

Helping People Club

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Helping People Club

Robert Ziefel

This is a work of fiction. All the characters, organizations and events portrayed in this novel are either products of the author's imagination, arose through the Demongate High Paragon campaign played by Robert Ziefel and his friends, or are used fictitiously.

Helping People Club

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For My Grandfather

The hardest working man I ever met

You were taken from us too soon

I miss you grandpa

Helping People Club

1

Clashing Worlds

You only go 'round one time

Ah, summer vacation! A time to relax, and to reflect upon the events of the previous school year. That is, unless your name is Dean Chesterfield, like me. In that case, you seek no reprieve from your self appointed mission to become the greatest talisman maker ever. That, and help people. It is helping someone where this chapter of my life began.

I was hardly back home a day, putting some things away from my *talisman* bag, when I heard the doorbell. Our house, located on the eastern edge of town, was situated in the very center of the supernatural world: Demongate Island. Smack in the middle of the ocean, the island was home to people with every sort of power imaginable. In fact, it was the only place on Earth you can regularly see people using powers. People flew, Teleported, or were carried from place to place as their powers allowed, and no one looked twice. It was a paradise for a person like me, that could learn the basics of any power. I would be the first to admit, however, that it was also somewhat lonely. All my friends lived elsewhere in the world, and even though I was getting to know my parents again after rescuing them, we still weren't what you would consider a normal family.

My parents were both in the "lab," or basement as most people would call it, when the doorbell rang. The basement was part mad scientist "hackerspace," and part ancient alchemist laboratory. Both my father and mother specialized in making things, so they needed a lot of materials, space, and quiet to concentrate. They mainly created the items requested by the Foundation for use on missions, but the occasional individual request came in, keeping them busy. So on one table you might see bunsen burners merrily flaming away, heating up a strange, swirling liquid while at a nearby table, Spirit Energy hung eerily in the air, waiting to be placed into an item.

As I knew my parents were probably both hard at work, and would rather not be disturbed, I quickly descended the stairs to reach the door before they rang again. I didn't really have any expectation, opening the

door, as to whom it might be. My parents were called upon daily by various people, both for status reports or to pick up items. Yes, status reports could be done over the phone, but a lot of people with powers seemed to have somewhat of a blind spot where technology was concerned. Not that they were backwards, or didn't have access to it. No, quite often someone would Teleport in only to later exclaim, "I totally forgot about my cell phone, I could have just called you!"

So someone coming by sometimes happened two or three times a day. It seemed most people had heard of my heroic rescue of my parents and were more than happy to linger a moment and discuss little tricks they had picked up in using their powers. As I couldn't attain the level of skill most people took for granted without years of effort, I focused on being efficient and sneaky with what I could do.

It was somewhat of a surprise then, when I opened the door to see the principal of the school, Lucien DeLefeu, and a very young looking girl looking back at me. The principal I knew well, as in the last two years of schooling I had come to him many times for advice on talismans and wards, that being my chief focus and what I was best at. He was in his mid fifties, with thinning grey hair. He was leaning on his cane, which...

"When did you start needing a cane, sir?" I blurted out.

He smiled. "Nice to see you too, Dean. It's only been a day but has vacation been treating you well?"

"Uh, yes sir. Thanks for asking. I am taking some summer classes though, as I'm sure you know. So it'll be pretty short for me."

He chuckled and shook his head. "Dean, Dean, Dean. You'll have taken over the world by the time you're thirty, won't you?"

"Eh, too much paperwork. I would rather just take over the Foundation so I can rule from the shadows." My smile fell. "I mean, I'm joking, of course."

"Of course."

My eyes darted around. I opened the door wider. "Uh, please, come in. And your young friend as well. Shall I go get my parents?"

"Actually," said Mr DeLefeu, stepping past me while leaning on his cane, "I'm here to ask your opinion on something. Elizabeth, this is Dean. Dean, Elizabeth."

