

Doran Stacey

The
Ghost
Lord

Chapter 1

House In The Woods

The school bell rang loudly and the doors flung open with a bang. The children poured out into the yard, flowing like a torrent of water spilling through a flood barrier.

Will walked out into the yard with Jack Parker, his best mate, and Russell Jennings (or Russ as he liked to be called). They quickly moved over to the old brick wall, under the solitary oak tree in the centre of the yard.

“Wait for it, here she comes” said Russ quietly. He barely finished speaking when she stepped out into the yard. Will stared in a dreamy gaze of admiration. Her long blonde hair flowing behind her, elegantly walking, flowing like an angel floating from heaven.

“Hey... Snap out of it” interrupted Jack.

Everyday they did the same ritual on leaving school. They sat under the same tree waiting for Susan Adams to leave the building.

“Why do we go through this everyday, just ask her and be done with it” complained Jack, “Yes give us all a break” said Russ.

Will had a huge crush on Susan and this had been going on for the last two years at school. He just never had the courage to go up

to her and ask her to go out, or even just talk to her.

“I am just picking my moment, I will definitely ask her tomorrow.”

Susan left the yard through the gates and Will let out a big sigh, partly in adoration, but also partly in relief. The friends jumped off the wall and headed for the gates. “Another chance missed” exclaimed Jack, shaking his head in disbelief. “Trust me, tomorrow’s the day” replied Will, with a somewhat worried smile on his face.

“Are you coming to the shop on Station Road to get some food, and maybe wind up old Roger the codger” said Russ walking backwards down the long straight road past the bus stops. “No” replied Will, “I’m going over to my grandma and grandad’s house in Parsons Woods tonight, I will see you at school tomorrow.” “Ok, smell you later” quipped Russ. “See you mate” said Jack as he turned to join Russ, who was now a good distance down the road. Will turned and set off in the opposite direction, heading up the road towards the older part of town and the direction of Parsons Woods.

Will had lived in Benton all his life. His father Eric Peterson had lived there, and his

father before him, Will's grandfather Joseph Peterson.

There had been a Peterson in the town of Benton for centuries, and the newest addition to the bloodline was William Peterson (or Will as he preferred to be called).

Will reached the rickety old gate at the edge of the woods. By now the light was starting to fade and he paused briefly, staring into the dark void beyond the tree line. There was no longer car access beyond this gate as his grandparents had not owned a car for many years, just a narrow dirt track remained.

He placed his hands on top of the gate and hopped over in one clean jump. A move that he had done many times before. He moved with a steady pace along the track and entered the tree line. As he hurried through the trees, the quiet eeriness of the woods started to unnerve him. It was a path he had been using for years, but even after all this time he couldn't help but feel nervous and on edge.

It took a good ten minutes of walking through the dark, quiet woods, jumping at every rustle of leaves and chirp of animal before he reached the large old house of his grandparents. It was a huge building protruding from the thick of the woodland. Many of the

surrounding trees and plants had become entwined with parts of the house. It was in a state of disrepair and he wondered why his grandparents remained in the property.

He slowly approached the solid heavy door on the front of the house, glancing at the many windows as he did so, to see if he could capture a reassuring glimpse of his grandparents. He did not see them in any window, which seemed strange. They usually looked out for him, knowing what time he usually arrived after finishing school.

He knocked three heavy bangs on the door and waited a moment. There was no answer, so he knocked again six times, and hard enough to hurt his knuckles. After realising nobody was coming, he tried the door handle. The door creaked open on its rusty hinges. It was dark inside as the daylight was fading fast, and there were no lights to be seen anywhere in the house.

He cautiously crept inside, wondering where they were. “Grandma.....Grandad” he shouted loudly. He could hear no reply and began to get worried. He could feel his heart beat getting faster as his concern grew. He picked up the box of matches they kept next to the door and lit the gas lamp and closed the

heavy door behind him. It banged loudly and echoed throughout the house. If anybody was there they would certainly have heard it. He paused for a few more moments hoping to hear his Grandparents warming voices and see their smiling faces, but to no avail.

He edged forwards into the dark, carrying the gas lamp. There was no electricity so he kept the matches with him and lit candles as he reached them. The entrance hallway was now softly illuminated by candlelight, but all the rooms leading off, and the ascending staircase remained in darkness.

He walked quietly to the first room and held the lamp in front of him, trying to illuminate the darkness. The light glared in his face, not helping him see into the shadowy void. “Grandma....Grandad” he whispered softly. All he could see was creepy shadows in the dark, they seemed to crawl around the walls and floor as he moved the lamp around in an effort to see better.

He made his way to the next room, floorboards creaking as he walked. He froze in terror. A loud bang from up the staircase stopped him in his tracks. He paused and listened, looking up at the wide, decorative stairway that formed a feature in the vast

hallway. It was too dark to see much past the first few steps, but his eyes strained to try and pick something out.

Again a loud bang, followed by a series of smaller bangs, like the patter of feet running across the old carpeted floorboards upstairs.

“Who’s there, who’s up there” he shouted nervously. He was again met with an unnerving silence. After plucking up courage and taking a deep breath, he headed for the stairs. Stepping on the first one, a loud creak broke the silence, stopping him in his tracks again. Each wooden step he continued to step on, creaked underfoot. He cringed at the noise he was making while trying to be quiet.

Arriving at the top of the stairs he lit several candles on the landing, to give him a better look. He listened for a while and then asked again. “Are you up here grandma....grandad....it’s William.” There was no reply yet again.

He started to look in the rooms one at a time, looking for whoever he had heard running around. Each one empty, dark and shadowy like the rest of the house. There were two rooms remaining to be checked. They were the only rooms with the doors closed. He took a deep breath and edged quietly down the corridor

towards one of the rooms. He tried to breathe as shallow as he could to not make a sound.

On reaching the room, he leaned forward and placed his ear on the door to listen for any sound. Nothing. He moved his hand and grasped the handle. Slowly, he turned the knob and opened the door a few inches. Lamp in hand, he extended his arm through the opening and his face warily followed, trying to focus on who or what was in the room.

After scanning the shadows for several seconds, he entered the room fully and lit a candle on a table next to the bed. Standing in the centre of the room, he was confused and frustrated, going around in a full circle. This room also was empty. Where had the noises come from? Had he just imagined it? He was starting to doubt himself. He headed back into the corridor to the other closed door, his grandparents bedroom.

Just then, a loud screech and a shudder shook the walls, followed by an almighty bang, even louder than before. It came from above the ceiling and his eyes glanced upwards to see a large door, with a cord that pulled down steps to the attic.

He walked underneath the door and pulled the cord to release the steps. They unfolded,

down to the floor and he stood at the bottom looking up into the opening above. Lamp raised above his head, he began to climb the narrow steps. Upon reaching the floor of the attic, he slowly lifted his head above the dusty floorboards, peeking across the floor with the lamp raised in the air, slowly rising until his whole head was exposed. He looked around. It was a huge space, very dusty and full of cobwebs. There was lots of old furniture scattered around, objects covered in sheets, many boxes, lots of old junk collected over many years.

He took the last step, and was now fully in the vast attic space, looking down the length of the room as far as the dim light would allow. The huge old wooden beams of the roof fell down either side to the edges of the floor, behind all of the stacks of clutter. He proceeded along the room, stepping over, and weaving in and out of everything in his way. His eyes scanning from side to side into the shadows.

Something caught his eye at the far end of the room. He turned his head and paused. A faint, green glow pulsated behind a large stack of boxes. Then a piercing screech erupted from behind the boxes, making him jump back in terror. It lasted several seconds, before going

silent. The green glow continued to illuminate the area beyond the boxes. He took a deep breath and crept forward, towards them. Reaching them, he raised the lamp and peered over the top to see what was beyond. Just then the glowing stopped and an eerie silence fell on the room.

On the floor, there was something with an old, brown, tattered piece of cloth wrapped around it. He pushed the boxes to one side and sat on one of the smaller ones, next to the cloth. He picked it up and began to unfold it. Inside there was a folded board, and a shiny green stone. He opened the board and was shocked to find it was a Ouija board. Had his grandparents been contacting spirits? He studied the green stone more closely. It was like nothing he had seen before. It was shaped like a huge diamond, but had a smooth shiny green surface. Inside it there was a swirling green mist, that twirled and spun around like a vortex trapped inside. It was one of the strangest things he had ever seen.

Suddenly the stone blazed out a blindingly bright green light in his face, and let out a piercing screech. It startled him and he jumped up off the box, tripped and fell backwards and went tumbling over. He crashed to the hard

wooden floor and the stone shattered into pieces, releasing the green vapour from within. He took a deep breath as his head came down hard onto the floor, in doing so inhaled the green vapours from the stone and then knocked him out cold.

After several minutes he began to come round. He had a cut on his head that was bleeding slightly, and one hell of a headache. He also noticed a painful, burning sensation in his throat. He coughed several times and took some deep breaths to try and ease it. It started to ease after a while. It began to feel more like a sore throat.

He looked at the pieces of shattered stone on the floor. "My grandad is going to kill me" he said shaking his head. He picked up the pieces of stone, along with the Ouija board and wrapped them back up in the cloth. Placed them back on the floor where he found them, and restacked all the boxes back in front. Sore and shaken, he made his way downstairs, left the house and made his way back home.

Chapter 2

A New Found Confidence

The next day at school, Will walked into the classroom with Jack and Russ. They made their way over to their desks and slumped down into their seats. Russ folded his arms behind his head, leaned back on his chair and placed his feet up on the table, giving out a relaxed sigh. Will and Jack turned their chairs around to face Russ.

“Wait till you hear what happened to me last night” said Will. He proceeded to tell his friends the events of the previous night at his grandparents house, about the strange noises, the absence of his grandparents and finding the Ouija board and green stone.

“ You daft sod!” laughed Russ on hearing about Will falling and breaking the stone. “Where do you think your gran and grandad have disappeared to then?” asked Jack, in a more concerned manner than Russ. “Don’t know” replied Will. “They definitely weren’t in that house....but someone was....or something.”

“Come on.....sit down....lets have some quiet.” The teacher entered the classroom, and Will and Jack spun round in their chairs. Russ dropped his feet off the table and the legs of his chair rocked and went falling backwards and he landed sprawled out on the floor.

“Russell Jennings.....get up you clown!” yelled the teacher.

Will’s eyes immediately caught sight of Susan, sat towards the front of the class. She turned around in her chair following the teacher as he strutted around the classroom, talking in a constant drone to the class. She glanced in Will’s direction, and he smiled at her. She returned it, and their eyes met for a brief moment, until she continued her attention on the teacher. Jack turned around, he and Russ looked at each other and raised their eyebrows. Until then, every time Susan looked at Will, he looked away, as though not noticing her.

“What was that all about?” said Jack after leaving the class. “What do you mean?” replied Will. “We saw you, you cant hide anything from us ” quipped Russ. “You actually shared a moment with Sue” added Jack. “Today’s the day” said Will, with a confidence about him, “I told you yesterday.....mark my words.” Jack and Russ stopped in their tracks and looked at

each other as Will carried on walking, “Naaaaar!” they both exclaimed shaking their heads, and then started walking again to catch him up.

Later that day, at lunchtime, Will sat down at a table in the canteen with his food slopped onto his tray, looking very unappetising. Jack and Russ were not with him, and he wondered where they had got to. He looked at his watch, they were ten minutes late for lunch already. He started eating his food. While munching on a carrot, he looked around the canteen, looking for Susan to see where she was sitting. He spotted her over in the corner, sat on her own.

He immediately, and without hesitation, got up and headed towards her. He was guided by a strange and powerful feeling of confidence that seemed to pull him straight towards her, as if obeying what he desired to do, but did not usually have the courage to.

“Do you mind if I sit with you Susan” asked Will. “No, not at all” replied Susan, giving a welcoming smile.

Will felt an energy around him, that filled him with confidence and he felt totally relaxed for the first time talking to her.

They enjoyed half an hour of chatting about each other, and were starting to get to know each other and felt a mutual affection.

“Would you like to see me out of school sometime, because I think you are really lovely” asked Will. Susan was quite taken aback by this new found confidence, although she had always had a soft spot for him, it had frustrated her that he would never approach her.

“Yes I would really like that” she replied, trying not to come across as too eager, and give away her feelings for him.

Will left the canteen with a smile on his face, feeling very proud of himself, but also wondering why he suddenly felt so powerful and courageous.

His mood soon turned to concern when, upon turning a corner he saw Russ being pinned to a wall by Bob Edwards, the school bully, with his gang of mates gathered around. Jack was pleading with Bob to let Russ go, “Come on Bob, leave him alone.” Russ, being himself, had made some comment to Bob, not meaning any harm, it was just his way. Bob had taken it completely the wrong way.

“You’re gonna get the pasting of your life you little maggot” Bob snarled at Russ with gritted teeth.

Just as Bob drew back his arm clenching his fist, Will, who was some distance away, felt a huge surge of energy and he reached out his arm as if to stop the attack. Bob dropped to the floor onto his knees and let out a cry of pain. His mates looked on mystified by Bob's sudden behaviour. His nose was now bleeding, and he rose to his feet and hurried away, tipping his head back and holding his nose. His mates dispersed, and Russ and Jack were left stood alone. Will reached his friends and asked if they were alright.

“What on earth happened there?” asked Russ. “He got a nosebleed” replied Jack.

Will was very confused. It had felt like he had caused Bob's nosebleed by the energy from his anger directed at him. But how was that possible, he thought. Perhaps it was just coincidence. They gathered their things and made their way to the next lesson.

The school bell rang loudly, and the doors flung open. It was the end of the day. Will and his friends made their way over to the oak tree in the yard and sat on the wall underneath it.

Susan walked out of the doors and headed over towards where they were sat on the wall. Russ and Jack looked at each other in disbelief.

“Hi William” she said as she reached them.
“Hi Susan” replied Will.

“I will be round at your house about six then” he said with a smile. “Ok, I will be ready” replied Susan. “I’ll see you later then, bye.” “Bye, see you tonight.” Susan gave a big warming smile as she headed for the gates. “Bye Russ, bye Jack” she politely said as she walked away. “Bye Sue” they both called together, looking shell shocked and again looking at each other confused as to what just happened.

They both turned to face Will. “Do you mind filling us in on what just happened” asked Jack, “Yeah, what the hell’s going on” demanded Russ.

“I just saw her sat on her own at dinner, and went over to talk to her.....and asked her out.” Will explained to them about how he had talked to Susan and got on so well with her, and also the fact that he suffered no nerves at all. He told them he had been feeling different all day. Somehow more confident, and stronger both physically and mentally.

“Whatever has come over you, it is certainly a good thing” said Russ, slapping him gently on the back. “Yes, today sure is a good day” smiled Jack, really pleased for his friend

finally hitting it off with the girl he has been besotted with for years. Will smiled and thought 'Yes, this really is a fine day', and he let out a sigh of contentment as the three of them left the yard and exited through the gates.

Chapter 3

Fright Out At The Movies

Two minutes to six, and Will approached the door at Susan's house. He knocked and waited. Susan opened it and greeted him with a big welcoming smile. "Hi Will, come in, I'm nearly ready." He entered the hallway and Susan shut the door behind him.

It was a very modern house, very clean and tidy. Susan led him through to the lounge where her dad was sat in front of the television.

"Hello Mr Adams" said Will respectfully. Mr Adams turned his attention to Will, away from the television. "Hello there... William, isn't it?"

"Yes sir it is" replied Will. "I hear you are in Susan's class at school."

"Yes sir, quite a few of them." Mr Adams turned to Susan and said, "He's very polite....I like that" and he turned back to the television. Susan finished off getting ready, and they left the house.

They were heading to town, the cinema in the high street. They walked to the end of the road, to the bus stop. While waiting for the bus, they began their conversation where they left

off earlier in the school canteen. There was an instant connection between them and they both felt the start of something special.

They arrived at the cinema and decided on a film, then queued up for a while until they were let in. It was a romantic comedy that Susan had really wanted to see. Will would have preferred to see the war film that was in the other screen, but was being a gentleman and chose the film that was more suitable.

Sat in their seats, the lights went out and the film started. Will looked across at Susan, who was looking at the screen. He took her hand in his, and she looked at him and smiled. Hand in hand they watched the film.

Twenty minutes had gone. Will started to get a cold chill, and a tingle down his spine. He felt very uneasy and started to shift around in his seat. He glanced across at Susan, who's attention was on the screen. It seemed to him like everybody else was unaware of him, and if he stood up and shouted, nobody would notice him. He sat there, his heart started beating faster and he suddenly started getting images in his mind of the strange events from his grandparents house. He felt overcome with fear and panic, but remained still in his seat, not

wanting Susan to realise his situation, and to try and be brave.

A mist started to roll along the floor, down the aisle next to his seat. He moved his eyes to glance, not moving his head for fear of what he might see. He once again looked at Susan, and the people around him. Everybody was fixed on the film, oblivious to the thick mist, which was now flowing down the rows of seats and covering everyone's feet and legs.

Even the sound of the film had seemed to fade to a distant muffle. It had gone very eerie and quiet, and Will felt separate and distant to all the other people around him. The mist frothed and churned on the floor, moving like it had a consciousness of its own.

A faint voice whispered "William." Will turned his head to try and see where it had come from. He was feeling very scared.

"William" once again a voice whispered his name. It seemed to come from within the mist, from all around him, he couldn't pin point it.

Just then he heard faint footsteps starting to walk from behind him, at the back of the cinema. Getting closer and louder. He sat looking forward, not daring to look, as they grew ever nearer, until they reached just behind his seat and came to a stop.

He sat, frozen in terror. Eyes fixed forward and pausing his breathing in anticipation. He could feel his heart pounding and a bead of sweat trickled down his face from his brow. Just then he felt something touch his shoulder and he leapt out of his seat and let out a loud yell.

Everybody in the cinema was looking at him. Susan said “What’s the matter Will, are you alright?” Will stood looking around at everyone. The mist had disappeared and everything seemed normal once again, apart from him making an embarrassment of himself. “Sorry” he said, glancing around at people, “Sorry.” He sat down and people returned to watching the film. A few were whispering between themselves and glaring at him with frowns and looks of disgust on their faces. “What was that all about? Did you fall asleep?” asked Susan. Will had to think for a minute, had he fallen asleep and dreamt the whole thing, he was no longer sure. “Yes I probably did.....sorry” he replied. He thought this would stop any further questions on the matter, but he wasn’t convinced of this himself.

After the film had finished, they walked out of the cinema hand in hand. “I’m sorry you didn’t enjoy it Will, we should have seen the

other film” “No that’s fine” he replied, “I have just not been sleeping well lately.....it wasn’t the film....that was fine.”

They left the building and made their way to the bus stop to return home, but Will felt uneasy and confused about the strange episode that had occurred that evening.

On arriving back at Susan’s road they stepped off the bus and Will walked her to the house, up to the doorstep. “Thanks, I really enjoyed it tonight” said Susan with a warm smile on her face. “Me too” replied Will, “I really like being with you.” They said their goodbyes and he leaned towards her and gave her a soft, gentle kiss on her cheek.

Susan’s face was lit up with a beaming smile and she trotted into the house. Will walked down the path, away from the house with a big smile on his face, feeling very happy and pleased with himself.

Chapter 4

Bump In The Night

Later that night, Will was in his room, lying on his bed in front of the television. It was nearly 11.00pm and his eyes were starting to feel heavy, but he was trying to keep awake to see the end of the programme he was watching. His eyelids began to slowly fall, and his breathing shallowed. His head started to tilt sideways, and then dropped to his shoulder, waking him up again for a brief moment, before his eyes went again. He did this several times, as he dozed before finally falling asleep. He started to snore loudly.

The bedroom door opened slowly. The shape of a head appeared around the edge of the door, shrouded by the darkness, the only light coming from the small television on top of a chest of drawers in the far corner. The dark figure entered through the door and slowly moved across the room.

Will, fast asleep, was unaware of the figure slowly creeping past his bed. The figure reached the end of the bed and paused for a minute. Then an arm slowly extended, reaching

out into the darkness, getting closer....closer....suddenly there was a loud ‘SMASH’ and Will woke with a jump and sat up in bed. Startled, he scanned the room and saw the dark figure at the end of the bed. The figure too must have been startled. The dark shape dropped to the floor with a big thud. “OOOF” a voice cried out as the figure hit the floor. Will flicked on the lamp next to his bed and leaned slowly forward to see what was lurking.

Sprawled out on the floor was Will’s dad, rubbing his head. He had crept into Will’s bedroom to turn off the television and as he reached out to turn it off, knocked a drink glass onto the floor and then stepped back onto his school bag, fallen over it, not noticing it in the darkness.

“Dad....you scared the hell out of me....what on earth are doing?” asked Will. His dad explained, and then left his bedroom, rubbing his head. Will turned off his lamp and laid down to go to sleep with a smile on his face, realising how amusing it was, what his dad had just done.

The clock on Will’s bedside table changed to 12.00 midnight. The house was still and quiet. Everybody was in bed, asleep. He

opened his eyes. He felt strangely wide awake all of a sudden. He laid motionless on his bed, looking into the darkness of the room. The only light coming from the moon outside. It was very quiet, you could hear a pin drop.

He eventually sat up, and looked towards the door, which was wide open. This seemed strange to him, he always had his bedroom door closed, and he was sure his dad closed it earlier in the night.

Just then a dark shadow darted past the doorway on the landing, too quick for him to make out who it was. He climbed out of bed and slowly moved towards the door. He paused in the opening and turned his head to look along the landing, left then right. Nobody was there, all was still and quiet.

He crept along the landing to his parents room and placed his hand gently on the handle. He slowly turned it and carefully opened the door. His parents were both asleep in bed, so he closed the door again and made his way to his sisters room. She too was fast asleep in bed.

Suddenly he heard footsteps behind him. They seemed to come from the direction of the stairs. He quickly spun round, now feeling more anxious knowing his family were all in bed. He walked cautiously to the top and

peered down. It was very dark, and he couldn't see anything in much detail, just dark shapes and shadows of furniture.

Suddenly there was a bang from the right at the bottom of the stairs. The living room door had closed by itself, as if slammed shut. Then a noise like the pattering of feet came from the room, as if someone was running away from the door on the other side.

He proceeded to walk downstairs, carefully placing his foot on the first step, it creaked, stopping him in his tracks. He listened for a moment and continued down to the next step. He tried to be as quiet as he could, but every so often, one of the steps would creak and he would pause again.

The moonlight now softly illuminated the hallway at the bottom, enabling him to see that a mist was now forming, and rolling along the floorboards towards the base of the stairs. It was like what had happened earlier at the cinema, and he began to feel scared. The whole house downstairs was now consumed in a rolling, churning layer of thick mist up to about waist height. "William" a voice whispered his name, it seemed to come from within the mist like before, all around.

On the stairs, he now reached the level of where the mist came up to. He paused and looked along the hallway into the darkness, listening carefully for any sound. He descended the last few steps into the mist, and stood quietly at the bottom. The cool mist was swirling and churning all around his waist, and he started feeling very cold. It felt different to a normal mist, it was thicker, and he could feel it moving over his skin like a cold gel.

He started to walk down the hallway but stumbled and nearly fell completely under the mist because his feet and legs were hard to move, as if walking through deep mud. The mist had such a denseness to it that it seemed to cling to him, or even pull against him as he tried to move.

He rose to his feet and tried to take another step.

Struggling to pull against the mist, he managed two steps before falling with a thud, flat on his face completely submerged in the thick mist. It frothed and churned on top of, and all around him. He struggled to move, trying to kick his legs and stretch out his arms, but without much success. He was finding it hard to breathe and started panicking and gasping for air.

He finally managed to stretch an arm out and cried out a roar of anger in desperation, sending an explosion of fiery lightning from his fingertips, across the floor through the mist, illuminating it in a bright white flash.

He stood to his feet and outstretched both hands to the mist, firing showers of hot, flaming electric sparks into the white mass. It hissed loudly as it dissipated, clearing the hallway back to its original state. He lowered his hands as the lightning stopped, and looked at them in disbelief. “What the hell was that?” he cried out, shaking them as if they were on fire, even though they didn’t hurt at all.

The hallway was once again in quiet darkness and he stood almost in shock from what had just happened. He was trying to think of some rational explanation, but couldn’t come up with one.

His attention was quickly drawn back to the living room, when he heard loud footsteps on the other side of the door, getting closer and closer and louder, until they stopped on the other side of the door. “William” a voice spoke his name from behind the door, in a whisper, but louder than before.

The door handle slowly started to turn, and in fear of what might come out of the room, he

looked around for somewhere to hide. He spotted the cupboard under the stairs and rushed towards it. He almost threw himself inside, landing on his knees through the small, shoulder high door. He turned around and pulled the door behind him, leaving a slight gap which he put his face up to, so his eye could peek at the living room door. He took a few deep breaths to try and regain his composure and quieten his breathing.

Will was now silent, on his knees in the cupboard peeking across the hallway to the room door. It was dark, but he could make out the doorway with the living room door now fully open.

A dark shadowy figure appeared in the doorway. He couldn't make out any features, it was too dark, but his heart began beating fast and sweat started to trickle down his face. The small cupboard was very warm and stuffy and he felt very scared and uncomfortable.

“William” whispered a voice again, this time from the direction of the dark figure.

He pulled the door shut, to hide from the figure. He sat in the corner of the cupboard, his knees up to his chest with his arms wrapped around them, trying to be as quiet as he could. It was pitch black, and extremely warm with

the door closed. He felt sweat dripping off his body, and wiped his brow with his arm. He sat very still now, and listened nervously.

Footsteps started moving slowly from the direction of the living room, towards the cupboard. They grew louder as they approached until the noise stopped just outside the door. He froze in terror, trying not to breathe for fear of being heard.

Suddenly a loud noise, like a strong wind blowing on the door, came from the other side. It whooshed loudly against it, rattling the door violently. It was being pounded by a tremendous force. Will covered his ears, and squinted at the horrendous din. The blasting of the door was constant and relentless for a couple of minutes, the door shaking violently and the roar of wind, until abruptly, in an instant it stopped and everything went silent.

Once again, he was sat silently in the darkness. He paused for a moment and listened for any sound outside of the cupboard. He could hear nothing. He took a deep breath and tried to dig down deep to find his confidence. He started feeling better, and after several minutes of quiet, and no activity, he started thinking more rationally and remembered that

his dad kept a battery powered lamp under the stairs.

He started to feel around in the darkness, picking up objects, a brush, a shoe, something soft and padded, finally he placed his hand on the lamp and placed it gently on the floor in front of him. No sooner had he done this, that he noticed a very faint noise, like breathing, coming from inside the cupboard with him.

He stopped and listened. The feeling of anxiety and fear returned as he was now positive that there was breathing inside there with him. It was too dark to see who or what was there, lurking in the darkness, so he placed his hand on the lamp and fumbled around for the switch.

The light flicked on with a click, and a face was inches away from his, looking directly at him “AAARGH” he screamed, startled by the pale, gaunt figure in front of him. He jumped back against the wall of the cupboard, kicking himself backwards with his feet. The figure remained where it was.

It was the pale grey figure of a boy, sat in front of him. He was clearly there, yet not completely solid. The boy looked a similar age to Will, but in very old fashion, Victorian style tattered clothing and a dirty face.

“William” a voice whispered.

The boys lips moved, and the sound came from him, but his lips didn't form the word.

“William” whispered the boy again, this time his lips formed part of the word, as if he was trying to get his lips in synch with the sound.

“William” said the boy, his lips finally matching the sound of the whisper.

