

Saga 4:
Gosan and the Wizard's Planet

Desert of the Real

Narrator:

Gosan, having arrived with only his little bag of water and a large desert lying in front of him, had obviously underestimated the seriousness of his situation. He looked around for a while, taking in the surroundings with his senses. Yet of all six, he could only find resource in one; for the air lacked smell and the planet lacked life as well as sound, and all feeling and taste were of no use to him. Wondering which direction he should go, Gosan turned his head slowly ever more, searching for answers where none could be found. He could sense no life on this planet, no Ki from which to derive guidance, and the feeling was worse than being in the most desolate parts of the Room of Spirit and Time. Closing his eyes to try harder to claim higher concentration, he only felt his own energy on the Ki continuum. Thus he could not decide whether either direction mattered. Opening his eyes once more, he realized he had already begun to perspire. Raising his hand to his sweat-laden brow, he peered up into the sky at the three suns floating over him at several positions in the sky. There they sat, staring at him harshly, as if awaiting him to catch fire or flee their mighty rays.

Between each of the giant stars rested a moon of brilliant radiance, reflecting the heat of the stars as if to magnify what was lost to space back onto Gosan. On the horizon off to his right and left, he could see that one was setting and another rising. It seemed as if the planet was designed specifically to burn those on it alive under intense powerful rays of heat.

To his dismay, he found there was absolutely no shade around him, only endless waves of sand dunes, laid out as if the ground were some slowly moving ocean. He could not perceive that anyone could be on this desolate rock. If the wizard had once been there, he was long dead in the ruinous sand that covered the surface of the planet. Sighing in regret and disappointment, he thought for a moment about leaving; it seemed the only rational thing to do. He had wasted his time, and already felt the sting of the suns' rays burning his flesh, annoyingly turning it pink before his very eyes.

He raised his two fingers up to his brow again, turning away his forlorn thoughts to focus. Only, he realized he couldn't. The more he tried, the more his thoughts became like fog, clouding his thoughts more terribly than any smoke created by the most terrible of flames. As seconds passed, annoyance and focus turned to fear. Fear erupted into panic; panic into denial, into anguish and bitter anger. Then anger led to understanding that he had suddenly forgotten the images of everyone and everything. That some force had caused such demise. He ascertained that he couldn't even remember how their Kis felt. Then understanding morphed finally into desperation, as Gosan came to see how utterly alone and with no hope of home he stood. Palpable and penetrating pathos grasped his entrails viciously and squeezed at his very soul's throat attempting to forsake its life. For Gosan it became Truth that desperation and misery would be his friends for a long time to come...

Gosan slunk downward at this sorrowful epiphany. He nearly collapsed totally as he felt the ten-ton weight of emergency fall upon his very shoulders. In fact, the pressure on him was so irritating and grievous, he felt like sobbing right there as he stood. But instead, he did not. Instead of taking the weak man's road, he vowed to find the old wizard who had cursed him so, and choosing the easiest direction, began to trudge through the winded, sandy sea.

As he walked, he pondered the terror of everything as it was. The longer he walked, unable to think of nothing else, the more he thought about his terrible circumstance. For instance, he could remember his love for his wife, but could not see her face. Or he could remember the names of his friends: Goku, Master Tsu, Poshku, Dende, Mikinko, Mr. Popo; and he could remember his enemies: Frost, the Hell-spawn, Jobey, Jinho-Mai, the rapist he had killed at the bar, and even Detrius; but he couldn't remember any of their faces, their homes, or their identities. Worst of all though was he could not remember any of their voices, none of their laughter or cries (not even the most vile of all, Frost's). The pain that tore at him already began to grow – the first slashing scar was wrought on him: he was so alone, that even future insanity offered no kinship of voices.

For hours he walked, pacing himself at first and growing wearier as time passed beneath the heat's unbearable pressure, until he came to several mountain dunes. The sun's rays beat at him as if they carried heavy maces, slamming him with angry strikes of heated hatred. Soon his body tarried on painfully, pinker than the abominable sands that parched his feet.

Looking again to the horizons, he was dismayed that there was never night here, that always three or four suns surrounded him, each seeming more intense than the last. The moons themselves looked as if to laugh at his feeble resistance to the brutality only he witnessed. 'Whoa,' he thought, peering down at his burnt arms, 'I need to cool off,' he realized as he could smell his flesh baking like the rinds of pig flesh over a grill.

Bringing some of his massive amounts of Ki forth, he started to levitate and then slowly move forward. But even as he tried to move, he felt the winds ahead of him grow stronger. Sand and stone underneath began to pound into his face with such ferocity that he had to cover his face. The hot, slashing sand tore at his weakened skin as he noticed another terrible thing weighing on his troubled self. The gravity had actually increased when he rose up off the ground, defying the laws of physics. The whole desert, he imagined seemed to be trying to swallow him down. Trying to keep him a prisoner! "Wretched Wizard!" he shouted out as he descended back to the ground.

So, in slow pursuit of the bastard he sought, he walked endlessly for days. Though he tried to maintain his water by retaining all he could, and even licking the sweat from his burning, salty skin, the sack eventually ran empty and he fashioned it instead into a shield over his neck.

At first, too, he sang to pass the time. But then his lips and tongue grew too dry and cracked to even speak. He tried to talk to someone, to anyone, but there were no voices to reply. Insanity in lack of all else failed him as said before.

His entire body under the intense heat screamed for the refreshing liquid of life. Long ago, the sands had torn from him his gi and sack, leaving him to burn alive under the light of Lucifer.

As he walked, or rather crawled, over the endless dunes, insanity rapidly took hold of his mind that was as desolate and lonely as the very planet. He imagined things, yet

imagined nothing he wanted to see. The things he saw were of the deepest darkest terror found in the recesses of the sickest mind. And, of no coincidence, of no surprise, and of no happenstance, the most common sight he imagined was his son's dead fetus, hung by the tail by some unseen, menacing force that laughed at him darkly.

In between the torture images and the sickened songs about how drunk he was, he contemplated endless philosophies about all that none wish to doubt or judge. He thought up rationales that weren't rationales, but mere insanities and proofs of proofs of other insanities. He even doubted that he was there at all, on that desolate Hell beyond all Hells. He imagined that if he wanted he could be at his home (even though he had forgotten even what his home looked like), and that right now he merely wanted all of this. Yet on the outside, lying in the sand, he cried dry tears of sorrow upon such thoughts. The weeping stirred him to a deathly starvation of naivety and hopeless anguish.

Eventually, he lost all sense of who he was to the point where he could not exactly recite his name. He lay there, in the sand for hours trying to remember his name, blindly staring into the damaging and relentless sun above. Then his thoughts moved on, 'How long have I been here? Maybe I have always been here, in this living Hell. Yes, my eternal prison and home. I have never been anything. I am nothing,' he would think to himself. His contemplations of all/nothing forced him to manifest sick poetry. In his mind, he even mutilated himself while at the same time praising Gosan the God. Yet really he still lay there in the sand, face up into the sky, body half covered in hot sand, unable to move.

Thinking about how he led the life of two beings, he suddenly remembered his dream's message and the dragon that spoke to him without a voice or face. All at once, a gale picked up and washed a pile of sand over his face. A dune attempting to swallow him whole now poured slowly into his gaping, seared mouth. He tasted the sand and laughed silently, quivering underneath the hungry dune, 'So now Fate reveals, if only I had swallowed the sand!' he laughed crazily at his own sarcasm, '...So much for valor,' his face grew sad and lonely and all at once, he lost consciousness; aware only of a faint smell of imminent death creeping over him like a silent angel in the mist.

The Lake of Mirrors

Narrator:

Gosan lay there in the desert, almost completely dead, for quite some time as the suns all passed over him at least once. By the time the third one was passing above him for the second time, he awoke from his insane state.

While asleep, he dreamed a thousand dreams, yet he could remember none of them. Sitting up in writhing agony since his whole body burned terribly, he thought about his whole past day's sleep. In each dream, he knew he had suffered terrible pains and torment that was more horrid than anything concocted in the realm of the undead. He could not remember, still, the faces of anyone or the voices of anything, but the realization of all that was terrible he felt and knew.

Now awake, he sanely knew again that they were only dreams, and he sat currently in the real nightmare. How could he be alive? He pondered the question, unaware of his surroundings yet. He had nothing to live by or with, and he could feel his own skin

flaking away after it curled in the heat. Would the dragon even be there on his back anymore?

Feeling his back, his hand rubbed sorely on the blistered and...wet...skin. He became startled and looking down behind him to see what terrible pool he lay in (if it be of his own blood), he ascertained immediately that he sat in a pool of vast water. Above him the clouds of white shielded him briefly from the deep blue sky. Suddenly, the swift cloud uncovered the suns all at once and he was amazed to see that he sat in what was no longer a desert, but an endless puddle of water, reflecting the light on him as often as it rippled.

'It...it's water!' he thought. He stooped to stick his head into the pool when his nose hit mud. It apparently was not very deep. Yet he did not care at the moment for a mystical pool of water had saved him. Burying his nose further in the mud he stuck out his lips and tried to drink the muddy and sandy water. 'How terrible!'

But yet he drank, and drank, and drank until he had his fill of mud and water – it mattered little to him that he ate mud. Then, feeling some sort of strange revival of mind and power, he stood up and stared off into the distance. The suns above now reflected their hatred on the water, but he paid no heed to their angry grins. He instead faced where he had been pointing and started to walk. 'I wish I still had my sack,' he thought as the wind picked up and slung water droplets on his face.

The occasional wind-spray of muddy water did provide some relief at first. Yet, as time went on, the winds slowly died and the clouds disappeared totally, leaving him to fry as bad as ever. No matter where he went, the water reflected bright sunlight on his badly burned body. Covering himself with mud as he trekked through the endless puddle did help. But within minutes, the mud would turn to hot, baking dirt that only served to cook him like a potato.

In his shadow/reflection, he could see, too, how dark he had become. Too, his eyes hurt from the light and the fact that even his eyelids were burnt. He surmised there must have been no part of him that wasn't burnt (imagine the pain of *that*). The suns above him never relented, never gave reprieve so that even when he was tired, he had to sit in the water burn painfully.

Then too came the greater pains of his abdomen. He had not eaten in a while now and couldn't even find food in the muddy soil. No worms or leeches beleaguered him at all, there was nothing, not even mosquito larvae. The pains grew and grew as he thinned and thinned until eventually he didn't even notice the pain anymore than the light around him and the air in his lungs.

Sometimes while walking along in his torment, he would look up to see cyclones of fierce gales that lifted the mud and water sweeping about. They would rush him, threatening like big bullies to tear his limbs off. But as they approached he found them not even comforting in that. The hot winds would lift from the ground above him and dump hefty piles of thick mud on his head. Then the water fell on him, lightly and annoyingly.

After a few passes of the suns, which he counted by number, he no longer saw anything but walked aimlessly in a haze of nothing but white. The light and brightness had blinded him after all, and he did not care. He shouted obscenities at the suns who hovered as before over him. Six Apollos taunted him from above, no dawn or dusk allowed to reprieve him of their wicked arrows that scorched the land. Insanity from

hunger and blindness once again took hold. He now had use for no senses: his sight gone, and water of no taste to dead tongues, no smells to waft, no sounds to hear (less the occasional angry cyclones that teased him), no souls to sense, and no nerves left to feel.

Lying once more, this time on his thinned belly and in his own piss, he hummed pitifully the tune to a song he once heard as a child – a theme song from the Great War.

