Kian and the Sychonia

"Sophie? You okay?" I asked as I stepped inside my little sister's sun-lit room. Sophie coughed. Her forehead felt feverish. I sighed. Sophie had been sick for a few days now, and she was getting worse every day. We couldn't afford any medicine, and it felt terrible to just sit there and watch her suffer.

"Well, I have to get to school. Love you." I kissed her cheek. Slinging my backpack over my shoulder, I waved goodbye to my mother and walked out the door. As I walked towards school, I heard someone behind me. It was Rome, my best and only friend. He caught up and lifted his hood over his blond hair. "Hey, Kian. Cold, isn't it? How's Sophie?"

I shook my head. "She's getting worse, but what can we do?" Rome nodded. "You don't even know why she's sick."

School was never eventful. However, something happened that day that changed everything. After school, I stayed back to talk to Dr. Sam, the school physician, about Sophie. I stopped him as he walked out of the lab and explained everything to him. When I finished, he adjusted his round glasses and gazed at me. I stepped back. "What?"

"Your sister has Sychonia. I do have the solution...However..." He trailed off, looking thoughtful. My eyes lit up. "A solution! Please tell me!" He nodded. "Very well. Wait here." My heart pounded as he walked back into the lab. I had been so worried, and there had been a remedy all along! I tapped my feet, anticipation coursing through my chest. Soon, Dr. Sam came out of the lab, delicately holding a glowing green vial.

"Sychonia is a virus deliberately transmitted into the brain," he said grimly. I don't understand who...All I know is that it's extremely contagious. You must be quick.

"Behind this school, there's a machine called the Activator. On this machine, there is a slot that this vial will fit perfectly into. Activate the serum, and all Sychonia viruses within a 100-mile radius will be eradicated. He pressed the small glass into my hands. "Do be careful."

I nodded. Then, clutching the vial, I sprinted towards the back of the school, the cold air ruffling my tawny hair. I arrived at an iron gate. I pressed my ear against the metal. I could hear mechanical whirrs. Feeling rather nervous, I laid my hands against the cold gate, ready to push it open, when I heard a voice behind me.

"Don't do it, Kian." I whipped around, my heart pounding. Standing behind me was a tall, beautiful woman with shiny black hair blowing in the wind and eyes like obsidian. "Who are you? How did you know my name?" She smiled. "I'm Jocelyn. And don't be scared; I just need to talk.

"I know how much you care about Sophie, but don't trust Dr. Sam. Before he worked at your school, he was a scientist...and he has a rough history. You never know what's in that vial." She gestured at my hand. "I'm a very generous person...Trust me, and you can have anything you want."

I looked down, pondering my choices. Jocelyn had said I could have anything...and she sounded honest. I looked back at her and nodded. Her face broke into a relieved smile. "Thanks, Kian." She turned and left. I ran back towards my house, contemplating what had just happened. Suddenly, Rome ran up to me. "Kian, where've you been?"

"Never mind that," I said. "I have to tell you something." Excited, I told him everything. Rome looked distressed. "I don't know," He said, biting his lip, "this sounds strange. What about Sophie?"

"Never mind *Sophie,* she'll be fine! Jocelyn said I could have anything, including money."

"Okay," Rome said, "I'd still trust Dr. Sam if I were you, though." He left shortly.

Exasperated, I walked to my house. Why couldn't Rome understand? As I pushed open our front door, I couldn't help but notice how quiet everything was. "Hello?" I called. "Oh Kian, you're home?" said a raspy voice. "Mom?" I walked into the bedroom.

My mother looked terribly ill; her face was sallow and her brown eyes were bloodshot. I gasped. "And it's not just me, either. This plague has been spreading like crazy," she said. My heart dropped. "Really..?"

I walked back outside, guilt wrenching my stomach. "Kian!" Rome was jogging towards me. "I know what you're going to say. I don't care." I said when he got here. But Rome shook his head. "No, don't you see? My parents are sick too. *It's not just about you anymore."*

"But-" I stopped when I saw the look in my friend's eyes. "I'm really sorry...Let's Activate the serum right now."

We arrived quickly. I pushed open the gate and gasped at the sight. the Activator was a colossal dome with seven pulsing pipes spilling steam. A panel held buttons of all shapes and sizes and a single, glittering hole, obviously for the vial.

Suddenly, Jocelyn appeared. "Kian? What are you doing?"
"We're Activating the serum. Everyone is sick, Jocelyn. We have to." She stepped in front of the Activator. "No you don't." I crossed my arms. "Yes - look, why do you care so much?" Jocelyn smiled. "Because, I was the one who infected Sophie. I planned to wipe the whole city, then-." Her eyes glinted maliciously. "Well, there're

people I know who would *love* to buy unoccupied land."

"You put people's lives at risk, just for money?"I said, glaring. Jocelyn laughed. "Look who's talking."

I then realized how stupid I had been. I felt a surge of fury and lunged at Jocelyn. I threw the vial at Rome. "Activate it, Rome! I'll hold her off!" Jocelyn screamed and scratched my face, but I pushed her back. Rome had a clear shot at the Activator-but he just stood there, panic-stricken."QUICK!" I yelled. He jumped."Oh-right-"He went to push the vial in, anxiety in his voice. "NOO!" Jocelyn shrieked. She pushed me off and jumped at Rome-but she was too late. the serum locked into the Activator, making everything shake. Suddenly, lasers sped out of the seven pipes and shot into every house. Hissing, Jocelyn ran away.

Then, everything stopped shaking. Rome and I looked at each other silently-then we both sprinted towards our neighborhood. We had barely reached my house when the door burst open. Sophie, fresh as snow, toddled out. "Kiki!" She exclaimed. I picked her up. "We did it," I whispered to Rome, who was beaming. "Everything is okay now."