Will was pushing himself up against the wall, terrified, eyes fixed on the boy in anticipation of what might happen next.

“William, don't be afraid, I am here to serve you. You are my master, my lord, the champion of the Gorb Stone” spoke the figure of the boy.

“What....I don't understand....who are you....what are you?” asked Will, very confused and still afraid. “My name is Jim, and you are the champion, the keeper of the Gorb, my lord” replied the boy. “What is a Gorb?” asked Will as he came slightly forward from the wall, realising now that Jim intended no harm.

“The Gorb is a sacred vortex of gases from the spirit realm, contained, until now within the Gorb Stone.” Will suddenly remembered the strange green stone in his grandparents attic. “By inhaling the vortex from the Gorb Stone, you inherited all its power and became the

rightful lord of the spirits from this world and the next.”

Will now realised that when he broke the stone and breathed in the gases from inside, he had started to change and show signs of abilities. “Is that why I’ve been doing and seeing weird things, and feeling stronger recently?” “Yes,” replied Jim, “With the power of the Gorb, you now have many strengths and abilities of unknown magnitude...however these are merely tools to help you fulfil your destiny.” “What destiny?” asked Will, feeling somewhat puzzled by the whole conversation. “You are the lord of the spirit realm” exclaimed Jim. “A Ghost Lord?” said Will, “Yes, it is your destiny” replied Jim.

“I must warn you of a terrible entity that travels to this reality from the spirit realm. The Dark Spirit Lord Loxin. He comes in search of the power of the Gorb. There are two types of spirit, the light spirits who bring messages to those in this world, and help them travel their journey of life. Then there are the dark spirits, who wish to infect this reality with misery, upset and death to allow the dark spirits to claim the spirit realm, and this reality for themselves.”

Will looked shocked and leaned back against the wall again, trying to absorb all that Jim had just told him. “What the hell am I supposed to do?”

Jim started to fade slightly and become more transparent. “Only you have the power to defeat Loxin, and stop him....” Jim got fainter and fainter, and his voice got quieter, “....Learn to use your power from the Gorb...”

Will could barely see or hear Jim now, “... goodbye my lord” and Jim was gone. Will was sat alone in the dark cupboard with just the glow from the lamp, all was quiet once again.

Will cautiously opened the door and looked out into the hallway, then stepped out. All seemed calm and back to normal, so exhausted, he made his way upstairs on the creaky steps back to his bedroom. He looked in on his sister and parents on the way. It was as if nothing had happened. They were fast asleep, undisturbed by all the nights events.

Chapter 5

Power Of The Mind

The next day, Will arrived at the school gates where he met up with Russ and Jack. “Well.....how did it go last night then with Susan...the big date?” asked Jack, “Yeah come on.... spill the beans” said Russ, rubbing his hands together and raising his eyebrows. “Yes it was good....not a bad film” replied Will, teasing them by not giving anything away. “Come on....you know what we mean....don’t play the innocent” frowned Russ. “Ok....it went great, we had a great night and I think you could officially call us an item.” With that, Jack raised his hands and smiled, “Hallelujah.” “Was beginning to think it would never happen” added Russ, as he raised his fist and shook it in celebration.

Susan entered the gates and came over to them.

“Hi Will....Russ....Jack.” She slipped her arm around Will’s back and he gave her a gentle kiss and placed his arm around her. “Put her down” joked Russ, “Come on Russ” said Jack, grabbing his arm, “Lets give them some

space.....see you later Will.” “Yeah....thanks Jack” said Will gratefully. “You have some good, loyal friends there don’t you” Susan said quietly to him as his friends walked away, making sure she didn’t embarrass him by letting them hear her.

“Yes...they are good mates...we’re solid as a rock.”

The bell rang, so hand in hand they made their way to the doors and into school. They walked along the corridor, busy with people coming and going, lockers on both sides opening and closing as people stored and retrieved books and equipment. Some groups hung around, leaning against them as they wasted time.

Will noticed that they were walking towards Bob Edwards and his mates who were leaning around his locker. “Bob and his thugs are in front of your locker....lets wait till they move” said Susan nervously, just noticing them stood there. “No...don’t worry its fine” said Will confidently. Something in the way he said it made Susan feel better, so they walked over to the group of boys.

“Excuse me...that’s my locker, can I get to it please” asked Will politely so not to provoke any reaction. Bob stood in the way of his locker

even more and leaned towards him. “Get lost maggot, this area is off limits to you... unless you want to taste my shoe leather.” Will leaned forward to meet Bob. They were now staring each other face to face. “Had any nosebleeds recently?” asked Will quietly, staring him right in the eyes.

Bob stared back into Will’s eyes, gritting his teeth aggressively. It was now like a stand off, both trying to stare each other down to see who would back down first.

After a few tense moments, Bob looked nervous and turned his head from the stare. He looked around, avoiding making eye contact again with Will. “Come on lets go lads” he said as he turned and moved away from the locker. His mates all looked at each other, baffled as to why Bob had reacted this way and backed down, then they followed him away down the corridor, occasionally glancing at Will until they disappeared round the corner.

Whilst staring into his eyes, Bob had experienced a powerful feeling that made him almost shudder with fear. He couldn’t explain it, he just knew to back down and get out of there. Will never doubted for a moment. He could almost feel the power and confidence oozing through his veins. Susan clung on to his

arm, trembling slightly from the tense confrontation, but feeling safe and gaining comfort from his confident manner as he opened his locker. He picked up his books, closed his locker and they set off along the corridor towards their classroom.

Will sat through the first lesson very distracted. When asked a question by the teacher he didn't even notice at first until shouted at to wake up and pay attention, then having to shrug his shoulders because he hadn't even heard the question.

His thoughts were on the events of the night before, and what Jim had told him about being the Ghost Lord and possessing powers. He was wondering what exactly his abilities were. He decided that if he visited the library after the lesson had finished, he may find something in the occult section that may help.

The lesson finished and Will and Jack stood up at their desk. Russ got up from his, and went around the table to join his friends. Susan came over from across the classroom and joined them. "Are you alright Will? You seemed a bit distracted during class" she asked, concerned by his unusual behaviour. "Yes, are you alright mate?" added Jack, "Yes, he's just

tired of Mr Walton's constant droning" said Russ, "He's enough to send anyone to sleep."

"No it wasn't that. I'm fine." insisted Will, "I was just thinking about a science project that I have to finish for Miss Pelter's class tomorrow. I will have to go to the library next period to study. I will meet you later in the canteen at lunch." His friends seemed happy that he was fine and they made their way towards the door, and into the corridor. Will made his way towards the library, he could now try and find some answers.

He entered the library. The door closed slowly behind him, creaking on its hinges. It was very quiet with very few people in there. The smell of old varnished wood greeted him as he walked over to the far side of the library and entered the aisle where all the paranormal books were kept. He read the titles on some of the books as he moved along the aisle, werewolves, vampires, witches, witchcraft, finally ghosts. He scanned the shelves in this section for several minutes, not sure which book would be a good choice. He pulled a book out slightly to look at the cover 'Ghosts: Are you scared enough?' he frowned and put it back. He couldn't seem to find what he was after.

Just then something caught his eye, just to the right. A book fell to the floor off the shelf with a thud. Will promptly turned his head to look. It was a large old tattered book, with a hard brown cover and something sunk into the cover.

He leaned down and picked up the heavy book, turning it so he could see the front. It read 'E.S.P , Telekinesis and other strange phenomenon' and just below was a green symbol, sunk into the hard cover, which he thought resembled the Gorb Stone.

He carried the book over to one of the desks in the centre of the library and placed it down, pulled out a chair and sat down. He looked at it for a moment and then opened the first of the hundreds of pages of slightly browned, old parchment.

He proceeded to read through various chapters about powers of the mind, and how people can move objects just by thought alone. Also how some people can see visions of the future, and make predictions. There were cases of allsorts of strange abilities. He wondered if he possessed any of these abilities, and if so, how he made them happen.

He looked around the library. It was very quiet and empty. He could only see one person

sat behind the counter, near the door who was typing documents on a computer. Also one other person stood down an aisle reading a book, but not looking up at all.

He looked across the desk at a pen that had been left lying there. He started to concentrate hard on it, to try and get it to roll slightly. He squinted as he held his breath and squeezed, as if trying to exert a lot of effort, holding it for several seconds before having to gasp for a breath. The pen still sat motionless, but his face was bright red.

He made another attempt, trying as hard as he could to harness his energy. He clenched his fists hard and stared at it. The pen leapt up into the air with a sudden snapping sound and went flying across the room, spinning with a huge amount of force and made a loud crack as the nib of the pen embedded about an inch into the end panel of one of the shelving sections, about ten feet off the floor.

The woman at the counter quickly looked up from her computer to see what the noise was, and the boy down the aisle was peering round the end of the shelves, startled as to what had happened. After looking around for a few moments they both glanced over in the direction of Will, who was feeling a bit

embarrassed now. “Sorry” said Will, shrugging his shoulders, “I dropped a book.” The woman frowned and shook her head as she looked back down at her computer and carried on typing and the boy went back to reading his book.

Will realised that to properly test his powers, he would have to find somewhere more private where there were no people to witness the effects of his abilities, so he returned the book to the shelf and left the library and headed to the gymnasium.

He arrived at the gym and peered his face around the door. It was empty, so he went inside. He walked over to the equipment storage area and picked up a bag full of basketballs. He carried them into the middle of the hall and emptied them out onto the floor. There were about fifteen balls, rolling around in different directions. “Right come on concentrate” he said to himself, trying to gee himself up. Standing in the centre of the hall, he turned his head around to check where all the balls were positioned. Then he looked at the basket at one end of the hall, and the basket at the opposite end. He now concentrated and thought out in his mind what he wished to happen.

A strange energy seemed to start to fill the room and he felt a strange sensation, similar to a static charge flowing through him. All of a sudden, all fifteen balls started bouncing on the spot, their thuds echoing around the hall. The noise was loud and unnerving as they continued to bounce for several minutes.

He concentrated harder on the thudding balls, pounding on the ground, when all of a sudden he flung out his arms to either side, and basketballs started flying through the air, one after another. Eight towards one basket, and seven towards the other. One by one, each ball went through its relevant basket and came to a stop on the ground below. “Wow that was awesome” he shouted out, punching his fist into the air.

He continued to make the balls fly around the hall for another thirty minutes, before rolling them all back into their bag, using his new power and then putting the balls back in the store.

At lunchtime, he entered the canteen and stood in the doorway, looking around the hall for his friends. It was very noisy, with hundreds of people talking, laughing and messing about. Somebody barged past him holding a tray of food, making no apology for nudging him.

“Excuse me” Will said sarcastically. The boy glanced at him, pulled a face and carried on walking, barging other people as he went.

He felt angered and needed to bring the boy down a peg or two. He spotted a bag on the floor at the end of a table where the boy was heading, so he concentrated on the bag and felt the energy start to flow through him again. The bag quickly slid along the floor, into the gangway, unnoticed by anyone, right into the boys path. The boy’s foot hit the bag, and he tripped, stumbling forward throwing his hands out. The tray of food flipped towards him, covering him in lumpy brown gravy, mash and veg.

The table next to him erupted in laughter, followed by other tables as people glanced around to see what had happened. Pretty soon most of the canteen was laughing and pointing at him.

Will spotted his friends, sat at a table in the corner, laughing with everybody else, so he walked along the gangway towards them, passing the boy, who was stood dripping. Will gave him a dirty look as he went by and felt very smug, smiling to himself, he joined his friends.

Jack, Russ and Susan were still smiling from the food incident when they greeted Will, who sat beside Susan, placing his arm around her.

“I have something amazing to tell you, but you mustn’t tell a soul. You might think I am stark raving mad at first, but stick with it.” He leaned in closer to his friends, “Now keep a very open mind” he said, preparing them for what he was going to trust them with.

He proceeded to tell them about what had happened the night before, and the meeting with Jim and what he had told Will. He explained how it was all linked with what had happened at his grandparents house, and the Gorb Stone. He told them everything.

Russ leaned back in his chair and placed his hands behind his head. “Well I’ve been saying it for a long time, I always said this would happen.” The others turned to him, “What?” said Jack, “Will has officially gone completely and utterly, stark raving bonkers” added Russ, pulling a funny face. “No Russ its all true. I can prove it to you, right here, right now” insisted a frustrated Will. “It is a bit....er....strange..” said Jack, trying to be a bit more subtle than Russ. “I believe you Will” said Susan, cuddling in to him to try and

convince him, even though Will knew that she didn't, but appreciated the gesture anyway.

“Right.....watch.....” Will took his arm from around Susan, and rubbed his hands together. “This I must see” quipped Russ, “Shush” replied Jack, and the three friends sat back in their seats and watched Will.

He looked around the canteen, to see if anyone was looking their way. Nobody seemed to be. “Gather around the table so no one can see” said Will, beckoning them in closer. He picked up a food tray and placed it in the middle of the table, clearing everything else out of the way. He then focussed on it until the feeling of energy started to flow through him.

The tray abruptly jumped up on to its end, startling Jack, Russ and Susan, making them jump back slightly. He made the tray start to spin very fast on its end, causing a draught to blow in their faces.

“Oh...my...god” spoke Susan softly, “Cool” grinned Russ, and Jack just sat in disbelief.

Will smiled, and said “Now....watch this” and the tray, still spinning started to raise several inches off the table, and then spun in mid air.

He looked around again to make sure nobody was watching and made the tray slam

hard to the table in the blink of an eye, making an almighty loud bang that echoed through the canteen, stopping everybody in the hall in their tracks.

The canteen was silent. People were looking around and whispering, wondering where the noise had come from. Slowly people started returning to what they were doing.

Will sat with a big grin on his face, pleased with the show he had just put on for his friends, who were all sat gob smacked. “ And that’s just the tip of the iceberg” claimed Will, “Who knows what else I can do!”.

His friends now believed every word that he had told them, and they had a long discussion about ghosts, the supernatural and the possibilities of what he could do.

When it reached their time to leave, Russ got up out of his seat and moved around the table to Will. He bowed in front of him and said “It has been an honour dining with you my lord.” “Get up you daft sod” replied Will, amused at Russ’s antics.

“My boyfriend....a Ghost Lord...I cant believe it.” Susan wrapped her arms around Will affectionately and gave him a quick kiss on the lips and a cuddle. Jack stepped aside and

said “After you...” and Will and Susan left the table arm in arm.

Chapter 6

School Haunting

The afternoon classes were starting. Will and his friends sat for maths, waiting for the teacher to enter the room. Russ was swinging about on his chair as usual, chewing a pen in his teeth. Will was looking across at Susan who was sat with another girl nearer the front. She occasionally glanced back at him and smiled. Jack was talking to Will about how there had been reports of things being moved around and strange noises coming from the old attic.

“Hey....have you heard a word I have said ?” Jack snapped at Will, who spun his head around to look at Jack. “Yes, every word” replied Will, even though he hadn’t. “What do you say we go up there at break and see if you can find anything” suggested Jack. Russ’s head suddenly appeared between them and he bellowed “Count me in.” “Its all set then” replied Jack, “We’ll sneak up there as soon as class finishes.” The teacher walked in the classroom. “Right, get to your seats everybody!” and the class settled down for the lesson.

Afterwards they left the room. Susan was waiting for Will outside in the corridor. He explained to her what they were going to do. "Perhaps you shouldn't come" he told her, "If there is anything going on up there, it could be dangerous and I don't want anything to happen to you." Susan looked at Will in disgust. "I don't think so, if you're going so am I. I am part of this now aswell." Will paused for a moment, "Ok, you're right....but stay close to me at all times." They made their way down the corridor to the stairs, and ascended to the top floor.

The door to the attic was at the opposite end of the corridor, but they noticed a slight problem. Bob Edwards and his gang were hanging around the area. "This presents us with a slight problem" exclaimed Jack. "I can deal with Bob" said Will confidently. "Wait inside this doorway." He ushered them into a door on the left, and he stood in the doorway glancing round the corner at the gang.

They had not been spotted, the gang was too busy trying to shout over each other in conversation. Will concentrated his energy on Bob's guys. An invisible energy spiralled around them, building in intensity until one of them slapped Bob in the face, stopping him in

mid sentence. Another of them slapped him. Bob's face turned red with rage, when a third slap landed. Then they all started slapping each other, but had no control over it. More and more landed on Bob. He cried out with rage and felt powerless to move, as if glued to the spot.

Will continued to rain a barrage of slaps on him for a minute before finally ending his hold over them. The gang all turned to Bob who was now able to step forward, trying to explain they had no control over it, but it fell on deaf ears. Bob was going to vent his anger, so they all started backing away down the corridor, then ran, with Bob in hot pursuit. They piled down the stairs, Bob swinging his arm and walloping a couple of them on the back of the head as he chased them, shouting loudly.

They disappeared out of sight down the stairs, so Will and his friends came out of the room, free to enter the door and up the steps to the attic.

"Keep behind me" he said quietly to them, and they slowly crept up the steps to the darkness above.

They all now stood in the vast attic space at the top of the school. The lights did not work anymore so it was very dark, the only light

coming from a few skylights which were thick with dirt, dust and cobwebs so the light was very poor and gloomy.

They scanned the room, trying to get a sense of their surroundings. It was hard to see anything much, as there was so much furniture, equipment, books and things built up over many years. All of which were covered in dust, webs and grime. “Looks like my brothers bedroom!” joked Russ, to lighten the mood. “Shush” the others turned to him with frowns. “Lets move further in” said Will, setting off into the darkness, away from the relative safety of the steps.

Susan grabbed hold of his hand, feeling nervous and apprehensive. Will squeezed it gently, reassuringly. The others followed them, around a huge old cupboard that obscured the view of what was beyond.

They were now a long way into the attic, and could no longer see the steps. It felt very isolated all of a sudden, and even Russ didn't think it was so much of a game anymore. Will spotted an enclosed area between what looked like some old library shelves and large blackboards. There was a pile of boxes between them so he said “Grab one of those boxes and sit in here, then we'll be really quiet and see if

we can hear anything.” They all picked up a box off the pile and sat and waited.

After a few minutes of being silent, there was a noticeable drop in the temperature. Jack rubbed his hands together, he looked at Russ, who wrapped his arms around himself. Susan cuddled into Will, who sat up straight. “Get ready” he said, “This is it...the energy is building...I can feel it...prepare yourselves.”

It was quiet for a few more moments until a sudden loud bang echoed through the attic, making them all jump. “That was the door slamming shut at the bottom of the steps” said Jack, after they paused and thought about it for a minute. “But who shut it?” asked Susan, “Or what?” added Russ. “It was probably somebody in the corridor at the bottom, noticing the door was open” Jack suggested, to try and add some logic to it. “No” exclaimed Will, silencing his friends. “He is here...I can feel his energy around us.” At hearing this, the three of them felt a rush of fear overcome them.

Will felt very calm and in control, unlike his friends. He stood up from his box, followed by the others, who all looked at him for guidance. He moved over to the centre of the attic out of the enclosed area, so he could see

further along in either direction. The four of them now stood silently once again.

A disturbing noise made them all pause their breath. It sounded like fingernails scraping down a blackboard. Susan shut her eyes tight and covered her ears. The others winced with the uncomfortable sound and Will quickly turned his head towards the direction that it came from, just as the noise stopped.

He could see nothing, only the shadowy old junk in the darkness. Then from another direction, a noise like furniture being dragged along the wooden floor, followed by a very loud bang, as if the item of furniture had fallen over. They all spun their heads in that direction and Susan let out a scream. "I don't like this... I'm scared" she cried, burying her head into Will.

They felt very vulnerable as noises began to come from different directions, all around them. Russ let out a cry "Aaargh...someone just touched me." "No...you're just messing" said Jack in disbelief. "I swear, a hand just grabbed my arm." "I think someone is toying with us" claimed Will calmly, "I'm going to put an end to this" and he stood away from his friends and opened his arms out and took a deep breath. Just then a wind seemed to spiral

around him, building in intensity. His friends looked on amazed at what was happening.

He felt a powerful energy rushing through him. "I am the Ghost Lord, and I command you to show yourself to me" he bellowed in an eerie loud voice. The noise from the wind spiralling around him was loud, like a train thundering past. Susan's hair was blowing back, and they all looked with squinted eyes because of the force from it.

Abruptly it all stopped, and was dark and silent once again. However standing a couple of feet from Will, was the figure of a man, maybe about sixty years old, slightly transparent, and wearing a teachers gown which seemed to flutter, as if in a breeze. He floated several inches from the ground.

Susan, Russ and Jack stood open mouthed at what they saw.

"Who are you, and what are you doing here?" asked Will. The ghost hovered for a few moments and then glanced sideways towards Susan, Jack and Russ and gave a horrifying scowl at them, with a unearthly screech that terrified the three of them. Susan screamed, and they all jumped back in fright. "Leave them" commanded Will, and the ghost returned, composed in front of him.

The ghost's features seemed to change from the horrific scowl, back to that of a sixty year old man, and then he began to softly speak to Will. "I am Mr Bradley, headmaster of this school for thirty years of outstanding service, or at least I was once."

Susan, Jack and Russ gradually started to relax and move slightly closer, as the ghost continued to talk to Will. "All I can remember, is one day returning to my office after having done my rounds of the corridors at the end of the day. I sat down in my chair, and then had an uncomfortable feeling in my chest. The next thing I knew, I was floating from the chair and looking down on myself, slumped, lifeless. It was a heart attack. I felt that I couldn't leave this place. I couldn't move on. Its too much responsibility, somebody has to look after this establishment. Its been my life for so long."

"Then why do you haunt it and stomp around, and scare people?" asked Jack. The ghost turned his head to face him, and then looked back at Will. "There has been a lot of changes over the many years that I have been here, a lot of which I would not have allowed had I still been mortal. And the discipline of the students leaves a lot to be desired. This has angered me. It should have been left as I made

it, a first class establishment for the growth of children into well rounded, disciplined young adults.”

The ghost went on to explain how he spent most of the daytime in the attic, away from the hustle and bustle of the living, and to remain in the darkness. Then roamed the corridors and classrooms at night, playing out his role as headmaster, caught in an endless playback of his past life.

“There is one thing I must tell you my lord.” The ghost looked around nervously, “These last few weeks I have noticed some disturbing changes around the old place. Not from the living, but there has been a lot of activity around here, not from me but from some other darker spirits. I have not seen them yet, but I feel their presence and hear them. They are getting stronger...and closer all the time. Beware young Ghost Lord. You might be in danger! I feel they are searching for you.”

“Yes” replied Will, “ I can feel it too...a ghost called Jim already warned me of this.” Susan glanced at Will with a look of worry on her face, fearing what might be to come.

Just then there was an almighty crash and bang, and furniture started flying around all over the place. “They are here...they have

found you...you need to go...now. I will try and delay them for you...now run” and the ghost of Mr Bradley whooshed out of sight behind furniture to the other end of the attic.

Will grabbed Susan’s hand, “Come on run.” They dashed towards the steps down, followed by Jack and Russ. As they descended the steps they heard a voice cry “GET OUT OF MY SCHOOL” and then a roar and rumbling, with a few more cries, and then Mr Bradley fell silent.

Will reached the door at the bottom of the steps and turned the handle. The door wouldn’t open. Some unseen force was keeping it shut. “COME ON” shouted Russ. “SOMETHINGS COMING” shouted Jack, and they all paused quietly and listened.

Loud bangs like heavy footsteps were getting ever louder, and nearer the top of the steps. Occasionally a crash as furniture was thrown out of the way. Horrific shrieking voices started calling out “William”, as if there were many souls approaching. “Stand back” Will called to his friends, who climbed a few steps so he could have some room. Susan stood behind him and buried her head into his back as he raised his arms towards the door and let out a huge flash of light that blasted the door

straight off its hinges, into the corridor. They all ran out of the steps and along the corridor, but Will stopped just opposite the doorway, turning to face whatever was coming.

He raised his hands, pointing at the steps and waited. A thick mist started rolling down them, tumbling from one to the next as it came. Then a loud shrieking, piercing cry from the top of the stairs followed by a rumbling as something charged down the steps towards him.

Will gritted his teeth and fired streaks, like lightning from his fingers into the mist filled doorway. Flames and white light exploded out of the opening, just as, whatever was there, reached the bottom and the cloud of its remains bellowed out into the corridor covering him in sticky ectoplasm, followed by a covering of ash and dust.

After the cloud had settled, he faced the doorway, covered from head to toe in it. Russ ran along the corridor towards him, followed by Jack and Susan who had been watching from just down the steps at the end of the corridor. “Woo hoo” shouted Russ throwing his hands in the air. “You kicked butt” added Jack with a big smile on his face. Susan ran past them both and sped towards him, he caught her

in a big embrace and spun her around. Secretly he thought to himself ‘this is only the beginning’.

Chapter 7

The Factory

That evening after school, Susan had gone over to Will's house and Russ had gone to Jack's. The topic on everyone's mind was the dramatic events earlier in the day at school.

"Just imagine what Will could do with his powers" said Jack as he laid on his bed with his hands behind his head, fingers interlocked, looking up at the ceiling. "Yeah, bet he could cause Armageddon if he wanted" replied Russ, turning around from the video game he was playing on Jack's television. His mind filled with such dramatic things from playing on the action packed games.

"How we going to explain the state of the corridor, and the attic door when we go back to school hey Jack?"

Jack thought for a moment. After the events at school, they had just left the top floor, cleaned themselves up and the bell had rung for the end of day, so they left school and parted outside the gates.

"They have no reason to know it was us. Bob was up there before us, so they may pin it

on him...if anyone saw him...which...they could have done with how much noise they made as they ran down the stairs.”

“Oh yes” agreed Russ, “He can take the flack...couldn’t happen to a nicer bloke.”

Across at Will’s house, Susan and Will were sat on his bed, leaning against the headboard, her head resting on his shoulder in front of the television.

“I’m worried about you Will” said Susan, in a concerned tone. “Why?” replied Will.

“Because of all these ghosts that are coming after you. What if they hurt you...or even kill you?” “Don’t worry” said Will reassuringly, “I have all these powers to protect myself...and you! And who knows what other powers I have, and what exactly I am capable of doing. Only time will tell us that. Or maybe I will meet a ghost who can shed some light on it.” “Yes... maybe” sighed Susan with a hopeful smile.

Will sat up from the headboard with a smile on his face. “Let me try something” he said. Susan sat up and looked at him, with an intrigued look on her face, wondering what he meant.

He cupped his hands together and stared into them with a look of concentration on his face. “What are you doing ?” asked Susan with

a mystified smile on her face. He didn't answer, but just then strange things started happening around them. The television picture started to go fuzzy, the light on the ceiling started swinging, the curtains started blowing around, and soon objects all around the room were moving, and the lights flickered. Susan's head was flicking from side to side looking around at each bizarre occurrence as it started, her smile replaced with a nervous, bemused look on her face. She looked back at Will who was still staring into his hands.

Moments later a swirling vortex of mist started to develop within his hands. Gradually expanding until it was about the size of a football. The movement of objects in the room slowly died down and got quieter and calmer, until they eventually ceased.

He now sat, hands opened apart, with this ball of mist, floating in mid air between them. It looked almost like a solid object, suspended there but still like a misty mass. He started to move his fingers and the strange ball began to contort and change. Its colour deepening from a grey white to a blood red.

She started to recognise the form which the mist was taking, it was a love heart. He kept the heart floating above the bed and moved an

arm, pointing to the other side of the room. Susan turned her head to follow where he was pointing. A mist started forming next to the curtains, by the wall. It formed an elongated shape and soon resembled an arrow.