As he lay there for many passages of the suns, he lost consciousness often enough that he thought dreams would soon be his, but none were. And only close to the end, close to the brink of brinks, that deep in the white he saw something. It seemed to his mind like a human figure. As it faced him, he saw himself stand and move closer also, hand outstretched to it in hopes. The figure, darkened silhouette against the whiteness stumbled to him also as if lost. As they approached each other, Gosan spoke aloud in mumbled words, scarred by his damaged voice. “Hey you!” he shouted out in confusion, “How’d you get here!?” he stumbled closer.

The figure did not answer. Gosan, stopping as if wondering his countenance’s aims, spoke again, “Are you the wizard?”

The figure did not answer. Instead, he too waited in front of Gosan, who did not notice any signals of the body. Curiosity and confusion soon became his better logics and lowering his defenses he approached it closer. As he did he saw the light begin to fade back on the shady figure as the dark does for those who exit a cave. His face slowly grew more disgusted and shocked as he saw the terrible complexion and image of he who occupied the space before him. The arms, the face, the chest and legs, too, were naked as the day one is born. Only the skin was darkened and burned like a steak on a grill. Matted with mud, the hair hung low to his chest. His eyes, dark and sad, were hugged snugly by sagging sockets and burnt lids. His beard covered his face roughly and unjustly. Yet, what was so much more frightening was his thinned physique, muscles deteriorated terribly and painfully so as to make the soul weep.

Looking at the face he spoke once more, “Good night...how lo...” and as he was going to ask that silly question he realized the lips of the silent figure moved just as his did, precisely and equally.

Staring at the face, he moved his head closer to stare deep into the alien eyes. The figure too moved, yet Gosan could not register why. Then, raising his right hand he slowly and cautiously moved to grab the man in front of him. As he reached to it, the figure’s own opposite arm stretched out to Gosan and finally touched his finger-tips midway between them. Suddenly, he came to realize who the figure was, ‘Oh no...this...this is me.’ He was utterly shocked, raising his hand back to cover his mouth. A tear formed on their eyes at the truth. Then fingering his face gingerly, he inspected himself in the mirror. Disbelief and doubt jaded him while reality beat him wildly.

And then the thoughts came to him, the terrible thing that he should never believe. He began to weep at his newfound understanding that he was now nothing. He had no one to witness but himself, that he wasn’t even what the world had made him out to be. Nor was he what his dreams suggested. Nor was he anything else but a shell of a man, a phantom. Tears flooded his eyes and the picture of him faded beneath the clouds of misguided thoughts and self-emulated destructions.

He again felt the sting of the light as he awoke briefly, laying there in the sandy water. His tears became indistinguishable in the water while his saddened fists pounded large craters in the ground, filled with water around him. Instead of making him feel consoled

and safe, the endless pool broke him into pieces like a stick-formed house. Never had the galaxy seen a warrior so broken, so alone and crushed that he would weep naked and tortured, surrounded by nothing he knew. Eventually he fainted.

The Forest of Fear

Narrator:

Again, Gosan lay on the ground, damp and cold, with the sun beating down upon his body. The rays were unforgiving to the hero, not merciful as any person might be. The hot, scientific driven machines burned ever on as before pounding him angrily like sick parents. And again he had dreams.

The dreams came like a flood of pleasant fields laden with spring flowers. They contained all the things he wished to remember. He cheered in each of the dreams laughing joyously at the gorgeous oily paintings that formed his life. He cheered at the magnificent thought of going home, of seeing his wife and holding her, of making love to her once more like some romantic film. Dreams of all came to him.

He had a dream once about his son, teaching him a lesson in fighting. The boy, so handsome and polite, chiseled out of wood he seemed, listened with good presence as Gosan explained the art of Ki as he knew it.

He dreamed once that he ruled a great empire, more vast than the galaxy. One where all the people loved him, that he had no equals or enemies, yet was not corrupted in his power, like some god of little probability. He saw everything he wished to see.

He dreamed once of a great battle on Goku's planet. There, amongst all his kin and friends, the two greatest warriors fought friendly and often while in between they enjoyed the great feasts only the best of chefs could create. Cheering faces all around as he in the center sat, facing them, not a care in the world. He had a plethora of dreams.

When he woke up, a gallant smile smeared his face. A grin from ear to ear lined his face like that of a happy child as he thought he could leave. But, the longer he thought and tried to recall those dreams he knew he had, he realized he could not remember them at all. With his eyes closed, he tried harder and harder, growing more frustrated as time elapsed.

Soon tears embarked from his eyes down his upper cheek as he opened them for the first time in a day. He screamed out in pain and anger upon the denial of a truth that tore him to bits. The sudden and fierce rude awakening he faced was beyond unjust. Reaching to the sky bitterly, and clenching his fists till pasty blood leaked from his palms, he screamed out frustrated obscenities into the air. He shook the ground now for the first time with his rage and pure Saiyan power. The energy was still there, keeping him alive, and he burned it quick anyhow. It didn't matter to him now, for he was again alone, desolate, and above all starving to death, as he hadn't had food for a week now. Then he opened his eyes...

In front of him, stood a bush, covered completely with strawberries, apples, bananas, cherries, mangos, pears, dates, cocoanuts, and even pineapples. The strange, large brush was in fact contained no leaves at all, only the huge array of fruits that he had not eaten in many years. He was so shocked he fell backward off his knees onto his butt. Staring into the fruits with confusion, he realized that already his mouth watered heavily - as does the

dog's when famine sends it into hungry and ravenous frenzy. Wonderment took hold of him again as he looked below him, 'The water, it's, it's all gone!' he realized, scraping the plush soil with his hand and allowing it to funnel out like an hourglass.

Standing up slowly, he turned his head to get a full view of his new surroundings. To his amazement, nothing but vast forest covered the ground everywhere he could see. In fact, the forest was so dense he couldn't see very far anyhow. Looking down again to the ground, he noticed too that his skin was not as dark anymore, that it had healed somehow and that the sole pain he felt was that of hunger. A great smile covered his face as he looked around, no suns on sight. More and more his smile grew into a tiny celebration; if only he knew the horrors of that forest!

Immediately, he grabbed up the fruits off the bush and began to swallow them. In true Saiyan style, he ate and ate, gorging himself as does the lion when it makes its kill. Endlessly he stuffed his face with the tastiest fruits he had ever had. Better than those created in the best forests on Namek. His eyes blinded by hunger to their ridiculous nature and placement, he ate until their tender flesh soothed the insides of his body, providing new energy and supplement. Immediately he felt the regrowth of his body, as if his cells now worked hurriedly to replenish his once perfect form.

Finishing minutes later, totally full and happy, he turned to where he had been facing when he awoke, and began walking into the brush. Quickly, he learned that the bushes did not move so easily, in fact, they were very stubborn about it. He tried to be reasonable, but the further he went, the more irritating they grew. Bugs were crawling from everywhere onto him. Tics leaping from nearby leaves onto his personage and mosquitoes descended from the trees above like mad-bombers to chisel their way through his tender skin. He did not know how long he had been there, how many days, but it was long enough to heal his epidermis. Yet not long enough to protect him from the putrid bite of those pesky insects. Slapping one, he noticed how large they seemed, and how the entire forest seemed so much like those of Earth. 'Where am I?' he thought just as another bug planted its siphon into his skin. "Damn insects! Ouch...damn it!" his anger was growing.

Soon he felt as if the entire forest was bearing down on him. Swarms of insects descended like rain droplets from above him and attacked mercilessly. His blood they sucked like frenzied vampires, unhindered by shame or fear of his mighty power. "That's IT!" yelled out Gosan as he tried to squeeze through two trees.

He began to gather his strength, pulling in Ki quickly as he focused in on his power. He planned to unleash his mighty Saiyan Fury, and burn all those hellish creatures alive when he was suddenly struck by a new kind of pain.

His stomach, full of the tender, plant-flesh, suddenly quivered violently inside him. Stopping there, he forgot immediately about the painful enemy hovering about him, and looked down to his abdomen. Suddenly, a knifelike feeling plunged through his intestines and sliced him in half. He screamed out in terrified pain as his stomach, bleeding inside turned like a twisting rope. He fell to the ground.

His energy escaped him and now the insects attacked more ravenously and horribly than ever had. Centipedes, decimeters in length, burst from beneath the dirt beside him and started biting into him, injecting their own little poison.

He tried frantically to fight them off, but his power was all gone. Then a new rip to his insides came and he shook violently, lifting his head to see that his abdomen rippled

angrily below his skin. Then, almost too ironically, he watched a terrible, oversized wasp crash down from the sky, delivering a blow to his stomach like a dagger of death.

In the pain his mind shouted out and pure power emanated from his pores like sweat, blasted away the evil insects. Grasping his pained and bleeding stomach, he ran forward, quickly, through the brush. 'I've got to get away from them, somehow!' he ran, gasping for air, hearing the buzz of the villainous creatures behind him.

The more he ran, pushing aside bushes with his left, the more his body grew tired. In his delirium, he began to imagine things, flashes of life, yet he could not see them wholly or as a conscious mind. It was a subtle torture, played upon him by cruel intentions. Reaching out for Goku's image, having emerged from a bush to an opening, he fell.

"Splash!" the sound erupted into the misty air.

Narrator:

As Gosan sunk deeper into the river he had chanced upon, the insects above him searched, and eventually left. Their thirst sated by his powerful liquid, they could only watch powerlessly as it ran into the clear water that whisked him away at frightening speeds.

Gosan had fainted at some point in his fall, his body crashing into the rocks below, tearing his skin with extreme prejudice. His velocity increased quickly and on the brink of suffocation he was hurtled through the air over a waterfall, dropping hundreds of meters through the air.

Harshly, his body landed not in the water again, but on a bush of thorns. He awoke briefly at the sharp pain, only to again fall asleep, his eyes never open to see the magical bush he had landed in.

The large shrub, bedazzled and arrayed with thousands of little thorns, actually grew a chemical with healing powers in its cells, and upon breaking the bush's thorns, the magical chemical was sprayed all over his wounds.

Slowly, and over the course of many passages of the bright suns above, the halfway alive and heavily active bush pushed him off of it and let him land hard on the clay soil from whence it grew...

When he awoke, Gosan expected to find himself on Snake Way, a thing that would seem more a reward than a loss. But, instead, he soon realized that his sore body rested in the mud on the bank of a shimmering brook. Confused, he stared into the brook and then looked behind him. 'I remember that,' he thought, seeing the thorn-bush behind him, 'but how'd I get here?' He looked back to the quiet stream.

He did not smile, though, at the peaceful scene, for he had grown very aware of the horror the forest wrought in its parameters.

Looking down to his skin, he saw that somehow he had healed from the hundreds of incisions on his dermis. Glancing quickly to his abdomen, he saw the same result, a healed, smooth layer of tissue where the Wasp had attacked. He was hungry and thirsty now, thinking. 'None of that damn fruit, though!' he thought irritated at his stupidity.

Standing up, he began to walk the bank, looking into the water for fish. He ignored his thirst at first, for he didn't want to scare any fish away. But upon inspection, he found that not a single fish inhabited the waters anyway. There wasn't even a single minnow.

Finally, the need to quench his thirst overcame his patience and he went to the water's edge. Leaning down, he puckered up his lips and started to sip the water. The taste was good, not polluted in the least bit. He was drinking a lot, he knew, but he feared the loss of the stream ahead and his thirst was great.

