

Tails the Fox - Part 1

By 2BIT

Submitted: July 21, 2006

Updated: October 30, 2006

Part 1 of Tails the Fox. Includes chapters 1-9, which are reposts. In part 1, Experiment 2 escapes from Death Row, Knuckles and Experiment 1's race to find the Master Emerald begins, and Tails takes on Eggman's army in an invasion of Station Square!

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1. Prophecy of the Doomsayer

Tails the Fox

Chapter 01 - Prophecy of the Doomsayer

Stage 01 - Danger St.

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It had been a dark and stormy night. The thunder crashed, the wind howled, the rain pounded on the roof of Tails' Workshop. Tails had been having a rough night, tossing and turning in his sleep, but not because of the noise of the storm.

Tails had been plagued by nightmares, today marking the seventh day in a row that he's had the same dream. In the dream, Tails finds himself in a large, alien-looking room. It looks much like the interior of the Black Comet. The room is pitch black, except for two lights circling a figure. It is the figure of a fox, who looks just like Tails! It appears to be black, although it could be the lack of light making him appear so. The two lights spinning around the fox appear to be golden rings, with intricate patterns etched in them. The fox reaches out, grabs the rings, and slips one on to each of his two tails. A flash of light bursts forth from the fox, and when it is gone, it is replaced with the image of a terrifying monster!

...and then Tails wakes up. Today, it wakes him up around 6:34, and he slowly climbs out of bed, shuddering at the thought of that monster.

"This dream occurs so often now," he thought, "what could it mean?" He walked out into what passes for his "kitchen," turning on his TV in what passes for his "living room." A news report comes on.

"We bring you a special report from SSTV news! This morning, Station Square became the site of another terrible disaster as the notorious Dr. Eggman launched an all out assault on our fair city! Fires broke out everywhere when his robots began fighting with troops sent by GUN. The GUN forces are falling at an incredible rate, and victory seems in Eggman's reach!"

Tails ran out to the TV with a burnt piece of toast when he heard about the attack. The newscast continued:

"Dr. Eggman left this statement!:"

"I claim this city in the name of the Eggman Empire! To any hedgehogs in the audience, don't interfere... Or else I may have to test my new robot on your girlfriend!"

Dr. Eggman had captured Amy as well!

"I've heard enough!" Tails shouted, and ran off for Station Square.

On his way out the door, Tails found that the storm had started up again. Fast. And it had become very dark out. Fast. Tails saw someone running his way. Fast.

"Miles Prower!!!" The creature yelled, and stopped when lightning struck at his feet. However, he remained unscathed. Tails was awestruck. The creature was hooded and cloaked. It was wearing blood-red shoes. His face could not be seen, except for his shimmering golden eyes, and a pair of large spikes were on his back. He was somewhat larger than Tails, and he spoke in a raspy, creepy voice.

"Wh-who are you?" Tails asked, "And how do you know my name?"

"My name need not concern you. You can just call me... the Doomsayer!" Thunder struck loudly as he spoke his name. Indeed, this was an ominous figure.

"What do you want?" Tails asked, nervously.

"I bring a message. Miles Prower... Beware..."

"THIS WORLD SHALL END!"

The storm became more chaotic, and Tails couldn't help being afraid.

"You, Prower, will be among the first to die. Consider yourself warned!"

Before Tails could approach, a wall of hail rained down on the Doomsayer, a bright light came from him, and when Tails opened his eyes, the storm was over. The Doomsayer was gone, and it seemed like there had been no storm. The Doomsayer's voice echoed on the wind.

"Beware the experiment..."

Tails ran off for the Station, shaken by the Doomsayer's warning.

Despite the Doomsayer, Tails had to stop Eggman!

Tails ran out of the Station to find the city in ruins. "Is Dr. Eggman even capable of such destruction? What is he planning..." His thoughts were interrupted by the cries of a Chao. Cream was watching helplessly while Egg Pawns were shooting at Cheese, who was fleeing their shots. "Leave that Chao alone!" Tails shouted as he ran toward the robots. He leapt at them and swung his tails, smashing them into bits, one by one. Cheese flew down into Cream's waiting arms. "Oh, thank you Tails!" she said, crying. "Have you seen Eggman?" Tails asked her. Cream pointed down the street, toward city hall. "Let me go with you." she said, "I need to stop those robots so Cheese doesn't get attacked again!"

Together, they ran off for city hall. On the way, Cream spotted a little robotic dog. After she pointed it out to Tails, Tails said, "Hey! That's SPOT, the robot I designed to find the Chaos Emeralds! I left him with Sonic a week ago. That means Sonic must be in town!" Tails asked SPOT for a report. SPOT came to Station Square this morning, sensing a Chaos Emerald. It had left without Sonic, and there was no way of knowing if he was in town.

After a short while, the three found Eggman. Sure enough, he was holding a Chaos Emerald. He had Egg Pawns surrounding Amy, and a large robot facing city hall. It looked like a giant green praying mantis, with swordlike arms, and big, broad wings. Without thinking, Tails shouted at Eggman. "Hey, Eggman, let Amy go!"

Eggman spun around, and his robot spun around as well. "Get lost Tails, or Amy gets it!" At his word, the Egg Pawns aimed their guns at Amy, who had her hammer out in case they started shooting. "Don't worry about me, Tails!" Amy shouted, "Just stop Eggman!"

"Not on your life!" Eggman growled. "Egg Slasher, attack!"

To be continued...

2. The Egg Slasher

Tails the Fox
Chapter 02 - The Egg Invasion
Boss 01 - Egg Slasher

2BIT: Sonic the Hedgehog and related characters are (c) SEGA and Sonic Team. You knew that, right?

The Egg Slasher came towards Tails. Cream, Cheese, and SPOT ran for cover. It was all up to Tails....

Or was it?

GUN's troops had recieved reinforcements while Tails was distracting Dr. Eggman. His Egg Pawns were now severely outnumbered, thanks to the fact that Tails and Cream destroyed a fair amount of them on their way to city hall. Before Tails could act against the Egg Slasher, GUN arrived, and had deployed one of their mechs, "Bigfoot."

