

## Chapter 1

### The stirring

Sebastian was flying. Oh! It was glorious. The seagulls cawed as they swooped and dipped around him, and he flapped his scarlet wings and dived with them. Far below, lay the foam-flecked sea, in the distance the rugged coastline. In between, a fleet of wooden ships headed for the shore, their great sails billowing. Sebastian steadied and stilled his wings, capturing a current upon which to glide, following the ships on their course. Lazily turning, he hung for a moment before heading in the opposite direction, out, out, out into the misty unknown. He was supposed to stay with the fleet that was the understanding, yet he was drawn back, back to where it had all started. He would never reach it, he knew that, but he could feel it. Diving, he swept across the surface of the sea, the billowing waves rising to greet him. Fantastical creatures lurked beneath, reaching up and breaking the surface – beasts that would terrify him in future life, where all memories would be unashamedly erased – flying sea spiders casting great nets, long-necked serpents with several heads, merdragons encrusted in barnacles, and shoals of giant carnivorous snails with poisonous, spiny shells. He swooped in and out of them, heading joyously towards a land even further than Tir Na Nog, a land with cities of crystal and mountains of glass, the land of his birth. His scarlet wings began to fold. It had not been his intention, yet he allowed it to happen, hovering as they came to rest behind him. A giant kelpie rose from the water, her equine head reaching for him, flipping

him in the air. He landed on her back and she wafted her great fins before diving beneath the water, taking him with her.

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Sebastian woke with a start. He sat bolt upright, panting heavily, his face bathed in perspiration. No sooner had he done so than he remembered where he was and settled back down. A vague and vanishing disquiet, the last hurrah of a dream he could not recall combined with the chill shroud of night, prompting him to pull his blanket higher. He yawned and stretched and squeezed, soothed himself with a long, waking moan, batted open his eyes and peered into the inky depths. The swollen silhouettes of familiar bedroom objects pulsed back reassuringly.

‘It’s Sheffield, England, 1973, I’m in my bed and everything’s okay,’ he said aloud.

Sebastian was a compulsive dreamer. In his twelve short years, he had had more dreams than most have in a lifetime. He was a particular connoisseur of dreams about flying, treasure hunts, and magical lands with amazing creatures. He was able to return to them on different nights, though he never knew which one he would end up in, and they felt so real he was often convinced he was awake whilst he dreamt. Each morning his dreams were as vivid as events of the previous day, and though their sway subsided within hours, the accompanying dream-tone lingered on; an exciting dream kept him thrilled all day, a happy dream warm and fuzzy, while an adventure dream left him so exhausted he felt as if he had been running all night. Dreaming consumed his entire life. He would whittle away his waking hours daydreaming about dreaming or just plain old daydreaming and in this way he pretty much buffered himself from reality. He convinced himself that the paint-sealed door above the walk-in cupboard next to his bedroom was a gateway to magical places, connected to all the

other attics in the row, with narrow rooms between the walls and secret staircases leading to hidden chambers. For hours on end, he would conjure up a vast maze of cupboards, corridors, concealed rooms and garrets interconnected by stairs and chimneys and accessed by sliding panels or secret trapdoors.

The downside of all this dreaming was the nightmares he endured, frightful ordeals from which he would wake in a blind terror convinced something was lurking in the room. He would tear to the light switch, the illumination instantly dissolving panic, though a return to bed was contingent upon a clean sweep of possible hiding places and falling asleep only assured by keeping the lamp on, arms tucked firmly beneath blankets to protect from being pulled under the bed by some terrifying apparition. A pervasive unease would weigh heavily on him the following day, gradually diminishing by evening, allowing a brief reprieve before the dread of impending sleep and further nightmares, for they often came in clusters.

‘Strange, I can’t remember a thing about that dream,’ he thought, turning on his side.

For someone with such precise dream recollection this *was* highly unusual. Other than the uneasiness he had felt on waking, nothing else had leaked through the sleep membrane, not a thing. There was no otherness in the room; no cloaked figure at the foot of the bed, no hobbledehoy beneath. He turned back to the receding membrane in a vain attempt to retrace his steps, but it hurried from him and vanished. The grumbling of a distant goods train captured his attention and he followed its progress until it was engulfed by silence. The house was very still, very quiet.