As he continued to sip, allowing the cool liquid to run atwixt his lips, he felt a slight vibration. The first time, he paid no heed, opening his eyes and glancing around, then shrugging it off. But, then the vibration came again, this time tickling his lips unpleasantly...a slight noise tickled his eardrums. This time, he rose his head back and looked up and down the three-meter wide brook, expecting to see some sort of wall of water rushing at him angrily.

But, he saw nothing, and like a stupid deer, leaned forward again, on hands and knees. But just before he touched the water, a frightful, nagging feeling pulled at his mind. He saw something, there in the water, on the bed below the surface. His brow wrinkled as he squinted to see it, unthinking of the reality of his situation: unthinking of the absence of fish and plants. Something peculiar struck him about the brook bed, something about the surface of it. Along the length, it ran mostly rocky. Further up, it was more pebbly, and down the way also the same. But here, the same-colored rocks were bigger, and more dirt lay between them, connecting them in a different way than the pebbles around the area. Then, he saw an even stranger rock, gray and smooth, perfectly rounded as it sat there, unmoving. A vibration in the ground, a shutter in his body spun from inside him. Something about that bed, three meters wide and dozens long. He stared at the rock...and...it...stared...right...back.

Just as his nerves cringed, just as he realized, it realized to and burst forth from the water. Blazing speed of a serpent, the creature lunged at the hero. Certain it would grab its prey, the beast's jaw shot out from the circular region in its front, the teeth gnashing at Gosan with blinding fury. And if the prey had been any creature other than Gosan, any person other, the vile monster would have had its meal.

But, as it was, the prey was the fastest, strongest being in the Universe. Without need for caution, Gosan moved steadily and swiftly aside, avoiding the extended row of razor-teeth that struck where he had once been. Stepping back and moving faster than the beast could think, he flared up to SS. Born ready to deal out death to the wicked.

Upon seeing the bright flame in its gray eye, the beast turned to face Gosan. Then, It pulled the heavy, soon to be dead carcass out from the splashing water. The full length of it was frightening. It roared then at Gosan, a deafening bellow that rumbled the earthen minerals below them. The jaw then lashed out again, missing a second and final time its intended prey.

Disgusted by the vile, lamprey and crocodile hybrid, Gosan formed a wide energy disk in his right hand. Jumping back, he let fly the yellow beam, allowing it to cut straight through the flesh of the beast. Immediately, the beast roared its final roar as its cauterized head tumbled heavily to the clay, crashing. The body too fell with death and rolled into the brook, splashing and releasing its blood into the water.

Of course, as soon as Gosan could think clearly, he realized that tons of meat now lay before him. A smile formed on his face. But, cruelty and unseen hatred robbed him of that bounty for as soon as he approached the laid down carcass, it began its rapid and sour decay. Thus, emerging from the soil and the forest, creatures of hideous form emerged to eat the rotting flesh before it was emptied of natural resources. Soon, the corpse was

gone, only a large skeleton remaining. Unfortunately, the creatures' hunger was not satisfied, and thus turned their attention to Gosan.

Gosan, with no intention of running stood fast. His irritation grew at the insolence displayed by the beasts of his burden. Flaring up in energy he surrounded his body with a terrible red aura. "Kai-o KEN!!" his voice echoed out across the creek bed, rippling the water.

Then he released his madness in full upon the fast approaching beasts. The aura flexed inexorably to his front, swallowing the beasts whole with bloodied fury. Screams emerged from the organisms, who in their blinded hunger had mistook Gosan for prey. Their bodies evaporated away in the light and supreme heat. Until, upon releasing the Ki, Gosan witnessed the mass destruction of hundreds of feet of forest and creek.

Gasping for air to cool and calm his body, Gosan turned and went on down the brook-shore; he watched poignantly as the water that he had blasted backwards upstream rushed forward to meet itself again. He grew irritated at the Wizard.

Narrator:

Once more Gosan continued along the bank until he came to its end, where it ran into a deep well that led underground. Now he was again faced with the need to enter the forest that so haunted him for many days.

The brook had been his source of life and sustenance for many passages of the moons and suns above. He learned in those weeks to sleep with eyes open, to watch for the water predators and vile bugs that attempted every once in a while to creep up on him.

As much as possible, he avoided the suns, taking refuge under a fashioned umbrella.

Once he tried to fly, but again the gravity and angry environment haraunged him back to the ground's safety and ease.

Now at the end of the safety provided thus far, Gosan was reluctant to enter the most fearful of places. The darkness mocked his soul as he stood before the dense vegetation. Along the edges of the forest, and in the canopy he could see the malignant poisonous fruits that defiled goodness. He shuttered at the thought of eating another disgusting creature, but realized that eating the fruits was no good.

Finally, powering up, observing his half-retained strength, he forced aside the vegetation and entered the forest. Apprehension never slept so closely her lord...

The forest, he observed had grown more silent than he had ever heard it. The sole sound was of the plants bending and bowing away under his hateful will. Every step he took vibrated the ground, yet no insects now moved at his interruption of the world. He watched around him with caution and confusion. 'How strange, the forest is never silent,' he thoughtfully observed. No light entered that place of unholy desperation; only that which emanated from him illuminated his path.

At length, he grew tired of walking the weary distance, and sat down upon the soggy soil. A droplet fell upon his exposed knee. Then the sound of thunder and rain filled his surroundings. Yet, nothing alive stirred, as if waiting something more promising to come and kill him for their easy meal. He flexed his aura as he opened his mouth to the sky, allowing the rain to land casually in it. His umbrella he had set aside for a moment while he drank, and upon finishing, he sent his hand out to retrieve it. 'What?' he thought, turning to where it had been laying. It was gone.

His irritation grew as he stood up and flared his aura to get a better look. Around him the light danced happily on the leaves that pitter-pattered with the beleaguering drops of rain. He became a yellow ball of light in the darkness, yet he knew that the umbrella could not have fallen out of this ball – it had been taken.

Around him he looked, gritting his teeth as he stared into the dark. He couldn't see anything beyond the light. Removing the aura, Gosan knew his eyes would adjust, despite the bad effects of the suns from the desert wanderings.

For a few moments time, Gosan became more lonely than the loneliest of stars that sat in space at night, unable to be seen by anyone and unaccompanied by any celestial friends. Where in the desert he at least had the sand and the suns to shout his obscenest of remarks to, and in the infinite lake he had himself to shout at, he had nothing at all here. All that remained with him was the remembrance of what terrors lie in the darkest recesses of these forests. And though he was the strongest in the Universe, the fears of the unknown shook his very core in its deepest trenches.

Now, as before, all he could think of, the only voices he could hear was his own echoing in the desert. He shivered at the recollection. He shivered twice, though, for he felt the dark unknown seep into his mind.

Closing his eyes, he focused to sense out his close adversary; he whom he knew had taken his umbrella. From his back came the sinister laugh, a whisper as much as anything. His eyes opened, he could see the minimal amount that came from the suns above. Rain fell around him, landing like bombshells in the foliage. He glanced over his shoulder...a burning sensation pierced his shoulder.

A shudder crawled over his back (or was it a beetle?), the hair on his neck stood up. Turing around, he approached the source of the terrific and haunting feeling. Through the dim light, through his squinted eyes, suddenly emerged the sight of other eyes, watching him from the brush beyond him only meters away.

Cold sweat mixed with rain on his brow as he saw the bright-green eyes, cut like giant gems, watching him. The laugh came again, darkest of sinister chuckled: it mocked him. The eyes squinted and moved forward...the face nearly revealed. A loud laugh burst forth and then the eyes vanished back into the bushes.

Gosan grunted, whether from fear or anger, he knew not. But what he knew was that the face was as distinguishable and horrible as day. He could not place it, could not fix the face of the entity of the emptiness, but he felt its smirking gesture.

“Wait!!” he shouted out at the object.

He took flight, following the crashing in the brush ahead of him. Emerging into a voided opening, he saw three strangers now standing ahead of him. The spoke not, but he heard their laughter and wicked language anyhow. Then each turned to face him, again he ‘saw’ their faces, and grew angry. Their eyes felt so haunting as they looked at him wily, daring him to attack. He grew annoyed with the faces that so mocked him. He feared no mortal, no fighter, and they dared to jive him with their insolent eyes!? He flared up to SS in his anger and yelled out to them, “You want my blood!? Come and get it, fools, if you can! But don't mock me behind you trees and dark barriers!” he was raging now.

They looked at him menacingly, their dark silhouettes protected by the forest's nighttime. Then, laughing again, they vanished into the thicket, gliding as if to flee.

Instinctly, he rushed forward and chased after them, leaping into the brush, his power moving the forest as it had earlier. His advancement was terrifying, he followed them,

feeling their Ki ahead of him. All three called out in strange tongues ahead of him. They laughed at his tenacity. He roared in his madness.

Knocking down trees, tall and old as the most ancient of mountains, he pursued them. Yet, for all his speed, they evaded his every movement, swiftly keeping pace over him. Frequently he saw them all ahead of him, one leaping in the branches, another moving on the ground, and the third unseen. "Cowards!" he screamed out in frustration.

They heeded not a bit to his words. He watched their shadows and their bodies, not their faces, but their bodies, gliding between the forest walls in elegant movement. To keep up, he ran through destroying all in his path. His speed increased with every step, every laugh that emerged from their lips. He was untouchable by the most powerful of trees – all snapped like bird's limbs beneath his furious will.

He followed faster and faster, quickening his pursuit, and launching out Ki blasts at them. The explosions rocked the ground, catching afire the forest beside him. Yet, they only laughed and continued to run knowing he lagged behind them.

But, he felt his superior speed start to take hold, start to win over. He saw them more and more, and paying less attention to his front, he stared off into the trees. He almost had them. He would surely rip their sadistic heads off, beat them senseless for their arrogant looks at him. He would tear at their bodies and eat their flesh to sate his hunger. His wrath was nearly complete! Madness consumed him with a new purpose in mind.

But at the moment he thought to have victory, he realized his sudden alienation. He ascertained all at once the craziness of his thoughts: how utterly astray they were from himself. He turned his attention again forward, meaning to stop. Yet, the time for that had passed, he was late in his decision.

Running at full speed, and unable to see in front of him anything beyond a meter, he suddenly slammed straight into a stone wall. The pain in his face was significant, to say the least. The crash sent a shockwave out around him that flattened the forest. Slowly, he realized what he had done. He saw the blood smeared on the wall in front of his face. Dizziness overcame him, though, and he tumbled down, landing hard upon the wet ground.

Staring up, he could taste the blood on his tongue and gums. He watched with dizzied confusion as to where the wall had come from, as the rain washed the blood-tattoo down the stone sides.

His eyes rolled up and he fainted. In his mind, something told him to awake once again, and at last he opened his right eye. Looking up, he saw there above him the menacing figures. One hung from a root of an uprooted tree. Another stood across him. Both stared down at him with cut eyes. Lightning flashed above, and the light reflected down on their countenances. Gosan realized they really had no bodies, only eyes. He was to be prey to shadows of the night, what shame!

Finally, the third emerged over him, from his feet, leaning over him. His eyes came close to Gosan, no face for him to see in the light that often reflected down from above.

Closer the eyes got, closer, closer to his own, tired and bloodied ones. He felt too sore to move, to sore to protect himself, and so he simply lay there, at mercy to the phantom over him. At last, he looked into its eyes deeply, and there came familiarity. From someone he knew, from someone he loved, emerged the phantom's impression. Gosan's face lit up with surprise as he tried to move to take hold of his love.

