

# **LAND OF LIES**

**AUTHOR**

**Christopher Mackenzie Glover**



## CHAPTER ONE: NEW KID IN TOWN

"What does your mother do for a living Clara?" asked Mrs. Trussworthy.

All eyes in the room were squarely aimed at Clara Gorman. She felt their gaze heating up her cheeks until they were ready to burst into flames.

"She works at the hospital. She's a brain surgeon," Clara blurted out.

"Oh my!" exclaimed Mrs. Trussworthy to her grade six class. "She's what you call a neurosurgeon. Excellent!"

"Yeah a 'nemosurgeon' that's right," stammered Clara.

"What about your father?" Mrs. Trussworthy asked again. "He's an architect," Clara beamed proudly. "He came here to Oshawa to help build the new nuclear plant."

"And what do you do for fun Clara?" inquired Mrs. Trussworthy. "I read lots of

books and do gymnastics and sometimes skating," said Clara.

"Well very good and welcome to Harmony Heights Public School. And I can't wait to meet your parents in a few weeks. Okay class enough questions about our new classmate. Now let's get back to our studies."

Clara had an uneasy feeling in the pit of her stomach when she heard her parents would be coming to meet her teacher. She spent her first recess standing in a corner of the playground all alone. Suddenly two girls from her class came up to her. They were wearing identical red coats. A crest on the front said Jumpin' Jymnastics.

"Hi I'm Ariana Jeffrey and this is my friend Kaylee Miller," said a very cute girl with short sandy brown hair. "We heard you say you do gymnastics, is that right?"

Clara looked at the crest on their coats again. In her old hometown of Hartland, Ontario she went to the local gymnastics club. She had heard of Jumpin Jymnastics. They were a triple 'A' club and had won many awards.

"Yeah I belonged to Genny's Gymnastics. They were 4A," bragged Clara.

"That's funny, I never heard of them," said Kaylee.

"Well we only competed against teams from other countries. Last year we had competitions against China and the United States. We were too good for local clubs," Clara said conceitedly.

"Wow!" said Ariana. "I hope you can join our club and help us become 4A too."

"I'll have to ask my mom. I may have to get a private coach this year," Clara said with a little hesitation.

"Yeah, if my mom were a doctor and my dad an architect, I guess I'd have a private coach," said Ariana jealously.

"You have a big house too?" asked Kaylee.

Clara hesitated, "Yeah... and it's got a big pool."

"That sounds good. Could we come over sometime?" inquired Kaylee.

"Uh, oh, uh not right now. Some men are fixing our house up."

Just then the bell rang to end recess.

## **CHAPTER TWO: FOUND OUT!**

As the weeks went by Clara was becoming more popular at school. She told everyone about her expensive computer, her chocolate lab dog, and everything else she had. However, no one was ever invited to her house. One day after school Kaylee and Ariana came looking for her.

"Clara, wait up," yelled Ariana and Kaylee in the school hallway.

"Try-outs for gymnastics are next week, are you going?" Kaylee asked excitedly.

Clara said quickly, "No, I've had enough of gymnastics right now. Competing against Romania and the United States last year really wore me out."

"I thought you said China and the United States," said Ariana.

"Oh yeah, that's it. I forgot. I just don't feel like doing it anymore," said Clara haughtily.

"Okay then!" said Kaylee dejectedly as they hurriedly walked away.

Later that night Clara was eating dinner with her parents. It was potluck night and they were eating left over pizza and some roast beef from two nights ago.

"Clara, your father and I have to go to parent teacher night, tonight," informed Sarah Gorman.

Clara replied in a panicked voice, "You can't leave me at home by myself, I'm only eleven."

"Of course not silly," said her mother. "We've arranged for a babysitter. Her name is Danielle Jeffrey. She's the older sister of a girl in your class, Ariana Jeffrey. They should be here any minute."

'They' thought Clara to herself. Then the colour drained from her face when she realized what 'they' meant. Ten minutes later the doorbell rang. Mrs. Gorman opened the door and standing there was Danielle and right behind her was her little sister Ariana.