‘I wonder what time it is?’ he thought, ‘Probably two or three. What time is it, clock?’ he asked aloud. ‘Well, you’re no help,’ he yawned, as it ticked back

inscrutably, ‘not in the dark anyway. I can’t see you from here and I’ve no intention of getting up. Tomorrow can—’

It hit him like a punch to the stomach, his knees drawing instinctively to his chest.

‘No, no, no,’ he groaned, as he remembered that the next day marked the end of the Easter break, the last day of freedom, the last day of peace. The holidays had been such fun. Days and days of children’s TV, digging around the garden for bits of old pottery, devising his own secret codes, devouring Emil and the Detectives and countless Commando comics. Two weeks of dreamy pursuits. Solitary pursuits, now that Flynn had gone.

It had been two years since his only brother had been run over by a bus. He had been Sebastian’s idol. The one who stood up to the other kids and looked out for him at school, who had taught him to skim stones and to keepy-up, to climb trees and hang from branches, to ring doorbells and run. The one who had shown him that it was okay to fail. Sebastian was supremely uncoordinated and useless at the physical things Flynn excelled at. ‘Two left feet,’ his father would mumble, ‘all fingers and thumbs,’ his mother would scold, but Flynn did not mind one bit, playing down his failures, quietly encouraging him. It was Flynn who comforted him when things got bad at home, Flynn who took a hiding from their father when it was neither his fault nor his go, Flynn who held him when their mother had exhausted her cruelties. And it was his long-suffering brother who heard his cries at night when the terrors came, who dropped from the upper bunk to curl around him, his own human security blanket.

Sebastian’s ability to remember his dreams with such clarity had followed the accident, that and an alarming increase in nightmares, recollected in spine-chilling

detail. Flynn's absence had made their presence unbearable. Sebastian sighed, shifting in his bed. Two years. Two years and thousands upon thousands of vivid dreams, yet not one of Flynn. Why not? How not? At least he had stopped replaying Flynn's final moments. He had not been there, yet had imagined it repeatedly, Flynn darting across the street, the silent, deadly bus. Thrown into the air he momentarily hangs there, gracefully afloat in stilled time, before crashing down onto the terrible tarmac. Sebastian swallowed hard as he recalled glancing up from his Airfix kit when the police arrived at their home, the faint annoyance he had felt. Then, the rising, sickening panic swallowed by dreadful calm, the news rippling through walls, neighbours appearing from nowhere, arms and tears.

Sebastian turned his pillow to the cool side and pressed his face against it. The accident had left him an only child, a priceless gift, easily broken and to be handled with care. His parents had smothered him in cotton wool, keeping him indoors except for church, school and family holidays. This had not gone unnoticed by his enemies, aggravating an almost unbearable situation at school. Given that friends were never allowed inside the house – his mother too proud to reveal their dreary poverty – his isolation was now complete.

His parents hailed from County Mayo, Ireland, but had met in England. His father, Paddy Duffy, drifted over in the fifties, criss-crossing the country as a navvy before settling in Sheffield as a steelworker. His mother worked as a secretary before Flynn was born, then stayed home to raise the family. She began to suffer from 'nervous exhaustion', spending prolonged periods in bed. When Flynn died she was admitted to hospital for a month, barely communicating with her grief-stricken family. She was much better now, though her mood swings and anger outbursts continued unabated. State handouts still buffered his father's measly income, and things were

always tight or tighter. As he gazed into the night, Sebastian recalled that it was at junior school that he first realised he was poorer than most children, and that this meant something, a bad something. Other children had noticed, too, and invisible lines were drawn, divisions made.

‘It’s five and twenty past two,’ whispered a male voice, slicing through the silence.

Sebastian yelped as he leapt from his bed to rugby tackle the switch. The light steadied his nerves, but provided no clues as to where the voice had come from.

‘Flynn?’

There was no reply. He eyed the crayoned remains of the ‘magic’ door he had drawn on the wall when he was four, which had drawn a stinging smack from his mother.

‘Who’s there?’ he asked weakly, buying time as he scanned the room.

He could see no one and nothing appeared to have moved. Good, very good.

‘I’m awake, I’m awake,’ he repeated aloud, as he crept round the room, heart in mouth, checking the usual spots. The diminishing thump in his chest sounded the all clear. He sat on the bed and tried to work out where the voice had come from. Whoever it was had had no time to leave the room, his quick-witted cowardice had seen to that. Two twenty-five the voice had said, barely five minutes ago. His eyes darted to the clock.

