

"Finally, Moving Day!" Jack cried.

He had been waiting for this day for two weeks and it was finally here. He had bought a beautiful new apartment at half price because Hurricane Sandy had flooded it. He had had to buy new floors and furniture but that was okay, he had found them at a discount at Bob's Discount Furniture.

One of the movers called out "Hey Boss, the truck's ready," Snapping out of his daydream about his new apartment, Jack muttered a word of thanks, got into the driver's seat of the moving van, and drove off, the engine sputtering as it struggled to pull all of his furniture. He would be coming back for the other truck with the rest of the furniture and a final time to pick up his car, so he didn't say goodbye to the house just yet.

It was almost noon, and Jack had just finished moving his car into the garage of his new apartment building. He got out, wiping the sweat from his brow as he walked to the elevator and pressed the up button. He rode up to his apartment, unlocked it, plopped onto his bed, and admired his handiwork. The new apartment was a bit more cramped than his old one, and he hadn't finished unpacking, but Jack liked it. As he nodded off to sleep, he made a mental reminder to explore the other rooms in morning, since he hadn't had a chance to look at anything other than the bedroom.

He woke up the next morning feeling the same way he did every Sunday morning : tired. He still needed to unpack, so he mustered up all his energy, got up and got some cereal ready. Just as he was getting ready to take the first bite, he heard the doorbell go off.

Doing Ding Doing Ding.

As he unlocked the door he made a mental note to get a normal sounding doorbell.

"Ah, you must be Jack," said a short, balding man.

"Yes thats me,"

"I am Baldy Short, the superintendent of this building. Would you care to sign this, sir?" Said the man, handing Jack a form with a line for his signature at the bottom.

Jack looked over it, reading the long words only lawyers could understand. Eventually he realized that it said Baldy Short was not responsible for anything that happened to Jack in the apartment. Jack had never had to sign one of these before so he asked "What could possibly happen to me in this apartment?"

"The residents of this apartment before you have had some... accidents before," Sad Baldy with a sad smile.

'Well, i'm pretty careful, so that's not that big of a deal' thought Jack as he signed the form. Baldy left and Jack closed the door, returning to eat his now soggy cereal. After he finished, Jack set out to explore the rest of his apartment.

He started with the bathroom. It turned out to be relatively large, but it was hidden behind a small door in the bedroom closet. It was a strange place for the bathroom, but handy for nighttime bathroom emergencies. The next thing he explored was the living room, where he found a large walk in closet and shoe closet, a couch, and an old tv. As he walked out he noticed another door that he didn't remember seeing earlier. It was locked, and looked like wood but was cold to the touch, almost as if it was made of metal. He would have to figure out what was behind that door later, he had to go finish unpacking now.

Jack had just finished unpacking when the doorbell rang.

Doing Dong Doing Dong.

He really had to fix that. He walked to the door, and was greeted with Baldy's hand dangling a single key in his face. Jack took it and Baldy said in a voice that almost seemed to echo around the barren hallway, "For the secret door." Jack thanked Baldy and as Jack watched him leave, he noticed a trail of red dust falling from the back of Baldy's head. When Baldy turned to go down the stairs, Jack noticed a red flame in each of Baldy's eyes. By the time Jack had finished rubbing his eyes in disbelief, Baldy was nowhere to be seen.

Now that Jack had the key to the locked door, he walked back to the living room, and looked for the keyhole. When he couldn't find one, Jack decided to take another look at the key. That was when he noticed how peculiar the key was. It was just a brown metal stub.

Stupid wood! , he thought

In frustration, Jack flung the key at the door and started walking away, but just as he reached the bedroom door, he heard a snapping sound. When he turned around he saw that the door was full of cracks, spiraling towards the center, and pieces were beginning to get sucked in, almost like what a black hole would do.

Jack stepped backward just as the rest of the door got sucked in, leaving a rectangle shaped hole into who-knows-where. 'This must be what happened to all of previous owners of this apartment' thought Jack. As he struggled to look into the pitch black of the hole, Jack realized it wasn't black at all; It was the darkness of night! It was right then that Jack's power went out and the entire room was plunged into darkness. Jack tried to get to the kitchen to get his phone and turn on the flashlight, but he tripped one of the boxes and fell right into the doorway.

There wasn't a noticeable difference at first, but as Jack's eyes adjusted to the darkness, he realized that he was in someone's bedroom. When he looked behind him, he saw the same door that had been in his apartment, but this time it had a keyhole. He looked in his pockets for the key before realizing he had left it on the floor in his apartment. It was at that moment that he realized he was trapped in this strange new world until he found a new way out.

Jack tiptoed across the room, trying not to wake the creature sleeping in the bed, for it did not seem human, with large feet and a spiked head. Jack opened the door and found himself in a hallway. He followed the hallway to the end, and tiptoed down the stairs, searching for an exit. He was already out the door and running down the street when he heard a screeching siren and a robotic voice saying "Intruder, Intruder," over and over. Jack dove for the nearest bush and watched from his cover as all of the house lights in the neighborhood came on, their occupants probably extremely aggravated at having been woken by a siren at this time of night.

"Hey, You! Get over here" whispered a voice out of the darkness, nearly scaring Jack to death. Jack looked around for the source of the voice but only found the blackness of the bush he was hiding behind. Suddenly, two hands grabbed him in an iron grip and pulled him under a house. "Ahh Mmph mmmph nmnph!" cried Jack as another hand was placed over his mouth. "Shhh, we're humans," said a new voice.

Jack stopped struggling and the humans released him.

"Are you the previous owners of my apartment?" Jack asked.

"Yes," answered a third voice, feminine this time.