But, the shadowy figure stood back, a whispering laugh emerging from somewhere deep. Again, it mocked Gosan as the others too joined in with laughter. Tears suddenly emerged from Gosan's defeated eyes, mixing with the blood into an unpleasant and painful acid. The shadows laughed at him, and then, one by one they walked back to the forest. The last one to leave though, after passing over Gosan, leaned back over him. Falling asleep in the shadow of those eyes, the self-same eyes that seemed to come straight from his love, Gosan wished he were dead. 'Take my life, cruel deception...' his thoughts echoed aloud in the dark, until the continuous crashing of water droplets on the wrecked vegetation drowned the words out.

The Cliff of Despair

Narrator:

Gosan lay there in his dazed slumber, until the tyrannical storm had passed away and the suns had moved overhead twice apiece. When he finally awoke from his long slumber, Gosan realized he had had no dreams at all.

Sitting up, and rubbing his face, he thought about the past few nights. He had no idea how long he had been laying there, but he knew also he had had no dreams to occupy his mind. It was a REMless, endless rest, more like death than sleeping. Normally, he would have been thankful for no dreams, as anymore they were only nightmares of people he could not remember. But this time, he had actually hoped for dreams, hoped to see faces that would comfort his terrible anxiety that swallowed him whole now.

But, he hadn't seen anything: no friends, no family, no home...nothing. A depression had long ago taken hold of his mind, like a fungus wrapped around a tree-branch, squeezing the life out in an agonizingly long reduction of life. He then realized his head hurt too.

When he reached to the bloody lump on the right of his forehead, he faintly remembered hitting something some time before. He had been chasing something...suddenly he thought about the shadows. He jumped up, opened his eyes for the first time as he looked around him to the forest, but...

But when he turned, nothing was there, just desert. That seemed very strange because he swore he had had the worst time in his life living out the worst of nightmares in a dense jungle. Maybe that had been his dream? It was all a blur now; he couldn't remember and thought maybe he wasn't even here, like some sick illusion to haunted him at home in his palace bed. Maybe the lump that swelled on his brow was something causing his memory lapse. Sighing, he slowly turned around him to get a view of the desert world. How long had he been here? He could not remember even arriving.

Slowly, but suddenly too, the wall he had run up against came into view. His amazement grew as he studied its vastness, width and height. Only he realized it wasn't a wall, but instead a very tall cliff. In fact, he couldn't see the top.

Instantly he thought about his climb up Korin's Tower. Sadly, though, he couldn't remember what it looked like, or anything he saw there. Only, he knew it was a painful thing to do. He decided that the cliff would be more of a pain than walking around it.

Gosan, however soon came to understand that the formation could not be of natural creation; its sides were smooth as concrete, and its height immeasurable. It was like anything he had ever seen. Thus it was no surprise when he noticed the slight curve to the wall which led him, eventually, to where he had first been walking. He had spent one

whole passing of a sun, and still only gotten back to where he had been. His thirst grew greater as he stood back where he started and gazed upward.

Deciding that this must be the tower of the wizard, he powered up as high as he could and took to the sky. But soon gravity and strong downward winds forced the mighty SS to fall hard to the soil. Back aching as he rose from the crater formed by his fall, Gosan realized that the only way up, and off this planet was to climb...

First he descended to the form of a SS, hair gleaming in greater radiance than the jealous stars over him. Then, taking his right hand, he formed a knifelike blade and rammed it into the side, blasting away rock. 'That smarts,' he thought as his hand rested in the new hole.

Likewise, he did so with his left and began his ascent up, hoping the climb wouldn't be as terrible as that of Korin's Tower. 'Surely this thing isn't as tall as Korin's tower!' he thought.

But as the suns passed behind him and the time he climbed mounted, he began to wonder if it even had a top. His back, now healed from the terrible beating it received in the desert, started to burn again under the constant pressure of the suns. Soon, sweat poured from his body and felt below like a steady stream. His fingers grew numb from their intense use. The winds that sprayed across his body, cooling him, but ravaging him with granules of sand gradually blew harder on him. The air, in only a few meters up had begun to chill, until the point where pounding the sides was harder and harder, pressing him on with opposition. The chilly winds were not welcome, even in the suns' rays, because with them they shot ice and rocky grains into his skin. Soon, they became so frequent, he had to climb with his head turned permanently sideways away from them. The pain of the cold air rushing over him grew steadily worse.

Adding to the intense pain, pain worse than he remembered at Korin's tower, was the fact that the suns burned him no matter what – heat or cold. And his back received the beating like a stubborn child, taking it despite the cells' pleas for a reprieve.

On the entire escarpment, not even a single resting place, broke its constant upward growth. No windows outlined this tower at all. So the only rest he received was in his mind.

Looking down once again, he saw that he was far too high to fall, and no top was in sight. He decided to blast the wall through. But upon reaching back, he found that he had not the energy to form a beam strong enough. 'I'll try anyways,' he thought, forming tight beam and releasing it into the escarpment. It failed to even go a meter, and still the wall seemed compact.

Looking down again, he knew that if he let go, the fall, if he survived, would diminish all his hopes of ever leaving. He knew if he flew, he would not be strong enough to quell the intense gravity (especially at this height) or the downward winds.

He cursed the wretched wizard often as time went on more. 'Damn it, where does it end!?' he thought exhaling and looking downward again. Surely he would have died if he fell. So many passages of the suns had occurred, he no longer remembered the time. The long days that passed proved to make the climb almost like he were walking in a desert on his stomach, without the ability to stop moving for any amount of time. His thirst was unbelievable and painful too, luckily the sweat had long ago ceased and he lost minimal liquid.

But still he drove on, like an angry animal pushed to its limits by its will to succeed. His will proved more now than that of the wall. His thoughts dwelled on other things as he climbed, occasionally returning to the task at hand.

But, even while he tried to keep occupied, his thoughts tended to grow angrier and more frustrated. At length, he decided he was tired of it all. He was tired of his hands looking like blood-mangled extensions. He was tired of his tongue being cracked and swollen. He was tired of the grainy wind ripping his flesh from him, as if to expose his skeleton. Most of all, he was tired of the planet and his mission. It wasn't worth the pain. It just wasn't anymore. He was going to let go if the top didn't come in one reach of his quivering arm.

Just as he thought this, just as he felt to die and end all the pain and suffering, he reached his hand up and caught a ledge. Using all his last energy, he raised his head up to see. 'It really is an edge!' he thought excitedly. Looking hard at it he pulled up with all his ability, struggling even more to bring his body higher in the air. It seemed as if it was the hardest thing to do in his life, like the will to continue hinged solely on this pull: was he Man enough?

Grunting aloud, his energy gathered, shaking the tower under his power. In one last attempt, he pulled up, and stood on the edge. Suddenly, a wind pushed him forward and he found himself falling forward. Fear gripped his body all over until he opened his eyes, just as he was about to lose it and "SPLASH!"

He plunged into a giant pool of water headfirst. He was so confused that he allowed himself to sink a bit before swimming back to the surface. Panic overcame him when his legs, cramped from the long climb, wouldn't kick. But, now power and hope had revived him and energy flowed where it had not before. He burst up out of the water at frightening speed, breathing hard in the cold air that chilled him. His emergence from the water was not wonderful, though, for he was caught by a sudden, growing gust of air blowing him towards the edge. The planet was angry at his will.

Placing his arms over his eyes in a shielding 'X', he flashed up to SS3, the highest form he could attain in his dwindled state, his golden hair flapping violently in the wind. He pushed hard against the force, but it still pushed him inexorably back until his feet rested on the edge of the wall, his body leaning over the water.

Without a hope of sustaining his position with these winds still growing well over 500 kilometers an hour, he dove back into the water. This time, he managed to return to the surface, noticing the winds gone, but the waves still there. 'This water is actually warm,' he thought, staring into the suns above that reflected their fierce stare on the water around him, sending peaking frequencies of light in his eyes every few seconds.

'The palace must be in the center,' he figured as he began his strokes away from the walls, fighting the waves and terrible undercurrent as he made his way to what he hoped would be the end of his terrible journey.

Ocean Tower

Narrator:

One of the first things Gosan noticed was how extensive the water seemed. It looked as if it stretched wide like the ocean, vast and deep. That seemed so strange to him, because he had walked all the way around the base of the tower earlier and it took him little time.

But as he swam he began to wonder either how much time, or if that tower had really been straight up like he thought it was. Maybe, he spoke aloud to himself as he treaded water, slowly moving towards the center, the sides had been so slightly angled, but so tall that by now the top was a huge circle, forming an upside down cone. Needless to say, he was correct in his thoughts, in fact he was on top of a vast cone, filled with tons and tons of fresh water, teeming with life.

For hours upon hours, passes upon passes of the hot suns, he swam. Always he kept an eye out below him in the deep, clear water. Far below, he could see fish swim, and who knows what else did too. He felt too weak to go fighting things like that beast from the brook – its image stuck out in his mind – and in their home, the advantage would be the assaultants’.

So he swam, quietly and cautiously onward, thinking about those days in the forest, and in the desert, and on the tower. He couldn’t understand the obstacles the wizard had placed before him. They seemed to attack the mind and not the body. As if the wizard knew that no weaknesses hindered Gosan’s body. Gosan began to wonder if this ocean tower was a diversion, too, a test of his mind. Would there be a wizard here?

But, despite the odds against him, he had to continue as planned. There was no other way: if he went back, he could not survive the fall down or even the desert’s climate, if he tried to fly, the elements would destroy him. He didn’t even ponder swimming down because the unknown deterred his curiosity. He had to go forth, to the epicenter of this journey, where he hoped the end of it all might be...

After a while, Gosan grew tired of watching the fish below, and tired of the glare. Reclining back in the water, and using his Ki, he floated on top with his eyes closed, meditating and resting. This was his first relaxation in years! ‘Lying down hasn’t felt this good since...well I can’t remember,’ his memories of sleep in his own home eluded him.

Lying there, he nearly fell asleep when he felt something tickle his back. He awoke again, looking into the sky. Nothing...he closed his eyes again. Again, a tingle wrapped his body as something touched him. This time, he stood up, returning his legs to the water. Frantically he looked around below him. The fish were gone now, and all he could see was a vast pool of warm water.

Suddenly, a chilly current of water flicked by him, little whirlpools swirling around him. His muscles grew tense as he felt a low rumble proceed through the water. Lightly, and quietly, he lowered into the water and watched. Cheeks puffy, he turned around, looking into the dark blue below and around for a sign of what was toughing him.

Suddenly, from behind, a swift whirlpool formed and grabbed him, dragging him down and around. Using all his power, he rose up to the surface and drew a breath. The sudden whirlpools reminded him of the whip of an oar in the water, like the tail of something swimming against the water. Only, this something was large!

He knew, however, that if he rose out to see better, the winds would simply sweep him away. Fear was growing in his mind - he was a sitting duck.

Then the movement of the water became still, all the currents ceased and the calm before the storm came. Above the water now, he still heard a low rumbling roar erupt. Huge bubbles burst from below. He placed his ear into the water. He could hear, just faintly, a

piercing squeak traveling through the fluid like ultrasound. Soon a rumble answered the whale-like screeching. He realized a team of predators was hunting him.

With no other choice he started to swim away. He didn't know which way he was going, but anywhere was better than there to him. Arm over arm, he stroked furiously, using his power to go through the water like a sleek serpent.

