

NOVELLA: THE EIGHT AMULETS BY GIRISH RAMACHANDRAN  
SUBMISSION FROM WASHINGTON STATE  
SUSAN ZALL CRITIQUE

The blood red sky was an unmistakable sign. The Rain of Fire was on its way; the inevitable would happen. There was no escaping this. I jogged towards the Source, the direction opposite to that of which people were running to, screaming their lungs off.

So, was that brave of me? Yeah, probably. Stupid? Definitely. Was it necessary, though? Duh. Why else would I run to an area that would incinerate me to smithereens in a matter of seconds? (And yeah, I had equipment to protect myself but still) I sighed loudly, halting and catching my breath for a second. I was totally exhausted saving people's butts. I was one of the only people in my village who could survive trying to find a Source; that was probably why I was made to do this. That aside, I was carrying a large Water Sword (a sword that had the properties of Water AND a sword), around half of my size, which was sheathed in my belt and an Elemental Staff (A staff which could use spells of all Eight Elements if the magician was capable of doing so), which was around my height. So yeah, I was extremely exhausted. And I still had a lot more area to cover. Plus, I had to do it fast.

I glanced at the sky. Yup, it was getting redder and redder. Droplets of fire (don't ask) were starting to fall on the ground. Even this description might seem scary to you, but wait till the Rain intensifies. You'll see the real power of the Elements.

I looked back, to where my brother was calmly pacifying the elders and children; helping the townsfolk to get back to their magically protected homes (which I very much envied). He noticed me looking at him; he smiled encouragingly and went back to helping people. Thanks,

**Commented [SD1]:** Serious tone in first paragraph and then sarcastic tone in second and beyond-need a better transition between the two or change tone of the first to match the rest

**Commented [SD2]:** Identify whether main character is male or female right from the start

**Commented [SD3]:** Comment: voice is clear from here on

**Commented [SD4]:** You can use parentheses, but I would use this style sparingly, as we talked about in the show

**Commented [SD5]:** Way too much description of the brother-also not sure why we have to meet him at all at this point

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bro. That was very helpful! Ugh. I would've preferred doing Caspian's job and him doing mine. Oh, and about my brother- He was pretty tall for his age, fourteen. I think he stood around six feet, his posture always relaxed and his eyes blue, calm and friendly (trust me, he's not like how he looks). He had a handsome regal face, a pale complexion and a short temper. Still, don't judge a book by its cover.

I was nearing the Source, but I was still gasping for breath. I was so darn tired. Plus, I was wearing magical robes which would help enhance my magic, and they were probably the most uncomfortable clothes in the world. The Rain of Fire made the already hot summer even more hot. Well, I hope you got my point. I was sweating as if I was under a bucket of water that was constantly following me wherever I went, and lava was being mixed with it. Ugh, uncomfortable, I know. I was there.

Anyway, getting back to the story. Obviously, I kept walking. But I was getting the goosebumps – I had no idea what was out there; it could range from a forty-foot ~~tall~~ fire-breathing dragon to a ~~small~~ necklace levitating mid-air. But, how much ever fear I had, the vision of my parents, my village, and my friends was hardwired into my brain, keeping me going. If I gave up now, there would be nobody to stop the Source from wreaking havoc on my village. The town would be burnt to ashes. ~~N~~, with not a single survivor.

The effects of the Rain were upon the area now; trees burnt, puddles of lava. The Rain turned nature completely. ~~even~~ the most beautiful sceneries would become ashes in a matter of seconds. Magic might sound great and all, and sure, yes, it helps humans a lot. But I was beginning to realize, as most good magicians would, that Magic had more negative effects than good ones. Corruption, greed, thirst for blood and ~~power~~ — they all ~~rised~~ ~~rose~~ along with Magic. Magic was being used for killing others, mostly, and to destroy places, conquer kingdoms- all

Commented [SD6]: Often this adjective (small) isn't needed

Commented [SD7]: Use em dash

Commented [SD8]: Use em dash

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I cracked my knuckles and stretched (hey, it's a habit). The Rain was getting heavier; I knew this only after a few drops of fire fell on my hair and burnt it painfully. Damn... I was almost bald. And I did NOT look good without hair. In that wrathful moment, I felt like eliminating every single person in the universe. NOBODY touched my hair... not even my brother. Not even my mother, actually. My rage was unparalleled. Giving me a haircut without my permission... was **absolutely** unforgivable. I was ready to go blast the guy who made this Source into a million tiny pieces.

