My Superhero's

By Alisson Knopp

There are many moments in life that can define a person in your eyes. One of these moments happened to me on a hot summer day when I was 4 years-old …

We were outside our home on Wallamette St, with the company of my elder brother and sister's friends, partaking in the oldest of kid summer traditions: aka Water Fight! Everyone involved was broken into three teams; one girl team led by my sister, Larissa; and two boy team's, one led by Jason (the oldest), the other led by Ian & Sean (the twins). Each team leader picked their friends, of course, except Rissa, who had me as an addition on her team.

Now the rules of our battles were the same as capture the flag. Each team picked a toy from their own little trove and hid it somewhere within their domain (for the girl's team it was my precious Little Bo Peep Barbie doll). Then the other team(s) had to sneak in and try to steal it, whilst we repaid them the same courtesy. You were considered "dead" depending on how soaked you were and the inside of the house was most definitely off limits.

The girl's command was the whole front yard, including the huge evergreen and the sunflower patch. It was decided that Bo would be hidden in the evergreen and that guards would be posted around the patch to mislead the enemy. I was sent out with two other girls to try and sneak into Jason's territory while three more were sent to infiltrate the Twin's camp.

Jason had chosen the right side of the backyard, which meant we had to shimmy down a rock slide to get there. Once we were down, we slid along the side of the house

until we reached the corner and then peered out. On the other side, we saw Patrick and Scotty with Jason, huddled together in the corner directly opposite us, in a little alcove made by the trees lining our property. There were five other boys in Jason's group--Brad, Jeff, Brian, John, and Austin—who were all doing perimeter. It was our guess that Jason and company were hiding their flag. We continued watching as the three boys finished what they were doing and then started back to headquarters ourselves to report.

That was when I saw it. A small opening in the shrubbery, right across from where we had been hiding. I looked to where the others had already begun to scramble back up the rocks, and then back to the hole. I took a step toward safety, then did an about-face and ran for the gap in my eldest brother's defenses. I dove for it and safely made it in, before either the two girls or the sentries could notice. Nimbly I hopped up and started the perilous journey into the dark, un-probed belly of the beast.

I crawled, ducked, hopped and climbed my way for about 5 minutes trying to be as quite as I could, and thinking all the while 'what the *heck* was I doing'? Larissa hadn't even wanted me to go out and scout but was forced to since I was the smallest, thus the only one to comfortably sidle down the rocky path. I was risking a lot by doing this without her okay, but the threat of what Rissa would do to me if I got caught seemed to only strengthen my resolve to come back victorious.

As I stepped over the last fallen branch, I saw the little niche where Jason and his two best friends had been. After checking to make sure no one was about I slipped in and began to look for anything that might be Jason's flag. I started by looking on the ground behind tree's and under bushes. My search was for not though and I was just about to

give up when I heard approaching footsteps. And again I was diving for the cover of the underbrush.

"Come on, Jase." I heard the impatience in Scot's voice as they came closer.

"I doubt anyone's gonna find it, even *if* they get close enough to look." That one was Patty. It seemed that they had come to check on the flag. (Jason tends to be something of a 'Nervous Nelly' during these types of things.)

"Just wait a minute and then we can go. You never know what those little guys are capable of." Jason's slight voice came from right in front of me as he shuffled about the small nook. I slowly shifted to the left to get a better look at what he was doing, and saw him reaching up to a kinda low hanging branch and feel around. Apparently everything was as it should be, since he brought his hand back down and left with Patrick and Scotty without sounding the alarm.

When they left I scurried out of the bushes and up the tree to the branch my brother's hand recently vacated. It was there that his treasure was hidden; nestled firmly in the notch where limb meets body was a green, little stuffed frog. I stared at it for a moment, shocked that had actually been able to find the thing. After a moment I shook my self back to reality and quickly grabbed toy before descending. I re-entered the foliage and disappeared into the gloom.

On my way back I couldn't help but fantasize about my glorious return, how Rissa wouldn't see me as extra baggage but as someone who could help. When I made it back to the opening I again checked for guards before heading out, the distance to the corner of the house seemed a bit farther then before but I blamed that merely on nerves. I started out across the way and was 'bout halfway their when I heard the yell.

