted light green. This slime green world was strange to their eyes.

It took a few tries before Jordan could open the door. When they did, a flurry of smoke blasted towards them. The three adventurers trudged through the knee high combination of the corpses of smaller animals and the corpses of the Contrins who couldn't make it into the shelter in time. All of their eyes were glazed over in the endless dream of death. Jordan bent down over a particularly small Contrin who was clutching a doll like it could save her from the peril of the crystal. Jordan closed the eyes of the girl and whispered a prayer.

In their new green vision, the three could see through the thick fog, but that was not necessarily a good thing. It meant that they could see over the lifeless wasteland that used to be so many Contrin's home. The bodies of thousands lay out before him like a carpet of decay. Jordan put on a more grim face and trudged on through the terrible land of Contridia. The two brothers followed him, hand in hand. Jordan had previously thought that the wizard had covered the entire city, but he now saw that the coastal part of the city had been exposed to the endless winds of smoke that ravaged this new,

post-apocalyptic world. Jordan saw that the body of a sailor on a nearby ship had been left lifeless draped over the steering wheel of his ship.

At the recommendation of Marcus, he boarded that very ship. He gently laid the captain down on the floor of the cabin, when he saw that the arm of the sailor was still draped on the wheel, separated from the body by feet. He disgustingly threw the arm into the sea.

Then and there, the three humans began their voyage to the island in the ocean where they knew the crystal, and whoever it now inhabited, lay.

## Chapter 6

The bleak ocean was almost silent except for the crashing of the purple sea on the desolate land. Behind the three travelers lay the island of Contridia, gray in the most colorful clump of dead bushes. Before them lay the island, like a speck of dust silhouetted against the light purple sunset. They could not see the mist, but its heavy presence was always noted.

Jordan manned the steering wheel, while Marcus took watch from the crow's nest. Camoran slept down in the rowing room, for he could not stand sleeping with the dead captain in the cabin. Within the hour, they had hit the ground at the volcanic island. Jordan and the two brothers jumped from the bows of the ship and onto the hard ground. They climbed across the rocky ground riddled with the craters that are often found in igneous rocks. Jordan could see the great mansion looming above them. Its strong iron bars supported the overhanging gardens.

Camoran looked up at the broken stain glass window at the top of the tower. Something inhuman jumped from that tower. But something human, or rather Contrin, lay below the window. The twitching form of Bill, with the glove engulfing his hand, lay there in a largish crater.

The half alive body stared up at them hopefully. A moan escaped its lips. "De... dest... destroy... destroy the cry... the

crystal... of greed. Its take... taken... My life... oh...” the crippled figure managed. “Dest... destroy it... before...” it groaned right before it went limp. But as soon as the eyes closed, the body seemed to click back together. It stood up, eyes glowing red in the dark.

## Chapter 7

The once crippled form of Bill raised its head towards the heavens, laughing a hoarse, maniacal laugh. The purple and black smoke drifted up through its opened mouth. The form flew up, emitting fog so thick that even with their altered vision, Jordan and the brothers couldn't see through. But when it cleared, the reenacted corpse was gone. But the gates beside them had swung open revealing a vast cavern all contained within the great fortress.

A hoarse voice called in a taunting voice from inside that great cavern that was the entrance to the mansion, "The body has died... now I am free!"

Jordan, Marcus and Camoran trudged after the voice and into the great hall. One would expect to see the insides as a desolate wasteland, but instead the three found an almost untouched cavern with all the detail of two of the most magnificent buildings in Contridia. All that broke from the beauty was the assortment of twigs, leaves, and iron bars that littered the floor. A shattered cage at the end suggested that an animal had been kept there.

"Well, come on." Jordan stated more to hear his own voice in this desolate area than to instruct the other two.

They trudged through the strangely still alive weeds growing on the ground.

“There must be some kind of containment field that keeps the fog out.” Jordan stated as he took off his gas mask.

The two brothers did the same. The ground was piled with leaves from different trees. The beauty of the cavern was overpowering Jordan as he walked through the knee high waste. Intricate carvings lined the walls, painted illustriously with pictures of terrible things like goblins and obviously was made to intimidate.

The great roof was far above them and was decorated with huge carvings of griffins and dragons. One particularly large dragon hung from the rafters at the very peak of the roof. Stationary fire burst from its mouth. Jordan and Cameron were admiring the beauty of the great feat when they heard a strangled cry from behind them.

They spun around, only to see Marcus lying on the ground, dead. Camoran ran to his fallen brother, screaming.

Jordan stayed indifferent, as he had only known the boy for a moment. He called monotonously to Camoran. “Gas masks on. You might find yourself like him.” Jordan followed his own instructions and put back on his green-visor helmet. He walked on.

“You... Don’t you care for him? You let him die. Do not expect me to follow you through this death trap. Goodbye, Jordan.” Cameron called from behind Jordan.

Jordan tightened his grip around the carrier that would one day hold the crystal. “Than goodbye,” he shouted behind him as he trudged along.

He paced up the stairway to the great doors that must have led to some kind of main room. That room had a few scattered dead branches, but no actual living things. Three halls at the end of the room looked as if they led out into some kind of labyrinth of halls. Jordan stepped into the farthest right corridor and found himself, as he expected, in a long hallway with several doors branching off from it. At the end of the hallway, a staircase led up to who knows what. Jordan paced down the hallway, searching for clues that the crystal had been there. As he knocked on a side door, an evil cackling filled the air. It sounded like it was coming from the walls, reverberating everywhere. Jordan than knew that these halls had been made to be extra confusing. He wished Rohmbo was there with him, helping him find the crystal that had destroyed Bill the Contrin. Jordan continued on his way after a slight pause.

Meanwhile, Camoran had made sure to take the middle path. He walked down the hall, calling as he dragged his brother behind him. He called out to no-one in particular,

“Come out... I wish to find you... I wish to help you... come out...” he told himself he was talking to his brother, but deep down he knew that he was talking to the crystal. He wanted revenge on Jordan for not trying to help his now gone brother, Marcus. Now, he would do anything for that. Even help the crystal.

To Be Continued.....