

Gale-Force #10 - "Grydll"

Written by Steven Bland

One night, a male fairy child flew into the bedroom of a suburban house where two young boys were sleeping. The young boys woke up and saw the male fairy child hovering over their bed.

"Shhh," the male fairy child whispered to the boys.

"Who are you?" One of the young boys asked in a whispering tone.

"I'm Grydll," the male fairy child answered. "And I'm your new best friend."

"How would you like to come with me to a magical faraway place where you can be free to play, do what you want, and have lots and lots of fun?" A whispering Grydll asked.

"Oh boy," the other boy whispered excitedly with a happy smile, which soon faded.

"But, how do we get to this magical place?" He asked, still whispering.

"By flying," the whispering Grydll answered.

"But, we can't fly," the first boy whispered.

"I'll soon fix that," the whispering Grydll said before getting out a pouch and taking some special dust out of it. Then, the male fairy child sprinkled the dust on each of the young boys.

Soon, the young boys started to defy gravity.

"Now, quickly," the whispering Grydll told the boys. "Follow me."

The young boys soon flew off and followed Grydll out of the bedroom window.

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The next day, at her house, Dorothy Donaldson came down to the kitchen for breakfast, where she heard a news report on the television.

"The mysterious wave of nighttime child abductions continues," the TV newscaster said. "Curiously, the only children who were abducted were young boys. Experts at the Federal Bureau of Investigations are stumped."

I'll need to look into this as Gale-Force, Dorothy thought.

"In other news, Aron Hightower, chairman of Hightower Tech, has announced that he will create a new superhero team," the newscaster continued. "Hightower said that he was inspired by the arrival of superheroes like the Techni-Crusader, the Sprintress, the Blue Mantis, and Gale-Force, as well as the return of the Deliverer and the debut of the new superhero team, Freedom's Foursome."

"Hightower has also said that he will hold a membership drive for his superhero team, provide the headquarters and its state-of-the-art equipment, and fund it as well," the newscaster added.

Dorothy turned toward her mother.

"I'll bet I could join Mr. Hightower's superhero team as Gale-Force," Dorothy said. "I could be a huge help to them."

"You could," Jane said. "But then, if you reveal your true identity to them later on, they wouldn't let you be part of the team anymore. Having a team member who's really a fifteen-year-old girl from Kansas City Missouri would raise too many questions for them."

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"And even Gale-Force can't be everywhere at once," Jane added. "Besides, what if they have a mission that happens during the day between Monday and Friday? They would expect you to cut school so that Gale-Force could help them save the world."

"You're right," Dorothy said. "And I probably wouldn't have time for my friends, like Emma."

"Maybe some other time," she added with a smile.

Meanwhile, at the headquarters of the New York Harbor Patrol, Eric Larson and his fellow patrol officers were also watching the TV news announcement of Aron Hightower's superhero team.

Turning away from his colleagues, Eric secretly got out his simple wooden stick and looked at it.

Perhaps I will join this 'superhero team' this Aron Hightower is putting together, he thought. I just might meet other noble warriors as powerful as I.

Later, at school, Dorothy Donaldson talked to her friend Emma Lowell.

"Dorothy, guess what?" An excited and ecstatic Emma Lowell asked. "Brad has two tickets to a rock concert tonight and he just invited me."

"That's great," Dorothy said. "I'm really happy for you."

Then, Emma's elation turned to disappointment.

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"But, I promised Mr. and Mrs. Peterson that I would babysit their eight-year-old son Nicholas tonight," Emma said.

Hmmm, Nicholas might become the next victim of that mysterious kidnapper, Dorothy thought.

"Tell you what, Em," Dorothy said. "Why don't *I* babysit Nicholas for you, so that you and Brad can go to the rock concert?"

"You'd do that for me?" A happy Emma asked.

"Of course," Dorothy said with a smile. "We're besties, aren't we?"

"So, you and Brad enjoy yourselves tonight, okay?" Dorothy added.

"Thank you, Dorothy," a happy Emma said. "Thank you so much."

"We'll need to call the Petersons and let them know," Dorothy cautioned.

"You got it," Emma said as she got out her smartphone and dialed the number for the Petersons.

Soon, she got an answer.

"Mrs. Peterson? This is Emma Lowell," Emma said. "I won't be able to babysit little Nicholas tonight. Something came up."

