0:::Carlos and you make a good climbing team. You two decided to find Yeti, sometimes called the Abominable Snowman, in the Himalayas which forms a great natural wall between India and China, with Nepal tucked in amid the peaks. Your goal is to find positive proof that Yeti exist. That is what brings you to Kathmandu, the capital of Nepal. Two days ago Carlos left by helicopter to look over the terrain near Mt. Everest, one of the best-known mountains in the Himalayas. The helicopter returned without him since Carlos decided to stay up at the Everest base camp to check out a report that a Yeti had been seen. He had a radio transmitter but the weather turned bad and radio communication was interrupted.

1:::Mr. Runal, the Director of Expeditions and Mountain Research and an authority on the Yeti, knows of your plans. You telephone him at the Foreign Ministry. He kindly offers to help you. Two hours later, you land at the Everest base camp where Carlos was last seen. His red nylon mountain tent is still there, but the storm has erased all footprints. "Most reports of the Yeti have them well below base camp. But it is possible that they are up this high," Runal says as the two of you stand by the tent looking at the glacier and the high peaks.

2:::You have an appointment to speak with Mr. Runal, the Director of Expeditions and Mountain Research for the Nepalese government and an authority on the Yeti. You want to ask for his opinion at first. "Welcome to our country. We wish you success. But I have some bad news. The expedition you have proposed could be very dangerous." You look at Mr. Runal, not knowing what to expect. "Recently, a large expedition set out without telling us that they were going after the Yeti," says Runal. "They used guns and traps, and tried to kill one of them. The Yeti are angry. I must advise against you into the Yeti territory--I could arrange a trip for you into the Terai region. You could photograph and study the tigers. Later, perhaps, you could conduct the expedition you are leading."

3:::You two decide to search below the camp. The helicopter stays at base camp, and Runal and you descend on foot along a narrow, rocky path below the snow line into a pine forest. It takes many hours of careful walking. The trail suddenly becomes very steep, and one side falls off more than a thousand meters to a river gorge. You come to a small stone house with a thatched roof. An old woman sits in the sunlight by the door. "Can you tell us if any climbers came by here? My friend is about five foot nine, medium build, has dark hair." Runal translates my description into Napali. The woman nods and says two men came by. The younger one left a note: "Don't follow. Wait at base camp. -Carlos". Runal urns to you with a puzzled look on his face:"Carlos is your friend. What do you think?"

4:::"Carlos may be in trouble. We must find him." You answered. Runal nods in agreement, and he gives the woman two copper coins. She smiles at him and speaks rapidly in Napali. Then she shuffles into the house. You and Runal remains outside, next to the small garden where squash lie ripening. "What was that all about? What did the old woman say?" You adjust your rucksack straps to stop them from chafing your shoulders.

5:::Runal looks at you and says, "the woman claims that your friend was traveling with a Yeti." You stare at Runal in disbelief but why not? You are here to find them; maybe they found you this time. You head down the trail not knowing quite what to expect. As you race down the path you see footprints that might have been left by a Yeti. Suddenly it is very quiet. The birds have stopped singing. The only sound you hear is your footsteps and Runal's right behind you.

6:::It does not take long to find out. Around a turn in the path you run smack into a band of creatures that can only be Yeti. They are aiming an ancient bronze cannon at you. One of them touches a light to the fuse. And that is the last thing you remember-until you wake up in your own bed. It must have been the awesome tripledecker with mustard, anchovies and chocolate syrup.

7:::Probably best to return to base camp," you say. "It is getting late, and the trail back up will be especially dangerous at night. I think we should stay here until dawn," Runal counters. You make arrangements with the woman to spend the night. You are very nervous but you trust Carlos's judgment. Close to dawn, you hear a high, piercing scream. "Yeeeeeeeeowee!!" The noise seems to be coming from right outside my window. The woman is outside the house at the edge of the trail, holding up a battered kerosene lantern. "Yeoweeee!!Yi, Yi, Yeeeowee!!" You hear it again. This time it is even louder. "Those are the Yeti," she says. "They invite you to join them and your friend Carlos."

8:::You run down the trail as fast as you can with Runal following. Minutes later you jerk to a halt. There in front of you is the body of a yak, the ox of the high mountains. Its horns have been savagely twisted off. They are now used as markers to point the way from the path to a thick rhododendron-and-pine grove. You pause, looking at the horrible sight of the dead yak. The horns may be pointing you to Carlos, or they may lead into a trap. Cautiously, you enter the grove. The pale light of dawn does little to illuminate this eerie place. You are both careful not to make noise. Runal tugs at your sleeve and points to a branches of a pine. Hanging from the branches is a red backpack. It looks like the pack that Carlos had been carrying. It may have been taken from him, or he might have left it as a warning.

9:::You run down the trail as fast as you can with Runal following. Minutes later you jerk to a halt. There in front of you is the body of a yak, the ox of the high mountains. Its horns have been savagely twisted off. They are now used as markers to point the way from the path to a thick rhododendron-and-pine grove. You pause, looking at the horrible sight of the dead yak. The horns may be pointing you to Carlos, or they may lead into a trap. You leave Runal behind as a rear guard, because one person can move more quietly and quickly, and go into the grove by yourself. The pale light barely penetrates the pine trees. After fifteen minutes of slow progress, you come across a well-worn path leading to a rock face. At the base of the rock face, there is a strange carving. A bright red door leads into the rock wall.

10:::With your heart thumping so hard you believe the whole world can hear it, you push the red door open. A boy of eight or nine sits on a carved bench. He smiles at you and says in English, "Welcome. We thought you would come. Your friend Carlos is anxious to see you." "Where is Carlos?" "Oh, not far. If you wish to join him, you must agree never to go back to the world you came from. Do you understand?" It is probably the best decision to leave. Don't look for trouble. But what about Carlos? You wait for his return, and you wait and wait and wait and wait...

11:::With your heart thumping so hard you believe the whole world can hear it, you push the red door open. A boy of eight or nine sits on a carved bench. He smiles at you and says in English, "Welcome. We thought you would come. Your friend Carlos is anxious to see you." "Where is Carlos?" "Oh, not far. If you wish to join him, you must agree never to go back to the world you came from. Do you understand?" You feel confident that once you get to Carlos the two of you can plan an escape so you agree. You take several steps forward, and then feel the grasping of a force not unlike magnetic force. You are held in the force field for several seconds, suddenly transported to the innermost room of the building. Carlos is in the center of a group of people. While you look on in amazement, some of the people change form before your very eyes. One moment they are Yeti, and the next, unicorns. Smiling, Carlos speaks to you. "Welcome. Now begins your true journey."

12:::"Let's go back!" Runal nods his agreement. This looks too much like a trap. Just as you slip out of the thicket, you see a huge creature, seven or more feet tall, weighing at least two hundred pounds, with short reddish fur covering its body. The creature has an oval, pointed head. Its feet are wide and long. It sits next to the dead yak, eating. You are nearly paralyzed with fear. But this may be your only chance to get a photograph! Dropping to one knee you position the camera, framing the Yeti and its meal against a backdrop of Lhotse and Everest. Suddenly the Yeti stops eating; his head arches up and around. Then he sees you. You freeze. The camera slips out of your hands. Before you know what has happened, the Yeti has you in its grasp. Runal leaps forward, swinging the ice axe and hitting the Yeti three times on the shoulders. The blows are as effective as a mosquito bite. From out of nowhere comes a sharp whistle-like call, and the Yeti suddenly drops you to the ground. The woman from the house appears. She speaks rapidly in a tongue neither you nor Runal can understand. The Yeti seems to become quiet, almost docile. Then the woman and the Yeti disappear into the thicket, leaving the two of you stunned and confused but safe to return to Kathmandu with your pictures.

13:::"Let's go back!" Runal nods his agreement. This looks too much like a trap. Just as you slip out of the thicket, you see a huge creature, seven or more feet tall, weighing at least two hundred pounds, with short reddish fur covering its body. It is a Yeti! The Yeti beckons you to follow. You have no choice but to do what he asks. At the far side is a smooth rock face perhaps a hundred meters high. On a group of boulders at the base of the rock sit a group of Yeti. Carlos sits with them. He seems to be OK. "Listen to what they have to say."Carlos holds up his hand and says. "In the beginning of time on this planet, life was difficult but simple. We took the lives of only those things we needed to feed us. Nothing more." The Yeti continues his tale. "Later, people found fire, lived in villages, later small towns, then bigger and bigger cities. They made weapons to hunt, and then make war on each other. We, the Yeti, retreated, wanting none of the war nor the towns. So here we are, high in the mountains, where we thought we were safe." "We mean no harm." "Perhaps not you, but there are others who do. Leave us alone." The meeting is over, and you, Carlos and Runal are allowed to leave. You decide not to take pictures or record their voices.

14:::Just as you want to leave, there is a sudden crackling of bushes and twigs. You and Runal pull back ready to run for it. Carlos breaks out of the brush, sees you two, and yells, "Run for it, run for it!" Three of you leap out of the thicket and keep going until you can go no further. Between gasps for breath, Carlos tells you that Yeti carried him to the thicket and allowed him to photograph a group of Yeti. They told him that now he had what he needed and that they wanted to be left alone. You get back to the helicopter and return to Kathmandu with the first pictures the world has ever seen of the Yeti. Fame is now yours. It's the beginning of a great career.

15:::Runal grabs your arm."I know that cry. It's the battle cry, the cry of anger and revenge. We need to go back up to the base camp to get help and come back for Carlos." "Why are they angry? We have done nothing to them." "Too many people have hunted them, tormented them. They have had enough," Runal answers. The trail seems much steeper. Finally you are at the edge of the glacier where the camp was pitched. The helicopter lies smashed in the snow. The rotor blades are twisted and the Plexiglas is shattered. There is no sign of pilot, just giant footprints--Yeti footprints--leading off to the heart of the icefall.

16:::"Runal, I'm going back down after Carlos. I can't leave him. You stay here if you wish." Runal agrees, but he stays to wait for a search helicopter. You start down the trail, and right before your eyes around orange-colored mass appears. Before your eyes Carlos appears! "Carlos! What's up? Where did you come from?" Carlos smiles at you. "Hey, that's Movidians. They like us. I have been with them for the last two days. These mechanical creatures, well, they are higher beings. They use the mountains as their earth base." There is a humming sound, coming from the creature that Carlos calls Movidians. "Time now for decision. We invite you to come with us to the Planet of the Seas in the Void of the Seven Moons. Will you come?" You and Carlos decide that it's too good an opportunity to pass up, and you agree. One light beam is pointed at you, "Now, my friends, we are on our way to the Planet of the Seas. It's where all thoughts end up." You whirl away, confident that one day you will return wiser and better able to help others in a world where the going is rough.

17:::"Runal, I'm going back down after Carlos. I can't leave him. You stay here if you wish." Runal agrees, but he stays to wait for a search helicopter. You start down the trail, and right before your eyes around orange-colored mass appears. Before your eyes Carlos appears! "Carlos! What's up? Where did you come from?" Carlos smiles at you. "Hey, that's Movidians. They like us. I have been with them for the last two days. These mechanical creatures, well, they are higher beings. They use the mountains as their earth base." There is a humming sound, coming from the creature that Carlos calls Movidians. "Time now for decision. We invite you to come with us to the Planet of the Seas in the Void of the Seven Moons. Will you come?" "No, we can't go. We must finish our expedition." You don't trust the thing. Suddenly the Movidians turn on their light beams. Wham! Carlos is hit, and he vanishes. "Earth creature, don't be foolish. Join us. You will never regret it." You reach down, picking a fist-size rock and, in a sweeping move, hurl it at the glowing blob. Just at that point several Yeti come running and they slash rapidly in the air next to the Movidians. With a frantic gurgle, the blobs depart. Carlos reappears and, knowing the Yeti are now your allies, the two of you start to learn to communicate with them.

18:::The prints lead you into the intricate maze in the icefall. Something catches your eye. It's a piece of red nylon cloth held down by a small chunk of ice. Could it from Carlos's tent? You hear a sudden noise. Four Yeti leap out from behind two huge seracs. You and Runal are captured immediately. The Yeti's strength is unbelievable. Your arms are held in vise-like grips. Finally, you are put down, and there in front of you is the helicopter pilot. He is unharmed. One of the Yeti speaks. "Well, thank you for coming here. We thought it would be nice to study you, and it would have been hard for us to travel to your country." The Yeti laughs a low, long chuckle. The others grin. "Your friend is safe. He will be brought back to you later. Now we have enough of you, and we hope you have had enough of us." The Yeti walk off and disappear into the icefall. Your find your way back to the smashed helicopter. Carlos is there, unharmed as they said. Your only disappointment is at not getting a picture. Tired, somewhat disappointed, you vow to continue your search for life forms in the remote regions of our planet.

19:::You decide to search above the camp first. There are a lot of dangerous "seracs." These huge blocks of ice are always moving, and people climbing through this maze of ice are in constant danger. A block of ice quivers and tumbles to the side, sending clouds of snow and ice crystals in the air. Runal had seen it just in time. You move more slowly now, wary of these treacherous seracs. On the back side of a serac, you find him. Carlos is sitting in the sun, fidgeting with his camera. "Hey, what are you guys doing here?" "That's what we want to know. You scared us to death with your disappearing act. What's up?" After you introduce him to Runal, Carlos explains that he found tracks, Yeti tracks perhaps, and followed them. He tried to radio, but the weather blocked it. The tracks faded and he couldn't find his way back. He had been sitting and waiting. Runal explains that they are blue bear tracks and not Yeti track. So, disappointed, you go back to the helicopter and return to Kathmandu. The next day you go to the shop of Sangee Podang Sorba, a well-known Sherpa guide. You introduce yourself and immediately you like this man. He is warm and friendly.

20:::You occupy yourself with buying the high altitude tents, ice axes, crampons, ropes, pitons, and ice screws. While looking through a rack of parkas used on previous mountain expeditions, you come across one that attracts your attention. It's a purple parka, medium-sized. One of the pockets is filled with something. You take it out and unwrap the heavy brown paper that covers it. It is a skull!!! Could this be a Yeti skull? There is a piece of paper stuffed inside the skull. It's a map, and it shows a road leading from Kathmandu to the town of Nagarkot. "Oh, that is not for sale. Please give it to me!" You look up and see Sangee moving toward you with an axe in his hand. He raises the ice axe. You run for the door, but standing there are two tough-looking men. You are quick, but not quick enough. The three men surround you. "Foolish one. Now there's no way out. We need both of you for our plan. You will send a message to your friend, telling him you've found an important clue. Get him to come here. If you don't, we'll kill you on the spot."

21:::"I'll get Carlos here. I'm not sure where he is, though," you say. How can you get out of luring Carlos into this trap? You remember a special signal used when climbing with ropes. The sharp tugs on the rope meant trouble. "Okay, give me pen and paper." They hand you these things and you begin to write. "Hey, this pen doesn't work. Look!" You quickly scratch three lines on the paper with the pen. Of course it works, and you say, "Well, I guess it's working now." You hope that three marks are enough to warn Carlos. One of the men speaks in a German accent. "Tell us now what you know about the map."

22:::You decide to fool them with a fantasy story. "Well, you see, it's like this. I am the prince of a tribe of superior beings from the lost continent of Atlantis. We live under the sea off the coast of Africa. Now we are ready to join forces with the Yeti, a tribe from the planet Borodoz which has been in the high mountains for the last three hundred years." The three look at you and begin to laugh. One of them says, "Sure, and I'm Julius Caesar, and here is Cleopatra." They all laugh at the big joke. This gives you time to whip out your Swiss Army knife. You cut some cords hanging from the ceiling. A mountain tent on display falls down on top of your enemies. You scoot out the door just in time. You go directly to the police. Later you decide to cancel the expedition for this season. There will always be another chance.

23:::"I know nothing, nothing." One man says, "That's what they all say. Let's end it right here. That expedition for the Yeti is phony. They're all from Interpol (International Criminal Police Organization)." "Hey, I'll make a deal." You don't have the faintest idea what kind of a 'deal' you could offer, but you need to stall for time. Then, to your immense surprise, Sangee opens the back door and six men holding weapons enter. "Gentlemen, you are under arrest." He flashes a badge and smiles at you. "Sorry, my friend. You just came here at the wrong time. I had to attack you to keep these men from becoming suspicious. The map you found will lead us to their hidden supplies. Good luck on your expedition.

24:::You occupy yourself with buying the high altitude tents, ice axes, crampons, ropes, pitons, and ice screws. While looking through a rack of parkas used on previous mountain expeditions, you come across one that attracts your attention. It's a purple parka, medium-sized. One of the pockets is filled with something. You take it out and unwrap the heavy brown paper that covers it. It is a skull!!! Could this be a Yeti skull? There is a piece of paper stuffed inside the skull. It's a map, and it shows a road leading from Kathmandu to the town of Nagarkot. There is an X marked next to an abandoned temple of Hindu god Shiva. "Oh, that is not for sale. Please give it to me!" You look up and see Sangee moving toward you with an ice axe in his hand. He raises the ice axe.

25:::You throw the parka at him. It's enough to startle him. You run for the door, but standing there are two tough-looking men. One has a beard, and the other is clean-shaven with hair hanging down to his shoulders. You jive to the right, duck to the left, and make for the rack of ice axes at the back of the shop. You are quick, but not quick enough. The three men surround you. "Foolish one. Now you have gone too far. Why are you here? What do you want?" Sangee snarls at you. The man with the beard holds a small, ugly looking automatic pistol, "Now there's no way out. We need both of you for our plan. You will send a message to your friend, telling him you've found an important clue. Get him to come here. If you don't, we'll kill you on the spot. If you do as we say, well, maybe you'll live. We'll have to see. We've been following you two. We thought we would use you to get this stuff out of the country."

26:::"Never, never. I'm not falling for your stuff. If you want Carlos, then go after him yourself." At that very moment there is a loud knock on the door. "Open up. Police. You're surrounded." The door crashes open and three Nepalese soldiers and a police officer rush in. Carlos is behind them. "Hands up. Well, well, we finally got you, didn't we? It's jail for you. Smugglers are all the same. Fortunately, we have been following you for the last three weeks. When you started following these two, we followed them also. Carlos has helped us. Your smuggling days are over." You are badly shaken, but the Nepalese government now considers you and Carlos heroes, and they will give you all the help you need for your expedition.

27:::Sangee has recently been with the Japanese expedition to Pumori and a French Everest attempt. Maybe you should ask him to join you as you search for the Yeti. "How about joint us on our search for the Yeti, Sangee?" He smiles and hesitates. Then he picks up two sticks of incense. One is longer than the other. He lights them both, and their rich fragrance fills the air of his small store. "You see, as one fragrance merges with the other we do not know the difference between them. Only when the shorter stick burns out will we know which stick was the fragrance of rose and which was the fragrance of magnolia."

28:::You are puzzled by his talk of incense. You ask, "So, what does that mean, Sangee?" "It does not mean anything, it only IS." You are really confused now. What to do? Perhaps you should leave this talk of incense alone and forget about asking Sangee to join you. Maybe he's crazy.

29:::"I don't think I understand. Before you come with us, I'd better talk with my partner. He's not far away. I'll go find him now. If I don't come back, don't wait for me." You move slowly toward the door; the incense smoke gets dense. In an instant it is so thick that you can't find the door. Gradually you lose consciousness and drift into a lifelong coma.

30:::Sangee has recently been with the Japanese expedition to Pumori and a French Everest attempt. Maybe you should ask him to join you as you search for the Yeti. "How about joint us on our search for the Yeti, Sangee?" He smiles and hesitates. Then he picks up two sticks of incense. One is longer than the other. He lights them both, and their rich fragrance fills the air of his small store. "You see, as one fragrance merges with the other we do not know the difference between them. Only when the shorter stick burns out will we know which stick was the fragrance of rose and which was the fragrance of magnolia." You are puzzled by his talk of incense and are really confused now. What to do? "OK, so you want me to choose which stick is rose and which is magnolia. Is that it? Is it a test? If I'm right you'll go?" You ask. Sangee smiles, and nods his head. "Here goes," you say. "The longer stick is Kashmiri Rose incense." Sangee claps his hands, brings them up to his forehead, and bows slightly, saying, "Namaste, bara sahib. I am at your command, Master." It is decided. He will accompany you. You have chosen the right one. "Where should we head to find the Yeti? What do you think, Sangee?"

31:::"Many have seen yeti prints near Everest, but there is the region near Annapurna where we could have good luck." Two days later, with permits obtained and supplies bought, you, Carlos, and Sangee start the long journey from Kathmandu to Annapurna. Three days after that, you and your party are camped in a field high above the valley floor near a small village called Dhumpus. That night, you sit in front of your red mountain tents watching the moon play on the snowy white flanks of Annapurna. It is silent and chilly. You are tired from the climb. Suddenly you see a light flash on Annapurna. It repeats. Then again. Maybe it is another climbing party. You sit and watch the spot where the flashes came from. It's cold now. You turn into the tent. Suddenly, you hear a wailing noise near your tent. "Yeeeeeeee Ah, Ah, Ah!!!" You unzip the tent flap and peer out into the darkness. There, near the pile of gear, is a dark mass. Maybe it's a Yeti. You reach for your camera. Maybe you can get a picture.

32:::"Many have seen yeti prints near Everest, but there is the region near Annapurna where we could have good luck." Two days later, with permits obtained and supplies bought, you, Carlos, and Sangee start the long journey from Kathmandu to Annapurna. Three days after that, you and your party are camped in a field high above the valley floor near a small village called Dhumpus. That night, you sit in front of your red mountain tents watching the moon play on the snowy white flanks of Annapurna. It is silent and chilly. You are tired from the climb. Suddenly you see a light flash on Annapurna. It repeats. Maybe it's a signal. "Look at that flashing light, Carlos!" "What do you think? Could be trouble." Carlos replies. "That could be an emergency signal. But it is very far from here, across the valley and just below the glacier. We could go, or I could return to Pokhara and report it to the authorities." Sangee says.

33:::Click! The digital camera flashes with its solar battery-operated strobe. What a creature! It's really a Yeti! It has a huge, hairy body, a giant head, enormous feet. It is frightened by the strobe, and it spots you. It heads right for you, making awful sounds--half growl, half gurgle. Run! You run for your life! You dash for the trees and the edge of the cliff. But the Yeti is fast, faster than you ever thought. Then you are falling, slipping into space over the cliff. Miraculously, the Yeti reaches out and grabs you, saving you just in time from certain death. He carries you back to your tent, puts you down gently, and slips off into the night.

