



Deachy and Keen

THE HAUNTED HALLS

by Jason Tharp

and J. B. Rose



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✧ ✧ Fellow Dreamer, ✧ ✧
Chasing your big dreams can sometimes be
✧ scary. You must believe you are much braver ✧
and stronger than you realize. Don't be scared!
Keep chasing. Keep Dreaming.
You're purr-fect just the way you are.



Be the weird YOU want
to see in the world!

I believe in you,
Jason



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ISBN 978-1-338-27130-0

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

18 19 20 21 22

Printed in the U.S.A.
First printing 2018

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Book design by Suzanne LaGasa

A Scare to Remember



“Gertie, you have to duck down! He’s gonna see your horn through the window!”

Keen the dog and Gertie the unicorn were on either side of a closed classroom door at Happy Tails School, crouched down, waiting. If any of the other students walking, hopping, or slithering by thought this was strange, they didn’t show it.

“Are you sure this is the best idea?” Gertie asked Keen, her eyes darting around suspiciously.

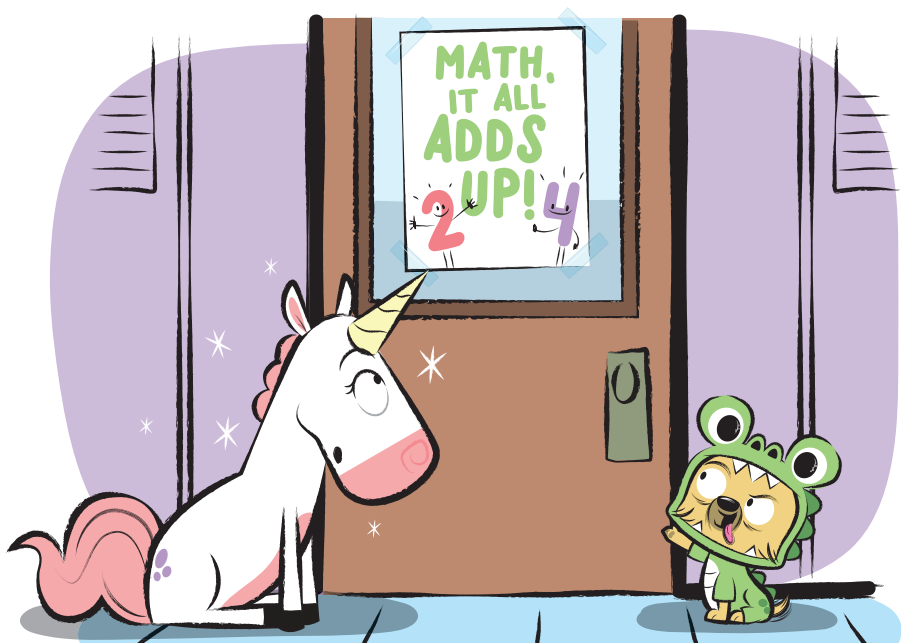
“Of course!” said Keen. “I still can’t believe you’ve never heard about the Happy Tails Super Scare-Off.”

“I’m still not sure if I *totally* get it,” Gertie admitted. “Everyone just takes turns scaring each other? What’s the point?”

“It’s a tradition!” Keen said excitedly, forgetting to

keep his voice to a whisper. “It starts today and goes until Halloween—whoever pulls off the best scare is the winner!”

“And you think jumping out at Nanner when he leaves his makeup math test is going to win the best scare of all?” Gertie asked.



“Nooo . . .” said Keen, trying to be patient. “We’re just getting warmed up! I can’t pull out my best scare right away! When Hot Diggity Dog is fighting off bad

guys, he doesn't go to his number-one-super-secret weapon, the lasso made of bacon, right away, does he?"

Gertie had never watched *Hot Diggity Dog*, Keen's favorite TV show, so she wasn't exactly sure how to answer that—luckily, she didn't have to. Through the closed door, they heard a voice say, "Okay, Nanner, time's up! Put down the pencil."



"Shhh!" Keen hissed at Gertie urgently, even though he had been the one talking. "On the count of three," he whispered.

They heard footsteps walking toward the other side of the door. They tried not to giggle as they waited for Nanner. Together, Gertie and Keen counted: "One . . . two . . . THREE!"

“BOO!”

“ARGHHHH!”

