

The Seven Chairs By Keya Patel

Chapter one

I had just woken up from my sleep. A servant was already waiting for me with my clothes ironed, waiting for me to bathe. I walked to my window and spread the curtains open, letting the sunlight flow through. "Good morning," I said, finally addressing the servant. The servant only nodded. There was some sort of impatience in her posture. I decided to quickly get dressed and find out what was bothering her. After bathing, and getting dressed, the servant finally spoke.

"The king would like to have a word with you." She addressed me.

"Right now?" I asked back. My father was a very tight person with a very tight schedule. He only got so much free time to talk to me.

"If you are free, then yes." She answered back.

"Lead the way then." I said. I let the servant lead me through the halls to where my father was waiting for me. Before making my presence clear I took a deep breath. I finally cleared my throat and spoke. "Father?" I started.

"Good morning, Aiden." My father greeted me.

"I heard that you wanted to talk with me."

"Yes. I had." My father motioned for me to come closer, "I have some exciting news for you.. You are finally closer to becoming king. There are tasks you must finish now. This is one of those tasks, however I want you to have a calmer start to your morning so I will meet you at the grand hall this afternoon at 5."

"I will see you then." I was very eager to hear what it was. Was it an adventure, a mystery, or maybe a puzzle? Different thoughts wandered and raced through my brain as I made my way to breakfast.

Chapter two

I sat silently on a chair that afternoon as I listened to the echoes of the castle as my father addressed different people. I waited for him to finish, however this time it seemed to be taking longer.

"Now for you, Aiden." My father said, taking me out of my thoughts.

"Yes father?" I replied.

"Times have changed and you are now going to be training to become king," My father continued. The word king echoed through the great hall. "However, there are tasks for you to complete before you can take on the duty as king."

"Yes father." I said, motioning for him to continue and that I was listening.

"You need to sit on seven thrones. Well, in modern times they are known as chairs. Each one of those chairs has a special history. One of our ancestors has sat on each one of those chairs. To earn all the jewels

on your crown, you have to sit on each of the chairs.” My father finished, turning to me and making sure I had heard and understood everything.

“Yes father.” I said once again. This was the chance I had been waiting for to prove myself. “When do I begin?” I asked, eager to start.

“It would be best if you could start by tomorrow morning. You are dismissed for now.” He answered back.

“Bye.” I ended the conversation as I got up. As I got to the door my servant, and best friend, opened the door for me. I stepped out and the moment it closed I took a deep breath. I only used my princely behavior when I had to be formal, otherwise, I was just a normal 14 year old boy. At the age of 18, I would become king, but that was only a small detail. With my servant, who was the same age as me, I could be who I wanted to be.

“How was it?” Asked Dayaal.

“It’s time. Finally, I can leave this country and explore the world!” I answered back, smiling.

Chapter three

The next morning, Dayaal waited for me as I got dressed and together we made out way to my father,

“Good morning, dad.” I greeted him.

“Good morning.” He greeted me back.

“You had told me that I was leaving this morning?” I continued. There was some sort of mischief in my fathers eyes and I knew that was not a good thing.

“Yes, yes. Follow me.” My father motioned for me to follow him. I did. I was following my father down a set of halls that I knew by heart, however when my father turned to a hall that I was told not to go through, it shook my curiosity to another level. Why were we finally going through this set of halls? Was there a secret that my father had been hiding from me for the last 14 years of my life? I was about to find out. My father led me through the halls, taking a few rights and lefts there, however it seemed to be taking much longer than I had expected. When were we finally going to get there?

“Just around the corner now.” My father finally said, turning the corner. When we turned the corner and walked a little further down the hall, I noticed a door in the distance. It looked simple. It was a plain, wood brown door with a gold door handle.

“Now. The reason I brought you here is because you will need some tools on your mission. You will be given what you need, and then you will be on your way to find the seven chairs. “ My father explained to me. He stepped closer to the door. He opened the door, which was unlocked, and motioned for Dayaal and I to follow him.

“What’s in the rooms?” I asked. It was pitch black. I silently waited for an answer when suddenly a burst of flames erupted. I was startled for a moment before noticing that it was in a lamp. I let the lamp light the rooms before I gasped at what I saw. The room was full of maps! However, there was one map that caught my eye more than the rest. It was smaller than the rest, but the brightest. It was a map of the world. There were lines all over the maps. Some lead to countries, while others lead to random places in the ocean. I ran my fingers along the lines looking at all the different locations.

“Pick a map.” My father told me.

“Any?” I asked.

“Yes.”

“What will I need the map for?”

“You will need the map to travel, so choose wisely.”

“Ok.” I looked around for better maps than the one I was previously looking at, but nothing caught my eye. The map that I had seen before had seemed like the correct one. I walked back to the map I had been looking at and rolled it before putting it under my arm and walking towards my father. This is the map I chose.” I confirmed it with my father.

“You may begin your journey from here then.” My father said, Those were the last words he said before blowing the lamp out and leading me out the door with Dayaal. However, when Dayaal and I left the room without my father the door closed and vanished. I looked at Dayaal in confusion.

“The excitement must have gotten to us.” Dayaal tried, turning away from the door.

“You must be right.” I said, following Dayaal out through the halls and out of the castle.

Chapter four

We finally made it outside of the castle doors. However, when I got outside, I remembered some important details. I had to pack some stuff for my journey. I wasn’t going to survive on my own, even if dayaal was with me! I was about to turn back, but the castle doors suddenly slammed shut! I ran to the doors and tried to open them, but the huge, gold doors wouldn’t budge at all! Dayaal ran after me and followed suit, but even with both of us pushing against the doors they didn’t move. “Did someone lock us out?!” I complained

“Seems like it.” Dayaal responded.

“Why would someone do that?”

“Maybe because you began your task you can not return inside of the castle...” Dayaal’s voice got softer and softer as he finished the sentence.

“your kidding? Right?” I glared at him.

“Well, you cannot return inside. But I didn’t make the rules!”

“So we have to begin my task before I can get back inside?”

Dayaal hesitated to answer. “No. You have to finish the whole task to get in.”

“No! this can’t be happening.” I cried. I was locked out and all I had on me was a map. No supplies except for my clothes and some gold.

“We can go into town and buy some supplies if you want?” Dayaal tried to calm me down.

“I suppose you're right.” I agreed and made my way to the castle gates where my journey would truly begin. Dayaal followed close behind me. When I finally made it to the gates and stepped out and into the huge lawn in front of the castle, the gates did the same thing that happened to the castle doors! They slammed shut just as Dayaal and I stepped out. I looked back with wide eyes. What was going on? My world suddenly began to have a mind of its own.

‘It’s fine, just continue on.” Dayaal tried to make me less worried.

“Yeah. That’s right. Just continue on.” I whispered back, finally getting over my surprise of the gates and door magically closing. Dayaal and I continued to walk out and into town in silence. When we finally got to town, I was overwhelmed by the amount of people. I had always grown up inside the castle walls, I had never seen so many people in one place before. “Dayaal?” I asked.

“Yeah?” He answered.

“What do we need?”

“What do you want?”

“I don't know!”

“Well, you should have planned all of that through when we were walking here.”

“It’s fine, let’s just plan it out right now.”

“We don’t have a choice.”

I sighed and rolled my eyes while I guided Dayaal to someplace where we wouldn't have to yell over the crowd of people.

“Ok, so we need food and umm. What Else?”

“Aiden. It’s your task. You have to pick.” Dayaal explained to me.

I sighed before thinking about what else we would need. “Maybe some more clothes. Maybe a jacket?” I tried again. Dayaal nodded and motioned for me to continue. “I think that is all we need for now.”

“Ok, so do you have money on you? Maybe a bar of gold or some sort of jewelry?” Dayaal asked as he got up and looked for a food stand.

"I don't think so..." I got up and started to pat my pockets for anything. I was about to tell Dayaal I didn't have anything, but then suddenly I felt something in my right pocket. I pulled it out to find... 1 euro. "Well, I have this?" I stretched my arm out for Dayaal to see.

"Um. Why don't we just find out where we have to go first?" Dayaal suggested, seeing my little amount of money.

"Right." I agreed. I pulled out the map and looked at it. To my surprise it looked different. This time, it only had seven lines. "Um, this is not the map that I had taken." I told Dayaal.

"Are you sure, it looks similar."

"Yeah, I'm sure that this isn't the map I had taken."

"Can I have a look?" Reaching out for the map, Dayaal asked. I gave the map to him and let him have a look. "It looks somewhat similar, but something is different I guess."

"See! I told you!" I responded with confidence.

"I don't think it's that different." Responded Dayaal.

"Really? What's the same?" I asked.

"Well, the size the color, some of the lines-"

"Ok, I get it, it's the same, But what happened to the other lines?"

"I don't know, but can we please focus on where the first chair is?"

"I guess." I responded, somewhat disappointed. I really did want to find out what happened to the rest of the lines. I took the map away from Dayaal's outstretched hand and had another look at it. I looked for England and then followed the one line that was going out from England. It led to... Canada? Why did we need to go all the way to Canada? I couldn't think of any ancestors that had been to Canada, let alone ruled the country. "We need to be here." I pointed at Canada and waited for Dayaal to respond.

"How do we get there?" Dayaal asked. I hadn't thought that far though, I didn't have an answer, so in response I just shrugged my shoulders.

"We need to find out how to get there!" Dayaal said, raising his hands in frustration. "Wait, your prince...don't you get special treatment?"

"I don't know, I have never been out of the castle walls! Why do you think I wanted to get out so fast!"

"You're right. But can we give it a try at least?"

"Sure, but who will we ask?" Dayaal looked at me like I was the problem here. I didn't blame him though, I kept on thinking of the worst case scenarios. However, someone has to look at the problems. We were always going to make mistakes if we didn't solve them, right?

"Why don't we start by looking for a way to get there?" Dayaal started.

"By plane. How else were you thinking of getting there?"

"You don't have any money."

“Can’t we make some?”

“Aiden, Money doesn’t work like that! But, if you really need the money, we could sell something that is worth something. Do you have anything on you?”

“No? Also, why do you keep asking if I have things? We wouldn’t be here if I had the things we needed!”

Though, I still went through my pockets and checked for anything valuable. Something like a ring or a gold chain. I had almost gone through all of my pockets, and I was about to give up when I finally got something. I pulled it out to see that it was a small diamond. I held it up for Dayaal to see and his face lit up instantly.

“That’s perfect!”

“Great, how do we get the money now?”

“We need to sell it! Or we could exchange it at a bank.” Finally, I had done something useful! If we could sell the diamond, then we would have enough money to get to Canada and sit on the throne. How long would it take to sit on the throne, right.

Chapter five

Dayaal and I wandered the streets until we made it to a bank. We both rushed in and went to the first person we saw to ask for an exchange with the diamond. “Excuse me, sir?” I asked, trying to get the person's attention. The person quickly looked in my direction and asked,

“Yes.”

“We would like to exchange something for paper cash.”

“Of course. What would you like to exchange?” I handed the diamond towards the sir and his eyes grew wide. “Are you sure that you are ok with exchanging such a thing?” Both Dayaal and I nodded our heads.

“Yes, we’re sure that we want to exchange it.”

“Ok then, please wait here while I get your cash.” Dayaal and I waited for a long time. Every now and then we had to fill some forms out, but soon enough we got our cash. The second we got out of the bank we ran to the nearest airport that we knew. According to the money we had counted we had enough money to get the cheapest flight to Canada.

“Are we there yet?” I asked Dayaal as I began to run out of breath.

“We are almost there! Just a few more kilometers.”

“What do you mean, a few more kilometers. That’s so far away!”

“Trust me it’s not.” Dayaal responded. I stopped talking before I completely ran out of breath and continued to follow Dayaal. A few kilometers after running -which was not close- we finally made it to the airport. Dayaal and I put our hands on our knees and panted hard. We were at the airport, but we still had to book a flight and get on the plane.

“How are we going to book a flight?” I asked Dayaal. This was the problem with never being outside of caste walls, you never learned how to do common things, such as book a flight. Dayaal shrugged in response, still catching his breath.

“We can make up an excuse, saying that we were sent on our own to meet up with an aunt in Canada.” Dayaal finally spoke.

“Are you sure that will work?”

“No, but it’s worth a shot.” Dayaal said, and began to walk toward the door of the airport. He was right. We could try, but the chances were really low. Dayaal and I looked for a place to book our flights. After looking at a bunch of signs, asking a bunch of people, and a bunch of walking we finally made it to a center where people could book their flights. Dayaal and I waited in line, booked our flights and luckily a lady helped us convince the lady booking our flights. Soon enough, we were on our way to Canada.

