

The Story Weavers of Bacalen

The Story Snatchers



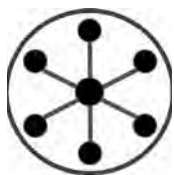
D.I.D Card
The Great Archives of Bacalen

Travellers:		
Destinations:		

A.J. Hill

Junior authors: M.E. Grace & C. Höök





*Protect your books' stories:
a warning to readers from
The Great Archives of Bacalen.*

The words on the spine and title page of this book are written in an ancient script from The Great Archives of Bacalen.

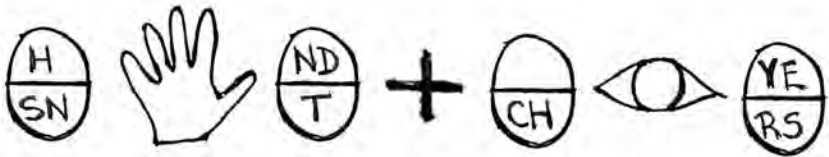
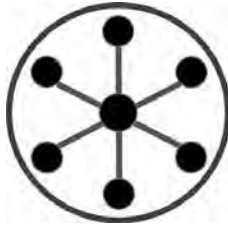
Diegesis Script will protect this story from the steals of Story Snatchers who prowl our world, searching for books so that they can change their stories.

If you are truly a friend of The Great Archives, you can use this script to save other stories from The Snatchers.

Translate your book's title into Diegesis Script, write it on a bookmark or strip of paper and place it between the book's pages each time you have finished reading. The Snatchers can't remove a bookmark touched with Diegesis Script. It will protect the story forever!

To translate a book title into Diegesis Script, you will need to decipher the words woven into the magical bookmarks that the Story Weavers find in this adventure.





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Junior Authors: M.E. Grace and C. Hook

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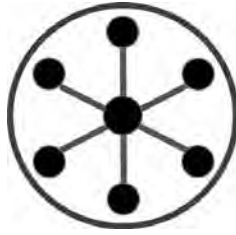
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The History of Stories

“Stories are everywhere;

And in everything;

In all that we do;

In all that we see.

They are why we learn.

They are why we question.

But,

If stories are lost;

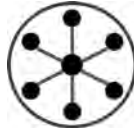
If stories are changed;

Then our lives;

Then our world;

Changes too.”

*(Diegesis, The First Great Storyteller
at The Great Archives of Bacalen)*



Chapter 5:

Why is a Storyteller important?

Meg and I ate our lunch in double quick time.

“What was that hypnosis trick you pulled on me?” I asked Meg as we shoved our lunch boxes into our bags. “Are you some sort of magician too?”

Meg shook her head. “No. It was a test—to see if you were a **Story Weaver**. The **Book** has many strange powers that help **Story Weavers**. When you held **The Book**, the story-suggestion stopped working on you. If you had started your **Story Weaver** training, then it wouldn’t have worked on you at all. We learn story-suggestion so that we can recover injured books from people. Once we have the book, the story-threads are removed and then repaired.”

“Does story-suggestion work on teachers if you’ve forgotten your homework book?” I asked

eagerly.

“Ha!” said Meg with a laugh. “Never dared try it! I don’t think The Great Storyteller would be pleased if you used it to trick teachers!”

I laughed too. “Thanks for the advice! I don’t need more detentions!”

Story-suggestion was similar to how heroes tricked their enemies in my favourite science fiction story! I wanted to learn to do it too. We hurried back to the library to join Miss Paige. We found her tidying her desk. She reached over to take her leather satchel from its hook on the wall.

“Just about ready,” she said, putting the woven satchel-strap over her shoulder.

My body started to tingle again. I somehow knew The Book was inside the leather bag. The satchel had the same circular pattern on the front. That book was magical. How had the letters been able to move and make rivers and snakes on its pages. How had it written those words? Why did it choose me? So many questions! *Notebook!*

“How do we get to The Great Storyteller,” I asked pulling a small, slightly worn, black and

red notebook from my pocket.

The notebook had a pen attached to it. I scribbled down some questions and information. I looked at the words I had printed on the page. My writing was not always easy to read. Spelling and handwriting were things that my teachers said I had to work on.

Dyslexics are not known for neat handwriting or for being amazing spellers!

Lucky The Book hadn't been looking for a Story Weaver with these talents! What will Mum and Dad say when they find out that I'm a Story Weaver? How will they react when they hear I skipped school to meet some stranger from goodness-knows-where?

"This way." Miss Paige interrupted my thoughts. She walked toward the Fire Exit Door at the side of the library. Are we going outside? Miss Paige stopped at the book return chute beside the Fire Exit Door.

Book chutes had always fascinated me. I loved the big brass handle on the chute at the town library. As a small child, Mum would lift me up so that I could pull down the handle and 'post' the books. It had always disappointed me when the book chute didn't operate during

opening hours!

The school's book return chute was not made of brass. It had a simple stainless steel cover with black lettering and a solid, black handle.

I watched as Miss Paige quickly opened and shut the chute three times. She opened the chute again and threw a small white card into it.