"Nice to meet you," I said, which she returned, shaking my hand. Elizabeth was probably a couple of years away from attending Demon-

gate High, the school found smack dab in the middle of the island. She seemed a bit sad as she walked past me into my house, and I looked her over. She was average looking, with red hair, but which oddly had a white stripe down the middle. Thin glasses were perched on her nose, and was much shorter than me. As she passed I felt her *Spirit Energy*, which shocked me. It seemed muted somehow, like it might have been higher than mine at one time, but now it seemed like she didn't have powers at all! I was intrigued, who had principle DeLefeu brought to see me?

As I brought them into the living room to sit down, I noticed her looking me over as well. She had a kind of "who have you brought me to see" look on her face, and I chuckled softly.

"The cane actually leads into Elizabeth's story, which I hope she doesn't me mind telling?" He looked over at her.

"If you think it will help," she replied. "Is he going to help us track down Elizabeth?"

"I think you'll find Dean rather surprising in a number of ways. With a little luck, we won't have to." She looked confused, and he turned back to me. "In any case, *you* haven't come across anything more out of the ordinary than usual, have you?"

"Maybe one thing," I answered, "but nothing like that." I pointed to his cane.

"Yes, a bit of a surprise for me, as well. I just woke up recently and it seemed like I had two sets of memories. One set was me not walking with a cane, the other was the opposite."

My eyes got wider. "That happened to me!" I exclaimed. "Not long after that weird guy came to us in our dream I woke up with the *Ant Spirit* being different. I would have sworn before that it would let me assist anyone with any skill. But now I remember learning it can only help someone with something they don't already know how to do. I mean, if I had known that, why would I have bothered learning it?"

"That happened to me too!" said Elizabeth, looking surprised. "I didn't want to mention it because it's such a small thing compared to everything else. Are you a *Shaman* then?"

"Sometimes," I hedged. "I think I'll want to hear your story before I tell you my own."

Lucien gestured for her to go ahead, and she took a deep breath, looking resigned.

“It all started at the Valentine’s Day dance in February. A bunch of us, and I mean a lot of my classmates that were there got powers. All at once.”

“That’s possible?” I asked.

“It is now,” Lucien nearly snarled. “Apparently.”

“Go on.”

“Long story short, we got a sort of random mix of abilities, from *Cambions* to *Petitioners*. I got *Shaman* and *Spirit Energist*, for all the good it did me.”

“Plus a little bit extra,” said Lucien.

“Right, like my copycat power and more energy. Those saved me more than being a Shaman, let me tell you. In fact, being a Shaman caused me no end of grief!”

“Really?” I was surprised. “Calling on spirits and calling out my Spirit Projection, which I still haven’t named, actually, is great.”

“Oh, it would have been. Sadly my teachers proved to be a bit evil. And by a bit, I mean a bunch. They were some *Progenitor* cult trying to make their own army... out of a bunch of school kids.”

“Progenitors? That is bad news. Just one Progenitor is like me on steroids, I can’t imagine a whole group of them.”

“Tell me about it. Wait, like you?”

“Long story.” I waved it off.

“Oh. Anyway, they hid the fact they could use all powers, and presented themselves to be just regular people who wanted to help. We only learned what they really were at the end.”

“And they were the ones teaching you?”

“Yeah, we were the test subjects for their insane little plan.”

“That must have been... intense?”

“That’s one word for it. My friends and I weren’t sure if we could trust them, and what was worse, after only a few weeks they started sending all of us on ‘missions,’ which I never really understood. I mean, fighting demons with only a couple of weeks training seemed like suicide! And we had some close scrapes.”

“It was probably supposed to be like that. See which people got the best powers, so they could be focused on for the indoctrination.”

“Yeah, well, we survived somehow. Many did choose to go with them, but not all.”

“Now wait a second, where was the Foundation during all of this?” I glared at Lucien.

He tapped his cane. "Good question."

"You can't mean- a whole group of kids?"

"A whole group of kids. Their story is that they heard about us, and that we were 'too busy doing our own thing' to come and help. Something about some fight between us and Spirit Hunter Society or something?"