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There was a kind of vibration and humming (Magic does that, for some reason. Maybe it likes singing?) around in the air, which again told me I was close. And I think it was right in front of me, except, for one annoying, horrible, fact. A hill was blocking my path. I stomped my foot on the ground with all the force I could afford. The ground cracked, and I gritted my teeth, cursing. I... had to climb... a hill. And climbing large hills is the worst part of my job.

**Commented [SD9]:** This paragraph is a bit too dramatic.

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> It was a man with a purple robe covered with the country flag's symbol. He was holding a large staff which was glowing dark red, as it channeled the power of The Rain. It almost seemed like he himself was The Source. Was he that powerful? Thunder boomed overhead, even though the Rain was supposed to be of Fire.

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"Is this what my country has been reduced to?" he asked, laughing. "Sending ~~small~~ children to do their work, when they should be protecting the children?"

Commented [SD10]: "small" is implied by "children"

He turned towards me, and took off his hood. His hair was grey- He was old, and he seemed pretty weak; he was only standing as he had the support of his staff. Even from a distance, I could observe his features- he was pretty tall, too, and his hands had only three fingers each. His eyes were the most disturbing though... they seemed almost multicolored... In fact, it was more than just two or three colors. I counted them carefully- I could be mistaken. Just a small difference could tell me a lot. But no. He had eight colors in his eyes.

Coincidence? I think not.

The man laughed again. "Boy, you had better get out of here before something bad might happen to you..." (deleted remainder since it repeated beginning of story).

You have an interesting premise and there's definitely imminent danger here. I think, though, that the threat is severely tempered by the humor in the story. The humor is good, but I

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think it would work better if you toned it down a bit. Have longer stretches of action (step-by-step) dispersed with humor here and there. I think that would be more effective.

Good luck!

# Jenn's Feedback

## NOVELLA: THE EIGHT AMULETS BY GIRISH RAMACHANDRAN

The blood red sky was an unmistakable sign. The Rain of Fire was on its way and there was no escape; the inevitable would happen. ~~There was no escaping this.~~ I sprinted/jogged towards the Source. Everyone else ran in the opposite direction screaming their lungs out, the direction opposite to that of which people were running to, screaming their lungs off.

**Commented [RJL1]:** Is it that the people had no escape? Or she could not escape having to dealing with the problem and stop it?

So, was that brave of me? Yeah, probably. Stupid? Definitely. Was it necessary, though? Duh. Why else would I run to an area that would incinerate me to smithereens in a matter of seconds? (And yeah, I had equipment to protect myself ~~—~~but still.) I sighed loudly, halting and catching my breath for a second. I was totally exhausted from saving people's butts. I was one of the only people in my village who could survive trying to find a Source; that was probably why I was made to do this. That aside, I was carrying a large Water Sword (a sword that had the properties of Water AND a sword), around half of my size, which was sheathed in my belt and an Elemental Staff (A staff which could use spells of all Eight Elements if the magician was capable of doing so), which was around my height. So yeah, I was extremely exhausted. And I still had a lot more area to cover, fast. Plus, I had to do it fast.

**Commented [RJL2]:** Why use parenthesis? Do you use parenthesis in certain types of dialogue? Or if it's a side thought? However you use them, be consistent.

**Commented [RJL3]:** How often did the Rain of Fire occur?

**Commented [RJL4]:** Clarify: do you mean 'made' as in created? Or 'made' as in forced to do this?

**Commented [RJL5]:** The way this is worded, her size was sheathed in her belt. Reword the descriptions of the sword and the staff. "Sheathed in my belt was a Water Sword. It was half my size and had the properties of water and a sword."