She reached for my hand. "Off we go."
Go? Where?

Before I knew what was happening, air rushed around us. I heard a noise like an enormous book being shut and somehow we were inside the chute.

I had never experienced such speed. In a blink we popped out of another book chute.

"Well here we are Samuel," said Miss Paige, giving a small sneeze.

"Wh-where are we?" I turned to Miss Paige and stared.

The rapid journey in the book chute had transformed the material of her dress into a dancing patchwork of words, book images and a collection of swirling, multi-coloured threads. She still wore her long, purple boots.

Bookworms must know some magic! Miss Paige brushed the dust from her dress. She didn't seem concerned at all!

"I must get that access chute properly cleaned before next trip," she muttered, writing a note in her diary.

"Next trip?" I asked.

"Of course," Miss Paige replied. "A dusty book return chute is terribly dangerous. You could be whisked away to the wrong destination completely! What's the matter?"

I opened the book chute and peered inside. "So did we really travel through a....? How did we travel through a....? It must be a **MAGICAL** book return chute!" I looked at Miss Paige and then at Meg who was standing beside her grinning.

"I suppose you could call it 'magical' if that helps you to understand the complex physics of book return chute travel," Miss Paige replied. "You look a bit green. Not travel sick? That could make riding the chutes very messy."

I shook my head. *Lucky!*

Meg laughed. "Fast enough for you?"

I stared at Meg. "What just happened?"

How could we have...? It's just not possible....”

Miss Paige snorted. “Everything is possible Samuel. You just need an imagination. Get used to using yours more often. This way.”

Our school librarian must have quite an imagination! *Amazing!*

Miss Paige led us into the room. I could feel the warmth coming from a fireplace, full of burning logs. Bookshelves lined the walls. There were no windows or doors. I looked up. The bookshelves stretched above me, higher and higher. They went on forever—shelf after shelf after shelf. My eyes strained to see where they stopped.

Wow! How did they get to those ones right at the top? Where's the ceiling?

I whispered to Meg, “I still don't understand how we can fit inside a book return chute. Did we shrink?”

Meg giggled. “Aunt Beatrix told you. It's just simple physics.”

“Simple for you.” My voice was slightly steadier than I felt after such a whirlwind trip. “You could have warned me.”

“No fun in that. Besides, you're a Story Weaver now. That's how we travel.”

“But **HOW** does it work?” I said in exasperation. “Is it an illusion?”

Miss Paige stopped and looked at me. “Well Samuel, given your present state of disbelief, I’ll just explain it from an operational perspective. **Come.**” She walked back to the book chute. The librarian grasped the handle. “First, open and close the book chute to make it big enough for the number of people travelling. **One, two, three.**”

Miss Paige took a small, white card from her satchel and turned it over. It was very colourful on the other side. She held it out for me to see. “Fill out the **D.I.D.** card (that’s a **Destination Identification** card) nice and clearly with whose riding and their destination and throw it in. **Easy.**”

She **WAS** serious! I stared at her and then at Meg.

“Easy for you,” I replied. “I’m still recovering from being thrown into a book return chute by my school librarian!”

Miss Paige and Meg smiled.

“Apologies Samuel,” said Miss Paige. “I’ll try to be less....spontaneous next time.”

Meg added, “Riding the chutes is how

we travel the world at The Great Archives of Bacalen. It makes it really easy to get together with the other Story Weavers. They don't all live in Australia you know."

The idea that Story Weavers lived in other places and the disappearance of stories was not just happening in our own town had never occurred to me.

"So are we in a hidden room underneath the school library?" I asked.

Miss Paige shook her head. "Samuel, we're at The Great Archives of Bacalen. This is The Great Storyteller's Library."

I looked up at the towering book shelves. My head was spinning again. "So you've actually taken me out of school..."

"Yes," nodded Miss Paige.

"Without my parent's permission."

"Yes."

"To a place that I've never heard of."

"Correct."

"Without a passport or travel visa."

"Technically yes."

"To meet a total stranger?" I looked at Miss Paige. "This is totally crazy! One day you're a school librarian—meek, mild, bookish—

and today you're acting like some secret agent who goes about abducting students!"

"Secret agent?" Meg laughed. "Meek and mild? Oh you don't know my aunt very well!"

Her aunt stared at me with wide eyes. "Samuel! I am a Bookworm and a librarian. I would never ABDUCT a student!" Her eyes began to twinkle behind her green lenses, "I would only ever BORROW them!"

That made me laugh too.

"Remember Samuel, you were looking for a book in the library that would take you on an adventure," continued Miss Paige, "and technically that is exactly what happened. You're a Story Weaver now and your life will never be quite the same again."

True!

I looked around the book-lined room. I could see the back of an enormous, old wooden chair. There was a carved circle in the middle of the chair's back and the letter 'B' had been placed in its centre. 'B' for books! So many books!

"This way," said Miss Paige.

We walked towards the front of the chair and stood on a worn circular rug. Its colours

were fading. The chair had stout wooden arms and very solid legs, all covered in beautiful carvings. The brown leather seat was well padded. It would make a comfortable reading chair but it was empty. Would The Great Storyteller magically appear on it? Were the other Story Weavers here too?