A giant gray shape was suddenly flying in the air in front of them. The sound that came from it was so loud that Keen and Gertie were almost scared themselves. The shape jumped so high it clunked against the ceiling before landing back down on the ground. Finally, Keen and Gertie saw what had happened. It hadn't been Nanner walking through the door first at all. Instead it had been—





“Principal Trunx!” Gertie squeaked. “We’re so sorry! I can’t—we didn’t—Nanner—we thought—” she sputtered. She was too shocked to form a full sentence.

“We thought you were Nanner,” Keen said quickly. In his head, all he could think was: *We are in so much trouble.*

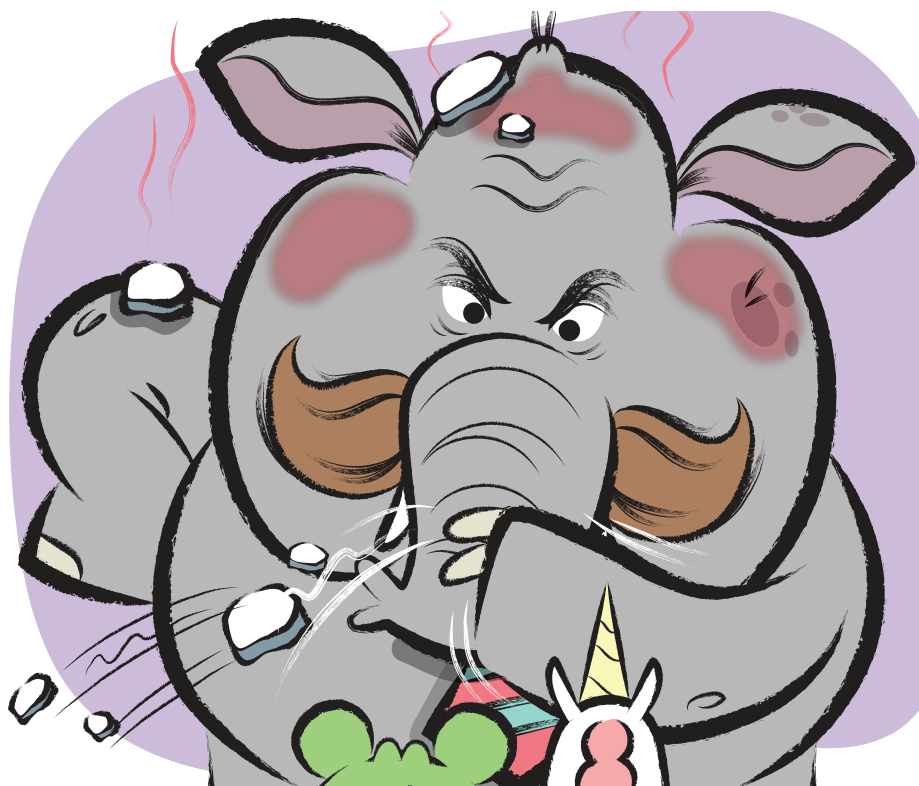
Principal Trunx, a large elephant with a large brown mustache and an even larger dislike for Keen and his friends, stared at them. His face was getting very red. Keen wasn’t sure if that was from anger or embarrassment. Maybe a little of both. He stood up and brushed himself off.

“And do you usually greet your friends in such a juvenile way?” Principal Trunx asked in a dignified voice.

He stared down his long trunk at them and waited for a response.

“Well,” Keen said in a small voice, “it’s the Super Scare-Off this week—” Gertie nudged him. She may have been new to this particular Happy Tails Halloween tradition, but even *she* had a feeling that it was probably not a good idea to mention it to their very strict principal.

“Happy Tails School does not support such a thing!” Principal Trunx boomed. “This is a place of learning, not some circus fun house! You’re very lucky that I, uh, was definitely not scared at all!”



“Really? I mean, you flew pretty high in the air—” Keen couldn’t help himself.

“I was merely giving you an example of why this silly game will not be tolerated,” Principal Trunx interrupted. “In a demonstration of how terrified, uh, some students could get, if they weren’t as clever as me to know that it was coming. I better not see such a display again.”

With that, Principal Trunx continued down the hall, giving menacing looks at every student he passed. Gertie and Keen looked at each other in shock for a moment before they burst out laughing.

“Did you see his face?” Keen howled.

“Yeah, sure, he *totally* knew it was coming,” Gertie joked. “Just like I’m a magical, imaginary creature. Yeah, right!”

“I’m glad I took my time packing up my books!” said a stylishly accessorized monkey standing in the doorway. It was Nanner, the student they’d been trying to scare all along!

