

“Never fear, my child,” said the lion on the hillside. The light grew dimmer, and Terry could clearly make out the visage of a large, foreboding lion. The lion leapt easily down the cliff and landed at Terry’s feet. “I am Aslan.”

“Aslan? Do I know you?” asked Terry. “Are you going to eat me? Please don’t eat me!”

Aslan came forward toward Terry, padding softly on the ground. Terry felt an overwhelming sense of calm and comfort overcome him. Aslan bent down and nuzzled Terry on the face. Terry nuzzled back.

“You have a wandering heart, Tearance. You seek what we all seek, an answer to things. Do you want an answer to things?”

Terry’s heart over-flooded with happiness and promise and hope. He thought of all the questions he had: who had killed Carlton? Why was Carlton killed? How did Holli Gregg fit in? Did Carlton really marry Holli Gregg? How did the Serbian communists fit in? What was Carlton’s mission for the captain? What was the link between the art heist in the Louvre and the political assassination in India? Who killed JFK? Why were they speaking swahili? Why were they speaking ancient egyptian? What was that mysterious language? Who was the voice in the radio? What was a Code 11-A6? What was the symbol Terry was seeing everywhere? Who was the Great Ozwaldo that Samwise mentioned? Where was 999 West Corning Street? What was at 999 West Corning Street? Who were Dr. Reid, Dr. Dorian, and Dr. Turk? Who was Corporal Floyd? Why did he try so hard to kill Terry? What was the deal with Gorgolon Conglomerate and its genetic experiments? Why was Terry born in a military hospital? Was his dad a service-man? Why had his dad left so long ago? How had his mother died? Where was she buried in Arlington National Cemetery? Who was Jordan Charles Lambert III, Ph.D., and where was he now? Why did Holli Gregg say “carthage” and what did it mean? Who owned the ferrari? Why was there a dead US senator in it? Why was it rigged with a bomb? Who was Carlton’s friend, Jeremy the boxer? Who was Carlton’s friend, Ishmael the former serial killer? Who was Carlton’s friend, Benny the dictator? Who was Jean Grey really, and why did she help them? Why would Terry inevitably eat Samwise? Why didn’t Terry get special powers? Why was Aslan there? Would Aslan help him answer any of these

questions? Terry's mind very nearly exploded.

Aslan smiled and winked (did he wink?) at Terry. "I will do my best to answer all of your questions. Please, ask away." Aslan laid down on the soft dirt of the canyon floor and peered at Terry with piercing and vibrant eyes. Terry could tell that Aslan was really ready to listen to him.

"Well, my first question is, Who killed my cop-partner, Carlton? This is the question that started my whole crazy journey," Terry answered the large, frightening and powerful lion.

Aslan beamed at Terry for choosing such a thoughtful and complicated question for him to answer. "I'm glad you asked, my child. For, to answer this question, may very well answer all of your other questions. Carlton was killed by-

A scream cut through the air. It wasn't a scream for help or a cry of pain. It seemed more like a war cry, and it seemed to get louder toward Aslan and Terry where they sat. Suddenly, from out of the darkness, came Samwise falling from the sky. He landed, blades down, right on Aslan. Aslan, might as he was, roared in pain. He tried to shake Samwise from his back.

"Not this time, bub," said Samwise, and he stabbed Aslan over and over with his indestructible claws. Again and again he plunged his sharp, glowing metal talons into the body and back of the mighty beast until Aslan quit moving and then quit breathing. Terry's eyes were wide with horror.

"What did you do??" Terry screeched at Samwise. He raced over and pulled Samwise off the fallen hero. Samwise took a while to realize just what he was doing, and that Terry was really in no danger at all. In fact, Terry had to beat Samwise in the head a couple times with his fists before Samwise ceased his behavior and got off the very very dead body. It was a horrifying sight, and a horrifying thing for Terry, who had been on the verge of knowing everything he'd wanted to know. "What is wrong with you, you retarded dog?? You killed the one creature that was going to tell us everything you wanted or needed to know about this stupid mystery!!"

Terry lost control and began to beat on Samwise with his fists, hoping to pummel Samwise into oblivion, into dust, into death. Eventually, Terry gave

up and began crying, sobbing over Aslan's body. Samwise, very confused with this whole thing, stood up and walked a little distance off. He had sincerely thought he had been saving Terry from a fierce and fiendish wild cat, here in the wilderness of Pennsylvania. He didn't understand why Terry was finding this so upsetting.