He looked at her and said, “Hold on” and with a flash of bright light, the arrow flew across the room at immense speed into the heart. Susan jumped back in shock, expecting some explosive impact, but instead there was a soft ‘puff’ and the room was filled with twinkling little particles and flower like shapes dancing about in the air. “Wow...that’s beautiful” exclaimed Susan, as she smiled and stood up, spinning around in the middle of the room, arms outstretched. All the glittery, flowery particles were consuming her, until they gradually started dissipating and returning to a misty dust that finally disappeared.

She jumped back on the bed and flung her arms around him. “That was fantastic...I’ve never seen anything so wonderful.”

“How do you know how to do all these things?” asked Susan. “I don’t know” replied Will, “They just seem to come natural. I don’t have to think about them, I just sort of will them to happen and they do.” She buried her head into him. “Its amazing...my very own

wizard!” and they both returned to watching the television.

Back at Jack’s house, they were now getting a bit bored of playing video games. Russ threw the controller down on the floor, took a running jump and landed on the bed, turned onto his back and put his hands behind his head like Jack. They both laid facing up at the ceiling.

“Wonder what Will and Sue are up to” said Jack with a bored sigh. “Why don’t we run on over there and see?” replied Russ.

They agreed, and quickly jumped off the bed, scrambled down the stairs to the door at the bottom, flying through it Jack called out to his parents “Going round to Will’s, see you later” and before his mother could say a word they had gone, the door slamming behind them.

They decided to take a route through the old, abandoned factory that would cut time off their journey. Jack being a bit hesitant, was usually talked into these things by Russ.

The derelict factory used to be one of the biggest steel producing sites in the country, but with fall in demand it swiftly ended production. Workers practically downed tools and left everything where they stood. It was an eerie

place where it looked like time had stood still, and all the people had just vanished.

Jack and Russ reached the high netted fence and walked a short distance around the perimeter, until they reached the gap in the mesh that had been cut by trespassers previously. A path straight through the factory would take them to a similar cut in the fence at the opposite side, but it was a huge site to walk through.

Russ grabbed the section of fence that was cut, and peeled it back to enlarge the opening for Jack to fit through. “After you” said Russ with a grin on his face. Jack dropped to his knees and crawled through the dirt. He winced in pain as a sharp piece of the wire fence that had been cut, scraped down his back, causing a slight tear in his shirt and scratching his skin. He quickly stood at the other side and lifted up his shirt, revealing a ten centimetre scratch that had just broke the surface. “Ouch!... Painful!... are you ok Jack?” asked Russ. “Stings a bit” replied Jack as he lowered his shirt again. “You be careful...don’t do my trick!” he told Russ.

Jack held the fence for Russ, who made it through unscathed by crawling through on his chest, rather than his knees. They both dusted themselves down and proceeded across the

scrub ground, towards the first big iron corrugated building.

They approached a metal door, that was covered in graffiti. Jack turned the handle and pushed. The bottom of the door was scraping in the dirt underneath and then got stuck and wouldn't open any wider. Russ tried to squeeze through the gap, but only managed his head, so they both tried pushing the door. Jack stood facing it, pushing with arms outstretched, leaning into it. Russ pushed with his back on the door, and his legs pushing from the dirt.

The door started to slowly scrape open as they both heaved at it, and then it suddenly swung wide open, sending Russ flying backwards, and landing on his back inside the door, while Jack stopped himself falling because he faced forward. Jack burst out laughing at his friend sat on his bottom, on the dusty floor. "Thanks mate!" frowned Russ, dusting himself down as he rose to his feet.

The hard, rusty old metal of the factory towered above them. A vast, twisted maze of metal pipes, walkways and furnaces. Strange machines, and huge metal devices that once filled the place with a hot frenzy of activity now stood eerily silent.

They proceeded down the central walkway, through the heart of the factory. Their footsteps loud, echoing amongst the surrounding hard surfaces.

They walked at a fast pace, both feeling a bit apprehensive with their surroundings, and engaged in a nervous chit chat to take their minds off it. Neither of them wanting the other to know they were nervous.

Eventually they reached a deep pit that once had molten metal flowing along it. It was too wide to jump across and too deep to climb down. The walkway that once passed high above the pit had eroded and collapsed into a tangled heap, deep at the bottom. “How we going to get across that then ?” said Russ, staring into the immense pit. Jack leaned over the side, staring down into the gaping darkness. “There’s the platform” he said, pointing down to the rusty heap on the floor, which was their usual way across. Turning back now and taking a different route to Will’s house would just take too long.

Suddenly a loud, terrifying screeching roar came from behind them, from further back in the factory, where they had just come from.

They turned to each other in horror, afraid of what beast could have bellowed this fearsome

howl. They looked back to see what was following them, but it was too dark further away. They had gone round too many twists and turns anyway to see back to the door.

Again a loud screeching roar echoed around the factory, this time followed by another, and another, and soon there were, what sounded like maybe four or five beasts howling again and again.

Jack turned back to the pit in a panic. “We seriously need to find a way across this pit.” Russ turned to Jack with fear all over his face. “What do we do...we’re dog meat...we’re dog fodder!”

“Think...think” Jack called to himself as he looked around in desperation, trying to spot some object to help them, or a means of getting across.

A deafening, roaring snarl bellowed from the darkness. It sounded wet and slavery, like a big ferocious dog with lots of huge sharp teeth and drool.

Russ stared into the dark shadows, trying to make out what was coming towards them. He crouched down to the floor, still staring ahead and fumbled amongst the debris with his hand, trying to find a weapon. He grasped something, and momentarily glanced down. It

was a metal rod, about two feet long. He stood up, wielding it in his hand ready to fend off their attackers.

Jack was still frantically searching for a way across. He saw a metal sheet on the ground, so bent down and grabbed it with both hands. He winced in pain, and pulled a hand away. Looking at it, the rusty old metal sheet was sharp along the edge and had cut across his palm.

With no time to spare, he took hold of the sheet again and dragged it to the edge of the pit, gritting his teeth at the pain of his hand. He raised one end of the sheet up, so it stood vertically on the edge, about eight feet in the air. He pushed the raised end over the edge of the pit, hoping to make a bridge with it. The end of the sheet dropped with a huge ‘BANG’, that echoed all around the place. The end of it had just barely landed on the other side of the pit. It was only on by millimetres.

Russ turned around to see Jack's efforts. “There’s no way I’m going across that!” he said, pointing to the thin sheet of metal that bent in the middle with the weight. “Step on that and it will go!” he added.

“We stand more chance than meeting them!” said Jack, pointing back down the factory. “I

will try it first” he said turning to the edge of the sheet.

As he stared at the rusty old metal, ominously stretching out before him, he wondered if he had underestimated the danger of the task. He paused, feeling increasingly nervous. A bead of sweat trickled down his brow.

“Come on then...” shouted Russ, making Jack jump. “Don’t do that to me!” he snapped, annoyed .

More growls and screeches were again becoming more frequent, and much closer than before. “I think they are right on us” cried out a worried Russ, waving the metal bar around to try and scare their stalkers.

Jack slowly placed his foot on the metal sheet. It bent slightly under his weight, and he paused a minute. When he was sure that it was taking his weight, he took another step, paused... and another. He was now completely suspended over the pit. Trying to be very still and not wobble too much. The sheet creaked and bent even further. The metal at the other side barely on the edge. His arms were outstretched to help keep his balance. He got to about half way across and paused slightly,

taking a sigh and focussing on being as steady as possible.

“AAARGH...go go go...they’re here!” shouted Russ in a blind panic, causing Jack to lose his balance. He wobbled, and the metal shook, and in shock and fear, he took three great leaping steps to the other side and dove onto the floor, clear of the pit. The sheet of metal bounced, and the edge fell off the side of the pit, and it hurtled down, clanging on the sides as it went, and a loud bang as it hit the bottom. “NOOOOOO...” shouted Jack as he saw the makeshift bridge to freedom fall away, trapping his friend on the other side.

Russ had glanced and seen what just happened, but was a bit preoccupied to totally grasp the seriousness of the situation. Coming out of the dark shadows, about twenty feet away, a spine tingling chill went down his spine and his hair stood on end. He was totally overcome with fear as a huge beast emerged from the darkness of the forbidding factory beyond.

It was a wolf like creature. On four spindly legs with long claws on the end of feet, that looked more like bony hands than paws. The body was a huge bulk, like the body of a grizzly bear, but with long spiky fur on its back

up to its neck. Its head contained two menacing fiery red eyes that seemed to glow like hot coals, and the mouth was an enormous, salivating chasm, full of long razor sharp teeth.

It lifted its front legs off the floor, and stood high on its hind legs to about ten feet, opening its mouth to a full wide position, exposing all its nasty teeth, and let out a deafening cry of a screaming roar. Splatters of drool fell from its teeth onto the floor as it continued to screech, raising its head into the air.

Responding to its signal, another four of the beasts slowly emerged from the shadows. These too, rose to their hind legs and joined in the deafening, screeching roar.

Russ froze in terror on the spot, looking up at the towering, ferocious beasts before him. “Get the hell out of there” shouted Jack, helpless to come to his friends aid. Russ tightened his grip on the bar, and prepared to do battle.

Jack fumbled in his pocket and got out his phone. He pressed to dial Will’s phone but there was no signal. “Damn!” he felt useless as all he could do was watch as the first beast fell back to all fours and began to approach Russ,

with a slow stalking motion and a deep guttural growl.

The other beasts started to creep either side, to try and surround him. Noticing what they were doing, Russ raised the iron bar and swiped it towards one of the side beasts. It pulled back its head to dodge the blow and immediately lunged forward, mouth wide open to bite Russ, who came back for a second blow stopping it before it could sink its teeth into him.

The bar crashed against the skull of the beast, with such force that the impact hurt his arm through the bar. The beast was stunned for a split second but then shook its head violently, as if trying to shake it off, or to show that it didn't hurt. Then it rose onto its hind legs and gave out a loud roar and pushed off, in a huge powerful lunge at Russ. Its claws outstretched and mouth wide, its claws slashed across Russ's arm and chest, tearing through his clothes and scratching his skin underneath. He twisted round, avoiding the huge jaws, and swung the bar to make another crashing blow on the creatures head as it fell to the side of him. He winced in pain at the wounds, and the other beasts lunged forward in attack.

Russ dove to the ground and rolled to the side, to avoid the attacking beasts. He felt several more slashes as he did so. He feared for his life.

The beasts began attacking relentlessly, snarling and growling as they came. Lashing out swiping, slashes with their claws and trying to get close enough to sink their teeth into him.

Russ tried to hold out, fending them off with the bar, he swung it around, cracking it on the head of any beast that got too close, but it only seemed to briefly stun them at best.

A heavy chunk of metal hit the back of one beasts, and it spun round to see Jack, on the other side of the pit, throwing missiles. Chunks of metal rained down on the pack of beasts. All but one of the beasts had now turned away from Russ, their attention now diverted.

A scratched and bloodied Russ lifted the bar again and brought it hard down towards the face of the beast. He was sure this would be a punishing blow that would put the beast down.

In the blink of an eye, the beast snapped its mouth and the bar was snatched instantly out of his hand.

He gulped and stood helpless, and defenceless. The creature moved its face slowly

towards Russ's. Its huge head only centimetres from his.

He could see all the horrifying detail of this beast's features, hear its loud guttural growl, and even feel its stagnant breath in his face. Its fiery eyes stared into his. With one clean, quick snap of its powerful jaws, it bit the iron bar into pieces.

Russ turned and ran towards the pit. He was going to attempt to leap over it. He didn't fancy his chances, but if he stayed, he was going to die anyway.

He ran, full pelt, closer and closer. "Russ...grab the chain" shouted Jack, pointing at a long, rusty old chain that hung down, over the pit. It was about three feet from the edge.

Russ spotted it and leapt off the edge of the pit. Flying over it, his hands grabbed the chain and it swung over the gap, and he let go at the other side, and landed in a heap near Jack's feet. "Well done" said Jack, helping him to his feet. The beast had stopped at the edge of the pit and as Jack and Russ walked away down the factory, Russ turned towards them and gave out a defiant nod of his head, followed by a glaring stare.

Chapter 8

The Graveyard

Jack and Russ headed towards the door out of the factory and the beasts started screeching and howling again. They turned and looked back one last time, and were horrified to see one of the beasts shuffle back a few paces and then take a run and a huge leap. It cleared the pit and raised its head in their direction and started to growl ferociously again. One by one they all leapt over the pit.

“RUN” shouted Russ, as they turned and went through the doorway out of the factory. “Wait a minute” called Jack, as Russ ran over the scrub ground towards the fence. He picked up a metal pipe from the ground and wedged it through the handle of the door, “It might give us a bit of time” he shouted as he ran to join Russ.

Just as they reached the cut in the fence, they could hear banging and scratching as the beasts tried frantically to get through the door, mixed with roars and growls.

As they ran down the lane away from the factory and turned the corner at the bottom,

they heard an almighty crash. The beasts had broken through the factory door.

The light had faded while they had been in the factory. They headed along the road in the direction of Will's house. There were no people around, the streets were very quiet.

A clatter came from down a side street, followed by more noises from surrounding streets. They turned their heads at each sound.

They arrived at a junction where there were three possible roads, but amongst the shadows down each one, the growls and bangs of the approaching beasts interrupted the quiet.

Opposite the junction was the entrance to the old graveyard. "Quick...in here" Jack shouted to Russ as he ran towards the pathway leading into the graveyard.

The graveyard was a large site, that had been there for centuries and in a state of disrepair. It was no longer used to bury the dead, due to a newer cemetery miles down the road. A huge stone wall surrounded it, and one of the huge iron gates hung off its hinges. They entered through the gates.

There were hundreds of graves in all directions, varying in size from a few feet high to large, walk in tombs with elaborate carvings and statues.

Trees, shrubs and weeds had all become overgrown over the years and become entwined with all the stonework. An eerie mist had formed, covering the ground, with graves protruding and stalks of plants like creeping fingers in the darkness. It was a very scary place.

They made their way deep into the heart of the graveyard, slowing their pace, finding it tricky not being able to see the ground for the mist. They tried to move behind the larger graves as they went, to hide and shield themselves from the beasts, who snarled and howled in pursuit.

They scrambled around a wide stone and sat behind it, leaning their backs up against it. Panting and out of breath at being chased, they took a rest for a few seconds.

They were not quite sure where the beasts were. Jack turned and placed his face near the edge of the stone. Russ did the same on the other edge.

They slowly peeped around the side of the grave to try and pin point exactly where the beasts had gone.

They stared out into the misty darkness. It had gone eerily silent. They scanned for any movement amongst the dark, crumbling stones.

Just then a dark flitting shape, darted between two large stones, churning the mist as it ducked back into the dark shadows. They couldn't make out whether it was a beast or not, but assumed so.

Again, another shadow darted across in the mist, followed by another, getting closer...and closer.

Jack and Russ turned around again, away from the movement behind. They sat against the grave, staring ahead. Then Jack remembered, he placed his hand in his pocket and pulled out his phone. "A signal...yes!" he said as he found Will's name on it. Jack put it to his ear and it rang for a few seconds. "Hello," Will answered on the other end. "Am I glad to hear you!" said Jack, relieved.

Jack frantically proceeded to tell him of their story of the factory, and their current situation. "I will be there in two minutes" promised Will, extremely concerned for his two friends, and hung up the phone.

"He's coming" Jack told Russ reassuringly.

They could now hear the panting and snarling of the approaching beasts behind them. They knew that Will would not make it before the bloodthirsty beasts reached them.

Russ had been scanning the area while Jack was on the phone. He had spotted a very large tomb, or crypt, a few hundred yards from where they sat. It was a very old looking, towering stone construction. Intricately decorated with strange looking gargoyles of unearthly creatures and vast pillars around the front entrance.

“We need to get in there” pointed Russ. Jack agreed. “After three...run as fast as you can...one...two...” Just then a huge head appeared over the top of the grave above them. It snarled, and drool splattered around them from the wide open mouth, full of razor sharp teeth. “...RUN!” screamed Jack, as they both scrambled at full pelt towards the crypt.

The beasts leapt over the graves in hot pursuit, claws tearing into the ground to accelerate their pace. It was a mad frenzy as they snapped at each other as they ran and knocked down graves, smashing them as they came.

Russ flew through the door of the crypt, closely followed by Jack, who tripped and went skidding along the floor inside. He got up quickly and they both flung themselves at the door, shutting it hard with a loud bang echoing around inside the vast crypt.

The beasts hurled themselves at the big iron door just as Russ slid the last of the two iron bolts across. Russ and Jack stepped back from the door as a barrage of loud bangs erupted from it, as the beasts outside threw themselves repeatedly at the entrance of the crypt. The crypt was too strong, they couldn't get in.

Will and Susan reached the gates at the entrance to the graveyard. They paused for a moment, looking into the misty darkness of the decrepit old cemetery. Susan took hold of Will's hand for reassurance and they set off inside. The overgrown ivy and creepers cracked and crunched underfoot as they carefully, and quietly moved between the graves. Mist swirling around their legs and feet. They stopped and looked at each other in fear as they heard the distant screeching howls of the beasts, lurking deeper inside the graveyard. Will leaned in to Susan and softly told her "Whatever happens...hold on to me...or stay close to me...I can't protect you if we become separated" and they turned and set off again through the graves.

Eventually they spotted the large entrance to the crypt where Jack and Russ were. They ducked down behind a grave stone and gazed

ahead, scanning the area between them and the doors.

The graveyard had fallen eerily silent. The swirling mist engulfed the gravestones in the darkness. There was no sign of the beasts. The moonlight cast strange shadows from the scattered stone monuments and statues.

They stood and walked around the grave, heading for the crypt. Slowly they crept between the graves, trying to be as quiet as possible. They looked all around as they edged forward.

Will could feel Susan trembling with fear as he held her hand, so he grasped it tighter and she looked at him, giving a grateful smile which couldn't hide her true anxiety.

The silence was suddenly broken with a loud screeching cry of one of the beasts, just behind them. They both spun round, but could see nothing. Then another howl to the left, causing them to turn again, but no beast.

Then a chorus of howls and screeching roars erupted from all around them. They moved around in a circle, looking for the beasts, when eventually the first huge, salivating creature emerged out of the misty darkness from behind a large grave. Its fiery red eyes glowing in the dark as it slowly raised

its huge bulk over the top of the stone. It shook its head violently, sending splatters of drool spraying around. Then opened its gaping jaws to full stretch, and let out a terrifying, loud guttural roar.

Susan clung to Will, terrified as other beasts started to emerge from the darkness, all around them. They were surrounded.

The first beast lunged forward, claws outstretched and jaws open. Will pushed Susan and they both fell to the ground, only avoiding the mouth of the beast by inches. It snapped its jaw with a loud crack as it flew by.

Will quickly rose to a kneeling position and spun to face the beast, which was scrambling back around to make another attack. He stretched out his hands towards it, just as it leapt straight at Susan. She screamed as its massive torso loomed overhead, but Will released an invisible wave of powerful energy from his hands, and with a strong throwing motion, the beast was hurled through the air at great velocity into a concrete statue, smashing it into pieces. The beast went crashing across the graveyard, ferociously snarling as it came to rest, sprawled out in a heap.

Just then a tall figure, wearing a long, dark, tattered robe, with hood covering its face

appeared next to the beast. The beast climbed to its feet and stood besides the figure.

Susan stood to her feet and they both looked around at all the other beasts, who had also been joined by similar robed, hooded figures. One for each beast. The figures stood eerily silent facing Will and Susan.

Each beast now stood by a hooded figure, like a dog with its master, although these were far bigger than any dog. They easily reached the shoulder height of their masters.

The beasts snarled, and all the dark hooded figures slowly and silently raised their arms, pointing at Will and Susan and instantly the beasts lunged forward in attack.

There was no time to think, the beasts were instantly upon them, so instinctively they both ducked down into a crouching position. Will wrapped his arms around Susan to protect her, he gritted his teeth and conjured the power within him.

The air around them started swirling like the vortex of a twister, just as the beasts reached them, sending them sprawling out in different directions next to the vortex. The jaws snapping at them inside as they were repelled. Will winced in pain as a claw ripped down his back. The beasts were picking themselves up

and kept attacking the vortex again and again, occasionally managing a slight scratch on one of them. The air whooshed and howled as it rotated faster and faster, making it harder for the beasts to get close.

Susan looked up from inside the vortex, making out the shape of the attacking creatures through the gushing air whirling around her and Will.

Suddenly she felt something grasp her leg. It was the claws of a beast. It had managed to breach the vortex and just barely clung on to her leg. It was just enough, and as the vortex repelled the beast, she was whipped out of there with it.

Will quickly stood to his feet, the vortex dissipating as he did so, to witness her being dragged along the ground, through the mist by one of the beasts. She was kicking and screaming, but the beast was too powerful. It was returning to the on looking figure, who was turning to disappear once again into the darkness along with the others.

“Stop...Susan...” Will shouted as he raised his hands towards the retreating beasts and their masters. “Will...help...save me” cried Susan.

Will felt the energy welling inside him and it erupted with an almighty flash, as fire and

lightning, carried on a gush of powerful wind blasted in a huge stream from the tips of his fingers into the area where the beasts were, causing the whole graveyard to light up and everything to blow around like a hurricane.

Will dropped to his knees, and everything calmed. He was too late, they had gone. They had took Susan with them. He looked into the darkness, in the area that they had disappeared from. Teary eyed, dirty, bloodied and shattered. He felt defeated and helpless.

Chapter 9

The Crypt

Will stood up and remembered Jack and Russ were still inside the large stone crypt behind him. He rubbed his face with his hands and tried to focus on rescuing them, but it was difficult to pull himself away from the area where Susan and all his self worth had been torn away from him. He felt a failure, but knew he had to overcome this for the sake of his friends. If he was to see her again he would need the help and support of them.

He stood between the large stone pillars, in front of the door to the crypt. The dark gothic structure looked ominous in the darkness. Gargoyles had the illusion of looking at him, which made him nervous. He clenched his fists in determination and felt energy flowing through him. He could feel his power building and his body started to flicker. It was becoming transparent and he stepped forward towards the door. He reached his hand out and was shocked to see it disappearing through the door. He quickly pulled it back and looked at it in amazement. He could see straight through it.

He looked back at the door and walked straight towards it and passed right through it.

Jack and Russ were sat a short distance from the door on the other side, on the dusty floor. They had heard all the commotion outside, but were unsure of the outcome, so they sat quietly, nervously looking towards the door.

They both jumped back, surprised as Will materialised out of the door in front of them. He stopped after clearing the door and his transparent form started flickering again and gradually returned to full solid form.

“Crikey mate, you sure know how to make an entrance” said Jack, as he and Russ rose to their feet, dusting themselves down. “It’s the ghost of graveyards past!” quipped Russ, slapping his friend on the back. “Boy are we glad to see you” added Jack. Will dropped to his knees, his head dropped, looking at the ground. He was exhausted and his scratched, bloodied body, with clothes all dirty and torn, sat motionless.

Russ knelt and placed his hands on Will’s shoulders to support him, thinking he would collapse at any moment. Jack also stepped over to assist. “They took her...they took Susan” he

said in a faint, almost whisper, “I couldn’t save her...she’s gone.”

Russ and Jack looked at each other in horror. “Where have they taken her?” asked Jack, but he continued to stare at the floor. “WILL” Jack shouted loudly to try and snap him out of it, “Where did they take her?”

Will looked up and looked at each of his friends in turn. He slowly rose to his feet, helped from each side by Russ and Jack. “I don’t know” he replied, “But we must find her...we must save her...somehow.”

Will scanned the huge tomb that they stood in. It was intricately decorated with elaborate carvings on the stone walls. There were four wooden torches burning on the walls that Jack had lit earlier. Strange stone sculptures of unearthly creatures were arranged in a circle, and in the middle, the steep steps into the crypt below, down to the heart of the ancient burial chamber.

Will proceeded over to the steps and began to slowly make his way down. Jack and Russ followed. “Where you going Will?” asked Russ. Will turned around with his finger up to his lips, telling Russ to be quiet and they carefully went down the steps into the darkness. They could not see anything down in

the dark chamber below. The only light coming from the flickering torches behind them, casting strange shadows onto the steps in front of them, but the deeper they went the darker it grew.

Will held his hand out in front of him. A crackle, like a sparkler flame ignited in his palm and then turned into a white ball of light that illuminated the path in front of them. They could see the steps going deep down underground, but the chamber at the bottom was out of view, so they carried on down further.

Will could feel within him a powerful force that seemed to draw him towards the crypt chamber. He knew it was a very negative energy, which filled him with fear, but he knew he had to put his fear aside and face whatever was ahead of him to stand a chance of ever seeing Susan again.

They approached the last few steps and Will opened the palm of his hand. The ball of light levitated and gently floated underneath the overhanging roof, disappearing out of view into the chamber. They could see the illumination of the crypt, shining past the overhang, so they negotiated the last couple of steps and ducked

down under the overhang into the chamber of the crypt.

The chamber was about twenty feet in diameter, and a perfectly carved circle out of the surrounding rock. The ball of light hovered in the centre of the chamber, lighting the whole crypt. A large stone coffin lay on a slab at the far side of the circle. There was writing etched into the sides in an unrecognisable language, but the lid of the coffin lay on the floor next to it.

Will told his friends to wait where they were, and he slowly and cautiously walked over to it. As he reached it, there was a step up onto the slab, so he couldn't yet see into the coffin. He took a deep breath and placed one foot onto the step, and then the other. He could feel the dark energy pulling his own, powerfully into the opening before him. He leaned forward to the edge of the coffin and placed his finger tips over the side, and moved his head over the top.

A blast of stagnant air blasted him in the face, and he was shocked to see, what looked like a whole new dark universe. It was the doorway to another realm. It was a dark looking void, with violent flashes of lightning and eruptions of exploding dark matter, in an

infinitely looking space that had no limits. He could see for miles and miles into the stormy void, and the noise was thunderous and exploding, with the wind constantly blasting his face making his eyes water. He began to hear loud, chilling screams from different directions and dark shadows flying past at great speed. He couldn't make out what they looked like, they were too fast. A dark shape flew past the inside of the opening, it let out a loud terrifying scream and its horrifying flesh torn face appeared in front of his, briefly before it whipped away, back into the void. Will jumped and stumbled back, falling off the slab onto the dusty floor of the crypt.

“Are you OK?” shouted Jack. “Yes...stay back” he replied as he climbed back up to the coffin and leaned inside once again. The activity of the screaming dark souls was increasing, and they seemed to be getting ever nearer to the opening.

Just then a roar erupted from deep within the void, so loud and powerful that the three friends had to cover their ears, as the whole crypt shook like an earthquake. Will ducked away from the opening until it had ceased, then peered back over the side, to witness an immense dark creature appearing far inside the

void. It wore long, dark flowing, silky robes that fluttered about in the wind, which covered its huge body of dark, slimy, leathery looking skin. Long sharp spines protruded from its back and limbs, and its muscular arms had long, sharp hooked claws on the ends.

The back of its head had three long spikes and its face was surrounded by tentacle like protrusions, and had an enormous mouth with a set of huge, razor sharp teeth and a second row of smaller, hooked teeth behind. This creature was far bigger and more menacing than the other spirits that were flitting around and flying past.

As it came closer, he could see huge, evil looking eyes staring at him and the mouth opened wide, exposing the double rows of teeth and letting out a second, deafening roar.

