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Charlie and the Hunbugs

Once upon a time, lived a boy called Charlie. Charlie never knew what it would be like to have an ordinary life, because Charlie was not your ordinary boy. From a young age Charlie's parents were absent from his life. He never truly knew why, his grandma would say they died young from an illness but most of the time she acted like it went straight over her head or she didn't hear him.

Charlie lived in a small town called Oakingham in the North East of England. His house looked normal from the outside but on the inside, it was a whole different story: aged meats hung from the ceiling, pots and pans of all different sizes were sitting around the kitchen, brightly coloured walls made your eyes pop and one very old grandfather clock was ticking as the day went on.

"Charlie bring your old gran a cup of tea will you?" called gran from the other room. "One spoon of milk and two sugars coming right up" Charlie shouted back. Charlie brought the tea into the living room where his grandma was perched in front of the TV. "Here you go grandma" said Charlie whilst handing the tea to her. "that's a good boy" said grandma, her eyes still on the TV.

A thump came from upstairs followed by dust falling from the ceiling. Charlie paused, it sounded as though there were little patters of feet running around upstairs. "There's a noise coming from the attic, I'll go and see what it is" Charlie said still staring at the ceiling. "Sure" replied grandma, not batting an eyelid. Curiously, Charlie ran upstairs and opened the door to the attic. Nothing was out of the ordinary, the clock was still ticking and there were stacked chairs in the corner of the room - stationary as usual. Charlie looked closer, acorns about the size of breadcrumbs were trailed along the floor.

You would think Charlie's house was already pretty weird, but to him this was more unusual than most of it. Although wanting to see more, Charlie came back downstairs to the living room.

The next day, Charlie went back up to the attic looking for the acorns and any other clues he could find. A mumble of voices came from behind the stack of chairs. All of a sudden a wizz of colour engulfed him. The next thing he knew a strange building was surrounding him. The walls were coloured black and brown. Two hands were ticking side by side. Suddenly Charlie recognised where he was. The old grandfather clock seemed to have teleported him inside, shrinking him whilst he was in disarray.

"Hello? Who's there?" shouted a squeaky voice from the left of Charlie. "Aah" Charlie exclaimed whilst jumping to the side. A strange figure was standing next to him. His hair was long and his ears were pointed. "Hi, my name's Ben, I teleported you here. You see, when

humans see us we are left with no choice but to shrink them and tell them about what we do. We are no harm to you but some humans take it as a threat.”

Charlie was now gawping at what he had just heard. Ben went on “this is where we live.” “We?” repeated Charlie, realising how many of the weird creatures were in the room with him. “Yes” answered Ben. “We are called hunbugs, we control the cosmos of time, hence why we live in a clock.” explained Ben. “We’ve been visited by many humans before. Although some have ended badly.”

“What do you mean?” Charlie asked.

Ben looked down at his feet, “two of them”, he went on, “were called Lily and George”.

Charlie thought he must have misheard this. “Wait, repeat that again, Lily and George was it?”

“Yeh, they...” started Ben

“Those are my parents’ names” Charlie barely uttered.

“Oh, I’m so sorry, I didn’t know.” Said Ben quietly.

“That’s OK” answered Charlie “so what happened to them?”

“On one night your father came back to us pleading to escape the poor and terrible life they had. We only have a certain amount of energy, so if we had to teleport him to a different world, we would have to start the whole of the time and space continuum again”

“Your mother wasn’t very fond of leaving the life she had behind. Although they were poor, to risk everything just to lead a better one wasn’t right.”

“Your dad disagreed and held us against our will to send him and his wife to a different world. We didn’t let him, but he let himself. The teleportation system exploded and both of them...” Ben shuffled his feet. “Well, passed away”.

Charlie’s life had just changed in the blink of an eye.