Chapter six

The flight to Canada was well. Dayaal and I couldn’t wait to finally step foot in another country, but our excitement was short-lived. We were only a few minutes away from Canada, but the plane suddenly began to shake. Dayaal and I quickly put on our seat belts, but it didn’t make the shaking any better. We were shaking out of control in just a few seconds. The pilot came onto the speaker and began to speak. “WE ARE EXPERIENCING SOME DIFFICULTIES. PLEASE STAY CALM AND REMAIN IN YOUR SEATS” I shut my eyes hard.

“Aiden! Are you ok?” Dayaal asked.

I kept my eyes shut and responded, “Yeah, just a little...shaken.” I attempted to make a joke.

“If you need anything, tell me.” But that was all I heard before the alarm went off. My ears began to ring. I closed my eyes even harder, but nothing happened. My emergency crash kit fell from the ceiling of the plane, and I grabbed onto it with one hand, while my other hand held the seat for dear life. With the help of Dayaal, I put my air mask on and got my floaty ready. I thought I was going to die. Then suddenly my seat belt snapped and the plane tipped over. Dayaal and I grabbed onto each other and fell into the water. Luckily we were close to the water and all that was made was a big splash. We got out our floaties and made sure we didn’t lose each other.

“AIDEN!” Dayaal yelled at me, trying to grab a hold of me. Which was hard since I didn't know how to swim. I was flapping my hands all over the place, attempting to stay afloat.

“I'M HERE. GRAB ME ALREADY!”

“STOP FLAPPING YOUR HANDS AROUND!” Dayaal suddenly grabbed onto my leg and pulled me upright. He grabbed my hands, and put them at my waist and put the floaty over my head. “Stop flapping your hands!” Dayaal repeated. I could tell he was making fun of me, but I was too scared to care.

“Take me to land! Take me to land!” I cried. Throwing my arms over his shoulders. All Dayaal could do was laugh. I admit, I was acting like I was 5! Dayaal just continued to laugh, while I just floated around in the water. I took a deep breath to distract myself from Dayaal's laughing and looked around for any sign of land. To my shock. We were pretty close to land. “Dayaal!” I yelled at him to try and get his attention. When I saw that Dayaal had not heard me, I tried again, louder this time. “Dayaaaaaaaaaall!!” This time Dayaal heard me. He looked at me trying to stop laughing and asked.

“Yes?”

“There is land nearby!” I pointed to the piece of land I had seen earlier.

“OH! That's great!” Dayaal began to swim toward the land. I just stood- or floated I guess -where I was. Then suddenly, Dayaal began to laugh again. I guess he finally noticed that he had left me behind. He turned around and swam back toward me. “Sorry, sorry! I'll stop laughing now.” He did stop laughing, but instead he started to giggle.

“Just go already!” I told him frustrated.

“I'm going Jezz.”

“Finally!” We began to swim to land. It didn't take very long, since we were close to it. The bad news was that when we did make it to land, we were soaked and none of us had money to buy new clothes. Or even dry our clothes! “What are we going to do with our clothes?” I asked Dayaal, while pointing to our clothes. “I don't know. Don't you have any money on you after selling the gem?”

“No, I used it all on the flight.”

“Let's just ignore our clothes and find the chairs, our clothes will be dried.”

“Right, so where's the map?” Dayaal went silent.

“I-I thought you had it...”

“I don't have it.” Both our heads jerked in the direction of the water. Dayaal ran and jumped in the water looking for the map, while I looked around the shore to see if it had washed up anywhere. If we had already lost that paper we were doomed. That paper was the map to all the chairs we had to go to, and the only one I knew so far was Canada! “No, no, no, no, no.” I worriedly mumbled under my breath. Then suddenly, a splash of color by some rocks caught my eye. Dayaal had just gotten out of the water, and I motioned for him to follow me. We both ran to where I had seen the color and we both sighed the biggest

sigh we would ever sigh in our lives. It was the map! I gingerly picked up the piece of paper and laid it down on a flat surface to help it dry. Nothing was smudged, luckily, and we could still read the map, the only issue was that the paper was so wet that no one could touch it.

“Can you still read it?” Dayaal asked me. I squinted my eyes and tried to read it. I tried to read it and responded,

“I can read parts of it, but the map changed again!” I let Dayaal look at the differences that were made.

“You’re right, it looks zoomed in, but can we please hurry up, I’m cold!”

“Ok, ok, let me see the map again.” I squinted my eyes attempting to read the map again. I looked at my surroundings to find out where we were on the map and found a sign that said, ‘sandown’. That must have been the name of the street we were on. I looked back at the map and looked for the street name. It took me a few minutes, and a lot of ‘did you find it’ from Dayaal, but after a few minutes of looking I finally found it. “I found it!” I pointed at the street name on the map. Dayaal looked closely at the paper and back at the sign before smiling.

“Great! We need to get to the castle now. Where’s the castle?”

“I don’t know, I haven’t checked yet.” I said looking at the map again. I followed the line that went through Canada and found a dot in the middle of the line. “I think this may be the castle we are looking for.”

Chapter seven

“Ok, how far is it?”

“Not very far I think. If we can get a ride then we may be able to make it there in just a couple hours.”

“Ok, but we don’t have the money for the ride.”

“Then we’ll have to walk even though it will take twice as long.”

“I don’t think you understand what I mean.” I knew what Dayaal was trying to say. I knew that it would take too long to walk all the way to the castle. But, what other choice did we have? We didn’t have the money to ride all the way there, and walking wasn’t the best choice but we had to do what we had to do. I looked around for anything that could help us, but we were only two 14 year-old boys who had no idea what they were doing. I doubt that anyone was willing to help us. Then Dayaal suddenly grabbed my arm and pointed. “Look.”

“Look. At what?” Dayaal sighed and pointed again.

“Look at that person.” It seemed to be a street performer.

“What about that person?”

“Look at what the people are putting in that hat!” They were putting cash I think.

“They are putting money in.”

“Exactly!” I still understand what he was saying, or wanting me to understand.

“What am I going to do with this information?” Dayaal let go of me and face-palmed himself.

“We are going to take that money to help us get a ride!”

“Canada is no different from England! You can’t steal other people’s earnings! That’s a crime!”

“Do you want to get to the castle and move on to a different country or not?” Dayaal did have a point. If we could get the money then we would be able to get on a bus or train that would lead us to the castle we were looking for and then sit on the throne and get out of there! It was the perfect plan. However, the idea of stealing still made me nervous in any case. We couldn’t just go around taking other people’s earnings, expecting them to be ok with that. We would go to jail and then we would both end up in jail and my mission would be over. Also, no one would want a prince with a criminal record! “I can tell that you are worried, but don’t worry about it! All we have to do is grab the hat and fly out of the scene of the crime.” I still shook my head.

“I can’t do it. Can’t we think of a different way to earn the money. Maybe we could sell something like we did last time!” I tried getting out of the stealing plan.

“We don’t have anything to sell though. Also, none of us are going to go through this city looking for a bank! That would take way too long!” But my efforts went to waste because Dayaal just wouldn’t give in. “Please?”

“Tell you what. I will go grab the hat, you get the map and I will run and you just have to follow! Easy enough.” I didn’t know this side of Dayaal. He was always the perfect child. He listened to people. And followed all the orders that were given to him.

“We’re royalty though. That would make such a bad impression on our country!” Dayaal looked like he was about to reject it all, but his shoulders fell as well as his confidence.

“You’re right. What was I thinking?”

“Wait, you agree?”

“Yeah. We couldn’t just go around stealing.” Dayaal slumped down onto the grass. I slumped down with him.

“Don’t worry, we’ll think of something.” I rubbed him in the back to make him feel better. Then suddenly, a woman came up to us and handed us some money. She left without saying a word. I looked at Dayaal, who looked at me. A smile appeared on both our faces.

“Money!” Dayaal said beaming.

“How much though?” Dayaal looked at the money and his smile turned upside down.

“I don’t know.” He both slumped into the grass again. It kept on hanging. It was good, then bad, then good, then bad, then good and now bad again! Why couldn’t things just work out for once!? I looked down at the money the nice lady had handed us and saw that the number ‘25’ was on the paper. Could it be

enough to get a ride to the castle? I got up and pulled Dayaal along with me. I then looked around for a bus station. When I spotted one, I ran toward the stop and asked the first lady I saw,

“Hello madame, we are looking for this destination, would you mind helping us?” I showed her the map and let her look at it.

“Yes, yes. This is about 2 hours from where we are right now. Just take the next bus and let the bus take you as far as it goes. Then get off the bus. After that, look for whatever you're looking for.” I smiled and thanked the lady. Then I jogged back to Dayaal. I told him what the lady told me and when I was done, Dayaal pointed behind me.

“So we need to get on that bus.” I saw a bus in the distance and smiled.

“Yes, come on, we need to go.” When the bus came and opened the doors Dayaal and I were the first to get on. We handed the money to the driver and he motioned for us to sit down. We sat down near the front and just waited. The lady had told us that all we had to do was wait until the driver told us this was as far as our money would take us and then find the castle we were looking for. That sounded simple enough. Just a few minutes after driving, Dayaal had fallen asleep on my shoulder. I decided to do the same and let my eyes rest. Before I knew it though, I had already fallen asleep on top of Dayaal.

About two hours later, the driver had woken us up and we had to get off. We carefully got off, making sure we still had all our stuff, especially the map. I looked around to see that just in the distance you could see a parade. It caught my eye and I rushed Dayaal along with me to see what was going on.

Chapter eight

We both followed the music of the parade and when we made it we were greeted by a huge celebration. There were people everywhere and the place was decorated from head to toe. The best part about this whole thing was that it was a huge castle that was decorated. I pointed at the castle with a big smile on my face. “Look! We finally found the castle!

“That took much longer than expected.”

“Yeah, but for now let's just be happy that we found the castle.”

“Don't get too excited, we still have to find the chair and you still have to sit on it.”

“We certainly can't do that right now though. The place is packed with people. We won't even be able to sneak in past the gates.”

“You're right, but there has to be a way that we can get around all of these people.”

"It's going to take way too long if we look around this whole castle. It will be night by the time we are done. And in the worst case scenario, we may not be able to get in." I was right. We had to find a faster way in.

"How do you think we should get inside then?" I thought about it, but nothing came to mind. Dayaal was right. There were way too many people to get around. The only way to get in would be either after the whole celebration. Which would take too long since we don't know how long it will last for. Or, we would have to sneak past the people and get inside. Which was a risky option but much faster if we didn't get caught.

"I don't know. You're right. It will take much too long for us to get through."

"Thought so. Unless we could disguise ourselves as someone on the guest list -or a servant- we have no way to get in."

"It's fine, we'll be able to figure something out. Wait! Your idea isn't too bad! All we need to do is find two servant uniforms and sneak in without getting assigned a job."

"Perfect! We don't have a uniform, but it's perfect!" Dayaal started to joke around.

"We need to find a uniform then." I started to look around, but didn't see anyone that might have been able to help us. All the servants were moving around, and serving people with treats. If we needed a uniform then we would have to get a tag or something that would let us in. Then we would sneak into the palace without much trouble. However, we would need one of the servants to be on their own in order to get the tag.

"There's no way this will work!"

"It will, trust me. All we have to do is find the tag." Then suddenly a man walked past us and went to an area where no one was at. He must have been going to get more food, but that wasn't my worry. This was my chance to get the tag. I slipped away from Dayaal and followed the servant from a distance. When he turned back I 'accidentally' bumped into him. While I helped the servant, and straightened the shirt, I grabbed the tag and slipped it into my own pocket. I sent the servant on his way, and when I was sure that he was out of sight, I went back to Dayaal.

"Where were you?"

"I got what we needed." I showed him the tag I had and put it on myself.

"That's great, but you don't look like anything like the man in the picture." I looked down at the tag and nodded in agreement.

"I will just have to keep my head down. You just follow after me." Hopefully, no one would notice the small smudges and rips on my shirt. If they didn't we would have a free ticket inside of the castle. I looked for the entrance gate and slipped in with the rest of the guests. I started to walk toward the castle entrance and when I got there, I was happy to see that many people were chatting or taking pictures by them. We

just had to go around all of the people and make our way to the grand room. When I was sure that no one was looking I motioned for Dayaal to follow me and went to the castle entrance. I opened the door just wide enough for both of us to slip through and we were in. “we’re in!”

