

RELIC HAMILTON

GENIE HUNTER

THE DOOR OF THE DEAD



JOSEPH COELHO



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For Caroline – wishing you all you wish yourself

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WALKER
BOOKS

THE HERMITIC SODALITY OF GENIE HUNTERS

Leader: Professor Laurence Latimer

Age: 63

(I don't mean to be rude, but that's so old!)

Special skill: Using books to learn how to wield spells and chants to entrap evil genies

Favourite saying: "That book belongs in a library!"

Favourite food: Curried goat
(But it's got to be done right.)



Tech specialist: Doctor Raphaela Gillan

Age: 27 (But sometimes she acts like a kid.)

Special skill: Designing and making the most incredible gadgets like the Sodality's high-tech jet, the *Aladdin*

Favourite saying: "I've made this little thing for you..."

Favourite food: She says it's two things - her dad's tatties and neeps, and her mum's garlic and olive oil pasta. Often at the same time.



Doctor and field agent: Rania Latimer

Age: 13 (She's only a little bit older than me.)

Special skill: Using her medical know-how to heal any injury or malady, magical or otherwise

Favourite saying: "Hold still,
this is going to hurt."

Favourite food: Genie bread - it squirms!



Wielder of the Lamps and agent: Me, Relic

Age: 12 (and a half, if you include the time
I was trapped in the past)

Special skill: Using my magical
sprite lamps to defeat evil genies

Favourite saying: Now that I'm sort of a
superhero, I need something cool to say when
I use my sprite lamps ... I'm working on it.

Favourite food: Shepherd's pie ... with spice



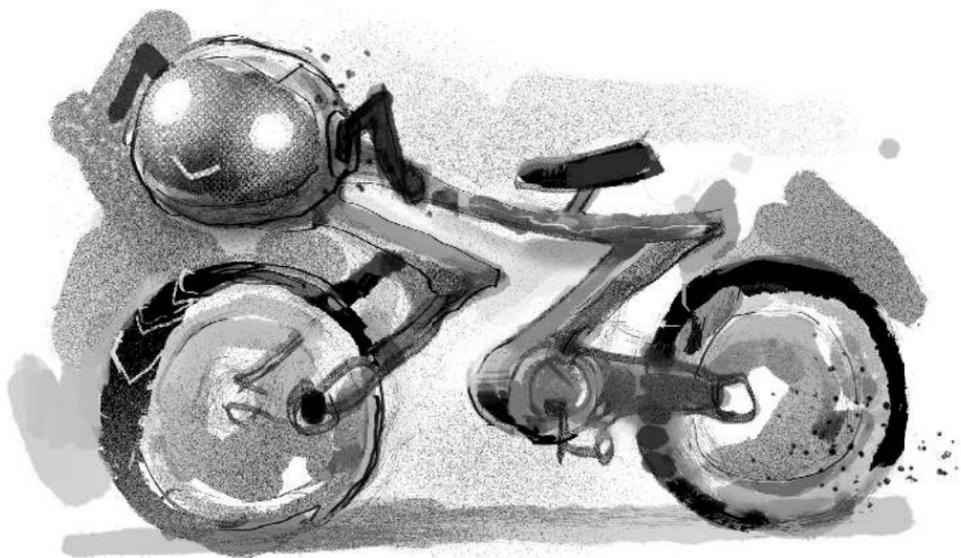
Bike/AI agent/robot: Humphrey

Age: 2 (Raphaela only built him recently,
so he's a baby, really.)

Special skill: Rewriting code and
going at break-neck speeds

Favourite saying: "Well, I never..."

Favourite food: He says electricity from
solar and wind tastes different.



