

Years 5 & 6

1st Place: Jantiff Beasley

Year 6, Perth Waldorf School

The Troll of Perth, Australia

Minerva Rue sat on her bed in New York City puzzling over recent events. She was a monster hunter after all and this was supposed to be easy, but people were going missing all over the world. Although she had little clue to who this person was, she thought she had an idea of who was snatching people from their beds. She had tracked the mysterious assailant through Argentina, Ireland, China, Canada, Egypt, Italia, Greenland, Mongolia and Norway, now she had nowhere to go. In each country he had sent a different monster for her to fight (giant tiger, ogre, dragon, vampire, cursed mummy, warlord, sirens, a tribe of murderess head hunters, and zombies) and each time she had won. After each fight the monsters had given her a piece of a puzzle, which when assembled, formed two words: Perth Australia.

In her next fight she didn't think she'd be so lucky. Her last battle had been against a horde of zombies and just when she thought it was over, a zombie had jumped on her from behind and bitten her arm. She rolled up her sleeve to look at the wound, it was a jagged bite mark oozing pus and it had a slightly green tinge to it. She sighed. *A week at most*, she thought, she didn't want to think about the day she would turn.

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Two days later and Minerva still hadn't come up with any ideas of what to do, she then decided that the best thing to do was to find the kidnapper; yes, she was off to Australia.

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"I told you to delay her," said the raspy voice from the darkness.

"I . . . I sent every creature we have against her," said the figure who hunched before the troll's throne made of twisted thorny branches, scraping themselves on the rock of the throne. "The mummy, the warlord, even the vampires an . . ."

"You idiot!" the raspy voice yelled, "You complete and utter idiot, get out of my throne room!"

"Yes master" said the hunched figure.

When he was gone, and the only noise was the scraping of the thorny branches on the throne, the troll spoke.

"And now my plan has begun," he said.

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Minerva arrived in Perth and checked out her luggage. This involved some minor accidents, not unusual for Minerva, including running into the drink dispenser, falling down the escalator and accidentally taking her axe through security.

She took a taxi to the hotel where she was going to be staying and checked in. She took her bags to her room, which was bland and a bit drab but she didn't mind. She was tired from her flight so she collapsed into the small bed and fell into a dreamless sleep.

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The next day she woke up and ate a small breakfast of bacon and eggs, then headed outside to try to hail a cab. It was surprisingly considerably harder than it was in New York. Once she managed it, she asked the driver to take her to 25 Mount Pleasant Place. When she arrived, she paid the driver and collected her change, then she walked up the path to the front door. The house was normal red brick with a tiled roof and nicely trimmed hedges out the front. She knocked and waited. A middle aged man with dark hair opened the door.

"Come in," he said.

She walked in and took a seat on the lounge in the living room.

"So Minerva," the man said. "What do you want?"

"Hi Walden, long time no see. I want to know if there have been any suspicious people sightings or monster photographs recently," Minerva said.

"And why did you come to me?" asked Walden.

Minerva grinned. "Because I know you're the person to go to when I need information like this," she said.

". . . And what's in it for me," said Walden curiously.

"You owe me a favour," said Minerva.

"Fine," growled Walden.

They sat at Walden's computer as he did his thing.

"Okay," he said, "I've found something." His fingers flew over the keyboard. "The great fern forest on Toucan Mountain," he said.

"Thank you," Minerva replied.

She walked out of the house and hailed a taxi again. She told the driver to take her to the great fern forest. The drive took 45 minutes and she read a book for that time. She almost didn't notice when they reached their destination, but she got out and paid the driver and set off into the forest. She walked for 15 minutes until it started to rain. She saw a cave in the growing darkness, so she headed towards it.

Minerva walked into the cave, grateful to be out of the pouring rain. As she walked in and turned her torch on, she noticed giant stalactites sticking like the fangs of some monstrous creature from the ceiling. A tunnel branched off to both the right and the left. She took the piece of chalk from her pocket and drew a little arrow on the stony wall to remind her which way she went.