“Who are you?” he shouted into the void, “What have you done with Susan?” The creature within the void now looked huge, floating around in the space before him. It reached an arm out towards him, opened up its large claws and bellowed out a string of words in some incomprehensible language, in a deep guttural growl. It then turned and whooshed away, back into the dark void in the blink of an eye. All of a sudden, all of the dark spirits

stopped where they were and turned their awful rotting faces towards the opening to the void; the coffin, and let out a terrifying screaming noise, baring their decaying teeth, scowling at him. They all started flying towards him at great speed with their clawed fingers outstretched, and still screeching.

Will turned and jumped from the slab and started to run across the chamber towards the steps. “RUN...get the hell out of here...they’re coming” he shouted, and Jack and Russ scrambled up the steps, ahead of him.

Behind them, one by one the dark entities flew out of the coffin, into the chamber. The screams from them getting louder as each one exited the void.

Jack was reaching the top of the steps, closely followed by Russ, who upon clearing the top, spun round to see where Will was, but Will was walking backwards up the steps and blasting pulses of energy from his hands. With every wave of energy, the many spirits were being forced back, but there were more and more coming all the time. It was becoming a struggle to hold them off. “There are too many...I cant hold them much longer” he shouted up to his friends, so he abruptly stopped and turned and ran.

Upon joining his friends, they ran over to the door and Will flung the bolts open with a wave of energy, and a flick of his hand. They ran outside into the graveyard and turned to face the crypt.

The dark spirits were flying up the steps inside and whooshing around the crypt, increasing in numbers as more joined them. The crypt started to explode with flashes of lightning and a strong wind blasted out of the doors as it filled with hundreds of the demon like souls.

“What now?” said Russ anxiously. “How do we stop them?” asked Jack frantically. Will suddenly had a flashback to when Jim told him he was the Ghost Lord, and he had an idea.

“I have an idea...let me try something... hold on” he said, and he stretched his arms out and a stream of white light blasted down from the sky, consuming him in powerful waves of energy, and he raised his arms and clapped his hands together above his head within the stream of light. As he did so, there was a powerful flash and streams of light shone out in all directions into each of the surrounding graves.

This lasted several seconds and then Will separated his hands and the light ceased shining

to the graves and then shot back up, into the sky with a flash high above the clouds. The night sky then returned to darkness. The moonlight shining down from behind the clouds, the only light now slightly illuminating the gravestones.

Russ and Jack were stood in amazement, looking around at all the graves as white, slightly illuminated figures of people of all ages and sizes, children, men and women started to rise up from the ground, until the whole graveyard was full of hundreds of ghosts of the people that had been buried there over the years. They all stood looking to where the dark spirits were beginning to emerge from the crypt and started to drift forward. The huge army of ghosts marched towards the crypt, passing through gravestones as if they weren't there. Staring at the menacing dark spirits as they left the tomb entrance.

The dark spirits began to notice the advancing ghosts and let out horrific screeches and began flying towards them at great speed, with claws outstretched.

The ghosts of the people all raised their hands towards the oncoming attack, and waves of light, wispy energy pulsed in a huge deluge across the ground, hitting the unsuspecting

attackers and forcing them backwards, like flying in to a violent storm.

The dark spirits were unprepared for this attack and began to flee back into the crypt, some of them turned and tried to attack again, firing dark waves of thick, powerful energy, like dark clouds with lightning flashes erupting from within. But the combined energy of the ghosts was too great for the sporadic attacks by the dark spirits. They retreated back inside, and down the steps to the coffin and the dark spirits all disappeared back into the void. The coffin lid on the floor started to rattle and then spun through the air and landed back on top of it.

During it all, Will had kept his eyes shut and his arms outstretched in a trance like state. He now lowered his arms and opened his eyes as the ghosts of the people returned to their graves and slowly disappeared back into the earth.

“Wow...that was amazing” said Russ, “An army of ghosts...brilliant.” Jack congratulated Will, as he recovered from his trance like moment.

“We still need to rescue Susan” he said, “And I know just the ghost that can give me the help we need.”

The graveyard was now quiet and calm and everything was back to normal. The three friends walked down the dark misty path through the graveyard, heading back to the iron gates, and the entrance back to the streets outside.

Chapter 10

A Helping Hand

Will arrived back at his house. He had told Jack and Russ to go home and he would speak to them in the morning, hopefully with some answers. Will entered his bedroom and closed the door behind him. His sister was in her bedroom with the television on, and he could hear her talking and giggling on the phone. His parents were downstairs in the living room in front of the television.

“Lucy...get off the phone” he heard his dad shouting upstairs to his sister. Lucy paused for a brief moment, then carried on talking on the phone. Will laid on his bed listening. He needed to wait until everybody went to bed. Then he needed them to be asleep, before he went to try and contact the ghost of Jim again.

Lucy was thirteen years old, but in her own eyes thought she was a lot more mature, like many teenage girls. She chatted to friends on the phone for hours about anything and everything.

“Lucy!” his dad shouted up again, louder than before, and then footsteps trotted up the

stairs towards Lucy's room. Will heard her door bang open as his mother burst into her room. "Come on young lady, put that phone down. Say goodbye and then its lights out" his mother said in an annoyed tone, as Will heard her click the telly off. "Awww mum!" moaned Lucy. Will listened as it went quiet and Lucy settled down to sleep. The handle turned on his door and his mother peeked her head around. "You O.K William?" she asked with a warming smile on her face.

His mum Wendy, was a very warm, caring person who, although she loved Lucy dearly, had a soft spot for William, her first born. He could do no wrong in her eyes. "Don't stay up too late will you William" she said softly. "I wont mum...goodnight" he replied. "Goodnight sweetheart" she said as she closed the door behind her, and he heard the pitter patter of her feet running back downstairs. He laid there for a while, listening to hear when his parents would go to bed. His eyes started getting tired and heavy and began to shut. He flinched and opened his eyes again, trying desperately to stay awake, but he was too tired and drifted into a deep sleep.

Will jumped and woke up, as if disturbed by something. He scanned the room, but could

see nothing. He looked at the clock, it was midnight. The house was quiet, his parents and sister were asleep. He rubbed his eyes, annoyed that he had fallen asleep and he sat up on his bed.

He made his way through the door, onto the landing. He looked along towards the end, and could just make out the top of the staircase in the darkness. He could also see the other bedroom doors were shut, and hear the snoring and loud breathing of his parents and sister.

He crept past, trying not to creak any floor boards and wake anyone up. On descending the stairs, one of the steps creaked loudly and he froze on the spot and looked back over his shoulder towards the bedrooms. Pausing for a moment, not even breathing, he tentatively lowered his foot to the next step, still glancing back at the doors. Realising that he had not woke anyone, he continued carefully down the remaining steps to the bottom and stood quietly staring into the darkness of the hall.

He wondered how to go about summoning the ghost of Jim. Did he call out his name? or try and use some sort of force within him to open a vortex, or sit down and meditate? He was feeling frustrated and confused. "Jim" he called out in a quiet tone, trying not to wake his

family upstairs. All was very still and silent, so he called out again “Jim...are you here...I need your help...” still nothing. He decided to return to the place where he first saw Jim, in the cupboard under the stairs.

He closed the door behind him and sat back against the wall of the under stairs cupboard with his legs crossed. He felt relaxed and waited patiently for something to happen. His dad's lamp illuminated the small space. He concentrated his thoughts and focussed, picturing Jim in his mind. He sat looking straight ahead, and as he pictured him in his mind, the transparent form of Jim started to appear, sat in front of him, facing him.

“Yes my lord...I am here to serve you” said Jim. Will smiled warmly at him. “Am I glad to see you...” letting out a sigh of relief that he had managed to contact his spiritual friend.

“...and call me William...or Will...stop with all the lord stuff.”

“But that is who you are my lord...it would be disrespectful to call you otherwise” exclaimed Jim, bowing his head slightly as he spoke.

“No my friend...you are wise and I look to you for help and guidance...it would be me,

disrespecting you to expect that you bow to me.” Jim smiled at Will. “Very well Will...but I know that one day soon, you will earn the title that was bestowed you, and you shall bring order once again to the spirit realm...now, what is it I can do for you my...” Jim stopped himself calling him lord, “...sorry...I mean... Will.” Jim put his hand to his mouth, and Will smiled, finding it amusing.

Will sat back against the wall again. “Where do I start...” he paused and thought for a moment. The harsh reality of the seriousness of the situation came flooding back to him, like a slap in the face, quickly breaking the jovial atmosphere between the two of them. Thoughts of Susan and the earlier events filled his head and his face changed to a distressed, worried expression. “You have to help me...I don’t know what to do...they have took Susan... please...” His voice changed to desperation and he was practically pleading Jim to help him. “Please...you have to help me get her back... what am I supposed to do?” and he looked at Jim with a defeated look on his face.

Jim looked towards the floor, and then calmly looked Will straight in the eyes and said “I am here to serve you Will, and I shall do everything in my power to help you...but you

must remember, YOU are the Ghost Lord and have more power than either of us can possibly imagine. The only one capable of rescuing your friend...is you...now...tell me everything that has happened and we can work out what to do.”

Will started to tell Jim everything that had happened since they had last met. About the spirit head teacher, the beasts in the factory, the graveyard and discovering the strange coffin in the crypt, with its weird universe inside, and finally the events leading to the abduction of Susan.

“Things have become more serious than I anticipated” said a worried Jim. “Loxin has captured Susan to lure you...it is you he wants...he will try and kill you and steal the power, and the Gorb from within you. Then he will become the lord of the spirit realm. Your world and mine, will be forever in eternal darkness and the dark spirits will rule both worlds. Filled with death, decay and fear. The world as you know it will be doomed... forever.”

Will was shocked by this and asked Jim what he should do.

“Loxin will not fight you in this world...he knows that you are too strong...he cannot match your power in this reality once you have

learned to harness all your abilities. He wants to fight you in the dark plains of the spirit realm, where he resides. With your inexperience and lack of knowledge of the spirit realm, he means to defeat you where he has the advantage, and all his armies of creatures of the otherworld to aid his conquest.”

Will let out a big sigh, and ran his fingers through his hair, and then scratched the top of his head with both hands. He felt the burden of what he had to take on to rescue Susan, and ultimately save the planet, as well as the realm of the spirits.

“The huge entity you saw inside the coffin, with the spikes on his head and limbs, was Loxin. He came forward from the depths of the dark realm to face his ultimate enemy and look into your eyes, to sense the power from your soul, and declare his intentions to win the Gorb from you and express his defiance at the rightful keeper of the Gorb. The coffin in the chamber at the bottom of the crypt is the portal into the dark plains of the spirit realm. This is the main entry point of the dark spirits into this world. This is not an option for you to enter our realm. The dark forces are too powerful here

and it would be like stepping into the dragons den...they would eat you alive!!!”

“Well how do I get to the spirit realm then?” asked Will.

“By the same way the dark spirits pass through the crypt portal...ours pass through the light portal.”

“Where is this light portal ?” said Will, eyes staring in concentration.

“There is a large, old house deep in Parsons Woods which contains the portal into the light plains of the spirit realm.”

“My grandparents house...where I discovered the Gorb Stone” said Will.

“This is where you must return to, and enter the portal and cross into the realm of the spirits. I don’t know how your grandparents came into possession of the Gorb Stone, but once they had it, they put themselves in grave danger.”

“They too have vanished” said Will, “Maybe they could be in your world?”

“That is quite possible Will” replied Jim, “Lets hope that the dark spirits spared them!!!”

Jim told him that the light portal into the spirit realm was situated within the shaft of a dumbwaiter in the house in the woods. He would have to enter the attic and move across to the far end, and climb inside the shaft. Just

below the opening would be the portal. Through the portal he would enter the spirit realm and could begin his quest to find, and rescue Susan, and maybe face his nemesis Loxin, the lord of the dark spirits.

“Remember to use your strength and your power. You have abilities that are beyond your imagination. It is only a matter of trusting your instinct and letting go...and the power of the Gorb will flow through you. You can disappear...walk through walls...levitate...but this is just the tip of the iceberg...you are fuelled with a fire of supernatural energy, and who you are, determines how greatly you will be able to use that power.”

Jim started to flicker, as if his energy was fading. “I have to go now...”

“Thank you my friend” called Will, as Jim virtually disappeared.

“Good luck Will...farewell...” Jim said in a faint whisper as he vanished out of sight, and Will was left, sat all alone once again in the little cupboard. He made his way back to bed, mulling over all that he had just heard, and planning his next move.

Chapter 11

Loxin's Lair

The damp, dark misty plains of the dark spirit realm stretched out in all directions, as far as the eyes could see. It was a place where the ground was shrouded in a thick mist, so you couldn't see the broken, scarred landscape beneath. The areas of harsh rocky outcrops or the areas of swamp like mush. Sharp pinnacles of rock stretched into the air, and the frames of dead, decaying tree like structures protruding from the mist spread here and there. Dotted around, there was the flicker of flames from fiery outcrops, which occasionally jetted out a huge plume of flame high into the sky with a loud roar.

Above the ground, a seemingly never ending expanse of darkness, with eruptions of dark matter appearing and violent flashes of lightning from within. There was a constant, deep, vibrating, muffled rumble in the background, which grew louder and faded again at each eruption of fire or lightning.

Far within the bleak, dark plains of this land, an immense structure stretched high into

the darkness above. It was a fortified, castle like construction, but coated in a moist, black, leathery looking substance.

The outer walls had large spikes along the tops and within the walls were several large, black towers, the centre one being huge and towering above the others. Black shadowy figures filled the dark sky, flying all around the towers at great speed, screeching as they darted around.

At the base of the outer wall was an immensely deep trench, like a moat, all the way around the structure. It was about fifty feet across from one side to the other, with no apparent way of getting across it. Swirling around the whole ring of it was a violent gush of dense, grey fog, that roared around at such power that to enter it, would be like stepping into a tornado. It gave out a glow that in the dark landscape, made the towers stand out and look very menacing in the darkness of the realm. This fortress was where the lord of the dark spirits resided...Loxin's Lair.

Susan opened her eyes. It was dark and everything was blurred, so she lifted her hands and rubbed her eyes until her surroundings started to come into focus.

She had been unconscious for some time and now found herself coming round. She winced in pain and moved her hand to feel a deep scratch down her leg from where the beast had grasped her. She also had other grazes and scratches, and pain from knocks and bruises like she had been thrown around like a rag doll. She was in a lot of pain. She sat up, frowning in discomfort and looked around to assess her situation.

She was being held in a huge chamber, deep within the heart of Loxin's Lair. It was a large round cavern and in the centre, a platform on which she sat, surrounded by a very deep pit encircling her, with fire and molten rock glowing and bubbling deep below. This glow produced the only light within the chamber and the heat was almost unbearable, making her sweat profusely and giving off an awful odour. There was no way that she could get off the platform and over the lava pit to the other side.

She stood to her feet and looked over the side into the pit below. The rising heat blasted into her face, causing her to close her eyes and quickly pull her head away. She crouched down and placed her hands on the platform and sat down again, feeling too scared to stand in such a dangerous situation. The platform vibrated

and moved around in the current of heat rising up from below. It felt very unstable and she tried to hold on to the edge of the platform to prevent herself from being thrown over the side.

She looked around the perimeter of the cavern to see if there was any way out of there, but she saw no tunnel or doorway. She looked up above, but saw only the domed, black, rocky roof of the cavern. There seemed to be no way in or out of the chamber. She lowered her head and began to weep in despair and frustration.

“Help...where am I?” she shouted between the snuffles of her crying.

“What do you want with me?...let me go...hello...what are you going to do to me?”

There was no reply to any of her shouting, only the dull rumbling and vibrating of the rocky walls and platform, so she eventually gave up and had to face the reality that she may die there.

After several hours, her hands were sore and blistered from holding on to the platform and her skin was blackened by the fumes. She was drained of energy by the intense heat and now just lie motionless, her eyes starting to close with fatigue.

Just then a loud rumble filled the chamber, causing Susan to open her eyes wide. The adrenalin gave her a boost and she quickly sat up in fear. At the far side of the chamber, a black crack appeared in mid air. It was like a lightning strike across the chamber, but dark and travelling horizontally with a deafening cracking and crashing noise, like thunder. It didn't disappear like lightning, it formed an immense crack straight across the width of the cavern in front of her. The crashing noise had subsided to a loud reverberating rumble.

She covered her ears with her hands and squinted at the uncomfortable noise. She stared at the strange phenomenon in front of her, terrified of what unknown event it was leading to. She could feel her heart pounding within her chest and her breathing deepened. Sweat ran down her dirty face from her grimy hair, which was now more black than blonde.

All of a sudden the dark crack began to split open and tear apart, making her jump. Something was bursting out of it, like entering through from a different reality. The loud, thunderous noise crashed out again as she looked on in horror.

Two sets of huge claws appeared through the opening crack. Vicious looking hooks on

the end of them ripped open the gap even more, making way for two enormous, muscular, leathery arms with long spikes protruding from them. An immense opening was ripped and an almighty deafening roar came from within the dark void, through the gap.

The enormous spiked head of Loxin appeared, opening his mouth wide and roaring as he came. His double rows of sharp teeth glistening in the thick, oozing saliva, which dribbled down the tentacle like protrusions covering his face. His eyes fixed on Susan.

She screamed and started to panic. She looked around at her impossible situation, there was no escape. The thought even entered her head to jump off into the molten pit below, rather than face what was coming through the crack.

She fell to her knees sobbing, not even having the guts to commit to a quick death. She had to sacrifice herself to the creature that faced her.

She raised her head to witness the remainder of Loxin's immense, slimy, leathery body climbing out of the crack.

Loxin stepped away from the opening. His dark robes fell down to the floor. The spines on his back protruded through. The crack behind

him closed in an almighty bang and with a flash, disappeared.

The menacing, terrifying lord of the dark spirits stood, towering at the edge of the pit, looking right at her. He growled and then started to bellow out a string of words in a deep guttural growl to her. He was talking to her, but in a language that she couldn't comprehend. Occasionally he would point at her as he spoke and growl ferociously, although Susan didn't know what was being said, but assumed by the tone that it wasn't good.

Loxin finished bellowing and now stood silent, as if waiting to see her response.

“What are you saying?” She screamed at him, “I don't understand you...why are you keeping me here?...what are you saying?...let me go...let me go” and she screamed at him as loud as she could. Loxin smiled, an evil, smug sort of grin showing his deadly teeth and he extended his arms and stood tall, exposing many of the spines from beneath his robes, and in an incredibly bright flash, and a thunderous rumble he disappeared in the blink of an eye.

Susan remained, sat precariously on the platform above the fiery, molten pit below. Not knowing what was going to happen, if she was going to die, or if the huge creature would

return and just how long her torment would last, before whatever fate she was destined for.

Chapter 12

Attack Of The Spirit Corpses

Will opened his eyes and squinted at the bright sunlight shining through his curtains. He felt very groggy and tired still. He sat up in bed and stretched out his arms as he let out a big yawn. He could hear the activity downstairs of Lucy and his parents having breakfast.

He jumped out of bed. He was starting to come round a bit and began to get dressed. He sat on the edge of his bed and pulled on his socks. He looked around the room for his trainers and spotted them kicked into a corner. Feeling a bit lazy, he reached out his hands, pointing them in that direction and they sprung off the floor and spun through the air, landing in his hands. Will smiled, amused at his trick and his sheer laziness.

He ran downstairs and quickly dashed into the kitchen, grabbing a slice of toast off Lucy's plate. "Thanks" he called as he disappeared back out of the kitchen. "William Peterson you big fat pig!" shouted Lucy, as the front door slammed and Will left the house.

Will arrived at Jack's house. He was already watching for Will approaching, through the front window and opening the front door before he could even knock. "What's the plan then?" asked Jack, and Will filled him in on the details of the conversation with Jim the night before, as they headed along the road to Russ's house.

They arrived at the house and made their way around to the back, where Russ's window overlooked the rear garden. Russ being Russ, didn't leave the house like a normal person. Will and Jack stood below a large old tree, that creeped up the side of the house outside Russ's window.

"Russ... get your lazy backside out of bed" shouted Jack, and Will smiled and added "Don't make me fly up there" and they both chuckled.

A face appeared at the window. It was Russ, rubbing his eyes, he had been disturbed by his friends. His hair was all over the place and he opened the window wider and shouted down "Give me a minute... I won't be long" and he ducked back away from the window to get ready.

Thirty minutes had passed, Will and Jack were sat on a couple of garden chairs, getting

impatient, fed up of waiting. “Come on you moron” shouted Jack, and then the window flung open and Russ’s face appeared again with a beaming smile on it. “Ready!” he shouted. He began his usual dismount from his window. He climbed onto the window ledge and leapt to the branch of the tree, grabbing it with his hands and with one clean swoop, flipped over and held onto another branch upside down, dangling with his legs curled over the branch. He then dropped to a lower branch, grabbing it, swinging down into a somersault and landing on the lawn in front of his friends who slowly clapped, sarcastically, unimpressed upon seeing it a hundred times before. The three of them then set off in the direction of Parsons Woods, as Will filled Russ in on all the details of the night before, to prepare them for what lie ahead.

The three of them arrived at the old house in the woods. They emerged from the woods, reaching the end of the track and they all stood a distance in front of the large, creepy old building.

“How on earth do your grandparents live here?” said Russ, shaking his head in disbelief as they all stared at the house, with its creaky

old wooden frame entwined with vegetation and looking almost derelict and abandoned.

Will scanned some of the dusty, cob web riddled windows on the front to see if he could see any movement within, human or otherwise. “I suppose we had better go in” he said as he stepped forward towards the door. The others followed and he pushed open the heavy, wooden door with a loud creak and the three of them entered the gloomy hallway inside. The light in the house was very dim, struggling to penetrate the grimy windows.

Jack turned and slowly pushed the door behind them. ‘BANG’ the loud noise echoed around the house. They all cringed. “Oops!” said Jack and the three of them paused, listening if anyone reacted to it.

“They certainly always know I’m coming in this place” Will said quietly, on hearing no reply. Russ and Jack took a breath after holding it.

Will closed his eyes and stretched his arms out and straightened his fingers, as though he was feeling the air around him. He moved his hands around, pointing in different directions. Jack and Russ stood watching him with puzzled looks on their faces. “What on earth are you doing?” asked Russ, “I can feel something...”

said Will, still with his eyes shut "...There is a presence...I can feel an energy...it is building all around us...something is coming...we don't have much time, we need to go quickly and find the dumbwaiter" and he opened his eyes and looked at them. "Come on", and he took a step away from the door, but as he did so, he was abruptly stopped by a banging noise coming from below the floorboards in front of him. Jack and Russ hadn't even managed to take a step yet. "What on earth was that?" asked Jack, turning to Russ, who just shrugged his shoulders and then looked down at the floor ahead.

Again a barrage of thumps and bangs bellowed out from the creaky old floorboards, this time strong enough for them to see the shaking of the boards, as though something was hitting them from underneath.

The three of them took a step back against the door, feeling very worried and nervous of what was causing it to happen. They paused, silent and staring at the floor. An unnerving scratching noise started below the same boards. Scraping and picking, like fingernails tearing at the grains of the wood. The boards started to lift again as the banging started, accompanying the scratching and then the boards started to lift

and splinter. Two of the boards burst up, sending splinters of wood across the floor and an arm punched out of the small opening in the floor. It was a rotting, decaying limb with bits of flesh hanging off, being torn on the sharp splinters of wood as it came.

Two red, glowing eyes peered from the darkness of the hole in the floorboards and the other arm punched through, making the hole even bigger. The decomposing fingernails began cracking and tearing from the finger ends, as it tried to grab hold of the floor to lever itself out of the hole.

The rotting, flesh torn body of a corpse, possessed by a dark spirit clambered awkwardly out of the hole, moaning and groaning as it did so. It stood to its feet, with one of its arms swinging from the elbow joint where the upper arm was almost complete skeleton.

They leaned back against the door, horrified as the corpses red eyes glared at them from deep inside the exposed eye sockets, and it let out a loud groan.

Further banging's erupted from all over the floor of the hallway and floorboards started bursting up all over the place. More and more

of the dark spirit corpses were crawling out from under the floor.

The corpses started walking towards them, staggering and awkward, some of them dragging disjointed limbs behind them, others even crawling. All moaning and groaning as they came.

“Quick...get out of here” shouted Will, and they spun round to face the door and pulled it open. Clambering outside, they suddenly stopped dead in their tracks. Emerging from the dark, gloominess of the woods was dozens of the same walking corpses. All glaring at them, groaning and scuffling across the clearing towards the front of the house. Dozens soon turned into hundreds...they were being overrun.

“Get back in the house...there’s too many” shouted Jack, and they backed up into the house again slamming the door behind them.

A hand grabbed Russ around the ankle and he looked down to see a corpse spirit with no legs, dragging itself across the floor. He shook his leg violently and it released its grasp, so he kicked it hard, sending it rolling across the floor.

Other corpses were reaching them, stretching out arms towards them. The three of

them started kicking out at them, to try and force them back, but there were too many... they just kept coming.

The moaning cries were getting incredibly loud.

The cellar door at the end of the hall burst open and spirit corpses started to flood through. They just kept on coming, from everywhere. Banging erupted from the door behind them, as hundreds of them started to surround the house from the surrounding woods outside, they were trapped.

Several flesh torn hands grabbed Jack's arms and legs and he was dragged into the increasing crowd of corpses, shouting out, as many of them started to lunge for him. He was pulled out of sight into the thick of the mob. He was struggling and trying to fight them off. He felt the jagged edge of many nails tearing at his arms and legs and decaying teeth starting to try and bite him. It was becoming too much effort to barely move as the numbers of corpses jumping onto him kept increasing.

He felt his legs being dragged into the jagged, splintered opening of one of the holes in the floor so he grabbed the sides to try and stop himself being pulled down inside.

Will and Russ looked on in horror. Russ started to wade into the crowd of corpses, kicking and hitting them as he tried to reach his friend.

Will raised his hand and blasted out an intensely bright stream of sparks, directly at one of the corpse spirits. It was knocked back off its feet into a sprawling heap on the floor. He paused, looking at his hands he then pointed them towards Russ, who was also disappearing into the sea of corpses by now. He shot streams of sparks through the mob of corpses, sending them sprawling out in different directions and cutting a path through them towards Russ.

The corpses gradually started to climb to their feet again, so Will shouted “Get to the stairs...I will get Jack” and he blasted the powerful stream from his hands across the hallway, sending dozens of them flying through the air, until he had cleared a path to see Jack holding on to the floor boards, with his body dragged almost fully down a hole.

Will ran through the path he had cleared, towards Jack, but the corpses had already started getting back to their feet and coming after him.

“Grab my hands” he cried as he leaned down to pull Jack from the hole. The two of them fell

to the floor, after Jack was pulled free, and the corpses started throwing themselves on top of them both again. Will clenched his fists in anger and threw his arms out, sending a huge flash and a wave of powerful energy radiating out from where they crouched on the floor. Knocking every one of the corpses flying backwards onto the floor. “Run...go...to the stairs” he shouted, and the two of them ran across the hall, and joined Russ on the stairs.

Will turned around, the spirit corpses were all starting to get up and head towards the stairs again. The front door crashed open and the hundreds of corpses started to pour in from outside, still groaning loudly and more climbed up from below the floor boards. It was hopeless, they wouldn't stop coming, so Will, Russ and Jack scrambled up the stairs as the corpses began crawling and climbing up the bottom few steps.

They reached the top and Will looked down on the approaching army of relentless dark spirit corpses. “Pull the steps down and go up to the attic...I will slow them down” he called to his friends.