Behind Bigfoot was an official-looking character. Wearing the uniform of a GUN commander, this man was an important sargent in GUN's forces. He was known as Sargent Gunner. Holding a megaphone, Gunner shouted angrily at Eggman. "All right, Dr. Eggman! Your forces have been reduced to scraps! Surrender, or we will be forced to shoot you down!"

Eggman just laughed at him. "Sorry, loudmouth, but I'm feeling lucky today! Egg Slasher! Slash them!" The Bigfoot mech fired at the Egg Slasher, but its bullets wouldn't penetrate, and the mantis machine slashed it, causing it to explode! Gunner ran for his helicopter, turned, and yelled, "You haven't won! We still have plenty more where that came from!"

While all this was happening, Tails managed to help Amy fight off the remaining Egg Pawns. She then ran over to where Cream was hiding, while Tails flew up to Eggman's plane. After Gunner left, Tails tapped Eggman on the shoulder, startling him. "Aaaaah! Assasins! Help!" Eggman spun his plane around and crashed into Tails, causing both of them to crash. "You little pest! I'll teach you to sneak up on people!" Eggman picked up the nearest rock and threw in at Tails in an angry fit. Then Tails said, "Thanks!"

"Huh?" Eggman looked confused, until he realized that he had just tossed the Chaos Emerald! "Why you trickster! Give that back! Never mind, Egg Slasher, catch that flying hairball!!!" It was clear that Eggman's patience had run out. Tails got an idea. "SPOT, fetch!" Tails tossed the emerald toward the robo-puppy, who ran up and caught it. However, this manuver had cost Tails some time, and the Egg Slasher caught up to him. "It appears we have reached a stalemate!" Eggman declared. "Now hand over that emerald, little doggy, or I'll chop off your master's tails!"

Instead, SPOT "swallowed" the emerald. Eggman looked surprised, until SPOT opened its mouth again, turned to the Egg Slasher, and fired an emerald charged laser beam! The Egg

Slasher was struck hard, and was thrown past Tails until it hit the ground, collapsing in a heap. "It's not over yet!" Eggman growled. He was right. The Egg Slasher's feet had been destroyed, but it could still fly! Now, it was up to Tails, because using the Chaos Emerald used up most of SPOT's power. What was worse, the Egg Slasher was after the helpless robo-puppy. Tails had to act fast.

Tails had to fight, and to make it easier, he pulled out another new invention. When Tails uses his two tails to fly, he can't really use them to attack. So Tails invented some brand new Spring Shoes, which he could use to jump really high!

"Hey! Egg Slasher! Over here!" Tails called. This was starting to irritate Eggman, what with people constantly interrupting his plans, so he turned to the Egg Slasher and issued a new command. "Forget the Chaos Emerald! Egg Slasher, go and teach that two tailed troublemaker the might of the Eggman Empire!" The Egg Slasher turned in midair and flew off in Tails direction. Tails jumped in place, activating the Spring Shoes to bounce him in the air! But the Egg Slasher was going too fast to turn around. Tails soared up to its head, spun in midair, and whipped its head with his twin tails! The Egg Slasher collapsed again, this time for good.

As you can imagine, now Eggman was REALLY mad. "Blast you, Tails! You and Sonic always wreck my robots! Do you know how much it costs to build them!?! No matter, I'll just--"

Before he could finish, three more Bigfoot mechs landed, with an angry Seargent Gunner behind. Eggman realized now that he had lost. "I guess a hasty retreat is in order.... But I'll be back!" Before leaving, Eggman flew past Gunner, and taunted the sargent. "So, Gunner, I hear you're missing something in your base today. Such a shame. Good luck finding it... and the Chaos Emerald, too!" With that, Eggman flew away, with Gunner shouting curses at him.

After things had settled, Tails, Amy, and Cream went to Amy's apartment to rest. They all agreed that Eggman was up to his old tricks, and only Sonic could stop him....

Probably...

"What are we waiting for!?" Amy shouted. "Let's find MY Sonic! I say he's THIS way!" and Amy turned and ran out the door.

"Amy! Wait up!" Tails shouted. "SPOT can also be used to find Sonic! Let's try using radar!" and Tails and SPOT ran off.

"Amy, you forgot to lock the door! What if burglars show up!" and Cream and Cheese ran off as well.

Later, in one of GUN's secret bases, Gunner was trying to figure out what Eggman was up to. He wasn't making much progress, and had spent the past half hour shouting at his henchman, Spy. "Eggman! He's behind everything! I KNOW it! And he got Sonic in on it, I'll bet!" See, Gunner doesn't trust "Furry Freaks", which is what he calls Sonic and his friends. What's more, something had happened earlier that day that led him to believe that Sonic had turned bad. But the blue creature on his surveillance cameras wasn't Sonic....

To be continued...

3. Death Row

Tails the Fox
Chapter 03 - Escape From Death Row
Stage 02 - Death Row

2BIT: Sonic the Hedgehog and related characters are (c) SEGA and Sonic Team. You knew that, right?

Much earlier that day, at 2:15 in the morning, a blue object raced through GUN's newest prison compound, code named "Death Row." The blue object looked like Sonic the Hedgehog, except it wasn't Sonic. It was Metal Sonic, who had not been seen since the incident with Eggman's air fleet. He was headed for a particular cell in the prison complex.

Meanwhile...

"Time is short.... I must complete my mission..." thought the creature pacing in the cell. Outside his cell, a small squadron of GUN robots made sure nothing could get out. There was even talk about a secret guard that was watching the cell diligently, but Sargent Gunner wouldn't confirm anything about this rumor. Still, every thought of the imprisoned creature was bent on escape....

Then, his opportunity arose.