“Stop!! Hey, kid, what do ya think you’re doing?” I paused and turned saw Jeff standing only a few feet away.

“Uhh…”

“That’s what I thought.” Jeff raised his right hand, drew back and released. I saw the water-balloon arch through the air and crouched down bracing for impact.

Funny thing though—never came.

I glance up and see an absolutely *livid* Jason. At first I think he’s mad at me for taking the frog, but he’s not looking at me; he’s looking at Jeff. The whole front of his shirt was soaked.

“What are you DOING!!?” I’m completely stunned. Jason, the one brother I’ve never ever heard raise his voice, was in fact, yelling. “You can’t throw a water balloon at Ali! Do you NOT know how hard those things are? You, Hoser! You could’ve hurt her!!”

Jeff said something back and Jason replied in turn, but I wasn’t listening. All I could see was Jason’s wet shirt and how mad his face looked. Scotty and Patrick came up with confused looks.

“Man, what happened?”

Jason never took his eyes off Jeff. “I’ll tell you what happened. This guy tried to peg Alisson with a water-balloon.” Both boy’s looked shocked and looked at me.

“Are you alright, Ali?” Patrick asked.

I didn’t say anything, only clutched my prize hard to my chest and stared back at them. Jason started at Patty addressing me and then he too, turned hi attention to me.

“*Are* you ok, Al?” he repeated. “What’cha ya have there?” A reassuring smile touched his lips trying to tell me he wasn’t mad anymore.

Bit by bit I unfurled my hands from around the small toy and held it out to him.

“Sorry.” I whispered, hanging my head.

“Holy crap! She found it.” Scot exclaimed leaning in closer.

“Yep.” Jason said, he sounded… happy?

I looked up to see a wide grin on my older brother’s face and looks of utter astonishment covering Patrick’s and Scot’s.

“Well, you found it so why are you still in enemy territory?” he asked me. Grins slowly slid in to replace the confusion on the other two’s faces as even greater confusion appeared on Jeff’s.

“What? You’re gonna let her go? With the flag?”

Jason shot him a look that could have curdled milk. “Yes. And you’re not going to say anything about it. Right?”

Jeff opened his mouth, then closed it shaking his head. “Whatever.” He mumbled, turning away.

Jason looked back at me. “You’re still here? Go on and go!” he gave me a little push and I took off.

I was almost home free when I turned back and ran to them, giving all three hugs (and Jason a bonus kiss); then just as quickly I sprinted across the boundary line.

After scampering up the rock wall, I dashed over to Larissa.

“Alisson! Where have you been? We’ve been looking everywhere. What happened? Why didn’t you come bac-“

“Rissa! Look! I have Jason’s frog!” I held up the small toy again and a hush fell over our little troop.

“How’d you get that?”

I opened my mouth ready to tell of my adventure when Larissa held up her own hand in the universal stop signal. “On second thought, tell me later. Let’s go share our obvious victory with the boy’s.” she said, holding up Ian’s Woody doll with a smile, her right pant leg was damp and a few girls were soaked.

I grinned back and followed her through the house to the back porch. Over looking the backyard, we saw the other two teams in all out war, with an undefined border as to whose land was whose. Rissa sent out a piercing whistled and the fighting gradually halted.

“We, the ***girls*** team, have something for the rest of you to see.” She looked at me, “Would you like to do the honors?”

I nodded and stepped forward, taking Woody from her and thrusting him into the air next to Bob the Frog (personal nickname).

The whole crowd stood in a dumbfound silence except for three persons near the back who had identical smirks covering the lower halves of their faces…

That was my first success, the day that Rissa looked at me fully as one of the group, not just a tag-along. And it’s all thanks to those three 11 year-old boy’s, my version of the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles (minus one of course). I don’t think I can see these guy’s as anything else, even now, with them all grown up, and married. They’ll always be there protecting me and encouraging me to succeed. My Superhero’s.