"What's wrong, Terry," asked Samwise, tentatively. He cautiously moved over to sitting beside the crying Terry. Samwise put his adamantium-reinforced arm around Terry. Terry cried into Samwise's soft fur.

"He- he- he-..." began Terry, but he couldn't continue. He knew that pounding the point was useless. This dog, though loyal, was nothing but a mutt. He would have no chance without Terry, and, so, Terry stayed with him. Or would he? "Get away."

Samwise turned his head that funny way that dogs do. "What?"

Terry stood, the tears fresh on his cheeks. "You need to go now. I've endured your companionship for a little while now, and it's time you left for a while. Go your own route. You're just... you're holding me back." Terry steeled himself against the dog's emotional reaction. Yet, Samwise made no such reaction. He simply stood there and stared blankly.

"What do you mean, Terry?" Samwise shook his head slowly, not daring to comprehend.

"I mean go, you dumb dog! Go on! Git!" Samwise ducked at the words "dumb dog", and he skittered backwards when he heard the word "git". He understood those words all too well. He put his tail between his legs, turns his head, and walked slowly away from Terry and the lion. Terry was breathing heavily, shaking inside his shell. Samwise took a long time to walk out of sight. He kept his head down, his tail back, in a position of shame and fear. As a turtle, he had no similar position. He guessed that's why he never felt much shame.

Terry fell back to the earth, uncertain of what to do now. His main concern had been Samwise's protection, but without that, what was he to do with his time? It almost seemed ridiculous to continue with this charade of finding Carlton's killer. Would he ever find out the truth? Would it even

matter if he did?

“Did I hear my name?” asked a suddenly visible Carlton. He appeared above Aslan with a wry smile, then he noticed Terry’s face, and how he had blood down the front of his shell. Then Carlton’s eyes slowly searched out and located Aslan’s body on the hard canyon dirt.

“Aslan’s mane! It’s Aslan!” he interjected unusually - he didn’t ever use the expression “Aslan’s mane”. “What happened, Terry?” asked Carlton in a near panic. He floated down to the body, trying to feel a pulse or start CPR or check vitals. Of course, being a ghost, he couldn’t do any of that. He just floated into and out of the body in vain.

“Terry, what happened?” asked Carlton.

“Well, Aslan, the lion here, was just about to tell me everything I ever wanted to know when Samwise the wonder doofus came sailing through the air and skewered Aslan like he was a shish-kabob. It was horrifying and terrible, and it could have saved us nearly eleven chapters of pointless novel writing,” answered Terry, putting his head in his hands. He felt heavy, like he wanted to sleep for ten thousand years.

“Where’s Samwise now?” asked Carlton, sounding worried for the little doggie.

“He’s off on his own. I don’t know. He went that way,” and Terry gestured toward the way Samwise went off to, off to his right.

“He went towards that?”

“What?” said Terry. He turned and looked the direction his hand was pointing. Samwise had gone off down the canyon, walking between the two parallel walls of cliff on either side, toward the city. What had Carlton so exacerbated, and what Terry was beginning to realize was a problem, was the wall of water. The wall wasn’t moving, it simply stood, towering above the Philly countryside. The water was black in the night light, but Terry thought he could see flashes of fish and other marine life within it. Why it was standing straight up, poised and waiting, Terry didn’t know. Worse yet, he didn’t know how long it would stand like that.

“If that wall collapses, we’re all dead... except for me, since I’m a ghost,”

said Carlton. Then he glanced back at Aslan. "And, of course Aslan, who is also dead." Carlton was doing a poor job of cheering Terry up.

"What should I do?" Terry's mind raced. Should he follow and track Samwise to warn him of the wall? Of course, the wall didn't seem to be of any danger as of yet. Of courser, Samwise had to have seen the wall before he got two steps away from Terry. Would he have come back for help, or would he have continued on his suicide mission? Terry didn't know, and he didn't know what to do next.

"I know what you should do, but you won't like it," answered Carlton cautiously.

"What is it? If it's going after Samwise, then I'm okay with it. I've calmed down now," answered Terry.

"It's not that..."

"Well, then what is it?"

"Well, the way I see it, the only way to save Samwise and that entire town over there is for you to do one thing. You have to drink Aslan's blood."

"What?!" shouted Terry, disgusted.

"Bottoms up," answered Carlton, and he disappeared.