"Nice to meet you Mrs. Gorman," said Danielle as she extended her hand. "I brought my sister like you asked."

"Great, we're so glad you could babysit for us and that your sister could come," said Mrs. Gorman. "Clara hasn't brought anyone home from school since we moved here two months ago."

Clara looked at Ariana who had a very funny half smile on her face. After talking with Danielle for a few minutes, Mrs. Gorman suggested Ariana and Clara go up to her room to play.

Before the door to the room was fully shut, Ariana blurted out, "You're a big fat liar!! This isn't a big house. Where's the fancy computer, I don't see a pool in that puny backyard and where's the chocolate lab?"

"Uh, I'm uh... well you know..... "Oh forget it," Ariana said angrily.

"It's not cool to try to make people like you by being a liar. Liar, liar pants on fire. Want some water for your pants? I'm outta here." Ariana stormed out of Clara's room.

Clara spent the rest of the evening crying alone on her bed. She couldn't face going to school tomorrow. She was positive Ariana would spill the beans and everyone would hate her.

Later Clara heard the front door open as her parents arrived home. She heard some muffled talking and then the front door close. Her parent's were coming up the stairs fast. The door to her room opened and she saw the stone like expression on their faces.

Her mother spoke first, "A brain surgeon and an architect Clara? Why did you tell the teacher and your whole class those lies about us? Are you ashamed that your father is a millwright and that I'm a nurse's assistant?"

Her father David chimed in, "What were you thinking Clara? I was a little embarrassed when your teacher started talking to us. I know we move around a lot because of my job, but....." Mr. Gorman couldn't finish his sentence as he was all choked up.

"It's late Clara. Put on your pajamas and get to bed. We'll talk about this in the morning," her mother instructed. Clara sat on her bed crying even harder now. She shut off her light and with her clothes still on, drifted off to sleep.

## CHAPTER THREE: TRAINING DAY BEGINS

"Miss, miss, . . . miss. Wake up," a low voice bellowed from the dark. "It's time to go!"

Clara was startled awake by the strange voice, but was unable to get any words out. Just then a blinding light filled her room, she felt herself floating and then everything went dark.

When she opened her eyes the only thing could she see was a bright blue sky and very tall trees. Clara could feel warm air on her face and sunlight peaking through the tall branches. She was leaning against a large rock.

"Hi there," said a man standing in front of Clara.

He was very tall and wearing a white suit with lots of jewels and precious stones sewn on. He had a huge hairdo, with thick black hair. He carried a big walking stick with a huge gold knob on the top. For some reason Clara was not afraid as this place made her feel relaxed.

"Where am I and who are you?" asked Clara.

"My name is Nomora Fibbs and you are in the Land of Lies," said the man.

"Why have you brought me here?"

"I bring people from your world to ours to help them stop lying and start telling the truth again." Nomora continued, "I think you've been telling quite a few lies lately and it seems to be making you and those around you very unhappy. I brought you through a portal that goes between your world and mine. While you are here time stands still. We're going to meet some people and see some things that will help you to start telling the truth again."

"Wait a minute," said Clara. "I knew a boy at my old school named Jordan Riplan who claimed to go to a place called Mannerland. Is this the same type of place?"

Nomora replied, "Ah yes, Jordan Riplan. Nice boy. Very good manners now. Little problem with white lies. Anyway, it's time to go."

Nomora and Clara walked out of the forest and onto a stone path with a big sign that

said, 'The Walk of Truth'. After several minutes of walking they passed a small clearing filled with beautiful white flowers. Clara looked closely and she could see the little white flowers were popping out of the ground like popcorn.

"Nomora, what is this place?" inquired Clara.

"This is Little White Lies Meadow. White lies are little untruths that usually do no harm. They're said so that people's feelings don't get hurt or to prevent unnecessary worry. These flowers represent white lies being said in your world. Our worlds are connected in a way that not even I fully understand."

"You mean when someone in my world tells a white lie, these little flowers pop up?" asked Clara.

