

# **The Dream Fighter Chronicles**

## **Book One**

**These scrolls have come a long distance to make it to you. The loyal messenger Toryn the Traveler made it through much danger to finally bring this story to you. You are one of a few to have a chance to read it.**

**Promise to keep them secret and safe.**

**The first step in your journey begins now.**

*-Calvin Locke*

## Chapter One

Everything is quiet now. No one ever thought it would ever be that way, not after it all started. After everything that happened, so many crazy and unbelievable things the Dream Fighters saw, they thought they would be lucky to even breathe. We all know the world can be nuts sometimes but this is the kind of nuts you could never even dream of. That's been said before, but this time, it is for real.

We owe it all to five kids. They didn't want to be heroes; they even tried not to be. We couldn't let that happen. We had to push and push them until they realized how important they were. The world was in danger and they were the only ones who had the powers to save it. They did it by finding out who they were and, most importantly, by trusting each other. You could say it was magic.

This story was not supposed to be told. It is supposed to be a secret, to protect the kids and keep the world safe. Still, the story should be told, and if you promise right now not to tell anyone about what you will soon read, then you will read a story unlike any one you've ever heard before.

It's a story of heroes, alien invaders, and the power we all have inside us that can save us. It's the story of hopes and dreams and how we can use them every day to make our lives better. Promise not to give away the secret and read on. You won't regret it.

It all started at a house on Wolfson Drive. There was a big family gathering on a Sunday, a birthday celebration. All the adults were upstairs talking about whatever adults talk about. This time, they might have been talking about the family golf trip, where all the men went to Pennsylvania to play golf while the women planned a trip somewhere else. Usually, the kids didn't have much to say about it, and this time was the same.

Jack and Braden were busy playing a game on television, Sly Cooper. Jack had the controller in his hands, pressing the buttons as fast as he could. Jack was seven years old, with blonde hair. He was pretty good at the game, but at this moment, he was having

trouble getting past one of the monsters. He tried to jump left and got hit by the monster hard. Braden stood up quick from the couch.

“I know how to beat that monster. I did it last week. Let me show you,” he said, reaching for the controller.

Jack pulled it away. “No. It’s my turn. I’ll get it.”

“But you’re doing it *wrong*,” Braden insisted.

“I got it.”

“No, you don’t. You’re gonna get killed again.”

This time, Braden was right. Jack tried to jump left again and the same thing happened. He wanted to throw the controller on the floor but he had gotten in trouble two weeks ago for the same thing. Throwing controllers wasn’t a nice thing to do.

Instead, he handed the controller to Braden. “Okay, it’s your turn.”

“It’s about time.” Braden took the controller. He was almost eight himself, but unlike Jack, he had dark brown hair. He was wearing a camouflage flannel shirt and tan pants, one of his favorite outfits.

He went toward the monster. It came at him with a big hammer and swung hard. Braden jumped right and avoided the swing but didn’t see the next one coming. The monster clonked him on the head and he was out. He was pretty sure he knew how to beat it, but the monster was so strong. There had to be a way. If he could only remember what he did last week to get past him.

Haley was busy playing with Jillian and Gabriella, her two younger cousins. Gabriella, who was only two years old, was playing with blocks and Jillian, who was five, was helping. Haley wanted to play something else but she knew Gabby couldn’t play along so she decided the right thing to do was let her play. After all, she was being quiet, which was what the adults wanted.

What Haley really wanted to do was talk about the dream she had the night before. It was really weird. She felt like she was being pulled into this circle. She wasn’t scared because it wasn’t scary, and in the dream she felt stronger than she ever had before. She felt like she could leap high into the air easily. She just wanted someone to explain it. The problem was, before she woke up, she heard a voice tell her not to tell anyone about it. The voice sounded familiar, like someone she knew, but she couldn’t remember who. She

wondered if maybe one of her cousins had ever had a dream like that. She wanted to ask really badly but she figured the best thing to do was listen to the voice. Plus, her cousins were younger than her. She was almost eleven. They wouldn't understand.