“Great. Let’s find the room and get out of here. We will be in so much trouble for being here!”

“Yeah. Follow me.” I lead Dayaal through the halls. In my experience of castles the throne room was always in the middle but closer to the entrance. It took a lot of dead ends, confusion and almost getting caught, but we soon enough made it to a long hall. At the end of the hall were two big doors. “In there! I’m sure that it’s in there!” Dayaal and I ran to the door and pushed with all our might until we opened it. I was right. The throne was in that room. That’s when it hit me. I had to sit on it, and who knew what would happen to me. Would I earn powers, or die and start a new life for the next throne.

“Come on. Sit on the throne.” Dayaal urged me impatiently. “We didn’t come all the way here for nothing.” I gingerly started to walk toward the throne. I started to climb the stairs that lead to the throne. Then I was only one step away from it. Then all I had to do was sit on it. “Don’t be scared, nothing will happen to you. I’m here.” Dayaal continued to comfort me and urge me on.

“I don’t know if I can do this.” I said back.

“You can, all you have to do is sit on the throne.” Then, I heard something. There were voices. They kept on getting louder.

“OH NO!” Dayaal and I said at the same time. I panicked and wasn’t thinking about what I was doing. I attempted to get away from the throne and run. However, I suddenly tripped on the carpet by the throne and fell right onto it. The second my butt hit the throne, I couldn’t hear anything. My vision was only white and the only thing I saw was myself. I was sitting on the very throne I was on right now. There was a small crown hovering over my head with seven places to place gems on. One of them had a gem however. It was a small cream-white colored gem. I didn’t get to see much more because soon enough, my white vision had gone away and so had my patience. Dayaal was already rushing towards the door, and I followed.

“Wait!” I whisper-shouted. We couldn’t go out if there were people there.

“Why not!” Dayaal whisper-shouted back.

“We’ll get caught if we open the doors!”

“There is no other way to get out!”

“There’s a window!?”

“We are not going to jump out of a window and cause a scene!”

“We aren’t going out that way though!”

“Where do you want to go!?” Our debate continued on like this for a few seconds, but then I noticed something. The voices were gone! There was no one outside anymore. We were free to go as long as we were quick and quiet.

“Wait!”

“What now!”

“The voices are gone!” I motioned towards the door. Dayaal listened for a minute and then smiled a bit.

“Ok, let's get outta here!” Dayaal pushed the doors and peeked outside. When he saw that no one was there, he motioned for me to follow. We quietly raced through the halls and quietly came out from the door. There were more people than ever outside. However, Dayaal and I didn't wait to see what it was, we raced out of castle property the first chase we got!

“We're out! We're free!”

“Forget about that, what did it feel like to sit on the throne?” I didn't know what to say. It felt like I was special in a magical way. But, that would just sound weird and I kept my answer simple.

“It felt like I was special!” Dayaal and I laughed as we walked further away from the castle.

Chapter nine

After a few minutes of walking, Dayaal and I were finally a safe distance away from the castle. It had been so much fun to sit on the first throne, but we had to be faster if we wanted to sit on all of them. “Dayaal, hurry up!” I rushed to a bench nearby and unrolled the map that I had safely tucked into my shirt.

“Ok, what's next.” Dayaal eagerly asked. It was exciting to be on this mission. I looked down at the map when Dayaal sat down next to me. I was in for another shocking discovery. My eyes must have popped out of their sockets, because Dayaal suddenly looked worried. “What's wrong?”

“N-nothing, it's j-just the map.” I stuttered out surprised. This was the second time this seemed to happen. The line that had been going from England to Canada had suddenly disappeared. A line had disappeared! Again! “Look, another line has disappeared! This map is-is-is' ' I tried to look for a good word, “Magic! This map is magic!”

“That's impossible, let me have a look!” Dayaal said while reaching his hand out to see the map. I handed him the map, and his eyes popped out too! “It-it is magic! This map is helping us go around places. And telling us if we finished the task or not! That's awesome!”

“I know!” After Dayaal and I were finally done fangirling over the map, we finally got to topic. “Ok, ok. Calm down! We still have work to do.”

Right, right! What's next?” I looked down at the map to see that it was actually not very far from here. It was in the United States of America.

“Right here. We need to go to the United States of America and look for the next throne there.”

Dayaal sighed, “Isn’t that kinda far. Not as far as England of course, but we can’t walk there. We will need a transportation source. And for that we will need money.” Dayaal was right, again. We needed more money. However, we weren’t going to get as lucky as we did with the bus money.

“We need to find the money, or maybe make it.”

“Don’t be ridiculous, we can’t make money, let alone find it on the streets. We have only gotten lucky with the money the lady had given us.”

“How do you intend to even find a transportation source?”

“We’ll just follow someone.”

“What if that ‘someone’ leads us to their house and we become completely lost?!”

“Then we find another way to the United States.”

“You know what? Let’s just ask someone for instructions. We will figure it out from there.”

“I guess. But you ask!”

“Fine.” I told Dayaal to stay put while I went to look for someone who was willing to give us some help and maybe even instructions. You would think that being in a crowded area would make it easy to find someone to ask for help for, but Dayaal had been right. We weren’t going to get as lucky as we had when the lady had given us money and helped us get to the first castle. However, I finally made it to a park area where I was bound to have someone help me. I walked over to a park bench where I saw a boy about my age walking behind his parents with a suitcase. I rushed over to him to ask for directions to the United States. “Excuse me? I’m looking for some directions to the train station.” The boy didn’t respond right away.

“Where are your parents?” was the first thing he said. I couldn’t just tell him that I was on a mission to sit on seven chairs. That would sound weird. I could definitely not tell him that my parents were the king and queen to England. That would just sound even weirder.

“Um, I’m traveling with my...older brother!” I came up with a lousy excuse.

“Ok. I’m heading to the train station in an hour. Would you like to come with us?” He asked. This was great news.

“Yes!”

“But. Your brother has to talk with my parents.” My certainty went down a level hearing that. Dayaal was a tall boy, but even he wasn’t tall enough to be mistaken for my brother. Also, we didn’t look anything alike.

“Of course. Where should I find you in an hour?” The boy thought for a minute.

“Just around the corner. By the food stands.”

“Right, I’ll meet you there.” I turned around and began to make my way back to Dayaal. After a few short minutes of walking, I saw Dayaal. “Dayaal!” He turned in my direction.

“Did you find anything?”

“Yeah. So I met this boy about my age and he said that he would take us as long as his parents meet my brother.”

“You don't have a bother though.”

“Ok, so I may have said that I have a brother because he asked for my parents and now I need to become my brother.” I rushed out quickly. I was hoping that Dayaal may have not heard what I said but he sure did!

“You did what!”

“Look, it's just for now.”

“When are we meeting them?”

“In about 45 minutes now.”

“So, you're saying that I need to become your brother in less than 45 minutes.”

“Yeah?” Dayaal just shook his head.

“You make things so much harder than they are supposed to be!”

“It's just for the train ride and we'll ditch them after.”

“Ok, fine. But we need tickets now.”

“For what?”

“For the train!” I hadn't thought this far. I had just assumed that we would just hop aboard the train and make our way to the United States.

“It's fine, we need to find that boy again before we lose him!” I turned away from him and began to walk to the location the boy had told me. I really had to start planning things out. Dayaal followed close behind while I led the way. I could see that my plan had a few flaws here and there, but it wasn't like something bad was going to happen. Right? Then I finally turned the corner by the food stands. My eyes flew open when I saw it. There were people everywhere! There was barely any space for everyone to stand! Then the cops came to find. How was I going to find the boy in this many people?!

“What's wrong? You look like someone punched you.”

“Um, well you see. I don't know if we can find the boy among this many people.”

Dayaal sighed, again! “What does he look like?” I hadn't gotten a good look at him, but I still explained what I remembered about him.

“Honestly, he looked like a mini version of you. He was a bit shorter. Had browner hair. VERY light skin tone. And he was wearing a red shirt with jeans. That's all I saw of him before I came looking for you.”

“That's not information, but we'll have to deal with it I guess.”

“Yeah, I guess.” I turned back around towards the crowd and suddenly I was overwhelmed by the amount of small boys with brown hair and red shirts.

“Come on! We have to find him. We are already wasting so much time.”

“Mhmm” I turned back and started to make my way through the crowd, making sure that I didn’t lose sight of Dayaal in the process. Why are there so many people with red shirts and brown hair? The worst part was that we were running out of time and that we only had 30 minutes to find the boy before he left without us. Dayaal and I started to furiously look for the boy. We looked at every food cart line, every passing stranger and even behind the food trucks and throughout the benches by the trucks. But we still hadn’t found the boy!

“Come on! This is not the time for this!” Dayaal complained to no one.

“I know, but we are almost done searching.”

“What if he passed by us and didn’t seem to notice us and we didn’t notice him?”

“Dayaal! That did not happen. My eyes have been wider than hawks the past few minutes. We’re bound to find him.” I assured Dayaal once again. Dayaal began to pace, when suddenly out of the corner of my eye I saw another boy with a red shirt. Jerked my head in the direction I had seen the red shirt and grabbed Dayaal’s hand.

“Huh!” Dayaal pulled back. However, I didn’t let him go. Instead, I pulled him behind the boy and when I was sure it was the boy who had agreed to help me before I yelled out to him.

“Hey!” I tried over and over again, until he heard me. He finally saw me and motioned for his dad, I think, to wait for Dayaal and I. Dayaal and I jogged in his direction.

“Hey there. I thought you weren’t going to make it. We are heading to the train station right now.”

“Oh. great timing.” Dayaal joined the conversation.

“You must be his brother right?” The boy said pointing to me. Dayaal had no choice but to nod.

“Yeah, I’m older by a few years.”

“Ok, hurry up or else we won’t make it!” The boy motioned for me and Dayaal to follow him. We walked quickly through the streets until we finally reached the station. We walked past the gates and everything. All we had to do now was get onto the bus and we would be on our way to the United States.

Chapter ten

We heard the ding for our train and we got off of the beach we were all sitting on to wait for it. I could hear the train in the distance getting ready to come in. In just a few seconds there was a train in front of us. There were many people coming and going, but I hadn’t thought that it would have been this crowded. The boy pulled us into the train with his father and him. We couldn’t find a seat so we just had to stand. “Hopefully this is a short ride.” I whispered to Dayaal.

“Yeah, our feet already hurt enough.” He whispered back. Then suddenly the train jerked forward. It took a minute for everyone to catch their footing but after that it was a steady ride. We passed many stations in our ride, and we even had to get off on one, but after two long train rides and one bus ride- who the boy’s dad kindly offered to pay for- we had passed the gate to the United States. After a few more minutes we parted ways with the boy after thanking him. When we were far enough away, Dayaal asked. “Which way? Open the map and check.” I pulled the map out from under my small jacket and opened it. It had gotten all bent up, but it was still readable. The line from England to Canada had gone away and now our main focus was the line from Canada to the United States. I looked at the line to see a small dot that was us, and a bigger dot that was the castle we were supposed to find.

“Here.” I pointed to the bigger dot.

“We look far from there if you ask me. Also, it’s dark already. And by dark I mean, it’s the middle of the night. We aren’t going anywhere right now.” I looked outside the window of the station that we are yet to exit. It was quite dark. Then I looked at the clock in the train station and it read something around 4:30 a.m. No one was going out at that hour.

“We don’t have anywhere to sleep though.”

“We’ll find a park and find a bug tree to sleep under.” Dayaal joked around. However, I could see ourselves actually doing that. Since we didn’t have a place to stay, we were going to have to sleep in bizarre places.

“Yeah, I guess. We should start searching. I motioned for the exit.” An announcement had told us that the station would be closing soon and that we would have to go soon. Dayaal and I stepped out of the building and started walking on the streets. There was nowhere to sleep since we were in a city. There were only buildings and we didn’t have the money for the building or a motel. However soon enough we did find a decent place to sleep. By decent I mean, no one would be able to see us. Dayaal and I got as comfortable as we could and drifted off to sleep.

The next morning we were awakened by the bright light of the sun. To my amusement, there was a skunk only three feet away from Dayaal. I used my foot to tap him and the second we made eye contact, I pointed to the skunk and put a finger to my lips. His eyes grew wide and he slowly began to pick himself up and walk out of the trees. I followed him out and the second we made it out, Dayaal let out a deep breath.

