

A WORD FROM AUTHOR

ADAM GIDWITZ

When I was younger, this was my life:

Me, in my room, playing with action figures—little plastic dudes with masks and guns and grappling hooks. I'd take two in my hands. The bad guy would come up to the good guy and say something insulting. The good guy wasn't going to stand for it, and he'd say so. The bad guy'd take a swing at the good guy. And from there they'd just whale on each other—upper cuts and roundhouse kicks and jabs to the solar plexus.

On sunny afternoons after school I'd go out to the basketball hoop in my backyard and would pretend to be an NBA star, narrating my career from my rookie season through my induction into the basketball Hall of Fame. I always made it into the Hall of Fame. I have a great imagination.

When it was too dark to play basketball, and I was sick of beating up imaginary bad guys for imaginary insults, I would crawl into bed with Roald Dahl's *The BFG*, Gary Paulson's *Canyon*, or Jerry Spinelli's *Maniac Magee*, and I would scrunch my body up real tight, and I would read about the most amazing places, the scariest events, the funniest people.

This is my life now:

My brother smashed all of my action figures when he got old enough to hold a hammer.

I live in Brooklyn, and can't fit a hoop in my backyard anymore.

So I sit in front of my computer and write down all the things that I used to imagine when I was a kid. And people want to publish them. Then I crawl in bed with a book and laugh and gasp and try not to fall asleep until I finish the chapter.

I guess the point is, if you've got a good imagination and a good book, you're pretty much set for life.

Very truly,
Adam Gidwitz