The door blasted open, and the robots jumped into action. An alarm blared, "Intruder alert!" but was quickly silenced by precision shots by the intruder. Metal Sonic burst into the room, wielding one of Eggman's laser weapons, and made short work of the guards. "Foolish humans!" Metal Sonic said, "No matter how many there are, they cannot hope to challenge me!" Metal Sonic ran past the smoldering remains of the robots and turned his attention to the lock on the cell door. "Access denied!" an alarm said, but Metal Sonic tried to pick the lock anyway...

Zzzzzt!!! "Access denied!" Bad idea. Metal Sonic was given a nasty shock.

So, he decided to do this the easy way, and blast the door to smithereens!

"I hope I have the correct cell this time!" Metal Sonic grumbled. The robot stepped into the dark cell. Metal Sonic couldn't see the creature, but his sensors detected his presence. "Are you... Experiment 2?" The creature stepped forward into the light. Astoundingly, it looked much like the dark fox from Tails nightmares! It was just like Tails, except it was black. Three hairs stuck out over his right eye, and they were colored white. This fox wore blue and white sneakers, and had bright red eyes. His twin tails had scruffy fur, ending in spiky tufts of white. The creature spoke to Metal Sonic with a voice very different from Tails', it seemed darker somehow. "Who are you, and how do you know my name?"

"I come on behalf of my master, Dr. Eggman." Metal Sonic said. Eggman had wiped Metal Sonic's memory after it betrayed him, and replaced it with a new memory. Metal Sonic could

only remember being loyal to Eggman, and an enemy of Sonic. Experiment 2 had not heard of Eggman. "An egg person? I don't have time for this!" He walked past Metal Sonic, then surveyed his surroundings. Sure enough, nothing remained of the guards. If this "Eggman" could create a robot like this one, maybe he would make a powerful ally. Experiment 2 disliked robots, but realized he could use some help. "All right. I'll go meet this 'Eggman', but let's find the Chaos Emerald that GUN is holding, first!"

Metal Sonic zoomed past him. "Agreed! I will meet you outside!"

"And so it begins." Experiment 2 said. "I have no time for games. I must complete my mission, before it's too late!" So, without hesitation, he stepped outside his cell. Outside the cell was a ledge that ran around the compound. In fact, the compound's structure had one of these outdoor balconies on each of its floors. As Experiment 2 stepped onto the balcony, he discovered something.

It was raining....

For this was the dark and stormy night that this story began on. Experiment 2's vision was impaired, but he did see two glowing eyes to his left. He turned to approach their owner, thinking it was Metal Sonic. Except something was wrong. These eyes glowed golden! When Experiment 2's eyes adjusted to the light, he saw that it was a cloaked figure. The Doomsayer!

"Experiment 2... The dark one!" the Doomsayer said in his raspy voice. "The time is approaching!" Experiment 2 jumped back in surprise. "What! Who are you?! How is it everyone knows my name!?" The Doomsayer hissed at him, in fact it was a hissing chuckle. "You may call me the Doomsayer. Dark one, it is over..."

Experiment 2 chuckled back. "What's over? What are you babbling about, you weirdo?"

"This world!" the Doomsayer shouted, as thunder struck behind him. "This world is about to end!"

"HA! That's no concern of mine! I have my own troubles." Experiment 2 said angrily. "You want the world saved? Save it yourself!" The Doomsayer growled, and lightning struck again. "You fool! YOU WILL DIE FIRST!"

"No way! Nothing can stop me!" Experiment 2 grumbled, "You're wasting my time!"

"HA!" the Doomsayer was surrounded by ice and hail, which consumed him and then vanished. "Beware, you shadow, of your light counterpart!" Experiment 2 just laughed. "That guy has serious issues."

"Who are you talking to?" Metal Sonic asked. "Wha?! Oh, here you are!" Experiment 2 said, turning around.

"Sensors detect a Chaos Emerald this way! Follow me!" Metal Sonic said, zooming for the next door on the balcony. Experiment 2 followed.

They entered the stairway leading to the lower level of the base. It was a spiral staircase, littered with GUN beetles armed with various weapons. "Watch how a being with true power fights!" Experiment 2 said excitedly. After all, he gets to smash those metal morons! However, he said that too loudly, and a robot signaled the alarm. Lights flashed red throughout the base, and the alarm repeated "Prison break!" over and over. "Who cares?" Experiment 2 remarked. "Now, maybe this'll be a real challenge!"

Sgt. Gunner heard this alarm, and turned to his security cameras. All he saw was what appeared to be Experiment 2 and a blue hedgehog...

"Sonic!!! That traitor! All units, capture our intruders, NOW!!!"

To be continued...

4. The Guard

Tails the Fox
Chapter 04 - Copter
Boss 02 - Guard

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So, now they were in a real mess. The stairway leading down was littered with GUN beetles and other annoyances. But Experiment 2 wasn't worried. He turned to Metal Sonic, chuckled, and said, "Watch me, metal moron! You might learn something!" He ran for the stairs, leaping at the first GUN beetle. He spun himself in the air, struck it down with his tails, caught its weapon as it fell, and landed on the railing of the spiral staircase! The experiment grinded down the rail, blasting robots with extreme accuracy so that by the time he ran out of ammo, he had reached the bottom. Pleased with himself, he turned around to see how far away Metal Sonic was.

"Impressive, Experiment 2!" came a voice from behind him. Experiment 2 spun around to find Metal Sonic, already there. "It would have been faster to take the elevator, though!" The black fox grinned. "What fun would that be?"

Metal Sonic replied, "You said you had no time for games, Experiment 2." They ran outside to the second balcony. Metal Sonic led the way, as it was his sensors that were leading them to the Emerald. But up above them, on the upper balcony, something was watching them. Watching and waiting....

Exiting the balcony, Metal Sonic and Experiment 2 came to another spiral staircase. Oddly enough, there appeared to be no robots there. "Chaos Emerald detected at the bottom of staircase." Metal Sonic said.