‘Nearly three o’clock,’ he gasped with relief.

It had been two fifty-five when the voice spoke. Ha! The voice was wrong, thirty minutes wrong to be precise. It was a dream, a stupid dream, vaporized by the light.

‘Thirty minutes out!’ he yelled, diving under the sheets as he recalled that his mother set all the clocks in the house half an hour fast.

The voice had been right after all. Spot on. It took an hour of uninterrupted silence to calm him down, ultimately rationalising that the voice had been no more than a dream echo, a pocket of slumber. With the lights still on, he at last turned back towards sleep. Snuggling against the winceyette sheet, he worried he would never get off, yet within minutes was overcome with an irresistible drowsiness and was out like a light.

Outside, the garden breathed silently as the night deepened. A brisk breeze turned to whipping wind. Low clouds scudded across the rooftops, rumbling menacingly, stirring the rich darkness. The laburnum beside his window began to bend and sway, its boughs grinding together. Branches leaned forward scraping against the window, casting ebony shadows that crept across the room. They congregated above the bed, their twisting forms dancing over his still body. The wind was in song now, the sougning tree its instrument. Limbs rasped and creaked and scratched the window; leaves rustled in chorus. Sebastian could not hear the tune, though the lament inveigled itself into his dreams.

‘Come to us, come to us, help us.’

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Drip. Drip. Drip. Sebastian woke flinching.

‘Dad!’ he shouted, bringing his hands to his face.

‘Up yer get den, sleepyhead,’ laughed his father, straightening the cup and ceasing the trickle of water trained on his son’s forehead. Sebastian wiped his face with his pyjama sleeve. He thought of school, but for some reason felt incredibly happy.

‘I’m off for a walk if you’re after coming,’ said his father.

‘Sure,’ replied Sebastian, leaping from his bed.

Sunday morning walks were the only time Sebastian felt close to his father. Neither parent encouraged or displayed affection and he had to divine it obliquely. He was never hugged or held or told he was loved; indeed his parents barely spoke to him, unless he was in trouble.

Their route took them through the nearby woods whose shy wildlife and ancient trees had always enchanted Sebastian. The pale April sunlight splintered through the canopy, spotlighting the undergrowth as they crunched over the twigs and leaves that littered their path. They strode across a clearing fringed with blackberry bushes to where a frayed rope swing swayed from its anchor point on the bough of an old oak. Sebastian jumped on and propelled himself forward while his father sat on a nearby log, whittling a fallen branch with his pocketknife, all part of the ritual. Back and forth he went, legs swung behind then flung forward to gather momentum. The sky rushed to greet him as the ground retreated beneath his feet. The spirit of the woods began to sing, its gentle music whooshing in and out.

‘Whoosh-too-whoosh, whoosh-too-whoosh,’ it sang, as he tilted his head back, delighting in the sound. ‘Whoosh-too-whoosh, whoosh-too-whoosh, whoomsh-too-ush, coomsh-too-ush, come to us, come to us, *help us.*’

Sebastian flicked his head up in alarm and let go the ropes. He sailed through the air and landed in a sprawl on the ground.

‘I’m fine,’ he spluttered, as his father looked on, bemused.

But he wasn’t fine. He wasn’t fine at all. His father’s rude awakening had blotted out the events of the previous night. Now they flooded back. The voice in the room when he was wide-awake, the subsequent visit to a land much dreamt of. Even

though surrounded by a thick white mist he had known the place, he had *felt* it. As he brushed himself down he reflected on his dream. Standing on moss in rugged, hilly terrain the damp, enveloping haze clung to his skin. It was cold and semi-dark, either dusk or dawn; he could make little out through the dense fog. Alone and afraid, he tried to call out, but issued no sound. He attempted to move forward, but his legs felt leaden and he remained rooted to the spot. A sudden, violent gust of wind struck him from behind throwing his torso forward, his feet still planted on the ground. Another gust struck him from the front, then another from the side, several more coming at random angles, tossing him around like a marionette, his arms flailing. Within a minute, it had stopped as abruptly as it had started. Straightening up, he had looked around wildly, trying to shout for help, though remaining mute. The fog began to swirl and retreat, higher and higher, thinning in some places, thickening in others. He could see tree-studded hills peppered with boulders, but no path, no obvious means of escape.

