



la Bussola



LUKE BLACK

# KEVIN & THE MIDDLE WORLD

DISCOVER THE LIMITS  
OF OUR KNOWLEDGE



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## CHAPTER I

# KEVIN'S LIFE

Kevin was what could be called a normal twelve-year-old boy.

He had brown hair and green eyes. He was a little tall for his age and slightly thin. He loved being in the company of his friends and playing sports, especially swimming which he had been practicing for several years. He also liked reading books on fantasy, adventure and ancient mysteries. He loved to identify with the characters who went on heroic adventures and lived their lives to the full extent possible.

Born into a well-off Oxfordshire family, Kevin lived with his mother in a lovely, quiet two-story house in Kidlington, a few miles from Oxford.

His father, William, had passed away when he was only seven years old. He had died in a terrible traffic accident while he was abroad, in Washington D.C., participating as a speaker at a conference on ancient civilisations. Or at least that





was what his mother had always told him. His father, descendant of a Scottish noble family, had been a history teacher at the University of Oxford. He was one of the greatest experts of ancient civilisations, in particular of the Egyptian civilisation. He also had a particular interest in pre-Columbian cultures, for this reason he was often invited to participate in various congresses and events around the world. Like the time that William brought the whole family with him during a conference to Cairo, where they could admire the ancient pyramids and the treasures of the Egyptian museum. It was a very happy and enjoyable vacation for Kevin and his parents.

The period after the accident had been very difficult and sad for Kevin and his mother. Suddenly their life had changed and, although his mother had done everything to make the loss less painful, Kevin suffered greatly from the absence of his father and often, especially in the evening, cried secretly in his bedroom so as not to create further distress to his mother.

Kevin perfectly remembered the night before the accident, when he had spoken with his father on the phone for the last time. Even today, despite several years having passed, he regretted not telling him how much he loved him. At the same time, he imagined that his father was looking down on him from heaven, protecting him constantly. His father certainly wouldn't have wanted him to continue to be sad and so Kevin tried to remove these thoughts from his mind.

Kevin's mother, Lilly, was a manager at a famous British multinational company. She sold medical devices and was often out of work at clients, hospitals and medical trade-fairs. She was a very sensitive, sweet, outgoing and

interesting woman. She was full of energy and tireless, despite her small build. She was not very tall, with a slim physique and short blonde hair and blue eyes.

After the premature disappearance of her husband, she had become very anxious and protective of Kevin. She always treated Kevin with love, although recently she had been paying more and more attention to her career. Recently, on returning from a business trip and not finding Kevin at home, she had immediately thought that something serious must have happened and so alerted half the city, calling neighbours and friends, only to find out that he was at a friend's house, who usually looked after him when she was away. Another time, after Kevin had fallen off his bicycle and slightly bruised his knee, she immediately called a neighbour, an elderly retired doctor, to ask him for urgent help, even though the injury was evidently nothing serious.

Although, in the mind of a child what seemed like many years had passed since his father's death, the memory of his father was still strong and everything in the house seemed to remain the same as before that tragic event. In particular, his father's study had remained intact, the bookcase with all the books and the desk were exactly as he had left them the last time he left it. The study was very attractive, with a tasteful dark wooden floor and the large desk and bookcase that gave a feeling of majesty but at the same time made the room gloomy and a little spooky.

Only Kevin sometimes came in to take a book from a shelf and sit on his father's leather armchair in front of the majestic desk. Reading those books was a way to still feel close to his father and also to get to know him better,

to understand what his favourite books and interests were and, why not, to share them with his schoolmates.

Kevin spent his days, like other kids his age going to school, going out and playing football with friends, participating in swimming training, playing video games and he also loved reading his father's books. He attended school in his small town and had been at Gosford Hill Secondary School for a year.