Now, as far as Experiment 2 was concerned, this smelled like a trap. It was too easy. Why would nothing be guarding the Chaos Emerald? However, robots aren't that bright, so Metal Sonic ran for the stairway. Before he knew what was happening, an explosion blasted a hole in the roof, and something dropped down and kicked Metal Sonic down the stairs!

When the smoke cleared, Experiment 2 could see a furry green creature, slightly taller than him. It had a long, slim, pointy tail, broad, furry wings, and two horns on its head, making it look rather devilish. It had patches of blue fur going up its sides. It wore red shoes and red gloves, and held a scythe in its hands. Experiment 2 knew who it was. It was the Guard, a creature that GUN had placed to prevent Experiment 2's escape. Guard the Gargoyle!

"Grrrrr! Thought you'd escape, eh? Grrrrr! I'll stop you!" Guard said in his snarling, dog-like voice. He charged at Experiment 2, who spun his twin tails and flew over him, causing him to miss and hit the wall. Guard scrambled to his feet. "Grrrrr.... What are you, a copter!?"

Experiment 2 chuckled. "Maybe I am. You'll never know. So long, sucker!" Experiment 2

jumped over the railing and flew to the rail on the opposite side of the staircase. Guard ran to the edge to find the experiment taunting him from the rail. In his fury, Guard leapt into the air and swooped at him. Experiment 2 jumped again, causing Guard to hit the wall again. "You need a new strategy, dog breath!" Experiment 2 slid down the rail. "Catch me if you can!" So, Guard jumped down and swung his scythe at him. Experiment 2 jumped over it and kept going. Now, Guard was getting mad.

Meanwhile, Metal Sonic was busy re-booting his systems. "Does not compute. What hit me..." Suddenly, he spotted the Chaos Emerald, which Guard had left as bait for them. Now that they had sprung his trap, nothing was protecting it...

Metal Sonic ran over hastily and picked it up. Then, got hit on the head again. This time it was just a beetle, so Metal Sonic simply blasted it, then looked up. A swarm of GUN beetles were hovering overhead, guns aimed both at Metal Sonic and upward. "This can't be good..."

Experiment 2 and Guard exchanged blows all the way down the stairs, but neither landed a decisive attack. Guard would swing his scythe, Experiment 2 would swing his tails, but neither could finish it. "Stop being stubborn and give up already!" Experiment 2 said. "Grrrrrr! You give up!" Guard replied. Experiment 2 then decided to go for the scythe. He flew over to Guard and grabbed the scythe, but Guard wouldn't let go. Soon, they forgot they were in the air, and stopped flying...

Metal Sonic was hard at work fighting the multitude of GUN beetles. His gun was out of ammo, and the beetles kept coming. He needed a miracle.

Then, he got one.

Experiment 2 and Guard fought over the scythe, falling at the same time. They fell right into the GUN beetles! Experiment 2 climbed to his feet and grabbed the Chaos Emerald from Metal Sonic. Guard climbed out of the GUN beetle scrap, and growled at Experiment 2. "Grrrrr! You won't get away!"

Experiment 2 grinned. "Sorry, Guard. I can't stay to play with you!" He flew over Guard's head and grabbed the scythe. "Now, surrender!"

Guard, not easily discouraged, raised his hand, and focused. "Return to me, scythe...." He mumbled.

Suddenly....

Nothing happened. "Grrrrr.... Right, I don't have psychic powers.... Yet...." But Experiment 2 had been distracted by Guard's strange behavior, and Guard saw his chance. He very suddenly took off and tackled Experiment 2, knocking him down and reclaiming his scythe. "That was a dirty trick!" Experiment 2 growled. "Never make a copter mad!" Experiment 2 leapt to his feet, then took to the air. Guard pursued him back up the stairs to an area with a window overlooking the ocean outside. When he caught up, Experiment 2 smiled at him. "Thanks, Guard...."

Now, Guard was confused. "Thanks? Grrrrrr.... What for, copter fox?"

"Thanks for.... THIS!" Experiment 2 jumped on a rail, then jumped at Guard and tail-whipped him with all his might.

"Grrrrrrraaaaaaaaaaaaaahhhhh!!" Guard screamed as he soared through the window and plummeted into the ocean below, far from the shore. Experiment 2 laughed victoriously. "You gave me my new name, friend! An experiment number just isn't good enough. From now on, I am Copter the fox!"

Experiment 2, now named "Copter," grinded his way back to the bottom, and held up the shiny yellow emerald. "There, that was easy!"

Metal Sonic led Copter outside. Death Row was built on an island several miles off the coast of the Mystic Ruins. "Now what, metal moron? Do we have to SWIM back?!"

"Negative." Metal Sonic said. Suddenly, the water splashed violently as a ship rose to the surface. It was a small, red and black submarine, with Eggman's "logo" printed all over it. The hatch opened, and a red and black Chao flew out. "Tee hee! Hi, Metal Sonic! Did you find him?" the Chao said gleefully. Metal Sonic pointed to Copter. The Chao flew over to his face. "Hi, I'm called Char! What's your name?" Copter gently pushed the Chao out of his face. "Uh, hi. My name is Copter. My number is Experiment 2." Char flew back to the sub. "Tee hee! Alrighty, Copter! All aboard! Flight 101 to Eggman's Base, EggSub, ready for takeoff!" he said in his always-gleeful voice. As Copter climbed into the sub after Metal Sonic, he wondered about Char's comment. "Flight? On a sub?" Suddenly, wings popped out of the sides of the sub, and the rocket engines on the back fired up. Char laughed playfully. "This is your captain speaking! We may experience mild turbulence. Try not to lose your lunch!"

Copter wanted to scream, but held it in. "I'm dead, aren't I? We're gonna crash, aren't we?" Copter had a terrible fear of flying in planes. He just didn't like entrusting his life to a machine, especially one piloted by a playful Chao. The EggSub took off at an incredible speed, and Copter just had to let it out. "I WANT MY MOMMY!!!!!!!" he screamed, as Char chuckled at him. Metal Sonic even had a playful tone in his voice. "Who's the moron now, huh?" And so, Copter's journey began.