"Yes that's right. However, too many white lies can be bad. If you look down the path a little further you can see where too many white lies have grown together. They begin to rot and then fertilize the ground."

Clara reached down and picked one of the little flowers and put it in her pocket. She and Nomora walked some more until they came up to a small inn beside the road. Clara read the sign which said 'Tegritty Inn' and standing beside it was a big inukshuk marking the way.

Nomora spoke, "The man who runs this Inn is Juan Upman. Nobody ever stays here too long as Juan kinda drives them crazy. Let's drop in for a short visit and you'll quickly see why."

"Good morning," said Nomora as he and Clara approached a short and very skinny man standing at the Inn's counter. "This is my friend Clara."

"Nomora Fibbs! Don't see you around these parts too often," replied Juan Upman. "Why just this morning my two friends, Frank Awnisty and Alexa Zajurate were here."

"We must have walked at least a mile to get here," said Clara.

Juan replied back, "Yeah, I did a two mile walk this morning, very good for the heart you know."

"Well Juan we must go," said Nomora. "We're thinking of maybe climbing to the second level of Truth Be Told Hills close to the Embellishment Rock Mine to look for quartz.""

"After lunch I'm going to climb right to the very top, to Big Phony Stony, to look for gold," Juan said back.

With that Nomora and Clara waved good-bye and left Tegritty Inn.

"Nomora, Juan did drive me crazy. Every time you said something, he had already done it or was going to do it better than us."

"Juan Upman always does that. For some reason he wants to seem better than everyone else. I guess it makes him feel more important or he's trying to impress us. No one here ever believes anything he says anymore. Even when he might actually be telling the truth sometimes. He really doesn't have too many friends. It's kind of sad. Come on let's go."

"Where are we going next?" inquired Clara.

Nomora replied, "We are going to visit a man named Teldatrudda. Oh wait we can't see him today. He's gone to visit his brother Passdubudda in Mannerland. We can't visit the little boy who looks after Teldatrudda's sheep either. He's supposed to be ready to ring that bell if a wolf is nearby. Although he rang it the last two days just to see if we could come running. Next time maybe we just won't."

"Whom did you say? Mannerland did you say?" asked Clara.

"Oh, uh, never mind. I know where we can head to next," said Nomora. A few minutes later Clara noticed globs of foul looking green and reddish slime fall amongst the trees. Some globs were bigger than others.

"What the heck is that stuff?" she asked.

"Those are called 'Gobs of Lies'" explained Nomora. "People in your world sometimes tell lies that really hurt the feelings of others. However, people often realize what a bad thing they've done and say they're sorry for it. It takes a big person to do that. When they do, our world somehow absorbs the poison from that lie and turns it into those gobs of goo. It's like a fertilizer that makes our trees grow strong and our world thrives off it."

"You mean like horse manure," replied Clara.

"Yes, lies are like manure, but more like the manure you get from bulls," said Nomora.



Clara and Nomora emerged from the path and into a clearing. In the middle were the largest trees she'd ever seen. Under the biggest tree was a fairly big cottage, with huge red flowers on either side. In front of the cottage was a huge pond.

"What is this place Nomora?"

"This is the house of Frank Awnisty and Alexa Zajurate." Nomora continued, "They are married to each other, but are exact opposites. However, they seem to balance each other quite nicely. That pond there is called Fish Tale Pond."

"Those trees are massive," exclaimed Clara.

"Right you are. Those are called Big Whoppin Walnut Trees. I bring adults here from your world called politicians."

"You mean like the mayor of our city," added Clara.

"Yes that's right. As part of their training, they have to plant these trees if they've been lying to the people they look after. This is a symbol of their willingness to change their ways. Once they start telling the truth and making amends for their bad deeds their gobs of lies are absorbed here. For some reason their gobs of lies make these trees grow crazy big. I bring them back from time to time to see how big their tree is."

"You mean the more apologies they make, the bigger their tree," said Clara.

"Yep, the more they make amends, the more fertilizer comes to our world. And the walnuts that come off them taste a bit like peanut butter cups," added Nomora as they knocked on the door to the house.