34:::Click! The digital camera flashes with its solar battery-operated strobe. What a creature! It's really a Yeti! It has a huge, hairy body, a giant head, enormous feet. It is frightened by the strobe, and it spots you. It heads right for you, making awful sounds--half growl, half gurgle. You stay put, and fire the camera strobe in hopes of scaring it off. The digital camera keeps on flashing its strobe. The Yeti stops in its tracks, searches frantically for something, a friend perhaps, and then turns and, with amazing speed, vanishes into the night. Unfortunately for you, the shutter in your digital camera mysteriously jams.

35:::Suddenly, the mass rears up and lurches for the tents where Carlos and Sangee are sleeping. Instead of taking pictures, you decide to grab an ice axe and try to frighten this creature. You raise the ice axe. The Yeti, with eyes flashing, grabs it from your hands, snaps it as though it were a twig, and hurls it over the cliff. The Yeti speaks in controlled tones. "Leave us alone. Your world has enough. If we wanted what you have, your cities, your crimes, your wars, we would join you. But we don't want these things. Leave us alone. This is a warning." With that, the Yeti leaves. You stand and look at the fleeting figure......

36:::"But they may need help quickly. I should go there and check it." You reply. It takes you most of the night to thread your way down steep, tricky trail to reach the valley floor. Once there, you start up the immense Annapurna, scrambling over rocks and skirting the glacier. It is cold, and the night seems long to the three of you. Near dawn, Carlos says, "Stop. I think I see something." Before your eyes, you see what you had come for. Dancing around a large fire are eleven Yeti. You have stumbled into a Yeti celebration at the end of the monsoons. You quietly watch, taking pictures and making notes. You have proved, at last, that the Yeti really exist. Months later in Paris, France at the International Explorers Conference, you and Carlos are given their highest award for your work. Success is both exciting and lonely. Good luck.

37:::"You go ahead, Sangee. We'll stay here and keep watch." You reply. He vanishes into the dark night. "We should go and help them. I feel selfish, sitting here safe and sound." Carlos says. So near dawn you set off without your guide. The going is rough, and you no longer see the flashes of light. The climb seems endless, the air is thin and the breathing is hard. By mid-morning the sun is like a blast furnace. It reflects off ice that surrounds you, and in the thin air the ultraviolet rays burn your skin. You both put white zinc ointment on your noses and lips. Near noon, you gain a crest, and then you see it. It's a Pilatus Courier aircraft, one used for mountain flying. It lies in the snow, crumpled like a forgotten toy. The tail section is twisted, but the wings are intact. Reaching the plane, you open the cabin door. Huddled in the plane are the pilot and two passengers. One of the passengers is unconscious. You do what you can for the people; later that day a Royal Nepal Airlines helicopter finds you. All is well. It was the right thing to give help in the mountains. Congratulations for a job well done.

38:::You decide to go to the Everest region. You had always wanted to explore there first. Sangee comes from a village in the Everest region, and that alone could be most helpful in getting porters and help if needed. Later that week you, Carlos, and Sangee board an aircraft and fly for more than two hours deep into the Himalayas, banking gracefully around Everest. The air strip is short and very bumpy. You marvel at the skill with which the Royal Nepal Airlines pilot sets the plane down so gently. You three stay in the house of Sangee's friend to rest and get used to the thin air. For three days you stay in this small village, taking short walks, testing your legs and lungs at this high altitude. On the afternoon of the third day, Sangee tells you that you are ready. "You are ready to do the hard climbing at this altitude. We must hurry now. I have reports that the Yeti have been active in the Khumbu Icefall at Everest." He pauses and looks first at you and then at Carlos. "It is long and hard and dangerous in the icefall. Great pieces of ice tumble from the glacier and pile up like children's building blocks. The ice may crack and give way when you least suspect. Many have died in these icefalls. Perhaps that is why the Yeti like the icefall. Few people will risk going there."

39:::"I want to take the risk and go there. That's what we are here for." You go on into the icefall. The sun turns the Khumbu Icefall into a giant solar furnace. You squint, even though you're wearing your dark glacier goggles. Sangee leads the way, cautiously skirting the huge, over-hanging blocks of ice, constantly probing the snow with his ice axe for a hidden crevasse--sure sign of a dangerous snow bridge. Suddenly, with a whoop, three Yeti jump from their perch high above you and push a giant ice block. It quivers, and then it beings to tumble, slowly at first, then it picks up speed as it rolls toward you. Other seracs start to tumble around you, and you are locked forever in a sea of ice. You did not even have a chance to see the Yeti. All that remains is their eerie cry, echoing in the ice-filled valley.

40:::"Let's think about it, Sangee. The icefall is dangerous. The rains have weakened the ice and snow. Maybe it is a warning to us to leave this creature alone?" Sangee nods his head. "As you wish, bara sahib, as you wish." That night, all your supplies mysteriously disappear. It is further warning to leave things as they are in these high mountains. The Yeti have their own way of life, and they do not want you or anyone else to disturb it. Regretfully you decide to withdraw and leave the Yeti to their lives in the high Himalayas. You know that it's the right thing to do.

41:::"I appreciate your warning and kind offer of the alternative to go to the Terai," you say. "We are committed to this expedition. We will search for the Yeti with openness and friendship." Runal nods his head and speaks quickly to his assistant in Nepali. Within minutes you have the necessary papers for the expedition. As you shake hands before leaving, he stops you. "If you are determined to go on your expedition, it could be easier and safer if I come with you."

42:::"Maybe it is better to postpone the expedition to let the Yeti calm down and go on to the Terai region in search of tigers." You talk with Runal at length about the Terai, a tropical zone at sea level just one hundred miles from the Everest, the highest elevation on earth. What contrast! You realized that it will make excellent material for a feature article for your local paper.

43:::Now that he's a member of your expedition, Runal sends out a government team to set up your base camp and find Carlos. Success! Carlos is found and rejoins you. You start your journey. As you approach a village, Runal points out a large building with a red roof, which stands above the small, neat houses clustered about it. "That's the monastery where there lives a monk, a Buddhist monk, who has lived with the Yeti." "But I thought no one had really seen one. I thought no one alive had spent time with the Yeti." Runal answers, "A well-kept secret. Those who share the secret knowledge of the Yeti are pledged to reveal this knowledge only to appointed people. You, and you alone, are one of the appointed. It has been seen in the stars; it has been read in your hand." "What do you mean? Who saw it in the stars? Who read it in my hand?" Runal waits several minutes and speaks, "If you accept the secret knowledge, you life will change. You will never be the same!"

44:::"I think we'll go it alone, thanks, anyway." Mr. Runal shakes your hand, but he does not smile. It is clear that you have offended this man. What should you do? Is an apology in order? Should you try to patch things up?

45:::You try to make amends and end up inviting him to accompany you. "Mr. Runal, I beg your pardon, sir. I have made a mistake. This is your country, and we need your help. Please do accompany us. It will be our honor and pleasure to have you with us." The room is silent. You shift nervously and stare out the window at the palace grounds and the formal gardens. Runal does not respond right away. He fiddles with a pencil on his desk, deep in though. "I appreciate the kind offer. I can only accept if you allow me the great honor of being expedition leader. If you will allow this, I may be able to arrange for funds from the government, as well as tactical support from the Royal Nepalese Army, including helicopters."

46:::The telephone rings, breaking the silence in the room. Runal excuses himself and picks it up. "Yes. Yes. I understand...I will tell them." He turns to you with a serious look on his face." Our king is upset that people are disturbing the peace of our land. He apologizes, but he has decided to close the mountains to all expeditions. It is time for a rest. The Yeti are not animals. We will not allow them to be hunted any more. I am sorry, my friend." Well, at least you didn't have to refuse Runal's offer of leadership.

47:::After a long consideration, you decide to stick to your decision. You leave Runal's office. As you walk outside you are hit with torrential rain. It falls from the sky, hitting the earth in explosive drops. You planned your expedition assuming the monsoons would be over by now, but apparently they are not.

48:::You sit it out in your hotel for three weeks. The constant rain has closed off the trails to the mountain valleys with mudslides and boulders. nature has gone wild and your expedition is blocked for good. Too bad. Try again next season.

49:::"I gladly accept your offer. I am ready for the knowledge." "Come with me." He leads you to the monastery. Carlos stays behind. You and Runal enter the monastery through a huge wooden door. It is dark inside, but you make out the figure of an old man seated on the floor. Behind him is a statue of Buddha. The man welcomes you to sit before him. "Listen well with heart, head, and body. Listen with eyes more than with ears. Heed the cry of the Yeti," the old monk tells you. You can hear bells in the distance and wind in the pine trees just outside the window. It is beautiful. You sit for what seems like hours, listening with your whole being. Finally, the monk speaks. "Time now to go on the next journey." "What journey?" you ask. This is getting too weird. "A continuation of the one you are already on," he replies.

50:::This is too weird. "I'm not too happy being here. I'm frightened." You get up and head for the door. An invisible barrier stops you. The monk smiles. Perhaps he understands your feelings of conflict. The monk says, "Nothing is easy; many things are frightening. If you must leave, then leave. You will return when you are ready." You thank the monk. This time nothing blocks you from going through the door. Several minutes later you look back, not knowing whether you made the right choice or not. Your memory of recent past events is blurring, slipping, vanishing.

51:::"The Yeti are guides to Shangri-La. They take the chosen people to a hidden valley, which many have heard of and only a few have seen." You nod and agree to continue, "I am ready, Runal. Lead the way." Runal taps three times on the back of the Buddha, near the spot where its skull and neck join. Awesome! Before you stands a seven foot tall being, with broad shoulders and huge feet. His face is gentle and kind. You are not frightened. "This is Zodak. He is your special guide and will take you where you must go." Runal introduces him. Zodak motions to you to follow. He takes one giant step into the air. You look with amazement as he hovers a meter off the ground. Then you step up into the air, and you, too, are suspended above the floor of the monastery. You are levitating. You take one last look at the earth about you. You see the clouds rolling up from the flat, dry plains of Punjab in India. You see the curve of the earth. With a gentle bump, you come to rest. In front of you is a clear glass door. You push it open. "Welcome to Shangri-La." Zodak smiles. You walk out into a dark green valley surrounded by low-lying hills. Zodak leads you down a long trail to a seven-story building. It seems to be a fortress, but it is painted white and red and gold. There are no soldiers, no guns, only people who smile and greet you as though you are an old friend...

52:::Runal is still with you. He taps you on the shoulder, and you rise and follow him to the back of the monastery behind the golden Buddha. "The Yeti are guides to Shangri-La. They take the chosen people to a hidden valley, which many have heard of and only a few have seen. One last chance, my friend. Turn back now and live a normal life with your friend Carlos. Go ahead and accept the life of the secret world." You pause. Secret worlds. This is all too scary. To your way of thinking, you are not yet ready for this kind of thing. You want to explore the world you live in right now. Maybe Runal is crazy. Maybe he's a kidnapper. You'll never know. You can walk out of the monastery, find Carlos, and continue the expedition. That's what you came halfway around the world for, and that's what you intend to do. You collect Carlos from in front of the monastery and continue your search for the Yeti. Months later you are no closer to success than you were at the start. The Yeti are elusive and your funds run out. Your grandfather's words come back to you, "Everyone has the right to fail. Take chances; live life!"

53:::You look at Runal, you look at the monastery, and you look at Carlos. Maybe it is too crazy. "No, I'm not ready to accept you offer." No sooner have you spoken the words than clouds choke the narrow valley. The mountains seem to vanish, and the monastery is swallowed up by darkness. Runal turns his back to you and speaks as if to the wind.

54:::"I am very sorry that you cannot accept. Since you do not feel that you can go ahead, the expedition is declared over. All permits are revoked. You must return to Kathmandu and leave the country in twenty-four hours." The note of finality in Runal's voice tells you that you have no choice whatsoever. Your trip is over.

55:::"The Terai is incredible," Runal tells you. "The jungle is filled with flowers and animals, the fierce Indian tiger, and the dangerous rhinoceros. I will arrange to have elephants carry you into the remote areas." Within two days, after leaving a message for Carlos, you are riding on an elephant's back, swaying with its ponderous footsteps.

56:::The heat is almost unbearable, and drops of sweat roll down your neck and soak your khaki safari shirt. You come to a stream bordered by thick green jungle. There, in the sand, are boot prints and spent cartridges from a large weapon. "Not good. Not good. Must be poachers after tiger skins and elephant tusks. Dangerous," says your guide. "Let's follow them. Let's see what they're up to." "OK, but maybe we should split up; that way we can cover more territory."

57:::"OK," you say to the guide, "you go on downstream. I'll head into the jungle and circle around and meet you at the stream. If you need help, fire three shots, wait six seconds, and fire three more shots." "OK. Be careful." You set off into the jungle, moving as quietly as possible. Two hours later you stop for a rest, swatting the mosquitoes and picking off the leeches. With a roar, a magnificent tiger, at least eight feet in length from nose to tail, springs out of the brush. You are finished.

58:::"I think it is more safe to stay together." You reply. Then you and your guide head downstream. You find the poachers. Killing tigers and elephants for their skins and tusks is a serious crime in Nepal. They don't believe in leaving evidence of their activities. You try running away into the forest, but the poachers are quick. They don't leave any witnesses.

100:::Halfway through your summer vacation, you received an urgent telegram from your cousins Peter and Lucy: NEED YOUR HELP FINDING THE JEWELS OF NABOOTI. FLY TO BOSTON AT ONCE. BRING PASSPORT. DANGER. BE CAREFUL. Peter's father bought the jewels from a trader in Morocco many years ago. He always hinted about the strange and mysterious powers the stones had. Peter and Lucy tell you that the jewels have been stolen from a museum show in Paris and hand you a letter that reads: The Jewels of Nabooti are four keys to the hidden wisdom and wealth of a secret African tribe. Those who have the jewels either enjoy health and fame or they suffer agony beyond belief. The current owners of the jewels must guard against their being lost or stolen. They must wait to hand them over to the appointed messengers of Nabooti. Loss of the jewels could mean DEATH. Although you are still very puzzled after reading the letter, you understand that Peter and Lucy's lives have been threatened if they continue to search for the jewels.

101:::You agree to go on tomorrow's plane for Paris. "Fasten your seat belts, put your seatbacks in an upright position."The flight attendant explains about emergency procedures, "Flight 231 for Paris is now ready for takeoff." Turning away from the small plane window, you notice that the person sitting next to you is doodling on a pad. Long, narrow fingers grasp the gold pen tightly. They are bloodless white. What is creepier still is that they have no nails! You sneak a closer look at his face and see eyes that reflect no light. A mustache hides a scar that runs from the nostril to the corner of the mouth. You look down and see that the scribbles on the pad are diamond-shaped. They seem to spell out the word "NABOOTI". A shiver of fear races through you. This cannot be a coincidence! "Would you care to share a taxi into Paris, my friend?" It is the man next to you. "Why, I, I...don't know. Where are you going?" The stranger fixes you with an eerie stare and says, "We are searching for the same thing. I need your help and you need mine."

102:::You accept his offer for the cab ride. A row of taxis meets you at the entrance to the airport. Both of you jump in one taxi at the entrance to the airport and roar off to the center of Paris. The ride is fast and dangerous. Your driver doesn't seem to think that there are any rules to the road. Then you are standing on the sidewalk in front of a small cafe. Your companion motions to a waiter inside and tells you, "One moment, all is ready." The waiter scurries away only to return a minute later with a note asking you to meet with a man named Molotawa at the table in the back of the restaurant. "He is our contact here. Listen to what he says. But be careful. Watch the doors and windows. Our enemies are about."

103:::A tall, black man wearing a red, green and black African shirt enters the room. It is Molotawa. He begins to clean his finger-nails with a sharp, long-bladed knife, and he does not even look up when you slip into the seat next to him. You survey the room and get prepared to make a quick escape. You friend from the airplane has disappeared. Where did he go? Molotawa speaks, "I am from the Nabooti group. We believe in world peace, knowledge and wisdom, and the end to all wars. We are an ancient group, and we have fought long and hard for your goal of peace. The jewels when in pace give us a special power to stop people who oppose peace. Do you understand?" When you are about to say something, someone at a nearby table jumps to his feet and lunges forward. There is a knife in his hand.

104:::You grab a chair to defend yourself. The man falls on his face choking on a piece to meat. The knife in his hand rattles harmlessly on the floor. He struggles for air, his face getting redder by the moment. Two waiters rush up. One grabs him around the middle of the chest with both arms, gives a violent squeeze, and his windpipe is cleared of the steak. The man begins to breathe. You are safe for now. But you are embarrassed standing there holding the chair like a lion tamer. You sit down again, and to your surprise a stranger is sitting next to Molotawa. He is about to speak to you.

105:::The stranger is an old man with kind eyes. He smiles. "We have been trying to reach you for several weeks. Allow me to introduce myself. I am Jean Pierre Borel, and I come from Morocco. I believe that you want these." Mr. Borel takes your hand and puts four small paper-wrapped packets in your palm. You stare at them and not knowing what to do. Then you open one. Wow! There it is. A huge diamond. A ruby. Another ruby and the fourth. "But, I mean, where did they come from? Why are you giving them to me?" Mr. Borel holds up his hand as if to stop you. Then he answers, "My friend, questions are not always necessary. Accept the gift. Do what you must do." You don't know what to say. There are the jewels in your hand. The search is over...or maybe it's just begun.

106:::Just as you reach the exit someone shouts, "Stop that man! He is a thief!" Hands reach out to grab you; one of the waiters stands right in your way. You dodge around him successfully and make it to the street. Which way do you go? People are coming out of the restaurant shouting for the police. "Get in, we don't have much time", you strange companion beckons to you from an open car door. You dash past the car, ignoring the man, and lose yourself in the crowd of people. Too much has gone on now without planning. Stopping at an intersection, you decide to walk into a park across the street, sit down and make some plans. You sit on an unoccupied bench, gaze at the sky and think about what has happened so far. You jot the facts in your notebook: 1. Jewels of Nabooti stolen in Boston. 2. Mysterious man on plane to Paris. 3. Molotawa in cafe with story about world peace. 4. A lot of people after the jewels and you. Conclusions: DANGER, TROUBLE, CONFUSION. What is the next step? Back to find Molotawa or go on to Morocco?

107:::As you sit in the warm sunshine deciding about going to Morocco, you catch sight of what looks like a small plump girl with an odd-looking dog. She runs up to you, laughing happily and hands you the leash. She runs away. When you look down, you realize that the dog is a mechanical dog. Without warning, it explodes into a thousand brilliant shards of metal. The explosion finishes you off. UGH, what a terrible way to go!

108:::You circle back to the cafe, find the waiter and ask him to get in touch with Molotawa. Molotawa arrives and you agree with him to go on to Senegal to meet the Nabooti tribe. But once again, a man jumps up and lunges at you, knife in hand. Just like the nightmare a few hours ago. Molotawa is grim. He speaks, "You bring bad luck. We must separate now." "I must go with you. Give me another chance." Molotawa think for a while and says, "You must prove that you are not a spy, and informer, an enemy. I will give you two tasks to perform. You choice will reveal who you really are." Then he draws from his pocket a piece of paper and points to it, "Task one involves the removal of certain objects from a bank safe. It is simple, but perhaps dangerous. Task two involves helping one of our men to escape. His name is Ramolt and he is wanted all over Europe. You will lead him along a dangerous escape route and your life will be threatened." "Task one", you said. Molotawa grins and says, "Just as I thought. A crook at the heart. We will do well together."

109:::You circle back to the cafe, find the water and ask him to get in touch with Molotawa. Molotawa arrives and you agree with him to go on to Senegal to meet the Nabooti tribe. But once again, a man jumps up and lunges at you, knife in hand. Just like the nightmare a few hours ago. Molotawa is grim. He speaks, "You bring bad luck. We must separate now.""I must go with you. Give me another chance." Molotawa think for a while and says," You must prove that you are not a spy, and informer, an enemy. I will give you two tasks to perform. You choice will reveal who you really are. Task one involves the removal of certain objects from a bank safe. It is simple, but perhaps dangerous. Task two involves helping one of our men to escape. His name is Ramolt and he is wanted all over Europe. You will lead him along a dangerous escape route and your life will be threatened." Ramolt is the code name for a leader of the Nabooti Peace Group. He is one of the Jewels of Nabooti. The jewels are four famous people who lead the fight for world peace. The real jewels are valuable but unimportant. You are asked to accompany him by train in an attempt to escape. You have made a brave choice. Good luck.

110:::You circle back to the cafe, find the waiter and ask him to get in touch with Molotawa. Molotawa arrives and you agree with him to go on to Senegal to meet the Nabooti tribe. But once again, a man jumps up and lunges at you, knife in hand. Just like the nightmare a few hours ago. Molotawa is grim. He speaks, "You bring bad luck. We must separate now." You leave the restaurant and get into the street. Your pace slows and you begin to relax. Then you feel a tug at your arm. What now? But it is only a monkey on a chain with a tin can in his hand. The chain leads to an organ grinder. "A few francs, perhaps?" The organ grinder smiles, nods and says. You search for your pocket and come up for a few coins. No sooner does the clank of your coins stop in the tin cup than the organ grinder says, "Run for your life." You turn in the crowd. Where is the danger come from? A large black van cruises to a halt near the organ grinder and his monkey. You are frozen with fear. You feel the pounding of your heart, the beat of your blood in your veins. The side door of the van opens slowly. Out step six men, three have guitars, one a saxophone, one a flute and the other an African drum. Run for Your Life is a rock-and-roll band. Relax and Enjoy!

111:::You race for the nearest exit. Just as you reach the exit someone shouts, "Stop that man! He is a thief!" Hands reach out to grab you; one of the waiters stands right in your way. You dodge around him successfully and make it to the street. Which way do you go? People are coming out of the restaurant shouting for the police. "Get in, we don't have much time", your strange companion reaches out and grabs you by the arm into a car. "Duck down so no one sees you." The car accelerates and you instinctively know that you must be on a super highway heading out of Paris. Then there is the sound of helicopter rotor blades beating down on you. You see a four-place Bell executive helicopter in front of your racing car. Bullets from the muzzle of a machine gun rip through the thin metal of the car miraculously missing the driver, you and the man from the airplane. The car is finished. One of the people from the airplane with a scar running horizontally across his forehead, a heavy beard speaks, "You have exactly thirty-six seconds by my digital watch to decide to come with us or not. If you don't, we will extinguish you." The drive secretly slips you a pistol.

