



Book 1:
The Adventures of
Mike and Sam

By Sean Haynes



WonderPunch

Action Figures book series created by Sean Haynes

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For inquiries, contact

wonderpunchbooks@gmail.com

wonderpunchbooks.com

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Book 1

PREVIEW SAMPLE

Part 1

The Search for Sydney

Chapter 1:

A Call to Action

“Something is wrong,” Professor Lumo said as he paced back and forth. “She should have been back by now.”

The professor fixed his crooked tie and glasses. Then he grabbed his cell phone from his lab coat pocket.

“Looks like I have no choice.”

The professor called a nearby house. It was the home of the Wonder family.

Mrs. Wonder answered the kitchen phone. “Hello? Oh, hi, Professor Lumo. Yes, Mike is here. He’s in his room. Yes, he’s on punishment. Yes, *again*. So, whatever he did, I’ll just add it to his...”

Something the professor said made Mrs. Wonder stop talking. Mr. Wonder, who sat at the kitchen table, looked up from his newspaper.

“I’m sorry, but did you say you want Mike’s *help*?” Mrs. Wonder asked.

The question made Mr. Wonder raise a curious eyebrow.

Upstairs, Mike Wonder lay on his bed. He was 10 years old and brown-skinned, like his parents and most people in town, and he wore a backward blue cap that he rarely took off.

Mike calmly stared at the ceiling, like he was used to being in trouble. As he did, he played with his favorite red yo-yo. Mike flung it around in a circle and then yanked it back. It was a trick he had learned called Around the World.

The door to Mike's room opened, and Mrs. Wonder walked in with the phone. "Professor Lumo wants to talk to you."

Mike sat up and said, "I didn't do it!"

"Boy, take this phone. Do what the professor says, and don't give him any lip."

Mrs. Wonder left, and Mike put the phone to his ear. "Hey, Professor L. You, um, want to talk to me?"

"Yes, Mike. I do." Professor Lumo sighed. "I need your help."

"Mine?!" Mike couldn't believe it either!

"Yes, yours. Now, please listen closely and quietly."

Mike listened as Professor Lumo spoke. But something he said made Mike ask, "Why *that*?"

Soon after the call, Mike stood on the front porch, dressed to go. He wore an open blue-and-white vest, a black t-shirt, gray jeans, and blue sneakers with thick white soles. And, of course, his hat. He held up his blue backpack and looked inside. "Okay, I packed everything I was supposed to."

But one item confused him. And then it made him smile like he had seen an old friend.

Mr. and Mrs. Wonder joined him on the porch.

"Ready to go?" Mr. Wonder asked.

"Yep," Mike said.

"Remember, you're still on punishment," Mrs. Wonder said. "Go straight to Lumo Lab and come right back when you're done. Understood?"

Mike nodded. But then he asked, "Do you know what Professor L wants my help with? He didn't say on the phone. He just told me what to bring."

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“He didn’t tell us either,” Mr. Wonder said.

“And you’re still okay with me going?”

“He could send you to Mars if it would keep you out of trouble,” Mrs. Wonder said.

That comment stung, but Mike laughed it off and joked, “I’d still find a way.”

But his parents were *not* amused. Mike knew a lecture was coming, so he tossed on his backpack and hopped off the porch.

In the air, Mike clicked his heels together, and blue wheels shot out from his shoe soles! He landed with a row of four wheels beneath each foot!

His shoes had become rollerblades!

Mike waved to his parents and skated through the neighborhood to Lumo Lab!

Chapter 2:

Lumo Lab

Mike lived in the suburbs of Venture Peak. It was a normal city except for Lumo Lab.

Lumo Lab was a cube-shaped building with a dome-shaped roof. The whole building glowed and sparkled with soft blue light! It almost didn't seem real!

Mike skated to the front door and pushed a button on the digital keypad. A display screen appeared. It showed Professor Lumo's face.

"Hello, Mike. Please come in."

The front door opened, and Mike entered. The inside of the lab glowed and sparkled just like the outside!

Professor Lumo approached from a room down the hall. Mike skated over, but the professor said, "Wait, your skates!"

