

Table of Contents

Chapter	Page
1. The Challenge	1
2. Dead Zones and The Shadow Force	8
3. Vanishing Coach and Four	13
4. The House at Dean Bridge.....	19
5. Time Portal	24
6. Time Travel on the Water o' Leith.....	29
7. Secret Passage.....	33
8. Eilean Donan Castle.....	36
9. Melancholy Ghost.....	39
10. Escape at Midnight.....	44
11. The Wild Stallion.....	48
12. Dangerous Ride	52
13. Merlin's HiTech Magic	55
14. Union of the Crowns	59
15. Dream Magic	63
16. Unexpected Visitors	68
17. Dream Magic Two	73
18. The Return of King Arthur and William Wallace	75
19. Capture by The Shadow Force	81
20. Trapped	83
21. Invisible Friends	86
22. Merlin's Gift	90
23. The Journey Back.....	95
24. Healing the Oceans	99
25. The New Wealth	104



The Challenge

“The ability to inspire people will make a difference in the world of the future.”

Susan Light shared her thoughts with a skeptical Cameron as they walked down Princes Street in Edinburgh one sweltering July day. Pausing a moment, she added, “especially in the years 2006 and beyond.”

“These Americans,” Cameron thought as the wide wave of a grin washed over his face.

It was the school holidays. On their way home through town, two students discussing the future were striking contrast to a city steeped in the past.

Soldiers of the Roman Empire once traveled the ground on which they stepped. Ignoring their historic surroundings of old buildings, towers with pointed roofs, and ceremonial flag posts, they walked on. Passing Baronial hotels, Georgian homes of light gray Craigleith stone and sculptured iron monuments, the two friends continued their conversation. Above them in the skyline loomed the massive fortress of Edinburgh Castle, an imposing structure on volcanic rock.

Cameron McKenzie had known Susan Light since the first day of Primary School. She had moved to Edinburgh when her father accepted a post at the University of Edinburgh College of Surgeons. Dr. Light and his daughter had moved to Scotland from Princeton, New Jersey.

Now twelve, Susan was a tall, fit, clever girl with shoulder length blonde hair and blue eyes who was looking forward to a fun filled summer with her friends. Often told by her father how much she looked like her mother, who had died when Susan was an infant, she had been raised by Gran, her father’s mother. Gran shared stories about her mother, a medical intuitive able to recognize illnesses in people through her senses. Working with her husband, Dr. John Light, Susan’s mother helped many people before her death.

“From your mother,” Gran had told Susan, “you get your spunk, keen intuition, and sensitivity, From your father, your scientific nature. From both, your cleverness.”

Her father never remarried. “I’m married to my research,” Dr. Light would tell his daughter.

Susan’s classmate Cameron McKenzie--Defender on the school football team-- was a tall, athletic boy who was a natural leader and all round good sport. His mop of brown hair was always worn in an athletic cut which framed his shining brown eyes.

A gifted student, Cameron had received a full scholarship to Lofthill Academy since Primary School. Now in High School, his cleverness and natural ability made him a formidable opponent in any sport. He had speed, agility, and a strong will. His family roots traced back to the Isle of Skye in the Scottish Highlands and the days of Bonnie Prince Charlie. Now twelve, Cameron could hardly believe he had known Susan Light for six years.

He had pegged her right the first day of Primary School. Seeing both sides of her personality -- the wildness of her untamed spirit and the fearful look in her eyes at being the new kid in a new land -- he had felt sorry for her. He had befriended her and wouldn’t let people tease her. Since he was a leader, the others also accepted her. This was particularly helpful since a wild spirit was not exactly something a Scottish school girl was supposed to have.

Americans, Cameron concluded, were somewhat different.

His mind on sport, he said with a smile, “I hesitate to ask, but what ability to inspire exactly do you have in mind?” “Heroes,” Susan answered, deep in thought, “and heroines and how they make the world a better place. They think differently. Most people think in WIN-LOSE ways. If I win, you lose. Heroes think in WIN-WIN. They try to figure out things so everyone wins and that inspires others.”

“I know what you mean,” Cameron replied. “When one of our footballers does it like Beckham, the whole team feels great even though we didn’t kick the ball ourselves.”

Mental pictures of heroes flooded Cameron's mind. In addition to David Beckham's football kicks he pictured his grandfather fighting poverty as a youth in the Highlands and his father as a teen studying accounting late at night after returning from the factory where he worked afternoons after school. Characters from books he had read -- William Wallace, Rob Roy, King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table -- floated around Cameron's brain. Heroes, it seemed, overcame great obstacles, often tried the impossible, and inspired others in the process.

"What made you think of that now, anyway?" He found it interesting how her mind worked.