"Hello Alexa, " said Nomora. "This is my friend Clara."

Alexa Zajurate spoke first, "Hi to you too Nomora. Come to do some fishing today?"

"Why yes we are if that's okay with you?"

"You are always welcome here Nomora," said Alexa.

"The fishing is good right now too. Why just yesterday I caught around five fish all around ten pounds each."

Just then she heard a man's voice behind her, "Oh Alexa, don't tell fish tales now.

You only caught three fish and only one was around 10 lbs, the rest were about six pounds each."

"Oh, yeah, err I guess you're right Frank. I must have got mixed up a bit," said Alexa.

Nomora and Clara borrowed two fishing rods from Alexa and Frank. They sat in two chairs by the dock and talked for awhile.

Nomora spoke first, "Do you understand why I brought you here to the Land of Lies?"

"Yes, I think so," said Clara. "I've been telling too many lies. I've told so many I can't even remember what I've told people. Even things that are true I've been making sound better than they really are. Kinda of like Alexa Zajurate was doing today."

"Do you think telling people those lies will make them like you more?" asked Nomora.

"I think I just want to fit in. We move around so much because of my dad's job, I'm just trying to make friends. I guess it's not working too well, because I probably won't have any friends after tomorrow." .

"I think you can see that one lie leads to another, and then another. Pretty soon nobody will believe anything you say. Just like what's happened to Juan Upman. People won't trust you anymore and it will be hard to make friends. No one will take you seriously and they'll be laughing at you behind your back."

"I think I see that now. My dad says we probably won't have to move again after this and already I've messed things up," Clara finished as she started to cry.

Nomora continued, "First thing you do when you get back to your world is tell your parents and your teacher that you're sorry for lying. They'll understand. The hard part will be apologizing to the kids in your class. Some of them may act badly towards you at first."

"I don't want to do that," said Clara through her tears.

"You must," said Nomora sternly. "It will just make things worse by not telling the truth. Lying will become a habit for you and you'll never really be able to make friends. You'll begin to lie about little things for no reason. The more you do the more foolish you'll look"

"I understand," said Clara. "I'll try what you suggest." "I think you're ready to go back. There's no need for you to see General Rossidy in the Land of Me."

"General who?" questioned Clara.

"Oh look, you've got a fish on your line," Nomora interrupted. Just as Clara was going to pull up the fish, a bright light made her close her eyes. She felt the fishing rod fall from her hands and her body was once again floating. With a quick whoosh, she was back lying in her bed with her clothes on and the morning sunlight bursting through her window.

## **CHAPTER 4: MAKING AMENDS**

'Must have been a dream,' she thought as her hand reached for something lumpy in her pocket. She pulled out one of the beautiful little white lie flowers and, thought again, 'Maybe it wasn't.'

At breakfast that morning Clara apologized to her parents. They hugged her and told her they understood and that they loved her very much.

"Just be yourself sweetheart," her mother said warmly. "People have to like you for who you really are."

Going back to school was even harder. All eyes were on her as she walked through the school yard. Some of the girls were whispering to each other and pointing at her. She apologized to her teacher who also said she understood. She got up in front of her class and told them all the things that weren't true. Some gave her angry looks, some just looked away. It was the hardest thing she ever had to do in her whole life.

At recess she stood in the yard, by herself staring at her feet. Just then she saw two other pairs of feet close to her own. She looked up and saw Kaylee Miller and Ariana Jeffrey.

"That was pretty cool what you said in class today," offered Ariana.

"Yeah, I couldn't have done that. I would have been too embarrassed," replied Kaylee.

"Did you really do gymnastics in Hartland?" asked Ariana.

"Yes," said Clara. "It really was called Genny's Gymnastics. I had a lot of fun there, but we never really competed against anyone."

"Well why don't you ask your mom if you can come to Jumpin' Jymnastics with us?" the two girls said together.

With that Clara gave a big smile. She felt better than she had in a long time. Somewhere in the Land of Lies a big gob was falling to the ground.