She figured everyone would just think she was crazy anyway.

"You got killed again," Jack said to Braden. "We'll never get past this monster."

"I know one way we can," Braden said, smiling.

Together, they yelled, "Uncle Johnny!"

Haley and Jack's mom came to the top of the stairs. "What do you guys want?"

"We need Uncle Johnny," Jack said.

"He's eating."

"Oh," Jack and Braden said at the top of their lungs.

"Do you want me to come down there and turn that system off?" Haley and Jack's mom, Aunt Tina, asked.

Braden and Jillian's mom came to the stairs too. "What are you doing, Braden?"

"We were trying to beat this monster and couldn't so we wanted Uncle Johnny to come downstairs and show us how," Braden said, as nicely as he could.

"Didn't Aunt Tina say he was eating?"

"Yes. But I thought everyone finished eating already."

"Uncle Johnny got here late."

"But—"

"Stop it or both Aunt Tina and I will come down there and turn the television off, do you want that?" Aunt Lisa asked.

"Well—"

"I didn't think so."

"But—"

"But nothing," Aunt Tina said. "I'll ask Uncle Johnny to come down, when he is finished eating." The last few words were said sort of angry, Haley noticed. Not *angry* angry, like when someone broke something or lied, just angry, like if Braden and Jack didn't give in, *angry* angry was coming soon.

"Okay," Jack said, and plopped down on the couch. Haley thought he was going to say something else back, but she was happy to see he was smart enough not to. Braden went

back to playing the game. Jack was pretty smart, but sometimes he didn't act that way and they got yelled at for something she didn't even have anything to do with.

When Aunt Lisa and Aunt Tina were gone, Jack said, "Parents can be a pain." Haley knew he said this as a joke but he still shouldn't have said it. Sure, there were times when she got angry at her Mom and Dad, but not too many times. She was going to say something to Jack, tell him to take it back but she didn't. He probably wouldn't listen anyway.

"Oh no," Jillian said.

"What?" Haley asked.

"It's my doll. She went wee-wee again."

Jack stuck his head out from the side of the couch. "Your doll did what?"

"She went wee-wee. I gave her too much water again. When she has too much water, she goes wee-wee a lot. Now I have to change her diaper. A mommy's work is never done."

"What kind of doll goes wee-wee?"

"Baby-Wets-A-Lot," Jillian said. "I brought her and three other dolls with me today. Baby-Wets-A-Lot drinks water and then either goes wee-wee or cries. Sometimes she does both."

"That's stupid," Jack said.

"Don't be mean," Haley said.

"It's okay, Haley. Jack, you go wee-wee and cry and I bet when you were a baby you did both at the same time."

Everyone laughed, except for Jack of course. Jillian was right, everyone did that so there was a perfect reason why someone would make a doll that did. Haley wasn't so sure she would want a doll like that. Well, she had other things she wanted. One of the most important was a laptop. That would be cool, to have a laptop, so she could play games and go on websites almost anywhere. She didn't think she had much of a chance of getting one, but that wasn't going to stop her from asking, that's for sure.

Braden and Jack tried to beat that level of the game a few times more but they got bored because they just couldn't get past that one part. Haley was tempted to try herself but she didn't think she'd have a chance and she didn't want to fight to get a turn.

Just when it seemed like Jack and Braden were about to give up, Uncle Johnny came down the stairs.

“I hear someone’s having trouble down here,” Uncle Johnny said.

“We can’t get past this monster,” Braden said, “We tried going left and right but he keeps getting us.”

“I even tried jumping,” Jack said, “just like you showed us but it doesn’t work. Maybe the controller is broken.”

“We haven’t been *throwing* the controller, have we?”

“No,” Jack said. “I thought about it but remembered I am not supposed to do it, so I didn’t.”

“Good. Now, what part are you stuck on?”