Will kneeled down at the top step and placed his hands to the floor. He closed his eyes and concentrated. Feeling the power building

within him, a thick mist started to appear from his now outstretched arms and began to roll downstairs. The full length of the stairs was being consumed in mist, it tumbled to the bottom and around the legs of the ascending spirits.

As Will concentrated harder, the mist got thicker and flowed down faster. Gaining speed and power, it became a torrent of thick particles. Almost fluid like, but more like a blast of sand than liquid. The spirits were sent sprawling back down the stairs as the powerful energy cascaded down the staircase, washing hundreds of them back out of the door at the end of the hallway and into the holes in the floor. As they tried to clamber back to their feet, they were pushed away even further by the gushing force.

Eventually, when he felt they were far enough away, he turned and ran to the steps of the attic, climbed up and pulled them up behind him. He fell back onto the attic floor and let out a big sigh, partly of relief, but also partly through exhaustion.

Chapter 13

Enter The Portal

Russ and Jack helped Will to his feet. “Glad you could join us!” joked Russ, slapping him gently on the back and Will dusted himself down.

They looked into the dark, vast attic space littered with old dusty objects and furniture. All seemed quiet and normal so they relaxed a bit.

“Come here, I want to show you something...” said Will, setting off along the length of the attic, weaving his way around all the clutter. Jack and Russ looked at each other and then began to follow. They carefully made their way. Jack raised his leg, having to stride over a box. “Hey...slow down...wait up” called Russ from behind Jack, and suddenly there was an almighty ‘crash’. Jack and Will spun round quickly to see Russ sprawled out on the floor of the attic, amongst a pile of boxes. Russ gave a cheeky grin and shrugged his shoulders and his friends turned and continued along the attic, shaking their heads and chuckling.

Will stepped over a pile of boxes and crouched down, "...here, look at this" he said, picking up the old tatty piece of cloth where he found the Gorb Stone. As the others came over the boxes and joined him, he began to unwrap the Ouija board and shattered pieces of Gorb Stone from the cloth. "Look at this" he said, "This is where it all began...where I got all the power...and where all the trouble started. If I hadn't come up here on that day, then Susan would still be here and everything would be ok." Jack looked at him and said "Yes...but if you hadn't...then you would still be sat under the tree in the school yard, watching her come out and walk away. At least you now have a chance to save her, and to be with her, and be a part of something amazing." He looked back at Jack, he didn't say anything but he knew Jack was right.

Will picked up the pieces of green stone and held them in the palm of his hand. The three of them sat quietly looking at them. All of a sudden, they started fizzing in his hand. "What are you doing?" asked Jack. "Nothing... its not me!" replied Will. The stone fragments started to bubble, as they fizzed and they began to melt into a thick, green liquid in his hand. It continued to bubble and fizz until it started

forming a cloud of green vapour that slowly rose into the air above his hand, between the three of them and hovered for a moment.

Will suddenly felt himself jolt, and his head flicked back and he strongly inhaled. The green vapour sent a powerful stream into his wide open mouth. For several seconds, he was suspended with the whooshing green stream flowing into him. It created a force that blew into Jack and Russ's faces, until it immediately stopped and all the green vapour had disappeared inside Will. His head dropped forward and he started coughing like he was choking on something. He finally stopped and began breathing deeply to catch his breath.

"I think...I think I know what that was..." said Will, still recovering, "...I think the stone still contained more of the Gorb...and... because I am now the Ghost Lord...I absorbed the remaining power from it."

The three of them calmed down and regained their composure. The Ouija board lay on the floor between them. "Have you ever used one of these?" asked Russ, "No" replied Jack, "Not sure it would ever be a good idea" said Will, "It would just be asking for trouble."

“I never really believed in it...till now” said Jack picking up the wooden pointer off the floor and placing it on the board.

“We need to go and enter the portal now...to the spirit realm.” Will pointed to the dumbwaiter at the end of the attic. It looked fairly ordinary and it was hard to believe that the small lift shaft was the gateway to another reality.

“Are you sure you want to go ahead with this, and come with me?” asked Will. His friends looked at each other for a split second, realising the magnitude of what they were taking on. “Course we are!” Jack quickly reassured Will,

“Yes...you will protect us...” joked Russ, but then muttered, “...I hope” under his breath, so that the others couldn’t hear him.

Will picked up the piece of tattered cloth to wrap up the Ouija board. He was just about to pick it up, when the wooden pointer started to spin around. He pulled back his hand sharply and they watched in disbelief as the pointer started moving around the board in a circular motion on its own. It then started to spell something out, so he read the letters as it pointed to them.

“...E...N...E...M...Y...O...F...T...H...
E...R...E...A...L...M...M...E...E...T...T...
H...Y...D...O...O...M...” The pointer then
spun around very fast and shot up into the air
and flew across the attic, clattering to the floor
amongst the junk a few metres away.

“Enemy of the realm, meet thy doom” said
Will, confirming what had been spelt out. “That
doesn’t sound very welcoming!” added Russ.

“Come on, I think we had better go.” Will
wrapped the board in the cloth and stood up,
followed by his friends.

Just then a strong blast of stagnant air
gushed past them and instantly the atmosphere
changed. The three of them could feel a definite
difference and an eeriness fell on the room.

An unnerving creaking of the floorboards
began at the other end of the attic from where
they had come from. Slight noises began to
creep out from behind, and amongst the clutter.
They started to feel the hairs on the back of
their necks stand on end, and felt a cold chill.

Will held his hand in front of him to feel
the atmosphere. “This is bad...” he said,
closing his eyes to tune in even more. “...
increasing dark energy filling the room...a
powerful force emerging down the far end, and

approaching...we need to get out of here...
NOW.”

They turned and ran towards the dumbwaiter. Upon reaching it they turned to see a black mist coming ever nearer, which they could not see beyond. Heavy echoing footsteps approached from within the blackness. Getting louder as they got nearer.

They were terrified, but also scared to go into the dumbwaiter, not knowing what to expect. “Quickly...get in...drop down the shaft to the portal...don’t worry you will be fine,” Will reassured them, even though he was worried, and didn’t know what to expect himself. “I will hold off this dark entity while you escape.”

Russ peered over the edge of the shaft. A blast of air blew into his face.

“GO” shouted Will, getting impatient. “Send you a postcard!” Russ called as he leaned in headfirst and he disappeared down the shaft calling “GERONIMO....” which faded away, quieter and quieter until it went silent.

“Suppose its my turn...” said a worried Jack.

“...See you on the other side.” And he climbed up, dangling both legs down the shaft and edged his way off, falling feet first and

shouting with fear as he plummeted down, until his cries faded and then were gone.

Will stood in front of the dumbwaiter. It felt a very dark and lonely place now, without his friends. He wasn't even sure what had happened to them.

The dark mist was now almost upon him and the footsteps sounded practically in front of him. It was terrifying not knowing the terror that he was facing.

The mist came to a stop, a few feet in front of him and the footsteps stopped. He braced himself for what was about to happen. He tried to take a breath to calm his fear, but it didn't work.

Suddenly slowly out of the blackness, several dark figures began to emerge. They wore long dark hooded cloaks, covering their faces. Will couldn't see who or what lie beneath.

He raised his hands, ready to fend off any advance. The figures stood silently and motionless, which in itself was very unnerving.

All of a sudden the cloaks were flung off, revealing six dark spirit creatures, which looked like dark grey, featureless humanoid bodies.

They resembled people wearing dark leathery, skin tight one piece suits, from head to toe, with no fingers or toes, and the only features being two huge cat like eyes. But they weren't suits, they were some form of skin.

There were no apparent claws or mouth with teeth, so he wondered what exactly these spirits were going to be able to do to him.

They started to raise their fingerless hands, as if making some sort of greeting. Will raised his to copy, puzzled as to what was happening.

All of a sudden, six streaks of powerful energy blasted from the hands of the spirits, hitting him full force and sending him backwards into the wall of the attic.

He was dazed in a heap on the floor but created an energy wave around himself, shielding him from a barrage of blasting attacks from the spirits.

He instinctively squinted his eyes and he disappeared, reappearing behind them, he caught them off guard. Raising his hands, he fired an onslaught of his own. Fiery, lightning fuelled streaks pummelled his attackers, sending them sprawling in different directions.

They were now spread out. It was a dangerous situation to be in. Energy streaks started firing at him from all around him, as the

spirits now ducked and dived, exchanging blasts with him.

He was having to concentrate much of his energy deflecting incoming streaks of power from his attackers.

One hit him from behind. He shook violently, like being hit with a powerful current, giving other spirits time to shower him in blasts. The power from the barrage of blasts was throwing him around uncontrollably. He had to try and defend himself or die.

From within the flashes of energy bombarding him, he somehow managed to focus and conjure a burst of power, and with a raise of his hand he deflected one of the incoming energy streams at another spirit, causing it to go sprawling backwards and fire its own energy at another spirit, and soon the attic was ablaze with streams of energy shooting in all directions.

Will crawled along the floor amongst all the chaos towards the dumbwaiter. The spirits stopped and focussed their attention on him again. He was struggling to get to his feet, seriously drained of power and battered from the confrontation.

He raised a hand and grabbed the opening to the shaft. He squinted in pain and flung his

other hand up. With every last morsel of energy left in him, he pulled himself to his feet.

The spirits were beginning to form a semi circle and concentrate their power. An incredibly bright sphere of energy was forming between them, ready to finish him off.

He leaned his head into the shaft and thrust himself over the side, just as an almighty flash erupted from the combined spirits and a huge deafening ‘boom’ sounded out, like an explosion.

Chapter 14

The Spirit Realm

Will was falling at immense speed. He was spinning around uncontrollably. The G force distorted his face and flapped his cheeks and lips around as he plummeted downwards. He cried out in fear, as loud as he could, till his throat hurt. He just kept falling.

Around him was nothing but pure brilliant white in every direction. There was absolutely nothing to see and no ground below, that would at least give him the feeling that his fall would end somewhere.

After a while, he silently fell through the air. He had stopped shouting and struggling. He even began to relax and enjoy it, a chance to recover from the clash he had just had with the dark spirits. He straightened his legs and reached out his arms to slow his fall slightly. Then he leaned his head down to fall even faster. He then tucked into a ball and was tumbling in somersaults as he descended through the seemingly featureless void. He chuckled to himself. Strangely, the fear and

danger of the situation had gone and it was now like a game to him.

All of a sudden, with a loud ‘puff’, he hit something. He immediately stopped having fun and became serious again, wondering what he had just fell through. Again he hit something. It felt like something more dense than the surrounding air of the white void.

He twisted his body to face downwards and saw that he was hurtling towards, what looked like some sort of strange clouds, but not moist like normal clouds. These felt more like cushioning areas of denser air that began to slow his descent every time he burst through another one, with a puffing noise.

More and more appeared below him and he had now almost come to be floating gently downwards, rather than falling. Below him became just a sea of puffy, dense anomalies that he now, slowly began to melt into, like disappearing into a layer of smoke.

The thick dense air he was in, made it difficult to see anything. He could still feel himself slowly floating downwards. He felt his feet touch something...he had gently reached the end of his epic fall.

He stood for a few seconds. He then reached his arms out to try and feel if anything,

or anyone was there. The dense air started dissipating and he began to make out faint objects or people. It was a bit of a blur until the air cleared enough that he could make out trees and houses, not in much detail, but clearing all the time. He could hear laughter, as if children were at play. Eventually the air cleared completely and he found himself standing in a field with trees and shrubs dotted around the edge.

Beyond the field was a quaint, almost idyllic old fashioned town with wooden built shops and houses. Everything looked solid and made of substance. Not ghost like at all. The only strikingly unusual thing was the fact that there was not much colour in anything. Everything was very pale and pasty.

Will stood and looked around at all the people that he began to notice everywhere, pale and colourless like the town itself. Children ran around playing and laughing, while parents and grandparents watched over them from the sides, with smiles on their faces.

People mulled around the town, seemingly doing normal day to day things that the living would do. It was nothing like he expected the realm of spirits to appear. It all just seemed so normal. He felt relaxed and peaceful and felt

like he could spend all eternity in the tranquil serenity of such a wonderful place.

People started to notice him standing there. Children started to run over to him, men and women waved as they approached. Pretty soon he was stood in the centre of an ever increasing crowd of people, with the kids nearest, reaching out and touching him like some sort of god.

He was a bit overwhelmed, and touched the hands of children back and shook hands with many of the adults. Everyone was so welcoming and pleased to see him.

“Welcome... Will... welcome” a familiar voice called out from within the crowd, “...my lord has arrived, he has come to save us from the evil Lord Loxin.”

The crowd dispersed slightly, and through them walked Jim. He stopped in front of Will, smiled and put out his hand. Will grabbed Jim’s arm and placed his other hand in Jim’s, giving him a big friendly handshake.

“Welcome to the light plains of the spirit realm, my lord” said Jim, “You have some friends here who arrived a short time ago...”

The crowd parted again and through walked Jack and Russ, but Will was shocked to see that they were both transparent and appeared like ghosts.

“What has happened to them...why do they look like this?” asked Will, “Don’t worry...” reassured Jim, “...they are fine. Because they are not of this realm and this reality, they appear as we do when we travel to your reality...like ghosts or spirits.”

“Cool” said Russ, turning to Jack, “We’re ghosts...Jack, buddy.”

“How come Will looks like you then?” Jack asked Jim. “Will has the power of the Gorb, and since he is the Ghost Lord, the essence of this reality is now part of him, as much as the reality that you come from.”

Jim turned to the people and gestured for them to move away, “Give the lord some space...come on,” and the people slowly returned to what they were doing, but still glancing and talking about the presence of their new lord, who they hoped would save their realm from being consumed by the infection of evil from the dark plains.

Jim walked across the field, Will by his side, followed by Russ and Jack. Russ was smiling and looking at his transparent hands and arms and wafting them in front of Jack’s face making ghost noises. He thought it was great, but Jack was not amused.

Jim explained to Will that the light plains of the spirit realm were a place of happiness, where families were reunited after death. They could exist in a state of contentment. Spirits could return to the human realm as ghosts, to help loved ones by affecting them in certain ways and guiding them, without being known by the living. But this was threatened by Loxin's greed to take over everything. The dark plains had to exist because it was a place for all the negative parts of the human soul to exist after death. All the creatures and beings within the dark plains appeared as full solid forms in both worlds, although they had the power to change form and appear ghost like if they chose. The spirits that occupied the dark plains didn't interfere with the light plains. They normally coexisted without ever crossing. The two plains were kept separate by the Twilight Void; a strange barrier, that was like the edges of two realities merging into one. The edges of both plains overlapped, causing a powerful denseness that usually kept the two apart. No spirit had ever managed to pass through the Twilight Void, so until then, the souls of both realms had only crossed paths on few occasions in the human reality, outside the portals. Loxin's power was now increasing and the

chance of the Twilight Void keeping the two separate was decreasing. The final blow would be Loxin winning the power of the Gorb from Will. This would enable him to destroy the Twilight Void altogether and have free run to both sides of the spirit plains and rule the whole spirit realm, and eventually turning all realities, spirit and human into a place of decay and darkness for all eternity.

Jim led them along a road leading to the edge of the town. In the distance they could see where the road ended and was replaced by the most idyllic, beautiful landscapes imaginable. For as far as the eyes could see, there were both lush forests and wonderful, flowery meadows carpeting the rolling hills. Lakes looked like mirrors in the distance, dotted around the flatlands between the hills. Towering beyond, an impressive range of snow capped mountains, with an enormous waterfall cascading down one of the cliffs.

They stopped at the end of the road. Breath taken by the amazing scene before them. “Wow...” exclaimed Jack, “...now that is some kind of view!” Russ just nodded his head while staring forward. “Impressive!” agreed Will.

Jim continued to lead them through a beautiful meadow. Will looked down as the

knee long, luscious grass and flower heads brushed against his legs as he strode through. Bees, butterflies and other insects hovered around and moved from flower to flower. The air was alive with seeds floating by and all manner of airborne creatures.

Russ stretched out his arms and ran his fingers along the tops of the vegetation as he walked. It felt wonderful. The whole place just felt so relaxing and peaceful.

Jack snapped off a dandelion head from its stalk and held it to his mouth. The seeds drifted into the air as he blew across the head.

They reached a gentle stream that trickled over small stones, causing the gentlest of ripples that created a tranquil sound. They waded through the cool, refreshing water, which was only ankle high.

Just beyond the stream, Jim stopped them in a meadow, just facing the tree line of a dense forest.

“This is where we need a bit of help. To walk the journey to the Twilight Void would take far too long.” He turned to Will. “Would you do the honour my lord, of calling the Whispdragons.”

Will looked at Jim, puzzled. “The what?” he said, “What is one of those...and how do I do it?”

“Only the Ghost Lord can command the Whispdragons...if you call them, you have the power to control them, and they can help get us to the Twilight Void.” explained Jim.

“But what do I do?” asked Will. “Only you know the answer to that” said Jim, “Use your power, and your instinct and it should become clear to you.”

“Well here goes nothing...” said Will, as he turned to face the tree line.

“Come on Will” shouted Russ, trying to encourage his friend. “Yes...you can do it” added Jack, then the four of them stood silently facing the trees.

Will stared hard at the trees. He was thinking of ways in his mind that could possibly call out the mysterious creatures. He raised a hand towards the forest and squinted his eyes...nothing. He looked around at the others. “Clear your mind...you’re trying too hard” said Jim, “Relax and focus all your energy on what you command...be confident in what you wish for.”

Will turned back to face the trees. He closed his eyes for a moment and took a deep

breath to relax. He now looked at the forest with a clear mind and instantly felt a difference. He felt a surge of energy filling his body and he felt very confident and focussed all of a sudden.

Jack turned his head to look at his friend, who was now very focussed and almost didn't seem like Will at all.

A resonating, deep vibrating humming noise started to emanate from him. The sound carried forward to the forest and kept going for several minutes, after which it abruptly stopped.

“They are coming...I can feel them.” Will told his friends, and they all remained quiet, watching the tree line. Only Jim knew what to expect.

The trees inside the forest began to crunch and crack as something tore its way through the trees towards them. The ones on the outer edge now cracked loudly, making them jump and the huge trunks came crashing down onto the opening of the meadow before them. The four of them looked at the large opening into the dense forest. Something was inside, in the shadows, looking at them, but it was too dark to make out.

Will raised his hand towards the opening and immediately an enormous Whispdragon

began to walk forward. Slowly it moved directly towards him.

It was a huge creature, about twelve feet high to the shoulders and it walked on all fours. It was certainly a dragon shape, but it was covered in soft wispy feathers, more like a bird than scaly and lizard like. Even its head was rather bird like, apart from the sharp, razor like teeth.

The Whispdragon stopped just in front of Will. It opened its gaping jaws and let out a bellowing growl. Jack and Russ took a few steps back, terrified by the huge creature. Also remembering back to their last encounter with a beast with huge jaws. Jim and Will stood calmly still.

Three more Whispdragons now crunched out of the tree line behind the first. The first stopped growling and moved its head towards Will, who reached out his arm towards it.

Will confidently placed his hand on the snout of the Whispdragon and it closed its eyes and breathed quietly and steadily, like a dog being stroked by its master. The other Whispdragons then approached and stood alongside the first, also eyes closed and calm.

Will walked to each one in turn, stroked them and rested his head on theirs. "It is now

safe to climb on their backs and they will take us wherever we want to go” he said, and he climbed onto the back of the first dragon, using the feathers to pull himself up.

Tentatively, Russ and Jack edged towards their dragons and warily climbed up. Russ’s dragon snorted slightly as he started mounting it, causing him to tumble backwards and land on the floor on his bottom. The Whispdragon turned its head around to look at Russ, but didn’t seem amused and looked away again. “Ha ha...” laughed Will, “...even the Whispdragons think you are daft!” he joked. Finally Jim mounted his Whispdragon and they were ready to start their journey to the Twilight Void.

Chapter 15

The Twilight Void

The four of them sat on the backs of the Whispdragons. They grasped the feathers behind the necks to hang on.

“I have seen a Whispdragon before, but I have never been close enough to touch one, and certainly never ridden one” said Jim, stroking his hand down its back. The dragon made a slight purring noise, enjoying being stroked and tickled.

Will grasped the feathers tightly, turned to the others and said, “Are you ready?” and his Whispdragon, sensing the telepathic command thought by him, began to walk across the meadow, slowly at first. The other dragons immediately followed, and then Will’s dragon suddenly leapt into a full on dash across the field and with an almighty leap, its huge feathered wings opened out to full stretch and it lifted into the air, high off the ground. He tightened his grip and held on for dear life. The speed and power catching him completely unawares.

He was soaring higher and higher, the giant wings of the dragon beating powerfully to gain more height, making a deafening noise with each beat. The force of the air blasting in his face forced him to squint as their speed increased. All of a sudden it went silent, the Whispdragon's wings stopped fully outstretched, and they were now gliding effortlessly.

Will loosened his grip and sat up straight, it was fantastic. Every so often the dragon would give a couple of gentle flaps of its wings just to maintain momentum, "Woohooo!!!" he shouted, loving every minute of it. He turned his head to see his friends closely following on their dragons, with big smiles on their faces. He could tell they were enjoying it as much as him.

Will leaned forward towards the dragon's ear, "Right then my flying friend, let's see what you can do..." and patted it on the shoulder before grasping the feathers tightly. Using the power of his mind, he commanded the dragon to bring in its wings back against its body and they went into an incredibly fast dive. They were hurtling towards the ground, nearer and nearer. They fast approached the magnificent forested valleys below.

With just a thought in his head, he made the dragon level out, just before impacting on the forest. They skimmed the tops of the trees and hurtled forward along the valley at immense speed. With every twist and turn of the valley, his Whispdragon flung them round the corners, faster and faster. The landscape flew by and he cheered with celebration at every rock or tree narrowly avoided. He was getting a real buzz out of it.

His friends followed, but kept a safe height above the valley tops. Russ shouted “Go on Will...go for it!” enjoying the speed and daring of his friend.

Eventually, when he had got his adrenalin fix, Will pulled up a steep climb and returned next to the other three Whispdragons. The four now gently glided high above the glorious landscape below. They admired the view for a time and headed towards the mountains in the distance.

“I could soar around up here forever” sighed Jack, who was very relaxed and enjoying the ride. The others agreed.

“My dragon is guiding us to the Twilight Void...” said Will, “...all we have to do is sit back and enjoy the ride.” The four of them now quietly took in the beauty of the spirit realm

around them, and let the Whispdragons carry them to their destination.

After travelling for some time, they had just flown over the last summit of the mountains and just beyond them, the light plains of the spirit realm came to an abrupt end.

They had finally reached the Twilight Void. It was a rippling surface, like an immense wall of fluid, that stretched out as far as the eye could see. There was no apparent end to it, just a barrier, a flat surface.

The Whispdragons gently landed close to the void and Will and his friends climbed down from their dragons. They slowly approached the surface of the void. “What an amazing sight!” said Jack, and the four of them stood open mouthed, heads looking straight up into the sky, and then to their left and right at the never ending surface in front of them. They couldn’t see anything through the surface, it just reflected back the view of the mountains behind them, and the sky.

Russ reached his arm out towards it, “Be careful” said Jack, “Its alright, it wont harm him,” said Jim reassuringly. He pointed his index finger and gently touched the surface, causing small ripples. His finger didn’t break

the surface, maybe because he was transparent and ghost like.

“What does it feel like?” asked Will. “Well its kind of...er...like...like touching a rubber mat, floating on top of a swimming pool,” and then Jack and Will put their hands on the surface of the void to feel for themselves. They moved their hands around causing churning and ripples that spread out across the surface, dissipating the further away they travelled.

Will pushed his hand through, into the void. It took some force for it to melt through the outer surface, but his arm disappeared into it, right up to his shoulder. He couldn't see it but could freely move his arm around inside the void, so he pulled it back out and examined it to check that there was nothing on it, everything seemed fine though.

“It seems ok...are we ready to do this?” Will asked the others.

“Ready as we'll ever be!” replied Russ. “Yes lets do it,” followed Jack, a bit more confidently.

“Before you go...there are some things I must say to you...” said Jim, with a serious tone to his voice.

“I cannot go with you. I cannot pass through the Twilight Void. You need to prepare

yourselves for what lies ahead. Once you make it through the void, you will enter the dark plains of the spirit realm. It is a harsh, dark, fearsome place, where all kinds of evil lurk. It is in great contrast to this realm. Loxin will soon know that you have entered his realm and you will be in great danger, and hunted down by his dark spirits...My advice to you is keep moving and find his lair as quickly as you can.”

Jim took Will’s hand and shook it. “Good luck, and I hope you find Susan, my friend.” “Thanks for everything” replied Will. Jim shook the hands of Russ and Jack and then climbed back on his Whispdragon. Jim waved his hand in the air to his friends, and with a pat on the side of the dragon by Will, Jim’s dragon leapt into the air, followed by the other dragons, and with the powerful beating of their wings, they disappeared up into the sky, back towards the mountains, back across the spirit realm.

Will, Jack and Russ stood facing the void. Will looked at each of them in turn and nodded. They nodded back, to gesture their readiness and the three of them walked forward onto the surface of the void.

They felt their faces pressing up against the void and leaned into it with some force. It

was like pushing against a rubbery membrane. After a bit more effort, they felt themselves melting through, like being consumed in some thick gel, but without the mess. Then they fell through into a strange sort of ‘nothing’, where there was no floor, nothing to see anywhere except another wall of the other side of the Twilight Void, which was the barrier to the dark plains.

The three of them kicked and flapped their arms as they floated weightlessly in the gravity free void. They had no control of heading in any direction. Russ was upside down and slowly spinning to face where they had just come from. “Think I’m going to be sick!” he yelled as the tumbling made him nauseous, and he flapped his arms faster in panic.

Will and Jack were also beginning to tumble off slowly in different directions into the void.

“How are we supposed to get to the other side? We cant even control where we are going” shouted Jack as he somersaulted further away.

“Hang on...let me see if I can get us out of this” shouted Will. The three of them were drifting further and further apart, into the featureless void.

Will closed his eyes and concentrated. He opened them again and looked to see where Jack was. After a full spin, he spotted Jack and stretched his arm out towards him. The powerful supernatural energy streamed from his arm and started to pull Jack towards him. He gritted his teeth in determination. Jack stretched his arm out towards Will, and as they reached each other Will grabbed Jack's wrist. He then stabilised them, so they were no longer tumbling. He slowly turned them to face a distant Russ who was tumbling uncontrollably and flapping in a panic.

Again, Will stretched out an arm and started to bring Russ towards him.

"Don't worry Russ, I've got you...calm down" and Russ covered his mouth with his hand, still feeling queasy but no longer spinning thanks to Will, who grabbed his wrist on reaching him.

Will now held on to both his friends and he started to head towards the other surface of the Twilight Void.

They struck the surface, and again forced their way through the membrane and they collapsed to the ground on the other side, in a big heap.

They stood to their feet and looked around. Behind them, the never ending wall of the Twilight Void, like in the light plains of the realm, stretched out in all directions. But opposite, their hearts sank as they saw the full, harsh reality of the fearsome dark plains of the spirit realm stretching out in front of them. The dark void in the sky, the misty scarred landscape with outcrops of rocks, swamps, decaying trees and plumes of fire shooting high into the air. The constant deep, vibrating muffled rumble was very unnerving. It really was an unwelcoming place.

“Oh my god...we are in hell!” said Russ in disbelief. Jack just stood and shook his head. He couldn’t possibly see how they could survive there, never mind rescue Susan from all the dark creatures of that realm.

“Hey...look at you two!” said Will, looking at Russ and Jack. “We are normal” laughed Russ, realising that they no longer appeared like ghosts.

