

Lloyd and Pixel sit in Lloyd's room, counting up money.

"I have \$100 right here!" Pixel shouts, waving a wad of money in the air. Lloyd takes it from her and places it in the safe. "Another \$100!" She shouts handing it to him, adding, "And an extra \$42."

"That totals to... \$442," Lloyd says, mildly surprised. Pixel breaks into a large grin.

"Yes! Almost there!" She hollers.

"Yeah! Have you figured anything else out yet?" Lloyd asks. To his shock, Pixel's smile crumples, and she looks away. He suddenly wished he hadn't said anything, wishing she would go back to grinning that smile of hers.

"Well, maybe. I had another dream, about the boy, Val," she begins tentatively, glancing at him. He nods, encouraging her to go on. "Val stands alone at the mouth of a cave. He glances around trying to catch his breath. He doesn't get the time. Shadows burst from the nearby forest, charging straight at him. Val starts running again, back into the forest. He knows the forest well, so he picks the most densely wooded path possible, hoping that he can lose the shadows. He hurdles a tree, and ducks past a low-hanging branch. His breath comes in short gasps as he races through the trees. But he's wearing out. These shadows have been chasing him for hours now, and despite his enhanced Fey stamina, he can't keep this up for much longer. He knows he has only one chance, and it's risky, but if he stops, the shadows will tear him to shreds. So that's why Val ducks off the path, and instead of running towards the cave system where the rest of his village are hidden, he charges through the underbrush in the opposite direction," Pixel sucks in a great breath, preparing for the next part. "Val crashes through the underbrush, making as much noise as he can and screaming random things.

"I'm a *gasp* potato *gasp* you creepy *gasp* stalkers! *gasp* Eat potato *gasp* chips!" He screams, pushing himself to go faster.

"Graahhhgggg!" Is the only response he gets.

"Yeah *gasp* hahaha. You're *gasp* only Cheetos *gasp* which suck," He tries to shout but it comes out as a sort of strangled gasp. He can hear it now, the sweet sound of salvation. Yet Val is not deceived. Though the roar of the waterfall is loud, it can be hundreds of meters away. Lungs burning and legs trembling, it's all Val can do to keep running. He charges up a hill, leaps a log and ducks a branch. Then he sees it. Glistening in front of him, laughing at him. The waterfall. Unfortunately, Val is at the top, not the bottom like he intended. As the shadow burst from the forest and begins to advance on him, he realizes he has no other choice; he needs to jump. Taunting the monster, Val backs away towards the edge. Suddenly, the shadow charges him, and Val ducks out of the way, causing the shadow to sail over his head and off the edge. Sighing, Val relaxes, but just as he turns to go, something latches onto his foot, and drags him off the edge. The shadow falls with him, towards the water down below. All too soon they hit the water. The cold sends sharp pains through him as he plunges in. He can't feel his arms and legs, and his lungs are burning for air. Val struggles towards the surface, but the water drags him back down. *Stay with me.* It whispers to him. Val gives one last feeble attempt to reach the surface as black eats at the corners of his vision. The last thought he has as the water wraps around him like a blanket is, *I hope everyone is safe,*" Pixel finishes shakily.

"What??? You can't end a story like that! What happened to Val?" Lloyd yelps, leaping to his feet.

Pixel shrugs helplessly and says, "I don't know what happened to him. That was all I dreamed. And you're right; that's an evil way to end a story."

Lloyd glances back at the safe of money and says, "We better hurry. I think that there might be something bigger happening, and I think your house is the key."