



The Challenge Tree

by Jordan Crews (Year 4)

Jack and Jason loved to play soccer. However, they made a big mistake one cold wet Tuesday morning when they kicked the ball so high it smashed through the attic window of their uncle's worn-down country house they were staying at for the holidays.

"Oh no!" cried 4-year-old Jack. "Uncle Tom's going to be so angry at us!"

"Quick!" said Jason. "Let's go up and see if we can fix the window."

Jason grabbed Jack by the hand and pulled him through the muddy driveway, through the front door and up the staircase to the attic. They burst through the old wooden attic door and quickly ran to the shattered glass on the floor next to the soccer ball.

"Um. I'm not sure how we're going to get out of this one," said Jason. "Quick let's grab the ball".

"Oh dear," Jack sighed. "Uncle Tom will be home soon, and he will be so cross. Let's disappear into the forest behind the house for a while until he has a chance to calm down."

Jason motioned to Jack to follow him and the boys made their way out of the house, down the wet driveway to the forest at the back of the house, which stretched on for miles into thick overgrowth and massive trees.

As Jason and Jack walked further into the forest, the path became darker and the chirping of crickets became louder.

"I'm a little bit scared," said Jack.

"It's ok," said Jason. "We won't go much further."



Just as Jason said that, a flash of glowing blue dashed before their eyes.

“What was that?” said Jack.

“It looks like a butterfly Jack. Let’s follow it!”

The boys ran as fast as they could, trying to keep up with the bright butterfly and ran further and further into the woods, until finally the butterfly landed on a big dark, old looking Oaktree.

“Look at where its landed!” exclaimed Jason.

“It looks like it’s right next to what looks like an old red button,” said Jack.

Jack reached out and the butterfly immediately flew away into the forest.

“Oh it’s gone now,” said Jason sadly.

“But look at this button on the tree,” said Jack. “I wonder what it is?”

Jack immediately pushed the button and the most incredible thing happened. The middle of the bottom of the tree opened up to create an entry inside.

“Wow!” cried Jason. “Let’s take a look!”

Jason led the way and Jack followed excitedly from behind. Once the boys stepped inside the tree, their mouths gaped open. The inside of the tree was in fact an optical illusion. It was a massive round room with a blue spiral staircase winding up at least 3 stories high. It looked like there was a platform on each level of the winding staircase. In fact, it looked like there were three levels.

“Woouooahhhh,” said Jack.



“Let's go!” cried Jason. “I can't wait to see what's up the staircase!”

Both of the boys raced up the blue spiral staircase to the first platform. Before them was a massive shiny yellow door with a brown wooden door handle, shaped like a castle. Jason stepped forward and slowly turned the handle to the right and pushed open the heavy yellow door.