112:::You hesitate for a moment. The leader does not wait but fires a gas-loaded pen. You choke on the small cloud of dense gas and fall to earth. The three men load you roughly into the helicopter and zoom off. You keep your eyes shut pretending to be asleep. The three men discuss what they will do next. You hear mention of Monsieur Rigolade, a famous French politician. What in the world can be his motives for associating with the Nabooti group? One may says, "Let's throw this spare baggage out...no use to use...knows nothing." You realize that they are talking about you and sit up, "Hey, wait a minute. I know plenty I can help." The three men turn and grin at you, "OK, keep talking. Help us and you won't get hurt." "We want you to cable your cousins, tell them to get here right away. Then we will move on the next step." This was one time that you shouldn't have argued. They open the cabin door and push you out! Right into a farm pond. Wet but safe.

113:::You hesitate for a moment. The leader does not wait but fires a gas-loaded pen. You choke on the small cloud of dense gas and fall to earth. The three men load you roughly into the helicopter and zoom off. You keep your eyes shut pretending to be asleep. The three men discuss what they will do next. You hear mention of Monsieur Rigolade, a famous French politician. What in the world can be his motives for associating with the Nabooti group? One may says, "Let's throw this spare baggage out...no use to use...knows nothing." You realize that they are talking about you and sit up, "Hey, wait a minute. I know plenty I can help." The three men turn and grin at you, "OK, keep talking. Help us and you won't get hurt." "We want you to cable your cousins, tell them to get here right away. Then we will move on the next step." Peter and Lucy are not at home. There is no reply for the cable. Your captors bind and gag you and drop you in a trash bin behind a French fast food shop. A mangy dog discovers you and barks. You are freed just before the trash masher picks up the bin. Luck is with you. You gave up the search and go home.

114:::You hesitate for a moment. The leader does not wait but fires a gas-loaded pen. You choke on the small cloud of dense gas and fall to earth. The three men load you roughly into the helicopter and zoom off. "Hey, I will give you what you want. Let's be reasonable." "We want the jewels. Pure, simple, straight." Thinking fast, you respond with the following, "OK, but only I can get them. The diamonds are in Morocco. The rubies are in Boston. Without me, you won't get anywhere." It is a bluff. Maybe it will work. They tell you to choose where to go first.

115:::You hesitate for a moment. The leader does not wait but fires a gas-loaded pen. You choke on the small cloud of dense gas and fall to earth. The three men load you roughly into the helicopter and zoom off. "Hey, I will give you what you want. Let's be reasonable." "We want the jewels. Pure, simple, straight." Thinking fast, you respond with the following, "OK, but only I can get them. The diamonds are in Morocco. The rubies are in Boston. Without me, you won't get anywhere." It is a bluff. Maybe it will work. They tell you to choose where to go first. You decide to go to Boston first. An international airline strike has stopped all planes from taking off. While waiting in the airport, you get a notice to contact the police. You go up to a gendarme standing by the counter at the newsstand. The minute you identify yourself, the gendarme becomes suspicious. He takes you to an office where a fat officer sits at a desk munching on French fries. He holds your passport in his greasy hand, compares the picture with a fax his other hand. You are able to peek and see the words, "Dangerous fugitive, arrest immediately!" You are arrested before you can get any words out. You are charged with plotting against the French government. It will be a long legal battle to get you out!

116:::With the pistol at hand, you still think that there is no sense in fighting. You drop the pistol, raise your hands above your head and say, "OK, it's up to you. No fight." Soon you are in the helicopter scurrying across the French countryside. One of the people turns and says, "Join us. We will pay you anything you want, but the important thing is to help us." You have no idea what help they need from you and also why you. You captor speaks, "The Jewels of Nabooti are perhaps the most important force in the modern world. They can be used for good or evil. The people you are dealing with pretend they support the good side. They are liars. We are on the side of good. Join us." But who in the world are these people? Now you are really worried. Who knows what to believe? As you gaze down at the green country below you, you see an orange flash. It looks like a Fourth of July rocket. BALOOM! SCROSH! It is all over. The rocket hits the helicopter. You are finished.

117:::You sit with your back to the wall. That way no one can sneak up on you from behind. Then Molotawa appears-at least you assume that it is Molotawa-and takes a seat next to you. He is a handsome man of about twenty-five years of age. There are tribal scars on his cheeks, two rows of three lines each. "Thank you for agreeing to meet with me. Perhaps we can recover the lost jewels with each other's help." You nod in general agreement. "But who are you?" Molotawa says, "I am a prince of the ancient Nabooti tribe. We ruled a large region of Africa for many years. We were fair and just. The jewels are a powerful symbol of your leadership. They can confuse the evildoers and stop the bad. We must have them back." You are impressed with his words. "If you wish, you can meet my father, the king, here in Paris or you can go now to Senegal where my people are." You decide to go to Senegal. You soon find yourself in Dakar, the capital of Senegal, a beautiful country on Africa's Atlantic coast. Just as you enter the Grand Hotel, a siren shrieks, and both of you spin about to see a car scream around the corner. It is headed right for the hotel, but there is no one in the car. It smashes into the hotel lobby and barely misses you and Molotawa.

118:::You think this was an accident. You cross the lobby to the car and open the car door. Pinned to the steering wheel is a note with your name on it! It reads: WE WON'T GIVE UP. GO BACK WHERE YOU BELONG. The moment you leave the hotel, you are surrounded by police officers who claim that this police car was stolen only minutes before. One of them says, "The note is addressed to you, you must come with us to police headquarters." You protest, but they refuse to listen to you. Off you go to see the commissioner of police. You decide to tell the whole story to them. The police chief listens politely to your story. He tells you that he too, believes in the Jewels of Nabooti and he will help you recover them. "Allow me introduce to you my aide, Ouobessa Soul-One, a Senegalese from the North by the Senegal River." You shake hands with Ouobessa. He presents you with three options in your quest.

119:::You choose to try to contact the Nabooti tribe direct by going. There isn't any listing in the phone directory, no fax number, no email address, not even a website. Where should you look for the Nabooti tribe? They are a nomadic tribe that wanders from the northern part of Senegal to Chad to the edge of the Sahara. An article in the local newspaper reported that the Nabooti tribe was heading toward Lake Chad. You rent a twin-engine light plane and fly to the huge, shallow lake just south of the Sahara. Your plane crosses airspace held by a revolutionary guerrilla group. You are forced to land at an unused airstrip near a town named Fort Lamy. When you land the plane, you are surrounded by people with rifles pointed at you. You try to take off again. Release the brakes! Kick the rudder pedals hard left! Push the throttles full forward! Bump down the strip. Bullets rip through the thin metal skin of the plane. You make it into the air and dash for the border away from Chad. But your plane runs out of fuel and you land is a desolate area. You have very little water, no food and no little prince to help you.

120:::You choose to try to contact the Nabooti tribe direct by going. There isn't any listing in the phone directory, no fax number, no email address, not even a website. Where should you look for the Nabooti tribe? They are a nomadic tribe that wanders from the northern part of Senegal to Chad to the edge of the Sahara. An article in the local newspaper reported that the Nabooti tribe was heading toward Lake Chad. You rent a twin-engine light plane and fly to the huge, shallow lake just south of the Sahara. Your plane crosses airspace held by a revolutionary guerrilla group. You are forced to land at an unused airstrip near a town named Fort Lamy. When you land the plane, you are surrounded by people with rifles pointed at you. You get out of the plane and hold your hand up in a signal of peace. You strike a bargain with the leader of this band of cutthroats. They lead you to the Nabooti tribe camped peacefully on the shores of Lake Chad. The jewels have been returned. The power of peace is flowing in the world. Congratulations on a job well done.

121:::You choose to search in Dakar. Dakar is beautiful and confusing. Old buildings from past ages stand next to modern hotels and offices. Tall, handsome people in western dress and African grab move about. Flowers and palms line the streets. You begin at the university by examining the index cards in the library catalogue files. Nabooti is listed as a tribe, a religion, a man, a region, and a place. You could spend your life in the library. But you want your action. There is a listing in the tourist guide for a trip to the beautiful beaches and Club Nabooti. You take the trip to the Club Nabooti. Club Nabooti is jammed. People from Brazil, Germany, Japan, Canada, and other countries crowd the gigantic swimming pool, occupy all the tables in the outdoor restaurant, fill the tennis courts and cover the beach. The flash of credit cards and the jingle of change on the gaming tables underline that this place is for the very rich. A man invites you into his office. When you mention the Jewels of Nabooti, he laughs and says, "Sure, we had them, but we sold them to pay for the new addition to the club." You don't think that's very funny.

122:::You choose to search in Dakar. Dakar is beautiful and confusing. Old buildings from past ages stand next to modern hotels and offices. Tall, handsome people in western dress and African grab move about. Flowers and palms line the streets. You begin at the university by examining the index cards in the library catalogue files. Nabooti is listed as a tribe, a religion, a man, a region, and a place. You could spend your life in the library. But you want your action. There is a listing in the tourist guide for a trip to the beautiful beaches and Club Nabooti. You rent a car and drive to Club Nabooti yourself. Club Nabooti is front for the headquarters of the Nabooti Peace Group. People pretending to be vacationers are really secret agents who are trained here for missions all over the world. This lush resort is really the head quarters and training camp of the world's most powerful peace group. You are welcomed, asked to join the search team. Your efforts so far have earned you respect and a membership in a peace team. It is a great honor.

123:::You and your strange companion jump in one taxi at the entrance to the airport and roar off to the center of Paris. Then you are standing on the sidewalk in front of a small cafe. The waiter scurries away only to return a minute later with a note asking you to meet with a man named Molotawa at the table in the back of the restaurant. "Thank you for agreeing to meet with me. Perhaps we can recover the lost jewels with each other's help." You nod in general agreement. "But who are you?" Molotawa says, "I am a prince of the ancient Nabooti tribe. We ruled a large region of Africa for many years. We were fair and just. The jewels are a powerful symbol of your leadership. They can confuse the evildoers and stop the bad. We must have them back." You are impressed with his words. "If you wish, you can meet my father, the king, here in Paris or you can go now to Senegal where my people are." You decide to go to Senegal. You soon find yourself in Dakar, the capital of Senegal, a beautiful country on Africa's Atlantic coast. Just as you enter the Grand Hotel, a car smashes into the hotel lobby and barely misses you and Molotawa. You think this was an accident. You cross the lobby to the car and open the car door. Pinned to the steering wheel is a note with your name on it! It reads: WE WON'T GIVE UP. GO BACK WHERE YOU BELONG.

124:::The police officers come and surround you. You tell them about the whole story, including the Jewels of Nabooti. The chief of police believes in you and is willing to help you recover them. He introduces his aide Ouobessa Soul-One, a Senegalese from the North by the Senegal River, to you. And you two decide to consult a shaman, which is another word for a witch doctor. You and Ouobessa rent an old Land Rover and drive out of the city. The Land Rover bumps along, and finally you arrive at a small village. There are twenty-three circular huts of roughly the same size. They surround a lightly larger hut. It is to this larger hut that you and Ouobessa head. Sitting in the darkness is an old man. He is dressed in a simple, worn, khaki shirt and shorts. "Come in. Sit down." The old man does not even look up at you. His eyes are closed. He hands you a black cup with six chicken bones, two parrot feathers, and the tooth of a hyena. "Throw these on the floor." You do as he command, and the bones, feathers, and tooth form a pattern that is barely discernible in the dim light. He opens his eyes and studies the pattern. "The mountains of the Moon bear the secret of your search. But, so too do the upper waters of the great Zaire River. Look for the sign of the snake and the mask of the crocodile."

125:::You decide to go to the Mountains of the Moon first. You and Ouobessa travel by plane, truck, and finally, foot, until you stand at the base of the highest peak. You have heard that there is a guide service to the peaks of the Mountains of the Moon. But when you reach the small, wooden hut with the rusty metal roof, no one is there. On a wooden table inside the hut is a map of the main peaks showing routes and several overnight huts. One is marked in red. Underneath it is a crude line drawing of four jewels. The place marked is at the 14,000-foot level. You two choose ice axes, ropes, packs, and crampons from the supply stacked in the corner of the room. You trudge off, following the path through the ferns. At the top of the cliff, you leave the rock face, cross snowfields, and climb steeply. The sun beats down on you. It reflects on the snow and blinds you. Then you see it; it is a small mountain hut made out of aluminum. It's an emergency shelter. Across the doorway are three chicken bones and two dead mice. Ouobessa screams, "Stop. Don't touch. This is magic. It is a curse and a warning. It means it is death to enter."

126:::You don't care about Ouobessa's warning and cross the threshold. Nothing happens. Your eyes grow accustomed to the gloom. It is a small hut with enough room for six people in sleeping bags--a typical high-altitude mountaineering hut. There is a low table in the center. You and Ouobessa approach it. There they are. The fabled Jewels of Nabooti, two rubies as red as the glistening tongue of a cobra and two diamonds that shimmer like sunlight reflecting on a mirror. You and Ouobessa stare in disbelief. You reach out to touch them. ZONK! You are hit with a bolt of lightning. The energy in the lightning momentarily paralyzes you. The Jewels of Nabooti vanish. The sky is clear of clouds. You will never lay hands on the jewels.

127:::You stop. Ouobessa says, "It is not good. A curse like this means that we are still being followed. One of us will go for help. One of us will stay here." You hesitate but finally agree. With the flip of a coin, you decide who stays watch and who goes down for more help. You win. You go down the mountain, but you slip on an ice pitch and tumble into a deep crevasse. There is no way out. Ouobessa sits alone and waits for you.

128:::You decide to travel to the headwaters of the Zaire River first. The Zaire River is a mighty, wide river flowing from the highlands of Central Africa down to the sea. Many tributaries run into the Zaire. River steamers loaded with people and goods travel up and down the navigable parts of the river. You and Ouobessa fly to Kinshasa and book passage on the River King. You climb aboard just as it casts off. The big paddle wheels churn the brown water. You watch them, almost hypnotized at the sight. Four days later, you and Ouobessa disembark at Leelengalli, the end of the line. Now you must travel by a small boat paddled by men from the village. Four more days of endless travel lead you deeper into the jungle. You have heard tales of a man called Kurtz. It is rumored that he holds the Jewels of Nabooti.

129:::"Mister Kurtz? He's dead. A penny for the old guy." It is an African talking. You stare at a ramshackle building surrounded by the jungle. "But he left a package for people he said would on day come. It is there. Perhaps you are the ones." The package contains the Jewels of Nabooti. Wrapped in old newspapers are the four stones. They glow with an inner warmth that makes you feel good inside. There is beauty and power in these stones. They are symbols of strength and peace.

130:::You don't want to be with him. A large crowd gives you the perfect opportunity to escape. Deciding to avoid your companion, you duck into a phone booth. The crowd swirls around you, and he is gone. Slowly you open the door, look cautiously around, and step out on the airport waiting room floor. There is a tap on your shoulder. You spin around. Standing there is a tall woman with intense eyes and a muscular midget in a track suit. He has a small laptop with him. "Come with us. We are going to help you with the Jewels of Nabooti," the woman announces. Too much! No matter where you go, they are after you. Is there no escape? "OK, OK, what is it? What do you know?" She looks at you and then says, "There is a jet waiting over in the private air terminal. It will take you to Morocco. Here is your identification." She hands you a small sliver of ivory with a design on it. "Whoever sees it will give you help. Good luck." The midget grins in an evil way. He opens up the laptop so you can look inside. It is not a laptop at all. It contains a dagger with a sharp point. The dagger sends you a different kind of message than the kind you get over the Internet. A very different message.

131:::You decide to go to the jet. A beautiful and unusual jet plane sits in readiness at the private air terminal. You are met by two large men in business suits. "Follow us. Be quite." There is no opportunity for hesitation or argument. They hustle you into the aircraft. Soon you arrive in Morocco. No one has said a word. You know no more than when you left Boston, except that quite a few people are on your trail. A black Mercedes limousine pulls up to the jet. A powerfully built man in dark clothes stands by the car holding the door open. You are moved along with little or no choice to escape or even to ask what is going on. Tires screech around corners. The car speeds toward town, past rolling hills filled with brilliant yellow, blue and red flowers. It then stops in the shadow of the wall of the Medina--the great walled inner city of Tangiers. The two of you start off on foot. The drive points to a small opening in the Medina wall. A blind woman sits by the opening, begging. When you walk by her, she spits at your feet. You jump back in disgust, but the driver just keeps pushing you on. You stop and pretend to tie your shoes. You look at the blind woman, and you're sure she winked at you. Was that just a tic, or maybe she's not blind and trying to signal you?

132:::In your pocket is the small ivory identification piece given to you in Paris as a sign that can be used to get help. Instinct tells you to give the ivory piece to the beggar. You drop it into her outstretched hands. The moment the ivory piece is in her hands, she yells, "AIEEE!" Two short, wiry men in hooded robes stop out of a small door in the wall. One of them shouts in English, "We are your friends, follow us." The other man wrestles with the huge man who drove the limousine. You go with them through dark tunnels and streets deep into the Medina. You haven't the faintest idea where you are or what is going on. The ivory piece seems to have a strange and powerful effect on these people. "In here." It is your new guide speaking. Seated at a small table is an old man with white hair and beard. "We have followed your trip from Boston. We know who you are, and we want the jewels. Now give them to us." "But, I don't have the jewels," you protest. The old man rises and looks sharply at you. "Look in the pocket of your coat."

133:::INCREDIBLE! There in the coat pocket are the Jewels of Nabooti! How did they get there? But, that is not important. There they are, bright, incredible, powerful, mysterious. The old man smiles, takes them from your hand before you can do a thing, and says, "You have done well in returning the Jewels of Nabooti to their rightful owners. Blessings will befall you. Your life will be rich with friends and adventure. Do not wonder how they came to you. It is all in the magic of the jewels. We thank you." As the old man speaks you see him change form. He becomes younger, taller, and glows with a gentle gold radiance. You did the right thing. He is the king. The leader. The source of gold.

134:::They don't look nice to you. You pretend to fumble in your pocket, while you look for an escape route. The old man sees through your ruse. He stamps the ground and kicks angrily. You dash for a rear door and burst through. The door leads to a beautiful courtyard garden containing a calm dark pool filled with lotus flowers. A fat greasy man on the other side of the pool is sharpening scimitars on an old stone wheel. He takes on unsmiling look, grabs a knife and walks toward you. That pool is looking pretty good! You take a running leap and dive in, much to the fat man's surprise. He tries to motion you to stop. You ignore him and turn to swim, when you notice a pair of eyes just above the surface coming toward you. Crocodile. More eyes converge on you as you thrash to escape the oncoming open jaws. Too late.

135:::It's too late to do anything. The huge man rushes you along the twisting streets of the Medina. You enter a small square and come to a halt at an open stall selling olives and spices. There is a brief muffled conversation between your guide and the proprietor of the stall. Then you are pushed through a door in the back of the stall. The door leads to a tunnel that in turn leads to the yacht basin in the harbor. "Don't move. We will take care of everything." The voice is harsh. A powerboat nestles against the dock. You are hustled aboard. Two crewmen start the motor, and with a roar of the engines the boat nudges out into the harbor. Throttles are pushed full forward. The boat leaps on top of the waves and speeds toward Cap Spartel and the Pillars of Hercules.

136:::The surf roars in and crashes on the beaches just below the jutting cliffs called the Pillars of Hercules. The crash of waves is not only on the beach! The crew members yell, "Watch out, look out for that wave!" But they have forgotten the treacherous rollers of the Atlantic that pound the shores of Africa. The boat rolls violently and is tossed up into the air by a giant wave. You cry out, "Helllp-HELLP!" The boat smashes to pieces in the milk-white surf. All hands are lost.

137:::"I'm sorry, this must be a mistake. You have the wrong person. I don't know anything about Jewels of... What did you say the name was...?" The woman looks at you with a puzzled expression. She pulls out a small whistle and blows it. Within seconds, you are surrounded by French police and hustled off to a small room where you are questioned for two hours. They accuse you of being a smuggler. "But, I've never smuggled anything in my life. Search me."

138:::The two police officers on either side of you do a quick but complete search. Amazing--in a jacket pocket they discover a small packet. When it is opened you are shocked to see a very large uncut diamond! "So, you are not a smuggler. Well, well, what do we have here? This is a mere nothing, eh? You know smuggling such diamonds from countries in Africa is an international crime. What do you have to say for yourself now?"

139:::You want to call the American embassy for legal help. The American embassy sends over a member of the legal staff. You tell her the long, complicated story. Her advice is to return to the United States as quickly as possible. She will do her best to get the French police to release you. "The Jewels of Nabooti are too, dangerous for you to retrieve alone. Let them be." You feel depressed, but you are also convinced that there are too many people involved for you to handle. You follow her advice, give up the chase, and return to the United States.

140:::"I'm sorry, this must be a mistake. You have the wrong person. I don't know anything about Jewels of... What did you say the name was...?" The woman looks at you with a puzzled expression. She pulls out a small whistle and blows it. Within seconds, you are surrounded by French police and hustled off to a small room where you are questioned for two hours. They accuse you of being a smuggler. "But, I've never smuggled anything in my life." You try to tell them why you are here. "It's about the Jewels of Nabooti." It's a far-fetched story, but the police captain seems to believe you. To make sure, he calls Interpol, the international police. Then he turns to you and says: "Interpol tells me that you are telling the truth. We would like to help you. The Jewels of Nabooti are powerful, and those who seek them can be dangerous. If you would like, we can provide you with a plainclothes detective. Or if you would prefer to go on to Morocco alone, we can give you a special phone number to call if danger threatens."

141:::You happily accept the offer of police protection. They introduce me Raoul Tierrry--special detective in the smuggling and international crime division of the French police. Raoul says little, but you are glad to have him with you. You sit alone with him working out a plan of action. "This could be my most interesting and perhaps my most dangerous case. Would you like to carry a gun?" Guns are trouble. But you choose to take it. Raoul hands you a compact black automatic. Then he suggests that you and he should make contact with the secret African People's Federation. It consists of politicians, writers, philosophers, and exiles from many of the African countries south of the Sahara. You would like to meet them, but you are anxious to get on your way. Delays are eating up time.

142:::You happily accept the offer of police protection. They introduce me Raoul Tierrry--special detective in the smuggling and international crime division of the French police. Raoul says little, but you are glad to have him with you. You sit alone with him working out a plan of action. He suggests lunch in a little restaurant on the Left Bank because, according to him, "It is always best to begin difficult tasks without the burden of hunger." The restaurant is named Albert's. It is pleasant, the food tastes good. When the meal is done, you pick up the check. At the bottom of the check is written: LEAVE BY THE BACK DOOR. TURN LEFT AT RUE PELICAN, RIGHT AT RUE FUGERE. WAIT UNTIL YOU ARE CONTACTED. RG. Raoul has gone to wash his hands. He does not return. You are alone.