**Commented [RJL6]:** Is she a magician and is she capable of performing the spells?

~~I glanced at the sky.~~ Yup, it The sky was getting redder and redder. Droplets of fire (don't ask) were starting to fall on the ground. Even this description might seem scary to you, but wait till the Rain intensifies. You'll see the real power of the Elements.

**Commented [RJL7]:** Don't say that she glanced, just tell the reader what she saw.

~~I looked back,~~ to where my brother was calmly pacifying the elders and children, helping the townsfolk to get back to their magically protected homes (which I very much

**Commented [RJL8]:** You switch tenses here, and you address the reader directly by using the word "you". This is fine probably if you do it through the whole book, but if you don't then reword this to past tense. "Drops of fire might seem scary to most, but when the rain intensifies, the real power of the elements is terrifying."

**Commented [RJL9]:** She's rushing toward danger and she's able to locate her brother in the melee?

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Do we need to know this right now?

>I was nearing the Source, but I was still gasping for breath. I was so darn tired. Plus, I was wearing magical robes which would help enhance my magic, and they were probably the most uncomfortable clothes in the world. The Rain of Fire made the already hot summer hotter, even more hot. Well, I hope you got my point. I was sweating as if I was under a bucket of water that was constantly following me wherever I went, and lava was being mixed with it. Ugh, uncomfortable, I know. I was there.

- Commented [RJL10]: Describe him later. Stick to the conflict at hand.
- Commented [RJL11]: Avoid clichés.
- Commented [RJL12]: How can she tell?
- Commented [RJL13]: You say this too much.

>Anyway, getting back to the story. Obviously, I kept walking. But I was getting the goosebumps – I had no idea what was out there; it could range from a ~~forty-foot-tall~~ forty-foot-tall fire-breathing dragon to a small necklace levitating mid-air. But, however much ~~ever~~ fear I had, the vision of my parents, my village, and my friends was hardwired into my brain, keeping me going. If I gave up now, there would be nobody to stop the Source from wreaking havoc on my village. The town would be burnt to ashes. Not a single survivor.

- Commented [RJL14]: redundant
- Commented [RJL15]: Why not describe the robe when she mentions the sword and staff.
- Commented [RJL16]: Why isn't she sprinting. Isn't the situation urgent?

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- Commented [RJL17]: ????

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➤ I cracked my knuckles and stretched. (Hey, it's a habit.) The Rain was getting heavier. I knew this only after a few drops of fire fell on my hair and burnt it painfully. Damn... I was almost bald. And I did NOT look good without hair. In that wrathful moment, I felt like eliminating every single person in the universe. NOBODY touched my hair... not even my brother. Not even my mother, actually. My rage was unparalleled. Giving me a haircut without my permission... was absolutely unforgivable. I was ready to go blast the guy who made this Source into a million tiny pieces.

Commented [RJL18]: I

➤ Since I didn't want my entire body to get incinerated, I put up a Water Barrier (sounds lame, I know, but if you ever see it, it's #be epic) to protect myself. Yeah, a Water Barrier, a level three advanced spell. The fire couldn't touch me now. Even though the Rain kept intensifying, my Water Barrier would protect me.

Commented [RJL19]: Describe what it looks like. Is it an umbrella? A Bubble?

Commented [RJL20]: But it's epic. Unless you want to address the reader directly.

➤ It was evident now that the Source was near; it wasn't possible that the Rain could be so strong when far away from the Source. I braced myself for the worst, took out my staff out with my left hand and unsheathed my sword with the right. Yeah, now I looked awesome.

Commented [RJL21]: Be clearer here. "The Rain was stronger closer to the Source."

➤ There was a kind of vibration and humming (Magic does that, for some reason. Maybe it likes singing?) around in the air, which again told me I was close. And I ~~think~~ thought it was right in front of me, except, for one annoying, horrible, fact. A hill was blocking my path. I stomped my foot on the ground with all the force I could afford. The ground cracked, and I



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gritted my teeth, cursing. I... had to climb... a hill. And climbing large hills is the worst part of my job.

