

A Bully Grows Up: Erik Meets the Wizard



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STUDENT EDITION

SAMPLE

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STUDENT EDITION (EBOOK)

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This book is entirely a work of fiction. The names, characters, places, and incidents depicted herein are either products of the author's imagination or are used fictitiously. Any resemblance to actual events or locales or persons, living or dead, is entirely coincidental.

This book is dedicated to my son,

Dylan

who taught me how to

“play like a boy”

and remains closest to my soul.

Acknowledgements

I am deeply thankful to Dr. Fred Buechel Sr., for offering me wings and an open sky.

To my parents, Dr. Bill and Ev Sabes, for teaching me that there was no limit to what I could do.

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To Cynthia Zimpfer, for being Erik's first fan, providing endless encouragement, knowledge, and coffee.

To Bob Gelinas, for his foresight, insight and editing skills.

Dear Reader:

Welcome to my world of wizards, dragons and children. It's a magical place of adventure and potential, where you have the opportunity to follow a young boy's journey to a mystical land where he must sort out his dilemmas to save his own life.



At the end of each chapter, I have written five questions or exercises to help you in your quest to have the best experience reading this book and understanding its message. The questions/exercises are all designed to help you learn more about yourself and others. If you find that you do not understand a question or that a question is of particular concern to you, please talk to a caring adult about it. Discuss your concerns, feelings and thoughts with someone who cares enough about you to listen.

So sit back with a cup of hot chocolate, a warm blanket and your imagination and enter Erik's and my world. I sincerely hope you enjoy the journey!

Caryn

**A Bully Grows Up:
Erik Meets the
Wizard**



Chapter One

Fighting the First Foe



rik shouted, “That’s mine!” as he catapulted himself across the room and into his younger sister, Kim. Unhurt, they tumbled to the ground, Kim landing neatly on top of her brother. Erik pushed Kim off.

I swear she has an invisible protective shield, he thought to himself.

“I already told you,” Erik exclaimed, “That’s my new toy...*my* Winking Wizard! Get your hands off it! That wizard can turn into three kinds of birds, an airplane, and a super-duper land vehicle. It’s not for girls and especially not for sisters!”

Thus began another typical evening for Erik and Kim: Erik yelling and commanding and Kim struggling and pleading.

“Oh, come on Erik. Let me play with it for a little while. I promise I won’t break it. Can I have it? Huh, can I? I’ll trade you. I’ll make your bed for a week, or you can borrow my best CD, or you can use my bendable Carrie doll. She’s my favorite. Can I, huh, can I?”

“I already told you. No! Gimme my toy!”

Erik grabbed for his prized possession and another struggle began. With a powerful shove, Erik sent his younger sister airborne. She landed with a none-too-delicate thud—the kind a mother hears from another room, even over the sound of the TV. Kim hit the fortresslike side of Erik’s large, wooden desk, slid to the floor, and began to cry.

Unwanted, but as expected, Erik and Kim’s mother appeared in the doorway. Her face was red with anger and her eyes were tight. She was *furious*. Erik turned his attention from his sister (still crying on the floor) to the image in the doorway. He hoped to see his mother’s gentle blue-green eyes, her supportive and understanding angelic face. He saw no mother there. No nurturing, sweet-smelling female who gave great hugs and knew that his favorite color was orange. No woman who brushed his tears away, listened to his bad dreams, and knew the tooth fairy by her first name.

Instead, a fierce monster lurked there.

It appeared seven feet tall with a head twice the length of its body. It was ugly and scary, and, even so, its distorted, scaly face seemed vaguely familiar. It aimed a dragonlike scowl toward Erik; its reddening face puckered in disapproval. Its mouth gaped wide, showing

pointed yellow teeth poised for attack. Erik thought he saw smoke billow out of the open mouth.

And then the dragon spoke.

No, the dragon growled and roared. At first Erik heard only terrible shrieking; then the voice filtered through. It sounded strangely like the voice of his mother—and it was coming from the dragon’s mouth!



Had the dragon eaten her? Did his mother live inside the vicious creature? Erik prepared for battle.

Then, in a surprisingly stern and parental voice, the monster only snarled and scolded. “Erik, how many times in one day do I have to tell you? I can’t keep coming in here to referee fights with your sister! I love you, but sometimes you make me so mad!”

With those words and the faint recognition of the voice they belonged to, the creature began to fade away. Layers of dragon scales appeared to drift magically into the atmosphere, leaving only Erik’s mother standing in the doorway.

“It is not okay for you to hit your sister, even when you are angry. You must stay in your room tonight—and no TV, phone, or computer. This is the fourth time you have hurt her this week! I don’t even want to know what happened. Erik, when are you going to learn how to deal with your anger? No one likes a bully!”