Jack and Braden showed the part they couldn’t beat and Uncle Johnny remembered it was the same part they had a problem with the week before. It was pretty tough, but Uncle Johnny knew the trick and showed it to them again.

“You have to jump and swing at the same time. That throws the monster off balance so you can sneak past him on the right. Sometimes you don’t have to knock out the monsters to beat them. Sometimes you have to use your smarts and beat them that way.”

“You don’t have to beat them up?” Braden asked.

“Not all the time. A lot of these monsters are bigger than your character. Your character is smarter than them, and so are you. So use that.”

“I like beating them up,” Jack said.

“So do I,” Braden agreed.

Uncle Johnny turned and looked at Haley. “Silly boys.”

“You got that right. I am the one who has to be around them all the time.”

“Maybe you should show them how silly they are sometimes.”

“Good idea.”

“Okay guys, I got you past this part. Think you can take it from here?” Uncle Johnny asked.

“Sure,” Braden said, “it’s my turn so I can take it.”

“No, it’s my turn,” Jack said, trying to take the controller from Braden, “you remember, you died last.”

“But I still had one more life left,” Braden insisted.

“No, no. You got killed twice. Every two lives we change turns.”

“Enough,” Uncle Johnny said. “I don’t care whose turn it was. If you guys don’t stop, I’ll keep playing, and you know it will be a long time before I die.”

“Oh,” Braden and Jack said.

“Do you guys want to keep playing?”

“Yes.”

“Then learn to get along. I could tell you who goes next but I want you to solve this yourself. You guys are cousins, right?”

“Yeah,” they answered.

“And friends?”

“Yes, but—“

“Hey, what’s rule number one?” Uncle Johnny asked.

Haley smiled, rolled her eyes, and said along with Jack, “Listen to Uncle Johnny.”

“And rule number two?”

“Listen to Uncle Johnny.”

“Okay, then. So, like I was saying. You are cousins and friends. You shouldn’t fight, you should be nice to each other. You guys figure this out. I am coming back down here in a minute and I want to see you guys getting along, not fighting over something silly like whose turn it is. There are more important things than that.”

Haley agreed. Getting a laptop was certainly more important than arguing over who got to play some stupid game first. But, like Uncle Johnny said, silly boys. Haley wondered how silly Uncle Johnny was when he was a boy. Probably pretty silly, she thought.

## Chapter Two

After they sang ‘Happy Birthday’ the kids came back downstairs and the boys went back to playing their game. The boys started to play the way Uncle Johnny taught them, but before long they were trying to beat up the monsters instead of sneaking around them. Haley watched for a little while, and every time they tried to attack the monster, she could

see a way to sneak around it. She tried to tell them, but it seemed like they had their ‘Girl Ear Filters’ on, as they had called them once, and couldn’t hear her.

Haley was tired, and felt even more so when she saw both Gabby and Jillian sleeping on the couch. She sat next to them, telling herself that she wouldn’t go to sleep, just rest her eyes a bit. Jack and Braden, frustrated with the game, sat on the couch across from her. It looked like they were going to go to sleep, too. She closed her eyes, and felt the darkness wrap around her like when she went to bed. She fought to stay awake.

Luckily, her brother and cousin helped out.

“Uncle Johnny!” they yelled and yelled, trying to get him to come downstairs to help them with the game again.

Haley opened her eyes and rubbed them. They felt itchy like when she woke up in the morning, but she hadn’t even been sitting down for four minutes. She could see the clock on the cable box, so she knew she wasn’t crazy.

“Can anyone hear us?” Braden asked. “We’re having trouble with the game again.”

Braden had said that pretty loud, but no one answered. That wasn’t normal. It didn’t take much noise for *someone* to come downstairs. Braden yelled again, and Jack joined him.

Nothing happened.

Haley started to worry, but she didn’t want to let the rest of them know it. She was the oldest and she had to keep her cool, even if inside, she felt anything but. She tried to think what could possibly be happening, then remembered that Uncle Michael had brought over a video and the adults were probably upstairs watching it in the kitchen and couldn’t hear them.