But it was too late. Mike looked back and saw two skid marks on the floor made by his wheels! He clicked his heels again, which pulled the wheels back into his shoes. "Sorry."

"It's all right," Professor Lumo groaned.

"Thanks, Professor L. I'm really trying to stay out of trouble for a while."

"Speaking of which, what *did* you do this time?"

"Um..." Mike said, not wanting to answer.

"Mike," the professor said sternly.

Mike lowered his head and said, "Fighting."

Professor Lumo frowned. "When I told you to take up martial arts, it was for discipline, not for..."

"I know! I know! But another kid was getting bullied. And the bullies didn't stop when I told them to. And there were no adults around. I couldn't just stand there and do nothing."

"So, you took action even though you knew you'd suffer consequences?"

"I didn't think of it like that. I just did what seemed right. But I guess I made the wrong choice, huh?"

Professor Lumo didn't answer. He was no longer so sure that Mike was in the wrong.

"Anyway, thanks, Professor L."

"For what?"

"For asking me to help you."

"Glad to have some time away from punishment?"

"Well, yeah. But that's not it. I'm just glad that you wanted *my* help."

"You're...not the only one I called," Professor Lumo said.

"I'm not?" Mike was disappointed but also curious. *Who else did he call?* he thought.

Professor Lumo brought him to the room down the hall, and when they entered, Mike got his answer. Someone else stood inside, someone Mike knew and was surprised to see. "Kel?"

Chapter 3:

Mike and Kel

Kel was also 10 years old and brown-skinned. His hair was styled into six long twists. He wore a red headband and a long-sleeved red shirt with white stripes across the arms. His shorts were black, and his shoes were green and yellow. On his neck was a round, gray pendant.

Kel saw Mike, and at the same time, both shouted, “WHAT’S HE DOING HERE?!”

“Here we go,” Professor Lumo groaned.

“Seriously, unc, why did you call this loser?” Kel said “unc” because he was, in fact, the professor’s nephew!

“Who are you calling a loser?!” Mike asked.

“*You*, loser!” Kel said.

But Mike didn’t respond. Instead, he gave Kel a weird look. “What happened to your hair?”

“WHAT?!” Kel reached up to check his hair. But when he did, Mike laughed, and Kel knew he had been tricked! “You think that’s funny?!”

“Yep!”

As Professor Lumo watched them argue, he imagined the boys as five-year-olds. *Their behavior shouldn’t surprise me. Mike and Kel have been rivals since they were little. Actually, they weren’t always like this.* His visions stopped arguing. *At one point, they were...*

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The professor's thoughts and visions were interrupted by the present Kel.

"That's it!" Kel balled his fists! He was ready to fight!

Mike did the same, forgetting all about discipline!

But the professor stepped in. "That's enough. I didn't call you two here for this nonsense."

The boys knew he meant business, so they wisely backed off.

"Whatever." Kel folded his arms and looked away.

But Mike asked, "Why *did* you call us here?"

Chapter 4:

The Mission

“You said you wanted my help, but you never said what for,” Mike said.

“Same,” Kel said. “What gives, unc?”

“I have a special mission for you two,” Professor Lumo said. “And I couldn’t tell you about it on the phone.”

“Why not?” Mike asked.

“Because you wouldn’t have believed me.”

That got the boys’ attention!

“I need you to find someone for me.” Professor Lumo pulled out a photo from his pocket.

Kel took it, and he and Mike looked.

“Who is this?” Kel asked.

“My research assistant,” Professor Lumo said.

“WHAT?!” The boys were shocked!

The photo was taken in that very room. Professor Lumo smiled as he stood beside his research assistant.

His assistant’s hair was styled into long twin braids. She smiled too but looked much more serious than the professor. She wore a purple t-shirt, blue jean shorts, and purple boots. The device on her wrist looked like a square digital watch.

The research assistant also wore a lab coat, like Professor Lumo. But she was much shorter and *much* younger than him! She was 10 years old!

“*She’s* your research assistant?!” Mike asked.

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“She’s our age, uncl!” Kel said. “What kind of operation are you running here?”