"Oh," she said, "I was just thinking back on the history of Scotland."

"What?" he replied, his curiosity now awakened.

"You know," she said, "the history between Scotland and England. Imagine how different things would have been if Scotland and England had both been ruled by a hero king who understood the idea of WIN-WIN agreements instead of trying to dominate one another all those years in the same old pattern of WIN-LOSE."

Cameron listened as Susan continued, "They could have cooperated with each other. Scotland had so many raw materials like wood, iron, coal, and plentiful water. England had factories that could have manufactured those -- making wood into furniture and iron into steel. British engineering is world famous for building and inventing things. The two could have worked together and both countries would have become very rich and all those people wouldn't have died fighting each other in war after war."

"So, if you could go back to any point in history to change things," Cameron asked, "where would you go?"

"Back to the Union of the Crowns in 1603 to see King James," Susan replied.

"And what would you do there?" he said, asking for more information and at the same time somewhat shocked she had thought about this so fully.

“I’d meet with King James and try to inspire him. Remember his picture in our history book? He had a chance as the first king of both countries to be a real King Arthur and all he could think of was more riches. I’d ask him to consider a King Arthur type of arrangement for England and Scotland.”

“A what?” Cameron echoed.

“A King Arthur type government -- you know, the Knights of the Round Table. But instead of one Round Table, I’d suggest two.”

“I’m not sure what you have in mind,” he reflected, trying to picture it in his head.

“Well,” Susan said thoughtfully, “King James was King of Scotland when he inherited the throne of England. He united both countries under himself which was a good idea, actually. The problem was that in combining a big industrial country with a small, rural one, he shifted much of the wealth and power to the big one. So instead of being WIN-WIN, it was WIN-LOSE. England won -- it got more land, money, and power. Scotland lost -- its land, natural resources, wealth, and power.”

“Go on,” encouraged Cameron who hadn’t considered this perspective before.

“After King James died, the result of the Win-Lose was the 200 years of war between England and Scotland. Those wars were some of the most bloody in the history of the world.

Remember our class trip to the Battlefield of Culloden? You could feel the sadness there, almost as if the earth itself was crying. It was a civil war with Scots killing other Scots, a war where the English and Scottish killed one another and Highlanders using swords fought soldiers with cannons. Death was everywhere.”

“I know,” Cameron said solemnly. “To all of Scotland, the Culloden Battlefield is a field of sorrow.”

“And after that,” Susan continued, “all those wars were followed by 200 more years of bad feelings between the two countries and more pain caused by cruel leaders, not to mention the millions in gold paid to spies and the makers of cannons. So, what I had in mind was a

Win-Win instead of a Win-Lose. Think of it, Cameron. We could save the oceans and help the environment. Four hundred years of science would focus on something besides war.“

Cameron was silent for awhile. He respected Susan’s sincerity and unusual way of looking at things. At the same time, thought her naive sometimes. This, he decided, was one of those times.

“I wonder if it would have worked,” he said. “Changing the history of a country takes a world class leader. We would have needed someone like Mahatma Gandhi who transformed India or Nelson Mandela who spent most of his life in prison and changed racism in South Africa without firing a single shot. Scotland’s world class leader was Braveheart -- William Wallace -- but he lived centuries before the agreement was made.”

“That’s true,” Susan confirmed. “It takes a great leader to make great changes.”

Pausing, she added, “And one great leader inspires others. Nelson Mandela in South Africa was inspired by Gandhi in India and so was America’s Martin Luther King. And do you know who inspired Gandhi?”

This one he hadn’t heard. “No,” Cameron replied.

“A poet from India named Tagore who went to Gandhi’s bedside when he was ill and encouraged him. Tagore won the Nobel Prize in literature. I read it in a book my mother had because he was her favorite poet when she was in high school. Dad gave me the book last year for my birthday.”

The seriousness of the mood was broken by the flight of a seagull overhead whose poop falling on the sidewalk right in front of them brought their conversation back to the present.

Adding her own humor, Susan sighed like a damsel in distress as she stepped around the mess. “Alas, where is King Arthur when you need him?”

They both laughed and then Susan, after being quiet for a few moments, looked at Cameron with the impish grin he had come to dread because he’d learned (painfully) what usually followed.

“So,” she said smiling, “if I can find a time portal and locate Merlin, will you go back in time with me to rewrite history?”

“I knew it!” he thought to himself. “She has some fantastical adventure in mind. A time portal? Even she can’t pull this one off. I guess it’ll just be a nice summer of football and beach. On the other hand, ...”