"But my friend, Dorothy Donaldson said she would fill in for me," Emma added. "She's with me right now."

There was a brief pause.

"You're okay with it?" Emma asked. "Great."

"Let me talk to her," Dorothy said.

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Emma handed Dorothy the phone.

"Hello, Mrs. Peterson," Dorothy said. "I'm Dorothy Donaldson, Emma's best friend. I'll be taking over the babysitting duties tonight."

There was another brief pause.

"You want me at five thirty?" Dorothy asked. "No problem. I'll be there."

Dorothy handed the smartphone back to Emma.

"See you later, Em," Dorothy said before leaving. "I've got to get to my next class."

"Sure thing, Dorothy," Emma said before leaving also. "And thanks again."

Later that afternoon, at five thirty, in New York City, the Deliverer arrived at Hightower Tech, along with Patriot Prime, Beehive, and Njord, to see Aron Hightower, who had been expecting them.

"Mr. Hightower, sir," Patriot Prime said. "I would like to join your superhero team."

"Me, too," Beehive added.

"You can count me in," the Deliverer added.

"And me, as well," Njord added.

"Lady and gentlemen," Hightower said with a warm smile. "Welcome to the Justifiers."

Meanwhile, Dorothy arrived at the Peterson home and rang the doorbell.

Mrs. Peterson answered.

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"Hi, I'm Dorothy Donaldson," Dorothy said. "I'm here to babysit Nicholas."

"Come in, dear," Mrs. Peterson said. Dorothy complied. She soon saw Mr. Peterson as soon as she stepped inside.

"I'm Helen Peterson," Mrs. Peterson said.

"And this is my husband, Joe Peterson," Helen said as she introduced Dorothy to him.

"Hello, Dorothy," Mr. Peterson said as he and Dorothy shook hands

"Hello, Mr. Peterson," Dorothy said.

"Nicholas, honey," Helen called. "Come in here. There's someone here I want you to meet."

A young eight-year-old boy soon entered. He had short blond hair and freckles.

"And this is our eight-year-old son, Nicholas," Helen said. "Nicholas, this is Dorothy Donaldson. She will be your babysitter tonight. And I want you to listen to her, okay?"

"Okay, Mommy," Nicholas said.

Dorothy and Nicholas shook hands.

"Hello, Nicholas," Dorothy said.

"Hi," Nicholas said.

"Ready for dinner and a movie, hon?" Joe asked his wife.

"Yes, dear," Helen answered, before turning her attention to Dorothy.

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"Dorothy, Nicholas has to be in bed by eight-thirty tonight," Helen said. "If anything happens, you will find a list of emergency phone numbers on the fridge. And we have plenty of food here in case you get hungry. So please help yourself."

"Sure thing, Mrs. Peterson," Dorothy said. "And don't worry about Nicholas. I'll take good care of him."

"I'm sure you will," Helen said before she and Joe paused to go to their son.

"Goodbye, Nicholas," Helen said as she kissed her son.

"We'll be back soon, son," Joe said.

"Bye, Mommy. Bye Daddy," Nicholas said.

Joe and Helen Peterson turned around and walked out the door which soon closed behind them.

As the hours progressed, Dorothy and Nicholas played and watched television together. Soon, it was a few minutes before eight-thirty.

"Okay, Nicholas," Dorothy said. "Time to brush your teeth and get ready for bed."

"Okay, Dorothy," Nicholas said before doing what he was told.

At exactly eight thirty, Dorothy tucked little Nicholas into his bed.

"Pleasant dreams, Nicholas," Dorothy said with a smile.

"Good night, Dorothy," Nicholas said before nodding off.

Quietly leaving the bedroom, Dorothy gently closed the door behind her.

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Focusing on her benefactors, the Scarecrow, the Tin Woodsman, the Lion, and Locasta Tattypoo, Dorothy clicked the heels of her white shoes once.

"WHOOSH!" A magic cyclone rose up around her and transformed her into Gale-Force.

Now I'm ready, the superheroine thought.

Cracking the door ajar, Gale-Force kept a secret vigil over Nicholas.

Soon, she saw the male child fairy fly into Nicholas's bedroom through the window.

I'm guessing that's the mysterious child kidnapper, she thought.

Gale-Force quickly opened the door and raced in.

"Get away from him" The superheroine demanded.