Still, the TV in the kitchen had to be pretty loud, and she didn’t hear anything coming from upstairs at all.

“Where is he?” Jack asked.

“I don’t know. Maybe they are busy upstairs,” Haley answered, trying to sound like she believed what she said, even when she didn’t. She figured that was probably what her parents did a lot.

“He must be sleeping,” Braden said.

“But Uncle Johnny only falls asleep on Christmas Eve,” Jack said, “he never does it any other time.”

“He could be tired,” Braden said.

Jillian sat up. “What’s going on?”

“We can’t get Uncle Johnny to come downstairs. No one is answering,” Braden answered.

“Is *that* all? I can get him to come down here.”

Jillian jumped off the couch and ran up the stairs. She stopped at the top of them, like she ran into a wall. Her head hurt a little, but that didn’t make sense. She could see the hallway, but couldn’t go past the top of the stairs.

“Ouch,” she said, rubbing her forehead.

“What?” Haley asked.

“Something’s in my way.”

“Huh?”

“Yeah, I can’t get past the stairs,” Jillian said.

“Is the dog gate in the way?”

“I would have seen *that*.”

“Okay.”

Haley ran toward Jillian, and she got there quicker than she would have expected to. She didn’t really notice it until Jack said something.

“Wow,” he said. Jack said ‘wow’ a lot, but this one sounded serious.

“Wow what?” Haley asked.

“You just ran through the air,” he said.

“Through the air?”

“Yeah, almost like you were floating.”

Haley had sort of felt that, but she didn’t think it was anything. “So?”

“So, it was cool. Can you do it again?”

“Um, no. I have to see what Jillian is talking about.” Haley made it to the top of the stairs and put her hand out toward the hallway. Before she could get her hand past the top step, she felt something push her back. It wasn’t hard, like an invisible wall. It was more like trying to stretch a rubber band further than it is supposed to go, only this didn’t snap.

“That’s weird,” she said, looking at Jillian. Jillian just shrugged her shoulders.

“I can’t get upstairs.”

“We better call someone,” Haley said.

With that, everyone starting yelling for their mommies and daddies, and no one answered. Gabby had woken up from all the noise. She looked at everyone. Jack was the closest to her, and when he looked at her, he felt like he couldn't look away. It was like Gabby had control of his eyes and wouldn't let go.

“Gabby, stop it,” he said, but she just smiled at him. Jack felt the urge to get something for her, but he didn't know what she wanted.

Haley looked at Jillian and said, “We have to do something.”

Jillian seemed like she was ready to cry but she held herself together as best she could. Haley put her hand on her shoulder. Normally, Haley would want to cry too, but for some reason she felt a calm feeling come over her, telling her she had to take control and everything would be okay.

“We just have to think, Jilly. Think.”

“Okay.”

Jillian closed her eyes and squeezed them shut, like she was really thinking hard. Haley thought she looked funny doing that, but she closed her eyes and did the same thing, so if Jillian opened her eyes for a second, she wouldn't feel bad.

Jack still felt trapped by Gabby, not in a bad way, but he couldn't look away. He could tell now that Gabby wanted a doll. But it wasn't just any doll, it was a particular doll, a doll he had seen before. A picture came to his mind.

Then, he knew what she wanted: Baby-Wets-A-Lot.

He looked around and couldn't find the doll, but he felt like he really needed to. He looked on both couches, under the old wooden table in the center of the room. He found a football they had been looking for, a couple of Lego's, an empty Capri-Sun, but no doll.

“Just try to think of something that can get us out of this,” Haley said to Jillian, both of their eyes still closed tightly shut.

Braden had been quiet through all of this because he had noticed something but didn't know how to tell everyone else. When he had looked at the Playstation controller, he was pretty sure he made it move. He couldn't be completely sure, but he was as sure as he had ever been about something. He wanted to try it again, but he was scared. No one could move things by just thinking about doing it. That was stuff you saw in the movies, not

something you could do in real life. At least, that was what his parents and other adults had told him.