I nudged Meg, “Where do the other Story Weavers come from?”

“Belgium, New Zealand, Holland and Ecuador,” Meg replied. “Don’t worry, Story Weavers can understand each other—no translators are needed!”

Interesting! Before I could ask any more questions, one of the bookshelves began to slide to one side. *Brilliant!*

A hidden door in the bookshelves! Kate would love to see this! I was really visiting a magical place! A part of me felt guilty that Kate was missing out. Perhaps I could bring her here one day.

A figure wearing very large, round, thick glasses entered the room in which we stood. It was difficult to see the rest of their face behind the strange spectacles—like thick magnifying glasses over each eye.

The strange lenses continually changed colour—pale-yellow, soft blue, transparent rose-pink and all the colours in between. I tried not to stare.

Miss Paige walked briskly in her purple boots, across to the person and held out The Book. They took The Book from Miss Paige and placed it somewhere within the shrouds of their cloak.

Their clothes are made of the same brown material as The Book's cover! Does The Book belong to the figure? Is this The Great Storyteller?

“We have brought the new Story Weaver to meet you Spinner,” said Miss Paige. “The Book has found him—called to him in my library. Now we will be able to find the story-threads.”

The figure turned to me and removed the strange glasses. The person was an old man. His eyes radiated kindness and the lines on his face were filled with years of knowledge and wisdom. He produced a multi-coloured cloth and slowly cleaned his glasses. His pale blue eyes stared into mine.

“Welcome to the Great Archives of Bacalen. I am Spinner, The Great Storyteller.

What is your name **Story Weaver**?”

I didn't feel at all shy. **Spinner's** deep voice was so welcoming and calm.

“My name is **Samuel**, sir.” I cleared my throat. “I am not sure exactly why I'm here but I do want to help. Am I old enough to be a **Story Weaver**?”

Spinner looked kindly at me. “**Story Weavers** are always children, **Samuel**. They have the most active imaginations. When a **Story Weaver** reaches adulthood, a search is undertaken across the world to find a gifted child to replace them. A child who has reached their tenth birthday.”

How incredible that I've been chosen! I'd like to meet the **Story Weaver** I've replaced!

“The grown **Story Weaver** chooses to become a **Storyteller** or a **Bookworm**. Then they leave here to further explore the world. Some return to **The Great Archives** to work and teach. The most gifted with stories usually become authors in your world. Some are librarians and others use their talents for stories and creativity to make quite extraordinary contributions to the world. Their names can be found in the history books across

the world.”

There’s so much I don’t know about being a **Story Weaver**. If they grew up to be extraordinary people, then I’ll be trying to do my best. Always!

“What does a **Story Weaver** do here?” I asked.

Spinner continued, “**Story Weavers** do many things. They have gifts that locate lost or stolen story-threads. They work with the **Bookworms** to reweave the stories. We bring these stories back to life, so that they can live on and be part of people’s futures. It will not take long for you to understand what goes on here.”

“Is this your library, sir?” I asked, looking up again at the towering shelves that surrounded us.

“I suppose it is, **Samuel**, but it is also a library that serves the world. The **Great Storytelling Library** is part of The **Great Archives of Bacalen**. From here, The **Great Storyteller** is able to guide **Bookworms**, **Storytellers** and **Story Weavers** with knowledge and wisdom. With these ancient glasses, I can read the threads of stories that have become

blurred or have lost their essence. Within this room we keep safe, the most ancient of the world's stories and the most valuable of all story-threads."

Spinner took a deep breath and slowly rubbed his hands together. I looked around with wonder at the book-lined room. My mind filled with more questions!

"Now Samuel!" Spinner clapped his hands once and moved to sit in the high-backed armchair. "There is much for you to learn."

Some of the carvings on the surface of the wooden chair began to softly glow. I could just make out their shapes. There were various letters mixed with symbols: eyes and hands, crosses and ovals, dots and dashes, suns and something that looked like a type of insect.

What do the symbols mean? Do they tell a story? Is it a magical chair? Like in the story I had read with Kate—about two children and a chair that grew wings, and then flew them to new lands!

"Time is running out," said Spinner. "You must listen carefully to all that we tell you."

The symbols stopped glowing. I blinked a few times and looked back at The Great

Storyteller. He was staring at me.

“Beatrix, or Miss Paige as you know her, has told you some of the story. The other Weavers will be arriving shortly. Using your gifts, the six of you will be able to defeat The Snatchers and bring back the poached stories.”

The symbols on the chair were forgotten when I heard the word ‘gifts’.

Strange! What were these gifts?

“I don’t think that I have gifts of any kind, sir. Do you mean a super power that will locate the missing stories? Are we ‘superheroes’?”

“Wait until the other Weavers arrive, Samuel, and then you will all learn just how important your gifts are to the world,” replied Spinner. “These gifts are so special that they will save superheroes.”

What? This sounded like another riddle! Being a Story Weaver was so exciting but it also meant being very patient!