143:::It is better to meet the African People's Federation first. Seventeen floors above the city of Paris is a room in a new skyscraper. It looks out on Notre Dame. One person, an African named Patrice, sits at a large desk. He does not smile. He points to chairs and you and Raoul sit. Then he speaks in a slow and precise fashion. "The jewels are safe. You may give up the search. Here is proof." He hands you a cable from Peter and Lucy. It reads: RETURN BOSTON. ALL WELL. SEARCH OVER. P&L

144:::You want to skip the meeting and push on for Morocco. You were told by Peter and Lucy that Morocco was the key. And when you check into your room in Morocco, what a surprise! A note at the hotel desk tells you that Peter and Lucy are in Room 12! They flew directly from Boston. Peter and Lucy explain that a message told them to go to Morocco or else you would be killed. Peter says, "On the back of an envelope pushed under Lucy's door the other night were two addresses. Both are here in Morocco!" You decide to go with Lucy and Raoul to the first address. After you reach the address, you are met by a giant in a flowing gray and brown robe. He glares at you and pushes you into the shop. Before you can do anything, the three of you are handcuffed and gagged. "You will be held as hostages for the Jewels of Nabooti. We set a six-day time period. Then it is off with your heads." Five days pass. No word. This is the middle of the sixth day...

145:::You want to skip the meeting and push on for Morocco. You were told by Peter and Lucy that Morocco was the key. And when you check into your room in Morocco, what a surprise! A note at the hotel desk tells you that Peter and Lucy are in Room 12! They flew directly from Boston. Peter and Lucy explain that a message told them to go to Morocco or else you would be killed. Peter says, "On the back of an envelope pushed under Lucy's door the other night were two addresses. Both are here in Morocco!" You decide to go with Peter and Raoul to the second address. Raoul is anxious to go. When you arrive at the address, you are surprised to see that it is a small palace on the outskirts of Tangiers. Guards with dogs surround the palace. You are immediately allowed to enter. You are in a large room. Eleven people stand around a small table. On the table is a three-foot-long curved sword with four jewels in the hilt. They are the Jewels of Nabooti. The sword glows with a mysterious light. It rises off the table, glides through the air, and comes to rest in your hand. You are the new guardian of the Jewels of Nabooti. The chosen leader for peace and justice.

146:::You search for Raoul. The waiter says he left in a hurry through the back door. You have to follow the instructions and walk up and down Rue Fugere for more than half an hour. Then a car pulls to a stop. A piece of paper flutters to the ground. GO TO THE EIFFEL TOWER. TAKE THE ELEVATOR TO THE TOP. RG. You don't know these people. It's like a treasure hunt, but the results could spell D-E-A-T-H. You decide to double back to the restaurant. Playing it safe, aren't you? Double back, seek Raoul, but in the end, give up the chase for these fabled gems. You will never find them. TOO BAD.

147:::You search for Raoul. The waiter says he left in a hurry through the back door. You have to follow the instructions and walk up and down Rue Fugere for more than half an hour. Then a car pulls to a stop. A piece of paper flutters to the ground. GO TO THE EIFFEL TOWER. TAKE THE ELEVATOR TO THE TOP. RG. You go on to the Eiffel Towel. Once atop the tower you look out on the beautiful city of Paris. In the slanting light of late afternoon it sparkles like a thousand jewels. The sun is reflected from panes of glass. They shimmer like radiant gems for a minute, then the sun dips lower. The Jewels of Nabooti were finally about beauty of peace. And beauty is all around us--if we just look and really see.

148:::You want to wait for Raoul before taking any action. Suddenly he reappears behind you and drops a small packet into your lap. You look at each other in dismay. Inside are the Jewels of Nabooti. But they've been crushed into small shards, now worthless both as priceless gems and the repository of magical power.

149:::You want freedom of movement so you only accept the special phone number. Yet, it is comforting to know that there could be help at the end of the phone. The trip from Paris to Morocco is uneventful. Now you walk about this half-European, half-North African city trying to decide on your next move. Of course you have the address of a contact in the marketplace. The address leads you to a door in a whitewashed wall with no windows on the first and second floors. It is hot and you are impatient for someone to respond to your ringing the doorbell. Then the door opens. But no one is there. You peer down a long corridor of whitewashed walls hung with beautifully patterned red and blue rugs. A fan whirls overhead in a central room at the end of the hall. The smell of incense fills the air.

150:::You take a cautious step into the hallway. It is noticeably cooler inside. Another step, then two more. There is only the sound of your shoes on the red tiles of the floor and the whining of the fan. The door behind you closes on oiled hinges. You stop, look about, and then peer into a room off to the side. Then it happens! The floor falls away under you, and you spin dizzily down and down, coming to a nasty crash on a sodden, damp earthen floor. It is pitch-black. There are no exits; there is no food, no water. You are doomed.

151:::A young man wearing a colorful djellaba stands in front of you. He wears a curved scimitar at his side. Then it hits you! He is PETER! What in the world is he doing here in Morocco dressed in this crazy djellaba? "Peter, what in the world are you doing here? I thought you and Lucy were going to stay in Boston where you would be safe!" Peter puts a finger to his lips and indicates silence. Then he leads the way into the house. You are standing in a room filled with seventeen people. They ranged in age from very young to very old. There are people of all colors-black, yellow, brown, and white--in the room. Standing in the center are two figures cloaked in white robes. Before them is a box. In the box are the Jewels of Nabooti! One of the people is Lucy. "Welcome. You have passed the test. You are courageous and dedicated. We offer you membership in the International Tribe of Nabooti. This is an honor few people ever hear of--fewer still receive. Step forward, please." As you step forward, you realize that your life has changed forever. You are part of a world wide organization fighting for world peace. Good luck.

152:::"Hey, I can't just hop on another plane. I just don't know enough about what is happening." Peter looks at you and shrugs his shoulders. "I don't blame you. Let's go back to my house." That night over dinner the story of the jewels comes out. Peter says， "Three times in recent years messages have come demanding their return to the Nabooti tribe. Our father refused to be frightened into returning the jewels." Lucy quickly adds, "It wasn't just that they were worth a small fortune. Dad believed in the legends about the jewels. He knew the jewels had strange and magical powers." "And of course then he was killed in that tragic accident," Peter reminds you. You member the details of that awful event. Your uncle was stepping onto a sailboat from a dock on a perfectly calm day, when the boat suddenly moved. You uncle slipped between the boat and the dock and was crushed. His last words to Peter and Lucy were "Protect the jewels at all cost."

153:::Peter was spooked by his father's words. A short time after, he received a note directing him to deliver the jewels to a rug merchant in Tangiers, a Moroccan city. "Before I had a chance, three men broke into the house, bound me hand and foot, and stole the jewels," he finishes. CRASH! As you and your cousins talk, the window is shattered by a shotgun blast. No one is hurt, but you are all terrified. A musical chime plays, and Peter, shaking, scrambles for the phone. "That's strange, no one but my family knows this number." When he picks it up a deep voice says, "Give up now or else. This is just a warning." Click. The phone goes dead. A wind blows in the trees outside the broken window. The three of you stare at each other.

154:::You look at Peter and Lucy for a long time. Then as if someone else were speaking for you, "I can't do it. We'll all get killed. Give up. Get the police. Let them handle it." Silence. Peter and Lucy both look away. Finally, Peter speaks, "But you've got to help us. You're our only hope." "OK! But it's too big for us." You hesitate to turn down your cousins who sound desperate. "Wait a minute. Maybe I can get Beech Muzzwell to help. Beech is an adventurer, a private detective, and a good person to have around in an emergency."

155:::Peter and Lucy are not happy with the delay involved in getting Beech Muzzwell to Boston. Yet, you are convinced that Muzzwell is essential to your success. Over a lunch of tacos and re-fried beans, the three of you discuss the problems of the global search for the lost jewels. The telephone's ring interrupts the calm of the moment.

156:::"Hello, this is the FBI calling. We are sorry to report that a Mr. Beech Muzzwell has been kidnapped from the East Side Air Terminal in New York by a gang of jewel thieves. A not was left with one of the bus drivers saying that he will be killed if you continue your search for the Jewels of Nabooti. I think we had better get together for a talk. I'll send a car out for you right away." "That's it. It is too much for us. Let's quit while we're still alive." Peter and Lucy look at you and nod in agreement.

157:::"Hey, I can help you but I need more information." Peter looks at you and shrugs his shoulders. "I don't blame you. Let's go back to my house." That night over dinner, Peter tells you that his father bought the jewels but some one stole them. The jewels have strange and magical powers. CRASH! As you and your cousins talk, the window is shattered by a shotgun blast. No one is hurt, but you are all terrified. A musical chime plays, and Peter, shaking, scrambles for the phone. "That's strange, no one but my family knows this number." When he picks it up a deep voice says, "Give up now or else. This is just a warning." Click. The phone goes dead. A wind blows in the trees outside the broken window. The three of you stare at each other.

158:::Rising from your safe position on the floor, you head for the front door, slipping on the shotgun pellets on the smooth floor. You make it to the door, but whoever was out there is gone. You are silhouetted in the doorway--definitely a bad place to be--but nothing happens. "Peter, they are dead serious. If you don't get the jewels back, they will kill you and Lucy. I'll help. I'll leave for Paris tomorrow." Peter and Lucy gather around you slapping you on the back and shaking your hand. You seem to have forgotten the shotgun blast and the telephone call--but then the merriment is broken by the ring of the phone. "We weren't kidding. Next time you won't be so lucky." Click! The connection is broken again.

159:::For the rest of the evening and into early morning the three of you huddle together in talk. You glance nervously toward doors and windows. You are afraid of another attack. "Time to go now. Hurry. We will get you to the airport and meet you later when you want us." Driving in early morning traffic, it is hard to tell whether or not you are being followed. You think you see a light-colored compact car darting in and out of the traffic flow in an attempt to follow you, but you can't be sure.

160:::When you get to the check-in counter for the international flight to Paris, three squarely built men with crew cuts stand by the counter watching the door. You slip by them and try to go to another airline. But the three men surround you, and one of them jabs a needle with a knockout drug into your arm.

161:::When you wake up, you are in a cabin deep in a forested area surrounded by low hills. Your hands and feet are securely bound. You are cold and stiff and hungry. A large poisonous snake creeps out of a pile of leaves and heads for you. There is nothing you can do. It's all over.

162:::For the rest of the evening and into early morning the three of you huddle together in talk. "Time to go now. Hurry. We will get you to the airport and meet you later when you want us." Driving in early morning traffic, it is hard to tell whether or not you are being followed. You think you see a light-colored compact car darting in and out of the traffic flow in an attempt to follow you, but you can't be sure. When you get to the check-in counter for the international flight to Paris, three squarely built men with crew cuts stand by the counter watching the door. It is better to change the plan. You book a flight to Spain instead of France. Now and again you glance over your shoulder to watch the people at the Air France counter. Obviously they don't know you, or they would have followed you. Off to Spain. Once there, you can either fly up to Paris to begin the search or you can fly to Morocco and search for the rug merchant that Peter and Lucy told you about.

163:::You all decide to get in touch with the police. At the police station you find a sergeant behind the desk. He looks up and says, "OK, whaddaya want?" It does not inspire confidence in you. You hastily explain the circumstances. The bored voice says, "What are you, some kind of a kook? You putting me on about jewels and Africa and all that bunk?" You groan. Oh well, you might as well go it on your own. But, maybe, you should get someone to help you. Maybe Anson and Ramsey who have helped you before can help you again. You need good friends at a time like this, people you can trust.

164:::You call them. "Hello, yes, this is Anson. No, Ramsey isn't here. Oh hi, I recognized your voice. I haven't heard from you all summer." You quickly get over the talk about what you are doing and sketch in the details of the missing jewels and your search. "Will you guys come with me? I really need your help." Anson doesn't hesitate a moment. He agrees to meet you and join in the search. Ramsey is on a secret mission in the Himalayas and unable to come. Anson wants to meet you in Morocco. You would prefer meeting him in Paris because you want to stick to Peter and Lucy's plan.

165:::You agree to meet Anson in Morocco. He is delayed getting from the airport to downtown Tangiers and the walled inner city called the Medina. There has been a traffic accident. Anson waits, growing more restless by the moment. Little does he know that at the precise moment he sits in his taxi under the warm North African sun you are just entering the whitewashed house in the Medina. You could use his support, but time is slipping by. You have decided to go into the house alone. You take a cautious step into the hallway. It is noticeably cooler inside. Another step, then two more. There is only the sound of your shoes on the red tiles of the floor and the whining of the fan. The door behind you closes on oiled hinges. You stop, look about, and then peer into a room off to the side. Then it happens! The floor falls away under you, and you spin dizzily down and down, coming to a nasty crash on a sodden, damp earthen floor. It is pitch-black. There are no exits; there is no food, no water. You are doomed.

166:::You pressure him to meet you in Paris. But it turned out to be a mistake to suggest Paris as the meeting place. Anson got off the plane and went to the address of a cafe given to him by a person posing as an agent of Nabooti. He drops out of sight. POOF, VANISHED! You are once again on your own. This is too much. Your friend Anson is more important than any jewels. You decide to give up this search for the jewels and find Anson.

167:::You decide to skip Paris, and head directly for Morocco. You rent a car, drive to the coast, and take a boat from Gibraltar to Tangiers. The drive is uneventful, but once aboard the hydrofoil speeding across the Strait of Gibraltar, your calm is disrupted when the cabin speaker asks if there is a passenger named Nabooti aboard.

168:::The familiar shudder of fear ripples your body. You remain quiet and look at the deck, studying the drops of spray that collect on the smooth wooden planks. Someone is on board who can only mean you harm. The hydrofoil completes its trip to Tangiers. You don't get off, but you buy a return trip ticket to Spain. You hope whoever it was will realize that you have decide to give up your search. It was a wild-goose chase after all, you tell yourself. Peter and Lucy can take it from here.

169:::You decide to fly to Paris. But the plane to Paris is hijacked exactly eleven minutes after it takes off. Five people wearing masks and waving guns announce that they are taking the plane to China! The captain attempts to calm everyone down by assuring the passengers that everything will be done according to the hijackers' demands. But that only seems to add to the passengers' panic. The plane does not have enough fuel for such a long trip, and the pilot has to land in Greece at the Athens airport. After landing, the plane is surrounded by police and military vehicles. The hijackers call for everyone to listen up: "We need a hostage. If someone volunteers to come with us, we will let the others go. We promise not to harm the hostage. We will let the hostage go after we get to China."

170:::There is silence in the aircraft. No hands are raised. The hijackers look from face to face. The leader speaks again, "All right. You have exactly five minutes to produce a hostage. Then we will choose." He looks at his watch. You think about volunteering, but you still can't get your hand up in the air. Minutes tick by. The leader speaks, "We are losing precious time. We will take all of you with us. The plane will be refueled. You had your chance." It is as he says. The plane is refueled. It takes off and heads toward China. Two escort planes fly behind it. What a mess! You are never going to get to Morocco. Not only that, but what are your chances of getting off this plane alive? Sit tight and hope for the best.

171:::You decide to fly to Paris. But the plane to Paris is hijacked exactly eleven minutes after it takes off. Five people wearing masks and waving guns announce that they are taking the plane to China! The plane does not have enough fuel for such a long trip, and the pilot has to land in Greece at the Athens airport. After landing, the plane is surrounded by police and military vehicles. The hijackers call for everyone to listen up: "We need a hostage. If someone volunteers to come with us, we will let the others go. We promise not to harm the hostage. We will let the hostage go after we get to China." You volunteer to be the hostage. How crazy can you be? Finally you are seated in a fast-moving touring car and driven to the opposite end of the runway. Your captors are silent. The two women are firm and businesslike. The man reeks of garlic. You are led to another plane. Just as you are getting near the steps up to the plane, a Greek army captain shouts, "Run for it. We've got you covered."

172:::You keep on going up the stair of the plane. It is too dangerous to attempt an escape. You follow the other passengers onto the plane, wishing all the while that you were going back home. The plane takes off, heading for China. The leader, a beautiful woman with intense green eyes, sits down next to you. Leaning forward, she whispers, "I can read minds. It is a gift. I know that you are searching for the Jewels of Nabooti. You must give up the search. The jewels will destroy those who seek them." You stare at the woman, wondering if she is mad. Does she really want to help you or is she your enemy? Terrified, you shrink down into your chair and close your eyes. You drift into a nightmare in which the leader's eyes turn into gorgeous but deadly green snakes that slither around your throat choking you. You gasp for breath as the plane hurtles through the air to China.

173:::You run for it. Duck! Sprint! Bullets whip over your head. Then you are safe behind a Greek army jeep. The hijackers are in the plane, but the army squad shoots out the tires. It's all over for them. You decide to stay in Greece for a rest. Greece is beautiful. Clouds sail above the Acropolis; the sea is golden in the afternoon sun. You give up this frantic chase for the fabled jewels. You even decide to take a job in Athens working for the English language newspaper called the Amphora.

174:::You run for it. Duck! Sprint! Bullets whip over your head. Then you are safe behind a Greek army jeep. The hijackers are in the plane, but the army squad shoots out the tires. It's all over for them. You decide to go back home. Going back means giving up, but what can you really do? One person alone trying to find the Jewels of Nabooti is impossible. With a feeling of regret, you fly to Boston and taxi out to where you and Peter and Lucy met. But they are not there. A note on the kitchen table sends you to an address in downtown Boston. The address turns out to be the Museum of Fine Arts. A large sign out front announces the exhibit of the fabled Jewels of Nabooti--a recent loan to the museum by an anonymous group. You notice four or five children outside the museum wearing Nabooti T-shirt. They are listening to a CD player and doing a strange dance. The music blares "Do the Nabooti," a new hit dance tune.

200:::You are born on a spaceship traveling between galaxies on a dangerous research mission. Your parents are not from the same galaxy, but both have features common to those found on the planet Earth in Milky Way galaxy. Croyd is in the galaxy OOPHOSS, far distant from the Milky Way galaxy. You are going to explore it. This galaxy has black holes and supernova stars. It has always been regarded as an uncertain region by observers. Reports from previous space probes that Croyd has had a dim and troubled past. The reports also prophesy a bright and exciting future. "Perhaps this will help you." Just as you are about to go for your final briefing, a young member of the flight crew rushes up and says, "Let me go with you. You will need my help." His name is Mermah. His broad smile makes you feel happy about the adventures that lie ahead. Of course he can come. The head of Research cautions you about the black holes and supernovas. He tells you that if you want to delay your departure and go through the Space Academy, it may make your chances of success much better.

201:::You want to be on your way. Even though it might be a rash decision, you and your new companion, Mermah, climb aboard the space pod. You enter the proper numbers on the flight panel and you launch into space.

202:::"Mermah, check the stabilizers. We seem to be spinning a bit." "OK. Will do." Just then you realize from the computer screen that your flight path is close to a black hole. The danger is that once near the gravitational field of the black hole, you will never escape. Mermah helps you check the data input to the navigation system.

203:::To your dismay, you realize that instead of punching in figure 4800, you actually put in 4008, and your path is now locked into the black hole. Mermah stares at you in horror as the pod continues to move toward the massive black hole. People who have been trapped by black holes have never returned.

204:::"Don't give up! Try everything we can. Quick! Put up the energy repulsion shields." It's Mermah talking. He is two years older and traveled widely in space. "What do you think will happen to us, Mermah?" "One never knows," he replies. With a shudder, the pod is suddenly grasped by the gravitational field, and you find yourself hurtling into a tunnel-like void. A black hole might seem black to the observer from outside because no light can possibly escape its gravitational field, but all light and energy is contained within this space. The tunnel is brilliantly lit, but, strangely, the intense light does not hurt your eyes.

205:::Suddenly you are in a giant room. No, it is not a room; it's actually the interior of the black hole. It's a gigantic prism, thousands of miles across: a world unto itself. You are no longer frightened, and you and Mermah leave your space pod to begin a life in a new world. The new world is peaceful, and the people are friendly and eager to welcome you and Mermah. No one is in a hurry, and work is pleasant. There is food and housing for all. It's a good world.

206:::Maybe it is better to delay departure and study at the Space Academy first. Hesitating, you ask what other types of instruction will be given to you. So far you have learned flight procedures, navigation language, weapons, and planning. It is a good idea to get as much information as possible. "Self knowledge. It's everything you have learned now and in the past. You have but to realize it. Spend some time now. Then go." "All right, I'll do as you suggest. But how long will it take?" "You may either attend Space Academy courses on board, or you may study with me," he says.

207:::School can be boring, but then it might be just the thing for the light. You decide to go to the Space Academy. During the interview with the head of the Academy, he says, "Well, you choose. Either join Command School and become a captain of a ship, or go ahead and concentrate on research. We have done a personality, intelligence and health inventory on you, and you have scored very high. We believe you can make it to the top in either category. What do you think?"

208:::"What is the research about?" You hear nothing but "research". It seems to you that research is just another name for messing around with whatever interests you. "The subject of our research happens to be the cause of the violent trouble--specifically revolts--that occurs on all planets. Revolutions and wars have caused pain, but they have caused good things, too. What we want to find out is if the benefits can be gotten without the pain and horror of the uprisings." This is beginning to really interest you. Your intention to journey to Croyd seems to fade into some distant place in your mind. Mermah has chosen to remain with you. He is a good companion. After intensive work, the research team decides to split into two teams. Team A will head to the planet Cynthia to view a current revolt. Team B will join a mission exploring a revolt on Mars that happened 62 million years ago--a time transporter device will be used for that.

209:::You decide to go with Team B. Time travel is frightening. When you rush back in time, it is like riding a roller coaster backward, only faster. You can watch the universe through your private porthole. You see stars born and see them die, you see planets spin off into space, comets come and go, supernovas explode, and all the time you are not even there. You are but pure energy counting down in time until you stop at Mars, a planet of a small sun in the Milky Way galaxy--an almost unheard of planet in an insignificant galaxy. When you arrive on Mars, you are invisible and travel through space, through solid matter, and even into the thoughts of people.

210:::What is the cause of revolt on Mars? Who knows? Greed? Famine? Jealousy? Maybe just an instinctive need to battle, a basic drive to test and fight for the sheer sense of fighting. It's too complex. Everyone has a different answer. They all point to the other guy. All you know is that creatures get killed, cities get destroyed. What a way to live. That's why there is a new way--if only it will work. You are part of the new way, a way of sharing.