He stared at the controller, but it didn't move. Maybe he had just thought he had moved the controller the first time. There was no way to know. Maybe he had to do something special to make it work. He really had no idea and there was no way to know for sure.

"Hey, did anyone see Baby-Wets-A-Lot? Gabby wants it" Jack asked. He wondered if anyone would ask how he knew that. He hoped they didn't.

Jillian and Haley didn't answer. Jack could see they had their eyes closed like they were thinking about something. Jack felt another nudge in his mind from Gabby. It seemed like she was getting impatient and really wanted Jillian's doll, the one that went wee-wee all the time.

"I see it," Braden said. He pointed to a spot next to the TV, and Jack walked over to grab it. Before he got halfway there, the doll lifted off the ground and floated over toward Gabby.

"What the--?" Jack asked.

The doll kept floating across the room and landed softly on Gabby's lap, like it was following Braden's finger.

"I did that!" Braden said.

"How?" Jack asked.

"How should I know? I just did it, that's all I know. I did it before with the game controller."

"When?"

"A minute ago."

"I didn't see that," Jack said.

"You don't believe me?"

"I just said I didn't see it."

"But you just saw me do that with the doll, right?" Braden asked.

"Well, I saw the doll float across the room."

"Yes. I did that!"

Haley opened her eyes. "What are you guys talking about? We are trying to think of a plan here."

"Braden said he made Jillian's doll fly and that he made the Playstation controller move without his hands."

"What?"

"I did it, I swear!" Braden insisted.

"Come on, there's no way you did that. That's like, magic or something," Jack said.

"I did it."

"No way."

"Yes way."

"Guys, guys, you gotta stop arguing if you have any chance of getting out of here," a familiar voice said.

"Who said that?" Braden asked.

"Doll talk," Gabby said, smiling.

"What?" Haley asked.

"Doll talk. Doll talk," Gabby said again.

"Doll talk?" the familiar voice said, and it sounded like it was coming from Gabby.

"Uh-oh," Jillian said. She had an idea why the doll was talking.

"Uh-oh what?" Haley asked, looking back at Jillian, who opened her eyes.

"I think I did that," Jillian answered.

"Did what, made that voice?"

"No."

"Then what?"

"Yeah, what's with this 'Doll talk' stuff," the male voice said.

"Doll talk," Gabby said, laughing. "Uncle." It sounded like she said a name after uncle, but no one understood what she said.

"You told me to think of something, Haley, so I did."

"What did you think of?"

"Well, I thought of my Mommy and Daddy first, but not too much. Then I thought about something Uncle Johnny said today, and it made me laugh. Then I heard Jack talk about my doll."

“Um, okay,” Haley said.

“Oh boy,” Uncle Johnny’s voice said.

### Chapter Three

Everyone turned to look at Baby-Wets-A-Lot. That was certainly where the voice came from. The doll looked the same, sitting on Gabby’s lap. Haley looked close, to see if it was moving. At first, it wasn’t. Then, the doll moved its eyes.

“Jilly, does Baby-Wets-A-Lot move her eyes?” she asked. She had seen dolls do that before.

Jillian was still at the top of the stairs. “No. She just cries.”

“I’m a doll?” Uncle Johnny asked.

Everyone jumped from surprise. The doll was talking and moving its mouth. Now they knew for sure something crazy was going on. First Haley leaped, then Braden was moving things with his mind. Now, their Uncle was speaking through a doll.

“First the doll flies, and now it talks?” Jack asked.

“It didn’t fly. I made it fly,” Braden reminded him.

“Right. Either way, this is weird.”

“Not as weird as me being stuck in a doll,” Uncle Johnny said. “But, I am a cool doll, right? G.I. Joe, or like an action figure or something?”