Gunner was furious at Experiment 2's escape. He growled at his Spy. "How did you let him get away!?"

"I wasn't here..." Spy said, sheepishly.

"I don't care, Spy!" Gunner replied. "Let me see the security tape once more!" Spy smiled nervously. "Yes sir! I'll play it for you..."

The screen showed Metal Sonic breaking Copter out, but from that distance, he looked more like a certain heroic hedgehog. After seeing this security tape again, he was convinced it was Sonic. "Sonic, that traitor! I'll see him burn for this!" Gunner said furiously. "Curse those furry freaks! I always knew that they would do this!" Spy guessed at Gunner's wishes. "Yes sir! We'll capture Sonic!" Gunner turned around and growled at Spy. "That won't be necessary, yet. The Commander will never believe that Sonic did this. However, command the troops! Recapture Experiment 2, dead or alive!"

"Aye aye, sir!" Spy said, saluting before leaving to relay the command. "Blast that rat!" Gunner thought. "He won't get away with this! I'll kill all the furry freaks if I have to! I will secure our nation's security, and we'll never be bothered by those beasts again!"

To be continued...

5. The Missing Emerald

Tails the Fox

Chapter 05 - The Missing Emerald

Boss 03 - Knuckles Vs. Experiment 1

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Meanwhile, others were having their own troubles. A green echidna ran through the jungle. He had his mind on only one thing, the Master Emerald. This creature, in the color of envy, was known only as Experiment 1. Experiment 1 had an unfortunate case of amnesia, and could remember little. However, most of his memories were of the Master Emerald. "If I know anything," Experiment 1 thought, "it's that the Master Emerald is mine! The red echidna must have stolen it from me! But now, I'm here to take it back!"

A short distance, heading in Experiment 1's general direction, was Knuckles the Echidna. "I can't believe it!" He muttered angrily. "As soon as my back is turned, the Master Emerald vanishes! Can't I ever have a moment's peace!?" As Knuckles stepped forward, muttering angrily, something dropped from the sky in front of him! Knuckles recognized her immediately. It was, of course, Rouge the Bat!

"Hey, grumpy! Where's the Master Emerald?" Rouge said, getting straight to the point. "That's easy, " Knuckles said angrily, "YOU stole it! Right?!"

Rouge was shocked by that blunt accusation, but only a little. "Hey, Knucklehead! Why would I come over here if I already had it?"

At that moment, Experiment 1 barged in on the two. He had been eavesdropping, and heard that Knuckles lost the emerald. "Heeeeeeey, Red! You lose somethin'?"

Knuckles leapt to action, throwing a nasty punch in Experiment 1's direction, only to be swiftly dodged. "THIEF!" Knuckles shouted. "I SHOULD HAVE KNOWN IT WAS YOU!!!"

Of course, it wasn't Experiment 1 either. "I didn't steal it, Red! If anyone stole anything here, it was YOU!"

"Let's not go through this again!" Knuckles groaned. Apparently, Knuckles and Experiment 1 had tangled before. In fact, they had been fighting for close to a month!

At this point, Rouge stepped back into the shadows. Knuckles is so easily tricked, he even forgot Rouge was there! The two echidnas gave each other their meanest looks, and a fight broke out!

Knuckles threw punch after punch, which the experiment quickly and gracefully dodged, retaliating with various karate moves, which Knuckles dodged as well. It was clear that the two were evenly matched. They looked awfully similar, too.

"Stop this charade, Red! Gimme that emerald!"

"YOU turn it over, you crook!"

Rouge had had enough. This wasn't getting them anywhere, and Rouge didn't want to go looking for something that may not be lost. She swooped in and kicked them both in the head, knocking them out! Rouge then proceeded to search the area. When she was satisfied that neither echidna had the emerald, she turned to leave.

However, before Rouge could leave, Knuckles woke up! "Where d'ya think YOU'RE goin'!?" Knuckles roared. Rouge turned around, grinned at him, then took to the air, laughing. "COME BACK HERE!!!!" Knuckles yelled, chasing her into the distance...

But Experiment 1 was really knocked for a loop. He didn't wake up, even when a mysterious figure approached him. It was a mouselike creature, a little taller than Experiment 1, with dark grey fur, and wearing a dark blue cape. "Sleep, Dark One." he whispered, "When you awaken, you will find something you need..."

To be continued...

6. Gemini's Dilemma

Tails the Fox
Chapter 06 - Gemini's Dilemma
Stage 03 - Lava Glacier

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Knuckles and Rouge soon came to an agreement. They would help each other find the emerald, then battle it out to determine who gets it. Knuckles was of course, quite confident he would win. Their search led them to a strange place. A glacier had drifted into a small volcanic island, covered the top, and the inside melted to form a giant, fiery igloo! Although it was a small island, the ice cave seemed rather huge, and under the steep ice cliffs were rivers of lava flowing through rocky chasms. Right away, they knew the search wouldn't be easy.

"I think we should split up here!" Rouge said. "You're liable to get me killed in here, knucklehead!"

Knuckles growled at Rouge, so she replied, "Or, I could just stay with you...." Of course, Knuckles didn't want to stay with her. "All right! We'll split up!" So, Knuckles went one way and Rouge went another. Knuckles glided from platform to platform over the lava, until he landed on a large, high, ice pillar. "Ha! I can see everything from up here!"

"EVERYTHING!?" came the excited voice of a little girl. "Yep, everything!" Knuckles replied turning around. Then, he jumped in surprise. "WHOA!" Then he slipped on the ice and fell off the pillar! Before he hit the lava, the creature he saw on the pillar flew out and caught him on its back! When Knuckles opened his eyes, he found that he was riding on the back of a white dragon! The dragon dropped him off on the ice pillar. It spoke in the same sweet voice Knuckles thought was a little girl. "Sorry if I startled you..." Knuckles hopped off and gazed at the creature in awe. "I didn't know dragons existed!" he said. The dragon girl frowned. "They don't exist... I'm not really a dragon... I'm a sorceress. I messed up a spell and turned into a dragon. Uh, my name's Gemini!" She seemed a bit nervous for some reason.

