

Once upon a time, Magicaland. The hidden world inside the Earth's core. Magicaland is a large place filled with magic, fantasy, and adventure. Sam lives in the area of Urbantasyland, the more urban section of Magicaland. There are cities of heroes, unique creatures, and adventure beyond one's wildest dreams.

It's around ten o'clock when Sam wakes up on this bright Saturday morning. She heads downstairs where her mom is sitting at the table with a cup of coffee. She's reading a paper.

"Good morning, mom," Sam says as she opens the fridge.

"Honey," her mom replies, "this is fantastic!"

"What is it?" Sam asks.

"It's your essay about your hero you wrote for school!" She shows Sam the paper. "I didn't know you wrote it about your dad."

"Oh, yeah."

"I think he'd really appreciate being your hero. He really would."

The doorbell rings and Sam runs for the door before either of us get to tears. She opens the door and it's a mailman.

"Here," he says. "This is for Sam T. Nacav. Are you Ms. Nacav?"

"Yes," Sam says. "Thank you."

He hands me a letter from a guy called Bill Centor. I rip it open and read it.

"Mom," Sam begins, "do you remember that weird briefcase with the three keyholes? In the garage?"

"Yeah, what for?"

"This guy says he worked with dad, and knows where the keys are. This is a map of where to find them. He said inside the briefcase is something dad left us before he died. Something very special."

Her mom looks at her. "That's wonderful!"

"Only one fluke," Sam explains. "The keys are all in Monstropolis."

Monstropolis is another part of Magicaland. It's inhabited by monstrous creatures and is led by a giant purple dragon.

"Sam," she begins, "just be careful. And don't go alone."

In shock, Sam nods, and calls up her friends. "Hey guys," she says, "want to go on an adventure?"

Sam meets up with her friends: Dave, Lizz, and Brody. They fill their backpacks with gear and weapons and head for the treacherous land of Monstropolis.

They were able to find the first two keys quickly. The path they had to take was the back of the city, so no monsters were nearby. They found the first one at a waterfall, which required them to use a nearby fishing pole and reel it from the small lake at the bottom of the falls. The second key was found

on top of a building close by. They needed to sneak past some monster guards, but were able to climb the ropes on the building's side to take the key on top.

The third key, however, is a bit more difficult. It sits with the king of the land: a giant, purple dragon called King Nogarda. The dragon wears a necklace with a case hanging off it with the key inside.

King Nogarda is sitting at the end of the large, main street of Monstropolis, watching for any trouble with any dragon civilians. It's perfect for Sam and her friends to carefully get the cage off the necklace with the king noticing. They head to the building behind the dragon and make their plan.

"Ok," Sam says. "We need to climb the windowsills of this building to get enough height so we can jump onto the dragon's right wing – carefully and quietly."

The other three nod and they begin to climb the building. Once they are high enough, they each take turns carefully hopping off the windowsill and onto the king's wing. Slowly, they move toward the neck and jump onto the necklace, still not seen. The necklace is big enough for them to stand on due to the dragon's large size.

They start to screw off the cage, but accidentally drop it and it falls, crashing down onto the ground leaving the key exposed. That got the dragon's attention.

"HEY!" the king bellows. "WHO IS THERE?"

"There's some Urbantasyland creatures on your neck!" a guard at the ground points out.

Uh-oh.

King Nogarda starts to spin and spit fire at the foursome. They start to shake off one by one.

Sam falls right next to the key and picks it up.

"Guys!" she yells. "I have the key!"

"Great!" responds Lizz. "Now come up and help us defeat the king!"

She starts to walk, but then stops in realization. "I can go!" Sam screams back. "Distract the king so I can take the key!"

"You can't just leave us here!" Dave shockingly protests.

"You'll be fine!" Sam replies. "Just keep it distracted!"

"Sam! Don't leave! Help us!" Brody chips in.

But Sam is already heading off back to Urbantasyland, safe with the keys, but not with her best friends.

She runs back home and quickly sprints into the garage. She has been waiting for this since their adventure began.

Quickly, she shoves the keys into each of the three keyholes and turns them. The keys begin to light up, but then they fade away as the briefcase becomes unlocked.

Impatiently, Sam opens the briefcase to find the most shocking discovery she would have ever expected.

Nothing at all. The briefcase is completely empty with no trace of anything inside.

Sam angrily stomps off to her room. Her mom calls after her saying, “Did you open the briefcase? What was inside?”

Upstairs, Sam slams her bedroom door shut. She throws herself face-first onto her bed, and a paper falls on her head.

She moves to face upward, and takes the paper. “What the heck is this?” she says to herself. She starts reading and realizes it’s her essay she wrote for school. Her mom must have put it in here after reading it in the morning.

Sam picks it up and starts to read.

*My Dad*

*By Sam Nacav*

*My dad is the best. We do everything together. We love going on adventures - at least in our imaginations. We'll act like we are fishing in the waterfalls for exotic creatures, sneaking onto a building to get a view of where a criminal is heading, or fight with a giant demon or dragon. We always had wacky games we played, and it was the most fun I ever had. Thanks dad.*

She puts down the essay in surprise, remembering what she had just done. Everything she used to play with her dad in their imaginations was what Sam and her friends experienced in real life. That was the gift her dad left: adventure.

She sprints as fast as she can out of the house and back to Monstropolis where she finds her friends hiding behind a building.

“Sam! What are you doing back here?” Lizz asks, surprised to see her back.

“I’m sorry I ditched all of you,” Sam apologizes. “I was selfish and only thought of what I wanted and totally ditched you. I’m sorry.”

They nod. “It’s okay,” David says.

“Now, can we fight this dragon once and for all?”

Unlike the expression she is expecting, they all shake their heads in fear. “We’re no match for that beast!” Brody says concerningly.

“You’re right,” says Sam. “Let’s just go home.”

And they all lived happily ever after.