“Um, you’re a Ba—“

Haley covered Braden’s mouth. “You’re an okay doll, Uncle Johnny. It’s a baby, but it’s normal looking.”

“Yeah, and when you drink water you—“

“Aren’t thirsty any more,” Haley interrupted. “You’re just a normal doll.”

”A baby? I am a baby? All these years I spent growing up, working hard and now I am stuck as a baby?” Tears started to fall from the doll’s face. “A baby?” Uncle Johnny cried uncontrollably. It was what Baby-Wets-A-Lot did.

“It’s okay.”

“I’m, I’m, crying?”

“Yes, the doll you are in can cry and do a whole lot of other cool things.”

"I'm a girly doll, aren't I?" Uncle Johnny said through tears. "A silly, girly doll."

"Baby-Wets-A-Lot is not a silly doll," Jillian said.

"What? Baby who?"

"Baby-Works-A lot," Haley said. "You're a doll that helps Mommy work around the house."

"Then why am I in a dress?"

"Jillian put that on the doll. We can change it if you want."

"Yeah, I think I'd like that. Being a baby is one thing, but having to wear a dress, that's just too much. Know what I mean?" The tears stopped a little. It seemed Uncle Johnny was getting a hold of himself again.

"I think so. Do you know what's happening?"

"Of course I do."

"What?" Jack asked.

"Yeah, tell us," Braden said.

"Where is everyone?" Jillian asked, finally coming down the stairs.

"Well, it's kind of complicated, where everyone is. I'd first have to tell you where you are."

"Where did you come from?" Jack asked. "Was everyone else there with you?"

"I really don't know. I was sleeping when Jillian called for me and brought me here."

"How did she do that?" Braden asked.

"Yeah, how did I do that? I know that I thought of you, but how did I bring you here?"

"It's your Dream Power. If you think of something you can make it appear."

"So, I can make my Mommy and Daddy appear right now too?"

"Sorry, that you can't do. You can only call on one person to help you, and you called me. Good thing, though, because I was the one who was supposed to help you."

"Did you say that was her Dream Power?" Braden asked. "Like we are in a dream right now?"

"Well, sort of a dream and sort of not. This isn't the *real* real world, but things that happen here are just as important. Think of it like another world."

“Like an alternate reality?” Jack asked, “I saw that on a cartoon. I think it was *Jimmy Neutron*.”

“Exactly like that. That’s why you feel like you are awake. But in this world, you can do things that you couldn’t do in the other one. Everyone has a Dream Power. You all have more than one. And you guys just have special ones. For example, someone who can’t walk in the other world can in this one.”

“Everyone has them?” Jillian asked.

“Yup. Most people don’t even notice because they don’t think this world is real at all. They think it is just dreaming but it is much more than that.”

“But this *is* a dream,” Haley said.

“Like I said, sort of. Sort of like the dream you had the other night.”

Haley looked the other way. “What dream?”

“You know, the one I told you not to tell anyone about. The one where you felt like you were being pulled into something. That something was this world. I was trying to show you but you weren’t ready.”

“That was you?”

“Of course it was. Didn’t you recognize my voice?”

“Not really. It sounded familiar, but I wasn’t sure. Who was the boy with the long blonde hair?”

“We’ll talk about him at another time. What’s important now is that you guys identify your Dream Powers and learn how to use them.”

“What’s your Dream Power?” Jack asked.

“I have many powers because I have been training for a long time. Right now, I don’t think I have any real powers because I am in this doll. But, you did say this is a cool doll, so I am sure I will be able to do something.”

Jack and Braden laughed and Haley kicked Jack in the leg to get him to stop. The kick hurt and Jack said so, but Haley didn’t even look at him. He should have known that Uncle Johnny wouldn’t want to know that he was stuck in a baby that went wee-wee.

“You probably will find out soon,” Haley said. She actually had to hold back from laughing herself. It was pretty funny.

“Have you guys noticed anything strange other than what Jillian can do?”