The male child fairy quickly flew out the window. Gale-Force, using the Lion's speed and agility, quickly jumped out the same window to follow the sprite, only to see him attempting to fly higher and farther away.

He won't get far, the superheroine thought as she clicked the heels of her magic silver boots twice and summoned a powerful cyclone which she used to suck the male child fairy downward until he was at ground level.

"Who are you?" Gale-Force asked. "And why are you after Nicholas?"

"I'm Grydll," the male child fairy answered. "And I'm here to take my new friend to a place where we can have some fun."

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"Forget it," Gale-Force said. "He's staying put."

"And if you want him," she added. "You'll have to go through me first."

"Very well," Grydll said.

The male child fairy manifested a sentient shadow monster from his own body

"SIC HER," Grydll told his shadow monster, which attacked Gale-Force.

A shadow monster, the superheroine thought. And it's *strong*.

While the superheroine struggled with the shadow monster, Grydll quickly flew back into the window and took Nicholas.

I've got to get it off me, she thought.

As the shadow creature tried to bite her, Gale-Force transformed her body into organic tin, making her impervious to the monster's bite. Then, she threw the shadow creature off of her.

That takes care of Grydll's pet, the superheroine thought as she looked around and converted her body back to flesh and blood. Now for - -

Oh, no. I'm too late, she thought as she saw Grydll and Nicholas flying out the window and higher into the sky.

As Grydll and Nicholas faded into the distance in the sky, the sprite's shadow monster disappeared.

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Grydll's shadowy pet is gone. And so is its master and his young captive, the superheroine thought. I've got to get Nicholas - - and all of the other boys - - back to their families, and I won't rest until I do!

But first I'll need to make a pit stop, she thought before clicking her heels three times and focusing on her destination, which was the inside of a Best Buy store.

But, first, I'll need something that will give me an edge against Grydll's shadow monster, should he ever use it against me again.

Quickly, she looked for flashlights that provided bright light. Soon, she found what she was looking for.

Perfect, she thought. Shadows can't stand bright light.

After placing some cash on the counter for the flashlight, Gale-Force focused on being in Glinda's realm while clicking her heel three times and holding onto her purchase.

In an instant, Gale-Force appeared at her desired destination.

"Gale-Force," Glinda said as she greeted the superheroine. "What brings you here, my champion?"

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"A sprite who calls himself Grydll is kidnapping little boys all around the world," Gale-Force responded. "I tried to stop him from kidnapping a young boy I was babysitting, but Grydll summoned his shadow monster and sicced it on me. While I was struggling with the creature, that mischievous sprite kidnapped the boy."

"I bought a bright flashlight which would hopefully give me an edge, but I don't know where Grydll's home could be," the superheroine added. "I was hoping your crystal screen could help me locate him."

Glinda and Gale-Force turned to the crystal screen. It showed Grydll and all of the boys he kidnapped, including Nicholas, on an island that was off the coast of Belize at the Turneffe Atoll.

"Thanks, Glinda," Gale-Force said with a smile before focusing on the location and clicking her heels three times.

In an instant, Gale-Force magically arrived at her destination and appeared before Grydll and his lost boys.

"It's over, Grydll," the superheroine said. "Your playmates are going home! *All* of them!"

"*NO*," Grydll exclaimed. "*YOU CAN'T TAKE THEM AWAY FROM ME! I WON'T LET YOU!*"

With that, the sprite manifested his shadow monster.

"STOP HER," Grydll commanded.

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The shadow creature pounced.

"I'm ready for you *this time*, Grydll," Gale-Force said as she used Locasta Tattypoo's Teleport Dash to evade the beast. Taking advantage of the shadow monster's confusion, the superheroine, using the Lion's enhanced speed and reflexes, quickly brought out and turned on her new bright flashlight.

The shadowy creature pounced at Gale-Force who teleported dashed out of the way. With the Lion's enhanced speed and reflexes, the superheroine shined her bright flashlight on the beast. The creature was soon vanquished.

"NOOOOO," an anguished Grydll cried out. "MY SHADOW CREATURE!"

Gale-Force turned her attention to the male child fairy who was sobbing.

"Why did you do it?" She asked. "Why did you kidnap all of those small boys?"

"Because I wanted some friends to play with," Grydll answered. "And besides, I was doing those boys a favor by freeing them from a world full of grown-ups."