"If you're a sorceress, then can't you change back?" Knuckles asked.

"Well, I lost my wand and my spell book..." Gemini sighed. "I thought since you said you could see everything, maybe you could see my wand. I know it's here somewhere..."

Knuckles looked impatient. "I'm kinda looking for something myself." he grumbled. Then, he looked at the dragon's sad face, and couldn't help feeling a little sorry for her. "Aw, heck! I can find it! I'm the world's greatest treasure hunter, after all!" Gemini jumped for joy. "Thank you, thank you, thank you!!" However, her jumping cracked the ice pillar. "Uh oh, I don't know my own strength as a dragon..."

Knuckles jumped off the pillar and glided to a rock platform, while Gemini flew overhead just

before the ice pillar crumbled.

"This is gonna be a looooong day..." Knuckles groaned.

Meanwhile, Rouge had found herself deep in an ice cave, but it was getting warmer. "I sure hope this doesn't lead into the volcano..." she thought. Suddenly, she heard a voice ahead of her...

"Eggman is the best! Better than the rest! We swiped something cool from a silly little pest!" It was the voice of Char the Chao! Rouge jumped and grabbed hold of the roof, so that the Chao wouldn't see her.

Char flew by, singing to himself. "The servers are the seven chaos! Chaos is power, enriched by the heart! The controller serves to unify the chaos! Hee hee! But the other forces of chaos must be controlled by the a higher controller! Only we Chao know this secret! Char will not forget!"

Rouge dropped down after the Chao left. "A higher controller, huh? And I wonder what the other forces of chaos are? This little pipsqueak sure was helpful... Heh heh heh..."

Knuckles found Gemini's wand being held by one of Eggman's Egg Pawn Wizards. Knuckles easily clobbered it, and handed it to Gemini. "Thanks." Gemini said. "Now I gotta try to figure out how to change back to my true form. I'll see you later, OK?"

Knuckles looked around, then noticed there didn't seem to be a place for Gemini to fly out through. She was too big as a dragon! But Gemini simply waved her wand, and yelled "Abra-Ka-Transporta!" Suddenly, a bright light formed around Knuckles. "Hey, what's goin' on!?!!" The last thing Knuckles heard before blacking out was "Oooops! Wrong spell!!!"

The first thing he heard after waking up, was, "Get offa me you big Knucklehead!" Knuckles jumped to find that he had fallen on top of Rouge, and was in a rather warm tunnel. "Huh? How'd I get here..."

Rouge shook her fist at him. "You fell out of a bright light that appeared - right on top of me! I demand an apology!" But Knuckles just ran ahead of her. "Hey! Come back here!"

"No can do! I sense the Master Emerald here!"

So, Rouge took off in the same direction.

They soon found themselves in a blistering hot room, with lava in a pool on the far side of the room. Computers and various gadgets dotted the landscape, all with a familiar logo on them...

Eggman's logo!

"Well well! Some thieves have snuck into my temporary base!" came an all too familiar voice. Eggman's! "Well, don't mind me, my treasure seeking friends! I'll just pick up something and be off to my new base! But to be sure you don't follow me there..."

Eggman pressed a button on his plane, and Metal Sonic dropped down from the roof! "Intruders! Prepare to be neutralized!"

Knuckles and Rouge both hit fighting stances, ready for battle. But then, the equipment throughout the room sprung to life, revealing a horde of Shadow Androids.

"Think you can take em?" Rouge said.

"Might be tough if one more shows up." Knuckles said in a joking manner.

"Ha, not for me! Bring it on!" Rouge replied.

In the meanwhile, Gemini was still playing with spells, trying to warp out of the Lava Glacier. "Hmmm.... I can remember a lot of strange spells... How about.... Volcanis-Escapera!"

Suddenly, the glacier began to rumble...

To be continued...

7. Fake Master Emerald?

Tails the Fox

Chapter 07 - Fake Master Emerald?

Boss 04 - Metal Sonic

2BIT: Sonic the Hedgehog and related characters are (c) SEGA and Sonic Team. You knew that, right?

The cave rumbled, shockwaves shook the whole glacier. "This can't be good!" Knuckles exclaimed. "Really?" Rouge said, frustrated. "What was your first clue, huh? The earthquakes, the robots, or perhaps the rising lava level!!" she shouted, pointing to the lava lake, which was steadily getting bigger.

Eggman flew overhead, his plane carrying the Master Emerald in its claw! "Sorry to run, my furry fighting friends, but I must be leaving before the volcano erupts. Ciao!" At hearing this word, meaning "good-bye" (for those who don't know), Char flew in. "Someone call for a Chao?"

"Not Chao, ciao, you bone headed...." Eggman started to say, but the crumbling rocks in the roof suddenly began to fall, and a stray one hit his plane, knocking the Master Emerald from its claw! "Now's my chance!" Knuckles said, and jumped passed the falling rocks to grab the Master Emerald. Rouge flew over next to him. "I think it's time to go, red!" she said, pointing to the exit which was rapidly being covered by rocks. But it was too late. The cave was quickly covered, sealing all of them in! "No! Metal Sonic, Char, do something!" Eggman shouted in a panic. "What can we do?" Char said, still enthusiastic as ever somehow. Knuckles ran over to the covered up exit. "Only one way through this!" he said, pulling out his old shovel claws. Immediately, he started digging. Rouge looked back at the lava lake at the other end of the room. It was rising more rapidly, and Knuckles was never gonna make it! "It's not gonna work!" Rouge yelled. There seemed to be no way out...

Just then, a loud crash was heard from the other side of the rock wall. The boulders flew out of the path, and Gemini peeked her head into the collapsing cave. "C'mon people! This glacier's goin' down!" she shouted. They all ran out through the hole, and as they ran, Eggman used his plane's claw to snatch the Master Emerald again! "So long, sucker!" he shouted back at Knuckles, laughing all the way. "Eggman!" Knuckles yelled angrily, as everyone often does when Eggman angers them.