"Nothing like that happened, did it?"

"No, you would have heard about it. That's what's most disturbing about this. Even worse than finding all those buses that had been stranded in time. At least those kids belonged on the island."

"You aren't kidding. I mean, even if there was some war going on or something, certainly upperclassman could have been spared to go every few days and train these- how old are you, anyway?"

"You should never ask a lady her age," Elizabeth said, putting her nose in the air.

"She's fourteen," said Lucien.

"Humph!"

I stared at Elizabeth. This little girl was fourteen? Well, some Cambions stopped aging when their powers came in, and I didn't have the whole story yet. Or maybe she was just really short. "Right. Heck, just sending me in would have been enough, I could give all the classes. At least, the basics- Anyway, go on."

"At the end, when the Foundation showed up and helped, we scattered Zephyr but didn't know what good it would do. They know they can unlock powers in people now, they'll just be more selective this time."

"Crazy. But what does all this have to do with me?"

Lucien looked at Elizabeth, who seemed to deflate a little. "During our battle with them, I got cursed, and my powers ran away," she said. "And just a week after I got them under control, too. It stinks!"

"Ran away?"

"Literally. Separated from me, became a being apart from me, and ran off. Leaving me with nothing but this funny streak in my hair."

I nodded comprehendingly. "You want me to get them back for you!"

"Can you do that?" She seemed hopeful for the first time.

"Tricky," I said after a moment. "I helped one girl, an ESPer, get her powers back. But that wasn't a curse. I'll need some more specifics."

"And you know the person with the talisman that can get them for you," said Lucien with a wink.

“Yasui!”

He nodded. “Right. I’ve requested they come to the island, and a Foundation ESPer should be bringing them along in a moment.”

“Them?”

“I thought Osman might be helpful, his eyes might see something we miss.”

“Good thought. We are the soon to be Helping People Club, might as well get started! So this cane and spirit and...” I gestured to Elizabeth. “What do you think it all means?”

He shrugged. “You closed Dreamer power off from the world. It looks like the power was more extensive than we thought, or was changing the world somehow. That’s our best guess, given the two happened so close together. Now it’s like alternate realities are coming together, or something.”

“Ah, but correlation does not imply causation!”

“True, they may be unrelated. But apart from that odd business in Florida a little while ago, we have nothing else to go on.”

“I see. At least you’re keeping an eye on it. Man, all those kids from out of time from before, and now a school full of kids who wouldn’t have had powers otherwise. Good thing we have plenty of space around here!”

“We can use the help, too, once everyone gets trained. There will be more powered individuals in the world at once than ever before because of this.”

“Then the war is nearly won, right?” I joked.

“I wish that were so.”

I asked Elizabeth some questions about her experiences, and there was another ringing of the doorbell, and both Osman and Yasui were standing there. There was another man there too, probably the ESPer that had brought them.

“Didn’t you guys just leave?” I joked.

“You know us, Dean, can’t leave you alone for five minutes,” said Yasui with a grin.

Lucien went to talk to the guy, and I introduced my friends to Elizabeth. I told them the shortened short version of Elizabeth’s adventures, and made sure Yasui had brought the *Time Frame*. She said she had, and patted the bag she was carrying.

The ESPer vanished with a *pop* and Lucien turned back to us.

“Ready to go?” he asked.

“Better tell my parents I’m going out,” I said, “just a second.”

I ran down and told them what was going on, and they said to try and be back by dinner. I said I would, then went back upstairs and stepped into the circle of light coming from the ward on the ground, no doubt created by Lucien.

I found myself in a rather dank cave, and pulled the *Sunlight Knife* out of my pouch, holding it high.

“Sorry about that, forgot it was dark in here now. They had lights going before,” apologized Lucien.

“Is that knife made of... what is that knife made of?” asked Elizabeth.

“Pure happiness,” I said. She looked at me skeptically. I laughed. “Sunlight, actually. I’ve never fought a vampire, but I’m ready if I ever have to.”

