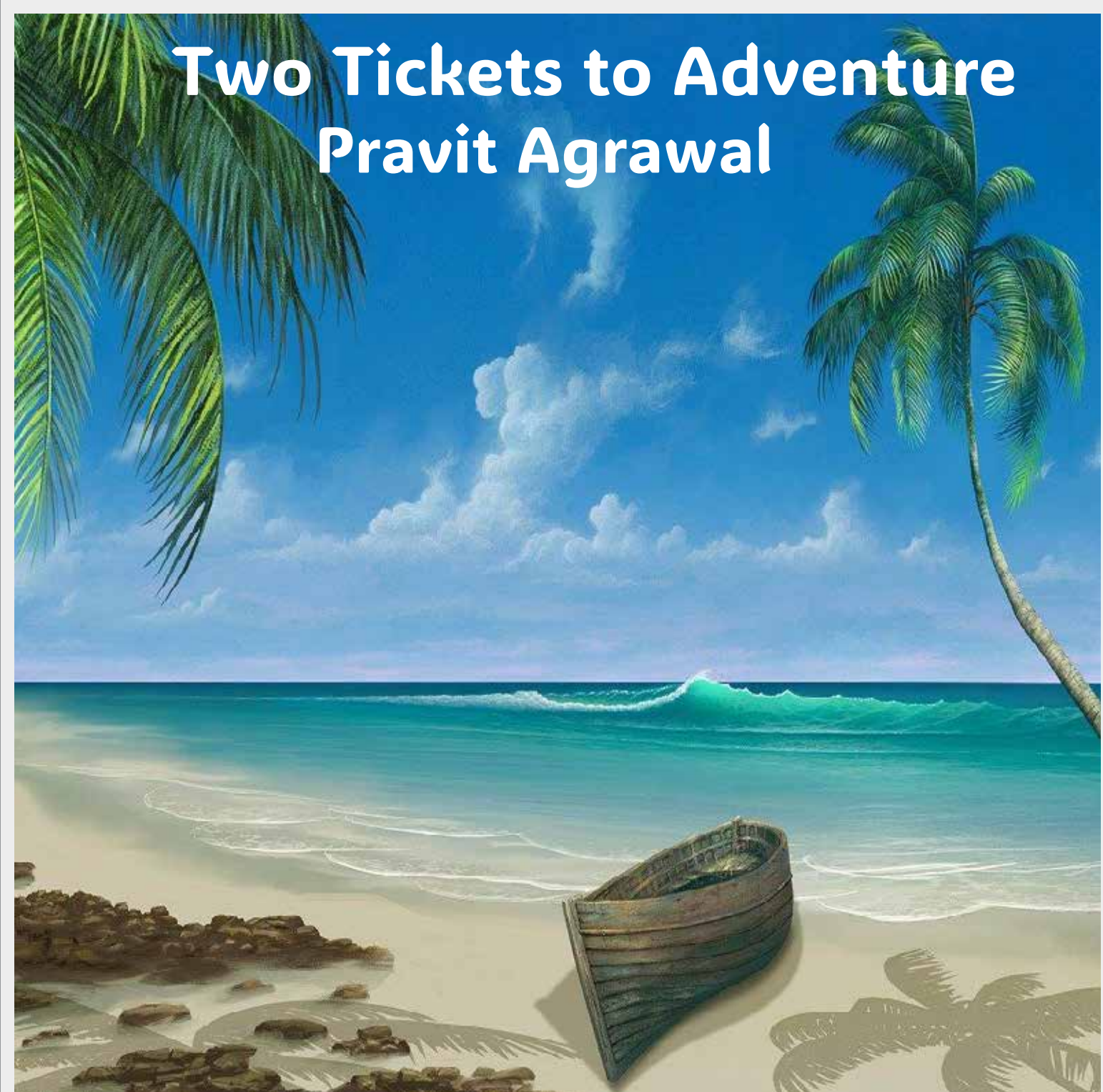


Two Tickets to Adventure

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Chapter 1 'Let's go'

It was quite early in the morning, I ate breakfast and was all packed for the family trip to Spain, I couldn't wait to get to grandad's house. He has the nicest beach villa I had ever seen. However, to get there, we needed to leave quickly, so we had time to get to the airport and to not be in a rush. My brother Rafe helped me fit everything in my suitcase, which meant all we were waiting for was Mum and Dad. Suddenly, Dad came downstairs and yelled, "Kids, can you put the suitcases in the trunk"? Immediately, Rafe grabbed two suitcases and walked them to the car whilst I was struggling to carry one. Dragging my suitcase along the ground, gasping for air, I was able to propel it over my shoulder into the car. By the time I did that, Mum had come down with her suitcase with dad holding the door open for her.

“Time to go,” said Dad whilst holding the door ready to close it.