A low murmur arose, seemingly from above. As he raised his eyes, the mist began to condense itself into dozens of shapes. Horror seized him as they morphed into skeletons. He desperately tried to move his unresponsive legs, his mouth opening and closing mechanically. The vaporous forms weaved above him, round and around, lower and lower now, through the thinning fog. One plunged, suddenly, like a starling, yet no sooner had he begun to panic than it transformed into an exquisitely beautiful woman who swept before her a warm, becalming breeze. She sped past him, insinuating something he could not catch. He jerked his head round as she soared up to assume her skeletal form, before jerking it back to see another skeleton, gliding down, slower this time. It too turned into a rapturous beauty, trailing cascades of silvery hair, her arms held out to him. She carried before her a channel of mist down

which she appeared to be descending, and it was trained on Sebastian, redoubling his serenity. As she swept by, her arm passed straight through him creating a shower of golden glitter. She too whispered to him, the same thing he was sure. One by one, they plummeted down, each as dazzling as the last, sprinkling luminous flashes whenever they flew through him, sighing in his ear as they passed. He realised they were chanting an identical phrase, but could not make it out. Once the last diaphanous figure had sped upwards, they turned and began dropping down together, their channels of mist directed at him. A horde of skeletons dive-bombing him and he had never felt so exhilarated in his whole life. As they transformed into the prettiest host he had ever seen he felt weak at the knees and thought he would positively faint with happiness. And then they reached him, sparks twinkling everywhere, the scene radiantly illuminated as they danced and drifted gracefully around him, swimming and swooping, banking and weaving, through the crepuscular air. Sebastian was laughing and crying in wonderment as channel upon channel was beamed at him, his head turning this way and that, eyes darting joyously, unashamedly feasting on their faultless forms. And he could hear them now they were all so close; grasp the message they were trying to convey.

‘Come to us, come to us, help us,’ they sang.

He nodded repeatedly, fat tears rolling down his cheeks.

‘I’ll come,’ he promised, finally finding his voice, ‘I’ll come, I’ll help.’

‘Yer wat was dat?’ asked his father, without looking up, ‘Help wid wat?’

‘Nothing,’ he replied shakily, trying to compose himself, ‘think I’ll walk on a bit.’

‘No dilly-dallying,’ said his father, ‘we don’t wanna be late fur Mass.’

Sebastian wandered along the path, thinking hard. He could have dismissed it

as an unusual dream had he not just heard the selfsame thing on the swing, and that voice telling the time. What was going on? What did it mean? A few hundred yards from where his father idled, he turned off. A narrow track led blindly into thick gorse, through which he bundled and elbowed his way to a small, grass-covered glade canopied by trees. He was looking for something, something he was sure only he had seen, that he had found within days of Flynn's death. Picking his way to the far corner, he moved aside the dense brambles. There it was, poking out of the earth. A red brick chimneypot, two feet high with a square neck scarcely big enough to fit a child through. He peered down it, but could see nothing, put his arm in, but could not reach the bottom. He rummaged for a stone and dropped it in, the expected thud sounding two seconds later. Crouching, he shovelled aside the soil at the base of the chimneystack, digging away at the more compact earth until hindered by tangled roots.

'Hellooooooo!' he hollered, his face to the opening.

He was convinced that somebody or something lived down there, raised on Irish folklore as he was. Late at night, by flickering candlelight, his mother would thrill him with tales jam-packed with the little people and mermaids, headless horsemen and ghost trains, banshees and devil dogs, their ghoulish silhouettes dashing across the walls as she spoke.

'Oh well, it'll have to wait,' he said, realising the time and hurrying back.

'Bejaysus, yer allus late,' his father moaned, 'yer'll be late fer yer own wedding.'

'Funeral,' corrected Sebastian.

'Ha? Yer wat was dat?'

'Nothing.'

With that they ambled home. As they climbed the stile at the edge of the woods, a squirrel scampered by clasping an acorn. Sebastian glanced back, following its progress as it ran up a tree. His gaze drifted up to meet a thin plume of smoke emerging from the foliage.