“Well I don’t know if you could ever be called normal” joked Jack.

Far in the distance, stood the menacing castle like structure that was Loxin’s Lair. “That is where we are heading then,” Will said, pointing to the horizon. Jack and Russ looked

nervously at the dark structure, far across the dark plains.

The three of them began to make their way through the dark landscape. The thick mist churning around their legs as they awkwardly staggered across the uneven ground and into a rocky gorge.

As they stepped over the rocky, mist covered floor, they passed a dark cave to the side of them. None of them noticed a pair of eyes, glowing out of the darkness. The menacing eyes followed them across the cave entrance. As Will and friends disappeared along the gorge, some sort of creature exited the cave at great speed and flew high into the dark void in the air, amongst lightning flashes and eruptions of dark matter. The three friends had unknowingly already been spotted in the dark spirit realm, and now the clock was ticking.

Chapter 16

The Dark Realm

Susan lifted her head to look around the large chamber. She had been unconscious for some time, due to sheer exhaustion. A bowl of water had been left on the edge of the platform, which was being spilt slightly over the edges of the bowl, as the platform moved and swayed above the lava pit.

She quickly grabbed the bowl and drank the water. It dribbled down her chin because she was so thirsty, she couldn't drink it fast enough. She tipped her head back to try and get every last drop, but was disappointed when there were no more drops left. She tossed the bowl over the side into the pit. She was feeling a little refreshed and sat up holding onto the platform.

The Dark Lord of the spirit realm was pacing up and down the great hall. His dark robes trailed behind him and he snarled and growled in frustration that he had not yet managed to win the power of the Gorb from the Ghost Lord.

Footsteps from the entrance to the great hall echoed out, causing Loxin to flick his head in that direction and let out a loud guttural growl, in annoyance at being disturbed.

A gaunt, bony creature, with large glowing eyes and wings like a bat stood in the doorway. It was the creature from the cave that had seen Will, Jack and Russ passing through the gorge.

Loxin reached out a hand and the creature fell forward onto the floor and was pulled hard, by some invisible force towards Loxin. Upon reaching him, the creature flew off the floor and Loxin caught him in his clawed hand by the throat.

Loxin bellowed a string of words at the creature. He was demanding that he told him why he disturbed the Dark Spirit Lord. The creature replied in a whimpering voice that he had seen the Ghost Lord from the human reality, that had come from the light plains and through the Twilight Void.

On hearing that the Ghost Lord was already in the dark plains, and on his way to his lair made Loxin seethe with anger, and he raised the creature in his grasp in front of his face and forced out a powerful blast of energy from his mouth, which incinerated the creature,

and its remains fell like half charred meat and ash to the floor.

Loxin raised his muscular, leathery arms into the air and let out a deafening roar, exposing his nasty teeth and tipping his spiked head back. His robes flapped around like a strong wind was blowing them and a huge wave of energy, with a big white flash shot up into the air above the great hall. It shot up the huge tower in the middle of the castle and erupted into a big white fireball at the top. Streaks of white lightning exploded from the top of the tower in all directions, across the dark realm. The dark void in the sky was filled with lightning spreading out and striking the landscape all over the dark plains, alerting all the dark spirits that it was time to rise up against the Ghost Lord.

Will, Jack and Russ stopped near the end of the gorge. They looked up in disbelief as the lightning streaks filled the sky. One of the streaks shot right past their heads, causing them to dive to the ground to avoid being struck.

Will rolled over in the layer of mist on the rocky floor, to witness the streak of lightning making contact with the rocky side of the gorge, near a cave. It exploded small particles of rock everywhere, causing them to duck

again to avoid being showered by the flying debris.

The lightning stopped and three heads popped up out of the mist to check if it was all clear. When they were happy that it had stopped, they stood to their feet.

“What the hell was that?” said Jack, looking back at the tower in the distance. “Its like Armageddon!” added Russ.

“I know what it is...” said Will, staring at the tower with a worried look on his face, “...I can feel a powerful presence...coming from there...it is Loxin...he knows we are here and that is his signal to tell the whole realm that we are coming.”

Just then a terrifying screeching sound came from a large cave behind them, in the wall of the gorge. There was a chorus of many creatures screeching all at once.

All of a sudden dozens of creatures, bony and gaunt with bat like wings and glowing eyes started to fly out of the cave entrance. They were the same creatures that told Loxin of their presence in the dark realm.

The dark sky around them was suddenly filled with about thirty of them, flapping about overhead. They screeched loudly as they began

to swoop down, attacking them. Trying to bite, claw and scratch the three friends.

One swooped low over Russ's head, so he punched up his arm into the air and knocked the creature tumbling to the floor. It quickly stood to its feet and the thin, bony creature opened out its wings and screeched. It scurried towards him and jumped on him, knocking him to the ground.

Russ wrestled with it, as it pinned him to the ground. He tried frantically to avoid its scratches, and to throw it off himself. Jack ran over and grabbed the creature by the wings, while Will fought off one of his own attackers. Jack pulled the struggling creature backwards, off of Russ, but then another one swooped out of the sky and landed on Jack's back.

More and more of them started to swoop down and attack them. Russ was knocked to the ground once again, with another four of the creatures overpowering him. Will looked across at his friends, both in real trouble, with about half a dozen creatures attacking each of them.

The remaining creatures all started descending and landing between him and his friends. Around twenty of them now stood, with their bat like wings fully outstretched, screeching and snarling at him. Their menacing

eyes glowing in the darkness. He could no longer see what was happening to his friends beyond. The creatures were more cautious in approaching Will, realising that being the Ghost Lord, he had power and could be dangerous.

Will stood in a sideways stance, in a ready position with his hands up. “Come on then... I’m ready for you” he goaded them. The creatures stood off warily, but then one by one they started to fade and turn transparent to the point that they were hardly visible.

He could now see the other creatures holding down Russ and Jack. They weren’t the target though, he was.

He could hear the breathing and movement of the creatures around him, stealthily surrounding him and getting ready to attack. He spun round, trying to get a fix on where they were. The sound of flapping wings caused him to flick his head to the right, followed by a screech to the left, and a noise behind him had him spinning in all directions. They were toying with him and trying to scare him. He kept his cool and focussed.

He shut his eyes in meditation, and in his mind it all became clear to him. He sensed exactly where all the creatures were. They took

this as a sign of weakness and the creatures began to reappear as they lunged at him.

Many scrawny arms with sharp claws closed in on him. Sensing this, he instantly disappeared into a transparent state, like a ghost. The creatures collided with each other awkwardly and fell into a big heap on the ground, not realising where he had gone.

Will's transparent form drifted through the creatures and ended up behind them all. He reappeared, facing them with his hands pointing towards them and fingers outstretched. Sparks of electricity fizzled from his finger tips at one of the creatures, who cried out a painful shriek. It instantly flung out its wings and leapt into the air and sped away into the dark void above. More sparks crackled from Will as he started to pick off the creatures one by one, and they in turn darted off into the void. Some then started to fly away, trying to avoid being zapped.

The last two creatures holding on to Russ, flung open their wings and started to lift off into the air carrying him.

“Help...Will...get me down” shouted Russ, as the flapping creatures began to gain height.

Jack grabbed hold of the leg of one of the creatures, which started to pull it back down

slightly, but they just began to flap harder and started rising again. Jack had to let go, or he would have been lifted into the air as well.

Russ was being carried high into the void above them, he struggled to break free but the grip of their claws was too powerful. Will raised his arm and reached out his hand, extending his fingers, he pulled Russ with a powerful supernatural force.

Russ was now being pulled around like a rag doll, between the creatures trying to fly away with him and the invisible power drawing him to Will.

The creatures flapped harder, trying not to let go. Russ's arms were starting to really hurt as the claws dug into them. Will saw the blood starting to trickle down Russ's arms and he was crying out in pain, so he pointed his other hand and a little streak of electricity, like a dart of energy went shooting up into the air and struck one creature. Then another blasted at the second creature. They shrieked in pain and let go of Russ and darted away into the void.

Russ was now tumbling down to the ground from a great height, screaming as he fell. Will had little time to react. He dropped to his knees and slapped his hands hard onto the

floor, sending a shockwave of energy that rippled across the ground.

Russ hit the floor, and the ground stretched and contorted, he sank into it like landing on a jelly like liquid that absorbed all the impact. The hollow that Russ had sunk into, started to rise slowly, and soon he was back at floor level.

Will lifted his hands off the floor and it returned to a solid state.

“Good job!” said Jack, placing his hand on Will’s shoulder, and they both walked over to help an exhausted and bloodied Russ to his feet.

After a short rest, they exited the gorge, which opened up into a huge area of swamp land. It was very damp, still with a layer of mist covering the mushy swamp. Dead decaying trees and long grassy clumps were scattered around, and here and there were outcrops of rocks.

They struggled through the muddy swamp, that came up to just above their knees. Every step was a huge effort, just to pull their feet out of the mud to take another step. Squelching with each movement. They kept noticing dark shapes flitting across the sky in the dark void above them, and hearing screeches and roars amongst the constant rumbling. They moved in

a line. Will at the front followed by Russ, and Jack at the rear, but it was slow going.

Will stumbled as he tried to pull up his foot and it stuck. He landed on his knees, covered in mud. Russ grabbed his arm and helped him to his feet.

“You alright Will?” asked Jack from behind, “Fine thanks Jack” replied Will, trying to put a brave face on it, but he was actually getting very fatigued.

The swamp eventually started turning less muddy as they battled on. They were now about waist deep but it was easier to wade through.

Jack stood still, the stagnant swamp up to his waist and the churning mist up to his chest. Will and Russ carried on wading ahead.

“Wait a minute you guys...” he called to them. Will and Russ stopped and turned around, “What’s up?” asked Will.

“I just felt something in the swamp...brush past my leg” Jack said, looking down into the mist. The others looked down. They were all quiet, listening and feeling for anything lurking around them. The rumbling, bursts of flame and cries of creatures and spirits from the distance filled the air, but nothing from the swamp itself. They carried on wading.

“Just be careful...we don’t know what’s waiting for us,” Will cautiously told them.

Just then something burst out of the muddy water in front of them, with a big splash. It was a slimy decaying corpse like upper torso, with bits of mud and vegetation hanging off the moist, half rotted skin. The bottom half of it was strange flippers. It was like some sort of large, decaying half human corpse, mud skipper.

Another one splashed up out of the swamp, next to it. They lunged forward and splashed across the surface of the swamp in the blink of an eye, propelling themselves forward at great speed with their flippers.

They leapt into the air and their slimy, rotten arms grabbed hold of Will and dragged him straight under the water, with a splash.

“Will... Will...” shouted Jack, as he and Russ frantically felt around in the water, below the mist, searching for their friend in the place he had just been pulled down.

Will could feel himself being dragged at great speed, under the water in the swamp. The two mud corpses had both his legs, pulling him backwards. He fought to hold his breath and was becoming disorientated and had to do something quickly.

He concentrated his energy, sending a surge of power down his legs, which travelled along the arms of the mud corpses. They screamed out in agony, and stopped moving through the swamp.

Russ and Jack saw the mud corpses emerge from the swamp, a distance away, screaming. There was no sign of Will. The corpses were splashing around in the water, in pain. All of a sudden a flash erupted from below them and they exploded out of the swamp, and went shooting up into the air in different directions, landing far away. Jack and Russ watched, waiting for a sign that Will was ok.

Just then, Jack felt a tap on his shoulder. They turned around to find Will stood, muddy, wet through and covered in swamp plants. They all laughed, relieved at him being alright and set off wading through the swamp again.

Chapter 17

Over The Ridge

The next hour or so, of walking through the dark realm was strangely quiet. Apart from the general noises of the surroundings, like fire plumes, lightning flashes and rumbles. They did not come into contact with any more spirits or creatures. It was as if they had all just upped and left.

Will, Jack and Russ had cleared the swamp lands, carefully made their way through miles of harsh and difficult terrains. All proved challenging to negotiate, but very unnerving the fact that they never met more resistance.

Will stopped walking and looked to the large towers of Loxin's Lair that stood towering over the top of the next ridge.

"Looks like we are nearly there..." he said to his friends, "...just over the top of that ridge is Loxin's Lair. I will lead the way over the top, but keep your eyes open for any dark spirits."

"Don't worry..." said Russ, "...if there are any ghosties or monsters around here, I will shout you faster than you can fly a Whispdragon!"

The three of them set off, towards the top of the ridge. They clambered over the rock strewn slope, sometimes having to practically climb up the steep face.

Will paused, holding onto his head. He squinted his eyes, like he was in pain. “What’s up Will?” asked Jack. Russ and Jack knelt down to him as he crouched on the rocky slope. Each placed their hand on a shoulder, showing their concern at their friends obvious discomfort.

“I can feel an overpowering energy...a strong negative presence...the nearer we get to the top of this ridge...something really bad is waiting for us...its taking all my power to fight against the waves of bad energy emanating from over there...”, he pointed to the top of the ridge. Russ and Jack looked up, and then at each other, knowing that it was going to be something horrifying that awaited them.

They helped him to his feet, and Will concentrated to shake it off as best he could, and he regained his composure and they carried on, climbing the last few feet of the slippery, rocky slope to the ridge top.

They dropped to the floor. Hiding just at the top, just below the ridge line.

“This is it...” said Will, “...this is what we have come all this way for.”

The three of them turned to face the ridge, and held on to the jagged, rocky top with both their hands and slowly brought their faces closer, and peered over the top.

Loxin’s Lair stood ominously, towering high into the dark void above. Eerily illuminated by the swirling moat of dense glowing fog, that roared around its perimeter. The darkness above the towers were filled with screeching dark figures flitting around the sky and many other strange winged beasts. Also hundreds of the flying creatures that attacked them at the gorge were darting around in the sky, amongst the violent flashes of lightning and eruptions of dark matter.

Their eyes then focussed on the ground, as they leaned further over the ridge top. A vast landscape spread out from the foot of the ridge, on the other side, up to the castle. The whole landscape, was completely covered in armies of dark spirits. Thousands of strange beasts, creatures and ghouls, all waiting to defend Loxin’s Lair from the Ghost Lord.

The three of them slumped down onto the rocks with defeated looks on their faces, just staring.

“That’s it then...” said Russ, “...there is no way of ever getting past that...its like all your worst nightmares all coming at once to kick your butt!!!” Jack turned to Will, “Sorry Will, we gave it a good shot, but even you couldn’t go up against all those monsters!”

Will didn’t say anything, he just sat and thought.

“We will have to go back and see if your friend Jim can do anything to help rescue Susan.” Said Russ, having another look at the thousands of dark spirits before them.

“No...” Will finally spoke, “...I am not going back without Susan, after all this... Jim cannot do this...this is something that only the Ghost Lord can do...it is my destiny...I can do this.”

“I was afraid you were going to say that!” said Russ, putting his head into his hands.

“Look...” pointed Jack to the dark forces below, “...what are you going to do against all that?” Will looked, and shrugged his shoulders. Russ shook his head and dropped his face into his hands, “Oh no...we’re screwed...” he quipped jokingly, “...as long as you have a good plan like that then...that’s ok, we’ll be fine!”

Will stood to his feet on the ridge top. “Get down...what are you doing?” asked Jack, “Are you daft...they will see you” added Russ.

Will stood with his arms outstretched, as if he was offering himself as a sacrifice to the armies below.

“Trust me!” was the only thing he said, as an immensely bright beam of light shot down from the dark void above and illuminated him brightly, accompanied by a deafeningly loud whooshing sound, that instantly got the attention of all the hordes of dark spirits. Russ turned to Jack. “Now we are definitely screwed!” and he looked back at Will.

The thousands of creatures and nasty entities all started roaring and screeching in anger. The whole of the dark spirit realm knew, without doubt that the Ghost Lord was there, and that they had to do everything in their power to stop him getting to Loxin’s Lair.

“Are you completely mad?” said Jack in disbelief to what he had just witnessed. “I said trust me” is all that he would say.

Russ and Jack peered over the ridge at the angered dark spirits. They could see allsorts of scary looking creatures. Spirit corpses, from the house in the woods in vast numbers. The beasts that chased them through the factory and

graveyard, also in their many hundreds. The figures in dark robes also from the graveyard. Russ nudged Jack and pointed to a large group of enormous creatures that towered above most of the other dark spirits. They had many long spindly legs like that of huge spiders, but had bodies of humanoid form, although the skin was rather dark and leathery with small black eyes and two long sharp fangs. The largest numbers of the thousands of spirits were dark, sort of blurred shadowy figures, that all looked very scary and menacing.

Will called their attention. "I must go away briefly...I need you both to start making your way down the other side of the ridge..."

Jack and Russ looked at each other with worried looks on their faces.

"...don't worry, I should be back by the time you reach the bottom...and hopefully I will have some help to get us through." And before they could say anything, Will started to take a step forward and sort of disappeared into a blur, leaving a trail of glittering particles in his wake, and he was gone.

"Ok, you heard the man, lets go!" said Jack, and they stepped over the top of the ridge to make their way down the other side.

Just as they did so, a huge rumble erupted and an enormous fire plume jetted out from the middle of the landscape below. As the plume climbed up into the void, it changed form, and morphed into a huge bird like, winged beast made from the flames themselves. It roared with ferocity as it whooshed around in the air, leaving a flaming, Smokey trail. It then flew over to the main tower of the castle, and perched on top of the tower, gazing over the landscape, towards the ridge. The fire from the beast raged ferociously as it occasionally gave out a deafening roar.

Jack and Russ couldn't believe their eyes. It just seemed to get worse and worse. They had just witnessed the awakening of the guardian of Loxin's Lair.

Will started to reappear in a blur, with glittering particles. He stepped forwards and reformed to a solid state. He had teleported back to the edge of the Twilight Void, on the dark side. He had no time to spare, so he raised his arms to the wall of the void, which sent out, from his hands a kind of vortex, which spiralled away from him, towards the wall. It expanded in size as it did so, and started tearing away and into the void, causing violent flashes of light and eruptions. He used all his powerful energy

to do what had never been done before and force an opening through the Twilight Void.

An intense blast of light erupted out of the opening, with a bang, and then Will stopped. He had made it through, creating what resembled a swirling vortex from the light side of the spirit realm through to the dark.

He stood facing the vortex. He could see the light of the light plains at the far end of the vortex. He shut his eyes and using the power of his mind, he called out, commanding all the light spirits to enter the dark realm through the vortex.

Within seconds a huge blast, like an enormous gush of air, came flooding through the vortex. Flashes of light erupted along with it. It was all the spirits entering through the vortex. Will's hair was blown back in the force of all of the thousands of souls pouring through. They all started reforming into their human forms on the dark side of the plains.

A hand touched him on the shoulder and he turned his head to see Jim stood besides him. They hugged and shook hands. "Boy am I glad to see you" said Will.

Just then several enormous, explosive blasts shot out of the vortex, followed by hundreds of Whispdragons flying through the

opening and into the sky, circling above them in the dark void above.

“Now that’s what I’m talking about!” smiled Will. He called down one of the Whispdragons, and he climbed upon its back. It leapt into the air and with a few beats of its huge wings, he set off leading his own army of light spirits back towards the distant towers of Loxin’s Lair.

Russ and Jack were nearing the bottom of the rocky slope, beyond the ridge. They had been careful to try and keep behind larger rocks on the way down, giving them cover from the evil hordes.

They ducked behind a couple of large boulders at the bottom. “Where has he got to?” said Russ, looking back up to the top of the ridge.

“He said he would be here, so he will...be patient...give him time...he knows what he is doing” replied Jack, “I hope!”, he muttered under his breath.

The front line of the spirit creatures was a short distance from where they were hiding. Luckily they had not been spotted. The spirits and beasts were too busy roaring in anger and fighting between themselves to be able to pin point where they were.

It was very scary for Russ and Jack, being so close to such terrifying creatures and their noise was so loud that they sat covering their ears, while waiting for the return of their friend, the Ghost Lord.

Russ looked down at his foot. It was sticking out from the edge of the rock, so he quickly pulled it in. It threw up a small cloud of dust, and they looked at each other, hoping that nothing had seen it. They paused quietly for a minute.

To their horror, they could hear something on the other side of the rocks. There was deep breathing, which was very unnerving and something started scratching on the other side of the rocks. A loud bellowing growl roared over the top of them. Something was now leaning over the top of the rocks. They couldn't see what it was, they just tried to push into the crevice between the rocks to hide. Drool started to splatter around their feet from above, and the deep growling sounded terrifyingly close.

Just then a brilliant white light shone right across the ridge top, into the sky. A Whispdragon flew over the top of the ridge, roaring as it came. Sat on its back, Will waved his hand in the air, followed by hundreds more of them, all bellowing out loud roars.

The creature, whatever was crawling over the rocks fled back to join the rest of the dark spirits and Russ and Jack let out a sigh of relief. “See I told you...he’s here” said Jack. “Impeccable timing!” replied Russ, and they looked up at the ridge to see thousands of light spirits descending the slope with a crown of light still shining over the ridge top.

The Whispdragons circled overhead and Will’s landed close to Russ and Jack, as they were joined by all the many thousands of light spirits.

Will smiled at his friends. “Look...I found a few friends!” Jim joined them and shook their hands. They now had enough help of their own to go up against Loxin’s army of dark spirits.

Chapter 18

Battle For The Realm

Will turned his Whispdragon to face his army of light spirits. Thousands of souls stretching as far as he could see, right to the top of the ridge and beyond.

Jim turned to Russ and Jack. “I have something for you...because you have no power of your own, I give you these staffs.” They looked at the knobby long sticks, which looked pretty unimpressive, apart from some sort of diamond strapped to the top that sparkled brightly.

“What on earth are these going to do against that lot ?” said Russ, examining his staff. Jack agreed, and offered his back to Jim.

“No...” said Jim, refusing to accept it back, “...these are no ordinary staffs, they both have a powerful stone, found only in the Crystal Mountains of the light realm. They are formed from a mystical, supernatural energy and will help you fight the dark spirits.”

“Ok...” said Russ, “...lets see what it will do” and he pointed it towards the dark spirits. Suddenly a streak, like lightning blasted out of

the end of the staff, with a loud crack. Russ fell backwards to the floor with the force of it, and it startled everyone. One of the dark spirits bore the full force of the strike, and one of its arms exploded with a puff of debris and it erupted in flames. It screeched loudly and rolled around on the ground.

All of a sudden the dark spirits erupted into angry cries and growls and started to charge forward, in a full on attack towards them. The huge, flaming, bird like beast on top of the tower cried out a deafening roar, and launched itself into the air, off its perch, with powerful flaps of its fiery, raging wings. It swooped across the landscape, over the top of the approaching dark spirits, towards Will and his army, leaving a trail of fire and smoke behind it.

“Whoops!” said Russ, getting back to his feet. The others looked round at him in disbelief as he picked up his staff.

Will looked in horror at the approaching army, and the enormous fiery beast heading straight towards them. “LETS GO...” he yelled, and his Whispdragon charged forward and leapt into the dark sky with a loud roar, and strong beats of its huge wings.

The other Whispdragons, circling in the dark void above them began to swoop down on the attacking spirits and creatures, and the light spirit army, led by Jim, Jack and Russ, began charging forward to meet their enemy.

Thousands of them flooded down from the ridge, and they sent waves of bright flashes of energy, pulsing out towards the charging dark spirits, who in return blasted powerful streaks of energy, flashing back into them.

Jack and Russ ducked as streaks like fire and lightning whizzed past them, then they raised their staffs and fired powerful streams of energy, which partly obliterated several of the leading attacking beasts. There were flashes and explosions everywhere, as spirits on both sides fired upon each other and were destroyed.

Will sped towards the oncoming fire guardian on his Whispdragon. They were heading straight towards each other. Nearer and nearer, until Will raised his hand and sent a massive spray of white streaks of energy from his finger tips, and quickly steered out of the way as they closely passed each other. He felt the immense heat as he whizzed past it. The guardian immediately swooped round, unaffected by his attack and began to chase him

and the Whispdragon through the dark void over the towers.

Will tightly grabbed the feathers of his dragon and ducked down into it, as he swooped down towards the dark army below. The fire guardian closely on his tail, he swooped from side to side to try and shake it off, but it was keeping up with him. He guided his dragon across the tops of the dark army of creatures, swooping low, the Whispdragon stretched out its claws and cleared a strip through them, sending the dark beasts and creatures sprawling and ripping some to shreds.

Other Whispdragons were making similar attacks, but were being chased and attacked by flying dark spirits.

Will saw a dragon fly by him, pursued by about a dozen black, winged figures, which started to rip their claws into its feathery body. It was fighting to shake off its attackers, but was being overpowered. Will looked helplessly as they brought the Whispdragon crashing to the ground, where it was quickly consumed in dark souls and nasty beasts.

Jack and Russ were, by now well in the thick of it. The two armies had reached each other and merged, they were now fighting amongst all the terrifying spirits and creatures.

Several creatures began to lash out at Russ from different directions. He held up his staff, swinging it around, he cracked it across the snout of one wolf like beast, and spun it round above his head to knock a spirit corpse off its feet. He then pointed it towards a group of dark entities and it erupted in a flash of energy streaks that obliterated them. It was manic. He was in the middle of a battlefield of flashes and explosions with spirits being vaporised and obliterated all around him.

He grasped his staff tightly and carried on blasting its supernatural stream at any dark spirit or beast near him. He looked across to see Jack holding his staff in the air, trying to defend off one of the huge spider like beasts. Its fangs slashed down from above, near Jack's face. One of its many legs knocked him to the ground, and he was pinned there with others. The creature lowered its humanoid body lower, by bending its long spindly legs, and it opened its mouth exposing the enormous fangs.

It jetted out streams of gooey ectoplasm from its mouth that coated Jack from head to toe in the thick slimy gunge. He wriggled about, sliding around in the ectoplasm, but couldn't escape the legs pinning him down. The creature lowered its mouth, wide open, about to

bite him when suddenly a Whispdragon crashed down to the ground with its jaws wide open, and grasped them around the spider beasts body and leapt back into the air, carrying the beast, struggling in its mouth high into the void above, screeching.

Will tore across the darkness above on his dragon. The blazing trail of the fire guardian still chasing him relentlessly. The beast was gaining, as the dragon was starting to tire. Will knew that he could not out run the guardian for much longer. He looked down at the battle below to see how his army was fairing. It looked like hell. The whole landscape was a barrage of streaks of energy flashes in all directions, and explosions and fighting of beasts and creatures. He feared for his friends, down in all the chaos, but had to stick to the plan and fend off the guardian and get to Loxin's Lair.

He flew his dragon straight up, high into the dark void above. The guardian proceeded to follow him. Higher and higher they went, the dragon using every last morsel of energy to flap its huge wings to carry them higher. The battle almost out of view, just a few flashes from the ground, far below.

The guardian gained some more ground. Will could hear the raging flames behind him. A streak of flames jetted past them, fired from the mouth of the guardian. The feathers of the dragon smoked slightly where it was singed.

He commanded his dragon to stop climbing, and they flipped and went into a very fast dive, shooting past the guardian at immense speed back to the ground. The fire guardian once again followed. Will grasped tightly as they hurtled downwards, towards the battle again, and Loxin's Lair. Fireballs began to rocket past the dragon, as the guardian shot them from its roaring mouth. He had to dart from left to right to avoid getting hit. The guardian let out an enormous burst of flame behind it, and greatly increased its speed. It was once again rapidly catching them up, and the ground was getting nearer and nearer.