211:::You decide to go with Team A. Swirling clouds, dense with a moisture much heavier than water, cover the planet of Cynthia. No towns or cities are visible as the craft flies over the empty landscape. Where are the people? Where is the revolt? You land with the advance party, and find the atmosphere almost acceptable to your bio-system. "Did you see that?" Mermah accompanies you. "What? What did you see?" "Only a shadow. A shadow moving quickly, as though it were following us." Then a short blast of a hornlike device stops you in your tracks. You are surrounded by flickering shapes, living creatures that blend and twist like shadows. You can't tell what they are. "Peace or war? You! Are you the leader or just the follower?" it's the shadow people speaking. "Peach, of course. In our world we don't believe in war." You reply. "They all say that, but the wars rage throughout the entire universe." "What are you people doing?" "We are fighting the forces of light, who are our enemies. We are the shadows." You don't know whether to believe them or not, but there is no choice. You must go with them. They take you to the headquarters. There they explain how the forces of light have attempted to wipe out the shadow people by creating a world without shadows where light comes from all directions.

212:::Mermah convinces you to join up with the land forces in defense against the light people. You and Mermah are put in command of a group of fourteen shadow battalions. You build a system of walls to block the light sources. The tension builds as the light people send messages demanding surrender of the shadow forces. A council is held. "Shall we attack them, or shall we retreat? We can't possibly defend ourselves against them," the apparent leader asks. You all decide to attack. Planet Cynthia is a battlefield. Smoke hangs over the cities. Your group attacks with laser weapons, but the enemy forces seem too strong to hold off. You troops are taking heavy losses; everything is in shambles. There is a chance to get away. During a lull in the battle, your group escapes to some remote hills. The energy of the lasers, the spacecraft, the communications systems, mysteriously vanishes. There is only your own energy. Weapons are useless. Radios and transports are just pieces of metal and plastic. They are not working either. To survive now, you have to hunt for food and support each other.

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215:::You don't want to join the force and fight on land. Instead, you decide to sign up with rocket ship crew. The rocket ship forces sound the most interesting, and besides, you are trained as a space pilot. Ground forces would be difficult for you. You are promoted to a command rank and put in charge of a large spacecraft with laser rocket weapons. From then on you are in space searching out and policing alien ships. But you think to yourself, Is this any kind of life, forever destroying things? Maybe you will quit.

216:::Being a pilot-in-command of a space mission sounds impressive to you. You enroll in the Academy and choose to become a captain of a ship. Mermah decides to join you. All thoughts of going to Croyd leave you, as the courses of study interest you more and more each day.

217:::The time passes and you achieve advanced standing in academy. Your parents are proud of you, and upon graduation, you and Memah are assigned to a new and radically different spacecraft designed to carry out deep probes into the remote and unexplored regions of intergalactic space.

218:::There is a hint that you might even explore the Worm Hole into the Space/Time Continuum. Bidding all friends and family a farewell, you and Mermah enter the new craft for a twelve-year probe into uncharted regions.

219:::You decide to study with the head of Research. His name is Fooz. He tells you that there is an infinity of knowledge stored within all living things from countless past experiences. It sounds crazy, but then you just can't tell. You wonder if you really can call on experiences from past lives. Are these flashes of memory locked in your cells? Are the dreams you have of places you have never been, things you have never done, people you do not know, actually experiences from a past life bubbling up within you looking for a way out? Maybe dreams are a real thing. Fooz speak. "Remember my friend, all travel in space accomplishes little. We end where we begin. Parallel lines cross! Time is not real. Try to make the past the present."

220:::You feel uncomfortable with these heavy thoughts, especially when he talks about parallel lines crossing in space. What does infinity mean, anyway? "We can experiment with the past." It is Fooz talking again. "The past is not lost. It is just changed into a different form." You spend days calling on past experiences. It's like a big dream machine. "You are doing well. Would you like to give it a try?" "What do you mean?" You ask. "You can either travel into past time, 125 million Earth years ago, the age of dinosaurs, and wander around there, or you can just give it a chance and wander into an unknown past. Which is it?"

221:::The dinosaurs are more appealing to you. You remember studying the min DVDs of the evolution of living things on twelve planets. Earth was one of the planets, and the time period of the dinosaurs always fascinated you. The Cretaceous period when Tyrannosaurus Rex lived was a difficult but fascinating time. Suddenly, you are there, in a world without any human creatures. You are shocked to see that you have become a Velociraptor, very small in comparison to the Tyrannosaurus Rex and a prey to his voracious appetite. Hiding behind some lush vegetation, you are frightened and hungry, but you don't dare move. Any movement in this world could end in a sudden and violent death. You hear a scuttling sound, and a small Protoceratops rushes by, saying, "It's all clear, now. Tyrannosaurus and that awful Tarbosaurus have gone off to quarrel by themselves. Maybe it will give us a break." You cautiously peer out from the bushes and plants, then step gingerly away from your protective shelter. You gain a vantage point to watch Tyrannosaurus and Tarbosaurus locked in a bloody fight. You are horrified as their sharp teeth and powerful arms and legs tear at each other. There is a terrible howling roar of pain, then a crunching sound as Rex succeeds in biting off the head of his enemy. Then he turns his attention to the surrounding area and spots you. Crazed with blood lust, he races toward you. You wildly hit some buttons on the time travel meter you carry in your claw.

222:::You accidentally hit the "Time Return" button. The buttons on your time travel meter catapult you through space time to the Eastern part of Africa now called the Olduvai Gorge, in the Great Rift Valley. Only when you get there, it is not a gorge, nor is it a rift valley. It is an upland plain. It is four million years in the past, in Earth time. It is the dawn of mankind, and the earliest human types are just developing their life patterns. They live as hunters and gatherers. They have discovered tools, and they have begun to use objects like sticks and animal bones as weapons. It is the beginning of civilization. Why not hang around and see what happens? Maybe you can change it all.

223:::A chance to go to the unknown is probably really risky, but there is that desire in most people to take big risks. You decide to go back to an unknown past. You race back in time toward the edge of eternity, the beginning of the entire universe. You achieve an elastic weightlessness, and a sense of complete peach and calm.

224:::There is no sound, no light. But no darkness either. You race back to the very beginning, to the pulsating, exciting start. You return to the big bang that started the whole thing. You are, and you have been, a part of everything--always. The beginning is the end.

225:::Accidentally you hit the "Erase" button. You flee just in time to escape the brute. However the erase button you hit doesn't really lead to anywhere or any time. You radio for help and direction. Suddenly you are back in a space pod, headed for Croyd. Oh, no, it's beginning all over again. You can't stand it.

226:::You are born on a spaceship traveling between galaxies on a dangerous research mission. Your parents are not from the same galaxy, but both have features common to those found on the planet Earth in Milky Way galaxy. Kenda is three times the size of the planet Earth. You are going to explore it. The crew of the spaceship carefully prepares a space pod for the journey to Kenda. Seating yourself at the controls and positioning the programmed flight path, you disengage from the mother ship and drift off into space. Once in space you are propelled by gravity generators. Something is wrong! You look at the scanner and see a nebula that is not supposed to be on your course. Suddenly the gases and particles of the nebula surround you. Your gravity generators and life support systems might fail. The radiation counter interrupts the silence of space flight with harsh bleeps and crackles a warning of dangerous radiation levels.

227:::It is too dangerous. Returning to the mother ship might be the best choice. You hit the navigation button and push the reverse command switch. But, just at that moment, the lighting in the pod turns to the flashing green/yellow warning color, and all systems stop. Swirling gas and dust particles bathe the pod. You frantically hit restart buttons, but nothing happens. As suddenly as the gas came, it leaves. The warning lights turn off, the control panel blinks with energy, and the navigation control systems say GO. The automatic S.O.S. signals turn off, and you sit exhausted in front of the controls. You wait for help from the S.O.S. call in the pod. There is not much you can do right now. Then you see it. First a speck on the screen moving in a sideways fashion. It jumps into focus. It resembles an amoeba, but it has lights, portholes, and marking of an unknown sort. In space, alien beings are not uncommon. You are alien to the beings in this craft jiggling outside your space pod. What should you assume? Are they hostile, or are they life forms knowing neither hostility nor friendship?

228:::You trust your instinct and decide to go ahead. Heavy meteor showers interfere with your complex navigation system. The interference is so intense that all communications systems fail. You hurtle through space looking out through the portholes, amazed at the sights about you. But, your space pod begins to tumble and the world spins in a maze of colors and shapes. Your speed is so great that you should get through the shower soon, perhaps even soon enough to correct the navigational problems. On the other hand, maybe it is dangerous to rely on chance to get you out of this fix.

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230:::You decide to go with them since you realize that your defensive weapons might not work. It seems reasonable to meet them in an open and unarmed manner. They suddenly appear inside your own craft. You have heard of pure energy passing through solid matter and then reforming into original shape. They call it dematerialization. Part of the ship's equipment is a language/thought translation device designed to make contact between different life forms as easy as possible. You punch the button on the device immediately, announcing, "Welcome to my space pod. I am on a mission to my own planet. I am peaceful." The aliens do not respond. Suddenly they morph into a large jumbled, jelly-like mass that surrounds you. You are caught in what feels like a slimy ooze. You try to kick free, but it is no use. You feel a lightness that you have never before experienced, and in seconds you have been dematerialized and transported to the jiggling, free form spacecraft that carries your captors. Testing the substance their craft is made out of, you believe you could break through and escape. Quick! There is no time to lose. Switch on the mind-scan computer and key into their thought patterns. You realize that you can render these creatures helpless, and even destroy them if you wish. "Listen to me. You have one chance. Stop this attack or I will deactivate you. This is just a sample." You momentarily release the sequence programmed for deactivation. Within a microsecond the creatures begin to tremble.

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232:::But they don't seem to care about you. Ignoring you is their biggest mistake. They thought you were bluffing, but of course you weren't. Not with your life at stake! You program the proper codes and watch these hostile, doubting creatures begin to vanish in microseconds. You feel a sublime satisfaction, a supreme power; and then you realize that something is happening to you.

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234:::Quick! There is no time to lose. Switch on the mind-scan computer and key into their thought patterns. The computer makes sounds almost like groans--it is too complicated a task to read the minds of these strange creatures. Then it works. The mind-scan blinks, "Readout ready for communication." "Main energy source located in lower trident, sequential grid, negative factor 3, eliminate E34, B13, optimized radical parameter input and proceed with viable alternatives." It sounds like crazy Earth-talk to you, but you follow it, realizing that you can render these creatures helpless, and even destroy them if you wish. "Listen to me. You have one chance. Stop this attack or I will deactivate you. This is just a sample." You momentarily release the sequence programmed for deactivation. Within a microsecond the creatures begin to tremble.

235:::But you decide to continue destroying them. Whap! Zork! Squarsh! They lie quivering in a sodden and then crispy mass on the cabin floor. But, the energy charge was so great, you too are transformed from your present form into pure energy. Maybe you can start all over. Maybe you can rematerialize. You don't know.

236:::You stop since you don't want to totally destroy them. So, now you are in command. Does that feel good? No? Lonely perhaps? No? Confusing? Being in command probably feels like all those things. It's in your hands. Get on with it. First you will search their memory banks, check ships' logs for previous missions, and put all the data together for an answer. It's confusing, but you persist. Like a puzzle in three dimensions, the data forms an incomplete picture of a planet in the midstage of evolution. They began as objects with the beginning of consciousness and are evolving into true life forms. Somewhere things got crossed and these half-object/half-living creatures launched themselves bodily into space, searching for thoughtfulness. They believed this thoughtfulness would solve their problems.

237:::They are really impressed with the demonstration you have just put on. Drawing together in a loose jumbled mass, they murmur and burble for several moments. A part of the mass separates draws itself into a close approximation of a human form and announces in a high-pitched singsong voice, "We recognize that you may have the power to destroy us. But we have decided to trust you. We believe that you are good." There is a burble of assent from the jumbled mass. The speech continues, "We are on a mission from our home planet. We desperately need special plasma that provides the energy for our thought generators. Without this plasma, which is no longer available on our planet, we are finished. We will become just big, messy blobs without direction. We need the guidance of thought. It is known that the plasma is available on two planets. One of them has the name Kenda." You almost jump out of your skin. "Awesome!!" you quip. "Let's go." Everything seems to stop. A strange sound permeates the void. It is neither loud nor soft, but it is obvious that it is completely outside all of you.

238:::The sound seems friendly. It increases in intensity. Then it changes in pitch and the energy in the sound transforms into light. The entire area is bathed in beautiful colors that radiate warmth and positive force. There is a strong pleasant feeling, followed by a pulsation. You make a jump into hyperspace. Totally awesome, you think. The light serves as a vehicle carrying you and these other creatures on a journey toward an unknown place.

239:::The sound does not seem friendly. Where is it coming from? A huge shadow spreads over you. All systems stop. There is a humming sound. Looking up you see a giant spacecraft, larger than anything you have ever seen or heard about. It glows with a soft greenish light. The humming sound is obviously coming from it. A transport beam picks you up and deposits you inside the giant spacecraft. Oddly, no one or nothing with life seems to be aboard this craft. It's empty. You are placed, by means of mechanical arms, in a small room. Food, books, music, and tapes are on a table. The humming stops. A voice says, "We have been searching for you, and we welcome you to life aboard Craabox. We are a small world of ourselves. We need your type to complete our society. Enjoy yourself. No harm will come to you." The humming sounds begin again, and you doze off into deep sleep. When you awake, you are told by the voice to go either to room 99 or 100. You ask why, but the voice only says choose. Choose what? It's a flip of the coin, there is no real choice.

240:::But suddenly you feel frightened and want to break the light vehicle's hold on you and return to you craft. Get away as fast as you can. Yuck, what a group! It is so comforting to be in command of your own ship again. In a moment of pure joy at your release from the alien creatures, you overprogram the velocity control, and with a swoosh you accelerate beyond the VNE(velocity not to exceed) mark. You keep accelerating, and there seems to be no end to your speed. Things begin to blur. The outline of the control console becomes indistinct, the lights seem to brighten, and you recognize that there is no barrier between you and outer space. You merge into starry emptiness.

241:::The Universe Governing Body has serous news. There is a major energy drain throughout al galaxies. No one has been able to identify the cause of the loss of energy, but there is a shutting down of systems in all quadrants: Transportation, communication, life support, all systems. It's as though a giant battery were drained and growing weaker by the minute. You are all on your own now.

242:::You randomly choose the room 99. Well, well, so your flip landed you here. What a surprise, your luck has just reversed time and space. You are back at the start. You have been given another chance. Try again! And good luck! You are going to start another trip.

243:::You randomly choose the room 100. Not bad. You flipped and you won. Room 100 is the Chamber of Leadership. You will be made commander of this strange artificial world. You will learn all that is to be learned, you will see all there is to see; you will then guide this roving min-world through the galaxies investigating, learning more, collecting specimens of other life forms.

244:::To join them in their search seems to be the only choice right now. Part of their team is in search of the vital energy plasma needed to help them think. But the main group is on a mission to collect samples of other life forms from a wide variety of planets. They hope to gain enough information from the many different types of life to aid them in the development of their transformation from object to life form. They mention that this "research" will be of great help to all beings in the trans-galactic universe. You realize that you are one of their specimens and that frightens you. They propose that you join them in this mission. Since their form is so repulsive, they need someone like you to lead the advance scouting parties for life form collection. You will be their lure! You don't like the idea, but they promise that no harm will come to any of the collected life forms. After study and evaluation, they will be returned to their original homes. What have you got to lose? You might as well go along. It could be interesting. They present you with two missions. The first is to travel to a planet with Earth-type creatures; the second is to penetrate a small, diminishing star in the search for object-life.

245:::You refuse them. No, you don't want any part of these weirdos. Go ahead, cast adrift. You prefer to be on your own. But, when they cast you adrift they shout, "A curse on you! You have little faith and little regard for others!" Curses are dangerous and evil things. How do you rid yourself of this curse?

246:::You choose the second task, to study the small star. Stars are masses of extremely hot gases which emit energy in the form of exploding atomic particles. The violence of their continual nuclear reactions is unbelievable. Why in the world would you want to go on a mission to penetrate such a world? But that is what you have chosen to do. The group you have joined is enthusiastic about this mission. They know that if they are successful in penetrating this particular sun and returning with samples of object-life, they will become Seoreh (heroes) in their land. Anything for fame.

247:::The spacecraft enters into a wide orbit around this sun, and then at the proper moment, with all heat deflection shields, antimatter reflectors, and dematerialization gear operative, it breaks orbit and dashes for the sun. It is sheer madness, and you realize it is much too late to do anything about it. You are transformed into basic energy particles.

248:::You choose the first task. It sounds more interesting to you. "We approach planet Orgone from a direction which keeps us in the shadow of its moon. Some call it Earth. We will land in an unpopulated area and proceed with specimen gathering." It is their "Minimum leader" talking. At any rate, down you go, and make a landing in a sandy area covered with small bushes. "Nobody and nothing here," you report as the first one to step out of your craft. "Proceed with gathering plan." It is the Minimum leader speaking. Making your way into a small town, you are amazed at the life forms. They are like you, but they all talk too fast. They are in a feeding frenzy, putting round discs into their mouths. They are pouring brown liquid after the round discs. There is strange sound coming from brightly colored boxes. It is all very strange indeed. You feel uncomfortable. Then an idea pops into your brain. "Maybe I can escape. I look like them, maybe I'll just join them and run away." You join a line to receive the discs and the brown fluid. Escape seems easy. You blend in with others. They don't take much notice of you, because they are so busy with themselves. You move off with a crowd of them. Outside you get in a big vehicle painted a dull green. The vehicle starts up, and you are driven off to a large camp outside the town. It says on a big sign, "Welcome to the Army." You are not sure, but you think you have just joined a military group.

249:::You choose the first task. It sounds more interesting to you. "We approach planet Orgone from a direction which keeps us in the shadow of its moon. Some call it Earth. We will land in an unpopulated area and proceed with specimen gathering." It is their "Minimum leader" talking. At any rate, down you go, and make a landing in a sandy area covered with small bushes. "Nobody and nothing here," you report as the first one to step out of your craft. "Proceed with gathering plan." It is the Minimum leader speaking. Making your way into a small town, you are amazed at the life forms. They are like you, but they all talk too fast. They are in a feeding frenzy, putting round discs into their mouths. They are pouring brown liquid after the round discs. There is strange sound coming from brightly colored boxes. It is all very strange indeed. You feel uncomfortable. With a cheap bravery born of the knowledge that nothing can hurt you on Earth, you capture what Earthlings call a politician (a very dangerous creature), a student (also dangerous) and a government worker (unknown whether dangerous or not). They all look alike. Your mind-scan computer says that they all think alike, basically.

250:::You decide to stay with the army and find out what's going on. Wherever you go, people or creatures are fighting. They want more land, or water, or power, or maybe just excitement. You become a natural leader, because the forces you join are leaderless and tired of conflict. After listening to all the complaints, you offer to negotiate for peach. At your first negotiation with the hostile forces, you are captured and the war goes on.

251:::You remember a secret weapon given to you before you left the research ship. It's an inter-galactic slow-time weapon. When you operate it, all motion and action freezes in time. No one is hurt, and the simple release of the energy field restores motion. You activate the device and disarm all the people on both sides. Next you program a future time leap to a place in time when peace is possible. It is weird wandering around with all these people looking like statues, but then suddenly they are alive again and wonder at the new world. They actually have forgotten the past and they can start again.

252:::You decide to question the student first. "OK, student, tell me about yourself. What is a student, anyway?" The student is relaxed. At least he is out of school, and he isn't really afraid of you. "Well, I don't know. Being a student is like being a prisoner. Everyone is always telling you what to do, where to go, and what not to say, and you always get yelled at. It's a bummer." You are shocked by what he says. After all, you enjoyed learning things. One of your favorite teachers said she was just passing on The Secret Knowledge of the ages. You believed her then and you still do. What a gift to all. You ask, "Isn't there anything good about being a student?" "Well, vocations, and you don't usually have to do much. You can get by." "Are you dangerous?" you ask. "No, they only think so. We aren't." Suddenly the student leaps up and grabs you by the arms. You are tied up. Now you are his prisoner. He says, "See how you like it. I'm calling the authorities." He makes the call, and soon you are carried away by uniformed men. You will be the object of study for years to come. Your freedom is gone forever.

253:::You decide to question the politician first. "A politician, what is that?" you ask. The person hems and haws and begins to speak. "A politician serves the people and helps them make the right choice. We are very, very, very IMPORTANT! Why, without us there would be no problems--I mean, without us, problems would not appear to be so large. I-I-mean, well, I mean we create more problems than we solve and that is how we stay in office because someone has to solve them." The politician begins to smile. He acts very friendly and says, "Hey, wait a minute. You're from another planet. We would become famous, you and I. Think of it. The whole world will want to see you and hear all about it. I'll be your manager. We'll make a bundle!" You get out of there as fast as you can. You want no part of this freak show. But as you try to leave, he blocks the way, and you are caught. You remain on Earth as a curiosity from outer space.

254:::But you don't have enough time to think about it. Get away as fast as you can. Yuck, what a group! It is so comforting to be in command of your own ship again. In a moment of pure joy at your release from the alien creatures, you overprogram the velocity control, and with a swoosh you accelerate beyond the VNE (velocity not to exceed) mark.

255:::You keep accelerating, and there seems to be no end to your speed. Things begin to blur. The outline of the control console becomes indistinct, the lights seem to brighten, and you recognize that there is no barrier between you and outer space. You merge into starry emptiness.

256:::You try to seek revenge to destroy the cause of the curse. But space is enormous and thoughts of revenge fade. By sheer luck you intersect a course set by a band of other space craft that are renegades from Earth, Acxr, X321, Mowon, and 0000. Communications with them are not difficult. It is not clear whether these renegades are actually space pirates or just adventurous wanderers. After many hours of talk explaining what happened to you, the new friends propose one of two missions. One mission is to form a battle group with them and search for the ship and its creatures that caused you trouble. Or if you forget the past, you can forge ahead with them as space adventurers (read 'pirates' is you wish).

257:::You choose the first mission. Your group of spacecraft goes into Fingers Four formation. You accelerate to maximum speed, searching the immediate galactic space for the odd space craft and its inhabitants. The scanning devices of all ships are tuned to the wrong frequency. You realize that these creatures will not give off life-type response signals, nor will their craft respond in the normal fashion to radar probes. The craft is a soft, gelatinous mass, capable of absorbing the energy of the radar probe and storing that energy for its own use. Any radar probe will not bounce back to your screens. It will simply be lost. Then you see it, just by the luck of your intuition. It lies directly ahead. The triangle battle group forms, slows, and concentrates its multiple power on the odd craft. With a gulping slurch the strange ship erupts and dematerializes. Well done? You aren't really sure.