"Come with us and you'll be safe," said the first voice.

Jack was lowered into a hole that looked like one of the manhole back in New York. He thought he could hear water below but he couldn't be sure. When he reached the bottom, he

heard water right next to him. 'Eugh! This must be their sewers,' he thought, thinking back to the inhuman shape he had seen earlier. Jack was led to a door on the side of the sewer, and as he waited for the other humans to unlock it, he realized that the sewers smelled like machine oil and metal, not excrement. When the door was finally unlocked and Jack was led into it, he was appalled by what he saw.

It could have been a wine cellar, there were kegs in the, except for the machines and pistons and cranes, and people! There were so many people. All different shapes and sizes, and some were even playing music on homemade instruments Jack had never seen before. Others were serving beer in all kinds of makeshift containers, and still others were working the machines and cranes, picking up boxes and cylinders and transferring them to a giant conveyor belt.

"This is amazing," Jack said, "Did everyone here come from my apartment?"

"Not everyone," said the woman, "Some people decided to have kids down here."

Now that Jack and his rescuers were in the light, Jack could examine them more closely. The woman was pretty, with long blonde hair and dark blue eyes. One of the men, probably the one who had grabbed him, was extremely buff, while the other one was scrawny, but smarter. Jack decided to call the buff one, Muscles, and the scrawny one, well, Scrawny.

"Welcome to The Pit!" said a booming voice.

As Jack was searching for the source of the sound, Scrawny pulled him into a nook on the side of the wall. Jack tried to ask what was happening but was shushed every time, so he just watched like the rest of his rescuers. The door swung open and out came Baldy Short, with a bunch of strange creatures behind him. They were like ogres, but with horns and elephant noses, and most of them were taller than Jack. 'This must be what was in that room earlier,' thought Jack.

The procession marched past them and down into the throng of people milling about. Jack leaned out of his hiding space and saw the humans bowing to Baldy. "Come on, let's go," whispered the woman. Jack followed her deeper into the nook and just when he thought the it was going to be too small to fit through, it widened into a small library.

Scrawny and Muscles came out after them and instantly began pulling books from shelves and rearranging them until finally, just when Jack was about to shout at them to stop and explain what was going on, the woman pulled a book titled "How to build a secret door," off a shelf and placed it on the only piece of furniture in the room, a coffee table. There was a loud click and the books that had been replaced whizzed back to their original positions, most of them just barely missing Jack's head as he crouched on the floor. The last book to snap into place was the one on the table, and then, the entrance to the passageway closed, and Jack felt the entire library began to move downwards, like an elevator.

Eventually, they reached their stop and the doors opened into a passageway lit with LED light bulbs. The woman grabbed the book closest to the door and walked off, letting go of it once everyone was off the elevator. It snapped back into place and Jack caught a glimpse of the library leaving the platform he was on and going back up.

As Jack followed the others out of the tunnel, what he saw left him speechless. It was almost like the cavern he had just come from, except these people looked less well fed and most of their clothes were in great need of repair. There was a giant screen set up on the far wall and it looked like it was displaying what was happening upstairs. Jack also noticed what looked like a pile of mattresses and pillows under a garbage chute in the center of the room. Suddenly Jack heard "Incoming!" from the chute and a man fell right into the mattresses. Followed by about a dozen burlap sacks.

The man got up, brushed himself off and said "New clothes and fresh food for everybody!" The cavern erupted in cheers as more bags flew down from the chute. Everybody began lining up and a couple of other men joined the man in the middle and started handing out food and clothing in smaller bags. Jack and his rescuers joined the line and when they reached the front Jack was surprised to see an old man helping give out the bags. When the old man turned to give Jack a bag he gasped and said "You are 'The Champion,'" "The who?" asked Jack.

But the man didn't hear him. He had already turned to the crowd and started yelling "The Champion, has arrived," pulling Jack onto the mattresses as he spoke. The crowd was silent for a while, and then erupted in cheers again. Jack had no idea what was going on but he liked the attention, so he stayed where he was.

"What's your real name?!" came a voice from the crowd.

"I'm... uh... Jack," he said.

This time, the response was quieter, but Jack heard people saying things like 'its really him!' and 'he's finally here!'

Eventually, Jack was led to a sleeping area and given a new set of clothes. These new ones were much cleaner and easier to move in than the clothes he had been wearing earlier: sweatpants and a button up beach shirt. As he nodded off to sleep, Jack wondered how he would get out of this place and back home.

A loud siren woke Jack up in the middle of the night. As he struggled to see through his drooping eyelids, he heard "Ogre Attack!" The ogres were attacking? Somebody grabbed Jack and dragged him into the main cavern where he saw ogres falling down from the chute.

"Save us!" someone cried out.

"Wha ... How?" Jack was very confused.

The people shoved him right in front of the ogres and Jack saw that one of the ogres was wearing a lot more medals than the others. 'That must be the general' Jack thought.

"So, The Champion has finally arrived," he said with a grin.

"Ummm..."

The general stared at Jack for what seemed like years and then yelled "CHARGE!" A wave of ogres charged toward Jack and as he closed his eyes and braced for impact, Jack thought 'I wish all of the ogres would go back up the chute.'

Immediately the yelling and the stomping feet of the ogres stopped, and as Jack opened his eyes, all of the ogres were gone, and the only hint that they were ever in the cavern was the general's sword. Slowly, the cave-dwellers, as Jack had nicknamed them, came out of hiding and began cheering once again for Jack. Apparently, Jack's wish came true.

"You did it!" yelled the woman from earlier as she hugged Jack.

"Yeah, I guess I did" Jack said.

Jack decided to stay and help these people until he could find a way out of this strange world for all of them.