“Right.” She didn’t seem convinced. “It was over here, but how is being here going to help?” she asked Lucien.

“You’re just going to have to trust me,” he said. We went over to where she pointed, and there were some signs of a battle having been fought here. Nearby were odd buildings made of stone, and it seemed like we could only see a small part of a much larger underground city.

“This is only a small part of a much larger underground city,” said Lucien. “They were using it as a barracks before. There’s a sort of temple way over there.” He pointed. “We haven’t found any traps, but best to stay away from it, get our business done here and go. Once this is done we’re going to destroy the whole place.”

Elizabeth got a dreamy look on her face.

Yasui got out the Time Frame, and Elizabeth shook her head and told her the time to view. She started it up and we looked around. There was Elizabeth, with what must have been one of her friends. They were facing a stern looking man who was tying a pouch onto his belt.

“Pause it,” I said to Yasui, who did. “Just how much training did you have?”

“It was one hundred and twenty-two days since we got powers to the day you’re looking at here.”

“You can give me an estimate if you don’t know the exact number,” I said sarcastically. She just glared at me. “You stood there, knowing what he was and what he could do? With less than four months training?”

“Like you said, it was an intense four months.”

“I guess it must have been. Okay, play it forward.”

“It happens right at the beginning,” said Elizabeth. “Listen to what he says.”

I looked over at the Time Frame. *Had it always done sound and video? I thought it only did video, and I'm the guy that made it. Weird.*

The man pointed at Elizabeth. “If you defeat me your power will no longer be under your control,” he said, smirking.

Elizabeth held up a hand and Yasui paused it again. I stared. “That’s not a curse. That’s a... a... I don’t even know what to call that. That actually worked?”

“It worked all right.”

“That’s impossible. I never learned to play around with curses because they seemed really dangerous, but even I know a curse has to have some kind of cure.”

“Well,” hedged Lucien, “they can also have a means of prevention. But you’re right, that wasn’t normal. Keep watching.”

Yasui started it up again, and we watched in morbid fascination as Elizabeth and her friend, Matt, threw energy bolt after energy bolt at the progenitor. Nothing fazed him.

“You’re both using the same technique, is that the Thunderbird spirit?” I asked.

Elizabeth nodded. “One of only *two* spirits I was able to learn. You’ll see why in a second.”

The battle raged on, and they were joined by another boy, who Elizabeth called Sam. He looked like a Spirit Hunter, but even with three people fighting him, the man didn’t seem too concerned.

“Who was this guy?” I asked, aghast. “How much energy did you all throw at him during this battle?”

“Nearly all of it,” answered Elizabeth. “I used the last of it to do this-” She pointed, and we watched the younger her get out her Spirit Projection, which seemed to be an ant.

“Why didn’t you do that in the first place?” I asked, holding up a hand so Yasui paused it again.

“Too risky. You’ll see.”

“Okay.”

The ant didn’t have any time to react, as after all that, an angel called by Matt tore through the man’s neck, severing his head.

“All that, and an angel ended it?” Osman asked, rather disappointed. “I’ll have to learn that angel though.”

But the scene wasn’t over. The head rolled around and spoke yet another curse. “May your luck turn on you when you need it the most,” he said, and died.

“Okay, that was a death hex, so I guess it doesn’t need a cure.”

“There,” said Elizabeth, pointing through the frame at an angle. “Take a look at Anthy.”

“You named your ant spirit Anthy?” I asked. But suddenly the ant was wreathed in fire, and a beautiful woman stood there. Younger Elizabeth was staring at her in horror, and then the woman basically thanked her and left.

“And that’s how I lost my powers,” explained Elizabeth sadly. “Do you really think there’s any hope for getting them back?”

