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**Chapter 9**  
**The Great Barrier**

MUSIC: (FADE IN) BLIZZARD OF OSBORN THEME

**NARRATOR (V.O)**

You're listening to The Blizzard of Osborn by Michael Sheen Cuddy.  
Chapter 9: The Great Barrier.

MUSIC: BLIZZARD OF OSBORN THEME (FADE OUT).

**Scene One: Ext. Wooded ridge overlooking valley – Day.**

SOUND: wind in trees, birdsong (FADE IN)

**NARRATOR**

Standing up on the ridge overlooking the valley it felt good to stretch after being cramped in a cave.

**CASSIE**

Ahh—fresh air—finally! Now if we just had something to eat.

**SLY**

Well, you're in luck!

**NARRATOR**

Sly slithered over to a tree with fuzzy looking branches drooping low with fat purple globes.

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**SLY**

*Zurglits*. They're like quinces, only sweeter. And very nutritious. You could survive on zurglits alone if you had to.

**NARRATOR**

Jet crouched in the grass at the foot of the zurglit tree, munching on something.

SOUND: food crunching

**CASSIE**

Jet, what are you eating?

**NARRATOR**

Jet looked up at her with the look she gave when Cassie caught her stealing shrimp from her plate.

**SLY**

Probably a *drin*.

**CASSIE**

Drin?

**SLY**

The common *drin*, of the family *drinopulus tersiperis*, evolved from the now extinct crayfish.

**NARRATOR**

That was an odd thing to say, Cassie thought, because where she came from, crayfish were not extinct.

**CASSIE**

Sly? I was thinking about your story of the sloth and the monkey. It still doesn't make sense to me.

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**SLY**

Who says it has to make sense? I made it up to take your mind off the dark cave.

**CASSIE**

So there was no sloth or monkey or lion?

**SLY**

Look, the point of the story is that there was a little girl who was lost. She had to find the Emperor and to do that she asked a snake to help her. The snake knew a shortcut but the shortcut went through a cold dark cave. The little girl got very scared so the snake told her a story that took her mind off her fear.

**CASSIE**

So ... you lied to me?

**SLY**

Did I? Or did I keep you from dwelling on your fear?

**NARRATOR**

Cassie didn't say what she was thinking:

**CASSIE**

What a strange place this is! Not only are there talking snakes, the talking snakes say the strangest things!

**SLY**

And now for the pièce de résistance: a nice drink of pure spring-fed O!

**NARRATOR**

Sly hung his head low to the surface and unhinged his jaw to let the cool gray liquid flow in. He drank long and deep from the spring. Once satisfied, he moved aside to make room for Cassie and Jet.

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Jet sniffed the gray liquid then sipped, her quick tongue lapping the ripples.

SOUND: cat tongue lapping

**NARRATOR (cont.)**

Cassie was staring at the spring.

**SLY**

Well, what are you waiting for?

**CASSIE**

That water looks dirty.

**SLY**

Dirty? That spring is pure O.

**CASSIE**

What's O?

**SLY**

Gah! You really are from another realm aren't you? O is the basis of life. You can't live without it. If you went three or four days without O you'd turn into a shadow then fade away.

**CASSIE**

So O is like water where we come from. If you go too long without water you'll die of thirst.

**SLY**

If you say so. But I would advise you to drink now because we may not find any more O for quite a while. And one more thing: have you forgotten why we crawled all the way up here?

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**CASSIE**

Oh! The trees! Always look for the tallest tree!

**NARRATOR**

Cassie looked out over the ridge.

**CASSIE**

There's the tallest tree, way over there!

**NARRATOR**

Sly stood up to get a better view.

**CASSIE**

How far would you say that is?

**SLY**

As the crow flies, I'd say around five *ron*. But as the snake crawls and the girl walks, it's a lot farther.

**CASSIE**

How long will it take us to get there?

**SLY**

Depends. That tree is on the far side of the Valley of the Narsies. If we don't run into any Narsies we could get there before dark. If we *do* encounter Narsies there's no telling how long we might be detained.

**CASSIE**

What are Narsies? Are they dangerous?

