He waited.

He had been waiting for several minutes, looking for the perfect opportunity to grab it. The Proteus Tome or more specifically, the world’s most wanted artifact was his goal. The bandit had many a sleepless night finding its whereabouts. Person after person and thousands of credits had led him to this final moment. His mind was full of thoughts of the future, how much his life would change after snatching the artifact.

His name was Walker, but his public name was the rogue of the floating city. Ever since he was abandoned as a child, Walker looked at every opportunity to become richer and more prosperous. Looking at the Proteus Tome from above he imagined the good life of relaxation and rest. But that was only moments away.

Moving ever so precisely Walker inched his way toward the artifact. The most valuable artifact within the world had to be guarded of course. However, this proved only to be a challenge when compared the sharpness and experience of the rogue bandit. With the artifact only inches away he slowly moved his hand down to grab it. Impatiently, Walker grabbed the artifact with haste; extending his arm out and snatching it with his hand, he rushed back into the safety of the vent.

He exhaled a sigh of relief.

“I finally have it, now fortune and fame are mine for the taking”, he whispered.

He continued out of the museum complex. It would only be a short amount of time before the authorities would take eye of what had happened. With no time to waste Walker climbed onto the roof of the museum. Unfortunately, the police were moments away from nabbing Walker.

“Come back here rogue, that trinket is worth more than all of the city!” exclaimed the police chief.

With one last look down he shot his portal gun into the ground, and closed his eyes as he nosedived headfirst into the portal entrance. Suddenly he emerged back in his home, on the floating city.

“Whew, I’m not going to do that again”, exclaimed Walker, with a breath of relief.

“You wouldn’t need to, I’m sure the Proteus Tome will amount to more than what you need”, said Cyrux.

Walker lives in a peculiar location, one that is unknown to the common person. Not only that, but his companion and best friend, happens to be his dog, who was altered and was made able to communicate with humans. Cyrux was a strange dog, however that was the way Walker liked things.

They both lived in the proclaimed Valhalla, or as most civilians call the rumored civilization, the city in the sky. Either way, it was nearly inaccessible, that is, unless you were helped create the city. Around five years ago Walker was but an ordinary thief, stealing bread from stalls as well as dreaming of something larger. Valhalla gave him that chance. He heard about it as a small rumor in the bar he visits regularly, and while Walker thought nothing of it, he was easily disproven.

The city in the sky was just that; a city in the sky. Several groups have stolen an antigravity material, and stationed it underneath a city. But that was just the beginning of it. In addition to the floating fixtures attached to the bottom of the complex lay cloaking devices, which served to shroud the city with nothing but clouds and dust. Ultimately, no human on ground level could ever find the city.

Valhalla served as a home to outlaws and enemies of the state. Walker was not an exception, except that the ground level people knew of his existence. Not a week went by where you couldn’t find a bounty on Walker’s head. However it was to no avail. Only locals could have access to both ground level as well as the sky city. Dozens of police forces on the ground have searched far and wide for traces of Walker. However every time Walker was a step ahead. And he took advantage of this too. No bandit save for a few novice rogues have been captured before.

As Walker calmed his heightened state down he reached for the Proteus Tome. Its glistening shine and purple shade amused him. However, he had no time to waste. Immediately he set for the thieves’ guild. Inside was a man who could appraise the artifact, and give Walker a price for it.

Walking through the dusty and old city he imagined how life would be after the artifact was sold. Life of riches and relaxation were all but a soon reality for the hardened rogue. After about fifteen minutes of meandering throughout the city, he came upon a tall building with a skull and crossbones imbedded into it. On it were the words ROGUE’S GUILD. Underneath it, were two guards with dull colored armor clanking all over their bodies.

“Identification”, said the first guard.

“Name and rank”, groaned the second.

“I’m Walker, and I’m here to get an artifact appraised” said the impatient rogue in response.

The guards soon moved out of Walker’s path, and granted him entry to the skyscraper of a building. Slowly walking inside Walker breathed the air of his past home. The Rogue’s guild stood as a home to all those declared enemy of the state, as well as the petty thieves who weren’t skilled enough to make a living. Looking both ways Walker was looking for a peculiar gentleman who was often called Pawd. Walking slowly to the table, he grabbed two mugs of beer and looked for the old trader.

He soon stumbled upon a dusty area where a man shrouded with a dirty tunic lay.

“How’s it going Pawd?” asked Walker.

“A bit tired, but that’s not important. You look like you got something in your hand Walker. Mind if I take a look?” Pawd responded.

A moment later Walker took out the Proteus Tome, which Pawd grabbed almost immediately.

“Looks nice, but if you want the full price then I sugge-“

“It’s nice ain’t it? It’s gonna fetch me a pretty penny sooner or later. How much do you think this lil’ trinket is worth Pawd?” Walker interrupted.

“Nothing”, said Pawd dryly.

Suddenly the look on Walker’s face became paler and he became so surprised that he nearly dropped the artifact, which actually wasn’t an artifact at all.

“Nice job grabbin’ a fake piece of junk Walker, better luck next time yeah?” added Pawd with a smirk on his face.

Enraged, Walker smashed the fake artifact into the table and almost immediately screamed his heart out had Pawd not stopped him midway. All of his hard work and determination, had gone down the drain because he was too naïve. But it didn’t matter anymore. He was hell-bent on getting the real artifact.

“You know, the real one exists just a few miles away, in a research station along the mountains. Maybe you will grab that one instead.”

In a split second Walker sprinted to the portal room, not even waiting for Pawd to complete his sentence. It didn’t matter what he said anyway. Walker was so enraged that in seconds he would go on a mass killing spree just to unleash all of his anger. However, doing so would get him killed and prevent any chance of his future relaxing and lazing around. With a look of determination Walker strolled fast into the portal, leading him to the ground level, near to where the real Proteus Tome was.

Minutes later Walker emerged in the clearing where the research station lay. Due to Pawd’s info and analysis, he should be in and out in within a few minutes. All it took was a bit of hacking and computer manipulation. He climbed the top of the building where the air ducts were. With careful precision he opened the vent up and climbed inside, but little did he know that the police knew he was there.

Slowly crawling through the air vent he navigated the building with accuracy. It felt all too familiar to him. Even though his progress was slow, he was sure of the Proteus Tome’s location. Inevitably, he reached the room where the artifact lay. The fake one glistened with the shine of a thousand suns. The real one however was colored in a deep shade of purple, and shined like a million suns; an almost blinding and eye catching sight. However, Walker had no time to waste.

As soon as he caught sight of the artifact he set his rope onto a support beam and lowered himself over the artifact. With victory in his sights, he nearly grabbed the artifact had he not heard the voice of the police chief.

“I knew we’d see each other again Walker”, the chief said with a cool and calm attitude.

“Wha-, what are you doing here?” asked Walker, flabbergasted at the chief’s sudden appearance.

“We’ve been watching you all this time. You know that artifact that you brought up to your godforsaken airship? It’s a camera as well as a tracking device. Thanks to your greed and ambition, we’ve secured that so called Valhalla. Take a good look into the sky Walker.”

Almost immediately the ceiling opened up and the city in the sky was but a platform, blazed and surrounded by fires and smoke. Right beside it lay planes firing more and more missiles into the city.

“All those people… Gone”, said Walker, with a tone of sorrow.

“Yep, and it’s all your fault Walker. But you’ll atone for your sin soon enough.”

The chief pulled out his pistol, and pointed it at Walker. I’m not the one who called you Walker, it’s your greed. All that could be heard was a gunshot.