“I can move things with my mind,” Braden said.

“That’s called Telekinesis, and it is a very special power. You have to be careful with it. You can’t just move anything, or everything would be going in different directions. You have to concentrate, and you have to relax. Most important, and this goes for all of your powers, you can’t doubt yourself. You have to believe you can do the things you do or they won’t work at all.”

“Okay,” all the kids answered. They really weren’t sure what to think of all of this, but they were pretty sure Uncle Johnny wouldn’t lie to them. They needed to trust someone right then. They were all a little scared, and Uncle Johnny was the only adult around. Maybe he could help them find their parents.

“With that power, Braden, you can move objects big and small. Don’t worry about the size. But there are a few other rules.”

“Rules?” Braden asked. Every time something cool came along, there were always rules. If this power was like anything else, Uncle Johnny was going to tell him he had to share it.

“Yes, rules. Like, rule number one, you can’t doubt yourself. That goes for all of you.” The doll moved its head a little and Gabby got scared. She knocked it off her, sending it toward the floor. Haley raced over in one leap and grabbed it before it landed.

“Thanks,” Uncle Johnny said. He turned his head and looked over at Gabby. “Sorry. I didn’t mean to scare you.” Gabby just laughed.

“You were saying about rules,” Braden said, and it was obvious he didn’t like the word ‘rules’. What kid does?

“Yes. For your power, you have two other rules. One is that you can’t move a living thing. Anything that has its own mind cannot be moved through telekinesis. Got it?”

“Like animals?”

“Yes,” Uncle Johnny said.

“What about trees? They don’t have a mind, do they?”

“Yes, they kind of do, Braden. A tree can search for water with its roots in the toughest places. It can sense water. They can break through big metal pipes just to get to the water in them. They also can lean one direction or another to get more light. Also, if a tree is sick, you can rip off part of its bark and it will fight to live.”

“They didn’t teach us that in school,” Jack said.

“No, they haven’t gotten to that stuff yet I guess. I have a feeling you are going to learn a lot of things today that you were never taught and probably never will be taught in school.”

“Right, like telekinesis,” Braden said.

“Exactly. Your second rule is that you can only move things for a short period of time. After that you’ll get really tired, so don’t push it, okay?”

“Got it.”

“What about Haley?” Jack asked. “She moved before like a superhero or something.”

“I saw that when she caught me. Haley, you have the ability to soar through the air. It’s not super speed, like someone else here has, but instead, you can make yourself light and jump really high.”

“Very cool,” Haley said, “but how do I control it?”

“You really don’t have to. You just have to believe, and you can jump to the top of a house if you want to,” Uncle Johnny said. Jack felt funny talking to a doll, and he figured everyone else did too. Every time Uncle Johnny spoke, Jack wanted to laugh.

“That’s it? No other rules?”

“Well, you can’t jump *too* high into the air because you can hurt yourself when you come back down. You’ll have to test it out and see what the limits are. Also, like Braden, you can’t use your power too much or it will tire you out, especially if you are new at it.”

“Okay, that seems easy enough.”

“What about me?” Jack asked.

“Well, you were the one I was talking about when I mentioned super speed. You can run faster than any car, and with training, even faster than that. You can go long distances in seconds. And, even though your power really doesn’t have any rules, there are a few things you should know.”

“Like what?” Jack asked. He had a really big grin on his face, Haley noticed, like when he knew they were going to get pizza. Pizza was Jack’s favorite food.

“Well, if you can go that fast, you have to be careful not to run into anything, right?”

“I guess so.”

“Also, you have to be careful not to get lost.”

“Okay,” Jack said, already sounding a little impatient, like he wanted to start running right then. Haley wondered, with the stairs blocked, where he thought he was going to run to.

“And if you stop focusing on running, you’ll slow down. If you get scared, you’ll speed up, but that’s dangerous. So pay attention, okay?”

“Yeah, no problem Uncle Johnny. I can do all that.”

“Good.”