“Why didn’t you wake me up sooner?” He asked as we made our way to the sidewalk.

“I only found out a minute before I woke you up.” I responded by opening the map to see where we were heading. It looked like we needed to do a lot of walking.

After seeing a lot of statues, meeting a lot of people, making the wrong turns and 3 hours and 47 minutes of walking later. We had made it to a castle that looked decent enough. It was a huge pearl white castle with pilates and diamonds and all that stuff. Honestly though, it wasn't anything special. Dayaal and I began to walk toward the gates of the castle. They weren't guarded or anything, however, the castle was surrounded by a huge gate. It stood much taller than Dayaal and I, so we didn't have a very good chance of climbing over it.

"How do you plan to get in?" Dayaal asked, running his hands over the smooth metal gates. "We are definitely not going to be able to climb this. And if we do, then the police will definitely catch us."

"I know, but shouldn't there be an entrance to the gate of something?"

"Even if there is an entrance, we won't be able to get in unless the gate is, well, open!"

"We won't know until we actually find the entrance!" I said, emphasizing *'find'*.

"Well then, let's find the entrance." Dayaal said back, also emphasizing the word *'find'*. Dayaal and I began to make our way around the gate, keeping an eye out for an entrance. We walked along the gate of the castle for quite some time. However, we still couldn't find the gate. "Are you sure that this is the front of the castle?" Dayaal asked. He was probably wondering if they were looking at the back or front. If they were looking at the back, there was a smaller chance of finding a gate.

"Yeah, I'm sure."

"Well I don't see an entrance and we are far past the middle of the gate. If I recall correctly, the gate is usually in the middle along with the main doors to the castle."

"Well. Maybe this castle is different from the others."

"And what makes you think that?"

"Nothing, maybe it just is though." As Dayaal and I continued to walk and argue about the gate of the castle, we saw a large crowd gathered around something. Dayaal and I looked at each other and we began to run towards the crowd. As we pushed our ways through the crowd, we heard the sounds of camera clicks and people chatting about how amazing it was. "Come on!" I called back to Dayaal.

"I'm coming jeez."

"Well hurry up. I want to see what they're all fawning over!" I grabbed Dayaal's hand and dragged him toward the front of the crowd. When we finally made it to the front Dayaal's and my eyes landed on a treasure. It was obviously in front of the castle. There was a set of huge golden doors, freshly cleaned and the door had a carving of the United flag. "Wow." I mumbled under my breath.

"Yeah, wow." Dayaal copied what I said. Then I noticed that there was no gate at this part of the castle. And there was a door.

"Dayaal! We can get in this way!" I whispered to him so no one heard.

“And get caught by a hundred people while doing it.” Dayaal pointed out the flaw in my plan and the smile on my face disintegrated.

“We’ll be sneaky.”

“Yeah, we’ll dress up as bushes and walk through the perfectly clean lawn that has no trees, bushes, flowers or fountains.” He replied.

“You think of an idea then!”

“We will claim to be something such as a cleaner or worker of whatever and get into the castle.”

“Yeah, but we don’t know-or have-the clothes for that.”

“We’ll find them!”

“That’ll take forever!” Dayaal and I continued to argue in a quiet tone until someone tapped me on the shoulder.

“Excuse me, we are trying to get some professional photos. Do you mind moving for a few minutes?” A nice lady holding a camera asked. I glanced around the lawn and saw that there were some lights and some people occasionally walking around or in and out of the castle. The lady also didn’t seem to be wearing a professional uniform or outfit that indicated that she was a photographer. All she had was a camera.

“Yes, of course.” I replied motioning for Dayaal to follow me. We walked a safe distance away from everyone and Dayaal was about to speak, but I cut him off. “Look. I know that our plans aren’t working, but just listen ok?” Dayaal nodded and I continued. “That lady that asked us to move. She was taking pictures and had permission to get into the castle and back out. If we can just get a camera and look somewhat professional, I bet we can get into the castle as well.” Dayaal thought about it before shaking his head as a yes.

“That could work, but we need a camera.”

“Simple enough. There are trucks full of equipment everywhere. Just hope when no one is there and grab the camera.”

“Ok.” Dayaal agreed and turned his head looking for a truck that had equipment and no people. Also, if the truck was open of course. He wouldn’t be able to get anything if it wasn’t open. Then suddenly his eyes lit up. “Follow me.” He said stretching his arm out as a sign for me to follow. I followed as he began to walk slightly further away. We were now away from the crowd fawning over the doors and by a bunch of trucks that were cramped together in a grassy area. Dayaal slipped inside and made his way to a truck that was slightly difficult to get to. I stayed behind and made sure that no one saw me. Everything was quiet and Dayaal still had not come out. I looked back toward the crowd and suddenly heard a voice.

“Marcus?” I jumped, slightly startled by the banging sound of the man’s voice who had called me. I instinctively turned in the direction I had heard the voice and was greeted by a man who was actually

shorter than me. He waved and walked over and hugged me as if we had been friends forever. I had no idea what to do, so I just hugged him back. Where was Dayaal? “Been a while since I saw you. Everyone has been saying that you found a better job and are planning on leaving, is that true?” This man must have mistaken me for another person, but I just followed along for now.

“Yeah, yeah. Got into a great job around,” I hesitated for a small second, “England!”

“Good, good. England has some nice jobs. Mind hooking me up as well?” I let out a small chuckle trying to seem casual. I looked over my shoulder and spotted Dayaal just coming out.

“Um, I better get to work. You know, get as many photos as I can before I leave.” I turned around and made my way to Dayaal, grabbing him by the arm and taking him a safe distance away from the man.

“Who was that?” Dayaal asked. I shook my head.

“That was the man that mistook me as...Marcus was it?”

“Do you look like him?”

“I don’t know. He just engaged in a conversation with me.” I responded, while Dayaal handed me an expensive looking camera. I looked it over and hung it around my neck.

“So, if the man mistook you as ‘Marcus’, does that mean other people will recognize you-Marcus- and let you go places?”

“Maybe.” We walked right past the gates without anyone noticing us, or taking a second look. We quickly made our way to the huge doors that were slightly agape for people to go through. We looked around once and slipped in. Now, it was time to find the chair. How hard can it be? The last one hadn’t taken very long to find and this one shouldn’t either. I lead Dayaal through the halls, while checking all the doors of course, towards the center of the castle where the throne-chair- would most likely be. However, when we made it to the center of the castle and opened the door we were greeted by a bunch of photographers, lights, and a huge throne room. The only problem was that, well, there was no chair, throne or anything of the sort.

“Where’s the throne?” dayaal asked in a hushed tone so no one overheard.

“I don’t know, but this is definitely the room it should be in.”

“It’s not here though. We need to get out and find the throne right now!”

“Calm down! The world hasn’t ended because we didn’t find the throne on our first chance!” Dayaal took a deep breath hearing that.

“You’re right. Let’s keep looking through.” We were about to turn around when suddenly another name yelled out Marcus’s name! This Marcus must be famous if he keeps getting called out so much!

“Marcus! Were you headed mate?” He yelled out. All I could do was yell back something not so good of an excuse.

“I need to pee!” I yelled as I ran out of the doors, Dayaal hot on my heels. We turned a few halls and made sure that the man hadn't followed before catching our breath.

“We need to find that throne! Or chair! Whatever it is! This Marcus person is too much of a problem. Everyone knows him, which puts us at a risk of getting caught!”

“I know! But because the throne wasn't in there, it will just take longer. We will have to check all the doors!” Dayaal already started opening doors, and I followed his actions as well. We opened door after door, but we didn't find any thrones. When we did, I sat on it. I didn't get the same vision I had with the first one. At this point we probably opened all the floors on the first level! However, we didn't stop opening the doors. We looked at all sorts of doors and suddenly we came to a door. The only issue was that the door wasn't opening! All the doors we had opened had been, well, open! For some odd reason this one was locked. “NO!” I complained

“Don't worry, I can open the door.”

“How do you plan on doing that?”

“I am a trained assistant. I can open locked doors in case of an emergency.” Dayaal informed me as he got to work. He used his pinky nail-which had grown out quite a bit-to pick the lock. After a few minutes of stressing and almost getting caught, we opened the door. We both silently cheered for about 7 seconds and then we went in. When we entered the room, we were greeted by a huge row of chairs and thrones and stools. Now, the question was, which one did I have to sit on.

“Pick one.” I told Dayaal to point to a chair. He picked the one second farthest from the right. When it didn't work I asked him to pick another. This went on for at least 10 minutes until finally I sat on the very last chair left. I sat down and all my surroundings turned white. I saw the same vision I had seen last time, except this time I was sitting on a different chair. The one I was sitting on right now. My crown was also the same, but one thing was different. It had its second gem. Then suddenly my vision came back to normal and I got off the chair and exited the room with Dayaal.

“Come on.” Dayaal said, walking towards the steps to go back down to the first level and exit the castle. I followed him and we raced through the halls. Whenever we saw someone we acted professional, and maybe even took a picture if we saw something nice. We mostly ran through the halls though. When we had finally reached the entrance. We got out as fast and quietly as possible. Not wanting to attract any unwanted attention. We finally slipped out of the crowd, placed the cameras near the truck and ran away from the castle, not wanting to get caught that they weren't actually photographers.

Chapter eleven

We ran a few streets down and stopped by a small alley to catch our breath.

"You ok?" Dayaal asked me.

"Yeah. A little woozy but fine otherwise." I said in one breath. As Dayaal and I continued to catch our breaths we overheard some people talking about the castle.

"Did you hear that some of the photographers found out that a locked door had been opened?"

"Really?" The girl with her said.

"Yeah, they say that the door was supposed to be locked but I guess someone must have not known." I looked at Dayaal worried. If someone found out that it was Dayaal and I that had opened the doors, there could be a problem. We had to get out of this country fast. I waited a minute until the voices of the two girls faded away and I pulled the map of the thrones out. I saw that the line going through Canada to the United States had now gone away as well. The line going from the United States landed in Rome next. Rome was quite far.

"Dayaal?"

"Mhm"

"We need to go to Rome next!"

"Rome? That's so far away though."

"I know, but we can't let anyone know that we were the ones who opened the banned door."

"We also don't have the money to get a flight. Or a train ride for that matter."

"We'll have to find a way there though." Dayaal and I fell silent as we thought of different ways to get to Rome quickly. We began to walk on the streets and make our way to the train station we had come here at. Maybe we could get a train ride again. We were walking silently but then I suddenly heard running footsteps behind us. I ignored the person at first, but when she yelled out 'Marcus' I had to stop. I stopped and looked back over my shoulder. It was a woman -who was definitely older than us- that had been running towards 'Marcus'.

"Son! You didn't tell me you were visiting! I thought you were at your new job!" Son? I wasn't her son. In fact my mom didn't look anything like her. I was forced to put a smile on my face and embrace her hug.

"Mom!" I forced the word out of my mouth. Dayaal just stood there pointing and gaping at me. I couldn't blame him, but maybe this was a good thing. If this woman thought that I was her son, then she might be able to pay for the flight to Rome. I could make up some lie about a photoshoot in Rome and batta bing batta boom, I would be in Rome.

"How are you, are you ok? Have you been eating well?" She suddenly began to ramble on. All I could do was nod until she let me speak. When she stopped talking, I faked worry and made myself look miserable. "Son? What's wrong? Tell mommy."

I faked sob before I began to speak. "A man stole my wallet not so long before I saw you!"

“Oh Marcus! Mom will give you the money until you can pay for yourself!” Was this woman for real? If she could pay for the flight I would be in Rome without a single issue.

“But!” I fake sobbed once again, “ I need to go to Rome in one hour!”

“Don’t worry! We’ll call a tab and get you to the airport ASAP!” I didn’t know what ‘ASAP’ meant but hopefully it meant fast. Marcus’s mom pulled her phone out and called a tab. In just a few minutes, Dayaal, Marcus’s mom and I were cramped together in the back seats. Who knew cars now-a-days were so small! In about 10 minutes, we exited the tab and made our way through the airport to book a flight. Or, Marcus’s mom booked a flight for us. And paid for it. Why couldn’t all people be like this woman? In just a few minutes we were boarding the plane with Marcus’s mom sobbing about ‘his baby boy’. Hopefully Marcus wouldn’t be too mad when he found out that she had been tricked.

“That worked terribly well!” Dayaal said once we were long out of sight from the women.

