



## CHAPTER ONE

“Kyle, take your hand out of the lion’s mouth!” I yelled.

With his hand inside the stone lion’s mouth, my best friend scrunched up his face and asked, “Why, Hailey?”

“Because you’re doing it the wrong way,” I said.

“No, this seems right,” Kyle said. Ever since I’d met him in third grade, he’s always wanted to do things his way. He hasn’t changed in three years.

“You won’t get any good luck that way,” I said.

“How do you know, Hailey?”

“My grandpa taught me,” I said.





Grandpa Wong and I used to visit the China Gate lions once a month. First we'd go to the dim sum restaurant around the corner, where I'd order my favorite dish—shrimp dumplings. He always ordered something different.

One time it was chicken feet. I'd stared at the slimy claws on the plate and pushed away from the table.

"Ew," I said. "No way. I'm not eating feet. Gross."

He laughed as he plucked one of the feet off the plate with his chopsticks and placed it in front of me.

"You'll like it. Tastes like chicken," he joked.

I shook my head, crossed my arms and clamped my lips shut.

“Hailey, don’t be afraid of a new thing. It might be the start of your next adventure.”

“It looks weird,” I said.

“The sooner you try it, the quicker we can get to the China Gate and make a wish.”

“Can I make my wish now? Because I wish you didn’t order chicken feet,” I said.

He laughed again. “Try it, Hailey. Trust me.”

I picked up the foot with my fingers and bit into the flesh. It tasted like chicken skin with a salty sauce. “It’s not that bad.” I took another bite.

“See?” he said with a smile, taking a foot for himself.

I’d finished the rest of mine.

After lunch, Grandpa Wong and I would walk to the China Gate, where a golden roof supported by red pillars formed

an arch over the street. Chinese lion statues sat on either side of the gate. Mounted on top, two Chinese dragon statues that looked like rolling ocean waves met in the center. The wingless creatures seemed to watch over the street like guardians.

Grandpa Wong would lift me onto one of the lions' pedestals. He said if I rubbed the stone ball in its mouth, the lion might grant me a wish. I always wished for the same thing—another dim sum with my favorite grandpa.

The last time I made my wish, it didn't come true. Grandpa Wong died a week later. The next day a windstorm blew one of the dragons off the arch and destroyed it. I felt like the remaining dragon—alone.



“Why did we come here today, Hailey?”  
Kyle asked.

“Tomorrow the city is tearing the gate down so they can dig a tunnel for the subway.”

“What are they going to do with it?”  
Kyle adjusted the chin strap of his bicycle helmet.

“My dad told me the gate’s going into storage.”

“That’s too bad. How am I going to get my wish?”

I grinned. “You always want the same thing.” I fished a baggie full of Chewy Worms out of my backpack. He licked his lips at the sight of the candy.

“My wish came true!”

“You’re so predictable.” I tossed the baggie at him.

He plucked out a worm while I climbed onto the lion's pedestal. I rubbed the stone ball the way Grandpa Wong had taught me, rolling my hand over it from left to right. I looked up. The remaining dragon had been Grandpa Wong's favorite part of the China Gate. Mine too. I'd always thought the dragon and Grandpa Wong would be here forever.

"I wish I could save you," I whispered.

The ball began to tingle under my hand. I yanked it out of the lion's mouth.

"What was that?" I muttered.

"What's wrong, Hailey?" Kyle asked. "Make the wrong wish?"

"It's nothing," I said, rubbing my palm. I slowly reached into the lion's mouth again and touched the ball. It vibrated against my palm. A jolt of electricity stung

my hand as a crack of thunder echoed in my ears. Was it from the sky or the lion's mouth? I couldn't tell.



I jumped down and examined my hand. There were no marks, but my palm still tingled from the energy of the ball.

“What is going on?” I exclaimed, my eyes locked on the lion's mouth.

It said nothing.

Rain began to fall. Weird. Only one lonely cloud floated above us.

Kyle grabbed my arm and pulled me back from the lion.



“What’s wrong?” I asked.

“Look!” Kyle pointed straight up at the top of the China Gate.

My mouth dropped open. The dragon was now a brilliant shade of jade. The spines on its back jutted up like a row of shark fins. It shook itself like a wet dog, sending water everywhere. The dragon was alive!

