

# Chapter 5

## Save the Schoolmates

Jack reached out for the door handle, his fingertips just inches away. The raiders were rounding the corner in the hall just 10 or 15 feet away. Jack – as fast as his body would move – yanked the door open, dashed inside the room and (mixing silence and speed) closed the door behind him.

He put his back up against the wall beside the door, his adrenaline moving like a raging river. He heard the footsteps go by, every second seeming like a year. When at last the raiders had gone, Jack stepped out of the room very cautiously. After surveying the hallway and seeing no one, he restarted the journey toward the escape window.

“At last...” he thought, “I’m almost home free! Just one more hallway.”

“It’s done!” boomed a voice from just around the corner.

Jack’s muscles instantly tensed. He silently flattened himself against a wall and listened.

“I don’t think it will do us much good,” another voice said.

“Raiders...” Jack thought. “What are they talking about?”

“It may help,” another Raider replied.

Jack then heard a click followed by what sounded like a television when it couldn’t get reception.

“This is Group E on the second floor... the barrier is in place!”

Jack concluded that the Raider was talking into a walkie-talkie of some sort. He could barely hear the replying voice.

“Good! Come back to the first floor!”

“Why?” the first Raider responded.

“Some of the kids have escaped out of the gym. We need you to come down and investigate with Group B.”

“Okay – we’re on our way!”

Jack knew there was trouble now. Sean was probably down there helping the other kids escape – and if the Raiders caught him... Jack shoved the thought from his mind.

After waiting until the Raiders had gone, Jack stepped out from behind his hallway... only to find his forward progress blocked. The Raiders had

stacked desks and chairs all the way to the ceiling, blocking off the hall completely.

“So this is what they meant by the barrier...” Jack thought. “That’s just perfect!”

Meanwhile, Sean and Ashley had made some progress in their Save the Schoolmates Campaign. Sean was freeing the students, while Ashley stayed in the Cafeteria. They’d found hiding places in the back of the kitchen. The plan so far was working.

Sean had a creepy feeling that their victory would be short-lived. The Raiders had become slightly more alert in their patrolling. It was a lot harder to avoid a patrolling Raider. Sean silently untied another captive.

“Run to the Cafeteria...” Sean whispered. “There are about 30 others in the kitchen, hiding there until this is over.”

The kid nodded in fear and silently careened out of the gym. Sean silently made his way over to other students using a useful technique he’d learned. After untying about 30 students, he’d left all the ropes strewn on the gymnasium floor. He’d kept two strings – one tied around his ankles, and the other in his pocket.

Whenever he felt endangered by an oncoming Raider, Sean would whip out the other bit of rope and pretend that his wrists were tied – making him look just as helpless as any other student.

Sean had done some good work. To the Raiders, it looked like students were suddenly disappearing. Thankfully, the gym was enormous and there were only three Raiders patrolling. To make things even better, Sean was getting good at pretending to be captive.

Things were looking good, but the sickening feeling that something was about to go wrong was still there.

No doubt the Raiders had noticed that students were missing. Sean would have bet his left leg that they planned to do something about the missing students. The students were hostages – and had become the walls to the school-fortress now overrun with Raiders.

The students served as a shield for the Raiders. The Police or any other military force would not dare endanger the lives of the students. The Raiders knew this, and they were not about to let their hostages go anywhere.

Sean was in the middle of untying another schoolmate when he heard something. The doors leading into the gym were opening. He stopped in the middle of his rescue speech and quickly pulled the rope from his pocket. He knew he could do this quickly, but he did not know if it would be fast enough.

**To be continued...**