

Gravy and



the Boattrain

by David Hurd

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For my children. Thank you for inspiring me to truly live each and every day.



It was a perfect day for an adventure when Gravy and Nathan arrived at Quartertone Park on Sunday afternoon. The boys had just completed their project for the Marion County Science Fair and were anxious to give it a test run. The annual fair had been something they looked forward to each year, but this year was special. This year the winners would receive a scholarship for a fall study at Faraday's Science Academy, the Midwest's most prestigious school for the scientifically gifted.



The boys walked toward the back of the park until Gravy felt they had a safe enough distance away from the children.

“Do you think we’re far back enough?” Nathan asked.

Gravy glanced at the children on the playground for a moment judging the distance carefully.

“Close enough I suppose.” Gravy said as he shrugged his shoulders.

Nathan pulled a smartphone from his pocket and pressed record. Gravy adjusted his blue backpack, took his place in front of the camera, and flashed a wide toothy grin. His orange hair swayed crazily in the wind and his eyes shined wildly with excitement as he spoke.



“Good afternoon ladies and gentleman, I am your mystifying host Gravy Theodore Boone!” Gravy said. “My assistant Nathan Spencer is behind the camera and will be documenting one of the greatest spectacles the town of Sawville has ever seen. For centuries, human flight has fascinated us.

Humanity has always sought to be free from the anchor of gravity that bounds us to earth and today, history will be made as I take flight to a whole new level with my latest and greatest invention Gravity Zero!”



“Hold on a minute.” Nathan said. “What happened to Wings in a Bucket? I thought that’s what we agreed on.”

“Wings in a Bucket sounded absurd! Gravity Zero sounds much cooler. Now please no more interruptions!” Gravy said as he waved his hand dismissively.

“Now where was I?”

“You were taking flight to a whole new level.” Nathan said rolling his eyes.

“Yes, yes indeed. I will now demonstrate my latest invention, Gravity Zero!” Gravy said.



Gravy pressed a button on the side of his backpack. The top unzipped and two metal wings sprung out in a wide span. He pulled a pair of safety goggles over his glasses and did a slow twirl to give the camera a full display of his invention.



The jetpack began to rumble with the flick of a switch. A low flame glowed from the engine barrels and Gravy levitated slowly off the ground. A few curious children from the park had taken notice and formed a small crowd around him. They watched with amazement as he floated inches above the earth.

“As you can see, Gravity Zero is a perfectly stable energy system. I developed a hydrogen cell in my lab, the Barnatory to supply its power. It’s another scientific breakthrough brought to you from me...”



“Us.” Nathan said with a huff.

“Yes, us.” Gravy continued. “A scientist is helpless without his assistant.”

“Partner.” Nathan said, slowly emphasizing every syllable.

“Yes, partner of course.” Gravy said. “Now watch in awe as I thrill you with another creation from the Barnatory. Please take a few steps back for your safety. We will have liftoff in three, two, one, go.”



Gravy pressed a button on the jetpack and closed his eyes. He reached both arms straight toward the sky. A brief moment passed before Gravy's eyes crept open. There were no blue horizons to soar through or any cheers of excitement from the crowd. Only silence and disappointed faces that multiplied since his last glance. A few chuckles rose from the back of the crowd and rippled toward the front as they burst into hysterics. Gravy's face turned flush as he pounded against the engine of the jetpack. Suddenly, his eyes lit up with excitement. "No worries friends, I forgot one thing." Gravy said. "What's that?" Nathan asked. "The safety."



Gravy flipped a switch and rocketed into the air. The crowd's laughter turned to cheers as they watched Gravy soar twenty feet over them, zipping back and forth across the Indiana sky.

Gravy dove toward the crowd, gently grazed over their heads, then shot up in a spiral as he reached towards the clouds. While most of the crowd was impressed with Gravy's amazing feat, one boy was not. Draped in a long trench coat, Melvin Snurley glared at the sky from under the shade of his black top hat. His eyes glowed with anger as Gravy continued the show.