Will headed straight for the base of Loxin's Lair. The glowing moat swirled rapidly around, at ferocious force and he was heading straight for it. Just as he was reaching the moat he commanded his dragon to use all of its strength and power to pull up, and they just felt the gushing power of the moat as they levelled out and hurtled over the top of it, and flew back up into the air above the battle.

The fire guardian plummeted down, but had reached such immense speed that it could not pull up fast enough, and it went hurtling into the violent, gushing moat, that encircled the castle. It flapped and screeched rapidly as it did so, but it was too late. The beast disappeared into the swirling mist and was followed by a huge flash, and explosive eruption, as it was destroyed.

This was a big blow for Loxin and the dark spirits. The Ghost Lord had defeated the fire guardian of Loxin's Lair. There was still much to do though. The battle on the ground was still anybody's, and he still had to rescue Susan.

Russ was still in the thick of it. He swung his staff around as a creature like a huge snake, but with a head like a dragon and arms with long claws, and huge sharp teeth, started to circle around him. He cracked it on the side of the head and it glared at him and roared in defiance.

It began to coil its body around him, and started squeezing. It raised its head above him, looking down, it opened its mouth and slowly moved towards him. Russ couldn't move his arms, and had dropped the staff. "Help... Jack... Jim... get this thing off me" he shouted.

Jack fired a spray of fiery sparks from his staff at a large, hairy beast that was attacking him, then looked round at Russ. A group of light spirits were between them, holding their hands up and pulsing out waves of light, wispy energy that was bombarding a cloaked, dark entity that moved towards them.

Jack flinched, as the entity responded and let out an almighty crack, and a shower of sparks obliterated the spirits in an explosive cloud of debris, right before his eyes.

As it dissipated, he could see Russ struggling in the coils of the dragon headed snake. He ran towards him as fast as he could, but several creatures advanced towards him and got in his way. It was hopeless, he couldn't reach Russ to save him. "Jim...Jim..." he shouted over to his near by spirit friend. "...I can't get to Russ...you will have to help him," and Jack turned his attention to fighting off his attackers.

Jim rushed over with several other spirits to where Russ was near unconscious, and the dragon snake was closing its mouth full of razor sharp teeth around his head. "Noooooo" he cried out, and punched his hand out, creating a powerful stream of white energy that fired straight into the mouth of the creature. It pulled

its head away and screeched a painful cry. White sparks showered out of its mouth. The other spirits with Jim, then pulsed out their own streams of energy, that pummelled the body of the snake, and it began to unravel its coils from Russ.

He slumped to the floor as the beast retreated deeper into the battlefield, and disappeared amongst all the battling spirits and creatures, screeching in pain and giving off a trail of debris as it went.

Jack rushed over to Russ. He had finally managed to fight his way over. He knelt down, joined by Jim. “Russ...Russ...” a concerned Jack watched Russ’s closed eyes for any sign of life. The battle waged on around them. Flashes and explosions, streaks shooting over their heads, but Jack focussed on his friend. “... come on Russ, don’t do this to me...”

Jim looked at Jack, fearful of what they might have to accept...that Russ was dead.

Jack’s head slumped. He just stared at the ground, and Jim placed a hand on his shoulder to comfort him. Light spirits had surrounded them to fend off any attacking dark spirits. Jack stood up, teary eyed, and looked at Loxin’s Lair beyond the battle raging landscape. He raised his staff and screamed out a loud, angry roar, as

he fired wave after wave of powerful streaks of energy across the landscape, towards the distant castle. The energy blasts didn't reach that far, but Jack was just unleashing all his upset, anger and frustration.

Just then he heard a voice from behind him. "Hey...save some of that action for me." Jack spun round, to see Russ sat on the ground rubbing his face with his hands. "Well...are you going to help me up?" asked Russ, stretching out his hand. Jack cried out a relieved laugh and grabbed Russ's hand and pulled him up from the rocky floor, and gave him a big hug. "You really had me worried there...you..." Russ picked up his staff, "Never mind all that...we've got a battle to win." Jim and Jack looked at each other and smiled. They all turned into the face of the battle and gave out a celebratory and defiant cry, and charged forward to fight once more.

Chapter 19

Enter The Castle

Will swooped down to the ground on his Whispdragon and landed on a patch of rocky terrain that was clear of any fighting. The battle had moved away from the castle, and towards the other side of the landscape, nearer the ridge.

He dismounted his dragon and looked up at the immense, dark towers before him. Then he focussed on the violent, gushing moat that circled the castle. About fifty feet across the other side, he could see a huge arched doorway, but with no apparent way of getting across the moat.

He gave his dragon a slap on the shoulder, and it leapt in the air and flew off into the dark void above. He heard its distant roar as it joined the battle.

Will stood opposite the doorway, on the edge of the moat. The roar of the ferocious mist filled pit was deafening, as it rushed past him. The wind from it blew his hair around and he had to squint his eyes. The bright glow, from deep beneath the mist glared up in his face.

Somehow he had to get across it to reach the doorway to Loxin's Lair. It was obvious that with the power of the moat, and what it did to the fire guardian, that if he fell into the moat it would kill him.

In frustration he raised his hands up at the towers and sent a powerful stream of energy, blasting at the wall of the first tower. Sparks exploded from the black, leathery substance that coated the walls. He sustained the stream for several seconds, while screaming out in anger, and then abruptly stopped. He could see no visible damage to the walls, and he dropped to his knees, feeling a failure and exhausted.

He just sat and stared across to the other side. The noise of the battle echoed across the landscape behind him. He took a deep breath and stood to his feet. "Come on focus..." he told himself, "...you have all this power...use it!"

Instantly, he felt a wave of energy rush through his body. The pupils of his eyes turned a glowing green. The power of the Gorb was now flooding around his body, and becoming properly integrated with his own cellular make up. The strange, supernatural substance was flowing around his bloodstream, and he was now becoming physically, as much a being of

this world, as one of the human reality. This was the point of no return, he was changed forever. Will was now the unquestionable Ghost Lord, and the only way to change that, was through his death. This was Loxin's aim all along, to lure him to his lair, kill him and so win the power of the Gorb, and use the power for evil.

Will now looked at the doorway, across the moat through glowing green eyes, and a confident feeling of power. He placed his arms by his side, and energy flowed down his body to his feet. The ground below him started to vibrate and rumble, and he started to gently levitate off the ground. He stopped about two feet off the ground, and paused for a moment. He then moved his foot forward to take a step. As he did so, a puff of mist came out from under his foot as if he had stepped on something, but he hadn't. He was in thin air.

He took another step, and another puff of mist. He began to walk out, over the top of the violent, gushing moat. Mist puffing under every step. He stared ahead, focussing on the doorway. The glow from the pit felt very warm, and sweat began to trickle down his face. The force of the moat rocked him around, but he persisted and carried on taking steps.

Eventually he was within a few steps of the door. It was an enormous black, solid iron door, about fifteen feet high.

He raised a hand from his side, and clenched his fist. He tugged his hand back firmly, and with the power of his mind he ripped the door clean off its enormous hinges, and it somersaulted through the air and disappeared into the moat with an almighty flash and explosive rumble.

He wobbled and fought to stay levitated in the position he was in over the moat. He managed to regain his composure and took the last couple of steps through mid air, until he stepped into the doorway, inside Loxin's Lair, and he let out a sigh of relief, and his eyes returned to normal.

Susan sat listening on the platform above the lava pit. She could still hear the noise of the battle. She fought to stay on the platform as the explosions shook the cavern.

A heavy barrage shook the castle, and rocks and debris fell from the roof of the chamber. She clung on for dear life. The platform began to sway backwards and forwards, and she began to think it would fall into the pit. She gritted her teeth and sank her fingernails into the side of the rock, as it jolted

violently and tilted at an angle. She started sliding off the collapsing platform, fighting to hang on.

The heat blasted from the pit below. She could feel the burning sensation on her skin, and sweat was running down her body. Her hands started to lose grip, and she let out a terrified scream.

The rocks on the wall of the cavern suddenly exploded into the chamber, and a huge chunk of rock fell to the edge of the lava pit, overhanging the edge.

She saw the opportunity and quickly leapt off the platform. She landed on the rock, with her legs dangling into the pit from the waist down. She began to fight to pull her legs up, but the rock began to crack.

She swung her legs round, up onto the cracking, crumbling chunk. It snapped clean in two, just as she flung herself across the dirty floor, on the edge of the pit. She rolled clear, and glanced over the edge as the huge slab of rock spun down the pit, and flipped into the lava after colliding with the side.

She stood on her feet, and looked at the opening left by the falling rocks. She could see a rocky stairwell with steps leading upwards, so she warily edged closer to the opening. She had

to scramble over debris, being as quiet as she could. Small rocks and dust fell in places, as the gap in the chamber wall was so unstable.

She entered the stairwell, and cleared the last piles of rubble. She strained to try and see up the steps, but it was too dark. She began climbing the steps. Her heart was beating fast, and she winced in pain, as she limped from her injuries from the beast. It was a huge effort to mount each step, being so drained of energy from her ordeal.

As she approached the top step, she dropped to the floor, and peered cautiously over the top. It was a long, stone corridor, with other corridors leading off it. There were flaming torches on the walls at intervals to give some dim light.

Susan climbed the last step and stood in the corridor. The roof of the corridor was arched, and very tall. She grabbed one of the flaming torches from the wall, and quietly limped down the corridor.

Will also found himself creeping down a similar corridor, elsewhere in the enormous castle. Rather than use a flaming torch, he had a ball of light floating a short distance in front of him. He held both hands in front of him, like in

a fighting stance, ready to react to whatever may be lurking.

He closed his eyes and concentrated. A ghost like, misty image of him floated gently out of his body. His body remained motionless, in a trance like state, while the ghostly image of himself drifted on along the dark corridor. In his mind, he could see everything that his ghost could see.

His ghost reached the end of the passageway, and turned the corner at the end. He could see another passageway extending in front, but an open doorway to the side. He moved the ghost into the doorway, to see inside the room.

It was a huge dark, stone walled hall, with a high ceiling. The only light came from a large round pit in the centre. All over the floor of the room lie bodies and carcasses of wounded and injured beasts and creatures from the battle. Steam jetted out of the pit, and from the edge of the room, a large creature awkwardly strode over the bodies. It was very fat and had a mouth full of ferocious teeth, with large tusks curled up the side of its face. It picked up one of the wounded creatures and lifted it with its powerful arms, up in the air and held it high above its head. The creature was helpless and

began wriggling around and screeching. The large fat beast, carried the struggling creature casually over to the pit and tossed it screaming down into the flames, and a huge blast of fire shot out, and then died away again. The fat beast then turned, and headed back to fetch another creature from the wriggling pile that covered the floor.

Will's ghost turned and carried on down the corridor. The rest of the doors along its length were closed, but he could see the end of the corridor had some steps leading upwards. There were about six that he could see, then it opened up into some sort of a room. His ghost slowly drifted up the steps and came to stop in a large hall. His ghost was surrounded by about a dozen dark spirits and creatures, who instantly saw the intruder. Two creatures with humanoid bodies, but many limbs similar to that of large stick insects, began lashing out and attacking Will's ghost, which just began to disperse and dissipate into the air.

Will opened his eyes, he was back in his body and now knew the dangers of what were around the corner. He could now hear the screeches and roars of the angered dark spirits at the end of the passageway, but it was the

only way to go to progress deeper into the castle.

He walked round the corner, and into the next corridor. He got to the doorway with the fat beast and the pit. He stood against the wall just before it, and morphed himself into a transparent state. He quickly moved past the door, and re-morphed back to his normal self. Continuing down the passage, he saw one of the insect like creatures descending the steps in front of him. He raised his hands into a fighting position. The creature saw him and began scurrying at speed towards him, crawling rapidly with its huge insect like arms.

It was quickly upon him. Just as it was lashing out at him, he managed to jump aside and dodge the first onslaught of blows from the spiny limbs. He then raised his hand as one slashed at his face, and he stopped it with a powerful invisible force, which held the limb motionless.

He raised his other hand to block the other limbs. He held it in front of him with his energy, while it struggled helplessly. Will opened his mouth and jetted out a stream of sticky ectoplasm that coated the creature. He then released it from his power and it writhed

and wriggled around on the floor as it fizzed and melted away in the ectoplasm.

Will pulled a face, and cringed. He was coughing and spitting at the horrible bitter taste left in his mouth from the ectoplasm. He ran past the remains of the creature and charged up the steps, and into the centre of the hall. He found himself surrounded by dark spirits. They immediately began to attack him. He disappeared and teleported to the corner of the hall, briefly confusing the spirits. He then projected an image of himself across the room, nearer to where the spirits were. “Hello”, smiled the look alike of Will, and the spirit creature nearest pounced with claws outstretched. It fell to the floor as the image of Will dispersed, as its claws swept through it, and it churned into a mist that slowly evaporated into thin air. The creature growled and roared in frustration.

Again, he teleported to somewhere else in the hall, to try and confuse the spirits even more, and carried on projecting images of himself to lure them to spread out across the hall. He thought it was safer to fight them alone rather than all together.

He appeared next to a dark shadowy entity. It spun round and raised its bony hand

towards him, and a powerful blast of energy fired straight towards him. Will ducked away, and created a shield of protective energy around himself to repel the attack. He then jumped into the air, and flipped over its head, landing behind it. He crouched and stretched out his arm towards it, with his hand open. Will's eyes briefly shone green, and the entity was sucked through the air, into a dark mist, which Will caught and squeezed in his hand. He spun round to see a creature lunging at him, so he blasted the dark mist from his hand at it, and it created a fireball that incinerated the attacking beast.

Some of the other spirits began randomly firing streaks of fiery lightning across the hall, trying to anticipate where he would teleport to next. It was getting very dangerous for him.

He disappeared, and then appeared next to one of the walls, but something grabbed hold of his leg. He looked down to see a serpent like creature wrapping itself around him. A bright streak of flames then exploded on the wall next to him, and debris showered over him. He pulsed out a flash of white energy, and the serpent released its grip. He quickly ducked an energy blast that was heading straight for him,

and he disappeared again, this time to the corner of the hall.

Taking on the spirits individually wasn't working, it was getting too dangerous, so he quickly focussed all his power, and he raised his hands facing the hall full of spirits. His eyes began to glow green with the power strengthening inside him, and he gritted his teeth and tensed his muscles up to draw on his strength. A wave of white hot, crackling sparks, pulsed across the hall in a bright flash. It obliterated all the spirits, with each one exploding into a cloud of dust as they were struck.

The hall returned to darkness. Dust fell, and sprinkled to the hard stone floor. Will lowered his hands, and his eyes returned to normal. He scanned the room to make sure all was clear. He made his way across the hall, kicking his way through the dusty remains of the spirits, and ignited a ball of light in front of him, to proceed along the passageway, continuing beyond the end of the hall.

Susan limped along the dark corridor, holding the flaming torch. She was tired and in pain, dirty with ash, dust, and covered in cuts and sores. Her blonde hair now hardly visible beneath all the dirt.

She had been wandering along, what seemed like miles of passageways for ages. They all looked the same, dark stone arched corridors with the flaming torches slowly burning at intervals along the way. She stood silently for a time. Taking a minute. She leant over and looked at the gash down her leg. It was quite deep, and the sweat and dirt made it hurt all the more.

Just then, an icy cold blast along the passage made her stand up and wrap her arms round herself. She was in a very long, straight passage, that she had been travelling along for some time.

She looked behind her, back down from where she had come from. Another cold blast of air made her squint her eyes, and tighten her arms wrapped around her.

A distance down the corridor, all the torches had gone out. As she stood there, looking down into the darkness, another one went out. Then another. One by one they slowly went out in the distance, working their way towards her.

Chills went down her spine, and she briefly held her breath in terror, as; out of the darkness came a terrifying guttural growling. She could not see beyond the last torch, but

something was slowly approaching in the darkness.

Another torch went out, and another. The growling was getting nearer. As the darkness approached, she could hear heavy breathing between the snarling growls.

She began to walk backwards along the passageway, but the torch flames carried on disappearing, and the growls still approached with the darkness.

She stopped and turned her head. She had reached the end of the corridor, but it was blocked with a large solid door. She tried to open it but it was locked. She stood with her back against it, looking down the passage at the last few torches. One by one they went out, until there was just one left in front of her.

She stood listening, eyes wide open to try and see further into the darkness, trying not to blink. She tried to quieten her breathing, but her heart was beating fast, and sounded loud in her ears.

She shrieked and jumped, as a loud snarl bellowed out from beyond the torch, out of the darkness. It sounded almost on top of her.

The last torch suddenly went out, and she was in total darkness. She began to weep and

sniffle in terror, but tried to remain as quiet as she could.

She turned her head around in the darkness to try and focus her eyes on something, but it was no good.

She froze in terror, and held her breath as she heard loud breathing, just in front of her. It got closer, and closer, till she could feel each breath in her face, and smell its stagnant odour. She screamed as loud as her lungs would possibly allow.

Will stopped dead in the passage he was in. He strained to hear the distant scream, that echoed out through the passageways. It then fell silent.

He knew straight away, it was Susan. He felt fear and panic, and wondered if he had not been quick enough to save her.

Chapter 20

A Great Discovery

Jack and Russ were pushing back the dark spirit army. Helped by Jim and the light spirits. They had been helped out of many sticky situations by their new spirit friends.

The sheer numbers of light spirits was a big factor in them getting the upper hand, although many spirit souls had been lost, and many Whispdragons also.

“Come on...” shouted Russ, “...we’ve got them on the run” and he charged forward, waving his staff around above his head. Jack followed, not quite as eager and bold as Russ, but feeling very proud of himself at what they had achieved.

The full ferocity and horror of what they had just been involved in wouldn’t hit home till after the battle. They were still fuelled on adrenaline at that time.

The light spirits waded forward in their thousands, giving off powerful bursts of energy at their retreating foes. The dark spirits gave sporadic bursts of retaliation, but knew they

were no longer a match for those sorts of numbers.

Winged creatures took to the air and were chased off by Whispdragons, while others dispersed across the landscape, and back to all reaches of the dark realm. Some literally melted away into the ground, or disappeared. They would survive to fight another day, but this battle was won.

Jack and Russ were joined by Jim in the middle of the landscape between Loxin's Lair and the ridge. Russ jumped around in joy, and Jack held his fist in the air. They were triumphant, and celebrated with the thousands of light spirits. The area was now almost empty of dark spirits, just a few still on the outskirts in fast retreat.

Jim turned to Jack and Russ, "Well done my friends, you fought bravely," and they shook each others hands.

"This is indeed a big victory, we may have won the battle, but to win the war...it is up to the Ghost Lord" and Jim looked at the towers of the castle.

Jack, Russ and the spirits all cast their eyes across at the huge menacing towers, and they suddenly remembered Will and Susan, and their cheers and laughter suddenly ceased.

“Our fate now lies with the Ghost Lord...” Jim shouted to the army, then he spoke quietly to Russ and Jack, “...if he were to lose the power of the Gorb to the Lord Loxin...then the outcome of this battle wouldn’t matter...he would become all powerful, and the whole realm would fall into darkness forever...and your reality would be doomed!” Jim looked silently at the towers with everyone else.

Will had made his way deep into the heart of the castle, through many passages and up and down many stairwells. His ball of energy floated in front of him wherever he wandered, to illuminate the way ahead.

He could sense the powerful presence of Loxin, getting greater the deeper he journeyed into the castle. He dropped to his knees and put his hands to his head. He rubbed it, and closed his eyes. He squinted at the overwhelming messages in his head, from his senses working overtime.

He got back to his feet and tried to focus his power to filter out the stream of psychic signals that bombarded him. It wasn’t easy.

He approached a part of the castle that opened up into a large chamber. There was a ledge ahead of him, which protruded high above the chamber floor. He dropped to his

knees and crawled the last few feet to the edge and peered over, into the chamber.

It was a large, circular room, with smooth stone walls intricately carved with symbols and drawings. Towards the centre of the chamber was a huge swirling vortex of gases in a permanent fixed position, and surrounding this was six small stone pillars, each with a clear crystal on top sending a beam of energy towards the vortex, holding it in place.

He studied the strange vortex for a moment. There seemed to be something contained within it, that occasionally came into view as it swirled around inside the funnel. The whooshing noise was quite uncomfortable in the otherwise quiet chamber.

When he was sure that there was no one there, he decided to take a closer look. He stood on the edge of the ledge, looking down at the chamber floor, about twenty feet below. His eyes began to change to a glowing green and he leapt off the edge, doing a somersault into a mist like twirl that descended, twirling to the ground, where the mist changed him back into solid form, where he gently landed down on the chamber floor in a squatting position. His eyes returned normal.

He walked to the centre of the chamber and stood facing the vortex, between the energy beams from the crystals, holding it in place. He stared into the thick swirling mist, moving his face nearer and nearer.

He jumped back, startled slightly as a dark shape hurtled past within the vortex of gases. It went too fast for him to make out what it was, so he concentrated and waited for it to pass close to him again.

It whizzed past, and Will felt sure that he had seen some human form pass by. He stared one more time, and again it went by, but this time he was convinced that there was not one, but two human looking shapes trapped within the vortex. If people were trapped inside, he had to free them.

He took a few steps back and raised his hand towards the vortex. It started churning and getting distorted as he pulsed waves of energy into it. The crystals on the pillars began to vibrate, and they all shrieked out a piercing high pitched noise before exploding into showers of fragments, and the beams of energy holding the vortex in place all disappeared.

There was a tremendous white flash and powerful blast of wind, knocking Will off his feet, as the vortex exploded, and then faded.

He was stunned, laid on the dirty floor. He looked in the direction of where the vortex had been. His vision slightly blurred, he could just make out the faint image of two human shapes stood in the centre of the chamber. He rubbed his eyes. “Hello...who’s there...are you ok?”, and he began to stand.

“William...is that you...” he instantly recognised the voice. “Grandma...is that you?” His vision began to return to normal, and a huge smile broke across his face, upon seeing his own grandparents stood in front of him. He charged across the chamber and threw his arms around his grandmother, who sobbed with joy, and then hugged his grandfather.

“How did you get here? How long have you been here? How did...”, His grandfather interrupted him. “Hold on William...hold on son...let me answer all your questions...”.

His grandfather Joseph, went on to explain that many years ago, they came across a Ouija board at a jumble sale. They had never dabbled in anything to do with the occult before, but thought it would be fun to see if anything happened. To their surprise, they had immediate results. Many spirits contacted them through the board, and it became a nightly ritual to sit down and talk with spirits. One

spirit in particular, called Horace, became like a friend to them. They often talked for hours at a time.

Eventually it reached a point where the spirits became visible, and there was no longer need to use the board. Horace often talked about the light plains of the spirit realm, and how they shouldn't fear death. He told them they had good, pure souls and would have a passing to be rejoiced.

One evening, Horace offered them something that no human had ever been given the opportunity to do; visit the spirit realm while still living. It was an honour, never before deemed worthy of any living mortal, but Horace and the spirits had formed such a unique friendship with the couple, that they wanted to share it with them.

They entered the realm, through the portal in the dumbwaiter, accompanied by Horace to guide them. They made the crossover on many occasions, and became regular, friendly visitors to the realm. They completely won the trust of the light spirits, so much that one day they were asked to do the spirits an important service.

There was a sacred crystal, called the Gorb Stone, which was kept in an ancient temple found deep in the heart of the Crystal

Mountains. It contained great power, which would only be released upon the opening of the stone by a worthy champion. The heart of the crystal would be absorbed by the champion, and the lord of all spirits would be born from the power of the Gorb.

It was written that a worthy champion would come, and the Ghost Lord would bring balance back into the spirit realm, and prevent darkness from infecting the world.

Will's grandparents were asked by the light spirits to be the new guardians of the Gorb Stone. To take it into the human reality, and hide it to keep it out of reach of the Lord Loxin; who was becoming far too powerful and dangerous. The sanctity of the stone was no longer certain in the spirit realm.

They accepted the great honour, and took the stone back to the house in Parsons Woods, where they wrapped it in a cloth along with the old Ouija board, and placed it amongst their cherished possessions and keepsakes in the attic.

Soon after, they were visited by dark entities in the night. They were woken by horrifying screams, and banging like they had never heard before. Dark shadowy demons entered their room and the last thing they could

remember was cowering beneath the sheets and screaming.

“...then we found ourselves standing here, and all the angels of heaven have brought you to us William, and I am so wonderfully happy.” His grandfather gave a beaming smile, and hugged him tightly and closed his eyes.

“Right...we need to get you out of here, and to safety.” Will told his grandparents. He paused to think for a minute. Then he bowed his head and went into a trance like state.

His grandparents looked on in amazement, as a ghost like copy of him left his motionless body. The ghost drifted silently towards the wall of the chamber, and disappeared through the wall.

Will could see everything his ghost saw. The ghost floated above the ground, on the outside of the castle wall. He could see the black, leathery looking wall extending high above into the dark sky of the dark realm.

The ghost image of himself dissipated and vanished, and he came out of his trance, back in the chamber with his grandparents.

“Stand back...take cover...and cover your ears” he told them, and they moved to the far side of the chamber, and ducked behind a pillar covering their ears.

Will stood facing the chamber wall. His grandparents looked on, as he slowly raised a hand. His eyes began to glow green again, and a powerful burst of energy pulsed out of his hand, sending the side of the castle outwards in a big explosion, causing a big cloud of dust and debris to fill the chamber, and huge chunks of rock and debris rained down from the castle, over the landscape below.

His eyes returned to normal, and he lowered his hand. His grandparents coughed and dusted themselves down of all the debris that coated them. Will too dusted himself, and looked at the enormous opening he had created in the side of the castle wall.

He slowly walked over to the edge of the gaping, crumbling hole. He could see the dark realm stretching out before him, and the light spirit army covering the landscape. He then closed his eyes and a deep resonating, humming noise bellowed out, across the plains. He stopped and opened his eyes again. A loud roar erupted from a distance away.

Joseph and Sarah joined their grandson near the edge, just as the enormous body of a Whispdragon appeared in the opening. Its huge wings beat powerfully, and noisily to keep it steady just outside the hole in the castle wall.

“This is your ride” smiled Will to his grandparents. Sarah looked worried and nervous.

“There’s nothing to be worried about. He is quite safe, and will take you back to my friends, down there across the plains.”

Joseph and Sarah carefully climbed upon the back of the dragon, and held on to the feathers at the back of the neck.

“Take care William, be careful and we will see you soon” said Joseph, “Goodbye...my lovely boy William” smiled Sarah nervously, and the dragon rapidly increased the beating of its wings to lift them high into the dark void above the castle, as Will looked on and waved his hand, they disappeared across the plains to where Russ and Jack would be waiting for them.

Will was happy and relieved that his grandparents had got to safety. All that remained was to try and establish if Susan was still alive, and hopefully save her. He left the chamber, and headed along another passageway, with his ball of light illuminating his path.

He eventually reached an enormous, double door. It was very solid looking, and beautifully decorated with gems and carvings.

It was obvious that whatever lie beyond it was of great importance.

He stood silently facing the doorway. He had an uncomfortable frown on his face. There was a very strong, negative presence emanating from behind the door. It made his head feel like it was pounding.

He knew that he had to enter the door, and that upon doing so, he would finally come face to face with the powerful lord of the dark realm himself; Lord Loxin.

He took a deep breath. He felt more scared than he had at any other time since becoming the Ghost Lord. He raised a hand, and using the power of his mind, the massive doors slowly creaked open.