“Her name is Sydney Ray, and she was the *only* person qualified to be my assistant. And you two are the only ones qualified to find her.”

Hearing that made Mike feel special. But Kel just got annoyed.

“None of this makes any sense!” he complained. “Do you even have a clue where this girl is?”

“Sydney is in another world,” Professor Lumo said.

Chapter 5:

Crazy

Mike gasped at the professor's claim that Sydney Ray was in another world. But Kel was fed up!

"Another *world*?! Unc, you need a vacation! This lab is driving you crazy!"

Kel marched to the door. His attitude gave Mike doubts. "Is there really another world, Professor L?"

But the professor didn't answer right away. Kel's attitude affected him, too. But he didn't stop his nephew. Instead, he walked deeper into the room. "Come and see for yourself."

Mike looked at the professor and then at Kel. He had a decision to make. So, he chose Professor Lumo and followed him through the room.

Meanwhile, Kel walked out the door. But he stopped in the hallway and watched Mike follow his uncle.

Professor Lumo led Mike to a locked door. Beside it was a digital pad like the one outside. But this pad had a palm scanner, a face scanner, and a voice scanner.

Professor Lumo pressed his palm to the pad. When that was accepted, lasers scanned his face.

"That's a lot of security," Mike said.

"What's behind this door is top secret," Professor Lumo said. "Besides me, only Sydney has seen it."

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“Then it had better be worth it,” a third person said.

Mike and the professor turned and saw Kel, who had changed his mind and caught up to them.

“I thought you would hold out a little longer,” the professor teased. Then he leaned toward the digital pad and said, “Gjen.”

The boys didn’t know that word. But before they could ask about it, the voice scan was accepted, and the door slid open!

Mike’s heart thumped with excitement! Even Kel got excited! They followed Professor Lumo into the top-secret room.

And then their excitement disappeared!

Because the only thing different about this room was a raggedy, old bunk bed in the corner!

Kel pointed at his uncle and said, “You really are crazy!”

Chapter 6:

The Master Bunk

“I know how this looks,” Professor Lumo said. “But this is no ordinary bed.”

Kel rolled his eyes. “Uh-huh.”

But the professor ignored him and walked to the bunk bed. He lifted the covers on the bottom bunk. And once again, the boys were filled with excitement!

Beneath that raggedy bunk bed was the most dazzling white light they had ever seen!

“I told you this is no ordinary bed. *This* is the Master Bunk. And beneath it is a portal.”

“The portal to the other world,” Mike said with amazement.

“Yes,” Professor Lumo said. “And if you’re still willing to help me, this portal will send you there...”

“I’m in!” Mike stared at the portal like he was in a trance. “It feels like that world is calling me!”

“You’re ridiculous,” Kel said. “But I’m in too, unc. Looks like you weren’t completely crazy.”

Good, Professor Lumo thought. *They both said yes.*

“Professor L, do you know what this other world is called?” Mike asked.

“Of course. It’s called The Land of Underbehd.”

Chapter 7:

Class

Minutes later, Professor Lumo stood beside a whiteboard. The boys sat in front of him. On the board, he wrote “Underbehd Class.”

“Class?!” Kel groaned.

“You must prepare for this mission,” the professor said. “Underbehd is different from our world in many ways.”

“Like what?” Mike asked.

“To begin with, no one over the age of 12 is allowed. If you’re already older, you can’t enter the portal. And if you turn 13 in Underbehd, you’ll be sent back to our world.”

Mike realized something. “That’s why you picked us and Sydney. It’s because we’re kids. We’re the only ones who can enter Underbehd.”

“Duh. You just figured it out? Unc only called us because he *had* to, not because he wanted to.” Kel didn’t seem too upset, though. “Whatever, I’m still going. Better than being bored at home.”

Mike was still going too, but he *was* upset and no longer felt special.

Professor Lumo was never great at cheering people up. So instead, he sighed and said, “Let’s get started.”

Chapter 8:

Into the Portal

Professor Lumo began teaching the boys about Underbehd. But his class quickly put Mike to sleep! And Kel pulled out a handheld system and played a video game!

