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FELIX AND THE FUTURE AGENCY

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For my beloved boys, Alex, Harry and Jack.

Thank you for believing in my daydreams
before I dared to believe in them myself.

All my heart, for always.



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Taken from the *Oxford English Dictionary*:

Premonition: noun.

An advance warning, a forewarning. The action of warning in advance; an advance notification of subsequent events.



CHAPTER 1

It's the look on his face that's the real sucker punch. I've seen it so much, I'd recognize it anywhere. His nostrils flare a little when I tell him. His green eyes are wide as they dart over my shoulder. He is looking to see if someone is around to help him out.

Seb Thompson stands at least five inches taller than me and a good deal broader. Star of the school basketball team, Seb could knock me over with a sneeze. Yet he is absolutely terrified of me.

I lower my eyes to try and make myself small. I don't want to scare anyone, but I've found that it comes with the territory when you can see the future.

'I'm so sorry, Seb,' I say softly. 'I don't want to worry you. But it happens after school today. Someone is going to hurt you. They are going to steal your bag. Can your parents pick you up later?'

Seb's eyebrows twitch nervously and I can see beads of sweat start to appear on his upper lip. He is looking at me as a cornered hare might study a fox.

I feel horrible. But there is no way I could sit with the knowledge that someone is going to get hurt.

I've done that before.

I'll never do it again.

'Seb, are you all right?' Jacob Tolley's voice comes over my shoulder.

'I . . . I don't know . . .' says Seb. 'It's Felix. He's being weird again.'

'Oi, leave him alone!' Jacob gives my shoulder a shove. 'We've had about enough of you – FREAK!'

'Please,' I say to Seb, my voice shaky and desperate. 'Just take care going home tonight, yeah?'

'Are you threatening him?' Jacob shoves me again. 'You go near him and you're dead, Green! Come on,' he says to Seb, placing a hand on his friend's back. 'Let's go.'

They turn and walk away, but Seb looks back over his shoulder and I think he is checking to make sure I'm not following them.

Here's the thing. I kind of get it. I know how this stuff sounds. I see why everyone in my entire school thinks I am a liar. Because every single thing I have warned people about has come to pass. To be honest, I wouldn't believe me either.

It all started with my Grandad Jim when I was nearly eleven. He warned me that Mum and Dad were going to

be killed in an accident. He held my hand and I could see it as clear as day but as dark as a nightmare. Our car heading for that oak tree. The windscreen shattering into a million pieces as the vehicle flipped over. The overwhelming, sickening feeling that my parents were not okay.

I begged them not to leave the house a year ago. I tried to tell Mum that something awful was going to happen and that she and Dad were in danger, but she said I'd probably just fallen asleep and had a bad dream watching the telly again. I told them that Grandad Jim had warned me.

Mum put her hand on my forehead and said she thought I might be getting a fever. I thought that she was right – that seemed logical. I had felt a bit clammy the night before. Getting sick was a far more sensible explanation than the impossibly horrifying thing that was playing out in my head. Gran sat with me while they went out.

Grandad was there too. His eyes were wide with terror.

Mum and Dad told me they loved me. They said they'd be back soon. Dad said I should go to sleep. 'You've got to be better before the match on Saturday, Felix – it's the Manchester derby – *Come on, you reds!*'

Mum kissed my cheek and I smelled her floral perfume as her curls brushed my face, her brown hair thick and untameable, just like mine. 'Rest up, my love,' she said.

Their steps faded.

The door slammed.

The engine started.