➤After reaching the top (which took a LOT of effort and pain), what I saw was definitely not what I was expecting. And yes, my expectations were pretty innumerable. And this wasn't even in the list of innumerable expectations.

➤It was a man wearing a purple robe covered with the country flag's symbol. He was holding a large staff which was glowing dark red, as it channeled the power of The Rain. It almost seemed like he himself was The Source. Was he that powerful? Thunder boomed overhead, even though the Rain was supposed to be of Fire.

➤I could sense the power radiating from the guy so far away, too. All of a sudden, the man roared with laughter.

➤“Is this what my country has been reduced to?” he asked, laughing. “Sending small children to do their work, when they should be protecting the children?”

➤He turned towards me, and took off his hood. His hair was grey. He was old, and he seemed pretty weak; he was only standing because he had the support of his staff. Even from a distance I could observe his features- he was pretty tall, too, and his hands had only three fingers each. His eyes were the most disturbing though; they seemed almost multicolored. In fact, it was more than just two or three colors. I counted them carefully- I could be mistaken. Just a small difference could tell me a lot. But no. He had eight colors in his eyes.

➤Coincidence? I think not.

➤The man laughed again. “Boy, you had better get out of here before something bad might happen to you.”

Commented [RJL22]: Why?

Commented [RJL23]: Wasn't he already looking at her? He saw she was a child.

Commented [RJL24]: She can see that from the top of the hill?

Commented [RJL25]: What's the coincidence?

Commented [RJL26]: Sorry, I thought it was girl up until now. I don't know why.

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I really like how you start with an action scene. The whole village is at risk and the main character has the heavy burden of saving everyone. It's a compelling start. I also like the magical elements. The main character's voice is distinct which is hard to do. He's funny and likable. Kinda reminds me of Percy Jackson. You do need to tighten up the wording, the way the main character interrupts himself makes it unclear what is happening sometimes. I had to read some paragraphs a few times, and you don't want your reader to have to stop because something is unclear, it pulls them out of the story. Also you do have some description here that can be moved to later in the story such as the description of the brother. You want action scenes to be fast paced and not bogged down with too much description.

Ed

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helping the townsfolk to get back to their magically protected homes, (which I very much envied). He noticed me looking at him; he smiled encouragingly and went back to helping

the casual language (Yeah, Yup, Duh) undercuts the feeling of danger

eliminate parentheses. use commas or em dashes

eliminate semicolons: use colons or periods

watch tenses: this is all past tense

we don't know what the danger is.

in opposite direction why?

forced?

I also held

strange something

I thought they were Kimi's army

Why speaks directly to reader?

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a little petty

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*beginning again*

JULIE

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A SUMMARY WOULD HELP.

Who is the narrator?

Choice 1.

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awkward against the tides of people

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Did anyone else have equipment?

Why?

only people in my village who could survive trying to find a Source; that was probably why I was made to do this. That aside, I was carrying a large Water Sword (a sword that had the properties of Water AND a sword), around half of my size, which was sheathed in my belt and an Elemental Staff (A staff which could use spells of all Eight Elements if the magician was capable of doing so), which was around my height. So yeah, I was extremely exhausted. And I still had a lot more area to cover. Plus, I had to do it fast... before...

are you?

> I glanced at the sky. Yup, it was getting redder and redder. Droplets of fire (don't ask)

But, this was nothing.

were starting to fall on the ground. Even this description might seem scary to you, but wait till the Rain intensifies. You'll see the real power of the Elements.

necessary?

When is the protagonist's dream?

> I looked back, to where my brother was calmly pacifying the elders and children;

helping the townsfolk to get back to their magically protected homes (which I very much envied). He noticed me looking at him; he smiled encouragingly and went back to helping

Are they put staying put or running with crowds?

Why?