Fortunately, the airport wasn’t too far away, so as soon as we arrived there was no rush. We underwent scanning procedures and placed our bags on the conveyor belt. “Flight 27 is ready for boarding to Barcelona,” said a mechanical voice on the intercom. I strapped my neck pillow on before entering the plane and got ready for a calm ride. After awkwardly greeting the flight attendants, I sat down admiring my surroundings. I closed my eyes for a second, or that was what it felt like because once I re-opened them, my brother was viciously tapping on my shoulder telling me that we had arrived at our destination. I tried turning my neck and realised half of the passengers had already left. I tried standing up, but the seatbelt was restricting me and my every move. As quick as a cobra, I

picked up my jumper and went to catch up with my family already walking down the aisle. We scanned our passports and walked out of airport, looking from side to side, we saw Grandad waving with a grin on his face. He gave me a hug and then he started walking us to his car.

“I am so ready to relax,” said Rafe in the middle of a yawn.

“Me too.” All I could think about was sitting on the side of Grandad’s infinity pool, drinking a strawberry mojito overlooking the sea. Rafe nodded whilst visioning the same thing. Mum overheard and told us, “You two need to take responsibility for your exercise,” urging us to go outside since Grandad lived opposite the beach. I was pleading for a different arrangement but could tell she wasn’t going to budge and the last thing I wanted was for this to turn into an argument. I was sceptical and wasn’t sure how it would go so I had to leave it to her judgement.



Chapter 2 'Look over there'

Organising my luggage felt like eternity yet manageable. We arrived at around 11 in the morning, so we still had the day ahead of us. My plan was to relax and watch TV for the rest of the day with Rafe, but mum had other plans for us. Reluctantly, I stood up whilst sighing in disappointment. Thankfully, Grandad came in and asked me and Rafe to sort out a few boxes in the attic for him. I couldn't say both were good options, but Grandad's was so much better than Mum's option. Accelerating into the air, I grabbed the pulling system down from the attic, out came a shaky rusty ladder. Rafe looked at me with genuine fear in his eyes, I tried masking my nervousness and started climbing up. I looked around and saw a few boxes. "Come on Rafe," I said welcoming him. I started rummaging through boxes on the left and found a mixed variety of different things such as scrapbooks, pocket watches, old pungent smelling

fragrances and more. After 20 minutes or so I hit my nail on a large metal object. Curiously, I tried picking it up however it was heavy for me. I leaned back and got a firm grip but instead I was lifting the whole box up, Rafe noticed and pulled the bottom of the box from underneath me. It was a makeup box, which belonged to my grandma, before she disappeared mysteriously many years ago. Happy with our discovery, we went downstairs and found the family sitting on the table chatting about life. Grandad looked as if he already knew what it was, mesmerised, spinning it around in awe. Mum enjoyed seeing grandad happy. She said, “You have earned a walk at the beach,” as if awarding us a trophy.

My sliders were scooping sand into my feet like a shovel, the blazing sun reflecting off my skin. Rafe's curly bush-like hair covered his eyes in the breeze. The ocean was inviting

us with open arms. It was better than I expected but nothing compared to a heated infinity pool sipping a tasty strawberry beverage. My walk seemed to be coming to an end, but Rafe's was only just beginning. He pointed to a brick structure far in the distance. As we got closer, I noticed it looked similar to a portal. I was puzzled and had so many questions like why we were the only ones who could see it on this highly populated beach. So many people were walking by.

“What do we do, Rafe?” Rafe sternly said he didn’t want to be part of it. Many people could easily describe me as lazy, but this portal changed my views. I was invested; I was intrigued. I was begging for Rafe to let me explore. Rafe was shocked. He knew me and my personality. He probably had so many questions. I gave it everything I had, until he gave

in. “Fine,” whispered Rafe under his breath reassuring me that we were only going in for five minutes.



Chapter 3 ‘Where are we?’

“Wow!” exclaimed Rafe in shock. Red cherry vines everywhere, the sky the colour of a ruby. Even the very grass we were stepping on was blue. It was very different to my real world. It was beautiful, the colours clashed perfectly. Flying squirrels were jumping from tree to tree. Birds with unicorn horns, I felt like I was dreaming. Taking it all in, Rafe looked behind him and yelled my name in a panic, “Jon run!” I didn’t think about it, I ran. Like nothing before, I glanced behind me and saw Rafe a couple steps behind and behind him was a masked being. Who knew what it was? Whatever he or she wanted, me and Rafe made it pay attention to us, red diagonal stripes, holding a sharp ended stick. Difficult biomes to traverse, we were encountered with bumpy forests, craters every direction we went, fields with logs laying on the ground. I looked behind me again, I saw Rafe but where could the masked person

be? Had we lost it? Were we in the clear? Catching my breath, I alerted Rafe, and he crumbled immediately, hands on his knees gasping for air. I had never seen anyone so tired before. I told Rafe if we went the same way that we could be spotted again. I explained to him that we should go in a large circle around and that it would be safer. I looked around and realised me and Rafe had ended up on top of a large hill. I craned my head over the side and saw something below us. "Rafe come quick!" It was a house of some sort; it was made of different woods. Someone with great architectural design had to have made it. I felt like I could get down the hill and angled my feet at a 45-degree angle. I started walking down as if it were a staircase. By the time I was near the bottom, Rafe loudly said that it could belong to the person chasing us. My heart stopped; I didn't think about that. Before I could change my mind, I saw a figure walking out of the forest nearby, holding a basket full of brightly coloured fruits. It was a lady, a human, she

looked exactly like us. She noticed me and her eyes popped. She was lost for words.