They collected his mother, piled into the Hillman Avenger and drove to church. They arrived habitually early; all the better to get a good pew, one that commanded uninterrupted views of the other parishioners entering, genuflecting, kneeling, praying and sitting. As his mother kept up a low commentary, pointing out the gossip-worthy, Sebastian looked at the other children. Unlike him, they went to Catholic school, his mother choosing to send her boys to a state school following a disagreement with the parish priest. All well and good, except that anti-Irish sentiment was at an all-time high following the Irish Republican Army's bombing campaign. The bell rang and everyone stood. Sebastian mumbled his way through Mass, carried along on dream-ease and incense, and then smiled appropriately as his mother exchanged barbed pleasantries on the church steps, his shy father shuffling nervous feet.

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Later that afternoon, as his father visited relatives, Sebastian sat reading comics, the house quiet except for the distant noise of his mother busying in the kitchen. A brief scratching sound made him look up. Thinking the cat was trying to get in he got up, before remembering she was curled up on the couch. He started to read again, but the same thing happened. It sounded like something brushing against objects, close yet muffled, and it appeared to be coming from the piano. Crossing to the upright, he swallowed hard and opened the lid. As it flipped back, it caught the bust of Beethoven, tipping it back on its base. The bust hovered precariously and may

have swung back into position but for Sebastian who, quick to the danger, swooped for it, only to send it tottering over the edge, his hands doggy paddling forlornly after. It hit the linoleum face first, severing the head.

‘Beethoven’s last movement,’ thought Sebastian before the rasp of the door handle reminded him that quick wits were no compensation for slow reflexes.

‘What’s going on?’ cried his mother, bursting into the room. ‘Bloody hell, you’ve decapitated Ludwig, you little swine.’ Sebastian flinched as she thrust an arm out. ‘Come here,’ she commanded, with an air of ominous calm.

His unwilling limbs moved towards her. Too slow for her liking, she leant forward to slap him. Missing him by inches she grabbed him instead, shaking him violently.

‘You did it on purpose, you brat!’ she yelled, slapping him twice, hard, on the legs.

‘I didn’t!’ he shouted defiantly.

‘Insolent cur!’ she screeched, her face assuming an air of the utmost incredulity.

Smack, smack, slap, slap, smack, smack, slap.

‘Ow, ow, ow,’ he whimpered, shielding his face.

‘You know you it did on purpose,’ she said, suddenly softening. She lifted his chin with her finger so their eyes met. ‘I know you did. It’s okay, just tell me you did.’

‘But I didn’t,’ he sniffed, shaking his head.

‘Despicable little freak,’ she screamed, exploding again, ‘why do you do it? Why do you do this to your poor mother? To see me have a breakdown, is it? To see your poor mother lying cold in her grave, is it? I’ll bloody swing for you, I will.’

Sebastian blubbered as an assortment of kicks and blows rained down.

‘You’re not my son!’ she hollered. ‘Get up those stairs before I kick you up them.’

She pushed him out, slamming the door before he had cleared it, catching his head between the door and jamb. He felt a searing pain in his temples and began to sob loudly.

‘Shut up, stop putting it on, there’s nothing wrong with you,’ she roared, ‘If you don’t shut up I’ll really give you something to blubber about, you little gobshite.’

Wailing inconsolably, he went to his room and lay across the bed.

‘I hate her,’ he muttered repeatedly as he rubbed his head gingerly, ‘I wish she was dead. I wish I could wish her dead. I wish I could make her die.’

He sat in the darkening room waiting for his father’s footfall, when seething indignation would dissolve into fear. His mother was an expert at winding his father into a simmering ball of fury and it was an agony of torments waiting for him. As the day finally gave up its light, he heard the door. Seconds later, his mother tore into the hall, yelling and carrying on. After a few excruciating moments, his father let out a blood-curdling roar and bound up the stairs. Sebastian shrank into a corner, steeling himself; no good hiding under the bed, fishing him out only infuriated his father more. He appeared at the door like a Maori warrior, face set in contorted anger, tongue fixed between teeth... belt secured between knuckles. As he held the buckle and let rip, Sebastian curled into a foetal position, remaining silent as the lashes rained down. As usual, it was exhaustion not subsiding anger that signalled the end. He heard his mother’s voice a few feet away. She had been watching.

‘Into the cellar.’

‘No, no, please, no.’

‘NOW!’