Erik glanced at Kim, who had stopped crying and

was leaving the room. Their eyes met for a moment and Erik glared at her as only a brother or sister can.

“I’ll get you for this one, Kim. Just wait,” his glare said silently. Then he was alone.

Erik crawled onto his bed and looked at his toy Winking Wizard. He was angry that he had to stay in his room: The victorious crusader locked in the dungeon. It just didn’t seem right. Erik thought about what his monstrous mother had said about his temper. What was she so agitated about? He always acted this way. He bullied those around him to get what he wanted, when he wanted it. He didn’t think he was such a bad kid. In fact, he thought he could be downright tender at times—but he’d rather do things the easy way, like making people feel smaller than he was, do what he wanted, and scare them into losing their own power. He would puff himself up and let his imagination help him be tougher and meaner than the people around him. His motto? *Might Is Always Right!*


Life would be great without sisters and parents, silly rules and the people who want you to follow them, he thought to himself. But, it was getting late, and, tightly clutching his toy wizard, he closed his eyes and was asleep.

Questions and Activities for You:

1. What does your anger look like? Do you yell, cry, throw things, blame others, etc...?
2. If you took your anger and put it on paper, what would it look like? Can you draw it?
3. If your anger were a color, what color would it be?
4. Draw an outline of a person. Put an X in the place/places where you feel tension, pain, or just different when you are angry. Can you describe what you feel there?
5. How long does it take for you to feel better after you are angry? Do you do anything special to help you calm down?

Chapter Two

Seeing the Wizard

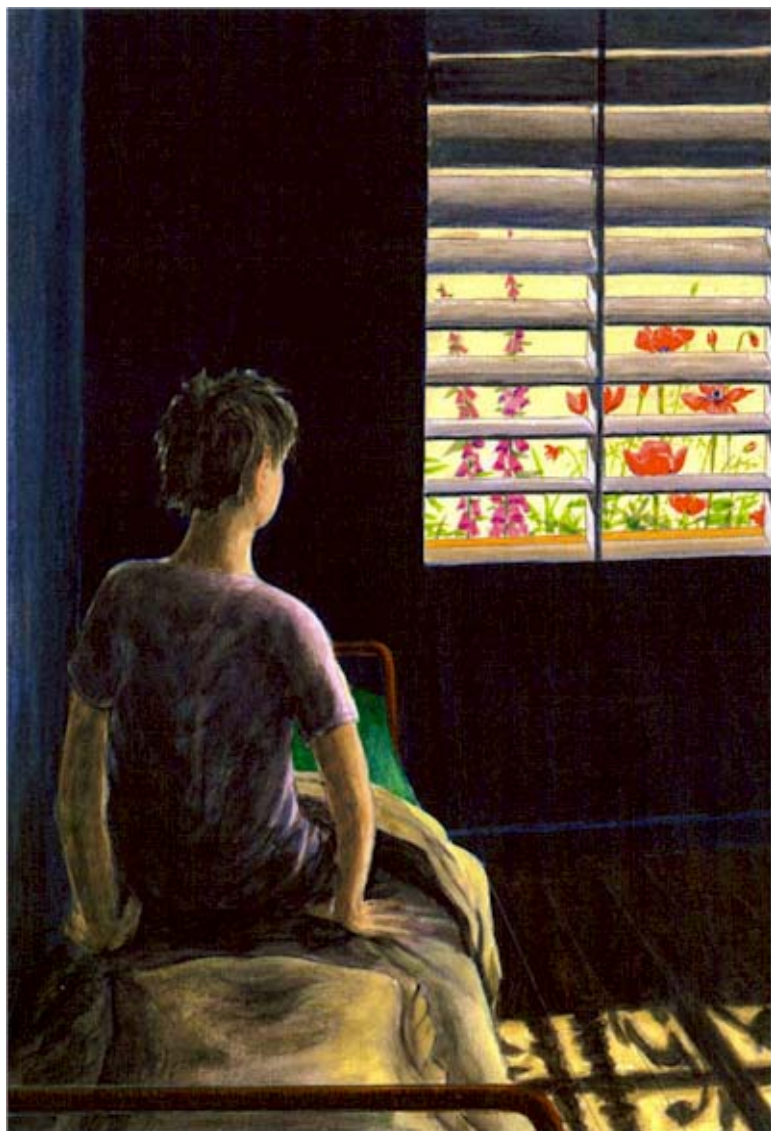
hen Erik awoke, he was no longer in his familiar bedroom. Instead, he lay on a small cot in the corner of a sparsely decorated cottage. Sunlight streamed in through shuttered windows lined with bright flowers, producing shadows that danced merrily on the worn wooden floor. Erik was alone in the small house.