Chapter 21

The Lord Of Darkness

Will took a few steps through the large opening of the double doors. He entered a spectacular looking great hall. It was illuminated with many candles and flaming torches, which showed off the marvellous stonework to glorious effect. Stone pillars with impressive creatures sculptured into them, an incredibly high arched roof, intricately detailed in carvings and precious stones.

“Will...run...it’s a trap...he is using me as bait” Susan’s voice called out from across the other end of the great hall. He looked down to the opposite end, to see her shackled in chains to an enormous stone throne.

He was shocked by how dirty, tattered and bloodied she was.

“Are you alright Susan?” he shouted, “I’m so sorry I let this happen to you.”

“Don’t worry, I’m fine” she called. “Very weak and tired...but otherwise its just bumps and scratches really.”

The heavy doors suddenly slammed shut behind him with great force, sending the loud

bang echoing around the vast hall. All the hundreds of candles started to go out, leaving an odour of burning in the air from all the smoking wicks.

The hall was now a lot dimmer, being lit only by the flaming torches upon the walls. There were lots of dark shadowy areas of the hall, which were not lit at all. He tried to be brave and confident, but the nerves were giving him butterflies in his stomach.

A loud guttural growl bellowed out and sent a shiver down his spine. The terrifying sound filled the hall, and he couldn't make out where it came from. He took a few steps forward and paused. He glanced around the hall, into the shadows to see if there was any movement. It was now eerily quiet.

“Just stay calm...” he called out to Susan, “...you are safe now, I won't let anything happen to you again.” “Ok” she replied, and the hall fell silent once again.

After a short silence, a faint rumbling noise started. It gradually got louder, and louder. Will and Susan looked at each other in fear. He didn't tell her, but he could feel the powerful, evil presence of Loxin growing in intensity. It almost felt painful to his paranormal senses.

The great hall was now starting to vibrate, and shake with the resonating, powerful rumbling. Susan was terrified and covered her ears at the awful sound. Will took a deep breath and tried to prepare himself for something big.

A loud crack, like thunder boomed, causing him to flinch. At that moment, a large, black cloud exploded in the centre of the hall. It was very dense, and rapidly expanded to about fifteen feet high, and twenty feet across. Streaks of lightning fizzled out in all directions, followed by a blast of crackling blue flames that sent a shockwave emanating out from the cloud, with another huge cracking sound.

Will was forced back to the edge of the hall by the powerful eruption in front of him. Susan cowered, burying her head behind the throne. The noise subsided to a faint, muffled rumble, and the big black cloud churned and bubbled, as if it had a consciousness of its own.

It gradually began to disperse, and clear away. Will strained to see the huge, menacing shadow of the Dark Spirit Lord, towering inside the cloud. As the last remnants of the cloud dissipated, an unnerving growling came from the darkness.

Loxin bellowed out a loud guttural roar and raised his muscular, leathery arms up into

the air above his head. His robes flung open to reveal the powerful, muscular bulk of his body with deadly looking spikes. His mouth wide open, exposing all the razor sharp teeth, as he continued to cry out his intimidating roars and growls. Drool splattered to the ground as saliva dribbled from his mouth, and down the tentacle like protrusions around his face. He shook his head, allowing Will to see the three enormous spikes on the back of his head.

He watched open mouthed, almost in disbelief of the nightmarish creature that stood before him, that he had to conquer. He gulped and took another step backwards, feeling very intimidated by the aggressive display of the Dark Spirit Lord.

Loxin stopped growling, and looked him straight in the eyes. He bellowed out a string of incomprehensible words. He was obviously telling him something, and by the sound of it, it wasn't very friendly.

Before Will could reply, Loxin reached out a hand, and he felt a powerful, invisible force grab him by the throat and he was being dragged helplessly towards Loxin, feet dragging on the floor behind him. He was tossed up into the air like a rag doll, and was caught in the grasp of Loxin's powerful claws.

Loxin raised him up in the air, his hand wrapped around his throat, leaving his legs dangling off the floor. Will was just inches away from the terrifying face of Loxin. They were eye to eye. He could feel Loxin's stagnant breath snorting in his face, and some of the slimy tentacles around his face began to slide over Will's face, leaving splatters of smelly, oozy, saliva.

He struggled to try and free himself from Loxin's grasp, but it was no good. Loxin stretched his arm out, and held him at arms length. He then began to take a deep inhalation of breath. A loud gurgle started to come from Loxin's mouth, and he was about to regurgitate something nasty, straight at him.

Will's eyes turned green and started to glow. He felt a sudden surge of power. He turned himself transparent, and then vaporised himself into a mist, which dissipated and left Loxin's hand empty, just as he jetted out thick streams of sticky ectoplasm, which would have covered him.

Loxin let out a roar, as he looked at his empty hand. He then tilted his head back and a huge jet of flames blasted up towards the top of the great hall, from his mouth. He was seething with anger.

Susan sat terrified, curled up against the throne. Suddenly a mist formed next to her, and it morphed into the transparent form of Will, who then turned back solid. She looked into his glowing green eyes.

“Right...I’m going to get you out of here” he said, raising a hand to the chains, and with a flash of white energy, the shackles cracked into lots of fragments, setting Susan free. She flung her arms around him and they shared a brief kiss.

Loxin had realised where Will had reappeared, and was now approaching across the hall.

“Keep behind me...we need to head to the door” said Will, stepping between Loxin and Susan. “Ok...just keep that monster away” she replied nervously.

They edged slowly, stepping sideways along the edge of the hall towards the door at the other end.

Eyes fixed on Loxin, who followed them closely, like a cat stalking its prey.

As they got nearer, Will used his mind to make the large double doors crash open, and he told Susan to go.

“Quick run...its me he wants...he will let you go,” and he kept his eyes focussed on the

Dark Lord, as Susan trotted into the doorway. She stopped and turned, “I love you Will...just do me a favour...kick this monsters ass!” and she turned and ran to escape from the castle.

Will raised his hands into a fighting stance, in the middle of the huge, great hall. His eyes glowed a strong, bright green, and he could feel the power of the Gorb pumping through his body, like an adrenaline rush with an electric charge. He felt strong.

Loxin towered above, and in front of him. He completely dwarfed Will. He stood up, straight to his full height, reached out his long muscular arms and tilted his head back to give a deafening roar. His robes flapped around as if wind was blowing them.

Will looked up at the ferocious display, but showed no fear, or reaction to it. He was ready for whatever the Dark Spirit Lord had to throw at him.

While Loxin was still performing his display of aggression, Will took his chance to take full advantage, and suddenly blasted out streaks of energy from his hands, like lightning, full force at the black, leathery torso of Loxin’s upper body. Loxin instantly stopped roaring and moved one of his huge claws into the path of the streams of energy, drawing it into his

hand for several seconds, before leaning his head forward, towards Will, opening his ferocious mouth, and showering it back out, with a jet of flames added to it.

Will leant backwards into a back flip, and disappeared into a trace of mist, as he avoided Loxin's attack. He then reappeared a few feet away, from a mist, back to solid form. Loxin instantly sensed Will reappearing, and punched his arm out in that direction, sending an invisible pulse of energy that sent Will hurling backwards, crashing into a stone pillar sending rock, and debris to explode across the hall.

Loxin then followed with a constant bombardment of powerful energy streams, that pummelled Will, and had him helplessly wriggling around on the floor, whilst he received the punishing onslaught.

He fought to stay conscious, as Loxin's attack drained him of his power and energy. He had to focus, and somehow retaliate, but first stop the relentless barrage of energy streams. His eyes burned an even brighter green and he managed a quick surge of power, to raise one hand, that sent out a quick pulse that surged across the hall, then his hand dropped back to the floor.

Loxin turned his head to see the energy pulse fly past him, and crash full on, into a stone pillar. He turned back to Will, and a menacing, evil grin appeared across his face, exposing all the sharp nasty teeth, and he started to bellow out a deep, guttural laughing. He roared out a string of words in an insulting manner, and raised his claws to unleash another onslaught, that would finish him off.

The stone pillar was heavily damaged, and started to crumble. Debris rained down from the roof of the great hall. Loxin spun round, just as the bulk of the pillar toppled over, along with a large chunk of roof. The tonnes of rock cascaded onto Loxin, who was caught unawares and was knocked to the floor, and being buried by piles of rock. A big cloud of dust erupted into the air, from all the mess, and took several minutes to clear.

When the chaos had settled, and the dust had cleared, half of the great hall was now missing, and it was now exposed to the void of the dark skies, of the dark realm outside. It was a gaping chunk out of the castles main structure.

Will groaned and pushed himself up to a sitting position. He looked around at the collapsed hall, and the huge pile of rubble

where Loxin had stood. He took a deep breath and stood to his feet. He was a bit wobbly, and unsteady on his feet, feeling weak from his battering. He dusted himself down, and walked over to the exposed end of the hall and looked out across the vast, dark landscape in front of him. All seemed quiet, and as normal as could be; for a different reality, of the dark afterlife.

The light spirits and Will's grandparents had left the battlefield, and returned to the light plains of the spirit realm through the Twilight Void. Only Jack, Russ, Jim, Susan and Will's Whispdragon had stayed behind, and were waiting in anticipation, at the foot of the ridge.

A sudden, huge explosion made Will spin around to see the big pile of rocks in the great hall, blast up into the air, followed by an immensely bright flash. The rest of the great hall was now destroyed, and standing defiantly within a bright, raging fireball, was Loxin roaring out in anger and sending flames, lightning and all kinds of explosive streaks in all directions.

Will's friends looked towards the castle from the distance and could see the powerful eruptions of Loxin emanating out from his lair, and knew something was about to seriously kick off.

Loxin thrust his arm into the air, and a powerful streak, like lightning blasted high into the void above. An incredibly loud rumble began to bellow out, like a constant rumble of thunder that echoed out across the whole of the dark realm. It shook the ground, and the friends covered their ears and ducked to the ground, as another thunderous crack bellowed out amongst all the terrifying rumbles.

An enormous dark cloud was starting to form, high in the dark void above the castle, where the lightning streak blasted. It grew in size as the rumbling continued.

There was a bright flash from Loxin, which travelled up the lightning streak to the cloud, which then gave off a strange glow, and Loxin had vanished from the hall. The cloud then started to move away from over the castle, and over the landscape, towards the ridge. As it crossed the plains, it started to morph and distort. It was forming something.

Russ turned to the others, “That thing is heading straight for us!” Jack agreed, and said “Its changing into something, something big.” As it changed its form more, Susan recognised the creature, “Its Loxin!” she shouted, “But... a hell of a lot bigger!”

Loxin morphed out of the cloud and reformed into his horrific self in the middle of the plains, but he was monstrously bigger. Bigger than even the castle. His roar, and guttural growling bellowed out across the dark realm. Jack and friends looked on in horror, at the enormous beast, filling the landscape in front of them, and now turning its full attention to them.

Will looked across the plains, from the ruins of the great hall, back at the castle. He saw the new, massively bigger Loxin, now focussing on his friends. He desperately needed to get over and help them. He couldn't let Loxin kill them.

He looked over the side of the opening in the great hall. It was a long way down. He could see the glowing of the moat far below.

His eyes gave out a stronger glow of green again, and he could feel the power of the Gorb flowing through him. It had already healed the damage done to him by Loxin before.

He took several steps back into the hall, and ran full pelt to the edge of the hall where it had collapsed away, out of the castle walls. He leapt head first, diving off the edge.

He flew through the air several feet, before dissipating into a thick mist, which then darted

in a fine stream at great speed, across the landscape, whizzing past Loxin.

The mist reformed between the evil Lord and his friends, and then morphed back into his solid form.

Will looked up at Loxin, amazed at just how enormous he now was. Loxin was now also a full solid creature once again. Will glanced around to see his friends, terrified and all huddled together. He gave a brief, awkward smile, pleased to see them but wishing it was in better circumstances. His Whispdragon gave out a slight welcoming whine, pleased to see its master.

He turned back to Loxin, feeling stronger and replenished by the power of the Gorb.

“Leave my friends alone...you big, spiky fungus!” and Loxin growled and seethed with anger.

“I am the Ghost Lord...the rightful champion of the Gorb, and with all the power of the spirit realm, I will not let you take, what isn't yours.”

Will's eyes gave out a burst of green, and he raised a hand towards Loxin. A wave of green energy emanated out, and formed a huge wall in front of him, that forced the enormous Dark Spirit Lord to move several steps back.

“I will no longer allow you to have control over the dark realm” he shouted, spurred on by the fact that his friends were watching.

“You give it to him” shouted Russ. “Shush!” the others snapped at him.

Will thrust out one hand after another, sending a wave of green energy with each, that forced Loxin backwards.

Loxin was quite surprised at the power and ferocity of the Ghost Lord’s pounding walls of energy, coming from something so small and ‘human’.

He raised his own hands, each one many times larger than the whole of Will’s body, and opened his claws. He swiped his claws with his powerful, muscular arm, heading straight for Will, but as it slashed across, Will blasted another wall of energy and the claws were repelled in showers of sparks as they scraped through the energy wall.

His eyes gave out another strong green pulse, and he faded into a transparent, ghost like form and levitated slightly from the ground. He held both his arms out and let the power of the Gorb flood through him.

Loxin took several more swipes at him, with his slashing claws, but in his ghost like

state, they just passed right through him, much to the annoyance of Loxin.

A loud rumbling shook the landscape underneath, and all around Loxin, as Will made big craters start to explode open in the rocky ground, throwing plumes of rock and debris high into the air. Then huge plumes of flames jetted high into the air from each one. Dozens of blazing, fiery funnels blasted all around, and straight at Loxin. He roared out in anger, as he ducked and dived, trying to avoid all the bursts of flames, but there were too many. Will concentrated and more and more craters blasted out of the ground, shooting flames at the Dark Lord.

Loxin was getting burnt with, now hundreds of plumes of fire. Will stood motionless, eyes glowing green, arms outstretched and levitating as a ghost, with all the landscape exploding up into the air before him. He could hear Loxin's roars turning to cries of agony.

Loxin was now consumed within all the plumes of flames, and he lifted his head and let out a deafening growl, that echoed across the dark realm. Then he shook his head around, and his jaws made a crunching, cracking sound, and his jaws started to open several times wider

than before. He then started to produce a loud bubbling, gurgling sound from deep within him, and in one big wrenching, regurgitating thrust, a constant stream of thick, black, oil like liquid, jetted out of his mouth. He directed the stream of black liquid all around, at the plumes of flames engulfing him, and slowly but surely, the liquid doused the flames and the fires were all put out. Loxin shook his head again, and his jaws crunched and cracked again, and his mouth returned to its original size.

Will and Loxin now stood facing each other once again. The ghost against the monster. They had moved out further into the landscape, away from where his friends were, so they weren't in any danger.

Loxin was now throwing his hands in Will's direction, and each one letting out a ball of bright energy that fizzled across the plains, directed at Will, who created a white shielding barrier of energy to block them.

Explosions pummelled the shield as the energy balls made contact, one after the other. Then Will retaliated with his own streaks of power that crackled and sparked across the plains to Loxin.

Jack and the rest of his friends looked across the plains in disbelief. The darkness of

the whole realm being illuminated by the epic battle ensuing between the two powerful Lords. They gasped and cried out as they watched the explosions, and streams of fire, lightning and supernatural, flashing energy streaks flying across the plains at the battling foes.

“How on earth is he going to survive all that?” Susan cried out, her face lighting up with bright flashes from the distant battle.

“Don’t worry...he is strong, and has more ability than he yet realises” said Jim to reassure her.

“Our young Ghost Lord will, one day learn how to harness his power to do great good, as well as to defeat the dark creatures of the realm...he MUST defeat Loxin.”

“He’ll do it Sue...don’t worry” Russ chirped up and wrapped his arm around her for comfort as they all stared across the plains at the epic battle of the Lords.

Will was managing to hold his own against Loxin. It was a fairly evenly matched fight, although Will had far more power at his disposal, but his lack of experience and knowledge on how to use it, meant that he had a disadvantage. The Dark Spirit Lord knew this, which is why he forced Will to go to the dark realm in the first place, knowing that he

would have the upper hand, and the only means of defeating the young Lord.

Will and Loxin stared each other down once again, having a slight break in the constant onslaught of fighting. Will breathed heavily and wiped his arm across his brow, to mop away the beads of sweat that trickled down his face.

Loxin snarled with gritted teeth, as he clawed at the ground, tearing up deep gouges of rock, waiting, like a stand off to see who makes the first move.

Will looked down at himself, having the first chance to notice the faint, transparent ghostly form of his body. Something sparkled on the ground, catching his eye. It was a large sort of crystal, with shiny sparkling surfaces, but black in colour. He opened his hand out, and made the crystal shoot up off the floor, and caught it. He looked closely at it and instinctively it all became clear, how he could finally defeat Loxin.

He remembered back to how it all started, when he found the strange crystal in his grandparents attic; the Gorb Stone.

Loxin roared in anger and started to attack again. He raised a claw at Will, and a powerful wind spiralled out, towards him. It blew like a

hurricane, and the ghostly form of Will started to dissipate, and get blown away with the wind. He quickly flashed his eyes green, and morphed back into a solid form. He leant forward into the wind, with one hand on the floor, and the other grasping the crystal tightly. He fought to hang on, and stop himself being blasted away. He stared directly into the wind and fired a rapid streak of green energy, from his glowing eyes. He watched it disappear through the dust of the wind, and then he dropped to the floor as the wind instantly stopped.

He could now see Loxin crying out in pain, holding his arm in the air, with his hand missing, and sparks exploding out of the end, and thick, green goo, dribbling from the wound.

Will stood to his feet and held the crystal out in front of him.

“I am the Ghost Lord, and I command that you, and all your power are mine,” and the crystal let out a piercing shriek, and a blindingly bright flash. A bright white streak shot out and struck Loxin, who then screamed out in pain. He writhed and wriggled as the constant stream from the crystal exploded through his thick, leathery skin, and the white

stream turned deep red, as Loxin's power and energy was drained and drawn into the crystal.

The stream abruptly stopped and Loxin's lifeless body exploded into a huge black, sticky mess, that flew up high into the air and then splattered to the ground, over a huge area across the landscape.

Will stood holding the crystal. He felt strong and proud. He held the crystal high above his head in celebration, looking over the black sticky remains of the Dark Spirit Lord with a big smile on his face. His eyes returned to normal, and he held the crystal up in front of his face. Inside the crystal there was now a swirling vortex of gases, like what had been in the original Gorb Stone. It contained all the power of the Dark Lord.

He held it tightly. He could not let the crystal be broken, or the power of great evil would be unleashed once again.

He looked up, on hearing a noise descending, to see his Whispdragon carrying all his friends. He smiled and waved his arms. The dragon landed besides him, and he placed his forehead onto its nose and wrapped his arms around its face to greet it, and it purred at him.

His friends dismounted, and ran towards him. Susan was first to get there, and she leapt

into his arms and had a long, lingering, passionate kiss. Then he hugged, and shook the hands of his three friends.

“Congratulations mate” smiled Jack, finishing hugging his friend.

“You gave one hell of a show” said Russ.

“My Lord...” said Jim, bowing to Will, “What have I told you about calling me that?” smiled Will, “...but now, you have earned the right to the title...you are the true Ghost Lord, of all the spirit realm.”

Susan flung her arms around Will again, and they all celebrated the events that they had all just taken part in, and revelled in their glory.

Eventually they had to make their way back to the Twilight Void, and through to the light plains again. They would all ride Will’s dragon to get back.

“First...there is one last thing I need to do...” Will told his friends.

“...cover your ears...this might be noisy.”

His friends watched puzzled, as he walked a few hundred yards across the plains, towards the towers of Loxin’s castle. He was still quite a long distance from the castle. He stood looking towards it, and his eyes began to glow green once more. With a raise of one hand, a powerful blast of energy rocketed at lightning

speed, across the landscape, hurtling towards the castle.

The impact was devastating. It sent out a shockwave, that nearly knocked all Will's friends off their feet, and the whole castle erupted into a catastrophic explosion, followed by a huge fireball, and an enormous mushroom cloud.

His friends looked on, breath taken, by the strange, surreal scene as Will, calmly turned around and walked back towards them, unaffected by the chaos that he had just unleashed behind him. It was just as if he had calmly said goodbye to someone, and was turning to leave.

The flames and explosions filled the horizon, a silhouette walked towards them. As he reached them he calmly said,

“Lets go then...we are done here”, and he led them all onto the back of the Whispdragon, and with a quick dash and leap, they lifted up into the dark void, of the skies of the dark realm, and headed back to the Twilight Void, and the light plains.

Chapter 22

The Lord Of The Spirits

The Whispdragon descended on the field, next to the town of the light plains of the spirit realm. The streets were lined with all the people, who clapped and cheered. Will was the final one to dismount the dragon, and the cheers dramatically increased. He held the black crystal in the air above his head, like a trophy of the winners of the battle.

People began to flood onto the field to greet them. Everybody wanted a look at the strange crystal. The spirit children gasped in amazement at the swirling vortex within the crystal. Jim led Will and friends over to some steps on the edge of the field.

Jack, Russ and Susan all appeared like ghosts now that they were in the light realm. All of the light spirit people had now filled the field, and were facing the steps.

They climbed the steps and stood at the top. The people went wild, clapping and cheering. Will, Jack, Russ, Susan and Jim all stood in a row with their arms around each other. They all looked at each other laughing

and smiling, proud of what they had achieved. Will's grandparents were stood on the field, at the front with the crowd. Proudly clapping their boy, and his friends.

Jim walked forward to the top of the steps, and waved his arm to quieten the crowd.

“People of the spirit realm... There were those that wrote, long ago... that one day, a champion would come to the spirit realm... and this champion would bring back a balance, and peace... to all the realm. Today we have our champion... but first... please show your appreciation for two fine young hero's... Jack and Russ...”

The two of them stepped forward, to loud applause and cheers, then they stepped back.

“...and a brave young girl... who has been through a terrible ordeal... but got through it... Susan...”, and Susan stepped forward to loud applause.

“...and finally... everybody show your respect to... our saviour... our hero... the champion of the realm... William... The Ghost Lord.”

Will stepped forward, holding his hands in the air, and the crowd went wild, giving the loudest applause yet, with cheers and whistles. His eyes turned green and suddenly hundreds

of streaks of white, wispy energy screamed into the sky above him, much to the delight of the crowd.

He grinned, looking round at his friends, proud of the little display he just put on for the people, and his eyes returned back to normal. His grandparents hugged each other, in the front, and had tears of joy in their eyes.

Jim bowed to Will, and returned to stand with the others, and Will stood to the front and waited for the noise to die down.

“Thank you...I appreciate the friendship and warmth you have shown us...I also want to thank you all for your help on the battlefield today...you all played a big part in helping to reclaim the realm...and make it a place of peace and tranquillity...like it should be...” and the crowd applauded loudly again, before quieting down.

“...Our thoughts also go out to the many spirit souls that didn't make it back from the battlefield...we owe them everything...” and again the crowds applauded.

“...My name is William Peterson...and I am...The Ghost Lord...and I will do everything in my power to keep the spirit realm in balance...and I will protect us from the evil forces of the dark realm, to make sure they

don't become a threat to our peace again... thank you," and he stepped back in line with the others, for the final applause and cheers.

After the crowds had cleared, they came down from the steps to join his grandparents, who both hugged him lovingly.

"What are you going to do with the crystal?" Jack asked Will. He held it up and looked at the swirling vortex within it. He thought for a moment.

"I need to take this with me, back home. Only I can protect it. I cannot let any dark spirits get hold of the crystal, and gain the power from within."

Jim put his face towards it, to look at the vortex himself.

"This shall be known as the Lok Stone... due to the power originating from the Dark Spirit Lord Loxin...I'm sure it will be safe with you."

It was time to leave the spirit realm, and return to the human world. They said their goodbyes to Jim. They thanked him for everything.

"I'm always here to serve you my lord... goodbye" said a loyal Jim.

Will was just about to walk out into the field, when his grandmother held his hand. He turned round to see tears in her eyes. It then

suddenly dawned on him, that his grandparents appeared solid, but pasty and colourless like the other spirit people. He now realised that his grandparents were actually deceased.

“I’m sorry William...we cannot go home with you” said his grandfather.

“I know grandad...I realise now” and a tear ran down his cheek.

“It was the night the dark things came for us...we never made it out of our bed...it was only our spirits that left that world,” and Will hugged both his grandparents, the three of them with tears streaming down their faces. Susan also had tears running down her face, and she gave Will a big hug as he finally walked away from his family.

“I will see you again soon” he called to them. “They will be fine here with us” said Jim reassuringly.

Will walked into the field, holding Susan’s hand, followed by Russ and Jack. They stopped and looked at Will.

“This may feel a bit peculiar” he told them, “Who’s first?”, and Jack volunteered. Will had to use his power to send them back through the light spirit portal, in the shaft of the dumbwaiter at the house in the woods.

Jack stood nervously with his arms by his side. Will raised a hand towards him, and Jack fizzled into a puff of energy that then darted off into the sky at immense speed, making a crackling noise as it quickly disappeared out of sight.

“Ok then, who’s next?” asked Will calmly. The others now felt even more nervous upon seeing what would happen to them. He sent both Russ and Susan up into the sky, and then waved at everybody one last time, and with a loud crackle, he shot up into the sky to follow his friends.

Will flew out of the shaft of the dumbwaiter, and sprawled out across the floor of the attic with a bump. He sat up, to see his friends helping him to his feet. They had made it home safe, back to the house in the woods.

“The landings a bit of a bump, but I think I must have slept through the journey...cant remember anything from standing in front of you on the field” said Russ.

They made their way out of the attic, down the steps to the landing below. They watched as Will slowly walked up to his grandparents bedroom door. He placed his hand on it and closed his eyes, and bowed his head slightly.

He knew the bodies of his grandparents lie in their bed.

A tear ran down Susan's cheek and she walked over to Will, and put her hand on his shoulder. He sighed and turned to leave the old house with his friends.

Later that evening, the four of them had said their farewells and returned to their homes. Will had to break it to his parents that he had found his grandparents dead. It was very upsetting for them all. The police had been around to the house in the woods, and they said it seemed just a coincidence, that they both died naturally in their sleep together. There were no suspicious circumstances.

Will sat on his bed. Lucy walked in his bedroom, teary eyed.

"William..." she sniffled, sitting next to him on the bed. He put his arm around her, "...do you think grandma and grandad are somewhere nice?" Will looked at his sister.

"Lucy...I have no doubt what so ever, that they are in a special place, and they are happy, and together...and I'm sure we will all see them again someday." Lucy smiled, and kissed her brother on the cheek and left the room.

Will placed his hand in his pocket and pulled out the Lok Stone. He watched the

vortex swirling for a few minutes, and then got up off the bed. He walked over to the corner of the room and knelt down. He peeled back the carpet and lifted up one of the floor boards, where he used to hide all his most cherished, secret possessions. He placed the Lok Stone into the space, and his eyes glowed green, and an energy field appeared around the stone to help protect it. He then placed the floorboard back over it, and rolled the carpet back. He climbed into bed and switched off his lamp.

The dark void in the sky of the dark spirit realm was filled with flying dark spirits that had returned, since Will and the light spirits had all left the dark plains. Creatures and beasts once again roamed the landscape.

Eruptions of dark matter exploded out in the void, and flashes of lightning, and fire plumes erupted. The constant rumbling, like a sleeping volcano, waiting to unleash its devastation at any time soon.

A dark figure stood at the foot of the ridge looking out across the battle scarred landscape. It wore a dark hooded robe, which fluttered in the breeze. The figure knelt down and a human hand picked up a handful of dirt, and looked at the distant, smouldering pile that was once Loxin's Lair.