

TAMATHIEL

by Daniel Hart

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Further information on Tamathiel can be found on the internet at:
<http://www.tamathiel.com>.

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Chapter 1.

Dan left his house in the usual manner, hair uncombed and a slice of toast in his mouth. He mounted his bike and peddled hard for the newsagents; if he was late again for his paper-round Rob would fire him. He jumped off his bike and flew into the shop.

It was dark and musty, Dan looked for his employer. The newspapers were in the clear plastic box by the counter where they were always kept. He was about to call out when Rob's fuzzy black mop came through the door from the back.

"Sorry, I'm late Mr. Taylor," he apologised to the man behind the counter.

"Aggh, there you are Smith, here's your bag." An orange sack was exchanged and Dan shouldered it. "Old Mrs. Beckett doesn't want hers today. Oh, and I've had complaints from Mr. Bridge about you boy. He keeps ringing in to tell me you throw his paper in the water sprinkler." Dan defended himself instantly.

“It’s an accident Mr. Taylor, I swear. It’s not my fault that his sprinkler gets in the way all the time.” All the while he was saying this he thought about how he could do it without getting caught, and smiled. “It’s not funny boy, one more complaint and you won’t get paid. No, scratch that, you’ll be fired,” Rob said, walking into the back of the shop where a TV was showing the 8:30 news. Dan looked at the TV and noticed the time.

“8:30!” he said in surprise, “bye Mr. Taylor, I’m going to be late for school.” Dan ran out of the shop and rode his bike down The Old London Road.

The race had begun, the race between Dan and time. He peddled like lightning as he threw the newspapers into the front gardens, American film style. The third house Dan came to was Mr. Bridge’s; the boy picked out the paper, looked, and threw. The take off was perfect, the flight exceptional, and the landing brilliant. The rolled up front page was soaked. Dan celebrated as he saw it land, and he peddled off before Mr. Bridge could catch him.

As he threw the papers for the next few houses the sunlight shone off something in the air. Dan looked; a short-bladed sword revolved through the air, but never stuck in the ground as the newspaper took its place and hit the lawn with a soft thud. Dan’s face was a mask of surprise as he saw this odd occurrence. He faced the way he was peddling and twisted his

handle bars to direct his bike around an old lady walking her dog. She turned and stared at him through her glasses that magnified her eyes so they looked like fly's eyes. Dan shouted a hasty apology before carrying on. By the time he had reached school he had five minutes to spare. He locked his bike up in the shed and went to find his best friend Joe. While he was walking through the playground he thought of the incident with the newspapers turning into knives. Five times it had happened. He eventually blamed it on lack of sleep and the excitement of the holidays coming up, and so walked off to registration.

Becky poured acid into the test-tube, onto the copper, and swirled it gently. Slowly the liquid turned green and frothed up over the top onto the desk, the woodwork of the bench slowly melting away. A worried expression crept across her face. The solution was meant to turn a yellow colour. No one else seemed to notice, however, so she wasn't worried. She looked over at Mel, her best friend, if anyone knew what to do it would be her.

"Mel, psst, Mel, come here," ordered Becky.

"What is it?" asked Mel, her long blonde hair tied back and tucked into her school blouse.

"I don't know, the experiment, it's gone wrong," admitted the dark haired Becky. Mel came over to help her friend and frowned at the solution.

“Sorry Bex, I can’t help you, ask Sir,” Mel suggested. Becky went into a state of despair.

“I can’t tell Sir, he’ll kill me, you know what he’s like. He hates me!” Tears started creeping down the girl’s face as she said this, swirling the test-tube vigorously all the time.

“No he doesn’t.”

A mighty explosion sounded as the test-tube in front of the two girls shattered. Green liquid erupted like a fountain, staining the ceiling, and covering the floor. Mel began to walk away before a voice like thunder crashed around the room.

“REBECCA ANDREWS, WHAT DO YOU CALL THAT?” The huge voice of Mr. White erupted from his tiny posture. Saliva shot across the room and hit a boy on the cheek, who cringed and recoiled.

“It’s mine Sir,” Mel said quietly, sticking up for her friend.

“DON’T LIE TO ME GIRL, THAT IS NOT WHERE YOU SIT, AND IS NOT WHERE YOU ARE MEANT TO BE, GO BACK TO YOUR PLACE, BEFORE I HAVE YOU IN DETENTION,” the man bellowed, his balding head now a bright shade of beetroot. His eyes pulsed and his temples throbbed as he stopped to catch his breath.

“AS FOR YOU REBECCA, YOU WILL SEE ME AT THE END OF THIS LESSON, DO I MAKE MYSELF ABSOLUTLEY CLEAR GIRL?”

“Crystal, Sir,” she said before running out of the room in floods of tears.