"Please don't hurt me, I'm Jon and that is Rafe, we're lost," I said, praying that she was kind. Holding the door wide open for us she said, "Come on in, I know how you feel." She sat us down on a leaf sofa and handed us mugs of juice, most likely from the fruits she was holding. "So, how did you boys get here in the first place?" Rafe started explaining as I interrupted asking for the restroom. She pointed to a door down the hallway. As I opened it my jaw dropped, I didn't need the bathroom anymore and I had goosebumps. We needed to leave immediately. The door I opened had a large picture of my grandma. She had disappeared many years ago and the police never found her. I looked below and there was a coffin. I think I knew who was in the coffin. In fear, I closed the door in a second.

I opened the door to the left and that was the real bathroom. I locked myself in and started staring at the walls trying to gather my thoughts. Sweat was dripping down my neck and I wiped it off. I left the bathroom as if everything was fine and sat back down scooting as close as possible to Rafe. He read me like a book and could tell something was wrong. I whispered in his ear to open the door I was pointing towards. As the lady was in a different room Rafe walked over hesitantly and slowly opened the door. His face lit up like mine and we both stood up ready to go. We knew we had to leave. Quickly.

Chapter 4 “Rafe Wait!”

The lady wasn't being honest about her true self. She saw me and started staring at me as if I was a spy. Rafe looked at me and then at the door. I was ready. My throat itching, I swallowed and counted to three in my head. I sprinted towards the door as Rafe held it wide open. I grabbed the handle and swung it as hard as I could. I felt like the hulk. We were both on the run again. As I looked behind me, I saw the door re-opening and the lady put on the same mask as the person chasing us when we had entered through the portal. Could it be true? The same kind-hearted woman who welcomed me into her home was the same killer chasing me and my brother before, how come Grandma was in her house and how did she get hold of her in the first place. So many questions unanswered. I felt betrayed, she deceived us. What was she going to do to us if we had stayed any longer? I vaguely remembered the

direction of the portal and kept going. Rafe was slightly ahead and was cheering me on. I was feeling fatigued. Rafe on the other hand gained even more energy. I kept pulling through and followed. Rafe manoeuvred us back through the forest strategically dodging each crater. Panting like a dog, I saw the portal. Only 30 metres left, I thought to myself. Were we safe, is this it.? We were about to leap through.

“Rafe help!” I called to Rafe. The lady grabbed my collar and jerked me back. Rafe turned around and had zero regret. He started running like an American football player and barged her to the ground. She was sitting there in pain. She had enough. He grabbed my arm and picked me up. “Who even are you?” asked Rafe, interrogating her. Admitting defeat, tiredly she said, “Fine, you got me. My name is Ino.” “Why do you have pictures of our grandmother stored

away in a mystery door?”

Hesitantly, she shook her head. Rafe looked at Ino and she immediately understood what would happen if she didn’t tell him. Taking a deep breath in, she explained to us how it went. Ino said that she wasn’t evil. She said in more depth that she was friends with Gran, she had guided Gran after she entered the portal few years ago and showed her around the place. Ino said she was the only person who accepted her. Knowing Grandma so well, that made sense. Grandma was the largest hearted person ever. Ino told us that Grandma would come back daily just so they could enjoy each other’s company. One day, she had asked to lay down for a quick nap but had never woken up. Ino said that she wore the mask since Grandma and her had made it together and she wanted to honour her legacy.

“How come you chased us after we entered?” asked Rafe.

“Since I had no idea who to trust and who not to. I’m sorry,” replied Ino sincerely. I offered for her to come back

with us. She declined. She told us that she liked it there but if she changed her mind, she would find us. There was no way to convince her. She was set in her ways. Although she looked happy. She stood up and took her mask off and smiled. “You should get back before your family gets worried.” Satisfied with our outcomes, Rafe and I waved back to her while returning through the portal.

Our legs in pain, we started walking back. Not saying a thing. We were traumatised. Rafe saved my life. This was a life experience. It taught me so much. I had learnt to enjoy the outdoors and not to sit inside all the time. Most importantly of all, to value the adventures I get to do as a kid. Who knows what’s in store? Maybe Rafe and I could convert another person into a kind soul. Everyone has good intentions deep inside, don't they?



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When Jon and Rafe go on a holiday to meet their grandad, they expect to kick back and relax but their mother decides that they must be actively moving and exercising. Jon and Rafe are forced to go on a beach walk, when they stumble upon a portal which only they can see.

Upon entering they are faced with many challenges and obstacles to overcome in this alternate world. Will the brothers get back safely? Who knows?