

Reach for the Stars

By Mugdha K.

Chapter 1

BEEEEEP! Laurell sat up straight and rubbed her eyes, cars were zooming past her. 12-year-old Laurell had yet another dream of her parents. She had lost her parents at the age of 1 and had no clue who they were. Laurell had learnt the ways of life from her surroundings. The only place she could call home was a damp alley with surprisingly tasty food scraps. One thing that was certain was that Laurell was a complete orphan, no one to love or care for her. She really did wish that one day that would change. Would that one day ever come?

Chapter 2

OUT! OUT! SCRAM! Micah sprinted across the grass and leaped over the stubby fence. He could still hear the woman grumbling behind him. 13-year-old Michael had, yet again, been disturbed from his peaceful sleep. He was abandoned by his parents at the age of 5 and had no idea where they went. Ever since he was abandoned by his parents, he has been wandering around town, scavenging for places to sleep. One thing he was sure he never got was respect, none at all.

Chapter 3

It was afternoon and the sun was shining. As every other day Laurell was making her way down the narrow alley to get her lunch. CLANG! But something had already got there first, maybe a raccoon? Laurell picked up the pace and soon she arrived at the trash can. There was a boy, he looked like he was about her age, and he was munching on some moldy broccoli. Hey! Who are you, and why are you eating my lunch? Oh! Is this your property? asked the boy. Not exactly, I guess it could be anybody's. Stated Laurell, who are you? Oh, my name is Michael, but you can call me Micah. My name is Laurell, it's nice to meet you. Hey, I have been looking for a place to sleep. Do you think I could sleep here? asked Micah. Sure! Come on, I will show you around. And with that their friendship began.

Chapter 4

The sun was shining, and the narrow alley which was usually quiet was full of snores. A light breeze went by, and a small paper landed on Micah's nose. Micah woke up and the small paper landed on his lap. He held the paper close to his face and squinted. There was some tiny writing on it. Hey Laurell! Look at what I found. Laurell woke up almost immediately, what? She asked. Micah handed the paper to her, she also squinted at the paper. It has some tiny writing on it! exclaimed Laurell. 1 second I swear I saw a magnifying glass here last week. She rummaged in a cardboard box and found a dusty and chipped magnifying glass. Here use this, she handed it to Micah. It said:

You will find us, above the city lights, across the vastest sea, at the highest of the heights

And there lies an entrance blocked with rocks, how to get in? you must think outside the box

Love, mom + dad

Woah, exclaimed Laurell. My parents are still alive! But where do I find them? "Maybe," said Micah, the note gives clues, leading to where your parents might be! But what does the first clue mean? Wondered Laurell. Hmm, grab your bags Laurell, exclaimed Micah, we are going out of town!

Chapter 5

It was an extremely hot day, the streets were very noisy and busy as usual, Laurell and Micah were walking on the sidewalk. They were very tired, hot, and sweaty, but they trekked on. Micah checked the map once again and they were almost in the city outskirts. It had been a few days since they found a mysterious note, they were following the clues that were written on the note. "Hey, Laurell," exclaimed Micah, "I think we're here. They arrived at the edge of town, where a small rental boat shop lied. They entered the shop and went to the counter. What can I help you with? asked the cashier. Um, can we rent a rowboat for two? asked Laurell. Sure, that will be 6 dollars. Said the cashier. One second, I think I got some money. She rummaged in her pocket and found a few bills and coins. She handed them to the cashier, and asked, will this be enough? yes, answered the cashier, follow me. Laurell and Micah followed the cashier out the back door. The cashier seated Laurell, and Micah in a stout rowboat. He handed them a pair of oars and a lantern; he then made his way back into the shop. Okay, Micah pulled out the small paper they found, the next clue says *across the vastest sea* that must mean, we must travel across the ocean to our next destination. Okay," responded Laurell, then let's get going.

To be continued...

Chapter 6

That night there was a massive storm, luckily Laurell and Micah survived. But their boat didn't! During the storm, their boat was smashed into pieces by the rolling waves! The next morning, they woke up, to find themselves floating on a chunk of wood. Oh No! exclaimed Laurell. Where did our boat go? They were startled by the fact that they had lost their boat. Micah pulled the map, and the small paper out, no! The map is all soggy! He exclaimed. "Well at least we can still see something on the map," said Laurell. A moment Later they heard a big noise, DING DING! A pirate ship? All aboard, shouted a lady on board. Are you stray, here to save the day! Sounds like a rescue boat, suggested Micah. Let's get on board, said Laurell. They waved crazy at the ship shouting, OVER HERE! The ship steered toward them, and they got on board. Hello, what's your name mate? It looked like the lady who was shouting earlier, she had a uniform, long red hair, and was clipped with a British accent. My name is Micah, and her name is Laurell, he answered. Okey do-key now would you two like something to eat? asked the woman. Yes please! Laurell and Micah were starving! Okay, we have eggs, bacon, pancakes, waffles, and juice. Which would you like? I'll take eggs and some pancakes, said Micah. And you missy? she asked. Same as him, answered Laurell. Right in here, the woman ushered them into a small compartment. With their hopes high, Laurell and Micah were pleased by the thought they were finally getting to eat, but things turned upside-down for them very quickly. As soon as they entered the room a large net fell over them. Hey! We're trapped! screamed Laurell as she was struggling to escape. Who are you, and what do you want? asked Laurell. We won't tell you anything! Sneered the woman. Please we'll give you anything! pleaded Micah. No! Snapped the woman. Laurell and Micah seemed doomed, but then Micah remembered he had a pocket knife! He snatched it out, and started to cut the ropes, while the woman was too busy cackling with joy. A few moments later Micah had finally cut a hole big enough to crawl through. He nudged Laurell, and she

gasped at the sight, and they made their way through the hole. The woman finally opened her eyes as she recovered from laughter. She was devastated when she saw the children gone!

Chapter 7

By the time they had escaped back onto the floating piece of wood. Micah pulled out the small paper. The next clue says, at the highest of the heights this must mean the mountains. In the distance they could see the mountains, we're getting closer! exclaimed Laurell. After a few hours, Laurell and Micah had finally reached their destination. They got off the floating chunk of wood, I think we should camp here for the night, I'm pretty tuckered out, said Laurell. Sure, responded Micah. So, they slept at the bottom of the mountain for the night. The next morning, they woke up, and prepared for the journey ahead. It was an extremely dangerous journey, and it took several hours, but they finally made it to the top! Micah pulled out the small paper yet again and checked the last few clues. It says, *there lies an entrance, blocked with rocks how to get in you must think outside the box* they glanced around and spotted a cave not very far away. Laurell and Micah made their way there. But, as the clue had stated, it was blocked with rocks! It says think outside the box, said Micah. They looked around the entrance looking for a secret door and they could not find one. They seemed doomed once again. Then Laurell spotted a hole in the rocks which was large enough to crawl through. Look! She showed Micah they went through. The cave looked deep, looks like another journey, said Laurell. After several minutes, they had finally made their way down the cave. But one last obstacle stood in their way, it was a giant boulder! Laurell and Micah had to put all their force in to move and there at last sat Laurell's parents! Mom! dad! Laurell rushed up to them and hugged them with all her might. How did you get here? Long story, we're just glad you're here, said her parents.

And that's how Laurell's wish finally came true!