“Wait, this doesn’t make sense. Yasui, run it back to where she’s cursed again, will you?” Again, the man pointed and spoke the curse. “Yeah, this makes no sense. He specifically pointed at you, Elizabeth. He didn’t say ‘your group’ or ‘if anyone in the next hour’ he said *you* specifically. But you didn’t defeat him, heck, you didn’t even scratch him. That angel was the one that bit his head off. How did the curse take effect?”

“You’ve got me,” said Elizabeth, shrugging. “You’re the supposed expert.”

“I am the supposed expert!” I said with confidence. I turned to Lucien. “What the heck?”

“We don’t know. Best guess is, he’s using something that looks like a Mystic hex, but which isn’t.”

“Hummmm. That could work. After all, they’ve had a lot more time to figure stuff like that out. They could be using powers we haven’t considered. But wait, how could he use a death hex? He’s not a Mystic!”

“True,” said Lucien seriously. “However we do have only a limited amount of information about them. Conventional wisdom states that only people like you, Dean, can unlock that sort of thing through study. Progenitors, from what we know, can’t. Perhaps we were misled in some way, and they can. It’s hard to say, they aren’t really sharing that info.”

“So who was that woman?” asked Yasui.

“That was who I was trying to get under control this whole time,” answered Elizabeth.

A light dawned for me. “You got a *Sundered Spirit* along with all the rest?”

She nodded.

“No wonder you didn’t want anything to do with your powers. Man!” I looked at this small girl with a new respect. “Suddenly getting powers, being trained by evil people, and on top of that your power could go crazy at any moment and get away from you. That was harsh.”

“I know. I did so much work on her prison it’s not even funny. Hours of dragging steel plates around underground, in my head, making her that cozy little underground hideaway. Wasted. If you can somehow get my power back, that would be great. I never wanted it, but now I can’t even see one of my friends when he’s using his power. Plus, if you can break my curse, maybe you can help Matt break his, too.”

“This is going to be tricky!” I said, pacing. “Very tricky. Osman, what do you see?”

Osman stared at her.

“There’s a darkness inside her,” he said at last. “But I’m not sure what I would do about it.”

I thought a moment more. “Would you mind if I looked at your soul? It probably won’t provide any clues, but I have to say I’ve tried everything before I give up.”

“My... soul? Sure, I guess?”

“Great! Lay down and relax, this will just take a moment.”

She did, and I set my hand on her stomach. She glared at me.

“I wonder if I could just touch an arm. Oh well, too late now. Don’t fight me on this, it’s hard enough as it is.”

She nodded, and with some effort I got her soul out and took a look. Like Osman had said, even her soul had a sort of hole in it.

“It’s different from *Asteraceae* though,” said Osman, looking at it. “If I had to explain the difference to someone, I would this soul was cut, where the one before was burned.”

“It feels different,” *Katrina’s Illusion* said to us. “Though of course I’m better at feeling stuff out now, so maybe that’s helping.”

“So if I’m understanding this,” I said, showing the soul to Lucien. “Because of this curse, or whatever it was, a part of this girl’s soul broke off and became mobile.” He nodded. “Could we somehow track it down, and have an actual *Soul Wielder* stick them back together?”

“What do you think, given what you know about the powers of a Soul Wielder?”

“I was afraid you would say that. And there won’t be a talisman that can help, as this has probably never happened before. Man, I wish Dreamers were still around so we could just go back in time!” I let the soul go, and Elizabeth stirred.

“Actually, I was hoping you would bring that up,” said Lucien. “As that might be the only solution.”

“But we cut off that power! Unless Sadye has retained some of it?” I asked hopefully.

Lucien shook his head. “Nope, we’re back to the old standby.” He drew a ward out of his own pouch, and handed it to me.

“I’ve never seen one this complex,” I exclaimed. “Don’t tell me-”

“It’s technically forbidden, but I think in this circumstance it’s justified.”

Elizabeth’s eyes were wide. “You can even time travel? I knew a guy who could make those paper tag things, before he got killed. But you saw that progenitor. He curses me right off the bat!”

“Exactly. We’ll have to time it exactly right. But Dean, there is a danger in using this ward, and that’s why we don’t allow just anyone to learn it.”