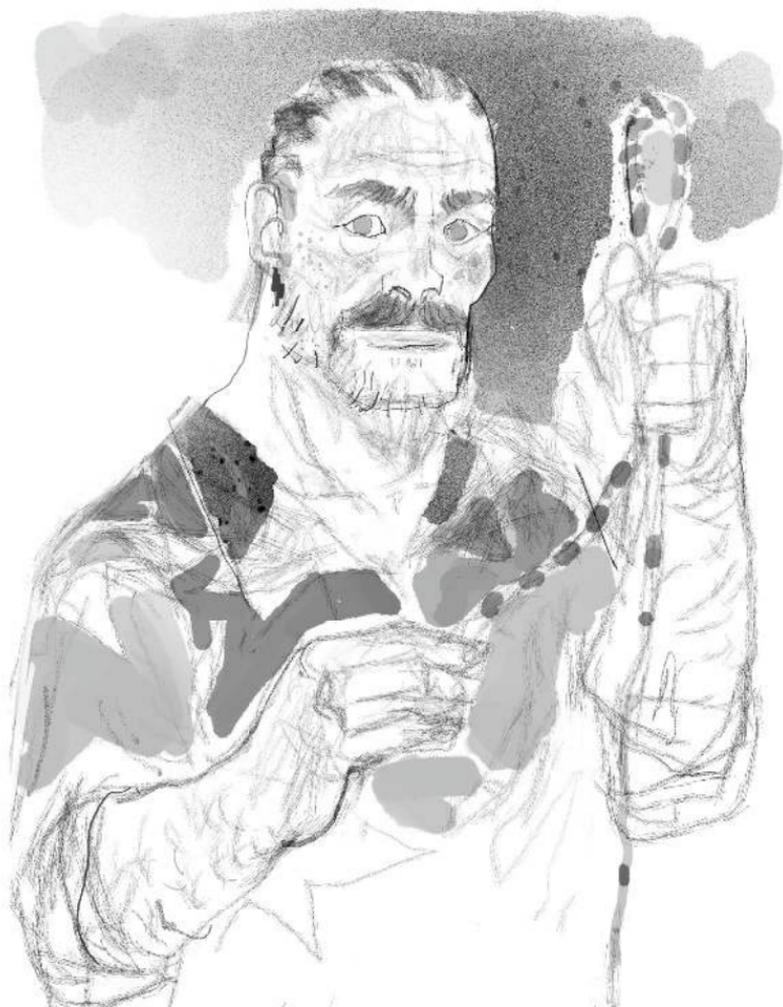
Grandfather and agent: Carl Hamilton

Age: 65

Special skill: Keeping his life as a member of the Sodality secret from me for his whole life!!!

Favourite saying: “Yu likkle but yu talawa.”

Favourite food: Healthy morning shake with oats, dates, turmeric and ginger - he calls it his tonic.



MY SPRITE LAMPS

Lamp 1

Sprite inside: Gamber. Small and furry with
a see-through chest, where you can
see his heart beating

Special skill: Knowing
when I need a friend



Lamp 2

Sprite inside: Lakshmi - jaguar-headed, sword-wielding warrior with four arms

Special skill: Using her four-armed sword dance to cut down evil genies



Lamp 3

Sprite inside: Bubbledon - a bright green smiling energy shell

Special skill: Giving me the power to create an energy force-field to protect me and others