But the professor didn't notice. He was too busy talking and writing on the whiteboard. His class ended an hour later, and he asked, "Any questions?"

Mike woke up and wiped the drool from his mouth! "I'm awake!"

Kel slid his system back into his pocket.

Professor Lumo knew something was fishy, but he continued. "All right, it's time to go. But first, I need to make sure you packed everything. Open your backpacks."

Professor Lumo checked Kel's first. He nodded and said, "Good choice."

"Naturally," Kel bragged.

Then he checked Mike's backpack. But he did *not* nod. He looked concerned. "Do you remember what I said on the phone?"

"Yep," Mike said confidently.

The professor was still concerned but said, "Very well."

"But, um, why did you want me to bring this, anyway?" Mike asked.

Professor Lumo grew more concerned. "I told you why during my class. Weren't you listening?"

Mike panicked. "Of course I was!"

"In between snoring?" Kel teased.

Professor Lumo frowned at Mike.

"Well, he was playing a video game!" Mike said.

Professor Lumo frowned at Kel. "Did you at least pay *some* attention?"

"I heard everything," Kel said. "*And* I reached a new level in my game! I'm so good."

"Really? Let me see."

Kel proudly showed his game to his uncle, who took it!

"Hey!"

"No distractions. And I expect you to fill Mike in on what he missed. And I expect both of you to help each other." The boys were about to complain, but the professor calmly placed his hands on their shoulders. "Please, I'm counting on you."

His message got through to them. They knew it was sincere.

"Fine," Kel groaned. He still had to be difficult.

But Mike was excited again and no longer upset. "I won't let you down, Professor L!"

"Thank you, both of you."

Professor Lumo returned to the Master Bunk and raised the covers. Mike and Kel put their backpacks on and followed. Then they kneeled on the floor and crawled into the portal!

Chapter 9:

The Land of Underbehd

The portal sent Mike and Kel to an endless void of white light, the same light as the portal!

The void was weightless and caused the boys to float! As Mike marveled at everything, the light became brighter, forcing him to close his eyes!

While they were closed, some of the void entered his body! It felt like a gentle shock! But none of it hurt. Instead, for some reason, it made Mike feel powerful!

The same thing happened to Kel!

Then the light inside the boys and the light of the void became a blinding flash!

The flash faded, and gravity returned. Mike landed gently. He opened his eyes and saw the greenest grass he had ever seen! The sky was bluer than ever! And the air was so fresh!

He knew what this meant. He raised his fists high with excitement and said, "We made it! We're in Underbehd!"

"You're so lame," Kel said nearby. But he was clearly excited, too!

Mike looked around. Near the boys was a familiar, old bunk bed! "That looks just like the Master Bunk! Is that how we get home?"

Kel laughed. "You really did sleep through unc's lesson. And guess what? I'm not filling you in either."

"But you told Professor L you would!"

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“Surprise, I lied.”

The boys argued again. But as they did, the insides of their backpacks glowed, just like the portal and the void!

But Kel wasn't surprised. “Already, huh?”

He took his backpack off and put it on the ground. Mike watched and did the same. Kel unzipped his backpack. Mike unzipped his, too.

And then beams of light shot out!

Chapter 10:

The Most Important

“What’s happening?!” Mike asked.

But Kel didn’t fill him in, just like he said.

Mike looked at the light shooting out from his backpack. There was something small and round inside it!

I know what that is! he thought. The object made him remember his call with the professor.

“Next, dress in comfortable outdoor clothes,” Professor Lumo said. Then he mentioned the thing that had confused Mike before. “And finally, you need to bring a toy.”

“Why *that*?” Mike asked.

“I’ll explain more later. Just know that it’s important. In fact, it might be the most important thing you bring.”

In the present, the object grew inside the light! The beam faded, and the object landed next to Mike. Although it had grown, it still barely reached his knees.

The object was white and plush with a round head and long ears on top. It had oval-shaped eyes, a pink nose, and a split upper lip. There were two short arms, two short legs, soft, fluffy paws, and a bushy tail. It wore orange overall shorts with round, yellow buttons on the front.

It was the toy Mike brought to Underbehd, a stuffed rabbit!