258:::You choose to forget the past. "Well, what do we do now?" You always need a plan. "We are going on a search mission. You see, my new friend, we tend to find things we need on other planets. We simply take them, whenever we can. We try and hurt no one, but there are risks." "Why, you are pirates! What about the Universe Governing Body?" There is a chuckle from several of the space pilots, but you can't tell whether they are laughing at you, or just at the idea of the Universe Governing Body. What a mess. What do you do now? You just don't know. Pirates in all ages and places have taken whatever they could grab. It makes no difference whether they are pirating sailing ships, or airplanes, or spacecrafts. Pirates live outside society; they must be banished. You and your group of pirates are surrounded by Universe Governing Body pursuit ships. You are deported to a distant and dim galaxy and guarded by Universe troops. Your pirating days are over.

259:::You choose to forget the past. "Well, what do we do now?" You always need a plan. "We are going on a search mission. You see, my new friend, we tend to find things we need on other planets. We simply take them, whenever we can. We try and hurt no one, but there are risks." "Why, you are pirates! What about the Universe Governing Body?" There is a chuckle from several of the space pilots, but you can't tell whether they are laughing at you, or just at the idea of the Universe Governing Body. What a mess. What do you do now? You just don't know. What fun to be a pirate! It is a good life, and the treasure box on the spacecraft overflows with Universe governing Body money. But then, one day, you intercept a radio broadcast. The Universe Governing Body announces that all currency and money are worthless and no longer needed or used. A new system for sharing food, clothing, and shelter that doesn't use money has been set in motion. As pirates you are finished. There is nothing left to steal.

260:::You decide to follow the light/land message. With all remaining energy resources, you propel the craft toward the black hole. The closer you get, the more strange things happen to you. First all the digital readouts on the command console reverse and spin back to zero readings. Your hair stands straight up as rigid as a wire brush. All light from your systems flows away in a stream and heads toward the black hole. You feel all your blood rush to your hands and feet, and a frightening dizziness overcomes you.

261:::From one of the portholes, you see a pulsating, velvet-like mass larger than the sky--or so it seems. There is a sharp, piercing cry, "Go back, before it is too late. Go back now." You have absolutely no idea where this warning is coming from. Perhaps you can still turn back. Maybe it's not too late. Maybe there is enough energy reserve to escape the intense gravitational field of the black hole. The warning is not repeated, and you hesitate about what to do next.

262:::You try to reverse the direction. It does not look good. Hitting reverse engine and power output buttons frantically, you feel the space pod tumble wildly as if out of control. A period of calm, quickly followed by more tumbling surprises you.

263:::Now you are awake, wide awake. You glance at the control console to check the graph and the navigational computer. You realized that you are on the route to Kenda, that all is well, that you had simply passed into a programmed sleep period which had produced the dreams of nebulae shower, light/islands, and black holes. On you go toward Kenda.

264:::You decide to follow the light/land message. With all remaining energy resources, you propel the craft toward the black hole. The warning has stopped. Your space pod comes to rest gently in the warm radiance. You leave the space pod and are greeted by a group of six creatures that change age and features, transforming from babies to old people. It is more than you can understand. It is frightening. It is watching the past become the present and the present turn into the future. You realize that it is beginning to happen to you, as well. You look down at your hands and they are small and pink--baby's hands. Before your eyes they grow and change color and texture. A rush of time and experience engulfs you. Then you are horrified to see the wrinkled skin and dark liver spots of old age appear on your hands. "Don't be too frightened," one of the creatures in front of you says. "All of us are shocked at the beginning, but it passes with time." They laugh, but not unkindly, and you calm down. "Look, here. You must accept the fact that you now belong either to the past or the future. The present doesn't really exist. Why not choose where you would like to spend time? Future or past?"

265:::Future! You decide to go to the future. Throughout all time (if there is any such thing as time) creatures have wanted to be able to predict the future. Sometimes they consult gods or goddesses. Sometimes they even cut open animals to search for the truth. Sometimes they go into trances, but most often they just hope that luck will help them tell what the future will bring. Nothing ever seems to really work. Now, you can travel into the future.

266:::"Step this way, you must be prepared for this futuristic trip." They lead you up a long ramp surrounded on all sides by constantly changing light and images. "Now, be quiet, remain calm, and enjoy!" Suddenly, you leap into the future.

267:::In an enormous, dimly lit room, a small light rests on a table. You know that you must go to the table. There is a faint smell of sagebrush. A voice instructs you to look at a hologram that appears in front of you. It is a history of your past lives for 6 million years. You are staggered by the great number of lives you have lived. You have been a success and a failure, many times over. You have been happy and miserable. Only twice in all that time were you bored. "Hey, wait a minute, I thought I was going into the future. That's what I agreed to, you guys. Come on now. An agreement is an agreement." "The past is also the future. You have much to learn. Look to what you have learned. Then the future will reveal itself."

268:::But you still doubt what's going on. It's just a lot of talk--you have heard this tale before. You can't waste your time on them. Maybe you can find your way back out of this crazy mess. Past and future the same! Bunk! But there is no way out--at least it appears that way.

269:::Maybe past? Returning to the past you believe is the safest and probably the most interesting thing to do. But what does the past mean? Five minutes ago, a year, three hundred years, two million? It's too general. You have to choose a specific time in the past or if not a time, then a period.

270:::You choose to see the universe two billion years ago. Two billion years ago. You can't even conceive of two billion as a number. What is it? Then you are there.

271:::Clouds of particles fill the void. Stars appear, planets burst forth; blackness is turned aside by the light from millions of stars. You wander in a mist of light and small particles. It is beautiful.

272:::You want to see the past one hundred years in Earth. How Earth looked over the last hundred years: population explosion, overcrowded cities, and transportation progresses from horses to spacecraft, artificial limbs and heart operations, telepathic communication, computers implanted into your fingertips, future-predicting that actually works, giant farms run by machines, oil discovered and then used up, great Sun's energy harnessed, wealth, great poverty, rapid change. Where will it end?

273:::The future of life on Earth is almost too much to think about. Anything could happen. You give it a try. Selecting the future in fifty years, you find yourself with a group of about sixty people, all young, all healthy-looking. They tell you that you are in a select group that is about to leave on a mission to find another planet to live on. Earth has become overcrowded, badly polluted, worn out, and dangerous. Wars, famine, and disease have made it unlivable. You don't really believe them, but they seem serous. "Look!" one of them shouts just as a large spacecraft arrives. You all get aboard and accelerate into space. It's all too familiar to you. This is the way you started, on a spaceship going between galaxies. It's starting all over again. Will the adventures never end?

274:::You want to go else where. So, Earth was too much for you. Wanted to escape, didn't you? Where to now? What planet can you go to? What galaxy? What time? The choice is yours. Maybe back to the beginning.

275:::Why wait? You feel that you will make it through. You push the advance button, strap your seatbelts and shoulder harnesses even tighter, and push on. The bouncing and rocking is severe. There is a popping sound. The space pod is flung out of the meteor shower and into a transit zone. The transit zone is a space highway designed for commercial use by transports. An amazing variety of spaceships are following different laser beam highways. A transit zone patrol craft hovers near you and signals you to follow it. The traveler information desk at the Patrol Station has some possible partners for your travel. "There is a space caravan that might stop in Kenda. Caravans are like gypsies, and they stop where the mood takes them. There is also a band of traveling space circus performers. They may have a gig in Kenda in three sforzits." "What is a sforzit?" you ask. "A sforzit is equal to nine earth days," they answer.

276:::The space caravan may never decide to go to Kenda. You decide quickly to join the space circus entertainers. A space circus sounds crazy, but then the whole idea of wandering around galaxies looking for your home planet is crazy, too. You meet the leader, Zogg, who can only be described as a totally normal-looking earth-type with a red beard, a huge grin, the body of a giant, and a laugh and warmth that makes you feel at home.

277:::"Welcome! We need a new thing. Welcome to the greatest show in the universe." "But what can I do?" "Don't worry, my friend. We will find you work. That is no problem there!" So, you join this group of creatures, some earth-type, others like nothing you have ever seen. The array of odd spaceships hurtles through space, stopping at the odd planet or convenient space station, or just drifting in the void.

278:::Your special job is to be the trainer of high energy particles and quarks, making them do tricks. You like quarks. And they seem to like you, too. You never get to Kenda, but you no longer care.

279:::You decide to go with the caravan. A space caravan! What would be more exciting than wandering through the universe, going wherever chance takes you? A meeting is arranged with the leader of the space caravan. She is a beautiful Noomanian--beautiful. Her name is Eus, and she explains to you that her group gathers exotic delicacies and objects. They never know where they are going. They go one stop at a time. For example, Eus informs you that they are on their way to the planet Earth with a consignment of black hole dust. So off you go. When you arrive on Earth, you are fascinated by this strange civilization with its tall buildings, it people who look like you but act as though they are frightened. There are crowded black canals, huge windstorms, dense dark clouds and vast desert areas.

280:::Earth fascinates you. You have heard many stories about its history--a history of violence, of greedy ways, of great destruction and hatreds that smoldered for years and even generations. It is described as one of the more hostile worlds, and only real adventurers risk spending much time there. Then there are those Earth people who, in spite of all the violence, designed great societies benefiting all Earthlings. It certainly is a mixed picture. Maybe you should stay. So, you transfer to Earth life systems by programming your bio-computer to accommodate for Earth atmosphere, language and food intake. You find Earth-types open and friendly, but you recognize an air of suspicion among them.

281:::What a interesting planet. There are many different people, languages, and customs. You could travel and learn so much on this small planet. True, there are grave problems, like pollution, wars, and the energy crisis; but you believe that progress is being made. The large political group called the United Nations is trying to resolve some of the problems. People are tired of the wars. Yes, you decide that Earth is a worthwhile place to stay. Maybe you can help make it a better place to live.

282:::You want to leave the earth. The telepathic videodiscs on the spaceship portrayed the problems on Earth: Too many people, too little food, too much crime, and too much pollution. Now that you are actually on Earth, you realize that those problems are real. It frightens you. Where do you start to solve these problems? What can be done? It's too late, you can't leave the planet. An enormous tremor shakes the ground. Earthquakes and tidal waves destroy cities. The cause is unknown, but people suspect that several nuclear explosions are at fault.

283:::When you land on the planet Earth, the pilot of the second largest spacecraft picks a fight with you. He says, "Listen, you don't belong with us. We don't want you around. You Stay here or I'll vaporize you."

284:::He waves a laser weapon. You have no idea why he is so angry, but there is no sense in taking risks. You'll stay on Earth for some time, and let them leave. Eventually you will have to set out again. Maybe a different route this time.

285:::You think it would be safer to radio for help. "Space pod, trans-galactic mission to planet Kenda, interrupted by meteor shower. System now three quarters inoperative. Coordinate Z2380, F9212, X2922. Time reference. Request immediate aid. Repeat, request immediate aid." Your voice feels small and hollow as it echoes in the pilot's compartment of the pod. You are so alone. What luck. You are suddenly drawn by a tractor beam into the receiving bay of a giant mobile research station: RS-3, UGB. It is under command of the Universe Governing Body, and you are warmly welcomed by all aboard. They immediately repair your spacecraft. One of them speaks, "We are headed for the planet Axle. It's a mercy mission. Axle has been infected by a strange disease for which the Axlians have no cure. Perhaps you shouldn't risk coming with us. It's up to you."

286:::You assess the dangers of traveling to a planet infected with a strange disease. You decide that you are not equipped to handle the problems. Your space pod is now repaired and outfitted for the journey. You are catapulted away from the research station, returning to the black void, spinning, spinning into the comfort of energy, timelessness, and endless space. Wham!!! You are in the midst of laser beam shots. Your optical scanner shows eleven spacecrafts. Four bear the design of Lodzot, and six have the look of Marly about them. The eleventh ship seems to be a Universe Governing Body police craft. Whammo! The laser beam hits the Universe Governing Body police ship. It explodes into a million bright, shining patterns, but one of the Lodzot ships breaks off to investigate you! "Come to a complete stop! Identify yourself." It is the Lodzot ship commander. "OK, OK, I'm friendly." It's you speaking.

287:::You have no choice but to join them. You feel forced into conflict that apparently has no meaning. They can't tell you why they are fighting. They were ordered to, so they do it. It makes no sense. The other ships have created a defensive formation and send out a radio call for a truce. You offer to be the negotiator. There is a mumbled conversation between spaceship captains, and then they say, "Tell us why we should negotiate." "What's the use in fighting? You'll all get killed. No one wins." "We'll talk it over." It's the Lodzot commander.

288:::You decide to make a run for it! It's foolish to stay in the middle of this fight. Who cares what they are fighting about. You push the maximum acceleration button and leave the area. Laser cannon shots follow your path but the computer-directed evasion tactics enable you to escape. Finally you are back alone in space.

289:::No one really want to fight. Too many have been killed already. You negotiate a peace between the opposing forces. They are all that is left of a great armada of spaceships who have been fighting for more than three thousand galactic years. They are the last survivors. They have even forgotten the original cause of the war.

290:::You decide to go on to Axle with them. RS-3, UGB enters the atmosphere of Axle. The ship hovers above the major city, Nal. The researchers report that some beings from other planets are immune while others are not. You think you are immune to this strange disease. The doctors confirm that your biochemical makeup will not be affected by the fever below. Down you go, in a small transporter with three other immune members of the crew. Your team interviews several of the sick people. All tell the same story of a sudden onset of sickness. In a matter of day, the entire population was immobilized. The only different event was a visit by delegates from another planet, who were searching for some escaped politicians. Then nothing, only the sickness. You question them about these delegates from another planet, but the answers are vague and uncertain. They can't remember the name of the planet. They can't recall the serial numbers of the spaceship. They are of little help. You interview other people who mention that a small group of scientists have warned that pollution on their planet would soon cause them troubles they would not be able to handle. They, too, are vague and uncertain.

291:::You decide to go on to Axle with them. RS-3, UGB enters the atmosphere of Axle. The ship hovers above the major city, Nal. A landing party is formed. You are not asked to join, but you are fascinated by what is happening below. The landing party radios back that a strange fever has gripped Axle, affecting virtually all its inhabitants. The research landing party reports that three of its members show symptoms similar to the Axlians. They retreat to formulate new plans. They also report that some beings from other planets are immune while others are not. You are taken ill with the strange fever. One by one, the other crew members become infected with the fever. Even those who were supposedly immune are not. The spaceship commander is out of his mind with the pain of the fever. He tries to escape to another planet. "We've got to escape. We have to go elsewhere," he shouts as the ship screeches away from Axle. But you might be carrying the fever wherever you go. After several weeks of aimless wandering, the Universe Governing body sends out pursuit ships to capture you. This could mean imprisonment or isolation for the rest of your very long life.

292:::You decide to go in search of the delegates first. It is possible that hostile aliens infected Axle for a purpose. Your team reports back and is assigned a search mission to find the delegates and track down what they were doing. Only one clue exists. It is a radio transmission, recorded on your research vessel when Axle made its call for help. The message is unclear, but it gives space coordinates that include the neighboring planet of Fleedes. You travel there, and what you find is appalling. The planet is almost uninhabited. There is the wreckage of cities and towns. It looks like a massive war has taken place, but there is no evidence of a victorious force in command. There is evidence of the fever here too.

293:::You want to conduct a cleansing operation at first. Once you have found no evidence of living creatures about, several small transporter ships are equipped with laser-spreading devices that will cleanse the area of any and all bacterial life. It is a drastic step, because the laser will eradicate all life forms. But, the operation has been ordered. You have no choice but to carry it out.

294:::You decide to search the past to find cause of the plague or whatever is ruining this civilization. The past is often rich with knowledge and solutions that the present has chosen to forget. You scan the data banks of the ship's computers for similar incidents. There have been similar plagues, and you discover a supposed cure. It was used on a remote planet, which was mostly desert, but with rivers and high mountains cutting into the wastelands of sand. It requires the sacrifice of ten percent of the population. Supposedly, the sacrifice will appease angry gods. Of course the Axlians won't go along with it. Who would? There is no cure. The fever will have to run its course.

295:::You decide to search the source of pollution at first. Pollution of the air, the water and the land happened quickly on Axle. Your research shows that in just three generations the air became almost unbreathable and the water unfit to drink. Little care or attention was given to what was going on, and the toxic levels built up quickly. While the leaders argued about solutions, the people waited for things to get better. Then the fever started taking hold. You find out that the fever was caused by a combination of pollutants and the general decline of health in the population.

296:::You try to get the remaining Axlians to make changes to stop pollution. But how do you try to convince people to stop polluting their planet when they have been doing it for so long? Maybe it's a hopeless task.

297:::You feel that this is a problem for the Galactic Court. You and your team members are transported, back to the research ship to report. "We are convinced that the Galactic Court under the Universe Governing Body should send a police team in to force reform on Axle." "Easier said than done. That's interfering with the rights of an independent planet. How can we tell them how to live? They are only hurting themselves." Your report and recommendation is sent to the Galactic Court. The court is sympathetic, but they say that there is nothing they can or will do. Axle will have to deal with its own problems.

298:::But you still decide to conduct a computer search for the cause of the disease. The histories of all worlds include sad stories of plagues and fevers and diseases and epidemics. But the worst of all these is the sickness brought on by excessive exposure to radiation.

299:::You never checked on Axle to see if their nuclear reactors were emitting dangerous radiation levels. It's so simple, so obvious. People get careless, times get lax, accidents happen. This fever isn't caused by a bacteria. It's radiation sickness of the worst kind. There is no cure.

300:::You want to devise a plan for escape before you are captured. The pursuit ships follow a trail of infectious fevers left behind on several planets, marking your mad dash to escape. Soon the word is out, and protective shield devices prevent your crew from entering the atmosphere of any planet. Three of your crew die of the fever, but you seem to be getting no worse, and you might even be getting better. Then you propose a startling idea. "Look, let's go back to Axle where the fever started. We can only find the cure at the start." Reluctantly the remaining crew members agree, and you head back to Axle. They take your advice because you have shown courage and wisdom under stress.

301:::Amazing! Incredible! The sight that meets your eyes on Axle is a wonder. The people are better. The fever has broken. The civilization is once again on the move. They welcome you with great happiness. Oddly, the cure for the fever is simple, complete rest in the light of the three moons of Axle for three weeks with no solid food and only moderate liquids. Simple, ancient, and effective. You are cured, and the future lies before you.

302:::Incredible! Unbelievable! The Universe Governing Body has sent police forces in patrol ships to Axle. You and your research station are forced to land and made to join the Axlians in a permanent quarantine. There is no cure!

400:::You are a deep sea explorer searching for the famed lost city of Atlantis. This is your most challenging and dangerous mission. It is morning and the sun pushes up on the horizon. The sea is calm. You climb into the narrow pilot's compartment of the underwater vessel Seeker with your special gear. The crew of the research vessel Maray screws down the hatch clamps. The Seeker crew begins lowering by a strong, but thin, cable. The cable attaching you to the Maray is extended to its limit. You have come to rest on a ledge near the canyon in the ocean floor that ancient myth says leads to the lost city of Atlantis. You have an experimental diving suit designed to protect you from the intense pressure of the deep. You should be able to leave the Seeker and explore the sea bottom. The new suit contains a number of the latest microprocessors enabling a variety of useful functions. It even has a built-in PDA with laser communicator. As agreed, you signal the Maray, "All systems GO. It's awesome down here."

401:::You decide to explore the ledge where the Seeker has come to rest. Your dive suit is a tight fit and takes you some time to put it on. Finally you slip from the airlock of the Seeker and stand on the ocean floor. It is a strange and marvelous world where your every move is slowed down. You begin the exploration with your halogen searchlight. The ledge hanging over the deep canyon is your starting point. A strange feeling overcomes you, part warning, part terror. Then you see it. The Seeker is in the grips of a huge sea monster. It is similar to a squid, but it is enormous. The Seeker is just a toy in its long, powerful tentacles. You seek shelter behind a rock formation knowing the spear gun you carry will be useless against this monster. It looks as though it will destroy the Seeker. Fish of all sizes huddle with you in an attempt to escape the monster.

402:::You stay hidden close to the Seeker. The giant squid tosses and turns the Seeker, but finally the creature grows tired of its new game and jets off with an enormous squirt of water. You now are free to leave your hiding place and examine the Seeker for damage. To your dismay, the airlock entrance has been jammed shut. You are locked out of the Seeker. The crew of the Maray, however, suspected trouble when you did not respond to a routine radio check. They are now lowering an escape platform. Once on the platform, you radio them to start the slow pull to the surface. To avoid the deadly bends--rapid expansion of nitrogen bubbles in your blood--they will have to bring you up very slowly. Just as the platform begins to move, the giant squid suddenly reappear. It is headed directly at you.

403:::You decide to signal Maray to pull you up at top speed even if you will get the bends. As they begin the rapid hauling, you lose your ability to function in the deep. Dizziness overcomes you and your arms and legs feel weak. You lose your hold on the platform and drift in the water exhausted. Surprisingly you see a dolphin heading right toward you. These marvelous mammals sometimes help people in trouble. Will it help you?

404:::You try to get help from the dolphin. It looks at you, and you even imagine that he is smiling at you. You grab one of his flippers, and with a powerful switch of his body, the dolphin swims upward. In a short time, you break through to the surface. You blink in the bright sun. The Maray is nowhere in sight. You are lost far at sea. The dolphin dives beneath the surface with you still clinging to him. He speeds off and within 20 minutes you are next to the Maray. The dolphin must have heard the Maray's engine noises underneath the water. Once aboard, every one congratulates you on your escape.

405:::It is too dangerous to put your life on an animal. The dolphin might help and might not. So, up you go, swimming towards the surface. The dolphin follows for some time, and then swims off. You rest for a while about 300 feet below the surface before your final ascent.

406:::Suddenly, a huge ugly fish swims towards you. Its bulging eyes fasten on you. It is a Mola Mola, and spans more than sixteen feet in width. It's a fish that does not bother to bite its victims. It swallows them whole. It looks as though you are its next meal.

407:::You decide to give up the expedition. A helicopter is sent to pick you up and return you to an air base for a flight back to the United States. Newspaper reports indicate that the search for Atlantis has been given up. Several months later, however, a group of scientists get in touch with you. They believe that Atlantis can be found. They put together another expedition and want you to join it. You are tempted. Adventure into the unknown is what you like.