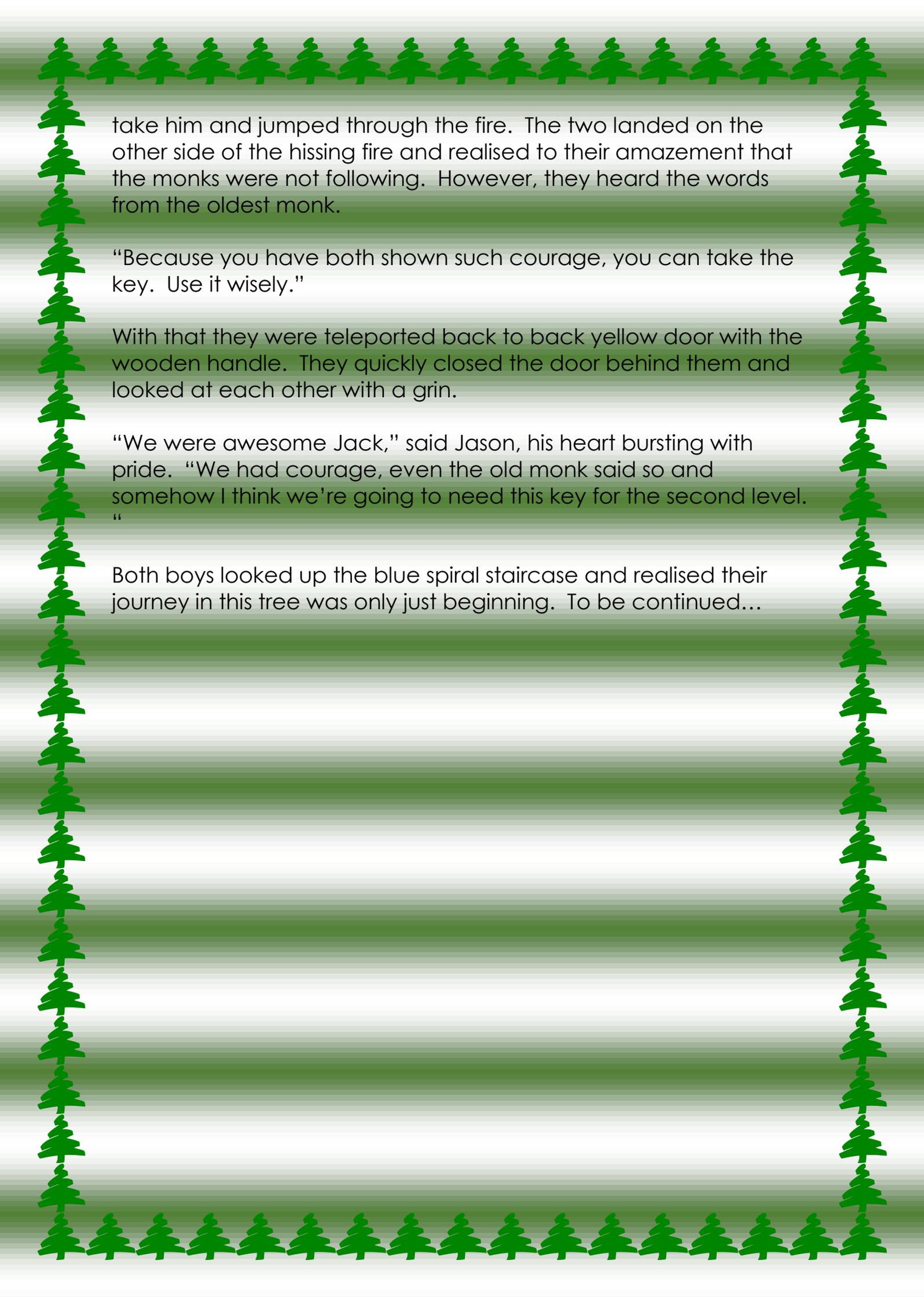
Suddenly a gust of wind blew them backwards onto their bottoms.

Jason stood up and saw in front of them a magical room with a giant chain leading up to an island in the sky. It looked like there was a castle at the top with monks facing the castle. As they climbed up they noticed the wind was picking up. Jack nearly flew off and Jason quickly grabbed his little brother just in time. Then suddenly the wind blew them up the chain onto the island in the sky. They landed on the soft sand and Jason spotted an army of monks in the distance with their backs to them, praying to the mysterious looking castle. They could hear an “ommmm” sound coming from the men and they realised they had not been noticed as they were deep in prayer. Jason and Jack sneakily walked past the monks and saw a key hanging up on the side of the castle.

“Quick get the key!” whispered Jack.

Jason grabbed the shiny key and ran as fast as he could but soon realised he had disturbed the group of men who angrily turned towards the boys. Jack was so scared he peed in his pants! The monk who looked to be the oldest said to the boys “if you want to pass you both have to battle us.” Nervously Jason and Jack braced themselves for battle. Jason punched as hard as he could and one of the monks flew to the other side of the wall. “Wow I have super strength!” he said.

Jack tried to copy his brother and swung his arms at another monk, then suddenly a great wall of fire appeared from nowhere. Jason grabbed his brother's hand and ran as fast as his legs would



take him and jumped through the fire. The two landed on the other side of the hissing fire and realised to their amazement that the monks were not following. However, they heard the words from the oldest monk.

“Because you have both shown such courage, you can take the key. Use it wisely.”

With that they were teleported back to back yellow door with the wooden handle. They quickly closed the door behind them and looked at each other with a grin.

“We were awesome Jack,” said Jason, his heart bursting with pride. “We had courage, even the old monk said so and somehow I think we’re going to need this key for the second level.”

Both boys looked up the blue spiral staircase and realised their journey in this tree was only just beginning. To be continued...