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For Griffin, Summer, Mary K, Dan, Barb, Bruce, Mom, and Dad

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# CHAPTER ONE

## FRANNY'S HOUSE

The Stein family lived in the pretty pink house with lovely purple shutters down at the end of Daffodil Street. Everything about the house was bright and cheery. Everything, that is, except the upstairs bedroom with the tiny round window.



That tiny round window looked in on the bedroom and laboratory of Franny K. Stein, Little Girl Mad Scientist. Recently, in this very lab, Franny had created Zero Gravity Dog Food, to make walking her dog, Igor, more fun.



And before that, she had invented Cannibalistic Broccoli that ate itself, so kids who hated eating vegetables would never have to.



And she still had a giant, hamster-powered trike, which she had created when she was only three years old.



She had been a mad scientist since she was just a baby. And Franny had been building and accumulating her creations in this lab as long as she could remember.



And she was very, very serious about it. She always had been.





# FRANNY'S FAMILY

The rest of Franny's family was not really interested in mad science.



Franny's dad was a regular dad. He loved Franny, but he didn't really appreciate her Voice-Activated Cheese Cannon, which provided the user with an endless supply of cheeseballs on demand. It just wasn't the sort of thing that regular dads appreciated.



And Franny's mom was a regular mom. She loved Franny, but she didn't really appreciate things like the special chicken that Franny had bred with so many wishbones that you could wish for anything you wanted.



And Franny's little brother, Freddy, was a regular little brother. He loved Franny too (of course, he'd never admit it). Freddy didn't appreciate her creations either. Especially when he found them under his bed at night.



But even though they didn't always appreciate her creations, they had learned to take them seriously. When they didn't, it made Franny pretty angry, and the only thing more dangerous than a mad scientist is an angry mad scientist.



# FRANNY TAKES THE CAKE

The announcement of the yearly Science Fair at school always filled Franny with mixed emotions. On the one hand, Franny loved creating new inventions and sharing them with others.



On the other hand, Franny already had a long list of projects in her lab that she was anxious to complete.



And on the other hand, it was always an extra challenge to create a project that the kids at school would appreciate. Wait a second, that was three hands.





Well, this is Franny we're talking about.



Franny explained it to her mom. "I want to do a good Science Fair project, but I really don't like to take time away from the other lab projects."

Her mom smiled. "You can't have it both ways, Franny. You know what they say: You can't have your cake and eat it too."

A wide grin came across Franny's face. "You can't have your cake and eat it too? We'll see about that."



Franny walked quickly to her lab, with the blueprint of her next creation beginning to form inside her head as she went.



# IT WAS A PIECE OF CAKE

Franny began assembling the mechanism she had designed. “Can’t have your cake and eat it too,” she scoffed. “Where do they come up with these things?”

As she worked, Franny recalled when she conducted experiments based on other sayings she had heard her mother use.



AN APPLE A  
DAY KEEPS  
THE  
DOCTOR  
AWAY.



BUT IT HAS  
TO BE A  
REALLY BIG  
APPLE.



A BIRD IN  
THE HAND IS  
WORTH TWO  
IN THE  
BUSH.



BUT ARE YOU  
SURE YOU  
WANT A  
BIRD IN  
YOUR  
HAND?

WHOEVER  
SAID  
"AS EASY  
AS TAKING  
CANDY FROM  
A BABY"



NEVER  
ACTUALLY  
TRIED TO  
DO IT.

At last her device was complete, and she demonstrated it to her faithful assistant, Igor.

“Observe. Here, on my Time Warp Dessert Plate, I have a delicious piece of cake.” Igor nodded. He was always ready to observe a delicious piece of cake.



Franny gobbled it up quickly. “Now I’ve eaten it. So, of course, I no longer have it.”



Igor shook his head. No cake. That IS sad.

“But through a slight time warp, I can actually make a small zone on the plate go back to a point in the recent past when I had not yet eaten the cake.”

Igor’s eyes widened as the cake reappeared on Franny’s special plate.

“And now I have it again,” she said.



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