Soon he had traveled well over a hundred meters, when out of the water burst a volcanic eruption, spouting the white-water high into the air over head. Gosan, stopped hard as he stared into it. His face churned, as did his stomach: out of the water emerged the head of a long serpent, a mix of a snake and dragon. He became terrified as the elongated creature roared into the air, showing brute force. The long hard scales near the water's surface flickered back and forth to hold up his body, creating a huge wake that smacked on Gosan.

In a vain attempt, he began to swim the other way, noting how the serpent remained still. Suddenly as before, the second creature burst up in likewise fashion. It was even more frightening to behold: deathly animal of beauty and skill. The two were like twin scepters, reverses of each other though alike in their hideous intentions.

The first, behind Gosan, rose straight and high into the air. Fiery purple, its scales flickered endlessly back and forth. Its eyes glowed a dark hyacinth that seemed to absorb the power of the sky above. Its body was arrayed with different colors as well as spikes and wretched formations that looked sharp as the glance of a hawk.

The second coiled into a striking position, held up by flapping fins that blew strong winds across Gosan's face. Its scales glowed light green scales, from perhaps algae or other plants that attached themselves to the neck. Horns and other lifelike formations grew out of its body while claws rested at the ends of its arms that rested midway down to the water. Its indigo eyes peered down at him calmly, awaiting the actions of the other who remained behind Gosan. It roared again, as if waiting for him to move in fright. Immediately, he understood. 'This one creates the show and scares the prey towards the other, who waits to ambush the other,' he reasoned, noticing their dismay with him, 'but the ambush occurs at the bottom where the plants grow...that means that this is foreign territory to them,' he concluded. He had made up his mind, finally, that he would get eaten without a fight.

Rising up out of the water to his waist, he turned to face the plant-covered creature. Forming a 'Y' with his arms raised above him, he gathered Ki for a transformation. Then, in one smooth motion he clenched his fists and brought his arms down to his waist, flaring up to SS.

His inner rage exited his body, and at that moment, his mind was locked into the very key of the Universe. If only he knew the gates by which his mind could flow through. Now an angry aura flutter around his body and he pushed the water away from his body. Steam arose from off of him as his wet skin dried hastily under the intense heat. Fatigue reduced his power, but still his dominance was complete. The beast's eyes quivered as it opened its mouth and allowed its tongue to issue forth and sense the air.

Now, Gosan smiled, and brought his hands up to his face to form an open veil, "SOLAR FLARE" he yelled into the air.

The words echoed out across the water, as white light, blinding as the suns above, burst from him. Gosan watched cheerily as the technique blinded the two serpents. Quickly he flew through the water backwards and away from the two, body forcing up huge waves in

clearing his path. After a few seconds, he slowed his speed, allowing the huge waves to settle while he took a breath. Flying in water was no cake walk when you haven't eaten in days.

Floating there, he saw how the two had gone below. He figured they wouldn't take his hint, but little did he realize it only made them angrier. And, all at once, two humps in the distance formed on the surface. Each, side by side, gained speed steadily. Flaring up, Gosan prepared himself once again. He flexed and brought forth all his energy. Reaching out he fired out two balls of Ki that twisted about each other like orbiting bodies and then separated to strike the humps. But their explosions heeded no end to the movement. Instead, he felt the rumble of their hatred below him. Then their heads and necks emerged, both roaring in anger. Out from their mouths rushed furious fire that whipped across the water, turning it to steam. Behind them, giant whirlpools whipped together to form a moving maelstrom that threatened the ocean.

They were almost upon him now with their fiery hot breath. Gosan smiled slightly, he felt alive. Rising up out of the water, Gosan felt the winds immediately pick up behind him. They pushed him straight for the serpents, only hundreds of meters away. Gosan leaned forward, arms out in front as he approached them rapidly. Their bellows rippled across the water, when suddenly he formed two disks in front of him. Then moving his arms to the side, he widened each disk to the length of his body. Standing against the wind, now only meters from the stupid, charging monsters, he twirled effortlessly around like an ice skater, releasing the disks to the air and his guidance. Faster than they could think, the disks struck them hard, slicing deep, sending both heads into the water. Plunging into the bloodied water, Gosan breathed a sigh of relief.

But, even as his mind celebrated, the waters began to bubble. The necks of the beasts now rose out of the water as he watched in horror them sprout new heads. Now the two monsters rose higher than before, with one more menacing head for each.

Gosan's face cringed, and then he focused again. "You want to play, let's play for real!" he shouted out as he spread his arms to gather massive Ki. As he did, the beasts let out a magnificent roar, and came together for a final charge. Each of the four heads aligned in the trapezoid threatened him like never before - fire issuing forth to threaten him in vengeful actions. "Take this and be gone! HAA!" Gosan yelled out as he released the age old technique that sent a gigantic glowing ball of light at the animals. The fire met with it, but was forced back, and at last the ball struck the demons so that they screamed out in a final desperate call for help.

Fire engulfed fire and now the explosion wrecked its havoc. From the atomic ball, came a huge tsunami. Roaring in its might, Gosan quickly saw its danger, and dove beneath to feel the wrath of the undertow. Immediately he was pulled with it. But now, a new danger arose.

He felt the tides turning, the forces redirecting and turning back to look. The explosion had created a vast hole in the ocean that resulted in the forming of an unbelievable whirlpool. Violently, he was taken and swept across, powerless to resist the mighty current.

In that haze, in the whirling fury created by his actions, Gosan grew too weary to fight, and tossed about like some tumbling stone, he passed out. His last thoughts dwelled on his victory. How sweet it was!

Narrator:

In the last moments of the mighty whirlpool's life, it spewed Gosan up into the air above, like a child's toy. The wind, of course, caught hold of him, and sending him with such veracious velocity North, he landed finally on the sandy beach of an island. Landing hard, his body cratered the beach. He had long reverted to normal and when a wave came washing up on the beach, it filled the crater with water, making his body float in the warmth.

But, despite the powerlessness of Gosan after his victory, no pain could reduce the joy he had felt upon his victory. He now slept in a greater peace than he had ever slept before. There was no fighting in his dreams, for he had done enough already. He had sated his thirst for destruction, and now was ready to die a peaceful warrior, in his slumber.

Then he woke up. No longer was he to die a peaceful death. And upon looking around, his smile quickly turned to a dismayed frown. He now lay on the hot sand, on an island. He did not celebrate this. Such unwanted a sight it was to be dry, he instead cursed as he stared out into the sea...

Standing up, Gosan looked to the sky. All around the extremely small island were dense stormy clouds that swirled violently. But above him a hole formed, from which glaring light shone down straight upon him, heating the sand. His skin burned as he sat there. He was thirsty too, and so he walked towards the edge. But he could see now that not only did the sky swirl, but did the water, fast.

He squinted his eyes in confusion. Grabbing a fistful of sand, he slung it out into the air over the water. Immediately, the winds grabbed the sand and spun it upwards into the sky. He grabbed a stone from beside him and stepped back, heaving it out into the ocean. The rock was swept up in the wind and twirled about in the air, until it rose so high Gosan couldn't see it. Then, he felt the sand, landing on his skin. It had come right back down.

Quickly he dove aside as the rock came crashing down into the sand, spraying it everywhere. Gosan felt dismayed now. He sat down, looking around the tiny island. There weren't any trees, and in the middle stood a perfectly hemispherical, smooth boulder. It had nothing on it. Gosan realized that he had landed in the center of the ocean now, that this was the center of the tower. And there was no palace. There was no wizard. Fooled again!

Now he was worse off than before. He had no food, no water, more sunlight, and nowhere to go. Instead of his peaceful and victorious death, he would die alone on this dismal island. Pity overcame him.

"Why!?" he shouted out to the sky, "I deserve none of this..." no one answered, "Coward!" he spoke now to the wizard, "You are afraid of me! You fear my wrath! If I cannot win here, you won't either! I'll destroy everything, and then what'll you have!?! Nothing...fool," he paused for a moment, looking around as he panted to catch breath, no one answered him, "Fine, you fear my fury, so now I'll give it to you!"

His anger overcame him. He felt mocked, as if he had been officially reduced to nothing. It wasn't fair, it wasn't right. He was awesome; he had done so much in his life. His dreams said he was great. Now, some hidden coward was betraying him. It was unthinkable...the insolence of the foolish wizard. 'Ha!' Gosan thought, 'he thinks

nothing will happen to him!? I'll show him now...I'll show him what happens to my challengers!' he thought as he gathered all his energy.

Flaring up to SS3, as high as he could because he was so weakened, he allowed his mind to surge with rage. He would not be humiliated, "You want my blood!? Here, have it!?"

Raising his hands above his head he formed a huge ball of angry red light. Swirling, it pounded against the walls of wind, reflecting luminance on the waterspouts that twisted in the far off horizon. "HAAA!" he shouted, releasing all of what he had left into the air outside the island. The winds grabbed up the red, abominable ball and tossed it up into the air. Gosan watched, with a maniacal and crazed smile, laughing as the ball started tumbling down the hole like a rolling ball going down a cannon.

But as he watched, ready to die with the blast, one of the waterspouts that had wandered nearby him pulled him up off the island into its more intense winds. "Wait...NO!!" he shouted as it slung him far into the air away from the island and the ball crashed into it.

The explosion erupted forth from the island and immediately a mushroom of water issued upwards. Meanwhile the blast wave pounded everything in sight, including the flung Gosan until he had passed out, yet again, unseeing how the entire ocean lit up in an angry glow that shattered all possibility of survival: except...he did.

Desert of the Unreal

Narrator:

Long, slow passages of the stars above were unknown to Gosan, who lay down in the dirt as before. Lo, what length of sleep he found in his extreme fatigue. Yet, upon his awakening, he felt that no sleep had occurred...worse than no dreams, he had had no rest either.

Sitting up, he tasted the bitter dry grains in his mouth. Around him, the inexorable winds tongued him, whipping constantly, sending sandy dirt into his ears. His body ached like it had beaten with an anchor. Looking to the sky, Gosan tried to remember the past, and noted his struggle.

He had no idea how long he had been in the desert. He had faint memories of death, of beasts and storms, of monotonous movement and cumbersome climbing. Even the shadowy faces plagued him still. Staring up at the sun, he noted his pale skin. But how? Just before, he remembered the terrible singing burns that ripped his body inside out, and now...nothing? He grumbled at his dreams. Were they dreams? Had he laid there the entire time, blown about by the winds and such, kept alive only by some unseen force?

Looking at his body, he thought about what he knew. He knew he had achieved nothing spectacular. He hadn't found the wizard, or anyone who could help him. He had beaten his self, doubted his self, and destroyed his self so much now, that he was nearly a new man. Experienced in all regions of life and understanding of all virtues and vices that drive men.

So, what now? He stared out into the plain that extended to the horizon around him. There must be a way out, and he knew that it must be true. The wizard was there, mocking him, betraying him, and sending him on in his adventures. Gosan realized he had allowed the wizard to control him; to control all his energies and designs. 'Ha!' Gosan thought, 'The wizard must think he is Fate!'

Deciding that no more would the wizard dominate him, he stood, either for the first or last time, and powering up, became one with the Universe again, beckoning it to obey...

Deep into its vast crevices unseen he peeked. Ever searching like a madman, Gosan let no place on the planet escape his eye. He let no trench in the deepest ocean go unfelt. Soon, he reaped his reward: far into the sunset, he felt the sign of a single life form. So faint it was, it might seem to be a flea to even a power like Goku. But for the new Gosan, the frequency was amplified to be as wide as an ocean liner.

“HA!” he laughed aloud, “There you were! There’s no more hiding for you, my friend,” he jeered.

