

The Escape for Destiny

By: Isabella L.

Skelm was walking through a forest. He felt a sense of recognition, yet he was sure he had never visited this place. His ears pricked as he heard a strange murmuring sound. "Find your destiny. You must find your destiny!" The words echoed loudly. "Where? How?" Skelm asked desperately. His surroundings began to change. He was in a lush, green forest. Dogs of all breeds were milling about and playing together. A powerful looking dog, which Skelm assumed was leader, stood on a rock, proudly glancing at his pack. His gaze suddenly turned to Skelm. His blue eyes bore into Skelm's. "Find your destiny, or all will be lost," The image faded away. Skelm woke with a jolt. He had had this dream many times, but never had a response ever been sent to him. Sighing, Skelm dully took in the surroundings. His dream was fantasy, it would never happen. After all, dreams were just dreams. Just like the dream that any dog would be adopted here, at the Dungeon. Except for the cute dogs, of course. If you hadn't been adopted here for more than a year, than it was very rare to be adopted afterwards. "Skull, Hunter, Squeak," Skelm whispered. Two athletic-looking German Shepards twitched their ears in acknowledgement, while a skinny German Shepard pup sat up. "Yeah?" Hunter replied in hoarsely. "I had the dream again," His littermates perked up. "Did anything happen?" Skull demanded eagerly. "Yeah," Skelm replied. "What happened?" Skull leaned against the steel bars of his cage. "A dog... told me 'Find your destiny, or all will be lost,'" "Wow," Squeak breathed. "And there were many dogs, almost like a family. They were a pack," Skelm finished. "The metal door screeched open, and the Keeper appeared. He yelled a few words angrily and, just as usual, unlocked their cages and placed a dirty food bowl in each one. Scrunching up his face, Skelm dipped his head

to take a bite of the hard, brown pellets. He had always dreamed of eating prey, but reality always washed over him as he took a bite of the kibble. He slept uneasily that night. Tossing and turning, Skelm barely got a wink of sleep. The next morning, Skelm gazed thoughtfully at the open door that led to the corridor. "Hunter, Squeak, Skull," Squeak perked up immediately, and Hunter and Skull wagged their tails to show they were listening. "Yeah?" Hunter asked. "Um... I had this...idea last night," "What is it?" Hunter sat up eagerly, and Skull followed suit. "I think I have a way to escape from the Dungeon," Skull and Hunter glanced skeptically at him. Even Squeak looked unsure. "I do," Skelm insisted. "Ok. I know I'm gonna regret asking this, but how?" Hunter asked. "You know that door?" Skelm gestured his muzzle toward the door. "What about it?" Skull asked. "It leads to the corridor, which leads to the other door, which leads to freedom!" Skelm raised his voice excitedly at his last words. "You know, it just may work," Hunter nodded slowly. "But how do we get out of our cages?" Squeak asked. "I already figured that part out," Skelm responded. "When the Keeper opens our cages to place the food bowl, we can jump out and head the door, which leads to the- ""We get it," Skull interrupted impatiently. "Are we in on this?" Skelm asked eagerly. "Yeah," Hunter agreed. "Sure," Skull growled gruffly. "Ready when you are!" Squeak chimed in. "Okay, then. Let's get some rest. We'll need it," His littermates murmured in agreement. *Bang! Bang!* Skelm woke with a start. The sound had also roused his littermates, who blinked sleepily. "Come on," Skelm hissed. "Just like we practiced," Hunter growled in agreement. The Keeper appeared as usual, his hands full with bowls of kibble. Skelm wrinkled his nose in disgust. The Keeper flipped Cavalier's cage open. Skelm waited anxiously as the Keeper advanced toward him and his littermates. They fell limp instantly, trying to fake sleep. "I'll just plug all the food in," Keeper muttered satisfactorily. He

flipped all the cages open. In unison, Skelm, Skull, Squeak, and Hunter leaped at him, snarling viciously. The Keeper stumbled and was knocked into a cage, toppling over the side of it. He emerged red-faced and angry as the littermates rushed out the door. "We're not finished yet," Skelm reminded them. Suddenly, another Keeper lunged at them. "There's two?!?" Skull exclaimed in disbelief. The Keeper snatched Squeak up, who squealed in fear. Snarling in rage, Skelm leaped at the Keeper and knocked Squeak out of his stubby hands. "Run!" Skelm shoved Squeak forward with his muzzle. Twisting his head, he gave a warning bite to the Keeper, who howled in fear and jumped back. His littermates were far ahead of him, but they slowed down for him to join them "Run," Skelm gasped. They bolted through the doors and into freedom, but they still didn't stop. Finally, when they were about ten fox-lengths away from the Dungeon, they skidded to a halt. "Nice moves back there," Hunter panted. "We all did well" Skelm replied. "So, this is what freedom smells like," Skull growled wistfully. "Yeah," Hunter agreed. "Let's move on," Skelm said. "We can move to a safer area," They spotted rolling hills in the distance. "We can travel there," Skelm decided. Seven minutes into the journey, the gray, crumbling ground had changed into lush, green grass. "That feels so nice," Hunter sighed contently. His littermates agreed. "This is nice, guys, but we should probably find a more sheltered area . The Keeper is probably still looking for us." Squeak shuddered fearfully. "I agree with Skelm," Squeak squeaked. His littermates nodded. They trudged through the grass longer. Finally, they reached a stone cave. Skelm's littermates all collapsed into a heap, allowing their weariness to envelop them. "I will find my destiny. I know I will find my destiny," Skelm whispered, hoping the dogs from his dream heard.