The tunnel was rather narrow, and Gemini could barely fit through, but she made it, with Eggman close behind, followed by Char, Metal Sonic, Knuckles, Rouge, and the Shadow Androids bringing up the rear. The Shadow Androids were one by one getting caught by the lava flow, which was erupting through the tunnel! They all tried to pick up the pace. Rouge ran up past Knuckles and Metal Sonic, jumped up, and grabbed the Master Emerald from Eggman. "Stop that, you thief!" Eggman shouted. "You're the thief!" Knuckles yelled back. "I didn't steal anything!" Eggman replied angrily. "Yeah! How dare you question Dr. Eggman's integrity!" Char added.

Gemini burst out of the tunnel and into the glacier, then flew away through a hole in the roof, which was crumbling fast. This created many small ice platforms in the lava flows. Knuckles, Rouge, and Metal Sonic jumped onto the platforms, each one attacking the others to try to get the Master Emerald. "I'll leave it to you, Metal!" Eggman yelled, flying out through the hole along with Char.

Then, the lava burst through the tunnel, shooting out like a giant, burning bullet. Knuckles grabbed the Master Emerald, and dodged just in time to see Metal Sonic hit by the "bullet." "We won't see him again." Knuckles said, only to find that when the lava subsided, Metal Sonic still hovered in the air, now glowing red. "Heat shield, activated!"

"I've gotta get me one of those..." Rouge and Knuckles said at the same time. The glacier began collapsing more rapidly, and Knuckles slipped on the ice platform he was standing on, dropping the Master Emerald! It fell on the platform and shattered into powdery remains, which flashed, then seemed to be normal rocks...

"What?! It was a FAKE!?" Knuckles groaned.

"Could be worse!" Rouge said, landing next to him. "It could have been the real emerald!"

"Danger! Must retreat!" Metal Sonic said, flying out of the cave. Knuckles and Rouge looked around, and found that the lava was rising up the glacier! "Now what!?" Knuckles yelled. "Now we're fried!" Rouge replied.

"Abra-Ka-Teleporta!" came a voice. Suddenly, wind blew fiercely, lifting Knuckles and Rouge high into the air! Before they dropped, Gemini swooped down and caught them on her back, then soared high above the glacier, which was destroyed in a fiery explosion!

"That was close..." Gemini sighed. "But why did teleport cause wind!? I need my spell book!" Gemini whined.

Gemini dropped them off back in the Mystic Ruins. "I'll see you later, my friends." She said. "I must find my spell book!" and she took off.

Rouge began walking away. "Well, I've got treasure to hunt. See ya, tough guy." Knuckles couldn't help chuckling at her. "You just NEVER give up! Then I won't give up, either! Come back here!" And the two raced off once again, resuming the search for the Master Emerald...

To be continued...

8. The Lost City

Tails the Fox
Chapter 08 - The Lost City
Stage 04 - Hidden Ruins

2BIT: Sonic the Hedgehog and related characters are (c) SEGA and Sonic Team. You knew that, right?

As Experiment 1 opened his eyes, he realized he had no idea where he was. He was lost in a dark area of Station Square. He slowly rose to his feet, and looked around, catching a glimpse of a creature with a blue cape heading down an alleyway. Experiment 1 sensed that he should follow him. "Hey, wait up!" he shouted.

When he ran into the alley, Experiment 1 noticed an open sewer grate. That had to be where the creature escaped to...

He hesitated a moment. "This is ridiculous. I bet it smells down there..." But then, a voice called out to him. "This way, Dark One..." So, Experiment 1 dropped into the sewer....

....and discovered a new world!

Deep underneath Station Square was an underground cavern, filled with the ruins of an ancient city. Experiment 1 rubbed his eyes in disbelief. "This is... impossible..." But his gawking was suddenly interrupted by a loud voice. "Now what do I do!? There's monsters everywhere!" came a frustrated voice. "I'll just bet they stole them! A fine predicament! Where will I live now?" The owner of the voice quickly rounded the corner and ran right into Experiment 1, causing them both to fall over. "Yeow! 'Scuse me!" said the speedy character. Experiment 1 looked up and saw a female echidna in a green shirt & skirt. Her fur was yellow, but her quills were various bright colors. She had bright blue eyes, and wore a red ribbon on her shirt's collar. The colorful echidna girl helped Experiment 1 up. "I'm so sorry, sir! But what are you doin' down here? What's your name?" she asked. "Uh..." Experiment 1 was slightly startled. "I'm Experiment 1..."

"OK! I'll call ya One for short!" she said excitedly. "And my name's Rainbow!" Experiment 1 quickly decided that she was annoying. "Don't call me One!" Rainbow just ignored him. "Say, One? Can you help me out here? These monsters invaded my home and I think they stole the relics that unlock the doors! I gotta find them..." Experiment 1 took a look around the corner. Sure enough, the town was swarming with insect-like robots. "Those aren't monsters. I could smash 'em up easy!" Rainbow grinned excitedly. "Great! Let's go, then!"

"No!" Experiment 1 growled. "I don't see anything in it for me!"

"Aw, come on, One!" she said. "It's your civic duty! As an echidna, you should help me guard our tribe's treasure!"

"Treasure!?" Experiment 1 said. Suddenly, he felt it was his duty to help. Something inside him told him it was right. "Fine, just don't get in my way!" Rainbow ran off ahead. "Follow me!" she shouted. "Slow down!" Experiment 1 yelled, then took off after her.

All the while, someone watched them from the darkness...

A shrew, with dark grey fur, wearing a blue cape. "All right, Dark One. Now, the journey through shadows can begin..."