June

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Why so much description of brother here?

people. Thanks, bro. That was very helpful! Ugh. I would've preferred doing Caspian's job and him doing mine. Oh, and about my brother- He was pretty tall for his age, fourteen. I think he stood around six feet, his posture always relaxed and his eyes blue, calm and friendly (trust me, he's not like how he looks). He had a handsome regal face, a pale complexion and a short temper. Still, don't judge a book by its cover.

Change one.

Maybe I ditched #1 gathered my magical robes

> I was nearing the Source, but I was still gasping for breath. I was so darn tired. Plus, I was wearing magical robes which would help enhance my magic, and they were probably the most uncomfortable clothes in the world. The Rain of Fire made the already hot summer even <sup>hotter</sup> ~~more hot~~. Well, I hope you got my point. I was sweating as if I was under a bucket of water that was constantly following me wherever I went, and lava was being mixed with it. Ugh, uncomfortable, I know. I was there.

?

Delete

> Anyway, getting back to the story. Obviously, I kept walking. But I was getting the goosebumps - I had no idea what was out there; it could range from a forty foot tall fire-breathing dragon to a small necklace levitating mid-air. But, <sup>no matter</sup> how much ever fear I had, the vision of my parents, my village and my friends was hardwired into my brain, keeping me going. If I gave up now, there would be nobody to stop the Source from wreaking havoc on my village. The town would be <sup>ed</sup> burnt to ashes. Not a single survivor.

Amkward

?

Can anyone else save village?

> The effects of the Rain were upon the area now; trees burnt, puddles of lava. The Rain turned nature completely <sup>(AD)</sup> even the most beautiful sceneries would become ashes in a matter of seconds. ~~Magic might sound great and all, and sure, yes, it helps humans a lot.~~ But I was beginning to realize, ~~as most good magicians would,~~ that Magic had more negative effects than good ones. Corruption, greed, thirst for blood and power- they all <sup>rose</sup> rised along with Magic. Magic was being used for killing others, mostly, and to destroy places, conquer kingdoms- all bad stuff.

tense "rose"

DLK

NOVELLA: THE EIGHT AMULETS BY GIRISH RAMACHANDRAN

But Magic was also used by good people. People who wanted to protect the innocent, kill the bad guys, blah-blah. Yes. I was one of them. But, as everyone knows... where there's good, there's bad.

> I cracked my knuckles and stretched (hey, it's a habit). The Rain was getting heavier; I knew this only after a few drops of fire fell on my hair and burnt<sup>ed</sup> it painfully. Damn... I was almost bald. And I did NOT look good without hair. In that wrathful moment, I felt like eliminating every single person in the universe. NOBODY touched my hair... not even my brother. Not even my mother, actually. My rage was unparalleled. Giving me a haircut without my permission... was absolutely unforgivable. I was ready to go blast the guy who made this Source into a million tiny pieces.

> Since I didn't want my entire body to get incinerated, I put up a Water Barrier (sounds lame, I know, but if you see it, it'll be epic) to protect myself. Yeah, a Water Barrier, a level three advanced spell. The fire couldn't touch me now. Even though the Rain kept intensifying, my Water Barrier could protect me.

> It was evident now that the Source was near; <sup>for</sup> it wasn't possible <sup>was</sup> that the Rain could be so strong when far away from the Source. I braced myself for the worst, took out my staff out with my left hand and unsheathed my sword with the right. Yeah, now I looked awesome.

> There was a kind of vibration and humming (Magic does that, for some reason. Maybe it likes singing?) around in the air, which again told me I was close. And I think it was right in front of me, except, for one annoying, horrible, fact. A hill was blocking my path. I stomped my foot on the ground with all the force I could afford. The ground cracked, and I gritted my teeth, cursing. I... had to climb... a hill. And climbing large hills is the worst part of my job.

JULIE

NOVELLA: THE EIGHT AMULETS BY GIRISH RAMACHANDRAN

> After reaching the top (which took a LOT of effort and pain), what I saw was definitely not what I was expecting. And yes, my expectations were pretty innumerable. And this wasn't even in the list of innumerable expectations.

