

### CHAPTER THREE: Glip

Two hours later Mr. Brumley pulled into Sam's driveway. As Sam exited the car he heard Alice's voice, "Ask him again."

Sam walked toward the house and stopped. His jaw was clenched, and eyes narrowed to slits as he scanned the windows, looking for the creature. He balled his hands into fists but relaxed them when he heard another car door close. He felt Alfred approach and spoke without looking at him.

"I'll be fine here."

"I'm sure you will. But Alice would still like you to stay with us tonight."

"I know. Maybe tomorrow."

Alfred nodded, "I understand. Hang in there. If you need anything, call us."

Mr. Brumley had always been kind to Sam. He wasn't an outgoing, playful dad like Sam's. In fact, Sam rarely saw him smile. But not because he was a sad person. He did have an inner joy that Sam had always been amazed by. No matter the circumstances, he always had a positive outlook. He just didn't express it outwardly.

Sam turned and faced him. "Is he going to be ok?" he asked quietly.

Alfred exhaled slowly. "I hope so. Our medical knowledge is amazing, Sam. They were able to stop the bleeding. And there's a lot of tests still to run."

"But they said he'd been poisoned. I heard them saying that they didn't know what it is."

"They'll figure it out."

Sam dropped his head, "What if they can't?"

Alfred laid a hand on Sam's shoulder. "Alice and I will help you through this. And I know Alexis and Fenton will be there as well."

Sam exhaled hard, "But I feel so helpless. I want to *do* something," he stressed.

"I know. But sometimes things are out of our control," said Alfred.

"One of the doctors said it's getting worse. They said he might only have a couple days left." Sam's mind shifted to the weird creature in his kitchen. It had claimed that Sam could help his dad by going with him. "What if..." Sam started, then trailed off. How could he explain it without sounding crazy? *What if the thing that hurt my dad is in the house right now? And says I can save my dad by helping him rescue a woman in another world?* There was no way to say it out loud. Thankfully, Mr. Brumley didn't ask him to finish his thought.

"Sam, we can't live in a world of 'what ifs.' We're not allowed to go back and choose another path. But you also don't want to live with regrets." Alfred paused, appearing to search for words. His eyes drifted to the front window and Sam saw him tense up.

Sam's eyes shot to the window and he froze. Two long pointy shadows moved behind the glass. The ears of that creature. Fenton's dad had seen it.

"Don't live with regrets, Sam," Alfred continued.

Sam sensed that Fenton's dad was facing him again. But Sam still stared at the window. He watched the creature's ears move again. And again. Then it hit him. It *wasn't* the creature. He was seeing two large fronds from the houseplant that sat near the front window. He exhaled slowly, relieved, and turned to Alfred who was smiling.

"If you think you can help, don't hold back," said Alfred. Sam watched Alfred's eyes glance to the house, then refocus on Sam. "We'll watch over your dad."

Sam was torn between hopelessness about his father and anger at the creature that might be the one responsible. But his adrenalin started pumping when he thought that he might be able to help his father, even if it meant working with that thing. He looked up at Mr. Brumley. “There may be something I can do.”

Alfred ran his fingers through his white hair, took a deep breath and placed both hands on Sam’s shoulders. He lowered his voice, “Then do it.”

Sam blinked a couple of times. “Ok.”

“We’ll see you tomorrow,” said Alfred. “We’ll pick you up around eight and go back to the hospital.” He climbed into the car and Sam watched him say something to Alice. She appeared to wipe away a tear as the car pulled away and headed toward their house.

Sam took a deep breath, set his jaw, and walked toward the front door. It was time to figure out what was going on.



Sam walked through the front door and immediately knew something was wrong. When his dad had crashed to the floor, everything he had been carrying had tumbled out of his arms and spilled across the entryway. In their rush to help, the paramedics had pushed all of it against the wall. But someone had cleaned it up.

It had to be that – that creature. *He knew my dad was hurt. He probably had something to do with it. He even tried to get me to leave before my dad got home. If I’d gone with him,* Sam thought, *my dad would have come home to an empty house. He’d be lying here right now. Dying.* As these

thoughts tumbled through Sam's head, his anger continued to rise. He scanned the room, clenching and unclenching his fists, and finally realized he was exhaling through gritted teeth.

He instinctively grabbed for the baseball bat leaning behind the front door. He would make that thing pay. He squeezed the bat tightly, his knuckles turning white, and moved tentatively toward the kitchen. Making sure he had enough room to swing the bat without hitting the doorway, he stepped into the kitchen and shouted, "What'd you do to my dad?!" But the creature wasn't there.

