

TuQ'uan sat on the cold crystallized ground inside a crystal building he had barricaded himself inside of, everything around him was made of the same red crystal, it was everywhere, everything was made out of the same damn crystal, and if he survived and made his way back to Aliso City, he would die happy never seeing another damn crystal in his life. The Kel Dor took a deep breath and steadied himself, he had to find a way out of this god forsaken place.

The mission was supposed to be straight forward. Sneak into this "city", find the Children of Mortis' source of power, and destroy it, driving this wretched enemy from the Plagueian home world. Easy right? Well, shortly after TuQ and his team entered the city the rain started falling, and then the red lightning started sparking from the crystals. And in those blinding flashes of light damn *crystalline raptors* appeared! That's when all hell broke loose and the di Plagia got depressed from the rest of his team.

*Thump. Thump. Thump.*

There was a pounding at the door followed by a growl. Those *things* had found him. Moving as quickly as he could while still attempting not to make any noise, TuQ climbed the stairs to the roof of the two-story structure. The sky had taken on a deep red hue from the crystals and light drizzle of rain had turned into a full on downpour at this point, making TuQ's already precarious footing now both uneven and slippery.

Screams of triumph and despair mixed with the sound of blaster fire and explosions echoing all throughout this city. All out warfare had come to Aliso, and he was at ground zero for the conflict. From his vantage point TuQ'uan could see that the building he found himself on top of was almost squarely in the centre of the city and peeking over the edge of the roof he could see an entire pack of the raptor creatures sniffing and circling the building, throwing themselves up against the walls searching for a way to their prey. Going back down was completely out of the question.

Another squat building stood just beside the one he currently found himself atop. Judging based on the height and distance, TuQ was sure he could make the jump and hopefully not draw any attention his way.

He stood still for a moment, readying himself for what he needed to do. The rain was coming down in sheets and had soaked into his hat causing the brim to droop down, blocking his vision. He was soaked to the bone and desperate to get out of here.

*One. Two. Three.*

He took off at a run, covering the short distance to the ledge in four long strides. On his last step he planted his foot firmly on the edge of the roof and pushed off with all of the power he could muster, launching himself across the gap. It was bigger than he had estimated and now he wasn't so sure that he would make it. Panic set in as he began to wildly flail his arms, a gust of

wind ripped his precious hat from his head and the edge of the next next roof rushed closer and closer.

The tip of his outstretched toe reached the edge of the building. SUCCESS! But as his momentum carried him forward, his foot failed to gain purchase on the crystallized roof and as the trajectory of his weight had changed, he found himself falling.

TuQ'uan landed hard with a thud between the two buildings, his head smashed against the crystal ground and a cry of pain escaped his throat. As his vision began to fade he rolled his head from side to side seeing the growling shapes of the crystalline raptors entering the alleyway from both sides. His hat lay just to his side, the Kel Dor reached out and grabbed for his hat as everything went black.