408:::You decide to dive again the next day. Again the Seeker is lowered over the side of the Maray and slips into the ocean. Fish swim by peering cautiously at you in your titanium and ceramic shell. The sunlight fades as you descend into the abyss. You are headed for the giant canyon below that might lead to Atlantis. When you reach the canyon, you switch on the Seeker's searchlight. Immediately you spot the round hole that appears to be made by intelligent beings. Perhaps it leads to Atlantis.

409:::You decide to fight the squid with your spear gun, hoping to scare it off. With a rush of water, the giant squid attacks. Two 20-foot tentacles with their pulsing suction cups reach out to ensnare you. You dive off the platform and fire two of your spears. They strike the squid close to its two monstrous eyes. The squid keeps on coming. One of the tentacles wraps around your diving helmet and ruptures the seal to your suit. You fire your last spear hoping to hit the monster in a vulnerable spot. Water is beginning to trickle into your suit. You signal the Maray to haul you up fast "Emergency Hoist."

410:::You must have hit the squid. It floats away writhing and thrashing. You think you're about to black out. You wake up on the deck of the maray and are quickly rushed to the decompression chambers to ward off the effect of the bends. Several days later you are over the worst and starting to worry about diving into the abyss again. Can you do it?

411:::With great sorrow, you decide that it is wisest to leave the expedition. You can't risk returning to the great depths. So, reluctantly you return to the United States. Several major television shows are desperate to get you. After all, you are one of the true survivors. While on one such show, a special news flash announces to the world the discovery of Atlantis by an Italian research team lead by Dr. Marcello, a world-famous explorer. You regret your decision, but you didn't really have a choice. Did you?

412:::You decide to fight the squid with your spear gun, hoping to scare it off. With a rush of water, the giant squid attacks. Two 20-foot tentacles with their pulsing suction cups reach out to ensnare you. You dive off the platform and fire two of your spears. Water is beginning to trickle into your suit. You signal the Maray to haul you up fast "Emergency Hoist." You must have hit the squid. It floats away writhing and thrashing. You wake up on the deck of the Maray and are quickly rushed to the decompression chambers to ward off the effect of the bends. Several days later you are over the worst and starting to worry about diving into the abyss again. You can't resist the adventure beneath the sea. You must go again, and after several weeks of rest, you enter the Seeker and slip quickly into the deep. You bring the Seeker to rest by the great canyon in the ocean bottom. There are no signs of giant squid and you feel safe. Rounding a rock formation, you come upon the wreck of an ancient Greek ship. How strange to find this ship intact so far below the surface. What brought it here? You take pictures and make notes in your PDA. Maybe this ancient ship hides the secret to Atlantis.

413:::You decide to go abroad the Greek ship. Cautiously you enter the ship's cabin. Clay jugs called amphorae, once filled with oils and wines, are strewn about. There are no remains of the crew. You have a sense of being in ancient Greece. It is like being in a dream. A door leads to a smaller cabin. On a table near the rear of this cabin is a golden box. Opening it you find the remains of a map. It does not show Atlantis. It shows that the ship was searching for an access point that leads to the center of the earth! You return to the Seeker and use the map to locate this shaft to the center of the earth. Using some guesswork to interpret the map, you discover the tunnel opening, which appears to be roughly 100 feet in diameter. The sonar readings indicate the shaft has no bottom.

414:::You face the fact that it is too dangerous to dive into a deep hole that might lead to the center of the earth. It's best to return to the surface and work out a plan of action. You give one last look at the opening, check the Seeker's instruments and head up to the surface. Finally the Seeker breaks through into fresh air and sunlight, and you wait to be picked up by the Maray. With great sorrow, you decide that it is wisest to leave the expedition. You can't risk returning to the great depths. So, reluctantly you return to the United States. Several major television shows are desperate to get you. After all, you are one of the true survivors. While on one such show, a special news flash announces to the world the discovery of Atlantis by an Italian research team lead by Dr. Marcello, a world-famous explorer. You regret your decision, but you didn't really have a choice. Did you?

415:::You decide to go abroad the Greek ship. Cautiously you enter the ship's cabin. There are no remains of the crew. You have a sense of being in ancient Greece. It is like being in a dream. A door leads to a smaller cabin. On a table near the rear of this cabin is a golden box. Opening it you find the remains of a map. It does not show Atlantis. It shows that the ship was searching for an access point that leads to the center of the earth! You return to the Seeker and use the map to locate this shaft to the center of the earth. The sonar readings indicate the shaft has no bottom. You cannot refuse to descend into the shaft. Why not go? The center of the earth! You push the control column forward and dive deep. Soon there's no more water, just a heavy gas that acts like water. You pass by layers of rock and sand. Suddenly you sail into a gooey mass which almost fouls the Seeker's propellers. You burst through a think elastic membrane and enter an area of giant atoms. Electrons whirl around you at high speed, but there is plenty of room to maneuver between these fast-moving particles. The electrons are revolving around a small mass you know is called the nucleus. You are able to avoid collisions with the electrons. What a world.

416:::No, you will not dive down toward the center of the earth. Once through the think outer layer of the earth, you know that the regions beneath change from solid to molten and then to a hard core. At least that is the theory given by the geologists. You couldn't possibly survive such a journey. Anyway, you think that your sonar gear is probably not working correctly. The hole is deep, but you don't believe that it really goes all the way to the center of the earth. Caution is your approach. You go back to the surface to consult with the scientists aboard the Maray. The scientists tell you that their instruments have been damaged, perhaps by an approaching storm, and they too are cautious. They decide to move the Maray away from the site of the mysterious hole. The expedition retreats and you know your chance to discover Atlantis has slipped away.

417:::You continue to go deeper until your instruments indicate that there is no time. The digital clocks stop, the speed indicator stops, your heart stops, and yet you are alive. Every sense in your body seems more alive than ever before. You are aware of other beings close to you. Turning around, you see three Atlanteans. You feel that the Seeker has become just a thought and that the people from Atlantis have entered your mind and are aboard the Seeker. This is too much for you. It's like a nightmare and you decide to turn back. Suddenly you are caught in the elastic membrane that almost stopped you before. it sticks to the Seeker, holding you back. You lose consciousness and wake up several hours later in your dive suit floating above the hole in the ocean floor. The Seeker is gone. Slowly you return to the surface, but the Maray has disappeared. You can't decide how much time has elapsed. The waves rock your unresisting body back and forth as you float alone in the vast sea. You feel your strength slowly draining away.

418:::You continue to go deeper until your instruments indicate that there is no time. The digital clocks stop, the speed indicator stops, your heart stops, and yet you are alive. Every sense in your body seems more alive than ever before. You are aware of other beings close to you. Turning around, you see three Atlanteans. You feel that the Seeker has become just a thought and that the people from Atlantis have entered your mind and are aboard the Seeker. A thought traveler! You realize that people do it all the time in daydreams. The Atlanteans speak softly and tell you that all things are the same--past, present, future. It simply requires you to concentrate and put your thought where you wish them to be. You try, and amazingly you are rapidly rushed through time to the day you were born, then to the day you made your first deep-sea dive. Suddenly you whirl through time into the outer reaches of the universe where you can actually feel the light going through you. You cast no shadow. A sense of peace fills you. One day your friends tell you that you can return to earth if you wish. You consider it carefully and decide that because of your though traveling ability, the life you now lead is what you want. You decide to stay where you are forever.

419:::You decide to return to the surface and report your findings. The trip back to the surface is smooth, and finally the Seeker is hauled aboard the Maray. You climb out and are greeted by the scientists and crew. The Seeker is prepared for the second dive, but suddenly the wind rises and the sea kicks up into furious waves that crash over the deck of the Maray. All hands rush to prepare for hurricane force winds. There is no chance for the second dive to begin. The next morning the wind has died and the sky is clear. You are now ready to dive again.

420:::Again the Seeker is lowered over the side of the Maray and slips into the ocean. Fish swim by peering cautiously at you in your titanium and ceramic shell. The sunlight fades as you descend into the abyss. You are headed for the giant canyon below that might lead to Atlantis. But this time, you cannot locate the round hole. It mysteriously disappears.

421:::You decide to cut loose from the Maray and dive with the Seeker into the canyon in the ocean floor. The Maray asks you for a more detailed status report, and you comply, telling them that you are going to cast off from the line and descend under your own power. Approval is given, and the Seeker slips silently into the undersea canyon. As you drop into the canyon, you turn on the Seeker's powerful searchlight. Straight ahead is a dark wall covered with a strange type of barnacle growth. To the left side, you see what appears to be a cave. The entrance is perfectly round, as if it had been cut by human hands. White lantern fish give off a pale, greenish light. To the right side of the Seeker, you see bubbles rising steadily from the floor of the canyon.

422:::You decide to investigate the bubbles first. Carefully maneuvering the Seeker between the walls of the canyon, you discover a large round hole. A stream of large bubbles flows steadily out of the hole. The Seeker is equipped with scientific equipment to analyze the bubbles. It also has sonar equipment that can measure depth. The ocean covers close to 90% of the earth and is mostly unknown. Who knows where this hole might lead?

423:::You decide to measure the depth of the hole. Maneuvering the Seeker next to it, you begin to take sonar readings to determine its depth. To your amazement, the sonar readings indicate that the hole is extraordinarily deep--it might reach the center of the earth! What lies down there? Where are the bubbles coming from? Is Atlantis beneath you? There is a sudden and disturbing digital reading on your instruments: a mid-ocean earthquake! The Seeker is not damaged, but the Maray might leave, and you will be will be abandoned. Maybe you should ascend right away and join the Maray. On the other hand, you are perhaps on the verge of one of the world's greatest discoveries.

424:::Going down the hole attracts you. You check all the controls of the Seeker, grit your teeth, and push the control column into the deep dive position. Down, down you go where no person has ever ventured. The Seeker is built for deep, deep dives, but you are descending rapidly mile after mile into the deep. The pressure is intense, the darkness is complete, and the depth gauge indicates an incredible 15 miles. Suddenly warning lights flare up on your control panel.

425:::The gravitational forces are now stronger than the Seeker's propulsion motors. You quickly reverse the control column but you have passed the point of no return and your journey downward will continue in utter darkness until the water pressure is too great for the Seeker. This is the final voyage.

427:::You decide to return to the surface at first and direct the Seeker cautiously back along the side of the canyon in the ocean floor. Without warning, the Seeker is gripped in a powerful current that sweeps it toward a grotto. Once in the grotto, the current carries you to what appears to be a large metal door. It swings open and the Seeker is swept inside. The door closes, the water in the grotto drains away, and you step out into a chamber that must have been made by some type of life force. A door opens in the wall, two people dressed in simple clothes come towards you. One of them says, "Welcome to Atlantis. We have been expecting you." What a discovery! You have found the lost city! "Yes, you have found us; but we do not trust those on the surface. We are not cruel, but you will never leave Atlantis." They want you to follow them and you agree. But you have another though. Perhaps you could blast your way out of the chamber with the Seeker's laser cannon.

428:::The Atlanteans have lived in peace for thousands of year. They have no love of warfare. Their civilization is technologically very advanced. A sensing mechanism tells them that you are about to use your laser cannon. They fire a special beam at the Seeker. All its functions stop. You are powerless to escape. They calmly approach the Seeker. "You are now part of Atlantis. We understand your fear, but do not be frightened. No harm will come to you and your life will be full. Follow us." As you walk with them, into a new world, you wonder if you will ever see the sky again.

429:::You decide to investigate the bubbles first. But there is a sudden and disturbing digital reading on your instruments: a mid-ocean earthquake! The Seeker is not damaged, but the Maray might leave, and you will be will be abandoned. Maybe you should ascend right away and join the Maray. Cautiously direct the Seeker back along the side of the canyon in the ocean floor. Without warning, the Seeker is gripped in a powerful current that sweeps it toward a grotto. Once in the grotto, the current carries you to what appears to be a large metal door. It swings open and the Seeker is swept inside. The door closes, the water in the grotto drains away, and you step out into a chamber that must have been made by some type of life force. A door opens in the wall, two people dressed in simple clothes come towards you. One of them says, "Welcome to Atlantis. We have been expecting you." What a discovery! You have found the lost city! "Yes, you have found us; but we do not trust those on the surface. We are not cruel, but you will never leave Atlantis." They want you to follow them and you agree.

430:::You are led to a room. The floors are a rich marble. The walls glow. The ceiling is like being inside a diamond looking through the many facets. "Welcome to Atlantis. Thousands of years ago we learned that we were about to slip into the sea. Our people prepared for the calamity by building a new city inside an extinct volcano. We have no sunlight, nor stars to gaze at, but we have other spaces to meditate upon." A person in the room tells you about a group of people called the Nodoors. If you wish, you can live with them, but you cannot leave Atlantis. A bearded man is to be your escort. Atlantis is a beautiful city. It would be pleasant here, but you don't want to be a prisoner. Maybe there would be a better chance to escape if you join the Nodoors. You ask your guide about them. "Oh, we believe they are dangerous, but we don't really know. They live in the center of the old volcano. If you wish, I can take you there."

431:::"I wish to join the Nodoors," you tell your guide. He leads you to the outskirts of the city. "I must leave you now. Good luck." The Nodoors send a greeting party that is heavily armed. They are suspicious of you and believe that you are a spy sent by the Atlanteans. They look exactly like the Atlanteans, but they rarely smile. "Come with us. You must be questioned. Perhaps you will work for us." For three days, you are questioned and kept in a small room without windows. These people are not kind and you believe that you have made a mistake. They ask you to help them spy on the Atlanteans. They suggest that, as a spy, you could pass freely between both groups.

432:::You decide to remain with the Atlanteans. Their approach to life seems ideal. Time is spent in creating things to help life and not to destroy it. You believe their leader is speaking the truth when she tells of avoiding war and of not hating. You are fascinated by this apparently ideal world. You would like to stay and research the history of how Atlantis became what it is and what caused the split between the Atlanteans and the Nodoors. Yet, in your min remains the hope of escape so that you can go back to your own world.

433:::You decide to escape. Escape is not easy, but you decide that you must get away from these people. The best plan is to tell them that you want to accept their offer to spy on the Atlanteans. They are of course happy when you tell them that you will work for them. "You see, the Atlanteans are jealous of us. We must be on our guard or else they'll invade and destroy us." You don't believe the Atlanteans are jealous of the Nodoors, but you don't argue. They take you back to the outskirts of their area, and you leave to join the Atlanteans. Once back with the Atlanteans, you ask them to allow you to live with them. You know that you will never be allowed to leave their underwater world, but there is always the hope for escape. It could be a good life.

434:::You have no choice but to accept their offer. "OK, I'll do it," you say. "I'll join you and spy on the Atlanteans. Who knows, maybe they aren't as bad as you think." The Nodoors are delighted. They give you a room in a large building where most of them live. It is grey and forbidding, more like a prison than anything else. That night when all are asleep, you sit sleepless and realize that you are caught in a trap of your own making. It comes to you that the Nodoors are from a different planet and are unhappy outcasts. The Atlanteans want nothing to do with them. You chose the wrong side.

435:::You decide to stay and spend your life researching the history and secrets of Atlantis. Maybe you can learn from the Atlanteans how they achieve such happiness in their lives. You seek out their history. Announcing your decision to stay, you are treated with kindness and friendship. You explain that you would like to help in their underwater food production. Atlantis was an advanced civilization thousands of years ago. The citizens nourished their peaceful thoughts and plucked out their hateful thoughts, as one would tend a garden. Their minds became a rich and dazzling universe, clear and unbounded. You have so much to do helping with sea plants and studying their history that you soon forget the Seeker.

436:::You decide to escape. When you get a chance and everyone is occupied, you dash for the tunnel exit and make it out into the water. No alarms sound. No one chases you. It's strange; they said they wouldn't allow you to return to the world above the sea. After you reach the surface, you fire the special signal flare and the crew of the Maray quickly spots you. Within a few moments you are safely aboard, surrounded by your friends. What a relief to be out of that night mare world!

437:::The grotto with the round entrance looks more interesting to you. You pilot the Seeker through the rounded entrance to the grotto. Once inside, your searchlight picks up what appear to be docks and piers along the grotto walls. The Seeker's searchlight is not very powerful. However, you do have a special laser light which would light up the grotto like daylight. Unfortunately, the laser light can only be used twice for every short periods before it must be recharged aboard the Maray, now more than 2,000 feet above you on the surface.

438:::But it is time to use the laser light now. The beam from the laser light illuminates the entire grotto. Far back on the floor of the grotto is a submarine! Cautiously, you maneuver the Seeker closer. It's the submarine that mysteriously disappeared in the Bermuda Triangle almost a year before. The Bermuda Triangle is more than 2000 miles away. How did the sub get here? It doesn't appear to be damaged, but it is covered with slimy algae. Beautiful fish swim around it as though it is their own special prize. Then you notice that the main hatch is free of algae!

439:::It might be too dangerous to go inside the sub directly. You cruise through the grotto past the wreck of the submarine. There is another shipwreck. And then another. They too, are covered with algae, and they also appear undamaged. Maybe people from Atlantis capture ships in the Bermuda Triangle and bring them here. There is a three-masted schooner of the type used in the early 1800s. Its rigging is festooned with algae, and fish swim lazily around its mast.

440:::You curiosity captures you and you put on your diving suit, leaving the Seeker. You move towards the old sailing ship. Suddenly a thirteen-foot long deadly poisonous sea snake strikes from behind the forward cabin and bites you in the soft flesh between the fingers of your right hand. There is no antidote to the deadly poison. The neurotoxin spreads like a wave up your forearm on its way to your cerebral cortex. Your life has been short and sweet. Farewell brave one!

441:::The grotto with the round entrance looks more interesting to you. You pilot the Seeker through the rounded entrance to the grotto. Once inside, your searchlight picks up what appear to be docks and piers along the grotto walls. The Seeker's searchlight is not very powerful. However, you do have a special laser light which would light up the grotto like daylight, although it can only be used twice for every short periods before it must be recharged aboard the Maray, now more than 2,000 feet above you on the surface. The beam from the laser light illuminates the entire grotto. Far back on the floor of the grotto is a submarine! Cautiously, you maneuver the Seeker closer. It's the submarine that mysteriously disappeared in the Bermuda Triangle almost a year before. The Bermuda Triangle is more than 2000 miles away. How did the sub get here? It doesn't appear to be damaged, but it is covered with slimy algae. Beautiful fish swim around it as though it is their own special prize. Then you notice that the main hatch is free of algae!

442:::It is not the time to use the laser light. You cruise silently into the grotto. Its roof slopes upward and you follow the slope. The depth finder shows that you are rising quite rapidly. Perhaps you will reach the surface and open air. The roof of the grotto stops sloping upward. Before you is a perfectly round metallic hatch made of a metal that you have never seen before. With the mechanical arm of the Seeker you try to open the hatch. No luck. Activating an electronic pulse generator, you bombard the hatch with electronic pulse--they are not meant to be hostile.

443:::The only way left to get beyond the door is to blast it away, or so you believe. The Seeker's laser cannon is powerful and you position the Seeker to fire. Pushing the fire button, you send a powerful beam at the hatch. Nothing happens. Then you advance the cannon control to full emergency force. Again you push the button and the beam dissolves the hatch instantly.

444:::A flood of seawater rushes into the giant hole, carrying you with it into an air-filled cavern beyond. The water fills the cavern with speed and explosive force. You see several people scurrying towards escape hatches. IT IS TOO LATE! You did the wrong thing. There is no turning back.

445:::The grotto with the round entrance looks more interesting to you. You pilot the Seeker through the rounded entrance to the grotto. Once inside, your searchlight picks up what appear to be docks and piers along the grotto walls. You cruise silently into the grotto. Its roof slopes upward and you follow the slope. The depth finder shows that you are rising quite rapidly. Perhaps you will reach the surface and open air. The roof of the grotto stops sloping upward. Before you is a perfectly round metallic hatch made of a metal that you have never seen before. With the mechanical arm of the Seeker you try to open the hatch. No luck. Activating an electronic pulse generator, you bombard the hatch with electronic pulse--they are not meant to be hostile.

446:::You are just about to give up when the door suddenly swings open, revealing behind it a cavern with another door. You enter the cavern cautiously and receive a radio signal in English. It tells you that you are welcome here, but that once you enter this place, you may never return to the world above. It is up to you to decide.

447:::You definitely want to go on and investigate what might be Atlantis. You are greeted by a group of people who look like ordinary human beings except that there are gill-like slits on their necks. Their bare feet have skin between the toes forming a web. They order you to put on your dive suit, pull you quickly from the Seeker, and lead you towards their city. On the way they show you the zoo where there are animals from the world above the sea. There is a glass-like cage surrounding them filled with air, allowing them to live below the sea. "So, my young friend," the leader of the group says, "you may have the gill slit operation and live like one of us, or you can refuse and join the other animals in the zoo." What a choice, but if you have the gill slit operation, you will never be able to escape and return to the surface.

448:::But it seems that you have no choice but to accept it. A large white light shines down on you as you lie on the operating table. You become unconscious. When you awake, you feel no pain nor any real change. But, now you can breathe underwater and join the Atlanteans in their world. For several weeks you explore the world under the sea as you never have seen it before. Without the heavy oxygen equipment on your back, you feel a marvelous sense of energy and you glide through a world of beauty. You two guides have become very good friends and they take you on adventures in the deep, exploring the ocean bottom and getting to know the fish and other sea creatures. It is a very exciting life indeed. You like it, but you regret that you will never again know the world above the sea.

449:::"No, I refuse to have this insane operation. I don't want to become a fish!" The Atlanteans try to convince you that life with them will be happy, useful, and long. Yet, you still refuse. Sadly they give up their arguments and spray you with a special mist that immediately knock you out. Several hours later you gain you senses only to find that you are in an underwater air tank where you breathe naturally. Your closest neighbor is a horse who looks at you with sorrow and understanding. The Atlanteans have built a small apartment very much like the ones in the world above the sea. People come by and look at you and talk with you. Maybe you have made a real mistake. They no longer want you to join them in their world and way of life. You refused their offer and now you are a prisoner in a zoo.

450:::It is too weird. You decide to retreat. Back aboard the Seeker, you radio the Maray that you are surfacing to make a plan. While rising out of the giant crevice-like canyon, you spot what appears to be a road running along the top of the ledge. What is this?

451:::The scientists aboard the Maray had mentioned the possibilities of finding signs of the ancient civilization, such as roads. You must investigate. But maybe next time...