"How? By taking them from their parents who love them and will do anything to protect them?" The superheroine asked. "And, how will these boys survive on this island? They can't fend for themselves!"

"Well, the trees here have plenty of fruit and nuts," Grydll answered.

"You think that's going to be enough for them?" Gale-Force asked. "They can't live on that alone forever! It would only be a matter of time before they starve to death!"

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"And your new little friends won't stay children forever! What will you do when they become adults?" She added.

"Well, I'd have to thin the herd," Grydll answered. "Growing up here is a no-no."

"So you would just *kill them*?" An angry Gale-Force asked.

"Well, - - yeah," Grydll sheepishly admitted.

"That's *it!* Say goodbye to your little friends," a still angry Gale-Force said. "Because they're going back to their homes where they belong!"

"AND IF YOU *EVER* COME AFTER *ANY* OR *ALL* OF THESE KIDS AGAIN," she told the male child fairy. "YOU'LL ANSWER TO *ME!* GOT IT?!"

A shamed Grydll nodded his head.

Gale-Force turned her attention to all of Grydll's victims.

"Okay, kids! All of you gather around me," the superheroine told all of the young boys, who did as they were told.

"Let's all join hands," Gale-Force told them. Again, they did as they were told.

I don't know were each of these children live, the superheroine thought. So, I'll take them to Ozma. With the aid of her Enchanted Belt, she might be able to help me.

With the lost boys and Gale-Force joining hands, the superheroine focused on Ozma's palace and clicked her heels three times. She, and they, were transported to their destination in an instant.

"Greetings, Gale-Force," Ozma said.

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"Hello, Ozma," Gale-Force said. "All of these young boys were kidnapped all over America by a male child fairy who called himself Grydll."

"These kids have families who are worried about them and don't know where they are," the superheroine added. "But I don't know where each of them live. Can you use your Enchanted Belt to help me?"

"I can and I will," Ozma replied with a smile.

Using the power of her Enchanted Belt, Ozma wished for each of the young boys to be reunited with their families.

"It is done," the princess said.

"Thank you, Ozma," Gale-Force said. "Now, all I have to do is get back to one of the boys and greet him."

Focusing on the inside of the Peterson house and the outside of Nicholas's bedroom, the superheroine clicked her heels three times.

In an instant, Gale-Force arrived at her destination.

Focusing on her desire to resume her civilian identity, the superheroine clicked the heels of her Magic Silver Boots once.

"WHOOSH!" A magic cyclone rose up around her and transformed her into Dorothy Donaldson.

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Dorothy opened the door to check on Nicholas. She smiled as she saw the eight-year-old boy still sleeping soundly in his bed.

Soon, she heard the door open.

"Dorothy?" Helen's voice called. "We're home."

Dorothy went to greet the Petersons.

"Mr. and Mrs. Peterson, hi," Dorothy said. "How was the movie?"

"It was very good," Helen replied. "How was Nicholas?"

"He was great. No trouble at all," Dorothy answered before leading them to the boy's room.

Once there, Dorothy opened the door and showed Joe and Helen their son sleeping peacefully in his bed.

"He's in bed right now, sleeping soundly," Dorothy said quietly.

"Thank you, Dorothy," Joe said as he took out his wallet. Then, he took out a few dollar bills.

"Here's twenty dollars. You've done a great job," Joe said as he handed the cash to Dorothy.

"Thank you," Dorothy said. "And you're welcome."

"Maybe sometime, you can babysit for us again," Helen said.

"Sure," Dorothy said. "But, if I'm not available, there's always my friend, Emma Lowell."

The next morning, in the Donaldson household, Dorothy and her mother listened to a news report on the television. The newscaster had good news.

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"Last night, a miraculous thing happened," the TV newscaster said. "All of the young boys who had been mysteriously kidnapped during the nighttime have most recently been reunited with their families."

The newscaster then showed footage of all the grateful parents.

"I don't know how it happened," said one thankful parent. "But, I'm glad it did."

"I am so thankful that my child is safe," said another.

Dorothy smiled and looked up.

Thank you, Ozma, she thought.

"In other news," the TV newscaster said. "Aron Hightower has just unveiled his new superhero team."

A feed cut to the billionaire tech mogul who was standing side-by-side with the Deliverer, Patriot Prime, Beehive, and Njord.

"Ladies and gentlemen," Aron said proudly. "I give you - - THE JUSTIFIERS!"

THE END

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