Lamp 4

Sprite inside: Gandor - a huge black bird
of prey with crushing talons

Special skills: Eagle flight and eagle sight



Lamp 5

Sprite inside: Unknown

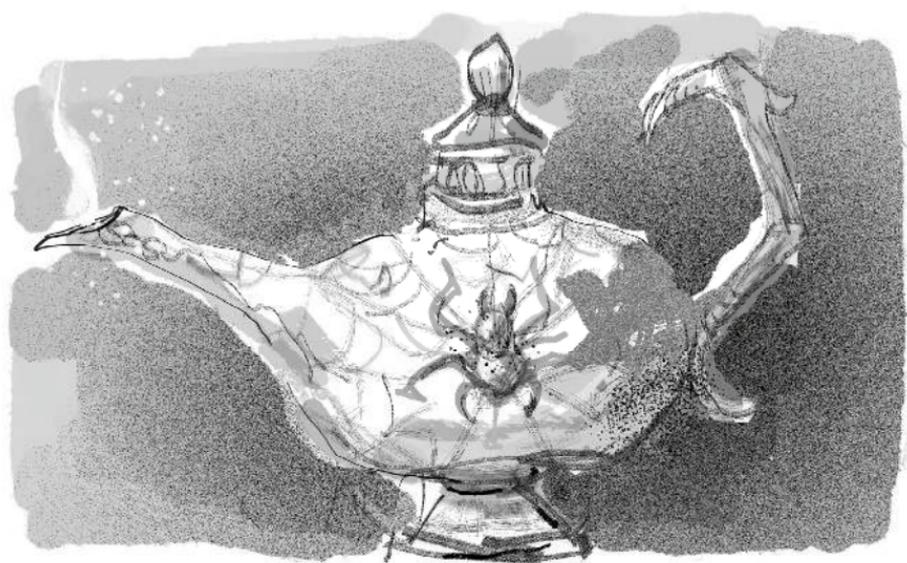
Special skills: Unknown



Lamp 6

Sprite inside: Unknown

Special skills: Unknown



CHAPTERS

1 – Searching	20
2 – Cells	29
3 – Attack of the Trees	34
4 – Swapping Spaces	40
5 – A New Threat	44
6 – A Tentacle in the Shadows	51
7 – A Tiny Book	53
8 – Breaking Into the Castle	57
9 – The Bear-o-pus	66
10 – In a Land of Giants	71
11 – A Tiny Tweak	76
12 – Yumi	79
13 – Grub!	90
14 – The Third Floor	98
15 – “Keep It Hidden”	103
16 – Scanning for Danger	116
17 – Connected	121
18 – Hunt for the Archivist	130
19 – An Explosion of Wishes	136
20 – Caterpillar-Coaster	140

21 – Team Up!	150
22 – Upload	159
23 – Pixelated	170
24 – Not Gnomes... Corbeli	173
25 – The Junk Online	177
26 – Next Stop: Edinburgh	184
27 – Ghost Train	190
28 – Deadly Algorithms	197
29 – The Search for Papusa	201
30 – “It’s What He Told Me to Wish For”	206
31 – The Door of the Dead	212
32 – The Archivist	216
33 – No Longer Alone	226
34 – Useful Rubbish	235
35 – The Lord of Bones	239
36 – A Guardian’s Return	244
37 – Reunited	247
38 – Buried in Bones	249
39 – “You Can’t Hold Me!”	253
40 – Crunch!	257
41 – Time to Feast	260
42 – To Gyft Bridge	265



PART ONE



1

SEARCHING

Relic

*I surf the internet,
searching.*

*Looking for clues, hints and leads,
searching.*

*Finding black holes and dead ends,
searching.*

*Knowing that I will find Taya
out there somewhere.*

*If I just keep
searching.*

“**R**elic ... Relic ... you good, Relic?” Grandfather’s voice is rich and comforting and pulls me out of my search. I’m so relieved to have him back. I didn’t realize how lost I was without him. How lonely and

scared I was when he was in that coma. If it wasn't for the Hermitic Sodality of Genie Hunters becoming my new family, I don't know what I would have done.

“Put the computer down for a while. Come tell your grandfather what I have missed.”

I'm sitting on the end of his bed in the medical wing of the Hermitic Sodality of Genie Hunters HQ. It's hidden beneath the Institute of Archaeology in Gordon Square, London.

“You want me to tell you what happened again?”

“Yes. Again, Relic. There's a lot I've got to get straight in my head. There are a lot of puzzle pieces I have to put in place. Now tell me one more time what happened with you and Ravenna.”

“What's the last thing you remember?”

“We were in our shop, Anansi Antiques. I knew you were in the basement sorting the stock and I felt something wasn't right. I got that tingle I used to feel when I was a young agent for the Hermitic Sodality of Genie Hunters. I ran down to the basement and I see that Genie King, Ravenna, getting ready to suck out all your hope energy. So, I stand in the way and then ... all is black.”

“He attacked me and you got in the way,” I say. “You saved me, Grandfather, and ended up in a coma, and then this happened.”

I point to the six lamps hovering around my waist and tap Gamber’s lamp. Orange smoke wafts out and Gamber materializes on Grandfather’s bed.

“This one is Gamber, right?” asks Grandfather, as he tickles him under the chin and strokes the see-through fur on his chest. It’s amazing you can see his heart beating with a bright blue light.

“Yeah, that’s right. You’re remembering. And I have three others in these lamps that have activated,” I say, running my fingers over the unique carvings on the surface of each sprite lamp. Four of them are glowing with an inner light.

“And they just float like that around your waist?” asks Grandfather, smiling.

“Yeah, they are always with me, Grandfather. I can’t get rid of them – and I wouldn’t want to. When I use them, they give me super powers.”

Grandfather smiles, but I can see that he’s worried.

“Ah, yes ... that’s right ... you found Ravenna’s prison. Those six sprite lamps were supposed to act

like prison guards keeping him in his lamp. But you don't know what sprites are in these two lamps," he says, tapping the lamps that have not yet activated and narrowing his eyes.

The box that I found containing Ravenna's lamp and my six sprite lamps flashes up on the screen on the wall of the medical wing. In walks Raphaela, typing at a screen that is implanted into her wrist. She's dyed her hair a brilliant purple. It's freshly shaved on one side and I'm sure she's added another piercing.

"That's what we don't understand, Carl... What was a lamp containing Ravenna, the evil king of genies, doing in your basement?"

