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POTION MASTERS

THE TRANSPARENCY TONIC



FRANK L. COLE

START WITH A NEW POTION. ADD A
MYSTERIOUS FRIEND. MIX IN AN OLD ENEMY.
WHAT COULD POSSIBLY GO WRONG?

• • •

PRAISE FOR THE ETERNITY ELIXIR

“This first installment in a new trilogy has all the hallmarks of a grand adventure: an unknown treasure, an all-powerful enemy, and a host of secrets revealed. . . . Gordy’s adventure is a memorable one. Fans of the archetypal hero’s journey will keep turning pages.”

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“Gordy learns that a sense of humor, the willingness to be bold, and his love for his family and friends might win the day. Wackiness and suspense keep the pages turning. . . . A spectacular beginning.”

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It has been nine months since Gordy and his friends, Max and Adilene, saved B.R.E.W. (the Board of Ruling Elixirists Worldwide) and the Vessel—the power source for the secret society of potion masters. Now, Gordy is starting the eighth grade, and has been trying new potion brewing techniques, but when he starts zoning out during practice, he knows something is wrong.

Gordy and his friends continue to work on their potions, but when Gordy chooses Max as his lab partner, Adilene starts to wonder if she still has a place with her old friends. She turns to a new friend, Cadence, who might know a way to help Adilene become a potion master on her own.

And in Greenland, Mezzarix has a chance to escape his Forbidden Zone—as long as he agrees to work with the mysterious Ms. Bimini and replicate an unusual solution known as “Silt.” It could be just the weapon Mezzarix needs to destroy B.R.E.W. forever.

With both B.R.E.W and the Vessel in danger, and with the potion world in chaos, it’s up to Gordy, Max, and Adilene to rally the remaining Potion Masters before it’s too late.



TIA CHAPMAN PHOTOGRAPHY

FRANK L. COLE lives with his wife and three children out West. He is the author of ten books. He is an active promoter of reading and the power of imagination and has been to more than 120 schools presenting to kids.

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The Eternity Elixir

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FRANK L. COLE



SHADOW
MOUNTAIN

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*For Jennifer and her story about Blip,
which may have just started it all.*

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CHAPTER

1

Gordy Stitser knelt in the forest behind his house and removed a flask filled with deep-indigo liquid from a shoebox. Three other identical containers rested in the box, each separated by a thick wedge of spongy cotton. Gordy covered the remaining flasks with the cardboard lid and set the box aside.

The ground was still damp, and the trees drooped under the sag of last night's rain. Exhaust from a garbage truck driving down the street saturated the air. Gordy squinted as the noisy vehicle lumbered past the trees as it tossed and dropped garbage bins haphazardly. He saw a school bus as well and could hear the faint, chattering voices of kids as they boarded. Checking his phone, Gordy noted he had about ten minutes until he had to be in the driveway to catch his ride for his first day of eighth grade. Enough time to test out his newest concoction, if he hurried.

Gordy unscrewed the metal lid from the flask, and miniature fissures of sparkling light ignited within the

potion. He held the container close to his nostrils and inhaled the fumes. The mixture smelled right. Pungent, purple, and with just a hint of Siberian salamander slime. Gordy stood and glanced toward the edge of his backyard and beyond that to the pink-bricked building that the Stitsers had called home for the past nine months—ever since their last house went up in a violent potion explosion. He saw no signs of his parents anywhere, and the fourth-grade twins had already been bussed away to school. Normally, Gordy’s mom wouldn’t have thrown a fit to see him testing out his potions in the forest. As a Dram, better known as an Elixirist-in-training, he had to practice, and the wooded area provided the perfect amount of privacy from prying eyes.

But this wasn’t a normal potion. Gordy had brewed it the night before in the family laboratory, using several ingredients on his mother’s “Only Use in an Emergency” list. The salamander slime was particularly difficult to come by. But this *was* an emergency—kind of. The Stitsers may not have been under a direct threat from an enemy at the moment, but that could change. Gordy needed to be prepared.

Gordy’s leg suddenly buzzed, and he fished his phone out from his pocket.

“What’s up, Max?” Gordy asked, pressing the phone to his ear.

“Dude, I can’t see anything,” Max said.

Gordy pulled the phone back. “You FaceTimed me?”

“Of course!” Max grinned. His round face, distorted

from being too close to the screen, resembled a freckled volleyball with bushy eyebrows.

“Why?” Gordy asked, checking the purple potion to ensure the mixture hadn’t settled back to dormancy.

“Because I knew you were about to test out Trapper Keeper, and I wanted to see.”