*painstakingly*

*Describe*

*word choice*

> It was a man with a purple robe covered with the country flag's symbol. He was holding a large staff which was glowing dark red, as it channeled the power of The Rain. It almost seemed like he himself was The Source. Was he that powerful? Thunder boomed overhead, even though the Rain was supposed to be of Fire.

> I could sense the power radiating from the guy so far away, too. All of a sudden, the man roared with laughter.

> "Is this what my country has been reduced to?" he asked, laughing. "Sending small children to do their work, when they should be protecting the children?"

> He turned towards me, and took off his hood. His hair was grey- He was old, and he seemed pretty weak; he was only standing as he had the support of his staff. Even from a distance I could observe his features- he was pretty tall, too, and his hands had only three fingers each. His eyes were the most disturbing though... they seemed almost multicolored... In fact, it was more than just two or three colors. I counted them carefully- I could be mistaken. Just a small difference could tell me a lot. But no. He had eight colors in his eyes.

*How far could you see from a distance?*

*significance?*

> Coincidence? I think not.

*with what?*

> The man laughed again. "Boy, you had better get out of here before something bad might happen to you..." The blood red sky was an unmistakable sign. The Rain of Fire was on its way; the inevitable would happen. There was no escaping this. I jogged towards the Source, the direction opposite to that of which people were running to, screaming their lungs off.

*Very tense Repeat of start 2 pts.*

JULIE

NOVELLA: THE EIGHT AMULETS BY GIRISH RAMACHANDRAN

> So, was that brave of me? Yeah, probably. Stupid? Definitely. Was it necessary, though? Duh. Why else would I run to an area that would incinerate me to smithereens in a matter of seconds? (And yeah, I had equipment to protect myself but still) I sighed loudly, halting and catching my breath for a second. I was totally exhausted saving people's butts. I was one of the only people in my village who could survive trying to find a Source; that was probably why I was made to do this. That aside, I was carrying a large Water Sword (a sword that had the properties of Water AND a sword), around half of my size, which was sheathed in my belt and an Elemental Staff (A staff which could use spells of all Eight Elements if the magician was capable of doing so), which was around my height. So yeah, I was extremely exhausted. And I still had a lot more area to cover. Plus, I had to do it fast.

WHY IS THE PROTAGONIST BREAKING THE FOURTH WALL?  
TOO INTIMATE WITH THE READER  
OH, I WANT TO LIKE THIS STORY, BUT I NEED TO KNOW  
MORE ABOUT THE PROTAG AND LIFE IN HIS VILLAGE.  
WHO'S YOUR AUDIENCE?  
HOW OFTEN DOES THE RAIN OF FIRE OCCUR?  
WHO IS MAGICAL AND WHY? DIFFERENT DEGREES?  
WHAT IS PROTAG'S JOB EXACTLY?  
DESCRIBE OTHER VILLAGERS' JOBS.  
WHY IS OLD MAN SENDING PROTAG AWAY?

NOVELLA: THE EIGHT AMULETS BY GIRISH RAMACHANDRAN

CONNIE MAYO CRITIQUE

The blood red sky was an unmistakable sign. The Rain of Fire was on its way; the inevitable would happen. There was no escaping this. I jogged towards the Source, the direction opposite to that of which people were running to, ~~screaming their lungs off.~~

So, was that brave of me? ~~Yeah~~, probably. Stupid? Definitely. Was it necessary, though? Duh. Why else would I run to an area that would incinerate me ~~to smithereens~~ in a matter of seconds? (And ~~yeah~~yes, I had equipment to protect myself but still.) I ~~sighed loudly~~, halting and catching my breath for a second. I was totally exhausted saving people's butts. I was one of the only people in my village who could survive trying to find a Source; ~~that was probably why I~~ was ~~made~~ to do this. ~~That aside~~, I was carrying a large Water Sword ~~(a sword that had the properties of Water AND a sword)~~, around half of my size, which was sheathed in my belt and an Elemental Staff ~~(A staff which could use spells of all Eight Elements if the magician was capable of doing so)~~, which was around my height. So yeah, I was ~~extremely~~ exhausted. And I still had a lot more area to cover. Plus, I had to do it fast.