This happened several more times as she made her way deeper and deeper into the cavernous maze. Suddenly, she found herself at a three-way junction. Before she had time to decide which way to go, she saw a light around the left corner, so she hid behind a tall stalagmite and turned her torch off. The person passed her and the

lantern revealed the shadow of the figure silhouetted against the tunnel wall that was an old hunched man with a thin grey beard carrying a walking stick in one hand and a lantern in the other. He turned, looked around then walked up to a blank wall and pulled a stalagmite. A secret passage opened in the wall and he walked through. She waited a moment then quickly followed him through the doorway. It led to a round tunnel with lights and what seemed like air conditioning. She followed him all the way to a door with a skull and cross bones on it, he opened it and walked through.

She followed the man into a room filled with treasure and precious gems. Sitting in the corner on a throne made of twisted thorny branches scraping themselves against it, was a troll. Minerva gaped. A troll. A real life troll, she thought. The troll turned his head. He had heard her, but that was impossible, no one has that acute hearing.

"Come here," he said, and she found her legs moving towards him

"So," the troll said, *"The great Minerva Rue is finally here, I've been expecting you."*

Out of the corner of her eye she could see an ancient looking sword with a jewelled encrusted hilt. It looked like it could do some damage. The sword was just one leap away.

"What do you want?" she said, trying to buy herself some time.

"Ha ha ha," he chuckled *"What does every bad guy in every bad movie want to do."*

"I don't know," said Minerva. "Why don't you tell me?"

"World domination," growled the troll.

She stiffened, then leapt towards the sword. The troll held up his palm and a symbol glowed in bright white on his wrist. She stopped in mid-air, frozen in time. As she hung there, she felt the zombie bite on her arm fade and disappear. The time stop must have some kind of magical healing power she thought.

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Walden Rue leant against the wall and thought about his recent visit from Minerva. He thought maybe he should follow her in case she got into trouble, so he walked over to the glass case on one wall. He pulled two short swords out, closed the cabinet then ran onto the street. He could see Minerva's taxi pulling away from the curb and he waved his hands frantically but to no avail. He saw another taxi driving past so he hailed it and got in. The driver was an elderly man who asked him where he wanted to go.

"Follow that cab!" shouted Walden.

The man grinned and gunned the engine.

"I've been waiting thirty years to hear those words!" He went pedal to the metal and they shot off into the afternoon traffic.

She hung there for a little over two hours until suddenly Walden burst into the room carrying two short swords. He lunged at the troll but the troll just roared in fury and threw him against the wall. In that moment, the troll lost his concentration and the time stop ended. Minerva landed, grabbed the sword and rolled. The troll had his back to her, so she jumped and plunged the sword into his back. The monster staggered back and then fell to the ground, stone dead.

Minerva ran over to Walden. He lay in a crumpled heap on the ground at the bottom of the wall. She propped him up and he groaned.

"I think my arm is broken."

"Wait here," she said.

"Just where do you think I might go?" he said drunkenly.

Minerva walked over to the dead troll. She inspected his wrist, looking for the symbol. She found it and copied it on to her own wrist with the chalk. When she was done, it sank into her skin as a tattoo. She held out her palm towards Walden the same way the troll had done to her. Walden suddenly stopped talking as he was frozen in time. She released Walden from the time stop by turning her hand back towards herself and he sank into unconsciousness. She took him to the hospital and the nurse gave him a once over. The time stop had healed his worst injuries, but he still needed to keep his arm in a sling for the next three weeks. On the way home from the hospital Minerva drove Walden home.

On the way home Walden said, "Thanks for saving me back there Minerva."

Minerva grinned. "You helped me first, Dad," she said. She dropped her Dad off at his house then went home. When she got there, she went up to her room and fell into bed.

She would need her sleep, because tomorrow will bring new monsters and new adventures, but at least now she had the time stop tattoo and Walden to support her.

The End