He got up slowly, careful to use any available space to keep as far from his glowering parents as possible. The expected cuffs did not materialize as he exited. A minute later, he was in the cellar, his father returning up the stone steps, light bulb in hand. As the bolt slid across, he sat on the second to bottom step and wept bitterly. He hated the dark and his parents had always made the most of it. It had gone on for years. When he was younger, he would scream blue murder, pummelling the door with his tiny fists. He had long since learned to endure in silence, so as to give no satisfaction to his tormentors. By screwing his eyes shut and remaining on the steps, never venturing beyond, he minimized his discomfort. Shivering with cold, he reflected on the day. It had started so promisingly and ended so awfully, with nothing but the prospect of school ahead. He felt utterly crushed. He inhaled the dank, fusty air, exhaling it slowly through his nostrils. Rubbing his aching body, he allowed his eyes to open. He was on the threshold of the larger room. It was pitch-black, yet he could still make out the door-less entrance to the other room, pulsing in absolute darkness. Petrified of it, he had not once been in, not ever, not even when he had gone down with fearless Flynn. As he shifted up a few steps, he heard his parents laughing at something on the television.

‘Don’t worry, it’s not long now,’ whispered a voice.

Sebastian screamed. It was the same voice from the night before.

‘No need to take on so, young master,’ it continued, louder now, ‘I’m here to help.’

‘Who are you?’ said Sebastian, buying time as he scuttled up the stairs.

‘I have orders to allow you one question today and you asked the time, remember?’ replied the voice, gently, ‘You can have two questions tomorrow, three the next, and so on.’

Convincing himself he was dreaming, Sebastian felt strangely calmed.

‘Why are you here?’ he asked as he inched back down the stairs. ‘What do you want?’

‘Two tomorrow, three the next, and so on,’ returned the voice.

‘Oh... yes, of course,’ said Sebastian, peering into the room, but seeing no one.

‘I must go now,’ said the voice, ‘you’re awake so I’m weak, you understand.’

Sebastian found himself making a very unusual request.

‘Don’t... don’t go.’

‘I have to, young master,’ replied the voice, ‘don’t worry, I’m always here. Oh, and I’ve brought something to cheer you up. Won’t last long, mind, you’re awake, see.’

‘Will you be back?’ asked Sebastian.

There was no reply. Whoever was there had gone. As Sebastian stared at the space the voice had occupied, he noticed a glint from the corner of his eye. He turned to see a pinkish glow coming from the smaller room and shrank back instinctively. The glow grew brighter casting a long shadow across the cellar, a grotesque silhouette of a tall, thin man with fizzing hair. Sebastian watched in horror as the shadow began to move, growing ever larger as its owner reached the entrance. Terrified, he raced up the stairs, his eyes glued to the shadow. He was about to beat the door down when the figure finally emerged; instead he stared in disbelief. Standing before him was a firework with little arms and legs, and a head from which a cloud of pink smoke erupted. And it was smiling at him. The firework gave a deep bow, its smoke changing to purple as it straightened up. It proceeded to cartwheel before him, changing colour with every turn. Over and over it flipped until it stopped at the foot of

the steps, grinning. Sebastian moved down cautiously.

‘What... sorry, I mean who are you?’ he enquired.

Winking, the firework jumped in the air and somersaulted, before bowing again. Sebastian giggled as the cascade of emerald green smoke subsided. The firework waddled back to the smaller room, beckoning to Sebastian, who followed it as far as the entrance. It made a dash for the far wall and to Sebastian’s delight ran straight up it, across the ceiling and down the other side, a plume of shimmering, multicoloured smoke streaming after it. Round and round it went, faster and faster till the plume became a continuous rainbow, illuminating the surroundings. For the first time in his life, Sebastian stepped into the room, no longer a place of fear, but a place of wonder. He stared wide-eyed at the magnificent circular rainbow, its shifting beauty captured in his saucer-sized pupils. Without warning, the firework vanished, plunging the room into darkness. Seconds later, he heard the cellar door being unlocked and his name called sweetly by his mother, who credited his blissful state that evening to her generous, forgiving nature.

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‘What on earth’s happening?’ he said to himself, as soon as he had escaped to his bedroom, ‘It’s incredible! That was no dream, no way. I was definitely awake. Wow, it was brilliant. A dancing firework! All these strange events, what do they all mean? And I don’t feel scared at all... well I did at first, but not now. You’d be so proud of me, Flynn,’ he added, realising he had not felt this happy for two years. ‘What next?’ he thought. ‘What’ll happen tonight when I go to sleep? Oh! I can hardly wait.’