> I glanced at the sky. Yup, it was getting redder and redder. Droplets of fire ~~(don't ask)~~ were starting to fall on the ground. ~~Even this description~~That might seem scary ~~to you~~, but ~~wait~~ ~~til~~when the Rain intensifies, it will get worse. ~~You'll see the real power of the Elements.~~

> I looked back, to where my brother Caspian was calmly ~~pacifying~~trying to pacify the elders and children; ~~and~~ helping the townsfolk to get back to their magically protected homes (which I very much envied). He noticed me looking at him; he smiled encouragingly and went back to helping people. Thanks, bro. ~~That was very helpful!~~ ~~Ugh~~. I would've preferred doing

Formatted: No Spacing, Indent: First line: 0", Line spacing: single

Commented [CM1]: Not really a phrase – screaming their heads off?

Commented [CM2]: Seems weird to be sighing while jogging

Commented [CM3]: This is the second mention of the Source – I'd like to know a little about what this is at this point.

Commented [CM4]: Made as in forced or made as in created?

Commented [CM5]:

Commented [CM6]: This doesn't really tell me anything much so I would leave this to the reader's imagination – same with the Elemental Staff explanation)

NOVELLA: THE EIGHT AMULETS BY GIRISH RAMACHANDRAN

CONNIE MAYO CRITIQUE

Caspian's job and him doing mine. ~~Oh, and about my brother-~~ He was pretty tall for his age, ~~fourteen~~. I think he stood around six feet, his posture always relaxed and his eyes blue, calm and friendly. ~~(trust me, he's not like how he looks)~~. He had a handsome regal face, a pale complexion and a short temper. Still, ~~don't judge a book by its cover~~.

**Commented [CM7]:** This is too abrupt and too direct.

**Commented [CM8]:** This would be a good time to mention Caspian's age relative to the narrators, so we can find out how old the narrator is.

**Commented [CM9]:** cliché

> I was nearing the Source, but I was still gasping for breath. I was so darn tired. Plus, I was wearing magical robes which would help enhance my magic, and they were probably the most ~~uncomfortable~~ clothes in the world. The Rain of Fire made the already hot summer even more hot. Well, I hope you got my point. I was sweating ~~as if I was under a bucket of water that was constantly following me wherever I went, and lava was being mixed with it~~. Ugh, uncomfortable, I know. I was there.

**Commented [CM10]:** why were they uncomfortable>

**Commented [CM11]:** this description needs work

> Anyway, getting back to the story. ~~Obviously~~, I kept walking. But I was getting ~~the~~ goosebumps – I had no idea what was out there; it could range from a forty-foot tall fire-breathing dragon to a small necklace levitating mid-air. But, ~~how much ever fear I had regardless of my fear~~, the vision of my parents, my village and my friends ~~was hardwired into my brain, keeping-kept~~ me going. If I gave up now, there would be nobody to stop the Source from wreaking havoc on my village. The town would be ~~burned~~ to ashes. Not a single survivor.

> The effects of the Rain were upon the area now; trees ~~burned~~, puddles of lava. The Rain ~~turned-changed~~ nature completely - even the most beautiful ~~sceneries-scenes~~ would become ashes in a matter of seconds. Magic might sound great and all, and sure, yes, it helps humans a lot. But I was beginning to realize, as most good magicians would, that Magic had more negative effects than ~~good-positive~~ ones. Corruption, greed, thirst for blood and power - they all ~~rised-rose~~ along with Magic. Magic was being used for killing others, mostly, and to destroy places, conquer kingdoms - all bad stuff. But Magic was also used by good people. People who wanted

NOVELLA: THE EIGHT AMULETS BY GIRISH RAMACHANDRAN

CONNIE MAYO CRITIQUE

to protect the innocent, kill the bad guys, blah blah. Yes. I was one of them. But, as everyone knows... where there's good, there's bad.