Luke sat bored in his French lesson, he glued his eyes to his book but his mind was elsewhere. He was aware of his teacher droning on in the background, but to him, it was only interference in his mind, like the crackling you receive on a bad telephone line. Luke’s thoughts suddenly snapped back to his classroom as his name was called out by his teacher.

“Well?” prompted Mrs. Roberts again.

“Sorry, Miss, can you repeat that?” asked the young boy, totally confused. He was aware of the thirty pairs of eyes fixed on him, and he didn’t want to embarrass himself any more than he had already.

“I said, for those of you who weren’t listening, what did the note say that Mr. Lenoir received through his door?” Mrs. Roberts repeated emphasizing each word.

“I, I don’t know, sorry,” said Luke sheepishly. He was meant to be following a text of French fiction, but he had slipped into a daydream.

“That’s the fourth time this week Luke, do I have to phone your mother and tell her you have not been concentrating in my lessons?” threatened his teacher, her eyes unblinking staring straight at the boy.

“No Miss,” came Luke’s reply.

“Right then, now, can you read the note and translate it please? On page 136.” Luke looked at his book and realised that he was some pages behind, and as a

result of trying to turn the pages too fast he dropped his book. The girl on the table next to him giggled and Luke blushed furiously and stared at her.

“What?” Luke inquired aggressively. The girl instantly stopped and tears started to well in her eyes.

“It says, Mr. Lenoir ... 60 Euros ... tomorrow ... or death,” said Luke in a broken translation, saying what he could understand.

“Right, good,” said Mrs. Roberts, pleased by his answer.

Joe concentrated hard on the circuit board and components in front of him, the soldering iron in his right hand trembled as someone behind him tripped and nudged his elbow, apologising instantly, but it was too late. Joe’s right arm had shot forward, stabbing his left wrist at the thumb joint. The boy let out a scream of pain as the soldering iron fell to the floor, his right hand clutching the wound. Before Joe knew it, his entire class and teacher, who was carrying a first aid bag, was crowded round him. He didn’t care though, all he wanted to do was to stay on his knees, rocking back and forth, trying to soothe the pain by letting out piggish grunts.

“Pass your hand here, Joe, and let me have a look,” said the teacher, pulling at the injured wrist and staring at it closely,

“Hmm, stick it under cold water, try to rinse out the solder, and cool that hand down; it’s red hot.” The

boy struggled to his feet and with much effort turned the tap and cooled his burn.

“Marcus, will you accompany Joe to the medical room, hopefully they can provide him with some ice,” the teacher said picking out one of the boys nearest the back of the crowd. The boy said nothing but nodded as he and Joe walked out the door and down the long corridor.

There was an eruption of noise as the lunchtime bell went at Riverside High School, Dan walked out of class feeling relieved. His final week before the summer holidays was nearly finished. The corridors were packed with children trying to access their lockers, Dan had to fight his way through them, occasionally apologising to the people he bumped into, and greeting his mates as they passed. He took out his lunchbox and slung his bag on top of his locker before walking out through the double doors that led to the playground.

He went and sat with his friends over by the library, all sharing their lunches. Dan let out a long and heavy sigh.

“Ah, it’s nearly the holidays,” he said, tucking into his jam sandwiches.

“Hey guys, has anything weird happened today?” asked Becky, thinking of her failed experiment.

“Now you mention it, yes,” said Joe, who was still nursing his injured hand, Becky looked hopeful.

“Dan was on time to school today.” Dan looked angry, before laughing along with Mel and Luke.

“No seriously guys, I mean it,” said Becky.

“Yeah I think so,” said Dan, “I could be wrong but on the way to school some of the newspapers turned into knives as I threw them.”

“You’re imagining it,” said Luke dismissing the idea completely, “it was a one off.”

“Five times?” Dan queried raising one eyebrow above the other.

“Oh,” said Luke bluntly and instantly went quiet.

“So what is everyone doing in the holidays?” asked Dan, changing the subject. The five burst into conversation before a large black cloud hovered over their heads.

“Uh guys, is this normal?” Mel enquired, noticing the cloud and pointing up at the sky. The five friends looked up and immediately saw what looked like red bolts of lightning flashing from within the cloud. The air around them grew thick and they could feel their skin being pulled and stretched from their faces; the ground was covered in a dark ash carpet. Luke was clutching his throat, he was obviously having difficulty breathing. The ash was blowing and spreading now. The other children at school seemed unaffected by the gale that had now struck. A dark cloud of thick fog covered them, Dan was the first to disappear, followed closely by Mel and Luke, then Joe. Becky was the last to disappear, seeing her friends melt away before her. Just before Dan disappeared though he

could hear a strange unearthly voice. He couldn't hear the first bit, but the last line was crystal clear: "*The true Emperor the empire from evil will release.*" Dan collapsed and cracked his head on the concrete and could feel the warm blood sticking to his short, mouse-brown hair.