



CHAPTER
1
Egg

YOU'VE PROBABLY SEEN THE ADS for Abby Carnelia's Find-Your-Magic Centers on TV. Or maybe you've seen a Find-Your-Magic Center at the shopping mall, tucked in between the Gap and the drugstore. But Abby Carnelia herself didn't discover her own magical power until she was eleven years old.

This is how it happened.

One Saturday in April, Abby and her little brother, Ryan, were in the kitchen, helping their mom make a chef's salad for lunch. Mrs. Carnelia's version of the chef's salad was basically a big tossed salad with sliced-up ham, turkey, bacon, eggs, and sometimes leftovers from the fridge that really had no business being in a salad.

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Ryan was setting the table. Abby was slicing up the hard-boiled eggs. Mrs. Carnelia walked by with a piece of meatloaf that was about to become salad topping.

“Did you lose an earring, honey?” she asked. “Or are you just going for a lopsided look?”

Abby looked up from the eggs. “What?”

“You’re missing an earring.”

Abby’s hands automatically went up to her earlobes. Sure enough, she could feel the left aquamarine earring still in place. But on the right side, there was nothing but a naked, rubbery, pierced earlobe.

On any other day, she might have run upstairs to look for the other earring, or felt around on the floor, or tried to remember putting them on.

And on any other day, she might have heard any of the three things that people in that kitchen said next. First came Ryan’s wisecrack: “It probably fell in the salad. Chew slowly, people.” (Ryan was eight. Wisecracks were his specialty.)

Then came her mother’s question: “Are you sure you put it on today, honey?”

Then her dad boomed into the kitchen, big and bald. “And good morrow to you, my beetlings!”

(He always said stuff like that. And no, I don’t know what “beetlings” means, either. It’s just what he had

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always called his kids for as long as Abby could remember.)

But this was not any normal day, and Abby didn't hear anything. She was too busy looking at the egg. Staring at it, actually, with just about the weirdest expression you've ever seen on a sixth grader's face.

It was a hard-boiled egg. Just a plain white chicken's egg, like every egg you've ever seen. There was only one thing unusual about it: this egg was *spinning*. Slowly, sitting there on the counter, turning around and around.

Now, in itself, a spinning egg isn't especially freaky. In the history of the world, there have probably been thousands of spinning eggs. There are egg-spinning science experiments, egg-spinning games, and probably world records for spinning eggs. What made this particular spinning egg so unusual was that *nothing had touched it*. Nothing had come anywhere near it. There are very few world records for eggs that start spinning all by themselves, for no reason.

Abby, frowning hard at that egg, reached out to stop it with her hand. *There*. Now it was sitting still, just like an egg is supposed to.

But then a little voice in her head seemed to say: Try it *again!* So for the second time, Abby Carnelia reached up and tugged at her earlobes, just like she had the first time she checked for the missing earring.

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And there it was: the egg started spinning again. By itself.

She was speechless. Even the little voice in her head was speechless.

She stopped the egg again. She tugged her earlobes again. It started spinning again. Always slowly, always the same direction, and always perfectly evenly, without any of the wobble you'd get if you spun an egg with your hand.

Now, Abby loved science. She had spent two years in Brownies, knew how to make a few recipes (which is science, after all), and had been the only girl in fifth grade not to be grossed out when they dissected a frog in science class.

She knew all the basic laws of science, like "What goes up must come down" and "Nature abhors a vacuum." But she had never heard the one that goes, "Eggs spin when you pull on your ears."

Abby's mom repeated her question. "Abby? Are you sure you put on both earrings this morning?"

It was Ryan, though, who first realized that something was going on. He trotted over to see what Abby was looking at. And he saw the egg start spinning by itself.

"WHOA, DUDE!" he said.

Abby came back to earth, noticed him there, and stopped the egg. She picked it up and tapped it on the bowl to crack its shell, ready to peel it, as though nothing had happened.

“What, Ry?” said their mom.

“Abby just did the coolest trick. Do it again!”

But Abby was confused and just a little bit freaked out. A thousand thoughts were crowding her brain, and her stomach was doing the jitterbug.

So she pretended that nothing was going on. She finished peeling the egg and began to slice it. “I was just fooling around,” she managed. “Forget it.”

Of course, you can’t tell an excited eight-year-old boy to forget anything.

“No, c’mon! Do it again!”

Ryan grabbed another hard-boiled egg himself and tried to make it spin the way Abby had. He waved his hands around it. He blew on it. He made ghost noises with his mouth.

“What did you do, blow on it? I bet you blew on it. Show Mom. Mom! Come here! Look at Abby’s egg trick! Hey, Dad! Want to see something cool? Abby did a trick!”

Abby rolled her eyes. “It’s nothing, all right? It’s just a stupid egg.”

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But her parents had now joined her at the counter.

“No egg is stupid,” proclaimed her dad. “Bring forth the trick with all due speed!”

“I’d love to see it, hon,” added her mother.

“Doooooo IT! Doooooo IT! Doooooo IT!” chanted Ryan.

Abby, flustered, didn’t know what to do. She had already sliced up the first egg; it was salad bits at this point. She had no idea if a different egg would work.

Ryan grabbed another one from the bowl, set it on the counter, and flicked at it with his pointer finger. “Do the thing, Abby!”

The little voice in her head said: *Oh, go ahead. Just do the thing.*

Abby nervously pushed her long, dark brown hair back over her shoulders. She steadied this new egg with her hand. Then, as her family watched, she tugged her earlobes.

The egg began to spin by itself. It kept spinning as long as she kept tugging.

“WICKED!” shouted Ryan. “How do you blow it from so far away? No, I know. It’s a magnet! Can I try? Where’s the magnet? Lemme try!”

“That’s great, honey,” said Mrs. Carnelia, giving Abby’s shoulders an affectionate squeeze. “You sure have me fooled!” And she walked away to pour the milk.

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Only Abby's father said nothing. And for him to say nothing was highly unusual. He had a feeling that there was more to this than just a spinning hard-boiled egg.

And, as everyone knows by now, he was absolutely right.

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