The power of Cameron’s logical mind was formidable. He considered situations from all perspectives before commenting or making a decision and then he seldom changed. As big as his brain was, his heart was bigger. Cameron’s love for Scotland always over-rode his sensible side when it came to Susan’s wild ideas. He had a genuine hope for making his country a better place and the sadness caused by its history of war he felt in his bones as he did fears for the oceans and environment.

“Count me in,” he said. Then with a grin added, “Oh, and while you’re at it -- try to summon the genie from Aladdin's lamp. I could use a few wishes.”

The two laughed as they strolled down Princes Street in the late afternoon sun. They were ready for the fun unlocked by summer’s freedom.

As usual, Susan was immersed in science fiction. She planned to finish reading Anne McCaffrey’s *Crystal Singer* over the next week and then start *The Catini Series*. She loved McCaffrey’s stories about people who changed their lives by learning how to turn weakness into strength and vivid descriptions of beings from other galaxies traveling from one place to another on mind power. These and other amazing ideas sparked her imagination.

Susan’s father had told her many concepts in science fiction might one day be possible through research and discoveries in real science. Ideas from physics -- the scientific field of a famous genius named Albert Einstein -- might one day make many things possible.

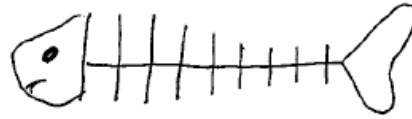
“In the meantime,” Dr. Light told his curious daughter, “enjoy reading about wonders the future and your own creative mind might hold.” And she did.

Waving good-bye to Cameron, Susan turned up Lothian Road toward home. As she

walked on the warm old road she thought of how many other feet had trod up the hill before hers. Years and years of feet -- many, many people in the years before the 2000's. How different their shoes must have been from her brown school shoes ... the shoes in 1990 compared to those of 1890 or even 1690. How different they must have looked and felt.

The sky was darkening by the time she reached home.

“Looks like it’s going to rain,“ she thought as she opened the front door to her house and walked into the kitchen. After kissing her Gran on the cheek, she got herself a lemonade and some crisps, not realizing the gathering dark clouds outside were ushering in more than a change of weather.



Dead Zones and The Shadow Force

The late afternoon breeze ruffled his thick brown hair as Cameron rounded the bend to Shandwick Place. Walking toward his home on Coates Crescent, he could hear Susan's words echoing in his mind, "... imagine how the future of Scotland would have changed. "

"There are just so many implications of changing the past," he thought to himself. "Scotland has a complex history."

If he hadn't seen Susan Light's crazy ideas in action, he would never have paid them any attention. He thought back on the first time something happened to get his attention -- when was it? Oh yes, it was the third week of class in Primary School after she had just moved to Edinburgh.

It seems the Israeli ambassador's six-month-old baby was kidnapped while his parents attended an official function at Edinburgh's Holyrood Palace. All the newspapers carried the kidnapping story as a swarm of local, regional, and international police officials converged on the town to track down the kidnappers.

The day after the kidnapping, five-year-old Susan Light went to school and told her teacher of the bad dream she'd had the night before. In clear detail she told of a little baby whose nanny had been drugged and who had been stolen by "a bald man with a snake on his head". The man smuggled the baby out of the palace in a soundproof carrier to a waiting black van driven by another bald man. Before he could get into the van the security guards saw them. The man with the carrier dropped it in an open basement window and fled on foot. When the guards reached the van, the bald driver showed the guards his papers and was let go. Two hours later the baby was discovered missing.

"I told Father about my dream this morning," Susan told the teacher. "He called the police and told them, too. "

"It's just a nightmare," the teacher reassured her. "All children have them. It's not real."

“But my father said different,” Susan explained, “because of the gift my mother had in being a medical intuit.”

Cameron had witnessed this conversation between his classmate and his teacher. Later that day when he went home, he heard his parents talking about the kidnapping. They read the front-page newspaper headlines of *The Scotsman* which reported the foiled kidnap attempt broken up by local police who found the baby, unharmed, in a soundproof carrier in a Holyrood Palace cellar beneath an open window. The villains, it seems, were two bald men--members of a political group called the Skinheads. One had a large tattoo of a snake on his head.

No mention was made of a five-year-old girl with a bad dream, her mother or her father. That day Cameron learned a medical intuitive was someone with the ability to see in dreams things that were real -- like diseases people had. Susan had inherited part of her mother’s ability.

He never underestimated Susan again. “This American girl is very unusual,” he decided.

