David Eggehorn

Passing Period

The front gates stood towering over the jungle’s vines and dark thorn bushes. The sound of unpleasant growls filled the air. My feet and exposed hands felt the cold radiating off the musty forest floor. At the bottom of the gates stood two guards. Each different but just as equally terrifying. They looked like they walked straight out of a nightmare. Four spider-like legs with massive humanoid upper bodies. Each armed with staffs the size of hundred year old tree. I was walking along the thin glowing dirt path. The closer and closer I got to the maze entrance, the more and more I wanted to leave. But I knew I couldn’t. The guards pushed open the two doors leading into the creature-infested narrow corridor. This was when I knew the day wasn't going to be easy.

Groups of creatures stood all around me. From what I could tell, there were three distinct types. Each figure had a symbol representing their level. The first of the three had horns and bull like features. Minotaurs, as I called them, had an octagon symbol burned into their chest. Then there were the minions. Their stubby goblin torsos appeared to be dangling from their oversized wings. Heptagons were engraved on their skulls. Finally, there were the bugs. This was where I fit in. Our surprisingly, but not unexpected, small bony bodies made us the smallest of the three beasts. We had hexagons on our backs.

At the end of the large corridor, that was full of overgrowth, was another door. I reached into my leg pocket and grabbed a guide I received in the black box outside my home. It was a map. Just as I was understanding all the lines and zigzags, everything stopped. The sound of one thousand horns went off, echoing through the maze walls. Nothing but this sound filled the air. Chills went down my spine. Then it stopped; silence filled the corridor. The second pair of large doors slowly screeched open. Then all hell broke loose.

A stampede of roaring started behind me. Without hesitation I began towards the doors. By being a bug, I wasn't as fast as the others. The rumbling ground got louder and louder as the mob of minotaurs, minions, and other bugs came closer to me. The doors were so close, yet so far. Now, I was in the middle of the swarm; getting knocked and shoved around until a minotaur tripped over me, and we stumbled on the muddy ground. The minotaur quickly got up but still found time to give me a deathly look. I made sure to get up before I got stepped on. It felt like my six years of training weren't enough.

The stampede reached the end of the corridor and pushed through the large but incredibly small doors. We came into a room bigger than the jungle itself. The vast space had no roof, just like the rest of the maze. At the bottom of the mossy stone walls were small openings leading in all different directions. The minotaurs and minions didn't stop to take in the large area. They all ran into different passages without even thinking. However, all the bugs stopped, looking at their maps and back at the passages. One by one, each bug went off in their own path. I reached into my pocket for my map only to find an empty space for my hand to rest. I must have dropped it when the minotaur ran into me. More and more bugs took off, while I stood helplessly, not knowing what to do.

I was all alone now. Nothing but a cold breeze along with my empty breath filled the room. What was I going to do?.. I thought. So cold, so helpless, so scared. I was hopeless. I couldn’t wish any harder for this day to end. I could hear soft noises from directly behind me. I thought I was just hearing things until the soft echos got louder and louder. Then the doors which were once closed opened behind me sending fear throughout my entire self. Shadows grew exponentially from the half opened doors. Staffs the size of a hundred year old trees appeared followed by the nightmares that led me into this place. I had no other feeling but fear in me.

The guards led me back through the long first corridor and through the main gates. From there they brought me to a building on the left side of that I didn't even notice when I arrived. Inside was what seemed to be a waiting room for dead people. The guards went into the back and left me to wait, alone again and still terrified of what was to come. After what felt like an eternity, one of the guards came back out holding an object too small to see in detail. The guard knelt down on two legs and reached its hand out, holding the object close enough to me so I could grab it. It was another map. The same map that I had lost just without the wrinkles. Then in a voice so deep the guard spoke.

"Don't lose it again."

The sound of a thousand horns filled the air again. I was led back outside. The front gates opened and released the minotaurs, minions, and bugs. I walked down the glowing dirt path away from the maze. All that was going through my mind was how unpleasant the day was, and how I’ll have to do it again for 179 more days.