“I know! We’ll be in Rome in no time at all!” I smiled at the thought of a break from faking. For once, we didn’t have to struggle for money, or ask people for help. All because I looked like a man named Marcus. I felt a little bad for lying to that woman but honestly it wasn’t as if I had the choice I wasn’t going to let an opportunity like that pass away. Of course I didn’t tell Dayaal and let him have a peaceful time for once. I put a smile on my face and grabbed Dayaal’s and. “This is the beginning of something good!” I said to him in a very dramatic voice.

“Sure it is. If you hadn’t walked right out of those castle gates we wouldn’t have had to struggle in the first place.”

“True, but let’s just be happy for once.”

“Don’t get your hopes too high. We still have some work to do. You have only sat on 2 chairs so far! If we need to sit on a total of seven chairs then we will have to sit on 5 more chairs! And who knows how long that will take!” He was right about that. We still had a lot of work to do. We were silent for the rest of the time while the plane took off and the safety regulations came on. It was only when the food was served that we spoke. “Food!”

“I know!” We were so busy looking for the thrones that we completely forgot to eat. This was the first time in two days that we had a proper meal! We ate and fell asleep as we waited for the plane to land.

Chapter twelve

10 minutes prior to the plane landing Dayaal woke up. He also woke me up 2 minutes later. We landed and when we entered the airport we finally addressed the castle. “Ok, hopefully the castle is closer than last time.” I said when we got near the exit.

"Yeah, I really don't want to waste as much time. The last castle took way too long. Let's finish this one faster." I nodded and we started to walk faster towards the door. When we got outside we made our way to the sidewalk straight away and I opened the map on the way. I looked down at it and saw the bigger dot very close to us. If we walked for another 30 minutes to 1 hour then maybe we would make it there. Also the area seemed to be pretty forestry so not many people would see us attempting to get into the castle. "This is so much closer than the rest of the castles we have struggled with." I said pointing to the dot. "I think we just got lucky with these castles. Don't you think so? First it was the plane tickets and now the castle is nearby."

"Could be." We continued to walk and occasionally jog toward the dot. I was that we wouldn't bump into trouble, but only time will tell.

A few minutes later, we ended up in front of a huge...forest? If not a forest then probably a big group of trees. At first I assumed that we had taken the wrong turn, but how could we be wrong? Our dot was so close to the big dot. "Um, we're supposed to be there by now."

"Not yet," Dayaal said looking at the map, "We still have some space."

"We're in a bunch of trees. I don't see a castle."

"Maybe it was abandoned."

"What if it's not and we take the wrong turn and get eaten by wolves?"

"I don't think wolves live here." Dayaal said as he made his way to the trees. I huffed and followed reluctantly. Dayaal led the way making sure there was no danger and told me to follow. We bumped into trees, tripped on roots and even almost got pecked by birds, but in the end it was all for nothing. One second we were not at the castle and the next we were already past it.

"Wait!" I motioned for Dayaal to come back.

"What?"

"We're already past the castle."

"How? We haven't seen it anywhere."

"We just have missed it, but all I know is that we have to turn around and look for it more carefully."

"Alright, no problem, let's turn back around." On that note, we started to make our way to the same place that we started, This time we looked more carefully. However, instead of finding the castle, we actually ended up at the start of the forest again. "How does that make any sense? I could have sworn we were going in the correct direction!"

"You want to try again?" I asked, willing to take one last shoot.

“Once more.” Again, we made our way back to the castle, but this time we were extra extra careful not to lose track of where we were.” We walked around the same area we had been in before and kept our eyes wide open. We stopped every few minutes or so to make sure we didn't miss anything, but we kept going past. This went on for a few other tries until Dayaal finally got an idea. “Ok, this doesn't seem to be working.”

“There is no way we are going to find it in a random group of trees. Also, this map isn't helping us. One minute we are going towards the castle, the next we are past it.”

“Maybe we're walking in the wrong direction.”

“What do you mean?”

“We keep walking straight, but what if the map is at an angle and it wants us to walk in a diagonal line? So maybe sideways.” I thought about it for a minute and maybe it could work. However, we didn't know which way.

“Which way?” Dayaal paused at that question. He didn't even know what direction we were supposed to be walking in.

“What if we split up and look in both directions? If you find the castle you sit on the throne and come back, and if you don't and I find it, meet me here in a few minutes.” It was risky enough being just the two of us. And planning on splitting up was also a very risky decision, but it would take too long for us to always be together so I figured it would be ok for us to split up for once.

“Sounds good. So we meet here right after we are done looking for the castle right?”

“Right.”

“Ok, let's go!” I set foot more to the east side while Dayaal went towards the west side. I began to make my way deeper and deeper into the trees. As I got further in, I noticed that the trees seemed to be getting larger and taller. Less light began to come in. Soon enough, just enough light for me to see where I was going was able to reach past the trees. I began to think about turning back and looking for Dayaal but when I looked at the map, it said that I still hadn't reached the castle so I continued. As I continued to walk I could hear different sounds coming from up front. However, they didn't seem to be the noises of animals, but the noises of a busy street. I began to eagerly make my way through the forest towards the streets. When I got there and looked at my surroundings I noticed that there was a castle. Expect that it wasn't in the trees. Did the map make a mistake? Had I made a mistake reading the map? Whatever it was I had to figure it out later because right now I had to go call Dayaal. I turned around and ran back the way I had come into the forest and the place Dayaal and I were supposed to meet up at. When I got there I noticed Dayaal and yelled his name out. “DAYAAL!” he turned his head towards me and started to make his way to me as I caught my breath. When he made it towards me and let me catch my breath he fiscally spoke.

“Did you find anything?” I nodded in response, still catching my breath. “Are you going to tell me?” I looked at him annoyed and held a figure out to him as a motion to wait. He waited another few seconds before asking me again. “Did you catch your breath yet?” He asked impatiently.

“I saw the castle except it wasn’t where it was supposed to be and it wasn’t in the green area in the streets so we have to go through the forest again to get to the castle before we can go in and sit on the throne.” I rushed out quickly and went back to catching my breath.

“Oh. So we better get on the move then.” He started to make his way in the direction I had come from and I had no choice but to follow. I didn’t want to be left alone again. I walked a little further behind him for the rest of the walk through the forest before we got to the castle. When we got there Dayaal pointed to the same castle I had spotted a little while back. “Is this the one?” he asked.

“Yeah.”

“How should we get inside?” I looked around the castle to see that there was no fence or anything, however the doors or windows weren’t open either. So they didn’t guard the castle from the outside but everything seemed to be locked up. Other people who were passing by also stopped for pictures so we had to make sure they didn’t catch us either. As well as the police car that was only a few 100 meters away from us.

“I don’t know. There are too many people and it doesn’t seem like anything is going on in this castle either so there is no way that we will be getting through without having a good chance of getting caught.”

“Is there at least a door or like a place where you can see the inside of the castle?”

“Don’t think so, I think everything is closed.”

“That’s fine, why don’t we get a closer look instead.”

“Good idea, maybe we can see an entrance and slip through.” We began to make our way towards the front of the castle without looking suspicious, but it was harder than I thought. We were two kids who just walked out of the forest and wanted to see the castle. This is going to take a lot of work to get into.

Chapter thirteen

We quietly walked a safe distance away from the castle in order not to get caught. “Did you think of a way to get inside yet?” Dayaal asked, still not seeing a clear route into the castle.

“No, not yet.” I continued to look around the castle but there was no way of getting in. In the former castles we had visited there were people going in and out which made it easier for us to slip in. In this one, everyone was outside and far away from the castle. If we attempted to slip inside then we would be caught before we even made it halfway through! We finally made it to the front of the castle and looked ahead.

“Do you think the door is open?” Dayaal asked.

“No. But even if it was, we would get caught since there are so many windows.”

“I guess, but we have to try to get inside. If we don’t we could stand here forever and not sit on the throne.”

“I would rather stand here than attempt to get in at the wrong time and end up in jail.”

“Your prince, Can’t you just, you know, say your prince I demand to let me in?”

“I could.”

“Great! Why don’t you do that?”

“And end up looking like an idiot and wanting people to get near me.” I finished my train of thought.

“You’re making this harder than it has to be.”

“I’m making it safe.” Dayaal just sighed and became silent for the next few minutes. We continued to scan the castle for any ways of getting in. Until I spotted our way in. It was on the side of the castle and closer to the backside so no one would see us get in. It was like a trap door expert visible and it didn’t seem to be locked or anything. I made sure no one was looking and then pointed to it so Dayaal could see. “That is our way in. As long as we don’t get caught getting in and come out fast, we can sit on the throne.”

“We also have to make sure no one follows us. If anyone sees us even getting close to the castle we are doomed since the police are right there.” I glanced back towards the police but she seemed to be preoccupied by other people.

“I think we can get in if we move now! Come on, follow me.” I led Dayaal towards the trap door closer to the trees so that we wouldn’t be spotted as fast and we jogged towards the trapdoor. When we got there, we looked around and made sure that no one was looking before running to the door and tugged it open. While I looked out for anyone, Dayaal managed to open the door and slip in. When I was certain that no one was looking I slipped inside as well as closing the door behind me.

“It’s really dark in here.” Dayaal said.

“I know, but there has to be something that can give us some light. For now, just let our eyes adjust to the dark.” We waited a few minutes, blinking our eyes so that they would adjust and carefully make our way deeper into the castle.

“Where are we going exactly?”

“I don’t know. We didn’t enter from the front like always, which means I don’t know where the center is.” Suddenly I heard Dayaal gasp. I looked for him and we came stumbling right into me.

“Don’t go over there!”

“Why not?”

“That is the place of the castle where all the windows are open! If we get near them or even step foot out of here we will be caught!”

“Ok, that’s fine. Why don’t we go in the other direction and search for the throne there?” I suggested not

wanting to get caught. In response Dayaal made his way around me and in the opposite direction. I followed him into the darker area of the castle. We felt around for thrones, chairs, doors, lights. Anything that would help us get out of here faster, but because there was no light we were moving twice as slow.

“Aiden?” Dayaal suddenly asked.

“Yeah?” I responded.

“Come here for a minute I think I found something.” I made my way towards the sound of Dayaal’s voice and the outline of his figure.

“What do you want to show me?”

“There are a bunch of chairs and thrones a little up ahead. Do you think that one of those could be the throne?”

“It could, but the chances are low.”

“Try sitting on them, I’ll look for another throne.” I nodded, hoping he would see it, and went on sitting on the thrones. One by one I sat on all of the thrones but none of them gave me the vision. Dayaal made it back just a few minutes before I was done and informed me that there was another room full of thrones. I followed him.

“Where are you taking me?”

“There is another level on the castle and it seems to have more light and lots of rooms. I opened the rooms that were unlocked and found some that had a few thrones in them. None of them looked as good as the ones you have already sat on but we will have to make do for now.” I nodded at the information he gave me. Room after room, throne after throne, but none of them gave me the vision I had gotten before.

“None of these are the throne I need to sit on.” Dayaal was silent for a minute. I wondered why and I looked in the direction of where Dayaal’s eyes were glued. I noticed that it was the same room that Dayaal had gone out of. “Dayaal? Dayaaal?”

“Huh. uh-u, yeah.”

“Is there something only in your mind? You seem to be distracted.”

“It’s nothing. Except for that.” Dayal said pointing into the room.

“What. There is nothing, it’s just an empty room!” Dayaal shook his head and moved out of the place he was standing and made me stand and look straight. When I looked ahead, I saw that there was a throne. It definitely outdone all the ones I had sat on, but it was right in the middle of the window room. “Why is the throne we always need in the most difficult and tedious places?!” I complained.

“I don’t know, but I do know that you have to find a way in there do matter what.”

“Do you have any ideas? It looks like you’ve been thinking about it for some time now.”

“None. We would have to wait for all the people to leave before we can sit on the throne and leave without anyone seeing us.” We stood there staring at the throne wondering what we were going to do about it. Then my eyes lit up and a lightbulb went out in my head.

“Why don’t we wait until night? Or until it is dark enough for no one to see us. Then when no one is around and it is dark so there are no chances of getting caught we sit on the throne and leave.” L suggested.

“It could work I guess. But we do need to wait until night.”

“That’s fine, it’s near sunset anyway. It won’t be too long until it gets completely dark and people begin to leave.” Now, all Dayaal and I had to do was wait.

