



The Promise Book

Completed by Claire Miller

Julia liked to climb to the highest branch of her grandfather's tree. It was very high and very dangerous, but Julia was strong and fearless, so there was nothing to worry about. One day, she brought her grandfather's binoculars with her. She saw the boy next door who played the violin in his bedroom most afternoons. His name was Matthew, and he had very few friends. While looking through the binoculars and scanning across the field to the edge of Matthew's lawn, Julia spied a book. It was in the field and not in Matthew's yard, so Julia climbed down and fetched the book herself. The book was titled THE PROMISE BOOK, but its pages were empty. Perhaps she would use it as a diary. So that night, when Julia was in bed, she picked up the book and opened it to write about her day. To her astonishment, on the first page were the words, "Promise to be a good friend". She was so stunned that she could not write a thing, and she put her book in her backpack for school the next day. The next morning, while walking to school, Julia saw that Matthew was being teased by a few of Julia's good friends. Julia ran up to her friends and . . .

– The Dreamstarter Book

just then remembered what the book said, and happily said towards the three girls with her backpack facing Matthew, "Guys, why are you even wasting your precious breathe teasing this lo.." she was cut of remembering the fine print, instead of saying loser the word that came out was kid. "Stop teasing this kid, what did he do to you?" I stammered with a half smile half smirk on my face. "You know Jules, your right, lets go tease the science club president, Joey." her best friend Linsey giggled and skipped of to where the boy was at a picnic table studying. "Not what I meant!" Julia yelled after her. When she turned towards Matthew, his eyes were gravely fixed on her sagging, dingy backpack. Julia took it off her back and looked at it. She gasped, the zipper was open and anyone who starred long enough at it could see the fancy words "*The Promise Book*" engraved with gold into the leather hard cover.

Julia sprinted across the smooth, grey pavement and towards the empty playground and sprawled onto the wood chips catching her breathe and her thoughts. "This book has to have something to do with Matthew. Ok so, this was near his house, maybe he lost it. Or it maybe his Grandparent's to do with this, it is really old so maybe." she threw the different ideas around in her head like a professional baseball player throws a baseball to home plate. Then the bell rang and she rushed towards the building and caught up with her friends at the main doors.

The rest of the day slowly stretched by. During science, her foot tittered up then down. During English, she twitched a bit more. The rest of the day her foot rapidly tapped as her fingers slowly rolled across the marble. Then there was Spanish, the hardest class at the end of the day, her foot thumped, her fingers rolled and her eyes were glued the small clock plastered on the

brick wall. Then the bell rang, before the teacher could finish his giving the assignment Julia was bounding down the halls, weaving through the crowds, brushing against lockers.

She unlatched her bike off the metal rack, clipped on her helmet and rode home as quickly as she could. As the air blew into her face and through the holes in her foam helmet she tried to guess what the book now said “Would it change or would it stay the same until I was a *really* a great friend” she thought.

When she got home she didn’t bother with opening the book knowing that its magic would not have made any effect yet.

Crouched on her bed the next morning, she carefully peeled open the cover from the sheet of paper and just as she had suspected there was a new order written on the next page. She flipped over to the page before and saw that a note had been tapped to the crinkled page it read; You have done what I told you, do not stop, every morning check me to see what you should do. Julia turned back to the new order and it said, “You may not tell a lie today”.

As Julia locked her bike up to the rack her three best friends came merrily skipping over with a pink note card in their right hand and a green laced envelope in the other. Linsey waved it in Julia’s face, “Did you get one of *these*?” her other friend Megan questioned in a snobby sort of way. Julia happily but forcefully took it out of Linsey’s hand. Before Julia could read the note or answer the question, Grace butted in “Didn’t think so!” she smeared. Julia looked down at the typed note and read;

*You’re Invited to Katy’s 11 Birthday Party!
It’s at my house on the last day of school.
Call me if you can come!*

She looked back up at the three giggling girls and then let out a little crafty smile and said “Actually, I didn’t get invited” trying not to lie. “Oh so sad, Katy is the most popular girl in the WHOLE 5th grade and YOU weren’t invited to her party!” Linsey teased. Then the trio happily darted away to meet up with Katy and her friends to discuss the party.

The whole school day Julia held in her tears. Every time she saw Linsey, Grace or Megan in the hall her eyes would well up with huge salty, crystal tears just from spotting the girls faces. Julia’s friends, her best friends decided to bail on her just because of one invite that she didn’t receive.

Finally the day ended and she rode home as fast as she could, speeding down her street and threw her bike onto the wooden floor of her garage. She bounded up the stairs of her house, swung open her bedroom door, slammed it shut behind her then dove into the comfort of her bed. She didn’t bother getting up for dinner, looking at *THE PROMISE BOOK* or even doing her homework.

The days of May flew by with Julia ever so carefully looking at the new demand in the book, following every one and by the next morning doing what it said all over again. Until the last day of school, as she read the new note, her throat dried up like the Sahara Desert, her tongue felt to big for he mouth and her eyes looked like they were going to pop.

The note had said,

*You have taken advantage of me for to long.
What you have to do now is to either tell everyone that it was the one making you so nice or you can pass on the book to someone else and you will no longer ever have someone telling you what to do, therefore you will no longer be the nicest person in school.*

“Oh my gosh! This can’t be happening! I mean, I was sort of nice before this, I can’t hand it on because then everyone will know my secret and I can’t tell everyone it was the book then they will never talk to me again! And I can’t hand it on because that person will know it was me, then they will probably tell the whole school! Ahhh!” Julia moaned to herself sitting on the her living room couch.

For the rest of the day Julia was in a sluggish mood, even the fact that Katy’s Party was over and Linsey, Grace and Megan were her friends again didn’t make her feel like her old happy, kind, gentle, peaceful self again.

At lunch she sat with the three girls but everything they said just sounded like the wind blowing or the waves crashing on the beach; normal and boring. The only thing that was on her mind was the book.

After that she slouchily walked toward her locker and just as she was about to take out her math text book she spied a note tapped under her science binder. Holding her breathe, she slowly slid the scrap paper off the binder and read the scratchy hand writing,

Give up the book or else!

You have ‘til Friday.

Julia let out her breathe and walked like a stiff soldier to her math class, still not sure of what to do. “What could “or else” mean? Who was leaving the notes for her?” she wondered as she flopped into her chair. Then just as her teacher started into her daily lecture on brain cells the fire alarm went off.

Everyone hurried in a single file line into the mid-June air. Whenever the students started to talk and giggle the principle would look at them with a stern face. There was a long wait so the standing students turned into sitting students and the annoyed teachers turned into frustrated teachers. Then finally a short, fat man ran out of the building and yelled “False alarm! You are free to come back inside!” then got into his truck and stated the engine.

Everyone hurried back inside to finish their classes. Just as Julia stepped into the math room she realized that she had brought *THE PROMISE BOOK* with her into math but left it there during the fire drill. She gasped and sprinted to her desk. The book was gone.

“I guess that the person or thing that left the note in my locker thought that time was up.” she cried to herself as she dodged her way to the girls’ room and cried as the rest of the school day slipped away.

As she left the bathroom she spotted Matthew with a group of kids surrounding him. Julia got onto her tip toes and peered behind someone’s head and saw that he was holding *THE PROMISE BOOK*.

“So it was him all along.” Julia sneered with a crafty smile on her face as she silently walked to the bike rack, “Watch out Matthew Haynes, watch out.” she chuckled to herself.