Gordy scrunched his nose. “Trapper Keeper? That’s what you’re calling it? That’s a dumb name.”

“It’s an awesome name! Show it to me,” Max demanded.

Gordy sighed and pointed the phone toward the flask. Max whooped excitedly.

Gordy started to smile, but then stopped in an instant. “Wait a minute. Are you on the bus right now?”

“Oh yeah,” Max said. “Smells like death! Wish you were here.” He laughed.

“You know I can’t ride the bus to school anymore. I’ve told you that at least a hundred times. And I’m hanging up. You’re breaking the most important rule. If anyone finds out what I’m doing—”

Max rolled his eyes. “Dude! I’m all the way at the back of this rolling metal prison and no one cares. It’s the first day of school, and the whole bus is filled with seventh-graders.” Max craned his neck. “All these minions, sitting with their heads down, fearing the day of reckoning of junior high.” He cackled.

“Where’s Adilene?” Gordy asked.

“How should I know? She’s probably getting a ride too. But quit stalling. Let’s see what our little masterpiece can do.”

“*Our* little masterpiece?” Gordy considered hanging up. His best friend, Max Pinkerman, was anything but discreet. He shouldn’t have been allowed to brew this potion with Gordy last night, but Gordy’s dad had been preoccupied on the phone, settling some dishwasher dispute, and Gordy’s mom had been working late in her office at B.R.E.W. Headquarters. At least, that’s what she told everyone. Lately, Gordy’s mom had been acting strange, and he wasn’t sure why.

“Hey, I chopped up those . . . seeds and stuff,” Max muttered. “And if you were to ride the bus with me and some dark potion lords showed up trying to mess with you, I’d have your back. You know that, right?”

Gordy groaned. Max couldn’t keep talking about the potion community like that out in the open. Maybe Gordy would have to administer a heavy forgetful elixir, just in case. “You need to zip it, okay? I don’t care if you think no one is paying attention. Someone might be listening.”

“You’re right,” Max said. “And I’ll zip my lip as soon as you carry on with the demonstration.”

“Okay, fine.”

Gordy stared down at the target, a two-foot-tall stuffed elephant, resting on a cleared-off patch of ground ten yards away beneath a towering dogwood tree. For just a moment, Gordy felt a twinge of regret about what he was about to do. He had won the elephant at a fair several years ago and had kept it in his room ever since. Gordy used to cuddle the floppy thing whenever he freaked out about some odd

noise he had heard in the house, and it was one of the only toys that had survived the house fire. But he was entering the eighth grade, which meant no more stuffed animals.

Covering the mouth of the flask with his thumb, Gordy shook the bottle, agitating the liquid. More lightning bolts cut through the thick goop. A high-pitched squeal escaped Max's lips as Gordy chucked the bottle.

Glass shattered at the elephant's feet, and a dense cloud of smoke mushroomed up from the spot where the potion connected. Gordy shielded his eyes, and when he looked again, the stuffed elephant had vanished.

"That's what I'm talking about!" Max cheered.

Gordy approached the bare patch of ground where the animal once stood.

"Well, I'm not sure it will work exactly the same on a person, but it will stop them for sure. I'd call the Trapper Keeper a success." Gordy stepped on the dirt. It felt firm and solid, almost like stone.

"The name's warming up to you, isn't it?" Max asked.

The guttural roar of a car engine sounded from the driveway at the front of the house. Gordy jumped and spun around. It wasn't a normal vehicle noise by any stretch of the imagination and resembled the sound a lion might make right before it pounced on an unsuspecting gazelle, mixed in with the subtle machinery tone of a backhoe.

"I have to go," Gordy said.

"Wait, just let me see—" Max pleaded, but Gordy ended the call before he could finish.

CHAPTER

2

Bolter Farina sat cross-legged on the hood of a faded orange Buick with flaking, gray racing stripes painted along the sides. Bolter had dark skin and long black hair parted evenly down the middle of his head. He riffled through the pages of an automotive magazine dated from the 1970s with the use of two fingerless nubs.

“Whoa! Where did you get this?” Gordy asked, nodding at the vehicle. Sputtering, the car filled the air with explosive bursts of white smoke from the exhaust. “Did you paint it yourself?”

Bolter raised his eyebrows and smiled, but before he could reply, the car lurched forward almost a foot, narrowly missing Gordy’s leg with the bumper.

“Hey, who’s driving?” Gordy asked, stepping back and laughing in surprise.

“That’s not very nice!” Bolter shouted, swatting the side of the car with the rolled-up magazine. “Sorry, Gordy. She can be slightly temperamental in the morning.”

