

"Lunchtime!"

Lucas Labrec, age 13, looked up from his book. "Coming!" he called back to his mother. He rushed down the stairs, and immediately wished he hadn't come. His lunch was the normal: a plate of (slightly burned) broccoli and spinach, with a Brussels sprout on top. "Why do I always have to eat this?" he inquired.

His mother's answer was very dissatisfying. "Because it's what I make for lunch," she answered.

Lucas sat down and took a bite. The food was (somehow) worse than normal. He recoiled at the taste, and then asked, "Can you make something else?"

"No. Eat."

"Do I have to eat all of it?"

"Yes. Don't waste food. Eat."

"Why shouldn't I waste food?"

His mother jumped up from the table. "That was the last straw! Eat what is on your plate!"

"No."

"Go to your room, now! And you will be eating your lunch later!" Lucas took note of her purple face, and decided that it would be safer to go than to stay.

When he reached his room, he muttered, "I wish I could have a nice meal of toast and eggs in the morning," and plopped down on his bed and picked up his book, oblivious to the fact that he was heading into the biggest adventure of his life.

Later, after his dinner of overcooked vegetables, he dropped into his bed, and fell asleep almost immediately.

In the morning, when he woke up, the first thing he did was to rush to the nearest sink and get rid of the broccoli taste that was still in his mouth. After that, he went down the stairs, knowing that a terrible meal awaited him. Much to his surprise, when he walked into the kitchen, his mother was cooking eggs, and there was bread in the toaster!

Lucas recalled his wish from the previous night, and immediately wondered if this was linked to the wish. Naturally, he wanted to find out. He said, "I wish my room were clean!" Lucas heard a grating noise from above, and ran to check it out. When he looked into his bedroom, he saw nothing on the floor. The room was flawless.

Lucas walked downstairs, eager to test out his newfound power. When the eggs were ready, he said, "I wish the yolk weren't as runny." Within five seconds, the yolk was exactly as thick as he liked it. He ate his breakfast quickly, and started reading his book.

When Lucas had to go to school, he simply said, "I wish I could teleport to school." He found himself in the school parking lot almost immediately. He was ready to boast to his friends about his wishing power.

Near the beginning of the school day, he found himself confronted by the school's meanest kid. The bully said, "Well, hello there, little Lukie. Amazing that you dare to come to school, after what happened last Tuesday."

Lucas replied by saying, "Oh, I wish you could go get lost in New York."

The bully walked away, and Lucas headed toward his classroom. Only then did the full impact of what he had said hit him. He gasped, "I just cursed a student to get lost somewhere in New York! I wish I could cancel the last wish!"

It was a week before Lucas used his wishing power again. He learned that the bully's family had gone on a vacation to New York, and the bully didn't return. Lucas realized that it made sense for it to be impossible to withdraw a wish. He shouted to nothing in general, "I wish I could help that kid!"

Suddenly, he found himself in the wilderness, next to the bully, whose name was Aaron Poucher. Lucas was surprised to see that his wish didn't put Aaron in a better position, but it put Lucas in a better place to help the other kid.

After he and Aaron recovered from the initial shock, the first thing Lucas did was say, "I wish we were in the school building." Nothing happened. Lucas tried twice more, but to no avail. He thought he heard some mysterious voice say, *Seven wishes is the lucky number. If you exceed seven, bad things will happen. That is why I shall grant you no more wishes.*

The response surprised Lucas. He said, "Grant me one more wish!" There was no response. He suddenly had a great idea. "I wish I could be granted another wish!" The wind in his ears sounded like the word *No* over and over.

Out of the blue, the wind picked up. Lucas lost track of the voice in the roaring of the wind. He saw uprooted trees hurtling down a nearby hill. Suddenly, he heard a creak from behind him. There was Aaron, huddled with his hands over his head. The tree behind Aaron was falling. Lucas shouted, "I wish Aaron and I were protected from the wind and trees!"

The rock below the kids shifted. Walls jumped up from the ground, completely covering them. There was a dull thud as the tree struck the rock wall.

Lucas asked, "Why did you grant the wish?"

"I never granted a wish. Why do you keep talking about wishes? If you have a magical wishing power, wish our way out of here!" The unexpected reply came from Aaron.

You would both be dead if I hadn't granted your wish, was the answer. Bad things will happen very soon.

"Now that bad things will already happen, can you grant me another wish?" asked Lucas.

No. Another wish granted will double the bad things. I cannot let that happen, unless you are in mortal peril. Do not ask again.

Later, Lucas decided to ask the mysterious voice what it was. He said, "Who, or what, are you? You have not mentioned that yet. Do you expect me to listen to you without knowing anything about you?"

Child, I am the Granter of Wishes-

"Yeah, I guessed that," Lucas interrupted.

I am the Granter of Wishes, and my job is to protect everybody that makes a wish when I am around. When I hear a wish, I must grant it, unless the person has already been granted seven wishes and they are not in mortal danger. Now that you have stumbled across this power, I must remain near you.

It wasn't long before Lucas started to feel a lack of oxygen in the air. He thought, "I am in great danger. The so-called 'Granter of Wishes' must grant my next wish!"

He said, "I wish Aaron and I were out of this rock shield!"

I will grant that wish, said the Granter of Wishes. After a few seconds, I seem to have lost the power to grant your wishes. The bad things are starting!

Lucas roused Aaron, and explained the situation. He told Aaron about the Granter of Wishes, and how it was his own fault that they were stuck there. He finished with a few sentences about the Granter being unable to get them out of there. When he was done, Aaron picked up a stick.

"If wishing won't work, we'll dig our way out of here!" shouted Aaron. He rammed the wall with the tool a few times. Some flakes chipped off and fell to the floor.

Aaron redoubled his efforts, and Lucas joined in. They were wearing away at the inside of the dome for about five minutes before they struck a harder material. No matter how hard they hit the wall, they could not leave a scrape on the new material.

The Granter said, *I designed the outer wall of this shield to be virtually indestructible. You will not be able to break it with those wimpy twigs.*

"What we need is a wish, but mine will not work..." Lucas trailed off. "It looks like you get to be the hero of the day, Aaron. All you need to do is wish that we were out of here, and we'll be out!"

"Really? Are you sure it will work? That sounds fun! I wish I were in my house!" said Aaron.

Lucas said, "Just wait, just wait." He couldn't control his excitement. He was finally going home!

Suddenly, Aaron was gone. Lucas was puzzled for a while, then realized that Aaron had said, "I wish *I* were in my house." The true meaning hit him like a shot out of a cannon. He was going to spend the rest of his life enclosed in a dome of stone! He collapsed, crying. "No! Don't leave me behind! Bring me with you! Don't abandon me! Come back! Stop! I don't want to die!"

The End