Dayaal and I stood by the door into the room for almost an hour now. It was finally time for me to sit on the throne. I made sure no one was looking and so did Dayaal. I looked at Dayaal for permission and he gave me a thumbs up. I took that as a sign for me to go and sit on the throne quickly. I ran to the center of the room, still looking through the windows to make sure no one was looking. I came up to the throne and sat without hesitation. All I wanted to do was get out in front of all the windows. As I sat down I got ready for the vision. The vision came. Again, same as before with the white background, and me sitting on the throne, as well as the new diamond on my crown. The second the vision faded away I looked out of the windows last time, got off, and ran straight for Dayaal ready to get out of the castle. “Come on, let’s get out of here.”

“I’m coming, calm down.” Dayaal and I retraced our steps to the door we had entered from and made our way out and into the forest where no one would see us.

Chapter fourteen

We made our way through the forest, retracing our steps again. As we made our way out of the forest we pulled the map out. I unrolled the map and looked at it. The line that had been going from the United States to Rome had now disappeared and now we had to follow the line from Rome to Greece. “Here.” I said pointing to the line. We didn’t seem to be too far away so we may be able to get that throne done easily as long as we could find a way in.

“Seems close. How are we getting there?” Dayaal asked.

“We could probably get there by land. We won’t need a plane.”

“Yeah, but we do need a way to get there on land. We can’t walk there. It’s not close enough for that. We will definitely need a car for that.”

“Why don’t we head back to the airport that we had started at and take a taxi from there. I still have some money from Marcus’s mom.” Dayaal laughed at the name Marcus for a bit and agreed that it would be the best way. We headed towards the plane station and in just a bit we were waiting for an empty ride. As Dayaal looked for a ride I wandered into my own thoughts. What if we didn’t make it in time? What if we took too long? Suddenly Dayaal’s voice snapped me out of my thoughts.

“Come on, I found a ride.” I nodded and followed Dayaal into the back of the car.

“Where to?” The driver asked.

“Greece.”

“Where in Greece?” I looked at Dayaal for help and said a random place that came to mind. Also the only place I knew in Greece.

“Athens!”

“Where in Athens?” I was starting to get annoyed now.

“Just the border line of Athens.” The driver nodded and started the car up. Hopefully we wouldn’t run into any traffic on our way.

Unfortunately, a few hours of smooth driving later we did run into some traffic. It was so bad that the car hadn’t moved in ages.

“Dayaal!” I whispered, careful that the driver didn’t hear us.

“Yeah?” He asked back.

“We aren’t going to make it to the castle at this pace. It will take too long!” Dayaal nodded. “We need to find a faster way.”

“Open the map and see how far away we are, if we aren’t too far then we can just skip the rest of the ride and walk through and around the traffic.” I followed Dayaal’s instructions and opened the map. I made sure that the driver wasn’t looking and saw that even though we were not necessarily near the castle, it was within walking distance.

“We can go if you have the energy.” Dayaal sighed. I knew he was tired, but we really had to pick up our pace.

“It’s fine, I’ll manage. Tell the driver that we are going to leave and pay him.” I nodded and waited a minute before telling the driver.

“Excuse me? We would like to leave because it is near our destination. We are going to walk the rest of the way.”

“That’s fine. traffic is bad. Are you sure that you don’t want to wait a few more minutes?”

“Uh” I began to think of another excuse.

“We have an appointment to attend to.” The driver nodded in understanding and pulled the car over for us to get out. We thanked the driver, paid and got out. We made our way to the streets and stood under a tree to review what we were looking for. “Ok, so we are now in Greece. Where to now?”

“Um, the castle is about an hour away I think.”

“We should start walking so that we can get there in a little time.” We began to walk towards the direction of the castle as I tucked the map into my jacket. Hopefully this one wouldn’t use up as much time as the last one.

A long time of walking later we saw a castle in the distance. Dayaal and I suddenly had a spring in our step and we ran the rest of the way. As we got closer we were greeted by a beautiful sight. It stood tall and towered over Dayaal and I. Dayaal and I admired the sight of the castle for a few minutes before Dayaal broke the silence. “How are we getting in?”

“You couldn’t wait one minute and let me admire the castle?” I ignored his question.

“We have lots to do!”

“Another minute won’t hurt!”

“Your prince, you have to focus on your duties first, and your duty right now is to sit on all seven thrones!”

“Fine! We’ll climb the walls into the castle.” I replied with a little bit of attitude in my voice. Dayaal just shook his head, as he often did with me. But honestly, I didn’t see another way in. Everything on the lower level seemed to be locked, however everything on the second and third floor was open. Or some of it was open at least.

Chapter fifteen

“Seriously, though. I really don’t want to waste more time than we have already.” I nodded and looked around the castle in more detail. Even though I knew that we weren’t going to be able to get into the castle any other way, it was worth another shot. Dayaal walked around the right side of the castle, while I walked on the left side of the castle, and we agreed to meet in the middle of the back of the castle. As we parted our ways, I wondered if we really would have to climb the walls. Since the windows were open on the upper ends of the castle we could probably get in quickly. Of course, Dayaal would never do a thing such as that. He would also never let me do it, me being the prince and all. As I looked at the walls unfocused I didn’t notice that I had already made it to the middle of the castle. When I spotted Dayaal and he was in hearing distance I asked if he had found anything, knowing that the answer was no

“Did you find anything?”

"No, not really. Only the upper castle is open. They probably did that so that no one would get in and the castle would have clean air going through it." I nodded in agreement.

"Yeah. But we will end up having to climb the walls. *Like I said before.*" I rubbed into his face. He didn't make eye contact and I knew I had won this battle.

"Or we can find another way in." Dayaal suggested. I looked at him incredulously. Was he serious? He knew that there was no other way in, and he was still trying to dodge climbing it! It wasn't even that high. "It's not even that high!" I pointed my arm towards the second floor to emphasize.

"Yeah, but it's dangerous."

"Walking through the front door is also dangerous." I crossed my arms, not ready to give up. Dayaal and I just stared at each other for 10 seconds until Dayaal blinked. "We're climbing." I concluded, confident in my decision. Dayaal had no choice but for him to step back and watch. As I got a hold of the walls-which were very slippery-I began to climb. However, I didn't make it very high since I kept slipping down. Still confident in my decision, I tried again. Again, I just slipped and fell back down. This went on for another 5 tries before I looked at Dayaal in defeat. "I can't do it." I said while looking down.

"I know." I looked at him.

"Aren't you going to help me?"

"I could."

"Then help me"

"But I found an easier way in and I assumed that you would like to see it." I walked to Dayaal and let him lead the way. We walked in a straight line on the right side of a castle before we made it to a wall that looked the exact same as the one I had been climbing.

"There's no difference. It's the same thing I had been climbing before."

"There is one difference. And I think that it will help us reach that window." Dayaal said, pointing to one of the windows closer to the bottom.

"How?" I asked, still not getting it. Dayaal face-palmed and pointed to the tree, then back to the window and back to the tree.

"Oh. Ohhhh! We can use the tree to climb into the window, sit on the throne and come right back out!"

"There you go!" Dayaal said beaming that I had finally caught on. This time instead of climbing the walls, Dayaal began to climb the tree and in no time he was already letting himself into the window. I followed the same path that he did and in no time we were already in the castle. All there was left to do now was sit on the throne. "Lead the way Aiden." I nodded and got a good look at my surroundings so that I would be able to find the same place and get out. I walked through the only hallway that there was. As we walked through the halls and looked through the castle, we noticed that not much was in the castle. A few portraits and thrones here and there but known of the thrones seemed to be what I needed.

“Dayaal, I don’t think that the throne is anywhere near where we are. I think that it may be on the first floor.” Dayaal sighs and we began to make our way to the lower floor and continue looking through the halls and rooms. As we finish the lower east wing of the castle, I hope that we can find it closer to the west wing or else they would have to look through the top floor.

“Find anything?” Dayaal asks, starting to get impatient.

“No, not yet.” Then suddenly I randomly walk towards a door and flung it open in frustration. To my amazement, that very door was our key to getting down with this throne. We are greeted in a room that is brightly lit by a bunch of windows and a throne in the middle of the room. Dayaal and I beam at the sight of the throne that was hopefully the throne we were looking for. I sit on it and prepare for the vision yet again. My surroundings turn white and I see myself seated on the throne I am currently sitting on. I see the fourth gem on my crown and suddenly the vision goes away.

Chapter sixteen

I step off of the throne and walk back to Dayaal who had already begun to make his way back to the window. As he slowed down for me to catch up with him he asked, “What did you see in the vision you always talk about?” It was random, but I didn’t think too much of it and answered anyway.

“Nothing much. Just me sitting on the throne. And I always have a new gem whenever I sit on a new throne.” Dayaal nodded and began to climb out the window that we had finally reached. He climbed out and held a hand out to help me. I grabbed on and we both jumped off the tree. We made sure no one saw us and we continued to walk around the castle to the front again. We got many looks from people since we came out from behind the castle, but we ignored them and continued to walk along the streets. As we walked out of sight from the castle, I pulled the map out once again. The line that had been going through Rome and Greece has now vanished and I was now following the line that led from Greece to France. **“The fifth one ended up in France.”** I told Dayaal.

“To France we go then.” Dayaal said, looking over my arm and towards the map. “How do we get there though? We don’t have any money left from our previous travels. All the money Marcus’s mom gave us is already used up.”

“We’ll just have to find another way. But first, we need to find out what method of transportation we’re going to be using to get to France.” Dayaal nodded in agreement.

“Bus and train seems like it would take too long. Plane would be the best option, but we don’t have the money for that.”

“I guess. But what other way can we get there?”

“There isn’t a good option. We could use a boat but that would also take a long time.” I became silent and started to think about other ways that we could get to France. Hopefully France wasn’t too far away though. If we really couldn’t get a flight there or another faster way, then a bus or train would be the best option.

“Is there any other way you can think of?” I asked Dayaal when I finally couldn’t think of anything that would be helpful to us.

“No, but we should go into an airport and first see how expensive the flight is. If it is in a good range, then maybe we can earn the money somehow.”

“We could do that. If we can’t think of anything else or find another way then we will go on a train or bus, ok?”

“Yeah.” Dayaal agreed and we began to look for the nearest airport. As we walked through the busy streets and we were on the hunt for an airport, Dayaal suddenly had to use the washroom.

“There isn’t a single washroom here!”

“I know, but maybe if we can find the airport we can stop by and use the washroom there.” I sighed and continued looking for the airport as Dayaal followed along, making sure that we didn’t miss the airport by any chance. After not so long of looking we finally made it to a small airport. We rushed in and the first thing we did was look for the washroom. As we followed the signs to the washroom I looked for any indications about the price of the flights. However we didn’t find anything. Though, after a few minutes we found the washrooms and Dayaal finally got the chance to go. However, when Dayaal came out and I was about to turn away and continue making my way through the airport, I noticed that Dayaal hadn’t walked out empty handed.

“What’s that?” I asked him, pointing towards a small bag in his arms.

“I found it on the sink in the washroom. I looked inside and it has money and all the essentials that we need.”

“Really?” I asked, bringing my voice down so no one would hear. We had already taken things that hadn’t belonged to us and gone to places that we weren’t supposed to go into, if anyone heard that we had taken something that didn’t belong to us then we would be in huge trouble.

“Yeah. We can use the money inside to get ourselves to France.” Dayaal went on explaining. I looked inside of the bag to see money, passports, toiletries, and a few other small things that didn’t really matter. My facial features turned into disgust all of a sudden and Dayaal looked at me funny. “What’s wrong? Did I say something?”

“No, it’s just that we haven’t showered or brushed our teeth in so long.” As Dayaal and I looked at ourselves in disgust we were suddenly shoved aside. “What?” I mumbled under my breath. Someone had just shoved past us. It was ok though because they shoved me in the direction of the clock and I noticed

that we had to book our flights or else we wouldn't be able to get a flight to France until tomorrow.

"Daayal! We have to hurry up if we want to get to France before tomorrow! Come on!" I motioned for him to follow me.

"Where are we going?"

"Where do you think we are going? We need to book our flights because the airport will close and we will have to wait until tomorrow."

"Oh." Dayaal finally stopped pulling away and followed me. We went through the airport and booked our flight in no time. In a few minutes we had followed the signs to the boarding zone and we were only a few minutes away from getting onto the plane and to France. Suddenly, the loud speakers beeped and told us that our zone was ready to board. We were finally on our way to France.

Chapter seventeen

About three hours later we landed in France with a good night's rest and a filling meal. Now, we had to get to business and find the throne we were looking for so that we could continue afterwards. "Where is the castle we are looking for?" I pulled the map from under my jacket and took a look. To my dismay, the castle was further than I had expected. It was practically half the country away!