“I figured there was. What is it?”

“Two things. The first is energy. It takes a lot to stay back in time. Figure it drains enough to kill a normal person every second you say in the past. Even you won’t have long.”

“That’s not very long!” I agreed. “What can I even do in a couple of seconds?”

“I hear you’re fond of the Contain ward.”

“Sure, put an object into a piece of paper. But that won’t hold a living thing for long, I’m not that great at wards yet. And if that guy gets loose...” I trailed off.

“But you would have enough time to use another ward before that, taking him by surprise.”

“I suppose, I could hold one in each hand. What are you thinking of?”

“Cut.”

“Oh, I get it. Chop his head off, suck the now ‘unliving’ head into the Contain ward, and bury it someplace. What’s the other thing? You did say two.”

“You have to be looking at the exact time you want to go to. No problem with that here, thanks to your foresight.”

“Yeah, I guess so. Okay, that sounds good. Get me a Cut ward and I’ll go at it.”

“Wait a second,” said Osman. “Isn’t this plan a bit hasty? I mean, you’re talking about changing the past. It worked when we used Dreamer power, but that’s because we were putting events right. They had already happened, and Seers warned us about maintaining the timeline. Think about what happens if you use this ward and change Elizabeth’s destiny in the past.”

I thought a moment. “I guess she would retain her powers... oh, and never need me to go back in time to do what I’m about to do. I see where you’re coming from.”

“We could work around that,” said Yasui, not to be outdone. “Have Dean drop a note to Elizabeth and to himself, telling them what to do. To come back here as soon as they can and finish this guy off in the way we’re about to.”

“And thus, closing the loop. Yasui, that’s great! That could work!”

“Do you really think so?” asked Elizabeth.

“If I get behind him, and scoop him up before he can speak that curse, yeah. I’ll have to practice it a few times before I leave, but I think so.”

And so I practiced. I had the Contain ward in my left hand, the Cut ward in my right. Lucien would stick me with the time travel ward, and I would appear behind the progenitor. I would slap Cut on his neck, putting energy in and hopefully chopping it off. Then the Contain ward in my left hand would be used. As the head got sucked in I would draw the letter out of my pocket with my right and chuck it on the floor. Then I would grab the time travel ward off, and be returned to my own time.

The moment came, and Lucien slapped the ward on me.

1

Clashing Worlds

You only go 'round one time

Ah, summer vacation! A time to relax, and to reflect upon the events of the previous school year. That is, unless your name is Dean Chesterfield, like me. In that case, you seek no reprieve from your self appointed mission to become the greatest talisman maker ever. That, and help people. It is helping someone where this chapter of my life began.

I was hardly back home a day, putting some things away from my *talisman* bag, when I heard the doorbell. Our house, located on the eastern edge of town, was situated in the very center of the supernatural world: Demongate Island. Smack in the middle of the ocean, the island was home to people with every sort of power imaginable. In fact, it was the only place on Earth you can regularly see people using powers. People flew, Teleported, or were carried from place to place as their powers allowed, and no one looked twice. It was a paradise for a person like me, that could learn the basics of any power. I would be the first to admit, however, that it was also somewhat lonely. All my friends lived elsewhere in the world, and even though I was getting to know my parents again after rescuing them, we still weren't what you would consider a normal family.

My parents were both in the "lab," or basement as most people would call it, when the doorbell rang. The basement was part mad scientist "hackerspace," and part ancient alchemist laboratory. Both my father and mother specialized in making things, so they needed a lot of materials, space, and quiet to concentrate. They mainly created the items requested by the Foundation for use on missions, but the occasional individual request came in, keeping them busy. So on one table you might see bunsen burners merrily flaming away, heating up a strange, swirling liquid while at a nearby table, Spirit Energy hung eerily in the air, waiting to be placed into an item.

