

In one of Oakburg's parks, an immense crowd had formed, eager to watch the familiar futile struggle before them, tittering at the runes lighting up to signify the magic working. In the center of the crowd, there was a large rock, reaching about halfway up one's thigh. The rock itself was thoroughly uninteresting, save for how remarkably smooth it was, its top appearing as though it was a manufactured platform rather than a stone. Even the runes carved within the stone wouldn't normally raise too much intrigue amongst the general population, having eight in a circular formation, the gaps between them being roughly equidistant. However, in the very center of the rock was wedged a sword, a longsword with a blade of shining white, an immense emerald embedded in a platinum pommel. Shining in the afternoon sun, it appeared practically spotless, despite the fact that normal swords in the same location would be ruined. Its leather grip was being held tightly by a team of a burly elephant, tiger, and gorilla, all muscular animals heaving with all their might. Each of them looked incredibly strong, perhaps even able to compete in a strongfur competition's superfur tier, reserved for only the strongest of furs, the kind of furs that could bicep-curl a train car. All three were trembling, sweating from the effort, all had gritted teeth and eyes screwed shut. Veins started to show across their muscular bodies as they pulled, heaving on the sword, trying to remove the sword from its stony prison. The runes shone brilliantly as the sword wouldn't budge, all three going red in the face before they lost their grip and sent themselves sprawling, grumbling as they got up about the stupid thing. The immense crowd was so busy laughing and hooting at the attempt that they didn't notice a newcomer push their way through the crowd.

A hush came over the crowd as they saw who this newcomer was, a short, light-blue cat with chocolate brown hair, in a baggy grey hoodie and equally baggy pants. Even with the size of

the clothes, it was clear that this cat was enormous, certainly wider than he was tall. No one spoke, because they were in the presence of Alex Dalan, also known by his self-appointed nickname: Sleepy. Sleepy wasn't exactly famous growing up, as he mostly kept to himself, but starting at eighteen, since he competed at Oakburg's strongfur competition, it was clear he was something special, lifting a staggering four-hundred-ton barbell named Goliath. Since then, he competed again and again, each time performing another impressive feat of superfur strength, leading to him being recognized as Oakburg's strongest fur. The cat's whiskers twitched a bit as he approached the sword, the three furs that tried previously hastily backing away into the crowd. Sleepy wore a cocky grin as he cracked his knuckles, eventually reaching the sword, standing on top of the rock as the other three were. The cat chuckled as he unzipped his hoodie. The first to be revealed was the cat's chest as the zipper passed his pectorals, pushing out more than most more endowed furs' breasts. Next were his abs, chiseled as though they were caved from stone. As the cat threw the hoodie to the ground, it exposed his arms, an immense pair of arms with muscles that looked more like balloons than anything a normal fur could achieve. The cat grinned wider as he brought his arms up in a flex, his biceps rising to the size of large pumpkins, larger than his own head. With that little bit of showing off done, the cat wrapped his hands around the sword's grip.

After taking a deep breath, the cat heaved, the runes glowing brightly as usual. The sword sat as immovable as usual after about a minute of moderate effort, so the cat put more muscle into it, letting out a soft grunt from the strain. His cephalic veins began to show, softly pushing against the fur of his colossal arms. The cat started to sweat as he pulled harder, the sword still not budging. Sleepy started to sweat lightly, his breathing starting to become more labored, as he

pulled. He was done with being patient, it was time to get serious. Sleepy gave a loud grunt and heaved, the cat's enormous muscles bulging from the strain. The sweat across the cat's brow started to increase in intensity, and the cat's body started to shake from the effort. A slight blush began to show on Sleepy's face from the attempt, the veins in the cat's arms becoming increasingly prominent, smaller veins connected to the cephalic veins coursing across his arms like the routes on a map. Some veins even began to bulge across his pecs, the cat putting more and more of his strength to the task, until the cat began to heave with all his might. By now, the cat's colossal body was dripping and drenched with sweat, his face flushed red from the struggle. Veins began to snake across his body like anacondas, eager to fuel blood to the task at hand. Much like the three furs that challenged the sword previously, Sleepy had his eyes screwed shut and his teeth grit, letting out a loud, strained groan as he heaved. The crowd was silent this entire time, watching in awe at the cat's brave struggle, until their eyes turned to the runes, noticing them starting to flicker, and the sword start to shake. Sleepy felt this give as well and redoubled his efforts, throwing caution to the wind in an attempt to prove his incredible strength yet again. This struggle went on for another minute, before one of the glowing runes sputtered and died. As the cat pulled, the runes began to go out, one by one, until finally, with Sleepy giving one last titanic heave, the last rune died, and the sword popped out, Sleepy barely managing to maintain his balance. The crowd was silent for a moment, before they all began to cheer, clapping wildly and chanting his name, as the sword that they believed could not be moved was finally out of the stone, all thanks to the cat's indomitable will and muscles. The cat was gasping for breath for a moment, before raising the sword high in one hand while bringing the other arm in the hardest bicep flex he could, a heroic pose for his fans with the artifact.

The crowd was so busy cheering the cat on that no one noticed two figures leave, one being a red rabbit in an ash-gray dress. She looked at the ground as they walked for a couple of minutes before turning her head to the other, a light-brown cat in a yellow and black flannel, gray sweatpants, and a gray and black fedora. His eyes, shining like two twin emeralds, shifted to meet her gaze, the cat's grin widening as they kept walking. A soft chuckle came from the brown cat, cold and predatory. The rabbit looked back at Sleepy posing with the sword as they walked, hoping beyond hope that he would be safe.