Raphaela taps at her wrist screen again, and pictures of Ravenna's lamp turn and twist on the screen; its handle and spout look like muscled arms. Seeing it again makes my head ache.

"I tell you, Raphaela, I do not know," says Grandfather. "D'you think I'd let my grandson anywhere near that thing? D'you think I'd have hidden it in the shop knowing the danger? No. I didn't hide it there but I think I know who did."

Grandfather goes silent then and gives me

that look I know so well. That sad look. That I'm-thinking-about-your-parents look.

“Mum,” I say. And he nods.

We hear the Professor's tapping cane from the corridor before he strides in. He has several files in his hands, which he tosses on to Grandfather's bed.

“Sorry, Carl. I pulled these files. They are everything that Evelyn and Abhiyu worked on whilst they were with us.”

Hearing my parents mentioned by the Professor feels weird, not least because I never knew they were genie hunters, never knew my grandfather was one. Genie hunting has long been a family secret, and I was the only one that did not know. The Professor pulls out some papers.

“I have Evelyn and Abhiyu's last assignment here ... I'm sorry, Relic. This must all be very confusing for you. Perhaps we should pick this up later?”

“No,” I say. “Please. I like hearing about them ... I want to know everything.”

The Professor turns to my grandfather with that is-the-boy-ready? look and Grandfather nods.

“He's no longer my little Relic. He's now the

‘Wielder of the Lamps’ and, I hear, a pirate.”

Grandfather still can’t believe that I spent all those months trapped in the past with a pirate crew, all whilst he was still in a coma.

“Very well,” says the Professor. “I think you’ll find this interesting. Your parents, Relic, were following a lead – something they had heard about genie lamps and how they work.”

Raphaela starts tapping again and more images show on the screen of diagrams and equations and blurred images.

“As you all know, the lamps were built by genie kind, the good ones at least, to imprison the evil amongst them. Lamps are hugely powerful objects that make the evil genie within compelled to grant the wishes of any human that rubs their lamp. We know they are risky things to use. Every time an evil genie is out of its lamp and granting wishes, it gains a little bit of power. If a human makes more than three wishes, the genie might just gain enough power to escape their lamp. That is why all lamps come inscribed with the warning: ‘Make no more than three wishes.’ This much we know from genie

lore collected by the Sodality over centuries. But we have never fully understood how the lamps work, not even today with all our technology. For centuries, we believed genies were shrunk down by the power of the lamps and actually lived inside them, but our theories have moved on from that. Now we believe that the lamps act as portals that send the evil genies to a prison dimension. When a lamp is rubbed, the genie is temporally transported into our world to grant a wish before the lamp transports it back to that prison realm. Your parents, Relic, had heard that the prison realm had been discovered and was at risk of being destroyed.”

“And if it was destroyed, then all the evil genies would be released in one go,” I say, realizing that before my parents disappeared, they had been working on something huge.

“I didn’t know the details,” says Grandfather. “But I knew something was up. Evelyn and Abhiyu were scared. I remember pictures and sketches of that box you found, Relic, the box containing Ravenna’s lamp and your Sprite lamps. They didn’t want me to worry so they kept things from me and

I'm ashamed to say, I didn't push for answers. I had just lost Relic's grandmother. I wasn't on top form. I should have asked more questions."

"This is not your fault, Carl," says the Professor, rubbing the bridge of his nose. "None of us realized how serious their task was. We all thought it was just rumour until they disappeared."

"Do you think they got too close to the truth – discovered something they should not have?" I ask, trying to stop the tears prickling behind my eyes.

"More than that, Relic. It's clear to me now that they did find something: they found Ravenna's lamp and your sprites and they hid them in the basement of our shop. I should have known. I should have done something." Grandfather closes his eyes tight, and I can tell the sadness is building in him, too.

Rania glides into the medical wing, all blue and purple hair and purple skin and blue horns "You're all crowding my patient."

She looks at me and I realize I'm staring and grinning like an idiot. I quickly look away, hoping she doesn't notice.

"Carl hasn't long come out of a coma. He needs to

regain his strength,” she says.

She’s so amazing. I can’t believe she’s my age and totally a trained doctor.

“Ah, Laurence, your daughter looks after me well,” says Grandfather. “Thank you, Rania, but I feel like I’ve been in this bed too long.”

“You will be out of here soon enough but, for now, I want you all out. I might only be thirteen but I am still his doctor, and you will listen to me. Doctor’s orders.”

“Sorry, Rania,” says the Professor. “You’re quite right. We’ll pick this up in the morning. We all need time to think and digest.”