As I knew my parents were probably both hard at work, and would rather not be disturbed, I quickly descended the stairs to reach the door

before they rang again. I didn't really have any expectation, opening the door, as to whom it might be. My parents were called upon daily by various people, both for status reports or to pick up items. Yes, status reports could be done over the phone, but a lot of people with powers seemed to have somewhat of a blind spot where technology was concerned. Not that they were backwards, or didn't have access to it. No, quite often someone would Teleport in only to later exclaim, "I totally forgot about my cell phone, I could have just called you!"

So someone coming by sometimes happened two or three times a day. It seemed most people had heard of my heroic rescue of my parents and were more than happy to linger a moment and discuss little tricks they had picked up in using their powers. As I couldn't attain the level of skill most people took for granted without years of effort, I focused on being efficient and sneaky with what I could do.

It was somewhat of a surprise then, when I opened the door to see the principal of the school, Lucien DeLefeu, and a very young looking girl looking back at me. The principal I knew well, as in the last two years of schooling I had come to him many times for advice on talismans and wards, that being my chief focus and what I was best at. He was in his mid fifties, with thinning grey hair. He was leaning on his cane, which...

"It's really you!" blurted the girl, eyes wide as she stared at me. "The boy that saved me! I can finally thank you!"

She pushed past Lucien and grabbed me up in a hug.

A bit panicked, I looked over at Lucien who seemed to be trying not to laugh. "Uh, do I know you?" I asked.

"Of course, silly!" said the girl, letting me go. "You saved me from that awful progenitor. Don't tell me you don't remember? It was, like, a couple of days ago!" She laughed. "You're just messing with me, aren't you? Oh, it's so good to finally be able to say thank you. So; thank you!"

She started hugging me again.

"Uh, you're welcome?"

Lucien cleared his throat. "Perhaps this might clear up a few things for you," he said, putting a folded up piece of paper into my hand.

"Wait, you got a letter too? Why would you need to send yourself a letter? You're weird!" she laughed again.

"You're not the first person to say that," I said, unfolding the paper.

I started to read.

Dear Alternate Dean,

You might be a bit confused at the moment, due to the sudden appearance of Elizabeth here. Yes, that's her name. She can tell you the whole story, which I suggest you believe and act on. Basically, you're going to need to go to a certain cave, take a ward from the principal, and save two people from being cursed, in the past. The boy Matt was going to have his luck turn against him, and Elizabeth's Sundered Spirit would have actually ripped away from her soul and started running around. Yeah, I know, it can do that? You can probably watch how we solved it last time with the Time Frame, as it's already happened in your reality. I just wrote you this note so you know the whole thing is legit and will go with them. If it worked, this letter reached you so do like the Fraggles Rock and pass it on. Better use a new sheet of paper though, you know why.

Things are getting stranger. Remember to ask about the cane.

The password is Draymock Tomarimas.

Good luck.

“The letter checks out,” I said. As naturally I had thought of a password once I learned time travel was possible, just in case I ever ran into it again. Never thought I would actually be using it, though! “Please, why don't you both come in and you can tell me what I have to do.”

So the energetic girl, who I sensed had a ton of Spirit Energy, (probably why she had trouble sitting still), and Lucien came in and sat down.

“Where did you go, anyway?” asked Elizabeth. “You just showed up out of nowhere, saved us, and disappeared again. How did you even know to be there? It was *so cool*.”

“Finally, someone who appreciates a timely rescue.” I grinned. “Apparently, according to this, I went back in time to save you. From now, or at least a little while in the future. So I probably popped in from the future and then returned there.”

“You can do that?”

“I don't know. I can do that?” I asked Lucien.

“There is a way, yes. How exactly do you know the letter ‘checks

out' as you put it? I was pretty skeptical when Elizabeth showed me the letter with what I had to do. But I figured I would come see you about it in any case."

I showed him the password.

"You have a time travel password?"

"Doesn't everybody?"

"I'm thinking of one right one," said Elizabeth.

"Right," he said slowly. "Anyway, I guess we're off to this cave the note mentions, with Yasui and the Time Frame. I'm having a Foundation ESPer bring her along, so she should be here shortly."