453:::You want to enter the submarine. It is indeed mysterious. Opening the hatch on the conning tower, you enter the sub. It is amazingly clean and orderly. There are no sign of life, but no signs of struggle or death. A voice softly speaks. "Thousands of years ago, the leaders of Atlantis realized that their continent was slipping into the sea. They discovered a large underground cavern and built new forms of living quarters for their people. Later when Atlantis was deep beneath the ocean, some of our scientists discovered and perfected an operation enabling us to breathe under water." The voice, which sounds friendly, also tells you that there are two groups in Atlantis. One group is thought to be good while the other is seen as evil. "Come join us," the voice says. "You can use the secret passageway to Atlantis. It begins just over there." As you follow directions, you spy a remarkable underwater craft passing by. There are several people aboard, and they smile at you. Or do they? If this is an Atlantean ship, are the people good or evil? Do they know of the secret passageway?

454:::This is too weird. Go back! Quickly you get into the Seeker in an attempt to escape the strange submarine. The sub is chasing you, so you put full emergency ascent power. You could use your laser cannon to blast the sub, but you do not wish to hurt anyone. The ascent towards the surface is swift, but a few fathoms from the surface all systems on the Seeker fail. You are suspended in the water in a helpless position. An unknown force has disabled you. Your onboard computers are unable to pinpoint the origin or nature of the force.

455:::There is one way out. You decide to leave the Seeker and try to reach the surface on your own. You enter the airlock chamber which gives you access to the ocean. With a quick push off, you leave the Seeker and swim toward the surface. A small, yellow life raft is part of your escape equipment. The surface of the sea is calm, but the Maray is nowhere in sight. For two days and nights you drift in the life raft under hot sun and sharp starlight. At last a search helicopter spots you. Finally you are safe. The exploration of Atlantis will have to depend on a new diver. You eyesight has been damaged by the strange force that immobilized the Seeker. Your career as an underwater adventurer is over.

456:::The best plan is to wait until the Maray locates you with sonar equipment. Looking out of the thick glass porthole, you see a giant blue whale heading for you. Suddenly the whale hits you full force. The Seeker is badly damaged. Water begins to trickle in through the hatch cover. You must abandon the Seeker. Why not ride on the whale. It sounds crazy, but this may be your only way of escape. You leave the Seeker, swim to the whale, and grab its fluke. With a smooth powerful movement, the giant mammal begins to swim to the surface... You drift for 2 or 3 days, dozing and waking. You are hungry and thirsty but unharmed by the time the search helicopter spots you bobbing in the waves.

457:::The best plan is to wait until the Maray locates you with sonar equipment. Looking out of the thick glass porthole, you see a giant blue whale heading for you. Suddenly the whale hits you full force. The Seeker is badly damaged. Water begins to trickle in through the hatch cover. You must abandon the Seeker. You admit that you just don't know what to do. The whale is scary looking and you don't have any escape plans. So you wait and watch and listen. After what seems a long time, but is probably just a few minutes, the mysterious submarine returns, attaches a cable to the Seeker, and pulls you up to the surface. The submarine vanishes under the waves, leaving you to wait for the Maray.

458:::You hurry in, trying to reach the secret passageway without being seen. Following the instructions, you enter a passageway. At the end of the passageway is an airlock door and beyond it a large air-filled cavern. A group of people approaches you with friendly gestures. They are wearing simple clothes much like the clothes people wore in ancient Greece. You remove your diving suit to find that the air is good to breathe. These people speak a language that is unknown to you, but one of them acts as an interpreter. You find out that this is Atlantis. They tell you it is governed by a man who is greedy, selfish, and dangerous. The people are like slaves. Everyone is unhappy except a few who serve the ruler as his lieutenants. These new friends ask for your help. You decide to help them by searching for the ruler first. It doesn't take you long to find the king. "So, you have found your way here after all. Put your mind at rest. I won't hurt you." The king's booming voice startles you. After several hours with the king, you find him to be bright, friendly, and interesting. Maybe the Atlanteans are wrong about this person. He offers you a chance to join his government. He tells you that most people are lazy and selfish and deserve to be ruled with power and command. He wants you to be an advisor on his staff.

459:::You hurry in, trying to reach the secret passageway without being seen. Following the instructions, you enter a passageway. At the end of the passageway is an airlock door and beyond it a large air-filled cavern. Perhaps it is inside of an extinct volcano. A group of people approaches you with friendly gestures. They are wearing simple clothes much like the clothes people wore in ancient Greece. You remove your diving suit to find that the air is good to breathe. These people speak a language that is unknown to you, but one of them acts as an interpreter. You find out that this is Atlantis. They tell you it is governed by a man who is greedy, selfish, and dangerous. The people are like slaves. Everyone is unhappy except a few who serve the ruler as his lieutenants. These new friends ask for your help. You want to help them escape. But the problem is where do they escape to? The king's spies are everywhere. The only plan is to devise a plan to capture the king and put him in prison. You suggest a plan to put on a festival with a play. On a given signal the actors and the people in the audience will rise up and seize the king. The actors will be carrying real weapons, but no one will suspect them because they are in the play. The people like the plan. They ask you to become their leader.

460:::You accept the king's offer. An advisor to a king! What a chance. Maybe the king has ruled so long that he is out of touch with the people. Perhaps as his advisor you can help the people get what they want. You don't believe that people are lazy and selfish. The king just needs a new point of view. You are appointed the king's special advisor on problems of research on food and shelter. You immediately call general meetings of all the people to discuss the food program and the work schedules. The king is so glad to have someone else take over the problems that he leaves it in your hands entirely. He gives you land and a large salary. You set up new programs and schedule the people in the planning work. You listen to their complaints and their ideas. Life under the sea is rich and full. The people are hard-working and good. It was a wise decision to remain.

461:::Advisor to a mean king? Not a chance! You tell him that you want nothing to do with a tyrant who doesn't believe in people. He laughs and tells you that people are complainers, not workers. Once back with your new friends, you discuss how to overthrow the king and his henchmen. But at that time, someone discovers a leak in the volcano wall of the underwater world. The entire civilization is in danger. Everyone works for a common purpose. Survival is the goal. You and the Atlanteans work without stop for 72 hours pumping out the flooding waters and building a special retaining wall around the volcanic crack. Finally the last pump is shut off. You are all exhausted, but you've won in your battle against the sea.

462:::Advisor to a mean king? Not a chance! You tell him that you want nothing to do with a tyrant who doesn't believe in people. He laughs and tells you that people are complainers, not workers. Once back with your new friends, you discuss how to overthrow the king and his henchmen. But at that time, someone discovers a leak in the volcano wall of the underwater world. The entire civilization is in danger. With everyone worried about the sea crashing in, no one will notice you if you try to escape. You run down a long, little-used corridor that leads to the sea. The exit door is heavy and rusty from lack of use. You push the emergency release button and shoot out into the water. The Seeker is where you left it, and once inside, you head for the surface where the Maray waits for you.

463:::You accept their wish and become their leader. You organize the play, and the king is pleased to have his people involved in a project that keeps them busy and happy. The night of the play the theater is filled, and everyone waits for the king to appear. There is a delay. The crowd grows nervous. A messenger from the king runs into the theater announcing that the king has had a serious attack of brain fever. He may not live. You wonder whether the king is really ill or whether he has found out about the plot against him. Just then, a squad of the king's soldiers enters the theater. They are headed for you. It is useless to try to escape the soldiers. You are surrounded. They take you to the king, and he sadly tells you that you are just like all the rest. He can't trust anyone. He will have to decide what to do with you and in the meantime he throws you into the dungeon.

464:::You accept their wish and become their leader. You organize the play, and the king is pleased to have his people involved in a project that keeps them busy and happy. The night of the play the theater is filled, and everyone waits for the king to appear. There is a delay. The crowd grows nervous. A messenger from the king runs into the theater announcing that the king has had a serious attack of brain fever. He may not live. You wonder whether the king is really ill or whether he has found out about the plot against him. Just then, a squad of the king's soldiers enters the theater. They are headed for you. How can you escape? The soldiers are coming after you. You scream as loud as you can: "Help me!!!" Everyone in the theater surrounds you, forming a barrier to the soldiers. The soldiers stare at the people, hesitate, and quickly leave. The people cry for the revolt to go on. The crowd leaves the theater and heads to the king's quarters. All along the route people join you and even the king's soldiers begin to join the crowd. You and the people are free; the king is put in prison. The revolt is a success.

465:::It is their world, but you are willing to help them with the planning for the overthrow of the king. You want no real part in the revolt. The planning requires choosing new leaders and setting goals for the people. You almost decide to join them in the actual revolt but you really want to get back to your own world. Once the revolt is underway, you hope to slip away and return to the Seeker for a quick escape to the surface of the ocean. The day of the revolt, you can't resist the excitement of the Atlanteans' bold enterprise, and you decide to stay with them and help in any way that you can. The endless planning and training pays off. The carefully selected band of men and women easily captures the king and his guards. The revolt has succeeded without shedding a drop of blood and the people celebrate for days. The Atlanteans treat you as if you are one of them, and, for the first time, you feel that you are.

466:::You want to analyze the bubbles before taking any other steps. Now outside the Seeker, you use your miniaturized wrist computer to analyze the bubbles. As you work, you clumsily knock against the valve the dumps the compressed air necessary to make the Seeker rise to the surface. There is nothing to be done about it, so you continue to analyze the bubbles. They contain a high percentage of oxygen and no poisonous gases. Perhaps they are coming from some area below the sea where human-type beings can live? Perhaps they are coming from Atlantis?

467:::You are worried about the Seeker's loss of rising capability from bumping the valve but you are able to trap the bubbles and use them to raise the Seeker. Slowly, the Seeker rises out of the canyon, scattering schools of brightly colored fish, and brushing past underwater plants that wave like palm trees in a wind. Just as you reach the ledge at the top of the canyon, you see what appears to be an old road!

468:::Rocks along the road's side look like old Roman distance markers. Could this be a path that leads to the lost city of Atlantis? You anchor the Seeker and prepare to investigate more closely. Suddenly a strange feeling overcomes you, part warning, part error. The Seeker is in the grips of a huge sea monster. It is similar to a squid, but it is enormous. The Seeker is just a toy in its long, powerful tentacles. That is the last thing you can remember.

469:::You want to analyze the bubbles before taking any other steps. Carefully maneuvering the Seeker between the walls of the canyon, you discover a large round hole. A stream of large bubbles flows steadily out of the hole. The Seeker is equipped with scientific equipment to analyze the bubbles. Now outside the Seeker, you use your miniaturized wrist computer to analyze the bubbles. They contain a high percentage of oxygen and no poisonous gases. Perhaps they are coming from some area below the sea where human-type beings can live? Perhaps they are coming from Atlantis? You start to drill, the stream of bubbles increases. The stream of bubbles is strong enough to ruffle the surface of the sea.

470:::You can return to the surface now and locate the exact position of the bubble are. Scientists aboard the Maray will know what to do next. You suddenly realize the stream of bubbles is powerful enough to raise the Seeker. Guiding the Seeker into the bubble stream, it heads towards the surface. As you swirl upward, you begin to notice increasing amount of brown kelp. Near the surface, you become entangled in the seaweed. The instruments in the Seeker indicate that the propellers and the steering mechanisms will not work. You put on your diving suit and exit the Seeker to see what can be done. Once outside in the kelp, you realized that you can't free the Seeker. You swim for the surface but find that you are completely stuck in the clinging seaweed. You are trapped and unable to go forward or return to the Seeker.

471:::You are dizzy from lack of oxygen and fatigue. With your knife you slash away at the heavy brown kelp that surrounds you. Bit by bit, you seem to be getting free. Then suddenly you shoot up through the last clinging piece of seaweed and reach the surface. You fire the special signal flare and the crew of the Maray quickly spots you. Within a few moments you are safely aboard, surrounded by your friends. What a relief to be out of that nightmare world!

472:::A violent storm is reported heading your way. The captain decides to move the Maray to the shelter of a nearby island. It's too dangerous to remain where you are. Deckhands lash the Seeker securely to the deck of the Maray and you get underway. The storm breaks before you can reach the safety of the lee side of the island. The Seeker is torn loose and lost overboard. The computers aboard the Maray are damaged by a surge of electricity caused by a lightening strike. You are all alive, but there are no replacements for the damaged equipment. The money has run out. The expedition to Atlantis is over.

474:::The worst thing you could do would be to panic. You relax and drift with the current which suddenly takes you upward. You cut through the kelp and are free. What a relief. No sooner do you get out of the kelp, than you are caught in the vortex of a giant whirlpool! You try to swim out of the whirlpool. But it's no use. The whirlpool has you in its grip. You feel your arms and legs being torn in every direction. There is no way out. Round and round you go.

475:::The worst thing you could do would be to panic. You relax and drift with the current which suddenly takes you upward. You cut through the kelp and are free. What a relief. No sooner do you get out of the kelp, than you are caught in the vortex of a giant whirlpool! You can't swim out of the whirlpool. There is only one thing to do: dive deep into the center. You kick several times and hurl yourself into the center of the whirlpool. Lights and colors dance before your eyes. You lose track of where you are. You find yourself standing on the ocean floor. You can look up through the center of the whirlpool and see the sky more than 2000 feet above you. It is a tiny patch of blue.

476:::You have a laser pistol for emergencies. You blast a hole in the whirlpool wall and dive through it. Facing you is a school of fish who are puzzled by this strange intruder. Behind them is a shark. You swim toward the surface slowly and the shark disappears into the deep. The Maray is nowhere in sight. You are wondering how long you'll be waiting when a loud splashing, sighing sound startles you. A huge whale has surfaced and lies nearby spouting and sucking in great noisy draughts of air. It takes you a good half-hour to swim to the enormous creature. It pays no attention to you. You climb onto its tail and crawl on hands and knees toward the highest point of its back. It's like creeping up a gigantic gray rock. From your vantage point on top, sure enough, you can see the Maray and the tiny glint of binocular lenses reflecting in the sun. The Maray crew is watching the whale. You wave, feeling certain they have seen you. It won't be long before they come to collect you.

477:::You continue struggling until you faint, and when you come to, you are floating on the surface of the ocean. There is a heavy ocean swell and the sun beats down on you. The whirlpool must have stopped as quickly and mysteriously as it began. You feel dizzy and exhausted and you move gently to make sure you haven't broken any bones. As you move your head slowly inside your helmet you feel an intense pain shooting across your right temple. You have to lie very still then and gradually your eyes pick up the thrum of the search helicopter. You don't dare move to look, but as the minutes go by, the thrum gets louder and slowly disappear. The helicopter has passed over you. It won't return this way. The pain in your temple increases. You begin to lose consciousness.

478:::The walls of the whirlpool look like solid ridges sloping upwards to the surface. The water in the center looks absolutely calm. You wonder if you could swim up through that calm. It's worth a try, and you set off. Before you can tell if you're making any progress, the whirlpool reverses and instead of whirling down, it whirls up and catapults you out of the ocean and into the air. You fall back onto the surface of the ocean close to the Maray. Although you are stunned by the fall, you quickly gain your senses and are picked up by the ship.

479:::Looking around yourself, there is a small metal hatch on the ocean floor. You pull with your strength and it opens. A voice commands you to enter. With fear and caution you walk down a corridor that leads to a small room. Three people meet you. They lead you inside. It is the most advanced control room that you have ever seen. "So, now you are in the control room of Atlantis. You see our secret. We land on this planet 3000 years ago. We used our anti-matter device to sink this continent beneath the sea to escape from your people. You can have a most pleasant and useful life here with us if you wish. All you need to do is allow us to inject you with a special serum to enable you to live down here. It is up to you. If you do not wish to be one of us, you will be held prisoner." The idea of being injected with a serum and joining them for the rest of your life is awful. You must plan an escape. When your captors are not looking, you slip away and dash for the door of the spacecraft. You fail to notice a laser beam guarding the exit hatch. Stepping into the beam, you freeze in midstep. The Atlanteans gather round you sadly and tell you that you will have to remain this way for the earth equivalent of 23 years and 61 days until the effects wear off. Then you will be given a second chance.

480:::You want to explore the hole with the Seeker to determine the source of the bubbles and guide the Seeker into the new passageway to the bubble source. Suddenly the Seeker is swept downward as if pulled by a giant magnet. You lose consciousness, and when you awake, you are in a well-lighted and comfortable room. Three people stand close by. They look normal and appear to be friendly. The middle one speaks. "You are in the visitors' reception room. If you wish to come into the city of Atlantis, then follow us; but you may never return to your world. If you wish to leave now, we will escort you safely to the surface. It is your choice. We do not wish to harm you."

481:::This is too weird. You don't want to go with them. The three people of Atlantis sense your wish to return to the surface. Instantly, they produce a bubble-shaped capsule and put you inside. "Farewell, earth person. May you live a long and prosperous life." You shoot up swiftly through the sea and break out onto the surface near the Maray. The capsule that protected you disintegrates upon reaching the surface. Once aboard the Maray, you tell the crew and the scientists about your adventure. They are kind to you, but no one believes you. They think you have imagined the world of Atlantis as a result of being so deep for so long. Back in the United States, you begin a television tour telling about Atlantis. You write articles and a book. You are paid a great deal of money for this work.

482:::It is such a good chance that you cannot let it go. The three people lead you inside. It is the most advanced control room that you have ever see. Computers, sensing devices, recording devices, monitors, and a series of digital screens fill the room. A strangely shaped figure with a very large head and totally blank eyes faces you. "So, now you are in the control room of Atlantis. You see our secret. We land on this planet 3000 years ago. We used our anti-matter device to sink this continent beneath the sea to escape from your people. You can have a most pleasant and useful life here with us if you wish. All you need to do is allow us to inject you with a special serum to enable you to live down here. It is up to you. If you do not wish to be one of us, you will be held prisoner."

483:::You are tempted to use this money for another expedition. It is the only way to prove that you are not crazy. You take all the money and start your journey. Poised over the spot you so carefully marked on the charts, you dive down in the Seeker. Again you find the hidden grotto and the round metal panel. The panel seems to seal off a passageway. It is locked. It is frustrating to be so close to the secret and yet so far from it. You try to blast the hatch right off its hinges. You have the power. Your finger presses the red button that fires the laser cannon. A blinding flash erupts immediately. But the hatch remains firm. You fire again and again. Each time the Seeker is rocked by the force of the laser cannon. The reflected energy is damaging to your craft. You continue to fire the cannon. Then there is a blinding flash inside the Seeker itself. The laser cannon explodes. You and the Seeker are destroyed.

484:::You are tempted to use this money for another expedition. It is the only way to prove that you are not crazy. You take all the money and start your journey. Poised over the spot you so carefully marked on the charts, you dive down in the Seeker. Again you find the hidden grotto and the round metal panel. The panel seems to seal off a passageway. It is locked. It is frustrating to be so close to the secret and yet so far from it. You wait patiently, hoping to be observed and invited in. For six hours you sit and wait for some sign. A green glow comes from the area ahead of you. It bathes the Seeker in a soft light. The hatch door opens. Three figures emerge and beckon to you to follow them. They lead you to a control room. After a pleasant meal and a tour of the deepwater lab, you are sent back to the Seeker for a return journey to the surface. You are told never to return again; if you do, you will be kept a prisoner for the rest of your life.

485:::You are tempted to use this money for another expedition. It is the only way to prove that you are not crazy. You take all the money and start your journey. Poised over the spot you so carefully marked on the charts, you dive down in the Seeker. Again you find the hidden grotto and the round metal panel. The panel seems to seal off a passageway. It is locked. It is frustrating to be so close to the secret and yet so far from it. You wait patiently, hoping to be observed and invited in. For six hours you sit and wait for some sign. A green glow comes from the area ahead of you. It bathes the Seeker in a soft light. The hatch door opens. Three figures emerge and beckon to you to follow them. But you don't want to go with them. They take out small hand-held hypnotizers that put you into a deep trance. You are led through a long tunnel into a large underwater lab. Three military technicians come up to you and break the trance. "You have stumbled into a secret military base. We're developing too many secret plans to risk being discovered. You will remain our prisoner." There is no escape.

486:::Perhaps you are being foolish, but you decide to join them. The injection is painless and you feel no different than before. They lead you to a comfortable room where you all share a special tea in celebration of your decision. "We have come from a different planet in search of other living beings. We have to be very careful about taking new people in our planet. Some of your people seek us out, just like you. We choose carefully." They offer you a choice of jobs in Atlantis. You want to become an underwater farmer. Farming under the sea is a job that you enjoy. Outside Atlantis, there are fields of sea plants that are tended like gardens back on earth. Atlanteans go out each day and harvest the plants, take care of the fields, and chase away the fish that love to nibble on the growing plants. Then there are fish pens to work where you feed and tend the fish until they are needed for food. Farming under the sea is beautiful and it is much easier than you had imagined. Danger lurks, though, in the form of stingrays, slender sea snakes, and occasional sharks. You have to be on your guard at all times.

487:::Perhaps you are being foolish, but you decide to join them. The injection is painless and you feel no different than before. They lead you to a comfortable room where you all share a special tea in celebration of your decision. "We have come from a different planet in search of other living beings. We have to be very careful about taking new people in our planet. Some of your people seek us out, just like you. We choose carefully." They offer you a choice of jobs in Atlantis. You want to become a musician. A musician in the world of Atlantis? Who would believe it? You are asked to choose an instrument to play. You examine water lutes, sea drums, shark bone flutes, and a wide range of electronic instruments. You choose one of the electronic instruments, but it makes no sound at all. You are told that it plays music that people feel rather than hear. What a world you're living in! Who would believe in music that is not heard? Gradually you learn to feel the different notes with parts of your body: your thighs, chest, temples and fingertips. Your interest in this new way of sensing music grows with each day. You master this new art form. You become their greatest musician.

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490:::You don't want to be with them. The idea of being injected with a serum and joining them for the rest of your life is awful. You must plan an escape. When your captors are not looking, you slip away and dash for the door of the spacecraft. You fail to notice a laser beam guarding the exit hatch. Stepping into the beam, you freeze in midstep. The Atlanteans gather round you sadly and tell you that you will have to remain this way for the earth equivalent of 23 years and 61 days until the effects wear off. Then you will be given a second chance.

491:::You decide to retire and lead a life of ease. You argue with yourself for several weeks about setting out on a new expedition. Money is not the issue. You fear that finding Atlantis will ruin it for the Atlanteans. You believe that their civilization must be protected. You decide to use the money you have made to carry on research on space and life on planets in other galaxies. Someday perhaps, you will meet the Atlanteans in space.