“Who can be slightly temperamental?” Gordy approached the driver’s side but couldn’t see anyone inside.

Suddenly the Buick’s horn erupted with a shrill, ear-piercing blare. Gordy leaped back from the door, hands shooting up to shield his head. The engine roared again, rumbling with a sound that almost resembled the gurgled snarl of a large cat.

“You’re not going to make many friends with that behavior, Estelle.” Bolter wedged the rolled-up magazine under his armpit, unfolded his long, narrow legs, and hopped down from the hood. “Gordy’s just a curious boy asking curious questions, and he’s our friend. He even complimented your paint job.”

The car made another sound, different from before, a cacophony of buckling metal and twisting plastic.

Bolter frowned. “I’d move if I were you, Gordy.” He pulled Gordy out of the way as the Buick continued to produce the unsettling noise. Then the car shuddered and vomited out an oily mass of mesh and wire from beneath the hood.

Gordy’s mouth dropped open, and he gawked at the metal lump lying in the driveway.

“This is why you need to control your emotions, Estelle,” Bolter said. “You get worked up over the silliest of things.”

“Is your car . . . part cat?” Gordy’s face contorted with confusion.

Bolter’s head bobbed from side to side. “Yes, but just a very small part. The essence, really. It’s a new fusion potion

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I've been perfecting over the past few months. Estelle is prototype G. I won't bore you with the details of the failures of prototypes A through F, but they were disastrous."

Upon closer examination, the Buick did in fact possess feline features. The headlamps were slanted with an inquisitive expression, and two sections on either side of the roof had been crimped in a way that made it look like pointed ears poking up above the windshield. Even the interior looked oddly like cat fur.

"Where's the actual cat?" Gordy demanded, eyes widening. "You're not keeping it under the hood, are you?" He squinted, trying to see if he could identify any signs of a poor, trapped cat tied up beneath it. Perhaps one running on a large hamster wheel. Animal-rights activists would have passed out had they known about Bolter's experiment.

"Oh, my word, no, no, no! Of course not." Bolter playfully shoved Gordy's shoulder. "How absurd. *Essence*, Gordy. It's just the animal's essence. That's all."

"How do you get the animal's essence?" Gordy asked, curious, but also slightly disturbed. Bolter was an unusual Elixirist who specialized in automotive potions and had been known to imbue all manner of mixtures within his vehicles. But this latest creation was definitely his most bizarre.

Bolter waved a fingerless hand in the air dismissively. "It's simple. Just saliva and fur, and maybe a claw or two. It's nothing the cat misses, I assure you. My work has all been sanctioned by B.R.E.W., so no need to raise the alarm."

B.R.E.W., or the Board of Ruling Elixirists Worldwide, was where Bolter worked, along with Gordy's mom and hundreds of other highly skilled Elixirists. B.R.E.W. monitored the potion-making community across the continent as well as in many places overseas. And they had their fingers dabbling in almost every area of society: medical, military, and, for Bolter, machinery.

"I do believe the clock is ticking away. The first day of eighth grade waits for no one." Bolter extended his hand toward the passenger side of the Buick. "Your chariot awaits."

Gordy blinked. "You expect me to ride to school in that?"

"You can't very well walk, now can you? There's too much at risk. Oh, don't be so worried," Bolter said when he noticed Gordy's reluctance. "Where's the Gordy Stitser, young man of adventure?"

"I guess it's fine." Gordy cautiously stepped around the front of the car. "But I think I'm allergic to cats."

Bolter nodded. "Aha! Me too! But don't worry. I've brought drops." He dug into his pocket and produced a tiny, clear bottle of eye drops.

The cat car produced a low, threatening rumble, its headlamp eyes seeming to narrow even more at the prospect of allowing Gordy as a passenger. He wondered if Estelle could bite. Then he wondered how it would accomplish such a feat. Lastly, he wondered if he would even survive the trip to school.

“When she purrs, the seats vibrate.” Bolter patted the dashboard enthusiastically, strapping on his seat belt.

Gordy carefully opened the door and sat down next to him. Estelle’s growling continued.

“It’s like a massage chair!” Bolter shouted over the escalating volume. “I daresay Estelle provides the loveliest ride you’ll ever experience. Once she warms up to you, of course. You wouldn’t happen to have a mechanical mouse hiding in your backpack, would you?”

Gordy’s seat lurched forward a few inches underneath him, and he worried that Estelle might launch him through the windshield.

“Oh well.” Bolter shrugged. “I’m sure it will be just fine. Buckle up and cross your fingers. I don’t have any.” He held up his hands as a reminder of the absence of any digits and laughed maniacally.