> I cracked my knuckles and stretched ~~(hey, it's a habit)~~. The Rain was getting heavier; I knew this only after a few drops of fire fell on my hair and burned it painfully. Damn... I was almost bald. And I did NOT look good without hair. In that wrathful moment, I felt like eliminating every single person in the universe. NOBODY touched my hair... not even my brother. Not even my mother, actually. ~~My rage was unparalleled.~~ Giving me a haircut without my permission... was absolutely unforgivable. I was ready to go blast the guy who made this Source into a million tiny pieces.

> Since I didn't want my entire body to get incinerated, I put up a Water Barrier (sounds lame, I know, but ~~if you see it, it'll be it's~~ epic) to protect myself. ~~Yeah, a Water Barrier~~, a level three advanced spell. The fire couldn't touch me now. Even though the Rain kept intensifying, my Water Barrier could protect me.

> It was evident now that the Source was near; it wasn't possible that the Rain could be so strong when far away from the Source. I braced myself for the worst, took out my staff out with my left hand and unsheathed my sword with the right. Yeah, now I looked awesome.

> There was a kind of vibration and humming (Magic does that, for some reason. Maybe it likes singing?) around in the air, which again told me I was close. And I think it was right in front of me, except, for one annoying, horrible, fact. A hill was blocking my path. I stomped my foot on the ground with all the force I could afford. The ground cracked, and I gritted my teeth, cursing. I... had to climb... a hill. And climbing large hills is the worst part of my job.

Commented [CM12]: is this implying that the narrator is both good and bad?

Commented [CM13]: This seems very casual given what is happening

Commented [CM14]: Hair can't feel pain

Commented [CM15]: It seems like if the fire had burned off most of his hair, he would have noticed by now

Commented [CM16]: ? it's not every person's fault...

Commented [CM17]: Why didn't he do this before his hair burned off?

Commented [CM18]: Is this the Water Sword?

Commented [CM19]: If the magic makes the sound, how does that indicate that he is close to the source?

Commented [CM20]: Present tense – should be past tense to match everything else

Commented [CM21]: Is this literally his job?

NOVELLA: THE EIGHT AMULETS BY GIRISH RAMACHANDRAN

CONNIE MAYO CRITIQUE

> After reaching the top (which took a LOT of effort and pain), what I saw was definitely not what I was expecting. And yes, my expectations were pretty innumerable. And this wasn't even in the list of innumerable expectations.

Commented [CM22]: Oxymoron?

> It was a man with a purple robe covered with the country flag's symbol. He was holding a large staff which was glowing dark red, as it channeled the power of The Rain. It almost seemed like he himself was The Source. Was he that powerful? Thunder boomed overhead, even though the Rain was supposed to be of Fire.

Commented [CM23]: What country?

> I could sense the power radiating from the guy so far away, too. All of a sudden, the man roared with laughter.

> "Is this what my country has been reduced to?" he asked, laughing. "Sending small children to do their work, when they should be protecting the children?"

> He turned towards me, and took off his hood. His hair was grey- He was old, and he seemed pretty weak; he was only standing as he had the support of his staff. Even from a distance I could observe his features- he was pretty tall, too, and his hands had only three fingers each. His eyes were the most disturbing though... they seemed almost multicolored... In fact, it was more than just two or three colors. I counted them carefully- I could be mistaken. Just a small difference could tell me a lot. But no. He had eight colors in his eyes.

Commented [CM24]: Difference? Different as compared to what?

> Coincidence? I think not.

Commented [CM25]: It seems unlikely he could see this unless he was right up in the old guy's face...

> The man laughed again. "Boy, you had better get out of here before something bad might happens to you..." The blood red sky was an unmistakable sign. The Rain of Fire was on its way; the inevitable would happen. There was no escaping this. I jogged towards the Source, the direction opposite to that of which people were running to, screaming their lungs off.

Commented [CM26]: Coincidental to what?



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**Commented [CM27]:** This is from the beginning of the piece. I assume this was not intentional.