

In the vacant lot next door, weeds grew waist high, except where Pete and Weasel had cleared a path. That path lead from the hole they'd cut in Aunt Lizzy's hedge to their bike jump. As Pete pumped his way through the hedge, the wind picked up and whipped those weeds around something fierce. He pulled up short and looked up at the sky, hoping they weren't in for another hurricane. Even after living in Hadleyville for over a year, he wasn't used to wind that sent cows and cars into other counties.

He aimed his bike toward the lot, gripped the handlebars, and was about to push off when the ground rumbled under his tennis shoes like it used to back home.

Earthquake?

Not that AND hurricanes.

He waited with his heart doing thud-thud, thud-thud against his ribs and the wind pelting his face.

When the wind stopped, a creepy hush followed. New hamsters joined the couple already chasing each other in his stomach, so, while he faced the weedy lot, a whole rodent family scabbled around inside him.

He focused on the bike jump again. Standing on the pedals, he pumped, got up to speed and bore down on the sloped plywood. When the wheels hit the wood, the tires swerved and yanked the handlebars to the right. He rolled to the side and landed with a whump on his back, tires whirring next to his head.

Everything spun—a blurry sky, dirt, a house. The earth rumbled underneath him again and settled to quiet.

Too quiet.

He turned onto his stomach, and, staying with one ear to the ground, waited for his head to clear. Then he wiggled all ten fingers and stretched out his arms. Those worked. Getting to his feet, he stomped a couple of times to see if his legs would hold under him, then he blotted his bloody elbow on his T-shirt.

As he brushed the dirt off and looked up, he froze. He was in the shadow of something big, a shadow that couldn't be there. Nothing was on this lot but weeds.

Nothing except... He rubbed both eyes. Wooden steps. A porch. A... door!

The scream stayed inside his head. All he could do was blink because where the vacant lot and his bike ramp used to be, stood a house the size of the Hadleyville library—a house he'd never seen in his life.

Or had he?