"Well, the castle isn't exactly near. But if we have the money from the purse we may be able to just book another flight to someplace that is closer to the castle."

"That will be way too much money. Isn't there a better way to get there?"

"I don't think so." Dayaal still disagreed and asked to look at the map. When he looked at it though his face turned into the same worried face that was plastered on my face.

"Ok, so we should book another flight that is closer to the castle and walk the rest of the way, right?"

"Yeah, that seems to be the best option." I responded. We turned back around in the same direction we had exited the airport and followed the signs to a place where we could book yet another flight. As we followed the signs, booked our flights, waited at the boarding zone, and finally got onto the plane, I couldn't help but think that this trip was going to be a handful.

After yet another hour or two of flying we made it to a city that claimed to be closer to the castle.

Hopefully now, the castle will be closer and we will be able to get there in no time. I pulled the map out, *again*, and led the way towards the castle with Dayaal hot on my heels. Luckily for us, the streets seemed to be straight forwards and after about half an hour of traveling we had made it to a luxurious looking castle. "Wow, this one is even better than the last one!" Dayaal fawned over it. All I could do was nod in

agreement, so mesmerized by its beauty. However, the silence wasn't held for too long, because a man who seemed to be leading a tour group barged into us and asked us to join them. My brain didn't process the information quickly since he spoke in French but when it did, I replied. Living in England has its perks, especially since French is the second language and everyone knows a little bit.

"Oui!"

"Magnificent!" The man motioned for us to join the group and I dragged Dayaal along with me.

"Aiden! We don't have time to go on a lousy tour!" Dayaal whisper-yelled at me.

"This lousy tour will help us get into the castle!" I whisper-yelled back to him. That made Dayaal fall silent. Since we had been sneaking into castles, with a huge risk of getting caught this would be an easy way of getting in. That would help us move one step ahead. One step closer to sitting on all seven chairs.

"Oh. But then we will have to get away from the group. Which could be hard since the guide will be constantly turning to explain certain parts of the castle." Dayaal pointed out.

"We will figure it out once we get inside." I responded following the rest of the group. We made sure that we were further back so that we could easily slip out of the castle. We went inside and our guide began to explain the history of the castle, but I wasn't focused on that. I was more focused on the fact that there were servants, maids, and butlers all over the castle. This castle seemed to be packed with people. The other castles were either abandoned or being used for something else. I looked at Dayaal with a little worry on my face. If there were too many people around we wouldn't be able to move around the castle with as much freedom as we had with the others. Dayaal looked at me as well and we shared a look. We both knew that this was going to be the hardest castle to get around. "I have no idea if we can get past all of those people. And what if the king or queen is sitting on the throne that I am supposed to be sitting on?" I whispered as quietly as possible to Dayaal.

"There has to be a way to get around all of these people. I mean, the king must leave the throne once in a while, right? He must have to use the washroom and have to go to bed at some point!" Dayaal tried to think of a way around our problem.

"But what if they don't get off for a really long time? Then we would be waiting here forever and we don't have the time like that!"

"What if we can make them get off? Like a robbery or a fire?" Dayaal suggested another way. It would work, but the risk level just went up 10x. If Dayaal and I were to get caught the trouble we would be in would be immaculate and also France would be against my country for ages. I didn't need to give my country such a bad impression. On the other hand, this would probably be the easiest way to get onto the throne. We also didn't need to make a real fire, we just had to pretend that we found one.

"Yeah, that's fine. BUT! We need to be *really* careful." I said pointing a finger at Dayaal. After a minute we made it to a somewhat empty hall and decided that it was a good time to split from the group. We were

about to turn when Dayaal and I stayed behind in a hall that went in the opposite direction. We carefully and quietly made our way to the emptiest room we could find. We entered the room, closed the doors and made sure no one was around before we began to talk about how we were going to sit in the castle.

“We need to be careful how we announce the fire. If we come from the opposite direction of the tour group then it would seem though we made the fire and we would get in trouble anyway. We need to be with the group and pretend that we saw a fire from behind but no one let us speak or something. Then, we would split up from the group, find the throne quickly, sit on it and make our way out.” Dayaal made the plan. I listened carefully, adding a few details in my head that would make the plan go a little bit faster.

“We need to find the tour group first though. And we can’t be caught while we are looking for them.” I said.

“Right, we don’t want that happening. Did you get the plan? We should start now so we can get out of here as fast as possible.” I agreed and Dayaal checked the door to make sure no one was outside. We stepped out quietly and tiptoed around the castle, making sure no one spotted us. We went through the hall that we had split from and made our way from there. Lucky for us, the tour guide had been so busy talking that he hadn’t made it very far. We joined the group, a little closer into the middle this time, and then I nodded to Dayaal. He nodded back, and all chaos let loose after that.

“FIRE!!” I yelled. All eyes turned on me as I yelled.

“Where?”

“When did it happen?”

“Will we be dying?”

“Get us out already!” I heard people around me saying, I pretended that I had run and fake-panted in an attempt to make it more believable.

“A few halls away, I heard some people talking about it!!!” I continued. The tour guide had already made his way to a butler and was explaining the situation. This was our chance to get out. However, all eyes were on me and I would have to wait for all of them to get out of my sight for me to run in the opposite direction. Suddenly, an alarm blared through my ears. Everyone was being guided out of the castle and the king and queen shouldn’t be too far behind. For now Dayaal and I followed the group and tried to spot what direction the king and queen may have been walking from. We were getting closer to the door but suddenly we stopped. People began to whisper again.

“It’s them.”

“The king!”

“The queen!” I heard people say from the tip of my ear.

“Dayaal! It’s them. They came out that way! We should go there! Come on!” Dayaal and I pretended to get lost in all the people and when we were far enough away, began to sprint from the direction the king and

queen had come from. From the throne room, hopefully. It didn't take very long to notice that there was a one single, big hall that led to the main throne room. We ran and ran until we made it to a set of doors that looked like they had been abandoned very quickly. There were still people racing through the halls so we had some time before everyone would be outside. We barged through the abandoned door. I got a quick look at the throne room. It was huge in size and the throne was right in the middle. I ran across the room and sat on the throne right away. My vision instantly became white. I saw myself sitting on the throne with my fifth gem placed on it. My vision came back to normal all of a sudden. I looked down at Dayaal to see that someone was right behind him. The second he looked in my direction I jumped off. He fainted right on the spot when he saw us though.



Chapter eighteen

I stared in horror at the man who had just fainted. He had seen me on the throne! Who knows what he would tell the others?! The king and the queen! Dayaal and I are frozen in shock. But a scream broke it. Dayaal and I looked in the direction of the scream to see that there really was a fire! A whole room had been lit on fire in all the commotion. Dayaal snatched my arm and ran all the way through the castle-opposite of the fire- and out. The second we exited the castle, we noticed that there was smoke coming from one of the rooms. The same room that we had seen on fire. Someone must have accidentally actually caused the fire in all of the commotion. We could hear the fire trucks and police racing towards us from a distance. Dayaal and I made sure that no one was looking before we made a run for it. I had to make sure no one saw me and that no one would ask me questions since I was the one who had declared the fire. As we ran through the crowd and up the streets where no one was since everyone had rushed towards the castle to see what was going on. Dayaal and I stopped when we ran out of breath and caught it. Afterwards, when no one was looking, I pulled the map out from under my jacket and unrolled it. It had

luckily not burnt in all of the fire and we could still read it. The line that had been going through Greece and France had now disappeared and I was now following the line that was going from France to Egypt.

“We need to go to Egypt now.”

“Egypt? What relation do you have with Egypt?”

I shook my head, “I don’t know, I’m just going where the map is taking me. The map had been right so far so why wouldn’t it be right now” Dayaal said something under his breath but I didn’t hear. Then he spoke aloud.

“It’s fine, how are we getting there?”

“Obviously by plane. We still have enough money for another flight.” I said looking inside of the bag we had found at the airport.

“Aren’t we wasting too much money?” Dayaal worried.

“No of course not, we need to finish it and also we only have Egypt and England left, so we shouldn’t need much more.”

“What about getting from Egypt to England?” Why was Dayaal being stuck up all of a sudden?

“Dayaal.” I calmly said while holding a finger up to him, “One problem at a time.” Dayaal looked down and fell silent. However, he needed to learn to focus on one problem at a time. We still had a lot to do and Dayaal just kept talking about the problems. Was it because we had caused the fire? It broke me to see Dayaal in such a tired state but I couldn’t do anything about it until we actually made it back to England.

“Come on, we still have work to do.” I said, offering Dayaal a hand. He looked at it for a minute and then grabbed it. I pulled him up and we made our way to the airport we had come to France in.

After a few minutes of traveling, we made it to the airport. We followed the signs, booked our flights, waited in the zones and we were off to Egypt.

Chapter nineteen

After about 5 hours of travel we finally made it to Egypt. The first thing I noticed there was that it was hot! Dayaal and I were already burning and we hadn’t even made it outside yet! “Please tell me the castle isn’t far!” I said to myself, while pulling my map out from under my jacket. I unrolled it to see that this time it wasn’t as simple as the last ones. The dot was right in the middle of Egypt and since Dayaal and I had never been here we were going to be wandering the deserts for hours! We were going to cook faster than you would on a stove! Dayaal took one look at my face and shook his head.

“It’s that bad!?” He said. I dropped my head and handed the map to him. He looked at it and face-palmed himself. “This will take hours! Even days to find it!” He said.

“We better get started then.” I said with no enthusiasm. I started to make my way to death as I stepped out of the airport. However when I was about to actually start walking away, he pulled me back! What was that for?

“Do you want to boil faster than we already are going to?!” He said, dragging me to a table with water bottles and beverages. I looked outside, then at the table. I didn’t do anything for a minute but when not many people were looking in my direction I snatched 20 water bottles and made a run for it! Dayaal grabbed another 5 thinking that 25 would be enough and we made our way out. Now our only problem was that we had to hold 25 water bottles as well as hold the map and manage not to get lost!

“Dayaal, hold your arms out like you are holding a baby.”

“Why?”

“Just do it!” He did as I told and I began to stack all 25 water bottles on Dayaal in a pyramid shape, with him still being able to see of course. I told him to hold all of them and follow where I went. I mean, it wasn’t like he had a choice at this point.

“Thank you very much.” Dayaal said, looking at me with sarcasm written all over his face. I smiled proudly in response and continued looking at the map. I was just guessing where I was going but if our guesses were somewhat accurate we shouldn’t end up too far away from the actual place we are heading. I started to walk. Oh the misery I was going to be going through on this journey...

About a half a day later we had made it to something that was considered a castle once upon a time. It took lots of water, lots of thinking we were going to die and lots of Dayaal’s stories but we made it! When we got there, we were sure the map had broken in all the heat. But it was in my shade the whole time. How could it be wrong!? “We’re here?” I announced, not sure of myself. I wasn’t completely sure if I was right, but then again the map was talking not me. The map was to blame for most of the problems that went on during this journey.

“This?” Dayaal said, looking at the next *castle*. It was a pyramid. Yes, a pyramid. A type of castle but trickier than others. I had no idea what we were doing at this point.

“Should we go in? I asked.

“And risk dying since we don’t know what to do? No, I’m good.”

“We are going to have to get in at some point!”

“Let’s take a break.” Dayaal whined in exhaustion. I obviously didn’t listen to him, me being the good listener I am, and continued to walk towards the pyramid and possible death in this heat. I was just a few

steps away from the entrance of the pyramid when I heard a distant voice yell out to me. "Aiden! Wait up!" I looked over my shoulder to see Dayaal running in my direction. Of course he was. He has to do everything that I tell him to do.

"Took you long enough." I said with a huff.

"I'm tired ok. Let's just get this done with." Dayaal sighed in annoyance. Even Dayaal got tired of me sometimes.

Chapter twenty

We entered the door and the first thing we noticed was that even though there was light everywhere outside, the second you step inside all the light vanishes and you are left in a pyramid of darkness. I let my eyes adjust to the darkness, and the second we could both make out the outlines of objects and walls around us, I grabbed Dayaal's hand and we continued our journey to find the seventh chair. I mean, how hard could it be to navigate the pyramid, right?

We were lost. It was hard to navigate the pyramid. "Can I say, 'I told you so?' yet?" Dayaal asked, trying to prove his point. I put my head down and sighed in shame.

"Yes." I mumbled softly. I knew this time I was wrong.