Feeling more curious than frightened, he crossed the room to the large window and opened the shutters. Leaning out over the windowsill, he felt the sun warm his face; he smelled pine and perfume. Gazing at the town below, he was struck by the beauty of the green rolling hills, the blue skies, and the rows of flowers that lined the streets, like youthful soldiers in their dress blues.

As his eyes surveyed the horizon, he became transfixed by a distant sight. Standing by a towering waterfall, almost hidden in the green moss and ferns was...*a Wizard!* Yes, a moving, thinking, smiling, singing Wizard. He looked wonderful. His eyes sparkled and his gray robes tumbled majestically off his shoulders, surrounding him like layers of frosting on a birthday cake. His face was old and wise, yet playful and kind. A glimmer of light burst forth from under his robes. The Wizard was wearing bright, shiny silver-glittered high-top sneakers. Erik laughed and the Wizard turned his eyes toward the sound.

Their eyes met, and time froze: that moment seemed to last a lifetime.

Whirling quickly, Erik scanned his surroundings. While searching for the door, he saw an average-size twin bed with a silver bedspread; one small table holding a silver candle and candlestick laden with crusted rivers of multicolored wax; a large, dusty mirror; and one smooth and slightly gnarled walking stick leaning against a wall. He ran from the window to the only descending stairs he could find in the room. Grasping the smooth, wooden railing, he leapt down the stairs, two at a time, to the wooden floor below. Barely noting the mixture of odd furniture, an assortment of glass bottles and vials and a large bubbling cauldron, he opened the heavy, wooden door fitted with an oversized brass ring and ran onto the street.



He almost forgot to wonder about the owner of such an odd loft. He almost forgot to feel the curious vibrations that floated among its magical possessions. He almost forgot to note his excitement at being possibly, potentially, accidentally in the Wizard's house. Almost!

Past the parade of flowers and over the grassy hill, Erik ran with intensity and purpose. He ran in the direction of the Wizard, onto the winding dirt path and then to the brook. But no Wizard in sight: no humming, no silver high-top tennis shoes, no magical gray robe. He slowed his pace to catch his breath and wandered into the ferns and the forest.

The narrow dirt trail beneath his feet was worn and uneven. Unable to jog with a steady stride, Erik began to walk slowly, taking in the sights and sounds around him. As with previews to a new movie, he thought he heard melodies that fit the scene. He could hear an entire symphony in the bountiful notes that surrounded him. The bubbling of the brook provided the background melody, layered with





the harmonic tones provided by the shush of fresh leaves and branches moving with the wind overhead, accented by the buzz of insects milling curiously about, the crush of seed pods underfoot, and the thud of feet against hard dirt.

Erik smiled, noticing how the sunlight filtered through the trees like silver glitter gently sprinkled to earth as a gift from the heavens, magically set in time to nature's symphony. Erik tried to hold onto the magnificence of it all.

Even in that enchanted moment that would have inspired an Eagle Scout, Erik knew a good soldier never loses sight of his mission. In spite of his momentary sense of harmony with his surroundings, he never stopped his search. He searched for the Wizard behind large rocks and trees and through dense patches of ferns—but to no avail. His stubbornness kept him from feeling discouraged. Erik continued to walk deeper into the forest. Not deliberately. His feet were leading him.

Suddenly—the melody that had brought him comfort and set his pace for exploration began to change. A new drumbeat banged its way into the arrangement.

“Plop,” then “plop, plop, plop, tap, tap, plop, tap, plop.”

When the first droplet made its way past the leaves and onto Erik's head, he realized it was raining. At first it was a gentle, spring rain, and then a steady, hard rain, so strong that the original symphony could no longer be heard. Only the constant thud of the sheeting rain and the sudden cold that consumed Erik remained. Shivering,

drenched, and lost in a strange land, Erik wished for a warm fire, a soft blanket, a cup of hot chocolate with large marshmallows...and his mom.

Questions and Activities for You:

1. What do you do when you are angry, scared or nervous to lessen those feelings?
2. Can you make a list of three healthy things that you could do to lessen those feelings: e.g., scribble on paper, play ball, listen to music, punch a pillow.
3. Why do you think Erik was looking for the Wizard?
4. Write down three sentences about why Erik was looking for the Wizard.
5. Erik wished for “a cup of hot chocolate with large marshmallows.” What special food would you wish for that would make you feel comforted inside? Do you have that food regularly?

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