Sam spun around and checked the front room again. The coat his dad had dropped hung on the rack behind the door. He slowly scanned the room looking for anything else out of place. His gaze landed on his dad's briefcase on the coffee table. It lay closed and latched, as if this was any other normal night. But the large, well-worn leather book sitting on top of the briefcase wasn't normal. He'd never seen it before, and it piqued his interest. But first he needed to find that creature. Tightening his grip on the bat, he slid toward the hallway.

"You know I'm here!" he yelled. "And I've got a bat! Come out now and I promise I won't hit you!" Silence.

Sam leaned around the corner of the hall and used the bat to flick on the light switch. He waited a couple seconds and then stepped toward the first door – his bedroom. He pushed it open with his foot and waited. Nothing moved, so he carefully eased inside. He flicked on the light with his elbow and scanned the room. His bed, dresser and bookshelf looked exactly the same as he'd left them earlier in the night. Nothing appeared to have been moved. And his closet door stood wide open. The creature wasn't here.

He side-stepped back into the hallway, keeping the bat cocked over his right shoulder. He needed to open the bathroom door, so he reluctantly let go of the bat with one hand. He reached

for the knob and, without warning, turned it and slammed the door open. As the door bounced off the wall and swung back shut, he saw that it too was empty. That only left his father's bedroom.

Moonlight spilled into the hallway through the open door. With the noise he'd been making, Sam knew the element of surprise was gone. So he dropped all stealth and jumped through the doorway, swinging the bat hard. If the creature was waiting for him, Sam knew the bat would win the first round. Unfortunately, this stressful situation had caused Sam's hands to become extremely sweaty. His slippery hands lost their grip on the bat and it sailed across the room. It smashed into the wall and clattered to the floor on the other side of his dad's bed.

He now needed another weapon. And his dad's closet had golf clubs. He slapped the light switch with his open palm, flooding the room with light. Without hesitating, Sam took two quick steps and yanked open his dad's closet door. Only as the door swung open did the thought cross his mind that the creature might be hiding in there. Sam didn't wait to find out. He barreled into the walk-in closet and grabbed the first club he could get his hand around. Sam jumped back into the bedroom and backed toward the hallway. Breathing deeply, he tried to calm himself.

"No one's here." He exhaled slowly. "He's gone."

Slowly he walked back to the front room. Knowing he was alone, he locked the front door and tried to relax. Again, the mysterious leather book drew his attention. He knew he'd remember if he'd ever laid eyes on it. He'd never seen a cooler looking book. A piece of leather rope wrapped around the book multiple times and tied in the front, preventing any of the loose pages from falling out. He leaned the golf club against the coffee table and picked up the book. He untied the leather strap, carefully unwound it and opened the book.

Sam's jaw dropped. A faint blue glow emitted from the pages as if they had a light shining behind them. He turned the book over in his hands, trying to figure out the source of the light. He flipped pages and saw that the light shone from all of them. Then he closed the book and the light disappeared. He opened and closed the book several times, the light coming and going as he did so. Dumbfounded, he looked closely at what was written in the pages. He realized it was some kind of diary. Drawings and writings covered every page. A large castle took an entire two-page spread, poems written with a very precise hand adorned dozens of pages, and interspersed throughout the diary were strange animals, plants, and trees he'd never seen before. In all, the diary contained more than a hundred pages of notes, scribbles, drawing and stories, all lit from behind by the blue glow. While still trying to comprehend what he was looking at, he heard a voice behind him.

"Wirt's diary. Thankfully, Hellius did not get it."

Sam recognized the voice. He slammed the book shut and spun around to face the little creature. Anger boiled up in Sam, washing away any remaining fear. Sam's face was a cloud of fury and he held the book in both hands, ready to pummel the thing if it came near him. "What did you do to my dad!"

"I did nothing to him."

Sam pointed a finger at him. "You came here telling me that my dad needed help and that I needed to go with you to save him. Then he comes stumbling in almost dead." He slammed the book down onto the table. "How did you know!" he yelled.

Sam thought about grabbing the golf club again, but looking past the creature toward the fireplace, he got an insane idea. Sam circled the coffee table and marched toward the creature threateningly. The creature backed sideways onto the left side of the hearth. As it slowly

backpedaled across the hearth, it looked up. Above the mantle hung a family crest and a magnificent looking broadsword, its blade gleaming in the light. The handle, although worn, still displayed elegance and the blade shone brightly. Sam looked at the sword, then back at the creature.

“Tell me now!” he screamed as he reached up and grabbed the hilt of the sword. He yanked it off the wall with both hands and turned toward the little creature. But it was heavier than Sam expected, and the momentum from its weight was too much for him. His eyes widened as he realized he couldn’t stop, or even slow, its path. The sword swung down to his right, slicing the leg of the coffee table in half. The table crashed to the ground, spilling its contents onto the floor.