**SLY**

Depends upon your definition of 'dangerous.' They're more likely to rob you of your time than your *glunk*.

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**CASSIE**

Glunk?

**SLY**

Oh, come on! Don't tell me you've never heard of glunk either? You know, when I showed you how to get to the top of the cliff I thought, from there, I'd just go on my merry way. But if you really don't know what O is and you never heard of glunk, I doubt you'll make it all the way to the Pinnacle of Aspire on your own.

**CASSIE**

I'm not on my own, I have Jet with me!

**SLY**

Yeah well, no offense but Jet is a cat. And I'm afraid there are many realms in the Empire that are not exactly ... shall we say, cat-friendly.

MUSIC: Forward

**Scene Two: Ext. Meadows and woodlands - Day**

SOUND: birdsong, wind

**NARRATOR**

Cassie trudged on, Jet trotted alongside, now and then leaping after a butterfly fluttering around candy-colored blossoms. Sly slithered along, occasionally standing up to get a better view of where they were heading. After walking for what felt like a very long time, Cassie stopped and stared ahead at something big, dark and still.

**CASSIE** (whispering)

What's that big stone wall?

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**SLY**

It's what's left of the Great Barrier. It was built back during the Two-Thousand Year War between the Narsies and the Altrus.

**CASSIE**

Who are the Altrus?

**SLY**

You mean who were the Altrus? Most say they're now extinct, but a small minority believe a few Altrus still survive, somewhere out there in the wild, subsisting in a primitive state.

**CASSIE**

What do you believe?

**SLY**

Doesn't matter what I believe—haaaaaahhhh....

**CASSIE**

What is it? Oh my God! What are you doing here?

**MEMYSELFANDI**

The question is, what are you doing here?

MUSIC: MMI theme

**NARRATOR**

Up on top of the wall, teetering on the edge, sat a very large egg. Or a man who looked like an egg. An egg dressed in sandals, knee socks, shorts, a checked short-sleeved shirt with wide red suspenders and a Tyrolean hat flamboyantly peaked with an ostrich feather.

**CASSIE**

But ... aren't you Humpty Dumpty?

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**MEMYSELFANDI**

NOOOOOOOOOOO! No! No! No! No! No! I HATE it when people ask me that!  
I HATE it when people confuse me with Humpty Dumpty. I HATE you!

**SLY**

Hey, take it easy eggboy, I'll scramble you if you don't show some respect!

**NARRATOR**

The egg saw Sly's formidable fangs and thought twice about provoking him.

**MEMYSELFANDI**

Well, I *am* a little tired of people assuming they know me before they even take the time to ask my name.

**CASSIE**

What is your name?

**MEMYSELFANDI**

Memyselfandi.

( **SLY & CASSIE:** laughter )

**MEMYSELFANDI**

What are you two laughing at? I HATE you!

**SLY**

Hey, what did I say eggboy?

**CASSIE**

I thought you were kidding. When I asked your name you said 'Memyselfandi' so I thought you were making a silly joke.



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**MEMYSELFANDI**

I am not a joke! And I HATE it when people laugh at me!

**CASSIE**

I'm sorry Memyselfandi. I don't like it when people laugh at my name either.

**MEMYSELFANDI**

And what is your name, pray tell?

**CASSIE**

Cassandra Cole.

**MEMYSELFANDI**

And what's so funny about that?

**CASSIE** (sing-song)

Cassandra Cole. Fell into a hole. Crawled back out black as coal. Get it?

**MEMYSELFANDI**

No.

**SLY**

It's a taunt, Benny. A schoolyard taunt. What planet are you from?

**MEMYSELFANDI**

'Benny?' Are you addressing me, serpent?

**SLY**

That's right. Eggs Benny!

**CASSIE**

Never mind. What I want to know is what are you doing up there on that wall, and how did you get up there?

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**MEMYSELFANDI**

The first question is easy: I'm sitting up here! As for the second question, well, that's a rather long story.

**NARRATOR**

Next: How could anyone survive being stuck up on a wall for years? Memyselfandi will explain.

MUSIC: Blizzard Theme (FADE OUT)

[ end Chapter 9 ]