Experiment 1 smashed the robots one by one, unleashing a flurry of punches and kicks, following Rainbow from the ground as she glided overhead. She led him to a large temple, with a magical force field blocking the door. Rainbow landed near the force field, then turned to Experiment 1. "Gee, can't you glide?" she asked. "It woulda been much faster that way!" Experiment 1 was holding a piece of one of the robots. It had the symbol of GUN on it. "What would GUN want here?" Experiment 1 said with a puzzled expression on his face.

"Listen up, One!" Rainbow said. "There are three relics that act as the keys to these force fields! If we find them, I can get back to my house!" Rainbow looked around the streets of the ruins. "Wow, you sure are a punchy critter... You clobbered all of 'em!" Experiment 1 chuckled. "'Punchy' eh? I like that. That'll be my new name." Rainbow laughed. "That's not a name! No, just stick with One."

"Dark One!" came another voice.

Punchy and Rainbow turned to the voice. It was the shrew! "Welcome, friends! I am Illusi the Shrew! Now, you will face your first test, Punchy the Dark One!"

Experiment 1, now calling himself Punchy, raised his fists. "What do you want?"

Illusi waved his hand, and darkness shrouded the ruins! "I hope you're not afraid of the dark! Because now you must face your inner darkness!"

To be continued...

9. The Realm of Darkness

Tails the Fox
Chapter 09 - The Realm Of Darkness
Boss 05 - E-3X Terra

2BIT: Sonic the Hedgehog and related characters are (c) SEGA and Sonic Team. You knew that, right?

Darkness shrouded the ruins throughout, completely blocking out Punchy's vision. Rainbow, however, seemed unfazed. "Whatcha talkin' about, Mousy?" she said, already calling Illusi by a nickname. Illusi turned to Rainbow and replied, "I speak of nothing that concerns you, guardian! And, to be sure you do not interfere..."

Illusi snapped his fingers, and strange, floating creatures appeared around Rainbow, blocking her from moving. They looked like red circles, with a diagonal line going across the middle of them. They had two round eyes at the top of their heads, and floated in midair. "Don't worry, " Illusi said, "the Wrongos won't hurt you as long as you don't do anything wrong! Just stay put, ma'am. The Dark One must find the relics to free you."

"Stupid flying donuts..." Rainbow said, looking around. "But this is easy! The relics are right there!" Rainbow said, pointing. Punchy was in complete disbelief. "How can you see anything in this dark!?" he grumbled. Illusi laughed. "Rainbow's spirit is too full of light to see my darkness! But you, on the other hand, are so filled with darkness that it seems to be all you can see! You will never find the relics!"

Punchy ran in the direction of Illusi's voice, but tripped over something. As he stood up, a wrongo flew past his face, and a bolt of lightning surged through his body. "Bad boy!" Illusi said, "You've no need to come after me. Just look! I hid the relics in plain sight! Can't you see them? Hee hee..."

"Over here, One!" Rainbow called. "I can point ya in the right direction!"

"You simple minded fool!" Illusi shouted, "My wrongos will barbeque you if you don't keep quiet!"

Punchy ran in the direction of Rainbow's voice. "Enough of this game!" he growled. He kicked blindly in the dark and hit a wrongo, knocking it aside! He then reached forward and grabbed Rainbow's arm, pulling her away from the other wrongos! At once, the darkness clouding Punchy's vision vanished, and he saw the relics. He pulled Rainbow along by the arm, running from the wrongos, and grabbed the relics with his other hand. "THESE are the relics!? They're just little copper coins!"

Illusi clapped his hands. "Bravo, Dark One. You truly are good at cheating. Next time, I'll try to make it cheat proof!" With that, Illusi snapped his fingers, and he and the wrongos vanished.

Rainbow stepped to the door of the temple she calls home, and held the relics over her head.

They glowed with a dazzling light, as the barrier around the door faded. "C'mon in, One!" Rainbow said.

Rainbow's home was quite large, a cavern within a cavern. It looked like an ancient ruin, with various statues and relics all around. "Home, sweet home!" Rainbow said happily. "Say, Rainbow, what kind of relic is it that you're guarding down here?" Punchy asked curiously. "I dunno." Rainbow said. "I never seen it. My ma didn't tell me where it was before she died. Naturally, I've tried to find it, but I never was able to..."

After a moment of unsettling silence, the silence was broken by an explosion. One of Eggman's robots stood in the destroyed doorway. It was from his new E-X line of robots. This was E-3X, as the number on his purple and black power armor read. Its glowing red eyes were fixed on Punchy. "Knuckles detected! I, E-3X Terra, shall destroy you!"

Rainbow looked at her hands. "You're gonna shoot us for havin' knuckles?" Obviously, she didn't know what Terra was talking about. But Punchy did. "I am not him!!!" Punchy shouted with rage. Terra opened fire on Punchy, its hands having turned into gatling guns, but Punchy simply leapt past the shots and gave the robot a swift kick in the chest, knocking it back out the doorway and straight through the wall of another building.

"There goes the library..." Rainbow sighed. "Remind me never to call you a knucklehead, right, One?" Punchy opened his mouth to yell, but quickly stopped himself. "Call me Punchy." he said calmly.

Terra flew out of the hole in the wall, sparks flying from one of his arms, which was now missing a hand. "Subject power miscalculated." Terra growled. "Must return to base for repairs."

"Right! I'm gonna follow him and give his boss a talkin' to!" Punchy declared. "Mind if I tag along?" Rainbow asked. "I get awful bored guarding a relic I can't find. A nice adventure sounds fun!"

"Go away." Punchy grumbled. "You're annoying. Scram!" And he ran off chasing the robot. "Don't be like that, One!" Rainbow shouted back, following him. "I owe you one, so I'll help you to pay off my debt!" Punchy continued running for the exit, following the robot, neither stopping, nor helping Rainbow. Not that she needed help. She was soon running by his side. "C'mon One! You can't be this slow! I'll race you!" And she ran ahead of him. "Hey! Slow down! We have to make sure the robot doesn't see us! RAINBOW!!!" Punchy knew now it was going to be a long journey. But where the journey would lead, he could not guess.

To be continued...