Undeterred, Sam dragged the sword back in front of him. He grunted as he shoved the point along the ground toward the little creature.

Sam huffed, “If I could lift this...”

“Ah, but you cannot, can you?” said the creature.

This enraged Sam even more. He grunted with the strain as he tried to lift the tip of the sword a few inches off the ground. He took one uneasy step toward the creature, but was unable to maintain his strength. The creature placed one finger on the blade and pushed it down. The sword slipped from Sam’s hands and clattered to the ground.

The adrenaline rush wore off and Sam felt terror chase away the anger as his hands began to shake. This thing had poisoned his dad and might try to kill him too. Sam backed up and stumbled onto the hearth. “What do you want with me?” With his back against the fireplace, he was trapped. He had nowhere to go and no weapon in reach. “And what did you do to my dad?”

“I did nothing to him. He was poisoned by an evil man named Hellius.”

Sam clenched his hands into fists so tightly that he felt his fingernails digging into his palms. The shaking subsided, but the fear now shifted to his father. “Is there an antidote?” he blurted out.

“Yes, there is a cure. But it is in my world. I will explain more if you will come with me. But we do not have much time. We should get the others.” He motioned with his arm toward the door.

Sam’s gut told him to believe this creature. But it wasn’t enough. “I’m not going *anywhere* with you.”

“But, Arthur...”

“My name’s SAM!” Anger rose in him again. “You claim to know what happened to my dad, but you won’t be straight with me. You tried to get me to leave with you, when he was already on his way home. Dying. Why should I trust you?”

The creature closed its eyes and put face in its hands. It started whispering to itself.

“ ‘Go get The Warriors,’ they said. ‘Bring them back to help us,’ they said. The little creature started swaying side to side. ‘What if they will not come?’ I asked.”

Sam, hands still clenched, stood on the hearth and watched the creature slowly turn around. It kept muttering as it shuffled toward the front door, “ ‘They will come. Trust us, Glip, they will come’ they said. ‘Decapolis needs them again,’ they said.”

“Sam stepped off the bricks and whispered, “What did you say your name was?”

The creature stopped and turned back to Sam. “Oh. Did I not properly introduce myself?” He bowed slightly. “I apologize. My name is Glip. I am a Grink.”

Sam went numb all over. “Glip,” he muttered. He thought back to his father’s words after he collapsed on the very spot where Glip now stood. “And did you say Dekaplis?”



“Decapolis. Yes, that is where I am from. And that is where you are needed. You and the others.” The creature’s eyes took on an almost pleading look. “Please, Sam,” he said. “There is no one else. I believe that you and the others are our only hope. Will you come?”

Alfred’s words echoed in his mind, *‘don’t live with regrets...do it.’*

He looked at Glip and nodded, “Uh...yeah. I think so.” He looked to the spot where his dad had fallen, then back to Glip. He dropped heavily onto the couch. “What do you need me to do?”

The small creature smiled. “There is much we need of you. But more importantly, your father needs you.” He held up a hand to stop Sam from asking another question. “As I said, there is an evil man named Hellius. His desire is to conquer our land and rule from a throne of power, as one of his ancestors once did. There have been rumors he is recruiting warriors. But they are only that - rumors. Then, one day ago, he kidnapped the woman Kendra. In most instances, one woman would not make a difference. And to most, this minor act means nothing. But to those who know her, this is viewed as his first step toward an attack on the kingdom.”

Sam furrowed his brow.

Glip nodded toward him. “I know this must be a lot to absorb, but you must understand that Kendra is...special. Because of this, she is obviously an important piece of Hellius’ plan.” He looked at Sam to make sure he had his full attention. “And she is even more important to your father.”

“Wait a second,” said Sam, raising a finger. “How can she be important to —”

“She can heal him,” interrupted Glip.

Sam’s heart skipped a beat as his mouth dropped open. Glip waited patiently until Sam could find the words.

“She can heal?”

Glip only nodded, allowing Sam to process.

“So, if we rescue her, my dad won’t...” his voice trailed off.

The Grink nodded again, smiling.

Sam’s eyes widened, pieces of Glip’s story falling into place. He took a stab at where this conversation was going. “If this Hellius has her. And he attacks your kingdom. And makes her heal his warriors...”

Glip’s smile disappeared. “Correct. You now know more than most.”

“We need to rescue her,” said Sam as he stood up from the couch. “How?”

“As I said, we must get the others.”

“What others?”

The Grink smiled. “You already know them.” He looked into the dark night. “You will need a coat.” He picked up the diary from the end table and pulled it close to his chest with both arms. “And we will also need this.”