In the meantime, I had Elizabeth explain about how she came to be fighting a progenitor and such, and what Mr DeLefeu's cane meant. Then Yasui arrived and I went with them to the cave.

"There you are," said Yasui, watching me appear behind the progenitor that Elizabeth and Matt were about to fight.

We watched what "I" did.

"Odd that when I pop in from the future, Matt and you don't react until after I've cut this guy's head off. You think they would at least look at me."

"Probably an Ignore ward," said Lucien. "My note said you knew that one?"

"I do know that one! Seems I thought of everything. Which, of course, is only natural." I said this last very modestly, and I could tell everyone believed me.

I watched the events carefully, and then practiced them a few times, until I got them down.

"Nothing like watching yourself succeed in the past to give you that little boost of confidence," Yasui remarked.

"I know. For just one tiny fraction of a second I thought about doing something differently than I just watched, just to see what would happen."

"Don't mess around with time travel," cautioned Lucien.

"Not to worry, I said it was only a passing fancy. Okay, do I have everything?"

They looked me over, comparing how I looked in the frame to how I looked at the moment.

"Looks good. I'll slap the Ignore ward on, then the one for Time Travel. Good luck."

I hooked into my *Dragon talisman* so I could drain it of energy while in the past. I shoved it back into my pocket, made sure I had everything close at hand, nodded, and was off.

I appeared behind the progenitor, just as the slightly younger Elizabeth, Matt in tow, walked up to him.

Only have seconds, I thought to myself, feeling my energy draining away. As the progenitor started asking Elizabeth “Do you *really* want to do this?” I slapped the Cut ward onto his neck, spending extra energy to activate it and make a clean cut.

“What?” croaked the progenitor. Elizabeth and Matt did a double take as the Ignore ward burned away and I became “visible” again. Wasting no time I slapped the Contain ward on the head as it was intoning “Whoever just killed me, you shall suffer-” cutting it off.

Well, I had already cut it off, I mean cutting his speech- you know what I mean.

It vanished.

Gripping the now used Contain ward tightly I drew the package with the freshly printed pages out from under my arm, and gave it a toss. With a final two fingered salute to the astonished kids, I ripped the Time Travel ward off and collapsed back in the future.

“Dean!” everyone shouted.

“Fine, I’m fine,” I assured them. “You weren’t kidding about the energy drain.”

“No, it’s pretty severe. But I figured your own energy, and the extra stuff you stash in the talisman, would be enough.”

“I can give you some!” said Elizabeth, bending down to touch me. “You did just save me, after all.” I felt energy flowing back into me.

“I can give you some,” mimicked Yasui softly. I glanced over at her and she gave me an innocent expression.

“That seems to have worked out well,” remarked Lucien.

“He really would have cursed me and made Elizabeth run away? And turned Matt’s luck against him?”

“That’s what the note said,” answered Lucien.

“Then we’ve really dodged a bullet. The last time she got loose, well, I don’t like to even think about it. Thank you, Dean. If there’s ever *anything* I can do for you, just name it.” She hugged me again, and Yasui gave her a dark look.

“T’was but a trifle, my lady,” I said, Elizabeth helping me up. “I think I’m going to go home and have a nice nap.”

Lucien chuckled. “You’ve earned it. I’ll see you in a few days for your summer classes.”

“See you when classes start,” said Elizabeth. “I’m super excited to go to an actual school and learn properly from now on. And Porta is just amazing, and I haven’t even seen it all. Zephyr really, really messed me up. This place, I can’t even tell you. I’ll be looking for you in school!”

Yasui came over and kissed me on the cheek. “See you soon, Dean. Good job saving... her.” She threw Elizabeth a ‘see, he’s mine’ look but she was ignoring it, asking Lucien if she couldn’t take some summer classes too, or at least tour the island a little more.

I really hope this isn’t going to be a problem.

Thanks for reading this sample chapter.

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hardcover.

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