

Gary and Collin
vs.
The Interdimensional Aliens

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ISBN-13: 9798679190290

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One (want to save the world?)

“Psst. Hey, you, kid. Wake up.”

It was late. I don’t know how late, maybe even early. I heard the whisper of the unfamiliar voice and felt the poke on my shoulder. My eyes opened in little slits. It was still dark outside the window. The only light in the room was from the nightlight near Brody’s bed.

I grunted, shut my eyes, and rolled to my side.

“Kid, come on.” This time there was a poke to the back of my head.

“Wha...?” I mumbled.

“I need you to wake up.”

My right eye was closed and my left eye opened as I twisted my neck to glance over my shoulder. Collin was asleep in his bed. He was facedown with his eyes shut and his mouth wide open. His arm hung over the side and rested on the floor. Brody was also in his bed in the far

corner, curled into a tight ball under his blanket, like he always slept.

I had to have been dreaming.

There was no one else in the room and the only thing out of place was the stuffed animal my dad gave me when I was five. It was this weird little alien creature with a jet-black body, purple and green stripes, and a matching tail. It had two tiny nubs that might have been ears but could have been horns. A black and purple cape was also tied to its neck. I don't know where dad got the things but, honestly, it looked like it could have been made from a sock.

I called it Martin.

But when I went to sleep, Martin was sitting atop the shelf between my and Collin's bed. At least I thought he was. Now he stood against my headboard and stared at me with his two little button eyes.

It was weird that Martin had moved but I was also groggy, so I didn't think much of it. I rolled onto my back and closed my eyes.

I heard a sigh and felt something on my chest. I opened my eyes. Martin stood on me, a foot tall. He cocked his head to his right and the button eyes blinked.

“Come on, kid. You want to save the world or not?”

“Ahhhhhhhhhh!!!!!!!” I screamed, flung off my blanket and sent Martin flying. Then I ran from the room. “Mom!” There were only two bedrooms in the house. Mom’s was next to ours. I slipped on the carpet but caught myself before I fell. “Mom! Mom!” I banged on her door.

She opened her door as she tied her robe around her pajamas. Her light was on and it blinded me. I squinted, shielded my eyes, and took a step back.

“Gary, what on earth?”

Frantic, I grabbed her hand and pulled her toward my room.

“Gary...”

“It’s Martin. He’s alive!”

“Keep your voice down,” mom replied. “You’re going to wake the neighbors.”

I led her through the door. Collin had woken and turned on the lamp. He was sitting up in his bed, rubbing his eyes. Brody was a heavy sleeper and, to no one’s surprise, was still curled tightly under his blanket, despite the commotion.

“What is going on?” mom asked.

My blanket was in a crumpled heap and Martin lay lifeless in the middle of the floor. I pointed at the stuffed alien. “Martin was standing on me and talking to me.”

“Your stuffed animal?” mom asked.

I nodded, wide-eyed.

“Gary...”

“I’m not lying. Martin is alive and he woke me up and was talking to me.”

Collin laughed. I knew how it sounded but I wasn’t making it up. I told him to shut up.

“You shut up.”

“Boys,” mom interjected with her stern *don’t give me a reason to ground both of you* voice. Then she turned to me. “Get back in bed, Gary.”

“But...”

“No. It’s...” She glanced and looked at the clock on the dresser. “It’s two in the morning. We should all be asleep.”

“But...” I climbed onto my bed as mom picked up my blanket.

“I don’t want to hear it. You have done enough today to get attention. I’m sorry he didn’t call.”

“No, mom, this...”

“Shhh. Lay down.” I did as she said. She wasn’t going to listen, so there was no reason for me to keep arguing. Mom placed the blanket over me and tousled my thick blond hair before giving me a kiss to the forehead. “Go back to sleep.” She glanced at Collin. “Both of you.”

Collin also laid down and pulled his sheet to his chin. Mom shut off the lamp and crept to the door, stepping over Martin in the process.

“Good night,” she said as she pulled the door shut.

I rolled onto my left side so I could see Martin in the soft glow of the nightlight.

“What was that about?” Collin asked.

Collin was my cousin and Brody was my brother. Though, technically I guess, Collin was our uncle. He was my dad’s half-brother. He had lived with Uncle Zach since he was two. That was until a year-and-a-half ago when he moved in with us. Now, he was almost more like a brother.

It's confusing, I know. That's why I've always found it easier to just tell people that he's my cousin.

"If I told you, you wouldn't believe me," I said.

"Try me."

I told him about Martin waking me up and standing on my chest and mentioning something about saving the world.

Collin snorted and snickered in reply.

I knew he wasn't going to believe me. He rolled over and fell quickly back to sleep. I stared at Martin until my eyelids grew heavy enough that I couldn't keep them open any longer. He didn't move.

In the morning, I woke and found him still in the middle of the floor.

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