Just as these thoughts were winding their way out of his conscious mind, the front page of *The Scotsman* blew across his path. Bending over to pick it up, he grimaced at the bold headlines exposing some of the problems faced by his beloved country and the world at large. He glanced down the page and scanned them all. This is what he read:

OCEAN ‘DEAD ZONES’ DOUBLE IN NUMBER SINCE 1990

Oceans in Crisis

1,000 Whales and Dolphins Die Daily in Fish Nets

Vanishing Tuna

Disaster at sea: global warming hits United Kingdom birds

Polluted Drinking Water World Epidemic

Higher Cancer Rates Found Near Industrial Plants

Scottish College Grads Forced to Leave Country for Work

High Unemployment Results from Business Moving Jobs Offshore

***400 Jobs Lost at Textile firm in Castleblair
....on and on and on...***

“Well, “ thought Cameron, I suppose a new vision might not be such a bad thing. Anyhow, I wonder what Dead Zones are?” And so he read on.

“Dead zones,“ the article read, “are polluted stretches of ocean in which fish cannot survive. In a report released by the United Nations Environment Programme yesterday, more than 150 dead zones were identified across the globe, some larger in area than the country of Ireland.”

OCEAN DEAD ZONES THE SIZE OF IRELAND? He read on.

“ The major cause of dead zones is industrial pollution...which kills small algae and plankton. As these small plankton die, they consume oxygen in water, leaving it unable to sustain fish life....resulting in the term ‘dead zone.’ Some of these dead zones are 27,000 square miles and appear in the Gulf of Mexico, Chesapeake Bay (in America), South America, New Zealand, Japan, and are now spreading to the Baltic Sea and the North Sea. More areas are expected in the future.”

Cameron’s heart sank. He loved the sea and his family spent August at their cottage on the Isle of Skye. Fishing, hiking, nature, and exploring were as much of his life as football and he would give none of it up lightly.

“It’s so logical,” he said, “that pollution be resolved. I wonder what the problem is?”

The other articles--whales dying in fishing nets, sea birds dying because of global warming, unemployment, local workers being pushed out of their jobs--all seemed to show the financial cost of these unsolved problems to Scotland’s people. The solutions, what could be so difficult?

As the headlines stayed suspended in his mind, he mentally turned them in all directions to consider them from different perspectives. Finally, his attention returned to the present.

Scotland was a country of immense contrast. Rich and poor lived worlds apart. In some ways, it was like two countries. If the poor became richer, the rich thought of it as themselves becoming poorer. What was it Susan had said about Win-Win? When two groups make an agreement and both benefit. If that is the case, then it must be that the rich - poor deal was a WIN-LOSE. When one side won, the other one lost. In history, this was always the way.

A puff of breeze snapped the newspaper from his hands and as he reached out to grab it, he had to run several paces to catch it. There, on the inside, was an article about Professor Albertson -- a friend of his father's -- and his new television program on Renaissance art.

"The Renaissance," Cameron thought to himself, "was a shining time in world history. Surely more of a WIN-WIN than today. I wonder what kept it from staying that way?"

As he walked home, his mind turned to sport. He and his best friend Duncan Leck had planned to meet tomorrow to practice some football (soccer, in America) game plans. On the field they played like a well-oiled machine, each anticipating the moves of the other. Cameron was Defender and consistently kept the other team from scoring. Duncan was Center Forward and the highest scorer in the under-13 league. That is, except the time he was injured after last year's victory.

Betting on football (in Scotland and in Europe) involves billions in wealth. There was a private money group trying to introduce betting on championships and to show how much money could be made, they tried to fix the outcome of the game. The game they selected involved Lofthill Academy.

Some visitors who had bet on the other team waited for Duncan to leave practice the week before the big game, jumped out and attacked him. He had to go to hospital and missed the game. Lofthill Academy won anyway with Cameron maintaining a zero scoring run as Defender. His anger had fueled his playing nonstop and inspired the rest of team to play an amazing game.

Because he was seriously injured, it took time for Duncan to heal. Like the international football hero, Scandinavian Henrick Larson who played for Celtic and now plays for Spain, after recovering from a very bad accident, Duncan had a difficult recovery. Critics said Larson would never play again, and today he's a wizard on the pitch. So is Duncan.

Remembering the image of Duncan in hospital, his arms and legs in bandages, brought another thought to mind.

“There will always be those who stand in the way of what is right, “ he thought, “and of the idea of WIN-WIN. And some of those people are very greedy. I suspect Susan has no idea how dangerous something like trying to change the future might be.” The thought made him shiver.

With little warning, the sky became darker as a late afternoon shower threatened to drench Edinburgh. Cameron walked more quickly, rounding the corner of Coates Crescent just as the first rain drops started to fall. He opened the door, walked into the kitchen and reached into the fridge for a cola and two slices of pizza left from the night before.

Little did he know that the force he had identified as greedy and wanting to retain control of the past would be a larger enemy than that faced by his friend Duncan. It would, in fact, hold Cameron’s very life in its hands. The Shadow Force, he would learn, was powerful.