“Uncle Johnny?”

“Yes Haley?”

“What about Gabby, does she have any powers?”

“Of course she does. Jack knows what it is.”

“I do?”

“Yeah. I noticed it before. She made you do something for her, didn’t you?”

“Uh-huh. She made me get the Baby-We--, um, the doll for her,” Jack said, remembering Haley kicked him the last time he almost said something about the doll.

“She’s got the charm power. If you look into her eyes, she can make you do whatever she wants. Be careful, because she is little, and she doesn’t have much control over it. Try not to look directly into her eyes. And if she gets angry, she can drive you nuts, if you know what I mean.”

“Gabby never gets angry,” Jillian said.

“I am sure she does sometimes,” Uncle Johnny answered, “but that’s not important. You all know what your powers are and you are going to need them. Also, you all are stronger in this world than you are in the other one. Again, you are going to need that for what’s coming.”

“What’s coming?” Braden asked as he floated the television remote in the air. He seemed to have good control over his power already. Jack wanted to see how his worked but he couldn’t do it in the small basement. He’d end up running into one of the walls.

“I can’t say I know for sure. I just know there is trouble, and we have been expecting it for a while now. We used to have other Dream Fighters to handle this, but we haven’t trained a lot lately and we need new recruits. It’s kind of hard to explain it all to you.”

“Dream Fighters?”

“Yeah, that’s what we call you guys. How do you like the name?”

“I think it is kind of cool,” Braden said.

“Me too,” added Jillian.

“Good, cause it’s not like they are going to change it or something. Anyway, we needed to get some other young people involved because our last team has gotten to the point where it is time for them to retire. When they get older, they stop believing and are not as powerful as they should be.”

“I thought you got stronger when you got older,” Jack said.

“Yes, you can lift heavier things, and maybe run faster and hit a golf ball farther, but your belief gets weaker. You forget to believe actually. It’s sad, but it kind of happens to everyone.”

“Even you?” Jillian asked.

Uncle Johnny laughed. It seemed odd coming from a doll. “Even me, though a lot of people say I don’t act as old as I am. In this case, that’s a good thing.”

“So, what’s coming?” Jack asked. “You said we needed these powers because something is coming.”

“We think it is Sarlak.”

“Who?” Braden asked. “Who’s Sarlak?”

“He’s is leading a group from the planet called Gorgon. We are not really sure who he is, but the Gorgons are a race of people seven feet tall. Their planet is dying and they need a new place to live. From what we know, they think Earth would be perfect for them and they are ready to move in. They are messy, ugly, and they have really bad breath.”

Everyone laughed.

“It’s not funny. Their breath is bad. Trust me; you don’t want to be stuck in an elevator full of Gorgons. You’ll pass out.”

“Well, I won’t need to use an elevator any more. I’ll just jump to the floor I want to go to,” Haley said.

“And I can run up the stairs,” Jack added.

“If there’s something upstairs I need, I’ll just think about it,” Jillian said.

“And I can use my mind to bring it to me,” said Braden.

“Right, and Gabby will just get one of you guys to do it for you. Still, I’m sorry that your first assignment is with these creatures. It won’t be very easy. The good thing is although they are very strong, they are also not so bright. We should be able to outsmart them.”

“What do we have to do, kill them?” Braden asked.

“No, probably not. We’re going to try and avoid fighting them.”

“And we have to do it?”

“Yes. They have decided to bring their army here. That’s why we brought you into this world, to bring them here. Hopefully we can convince them that Earth is not the place they want to live.”

“But I thought this wasn’t Earth.”

“Well, it is. And things that happen here have an effect on what you call the real world. I left a trap for the Gorgons. They should be coming here soon. So, practice your skills. Jack, you’ll have to wait, it’s too dangerous for you to practice running down here. All I want you to do is think about how fast you can run. Just keep picturing it in your mind, okay?”

“Okay.”

“The rest of you, start training. We got a big day ahead of us.”

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