"I told you so!" Dayaal said with his arms crossed and leaning on the wall. "You were wrong. You never go straight in a pyramid! You should have listened." Right after that sentence I stopped listening. I looked at the ground to see that it was vibrating. But just enough for the sand to move around. I looked back at Dayaal but he just kept talking and talking and talking! Couldn't he see that there was a problem in these mere seconds?

"Dayaal?" I asked. He kept talking, this time even louder. I buried my eyebrows in frustration and said his name even louder. "DAYAAL!" I said, not yelling but still loud enough to be thought of as yelling. He kept on blabbering about his home cat! Where did his home cat even come from?! I was out of patience at this point. I looked at Dayaal with red eyes only to see that he was still talking and leaning. But the wall was different. The part of the wall that he was leaning on was sunken. Like a button! "DAYAAALL!" I yelled as loud as I could this time. However, the second I yelled the whole floor of the hallway disappeared! Literally! For a second, nothing happened, I just stood in the air but then I went crashing down and tumbling right onto...a slide? Dayaal and I rolled and cartwheeled but for some reason the slide-or whatever it was- just kept on going! After about a few minutes of complete madness, Dayaal and I finally got ourselves seated onto the slide. Unluckily, we never managed to enjoy our ride because just after a few

seconds we plummeted onto the hard, cold ground. We skipped and jumped for a minute. Then after we completely fell silent, DAYAAL WENT RIGHT BACK TO TALKING ABOUT HIS HOME CAT!

“So, as I was saying. You should have listened to me and we would never have ended up here.”

“We wouldn’t have ended up here if you hadn’t leaned on the wall either!” I said back, not making complete eye contact. I angrily began to walk away from Dayaal. All he was doing was making me get distracted and I was getting tired of his voice!

“Aiden, where are you going?” Dayaal suddenly called out to me.

“Why do you even care!?” I said back, “It’s not like you seem to care about what I think. All you think is that you are the whole success of this mission. You think that you’re the boss of me!” Dayaal finally let go of my arm. He stopped where he was, and I thought about going back to apologize, but I was just too stubborn at the moment. I walked away with my chin struck up. I was just out of ear shot when I heard one last thing from Dayaal.

“You’re going to regret leaving me once I find the throne and you don’t!” I was done with him! Instead, I just walked away and followed the only hall there was. I walked for a very long time, but I didn’t find anything. The tunnel seemed to be going in circles and I was just following its stubborn ways. I decided to take the next tunnel out so I would at least stop going in circles and make some progress. I walked for another few seconds, ended up finding a tunnel that separated from the one I was currently walking in and went through. That was a good decision. I walked for another few minutes -luckily in a straight line this time- and ended up on three other tunnels. I just had to decide which one I was going to take now. I decided to take the one farthest to the right and move on from there.

“Hello?” I called into the tunnel to make sure no one else was there. It was much darker than the one I had been standing in before and I couldn’t see a thing inside of it. I stretched my arms out and used the walls as a guide for me, so that I wouldn’t end up hitting the wall face first. I hadn’t walked for very long and ended up walking straight into a wall. This time however, I had walked *straight* into the wall. I had hit a dead end. Literally. I felt the wall that I had hit for a button, but when I didn’t find anything I decided that I would just leave. I went out of the tunnel and decided to go to the wall farthest to the left. Again, the tunnel was abnormally dark and I had to use the wall as a guide. I went in and walked for much longer than I had with the last tunnel. I already knew that this tunnel was going to go on for a very long time, and I didn’t think that it would lead to anything I wanted. I walked out of the tunnel and finally went through the tunnel in the middle. This one was the darkest of them all. I was going to use the walls as a guide however they were too far apart. I kept my arms out just in case and began to make my way in. I had just walked about 30 steps when suddenly my arms could touch the wall. Had my arms grown larger? I kept my hands out and it noticed that it kept getting smaller and smaller as I went in. Soon I was just barely small enough to fit through. I was about to turn back when I saw something shine in front of me. I just

had to go and see what it was! I tried my hardest to get through but soon my clothes were starting to rip on the walls and I was starting to get stretches on my arms and legs. I was about to give up but I was just three steps away! I had to get in. With one last enormous step, I made it out and I was greeted by a huge room. It was full of treasures. Gold, diamonds, crowns and so much more! I ran to the huge hill of gold. I began to climb up the hill of gold in order to get to the gold throne that was sitting in the center of the hill. I finally made it to the top and sat on the throne. My feet were killing me! The second I was completely seated, I got the vision again. My surroundings turned white again and I saw myself seated on the throne. I had my 6th gem. Just one more and I would be done! Why was I so excited to start my missions again? I just shook my head at myself and started to make my way down the hill-or mountain. I was about to exit the way I had entered, however something stopped me. A scream. A very familiar scream! It was Dayaal. I know that we had ended up on each other's bad sides, but he was still my best friend! My only friend! I ran in the direction of the scream but ended up tripping on something. A gold necklace had gotten stuck on my foot. I tried to rip it off, but soon just ended up running with it clanking against my ankle. I found Dayaal not too soon after, only to see him run past me! I came to help him and he completely ignored me. I just stood there in either anger or shock. Probably both. I was busy looking in the direction that Dayaal had run in, when I heard some rumbling, the ground began to gently vibrate. At first I thought it was my stomach since I haven't eaten in a while but suddenly the wall to my right began to crack. That was when I suddenly found out why Dayaal hadn't stopped to greet me. He was too busy running. This place was going down! I began to run in the same direction Dayaal had, while also screaming in the most high pitched voice *ever*. I ended up in the same room with the throne. Dayaal was trying to grab the gold but that wasn't going to work. He wouldn't be able to run with all of it. I went up to him, grabbed the back of his collar and dragged him out of the room. Soon enough, I was holding his hand and retracing my steps out of this pyramid. I hoped very hard that the pyramid would not fall before we made it out. Also, Dayaal was not making it easy. I didn't say a word to him before, thinking that that the heat must have gotten to him, but it was now confirmed that he was being stubborn altogether. I even had to carry him up the slide that we had fallen through a little while back. The pyramid was falling really fast now. The wall couldn't hold the weight of the pyramid and Dayaal finally snapped. This time he grabbed my hand and began to drag me out. When we got out and were waiting for the pyramid to drop, nothing happened! When we got out and caught my breath, I looked Dayaal dead in the eyes and asked the question that was stuck on the tip of my tongue for ages. "What happened?!"

"Nothing!"

"We literally came screaming out of there!"

"Minor setback!"

"MINOR SETBACK!?"

“I was just walking, when suddenly everything began to fall! How was I going to stop that!?”

“For what reason though?”

“I don’t know!”

“What do you mean, *I don’t know!*!” I threw my hands in the air in exaggeration. I wasn’t going to waste my time since I had already sat on the throne and we were out. “You know what? Let’s just move on!”

“Fine, no one is stopping you!” Dayaal pulled himself up to his feet to see that map that I had just pulled out from under my jacket. The line going through France and Egypt had now disappeared and now I was following the line that was going through Egypt and England. We had to go back to where the line from France to Egypt had taken us since we had to make our way back to the airport. Since there were no people to ask for directions, we had to do everything on our own this time.

That took so long. If our dot was not on the map we would have gotten lost in a matter of seconds! We exchanged the gold Dayaal ‘stole’ for some money and booked our flights. We got to the zone, waited for the boarding call, got on the plane and we were on our way to England.

Chapter twenty-one

Six hours later we made it to England. It was so nice to finally be in a country I was familiar with. During the flight, Dayaal had also found out that the castle we were going to was mine, so it didn’t take long for us to find it. We were walking peacefully along the streets, when people started to stare. We had to get to the castle fast, before someone called the news and we would be talking for hours. The last time that happened I lost my voice for a week. “Dayaal! Come on!” I said. Giving a few nudges to help speed him up. “Coming, do you want me to run?” He sarcastically asked.

“Seriously! We are this close!” I said putting my fingers close together to emphasize. Dayaal finally picked the pace up. In a matter of minutes, we had made it to the castle gates. I opened them and the second I opened them all the servants moved out of the way to let Dayaal and I through. I began to walk through the gate. All the servants came forward to bow in my presence. When I reached the castle gates all the servants did the same as before. They moved out of the way in order for Dayaal and I to get through. We walked through the castle and into the throne room to see that my father had already got off for me to sit on the throne and finish my mission. I sat on the very last throne and my vision turned a bright, shimmery white. This time I saw a kingdom in front of me. My kingdom. And a luxurious crown was placed on my head. However, I didn’t see Dayaal in my vision. We had always planned this moment together and I would love for him to be in my future with me. But, instead I saw a woman and a man in

the servant's place. They looked very much alike and I seemed to enjoy their company. That was the end of it though. The Vision suddenly ended and I saw my dad beaming at me with the biggest smile I've ever seen! My dad walked up to me and placed the crown I had seen in many visions. I looked at Dayaal so much to delight only to find Dayaal pouncing right after me! Or more specifically, my crown!! Out of reflex I instantly jumped out of the way to dodge his attempt to snatch the crown. I flimsily landed on the hard mable ground. A loud echo went through the quiet and shocked hall. "W-what?" I whispered towards him. He didn't say anything but instead jumped towards me again. This time a guard pushed him out of the way. My father had already been escorted out of the room. I was also being pulled out but it was Dayaal who just did that! I had to find out why! "Dayaal! What is the meaning of this?!" I yelled loudly at him. He stopped struggling against the guards grip and let them grab onto him.

"YOU! You are the meaning of this!"

"What have I done?" The whole room had been emptied out. No jewels, or precise objects were left here. All there was was the crown that was placed on my head. Dayaal said nothing more. He kicked the guard that was holding him right in the stomach and jumped on me again. I fell to the ground hitting it hard. The crown skidded off my head and against the marble floor. I made a hard attempt to grab it. All I could do however was watch as Dayaal made it there before me. He tried to get up and run but I grabbed his ankle making his fall right on his chin. He whispered in pain for a minute but then got up again. This time I was ready to block him since I was up on my feet now. He turned towards me and tried to kick me away so that he could get to the door, but the guard had already closed and locked the door. There were only a few guards, me, and Dayaal now. I had to get the crown back! I grabbed his hair and flung the crown towards the guard, hoping that he would catch it. Unfortunately, it went out of a window. Dayaal and I ran towards the window and jumped right out onto some overgrown grass that someone was still cutting. The overgrown grass helped break the fall, but injuries were the least of our worries. The crown was somewhere here and since we were outside Dayaal would actually make a run for it! He began to look. The lady who had been cutting grass ran away and it was only Dayaal and I. I could hear the hard stomps of the guards coming down and towards me. People had begun to gather around. My father had made his way towards me and was about to pick something up when Dayaal belly flopped right towards it and grabbed it and ran right into the town! In the bright sunlight I could see the shine of it. It was the crown! "DAYAAAAAAAAL!!!!!!!" I yelled in complete anger. I ran after him with the guards right on my heels. Guards were coming out of the weirdest places making different attempts to grab him but somehow he dodged all of them. He was really deep into the town now. I was so close to him. My arm was outstretched to grab the throne when suddenly he jumped into someone's house! I wasn't going to invade someone's privacy but this was urgent so I just followed him. We destroyed the house. However, when we both

stopped for a minute we noticed that none of us had the crown anymore. We started to scream ridiculously at each other that the other lost it! When my father suddenly came through.

“SILENCE!” Father said and I stopped for a minute. The crown was somewhere outside and that was for sure. “Aiden, come here!” I began to walk there but Dayaal rushed past me and to the backyard, guards were already going out through the backdoor to catch him, but something different happened. One young boy and a girl had tied him up together in the backyard. He was rolling and screaming but no one dared to get close to him. I had to though. The crown was tied along with him. He started to laugh maniacally and I jumped forward, slapped his face and grabbed the crown. The guards carried him out through his lashing, kicking and punching.. All was silent. I looked at the young boy and girl to thank them. “Thank you! You have been very helpful to your country and will forever be grateful.”

“You're welcome,” the boy and girl said at the same time. They looked about my age and looked decent. After some final goodbyes, we finally got into a car and rode off towards the castle. I made my way right down to the dungeon to see Dayaal. What had he done! He would have been rewarded if he had just been patient. I walked for what seemed like hours when suddenly I heard the same maniacal laugh again. I stopped dead in my tracks. Heard the greedy laughter, heard the bars of the cell clang, heard the bad things he said. But he never got over his greed. I turned around and walked away. Forever.