Reaching straight out to his sides, palms out, he pulled on the Ki continuum until a vast chunk fell into his grasp. Then he brought his arms to an ‘X’ in front of his chest. The energy surged through him in new lights, and SS he emerged. The feeling was invigorating.

Pushing off the soft soil and leaving a vast crater behind, Gosan glided effortlessly across the ground. The winds opposed him none now because he shoved aside the elements like small children. He felt brand new, not even caring for the slightest drop of water or morsel of food. His vengeance was coming, where he would take what he came for from the Wizard, despite all the tests he had failed. What mattered was that he remained, an unstoppable force beyond any manmade measure.

Far out into the distance, as he neared his target, a castle tower rose up over the horizon. A smile accompanied the sight as he further accelerated his speed; all senses were maxed to the brim.

But, gliding there across the ground, he could see that some barrier was in the distance. At first he thought nothing of it, ‘I’ll just break through it!’ But the more he watched, the more he realized it wasn’t a wall of stone, but of dust. He slowed his pace, coming to a stop eventually to glare out at the division that stretched across the horizon.

Standing there, undaunted, but worried of the unknown, he ascertained that it moved. ‘A storm?’ he questioned, then closed his eyes to consult with the evil planet.

In his trance, standing there in that desert, he listened for the planet to speak. Never before had it offered its counsel, like some muted or dead object. But, he now felt a whisper coming; deep down beneath the surface, from within the core, the voice emerged. Gosan squinted; he couldn’t quite make out the words.

“...ha-ha-ha-ha...”

He shuddered, realizing the words not to be communication, but mockery. The wizard laughed at him, roaring with great humor at his foulest deed yet. Gosan quickly reopened his eyes; how plainly he saw them now!

The ground, of course was no cloak to Truth – it spoke loudly also, grumbling in laughter from the approaching on-rushers. Gosan, gritted his teeth at first, angered by this new insolence. But then, a new feeling came over him...rapture.

He took his stance, glaring out over the empty sea of salty death. They came for his blood; he would give none so easily. He watched them with grin from ear to ear, their swiftly beating legs, pounding the earth below like horses.

Any fool would learn at once they were warriors. Each dark soul contrasted the bright and fiery suns above. In his front, round, steely shields glimmered in the light until. Above them, they reared all sorts of devilish weapons: spears, maces, swords from all

ages, lances, chains, and axes of every size. They were monstrous beasts, not men, three meters apiece and each sporting heavy armor. He almost laughed at their appearance...his luck. Clearly, with no qualms he knew they were hounds, beasts that ran on two legs but had the heads of deadly wolves.

He smiled: a thought about the past came to him of how he had seen a movie once and it had frightened him. The creatures had been hounds too. So terrible it felt to him as a child, and now the wizard knew this to be true.

Gosan did not shudder in fear instead he quivered with anticipation. He would strike fear into the hearts of these fictitious creatures. A test more of his mind than his body it would prove.

He heard them growl, roaring at their approach like fearsome predators. He saw the sheen of his aura reflect on their shields, he was so close. The sides of the army began to fold around at the sides, to draw nearer to him. But he only watched ahead, selecting his first victim. This done, he glared into the creature's eyes; it knew Fate all too late.

Forward he rushed and struck the first set with open palm, slicing of three heads: one with guile, two more with luck. With their pleas, he roared aloud. Onto assault! Onward he would go.

Out his limbs went, using his body to block, and destroying them left and right. Soon they surrounded him completely, yet he killed them as quickly as they approached. No blood spewed from the corpses; instead they fell down to be trampled on by their peers. Left and right his punches and kicks broke off their heads as they growled and howled at him: thousands more still coming.

Like an insane train, he accelerated his attack at a constant rate. When he peaked off with his own attacks, he swiftly seized two swords and began swinging wildly at the poor creatures. Now they didn't even get to swing at him, for when he had eliminated those ready to strike at him, he did so to their replacements. There was no end to stop him, no barrier to block him. Even as he moved, the bodies piled up, and piled up. Soon a wall of dead warriors surrounded him, new orcish creatures came streaming over the slopes, all too ready for their most dishonorable death. "Ahhhhh!" he shouted and the force of his power up released light and blasted away the bodies around his position.

The blast tossed the enemy back, but he did not proceed to push them thus. He actually wanted them to come for him. So, with way clear, he swung more wildly now with his crimsoned sword and juiced limbs. He even occasionally released a Ki blast from his mouth to kill a fourth attacker, while shooting angry beams from his eyes to kill others that lined up too easily for sudden death.

But, even such fun became too boring for Gosan, who saw the extent of such fighting. Drawing back for a split-second, he heaved the two swords into the chests of six beasts and began forming Destructo Discs on his hands to fling them out. Round and round, he rotated his body like a ballerina. His elegant movements were matched now only by his perfect attack. The blades each took dozens of heads as he pumped them out one after another. Slinging them in circles to catch his attackers off guard, they flowed and swirl along some predetermined curve.

The army was dwindling fast, as was his Ki. Distinct to him more than the foul smell of dying flesh and dirty skin mixed with animal oils, he felt the level of his energy plummeting as fast as he fought. He knew that he had to end it soon. "Dai Kaio-Ken!" he shouted and in his SS form he released so much energy that the heat began to vaporize

his enemies. A raging aura burst from him like a Napalm explosion, ripping across the planet's surface in a widening inferno. Powered up higher now, he pounded the enemies faster than before. He would hit them with his arsenal just in time before the brilliance of his image blinded and then obliterated them.

They neither felt nor gained mercy from he, the dealer of Justice and retribution. Down through the ranks he glided, ending the lives of so many evil ones that threatened him foolishly. His disadvantage had completely flown over and even then, they did not flee. Soon, the mountain of bodies grew in length as he ran along the ridge. No faces he saw: only terrible and evil Kis he felt for and then annihilated.

After some passages of the sun, when he felt the strength of his body dwindle from lack of rest, he jumped from the end of the mountain he ran along and landed gently upon the ground; gravity didn't affect his ultra-pumped body. Facing the ridge, lined up with it down the straight length, he stared straight. His breath came forth in heavy pants, his face serious as it stared into the dozen or so kilometers of bodies.

Gaining his breath, he turned at last to face the lone warrior that now stood affront him. "Pitiful...Fool, come fulfill your Death-wish!" Gosan commanded to the lone captain. Hesitation grew to befriend the beast who suddenly realized that he stood alone. Behind him lay the endless ridge of his thousands-dead champions.

The captain trembled at the sight of the Saiyan power. "Would you wish it any other way!?" Gosan taunted him, jubilant, "Idiot! You think I'll spare you after laying so many of the like down to their dishonorable graves? Come finish what your race began; unsheathe your sword and rush me for the last time, Wizard's warrior!" he commanded.

The beast reached to his side at the challenge, he stood a mighty height. Then he watched as Gosan brought his arms straight out to gather up for a huge Ki blast. The beast glared at him, picked up his shield and took out his sword. Roaring his last time, he took charge at the Hero.

'That's it, bring it on,' Gosan thought as he pulled in the energy exponentially. Then, stretching his arms out straight, he formed two angry tiger claws that rested wrist to wrist. "Final Flash!!" Gosan shouted out.

From his palms the energy formed the widest ball he had ever made. The massive beam he then thrust forward in a beam that pushed him back in its fury. The blue light reflected emerald on his recoiled chest as it rushed ahead. Instantly it swallowed whole the lone captain and then it struck the mountain of dead. In its intense rage and ferocious heat, it engulfed and evaporated all the bodies as though meant to cremate them. Fulfilling its job, it ripped through the entire ridge and thus eliminated from existence all those who had challenged his might.

Narrator:

Gosan did not remain in that barren, air-burnt location to celebrate, however. Instead, he turned back to the castle and leapt forward as before, bent on exacting a certain level of revenge...

Like a comet in the night's sky, he went across the ground. A smile completely blanketed his face as he felt sure nothing could stop him now. His movements were rapid and sure in every form. He approached like a maddened phantom until he closed in within a kilometer.

At that moment, the ground beneath him began to quake, making him halt in preparation for the assault of whatever the wily old Wizard conjured up. The intensity increased steadily and below his hovering, golden feet cracks began to form. Suddenly, in front of him a hill of dirt formed. Rubble from deep within erupted forth, sending stones of all types tumbling down the quaking sides. 'What illusions are these?' Gosan disbelieved what he saw.

The hill soon grew to what looked almost like a mountain because it was over a hundred meters tall. And how great this barrier stood amazed Gosan who leaned back to gather its amazing altitude. Gosan, after the quaking had ended, neared the mountain in front of him. But as he walked slowly up, unrealizing, he was startled by rays of energy that shot out from beneath the dirt in horizontal lines. He had time to prepare just enough, and bringing forth a strong shield, he braced his mind for the shock...

With the force of Mt. Vesuveus, the soil and stone burst away from the core of that peak so violently, that he was flung backward in a furious gale force almost a kilometer before he caught hold and halted his flight. When the winds finally stopped blowing him from behind the blast wave, he flexed his body and blasted away the dirt and rock from around him, trying to catch his breath. The blast of supernatural, shocking strength had buried him in meters of dust and ash.

Standing in the desert, his light laden body was cloaked by a cloud of dust his anger had stirred. Through it he stared, irritation gathering in him. Pulling more energy from deep within his seemingly endless stock, he rose out of the cloud, staring out. The palace was not in sight, so he turned slowly in the air, surveying the horizon.

At that moment, when he first caught glimpse, strange signals of supreme fear slipped up his spine. A sight he had never beheld: ahead of him, strolling with terrific speed stood a mountain-sized golem. The brute was headless, as if life came from the Wizard himself. What terror to behold such a creature of solid form; what power it must have contained! The soulless golem moved by some force unnatural, death its intention. In little time the giant was upon Gosan, who himself was no newcomer to the realm of fighting giants. Thus, when it pulled back its arm and swung, Gosan was far quicker to react than was known to the slave.

But even with his energy barrier, the hit blasted him backwards. In fact, the punch sent a sound wave out that vibrated the air enough to ripple light. On the ground the blast pounded out a trench in the dust, sending away dust clouds in the powerful gush of air.

Gosan himself was dazed for a brief moment. But even the moment was enough for the enemy to strike. Suddenly, Gosan felt like a whole building landed on top of his body as he was shot straight downward to the ground, and pummeled into it a few meters. Looking up out of the crater through one of his bloody eyes, he barely managed to see the granite foot coming down upon him to crush his body. Quickly, Gosan fly up out of the hole, watching the foot pound the ground like some child stomped in a puddle. Looking back to the Palace, Gosan made a quick teleportation, he needed space to think and gather energy.

Standing by the epicenter of the giant's emergence chamber, Gosan watched as the giant lifted his foot and even dug in the rock a bit, looking for his body. 'I need energy for a blast, but where can I find enough?' he thought as he watched the giant realize his absence.

The giant leaned back in surprise, turning around to look for Gosan, who stood so far away. He stomped in anger, shaking the ground. Gosan hid his aura. 'This damn desert has weakened me to where even this brute is tough to defeat. That damned Wizard doesn't know when to give up,' Gosan thought as he continued to search for a way to gather energy without attracting the attention of the giant. 'Damn it! There has to be a way! Some source of energy that I have not used...like...' epiphany!

He laughed with joy, unseeing the approaching enemy of epic proportions. 'Of course,' he reveled in his absenteeism of mind. Focusing his mind, he felt now how the ground shook. But he knew it was too late to stop his plan.