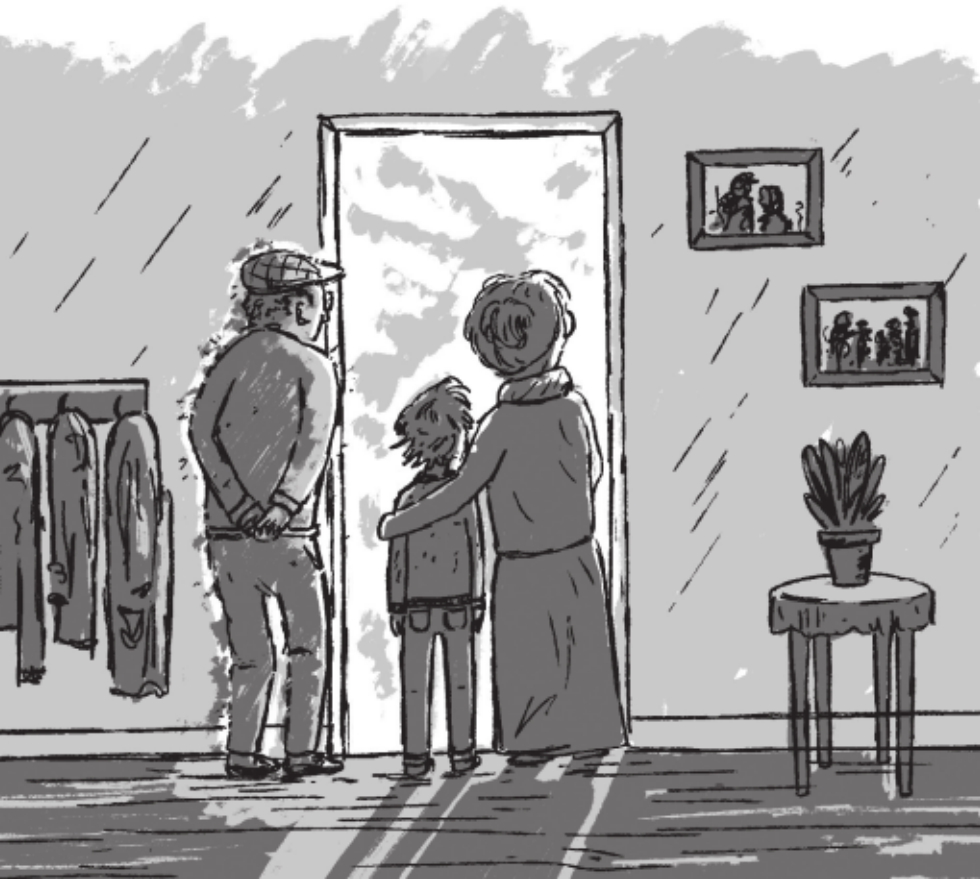
I slept.

The knock came at 11.54 a.m.

I knew what it was about before the door opened.

It was the police.

Gran crumpled like a rag doll on the floor when they told her. I don't remember my reaction.



Grandad Jim started showing me other things after that. One of the high bars was weak on the climbing wall in the school hall. Chris Lennon was going to fall and break his leg. The canteen would serve some dodgy chicken at lunch and half the school would be off with food poisoning. I started delivering his messages, trying to warn people that this stuff was going to happen. When it all actually started playing out, they said that the only logical explanation was that I was behind it all.

'Threatening and aggressive behaviour.' That's what my headteacher calls it. I am in Mr Purcell's office so much, you'd think I actually lived there. He's given me warning after warning after warning. 'One more incident,' Mr Purcell had boomed at Gran after I'd warned Lily Vance about getting her fingers badly trapped in the library door, right before she actually did. 'One more incident and I will have no choice but to exclude Mr Green from the school.'

My behaviour record reads like I'm on a fast track to prison. The rumours follow me like wasps. Parents have started complaining, teachers edge away from me when I pass them in the corridor and my classmates look at me with the same fear that Seb just has.

Felix Green could flip at any minute.

Felix Green tampered with that high bar – he made Chris fall – he's got a screw loose.

Felix Green put something in the food at the canteen – someone needs to lock that kid up and throw away the key.

Felix Green trapped Lily's hand in the door on purpose – he's a right wacko.

Felix Green knew his parents were going to die – I bet he did something to the engine of the car – what a psycho.

Felix Green is a freak.

Felix Green . . . Ghost Boy.

The names always make me flinch. But they are right about the last one. Because here's the thing about logic. You can't always trust it.

You see, my Grandad Jim – my mum's dad – died many years ago when she was a very young child.

My Grandad Jim is a ghost.