His best friends were Dave and Kelly. Dave was a very friendly, chubby boy of average height with light brown, neatly brushed hair and blue eyes. His father was a doctor and had recently been elected mayor of the town for the second time, while his mother had a very nice flower shop where Kevin's mother loved to buy flowers to give a touch of colour to their living room. Kelly was a pretty, dark-haired girl with green eyes and she was always smiling. She was not like the other girls of her age. She enjoyed being in the company of Kevin and Dave and she was very often better at sports and also at other activities that typically require strength and resistance. She was the daughter of a mechanic and a maths teacher. She had a particular passion for astronomy and spent a lot of time, especially on warm summer evenings, observing planets and stars.



## CHAPTER II

# THE SIGNAL

It was now late October. It was a warm, dry day, an abnormal autumn day in the town of Kidlington.

That morning Kevin woke up like every day at seven. Even though he wasn't going to school because he was ill, he wanted to have breakfast with his mother anyway before she went to work. At the sound of the alarm clock he opened his eyes and immediately noticed the delicious smell of croissants being prepared by his mother down in the kitchen. He thought, «how nice, a French breakfast today!» His mother loved cooking and she varied all the meals of the day by preparing typical dishes from countries all over the world. Putting on his slippers, Kevin left his room, went down the stairs and went to sit in the kitchen where his mother was finishing preparing breakfast.

«Oh, Kevin, you're already awake. How do you feel today?» his mother said kissing him on the forehead.

«Yes, mum, I got out of bed as soon as I smelled the croissants! I think I feel a bit better» Kevin replied.

«Well then, let's start eating, otherwise they'll get cold!» replied Lilly.

Kevin didn't need any more encouragement and started immediately.

«They're excellent mum, as always!» he said, as he bit into the first croissant.

«Thanks, Kevin. As you're not feeling well I thought it'd be nice to prepare your favourite breakfast». Kevin smiled.

After a while, his mother got up from the table and picked up Kevin's school backpack from the ground to tidy it away. As she was moving it she noticed that there were several non-school books inside and asked, «Did you get these in the school library?» Kevin shook his head and, after swallowing, said, «They're Dad's. I took them from his bookcase».

Immediately silence fell, the loss of the father still caused them both a lot of pain and every time he came up it was always the same.

His mother asked herself, «Will we ever get over this loss?»

Then, turning to Kevin, in a gentle tone she said, «Once you've finished reading them, put them back in their place, okay?» Immediately afterwards she kissed him on the forehead again and went on, «Now, I have to go to work. Be good at home and rest so this bad cold passes and tomorrow you can go back to school with your friends. See you tonight, my darling!»

She put on her coat, picked up her bag and left the house.

Kevin then stayed home from school because of an annoying cold.

Later, while playing his favourite video game, he heard the doorbell ring. It was Anthony, the postman, whom he knew very well because he was also his swimming instructor.

«Hi Kevin», greeted Anthony.

«Hi, what a surprise!» Kevin replied.

«I guessed I'd find you at home so I thought I'd stop by to say hello. I noticed yesterday you weren't in swimming training and your friends told me that you weren't feeling well. How are you today?»

«I'm better. I had a bit of a cold, now it's gone, but as a precaution my mother kept me home one more day»..

Anthony, who seemed in a hurry, replied, «Ah, I understand... I have the mail here. I think, today there's a letter for you too. Now, I'll leave you, because it's nearly ten o'clock and, you know, if Mrs Butter doesn't get her post by ten o'clock, she gets crazy! See you soon! bye».

«Bye Anthony, and thanks!»

Before leaving, Anthony handed Kevin the letter. As he was closing the front door, Kevin could hear Mrs Butter calling Anthony from her doorway at the end of the street, «Tony, always having a chat! That's why you're always late! You shouldn't work like that! When I was young and I first started working they taught me that you shouldn't be distracted. Ah, people these days don't work like they used to».

Mrs Butter was very old and, perhaps for this very reason, strongly tied to her habits. She always tended to complain about the postman's lateness, even when he was actually on time. This morning was no different but everyone was so used to her ways that people tolerated her and even smiled at her outbursts.