Raising his head to the sky, he opened his eyes as wide as possible, staring into the closest moon. He had never done this the entire time he had been on the planet. Never once had he more than glanced at the moons. Only the suns did he look at, spurning their ferocious natures. And now, the moons meant to do more than harm. Suddenly, the Wizard's plans had failed!

The four suns, two in the sky and two on the horizons pumped Ki into Gosan at a rate never felt by a Saiyan before. After only moments, shorter than on Vegeta, he felt the pounding in his head begin. His flesh began to tear at the seams. New energy poured into him like a stream overrun by Niagara's mighty volume. His body began the transformation; hair began to form all around it, as he grew steadier upward in size. The giant slowed his pace and came to a stop, curious at this new technique. Gosan grew, and grew, his size increasing and increasing, until he was only slightly shorter than the rock-giant.

The brilliance of his plan rang laughter in his mind. Savage thoughts rambled on in his head as power corrupted his soul completely. He was a raging ape of demonic powers. A juggernaut like no other, he roared in dominance.

Yet, he was compelled by logical thought to go farther. Staring still into the enlarged satellites, he transformed again. His mahogany hair went to gold, and then with a louder roar it went pure silver. Yet, he still had not finished, even in his ultra-premium form that stood more muscular than any Saiyan had ever been. The energy provided by the suns was so enormous, he felt no limits to achievable power; power that rejuvenated his body from the weakness he had felt to strength no one had ever felt. He went sable.

No longer did his body remain similar to the flabby, yet powerful type of Oozuru 1. Instead, it was tall like man; muscular and calm with logical thought. He stood completely upright, unlike before. His muscles bulged and ripped in all the perfect ways while his sleek coat shimmered in the rays of the suns. He appeared like a large warrior, fluid as much as any martial artist. Most of all, he was connected with all that was grand and supreme about Ki. He was a God compared to all else.

The giant stumbled back for a second while Gosan looked at his hands, flexing them. The Wizard knew there was no match for him. Gosan focused on the ground to his right. Quickly he raised his hand, ripping enough soil out that it formed a canyon. Then, he dropped it down again. The ground cracked with his actions. Looking to the sky, he reached to one of the suns. Then squeezing tight his fist, the sun vibrated and grew orange. He smiled at his play. Peering back to the giant rock, he noted it only stood to his height now. But Gosan was supreme in all ways possible. The game was up. Gosan turned to the palace behind him. 'HA! Do you think this peon has a chance to halt my destiny!? Haha! There is no swaying my design; I am supreme in all things known to

life. Give up or suffer my wrath," his voice echoed across the desert, rumbling the palace walls.

The response came, not in words, but in action. Around him, from the dirt rose four more mountains. Then, they exploded as before. The wind ruffled his fur, and his eyes squinted with irritation. Yet, a smile cracked out from the corner of his mouth. He gathered more energy from the suns, and formed an aura around him.

Each golem moved to surround Gosan. Each collaborated by some means of communication, all controlled by the one being. Then, all at once, they moved forth towards his central position to strike.

There was no glimpse of his movements. There was no seeing his actions. Only what came after left a glimpse of Gosan's attack. Five cracks of the sonic boom erupted into the air. Five blast waves that rocked the surface of the planet, rattling the palace He protected. Five clouds of fine dust formed where once solid marble, granite, and limestone had stood.

Standing upright again, Gosan gathered in the remaining energy, looking around to see his damage – he had had enough fun. Leaning back at last, he gave out a roar that emerged from deep in his belly. Beams of energy blasted forth, one that went straight into a moon above, blasting part of it away in his angry release. His body then shrank down, pulling the energy inward: he controlled even his forms now, as he controlled his levels. No limits at all could be found in his mind; he stood as the infinite pathway between two worlds, a connection to what was unseen. He knew this, and yet he withheld. Letting go of the power, he remembered how he had not finished his mission. All that had happened to him needed cause.

Gosan turned once again to the dust-kissed castle. The air, so vicious before, like a rabid dog, rested placidly around him. The planet was under his control as never before. There was no stopping his intent. In that cardboard-brown backdrop, the SS glared at the structure, anticipating some new test. His fur around his body had become a bright orange while it wiggled in the aura's fluid movement. Those deep eyes that no enemy ever lasted after beholding them, now flared silver, reflecting the giant ape he had once been. His hair shimmered a metallic/sable hue, stretching down past his hips to mid-thigh. He looked at his body and clenched his fists: the planet shook. 'There is no need for it,' he mulled over a contemplation, 'Restraint is in order,' he concluded. He realized too that he had torn his Gi, that one that Goku had given him. It was lost in the desert, or torn to shreds. Concentrating, Gosan focused on the atoms around him. A new Gi suddenly flashed up out in front of him. It was as if his will became truth upon thought. Then he turned again to face the castle.

Gently, he lifted from the ground, weightless he felt because his power was so intense. The inner rage had matured into new control. Control he could always have attained, only fear held him back. On Vegeta, or Namek, or anywhere else he would have been able to do it without the help of the moons. Or could he? Perhaps the planet had forced him to bring out what he did not want, to push him to the limits of his power until he realized the Truth.

Either way, it didn't matter much to his decision-making. He pushed forward without effort. In a flash, his power ripped space in front of him, and he reemerged directly in front of the castle. He no longer needed to use the instant transportation if he didn't want to. He moved in and out of dimensions like walking through doors. Now, he rested on

the ground, his aura cauterizing the stone surface of the entrance. With no fear, he moved in, lowering his awesome energy to not destroy whom he had come all this way for.

The Wizard's Castle

Narrator:

The castle, as far as he could tell, had once been a grand palace. Its lavish architecture complimented by rich interior. Now all that was left was soiled carpets, torn and faded paintings, armor suits rusted away into nothing. As he walked, he did not try to find the Wizard, but instead allowed himself to be captivated by the curious nature of the mansion.

At one point, he entered into a vast library. But, to his disappointment, the books all crumbled upon opening them, and none had writings he could understand. 'So much of a waste,' he thought to himself, sighing and leaving the dirty room.

He wandered into many rooms, hundreds in fact, methodically searching for the Wizard while feeding his hunger for learning. He saw dining rooms, and halls; memorials and statues. He saw bedrooms upon bedrooms. But the castle only really showed him one thing: that Loneliness was its true resident.

Finally, while entering the last hallway, he caught ear of a slight hum. It was like the noise he remembered...from somewhere at least. Anyways, it was distinct enough to catch his attention. At last he came to the door on the end of the hallway. Slowly, he reached to the handle, and turned it. Then, he pushed it forward.

Only once before had he seen what he now saw in front of him. Light emerged out of the room to fill the dark hallway behind him. His eyes widened at a sight he had never expected. The great Hero entered...

It is not easy to relate the captivation and confusion the Lord felt upon this sight. Nor is it easy to relate his emotions that flowed through his mind, clouding all judgment. But, given what he beheld in front of him, you would imagine such things to happen.

Hovering weightlessly in the air ahead, rested three man-sized, rippling portals. Like the one that rested above Snake Way, it fluttered like a shallow pond in the wind. It held no volume, no third dimension, only the area of what it showed him. Like the one on Snake Way, each donned a picture of their own. Three separate places familiar to him, yet hard to remember.

Slowly, and lightly, the mighty SS approached the central portal. They rippled more as he approached, hiding what he wished to see better. When at last he had crossed the lengthy room, and was within a few meters, the rippling ceased all at once in the left portal.

Now the picture reflected on his complexion like the bright sunlight on a morning snow. A tear formed in both his eyes – whether from brightness or from sadness one could not tell. Gazing at it hard, he released his power, reverting to regular form. The shock of all life came down upon him, he saw something he had not seen in so many days. In the still portrait, he could see Kami's Sanctuary. It was like some glorious and colorful sight straight from Heaven! Throughout flowers and butterflies as joyous as the morning suns' rays danced in that floating garden like some scene from Eden. He could almost smell

the sweet perfume of the pruned roses that surrounded the palace walkway. In the background, Gosan could see Mr. Popo picking plump pears from the orchard. Soon, Kami himself came into view, walking slowly around that garden, focusing on watching the Earth. 'What a good guardian he is,' thought Gosan happily, ready to leap through the portal to see the old friend.

At length Kami stopped by underneath Mr. Popo, tilting his emerald head to speak up at him. Gosan could see he was troubled by something, some terrible thing. Or maybe he just worried a lot, after all, Earth was a dangerous place before. Still, Gosan realized the implications of the portal. It probably even worked if it could show him Kami. Escape presented its seductive curves in new ways he had not anticipated.

He began to lean forward, closing his eyes as he went to go in. Yet, at the last moment, he pulled back. 'The Wizard's trickery!' Gosan suspected, 'This portal could send me to the depths of space, or the desert. I wonder what the second show...' he thought.

Suddenly, the far right portal ceased its violent rippling. Another picture imposed itself on his countenance. The calm pool of light called to him even more than had the last, and the tears in his eyes began to cloud his sight. He closed them, rubbing them out, then reopened them to gaze at the photo.

This one took him longer to comprehend, to understand its significance. But, with his eyes cleared, it took only a few moments until he could clearly see it. Oh, heroes of the past! How much more he was tested than any before him. So much so that he moved to touch the surface of what seemed like glass.

In the rich image sat so many people. They were not ordinary people, but the many counselors from his galaxy that he had left in charge. That was no ordinary room, either, but the negotiation room. So few of them sat there, their faces smeared by looks of desperation that rivaled his own. "Antinus, Yoshitaksu..." he called out to his friends that had advised him once in his throne.

He looked at each of their faces, studying them for answers to questions he inwardly posed. He watched their lips move. They talked so sternly, as though something more serious than trade moved them. 'So few left,' he wondered.

Finally, he rested his watery eyes on the one he had left in charge there; the one he had trusted to guard their lives and protect His people. The President sat at the head of the table, head resting on his hands, thinking as he stared, depressed, into the digital table. Then he reached out and pushed a button while the men became silent. Under the glass formed a map. This map perplexed Gosan. It showed so many things he had never seen. Moving ships between planets, and new galaxies, it almost seemed like trade. Yet, Gosan didn't buy it. 'Something is wrong, I know it,' he wept, remembering his speech at the dinner, 'I promised them I'd be there for them. I promised my people that...' his thoughts halted, 'No, this is all just deception! They're fine. I cannot trust the Wizard. Or can I?' his thoughts swayed again.

As abruptly as the thought ended, the central portal quit rippling. He blinked at it in amazement. So far, he couldn't make it out – his angle wasn't right. Slowly, he moved in front of it, eyes closed. Turning to face it, he struggled to open them, unwishing to see more. But he had to.

When he did open those tear-flooded eyes, he found more surprise than sadness. 'Who the hell is that!?' he thought, his brow wrinkling upon the sight of some random man, sitting in a chair in a room. In front of the young man rested the book he had been

studying. Around the room were various posters, a TV, other things that a young man would like to collect. 'It must be his room,' thought Gosan, unable to find reasoning in the picture. He stared at it more and more, studying the man's features and his movements. He was young, not too tall, about two meters or so, built strongly and handsome. The boy stopped for a moment, and looked up into the ceiling. Gosan stared into the boy's eyes that seemed to point right at him. They were so deep and captivating, like windows to new worlds.

Suddenly, the boy stopped and turned, answering someone's call from behind the door. Quickly he stood up and went to the corner of the room, leaning over by his dresser to reach into it and...

Gosan's mind shattered like tempered glass. Lightning crashes echoed in him as he glared into that pool. His soul screamed in terror as his eyes fell upon that mark. Down underneath the spine, along the back, where the pants had pulled away when the lad bent over, rested something that could never be mistaken by a Saiyan.

Gosan stumbled back, streams of tears flowing like the Gange across his reddened cheeks. "It...it can't be! No, no no no!" he denied, falling to the ground cursing his eyes.

'No, I didn't want to, why!?' Curse you Wizard!' he looked up again to the image. How cruel Fate seemed, to torture him like some mad Siren, calling to him. He knew of course now why the young man had crazy hair: why the young, round-faced youth had eyes deep as the Mariana. In front of Gosan, in the deep pool, stood his son. The only son he had ever created; the only son he would never hold.

On his back there remained a mark, a circular scar where the doctors had made the incision at birth. His mother and the doctors thus removing the appendage that hung from his body.

"Cruelty!" he shouted, reaching to his son as he wept on his knees.

Then, another man entered the room. The youth stood, putting on the shirt, and faced the man. Gosan's confusion grew. He stared blankly at the man, unable to place him. Meanwhile, his son conversed with the guy, dressed in a business casual suit. They talked openly and smiled. It was confusing to Gosan how well they talked, more like family than acquaintances.

Then, they both turned to answer a call from behind the door – no sound came through the portal. Soon, the door moved, a hand grasping its side and pushing. A body moved out from behind the unknown. Gosan's heart ruptured.

The woman's face, so bright, so shining, and so distant to him still struck a chord in him. He would know that face forever, he would know those thighs, those hands, that smile for all time. His heart imprinted with her silhouette like stamped steel. Her name was branded in his mind. Now, after so much time in absence of her memory, her face lit him on fire with love. His tears poured still forth. "Sha-rei..." he muttered, still confused about the man.

They continued to converse for a moment, when suddenly they all decided on something. The man moved passed Gosan's son, and then, kissed Sha-rei at the door, his hand resting on her hip. Gosan grew enraged, 'How dare he!'

Then the man turned to the youth. Forever, for as long as Gosan had thought, he never forgot those words that he read on the lips of the man in that central portal. "Good night, son."

At once Gosan felt himself tumbling down the rabbit hole, into wonderland. He desired no more for anything. He wanted to jump through that portal and grab hold of his son. He would shout, 'Son, son, it's me, I'm your father come from far off to hold you.'

'And what would he say,' a thought came into his head, 'What would he say to me, the father that never was. The one who left him on the planet to be loved by an imposter!? Why, why did I ever do that?' he cried into his hands as his elbows rested on the grimy stone floor.

But, out of the darkness, a voice came to him, a voice of reason, and of hope. Though true, it was in his mind, Ki brought guidance to the one who had been tested to the limits of all Humanity and Life. 'Earn your valor in battle...' it spoke so clearly.

He raised his head to face the portals again. "Those weren't my life, weren't my chosen path," he spoke aloud to answer the voice.

Suddenly, he knew the answers to that question he had posed. He knew too that the image he saw was only a distraction. 'The Wizard!' he realized, 'No, these are to lead me away to things I should not have!'

He stood then, in front of the portals, facing each. With one solemn look to his son, he whispered, "Goodbye, my son," and faced the counsel to the right, "Hold on, dear friends, I have more important things right now," and finishing thus, he turned to the door.

Narrator:

Leaving from whence he came, the great Saiyan did more than leave that room. He left behind all that personified him until this point. He had made his decision between what was solid in life, and what should be in his life. There was no family for him, no love of friends from the past, and no glorious empire that called him their victorious champion of all ages. All such things that could fill a man's dreams end to end a galaxy's worth, and more he should not take. Those things that no one person had ever had, he could, and yet he shunned them; he spurned the offerings of gods for something more, which had and always would drive him mad...

A sigh burst from his lips as he close the door, shutting out the light, the love, the life. Looking up, he found that he had taken the wrong door. Or had he?

No longer did he stand in the hallway of darkness, but in a imperial, grand room of luminance and mystery. Archaic, yet so fresh in his mind, the room sat around his mind. It was like so opened chamber that had previously been hidden from him. Somehow a new door he had emerged through instead of the same one he had time and time before.

Now too, he felt the awesome power of He who had kept him in suspenseful search. On his throne in front of the awed Gosan sat the Wizard.

Gosan approached the being, who sat like a statue, old as the sands of time, in his one position with eyes closed. "That's far enough," a deep and powerful voice burst from the frail sorcerer.

Gosan stood firm. "I'll go as I wish, Wizard," he felt as if the old coot owed him respect, "What right think you to tell me what I can and cannot do?" he queried the Wizard.

"Ha! Haha...what right have I? What right have you," his tiny hand jutted out to point at Gosan, "to question me?"

“I have journeyed a long way...” Gosan started to explain, halted by the interrupting voice of the sorcerer.

“Have you?” he smiled.

“Yes, I have! I traveled across much distance only to ask a mere question and yet I have been through more than...well, more than you could imagine.”

“Have you?” he echoed his self.

“Don’t mock me: don’t incur my wrath!” Gosan shouted in his growing irritation.

“Or what? Or you may slay me?” he chuckled.

“I have immense power, *friend*, and if I were you I would show some respect,” he hadn’t really planned out his words for when he finally found He who had tortured him so much.

“Really?” the Wizard stood, pushing aside his drooping and raggedy cloak, “Well, so have I. In fact, you’ll soon realize the intensity of my own power, foolish and brash warrior!”

Gosan’s face cringed as he tried to contemplate the Wizard’s meanings. Fear gripped him, some terror nagging inside him. He knew...he knew what the Wizard had in mind!

“That’s right, and now, what will you do?” the wizard laughed.

But, yet, there was no counting out our Hero, the Super Saiyan of Super Saiyans. Hurrilly, he rushed the Wizard, grasping his arm. Then, he formed a transparent/yellow barrier around them, trapping air and even some floor inside the bubble.

Gosan felt the rumbling in the earth below them, terrain crumbling and heating like some dirt-covered pyre. ‘An image...damn it!’ he couldn’t think of an image far away.

Giving up at last, he caught sight of the moon he had blasted earlier, and whoosh...they were gone.

Light Side of the Moon

Narrator:

Arriving on the moon’s dusty surface, Gosan spun quickly around in the bubble. Through the Ki barrier, he could see the desert planet crack and he watched as it suddenly burst into intense flames that ripped into space like devils’ tongues. The pieces flew off in concentric spheres, expanding away at intense rates.

All around them, chunks of planet came pounding into the surface of the moon. Then, millions of meteors began to pound the satellite, forcing the Hero to push with some strength ahead to deflect brutish asteroids and colliding pieces of severed land. Around them, the moon surface burned with furious destruction. But soon the flames died as they ran out of oxygen in only moments.

Looking up again, Gosan could see that all that remained was an empty void where once an entire planet had sat. He turned at length to face the culprit. Confusion bothered him.

He was a pinkish color, very faded though as the flabby skin had weathered many moons. His skeleton protruded in hideous and disgusting ways, like he hadn’t eaten in a millennia. He eyes were shallow and tired-blue. He seemed too weak and timid to have created such an explosion.

At last, he smiled, impressed now by the warrior who had survived so much...

“Do you know how many beings have died trying to find me?” he asked Gosan finally

“No, how many?” Gosan was more interested in why and how the Wizard did what he had just done.

“None,” he burst out at his joke, his voice squeaky now and elderly, “you are the first to try,” he answered his own question.

Around them the laugh echoed in the small bubble. Gosan was unamused, yet still amazed.

“Why did you make yourself so hard to find?” Gosan replied at length to the old, laughing fool.

“Long ago,” he cleared his throat and placed his hands behind his back, facing Gosan from his short stance, “on my home planet, a prophet foretold to me the coming of a great warrior. I, at the time, was a stubborn young man who had grown tired with the galaxy’s stupidity. He told me how this warrior would come to ask me a question.

“Determined to prove her wrong, I left to a star system of my own design and continued to study magic, becoming more powerful and wise. I made this planet to be the ultimate test that not even the best warriors could pass. I, until now, believed that to be true. I believed I would die on this planet, unmolested by the idiocy of the Universe, and then I would finally be rid of that curse. I challenged the galaxy itself to send its best, and it never did.

“These tests I created: courage and persistence in the face of death, calm in the face of an entire army, and control of Fear were things that I pushed to the max. Till a Hell beyond that imagined by even the Guardians surrounded me. When you came, and not by ship no less, I was intrigued by your power. I used my magic to remove your ability to make mental pictures and hid my own powers from you. Then I began to read your thoughts, monitoring your coping to my intense desert. Fire your friend, while I played the fiend.

“But, such was not so. Instead you created your own terrors and tortures, as if to hate yourself. Realizing your great and limitless strength, I watched in intrigue and sometimes played a part in your fantasies. I will not detail to you any one thing, only let you realize that most of everything was always in your control. If you had willed it, I could have been in your grasp within seconds. Yet you persevered through it all; my amazement nearly complete, I set you up for the final test under pressure.”

Gosan’s face wrinkled in thoughtfulness, “So did I really go through that forest and that ocean?” he couldn’t distinguish reality anymore. “All right, wizard, answer my question,” he commanded to continue his show of strength.

“Yes, of course, since it is you that has sought my wisdom. I will answer only that one question, however, and then I will be gone.”

“Tell me, then, where are the history of the Saiyan race’s beginnings to be found?”

“I myself do not know the history of the Saiyan race, dragon-warrior,” the short, illustriously dressed Wizard spoke, “but I do know that it can be found on the planet Nirosune,” he said, raising his right hand up to form an image of the planet in front of them, “There you will find the answer to the question you have sought so long to find,” he had fulfilled his query; yet inspiration touched him so to speak further, “But you must not seek it out, Son Gosan, only wait for it to come to you, no matter how long you are there,” he advised in seriousness,

“Now, flower of the Universe, I leave you,” he finished and stepped back.

Gosan stared into the picture and when it vanished, looked to the wizard. But he was gone. Then Gosan felt some strange tingle in his head, and turned back to look up into the sky of that snow covered moon.

Hovering over him, showering his white face with glorious blue light, hovered a new planet of amazing design. Across its face lay forest of evergreen plants, and oceans of the deepest purple and shimmering water. Clouds spread over the surface like searching angels. Around him, he saw that the suns had faded to a low glow that combined to shine ever so beautifully and calmly on the planet. Gosan smiled, 'Now the wizard can live.'

Now again, Gosan's immense power had somehow touched another soul, and Ki led him to victory as it had always before: his confidence restored.

Finally, the happy hero concentrated, flexing his muscles and flaring up like a Vegetan Sunrise, he donned his furry covering and sable hair with golden aura of light. He had thus concluded the long journey to the planet of the Wizard; harboring success, and also new understanding, he brought the image of Nirosune into his mind. Waving to the watching Wizard above, he vanished off into the distance. A new planet to call his home for some time, a new race of people to meet, and a new ray of Hope to shine upon his powerful chest and worn face.

Narrator:

Now that Gosan had nothing to hold on to, as though the life he owned now were new as the day he was born, he was able to go to Nirosune with a stronger sense of purpose than even before. He felt so close to finding the answer to the question that drove him to extremes of the Universe. He felt that the answer would somehow get him closer to the one thing that truly pushed him beyond the limits of his soul.

After what he had experienced on that deathtrap, he was ready for anything. He would wait until death on Nirosune, if he had to, just see the truth. He was prepared by all that had led him to search into the farthest corners of the living realm, and even other realms, until he held in his grasp that which he claimed as his own...