“Sam?” Mike said.

And to Mike’s surprise, the stuffed rabbit looked up at him!

Chapter 11:

Living Toys

“You’re alive!” Mike said to his stuffed rabbit Sam.

Sam surprised Mike even more and said, “Yup!”

“You can talk?!”

“Uh-huh!”

“This is so awesome!” Mike picked Sam up and hugged him, which made Sam giggle.

“How cute. Of course, you’d bring that kind of toy,” Kel teased.

“Oh yeah?” Mike faced him. “What kind did you...ahh!”

A six-foot-tall toy stood beside Kel! He wore armor made of steel and brown leather. His body was muscular and looked mostly human, but his hands, feet, tail, and head were like those of a lion! Tan hair covered most of his body, and his lion’s mane was scarlet!

“What is that?!” Mike asked.

“*My* toy,” Kel said. “Kenzo the Battle Lion.”

Sam wiggled out of Mike’s grip and walked to Kel.

“What are you doing?” Mike asked nervously.

“I know you,” Sam told Kel.

“Huh?” Mike said.

Kel frowned at Sam. “Go back to Mike.”

“Why?” Sam asked.

Kenzo stepped between them and raised his hand over Sam. Sharp claws shot out of his fingers! He was going to attack!

Chapter 12:

The Search Begins?

“Make him stop!” Mike said in a panic.

“Relax, Kenzo. You’re going to make Mike cry,” Kel said. He snapped his fingers, and Kenzo pulled his claws back. “Next time, keep your toy away from me.” Kel frowned at Sam again, and then he and Kenzo turned to leave.

“Where are you going?” Mike asked.

“To check out the rest of Underbehd, duh.”

“But our mission is to find Sydney Ray.”

“You think I *actually* planned to help with that?”

Mike stepped in front of Kel. “We promised your uncle. I won’t just let you leave.”

“Oh yeah? How are you going to stop me?”

Mike balled his fists, getting ready to fight if he had to. But Kel didn’t ball his this time. Instead, he threatened to snap his fingers and make Kenzo attack Sam again!

The threat worked, and Mike moved out of his way.

“You’re a jerk.”

“And you’re still a loser. Let’s go, Kenzo.”

Kel and Kenzo walked off. And Sam followed until Mike stopped him.

“We’re not going with them?” Sam asked.

“No, we’re not,” Mike said, upset.

“Aw, I liked them. They were nice.”

Sam's cluelessness amused Mike and calmed him down. "We're better off without them, anyway. But I do wish Kel filled me in on that class. Oh well, I'll just have to trust my gut and take action!"

"Yeah, action!" Sam said, copying Mike.

"Since Kel went that way, my gut says we should go this way!" Mike pointed forward and took off running!

Sam hopped beside him, chanting, "This way! This way!"

Mike smiled at Sam. He was still excited to see his toy alive. But as he looked ahead, he yelled, "Aaahh!" There was no more ground in front of them!

Mike stopped running, but Sam kept hopping!

"SAM!" Mike reached out and grabbed Sam just in time!

Sam looked down and saw nothing but blue sky and clouds! "Where'd the ground go?"

Mike put Sam down beside him and looked over the edge. The ground didn't just end. It sloped! "We're on a hill! The biggest hill ever! It's taller than a skyscraper!"

"How do we get down?" Sam asked.

"Good question." Mike looked back in the direction Kel and Kenzo went, but they were out of sight. "Kel must have found a way down already. Well, if he could, so can we!"

"Maybe we can jump down the hill," Sam said.

"That's a little too crazy. But if there was some pavement between this grass, I bet I could skate down it."

When Mike said that, something strange happened. A wide strip of grass beside him folded! The strip extended down the hill! Mike touched the folded grass. It was smooth and sturdy like pavement!

"Did you do this?" he asked.

Sam shook his head.

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Then Mike opened his backpack and said, “Hop in.”

Sam hopped inside and stuck his head, chest, and arms out. “Are we going down the hill?”

“Oh yeah!” Mike clicked his heels, and his rollerblade wheels shot out from his shoes. Then he skated down the hill!

Chapter 13:

The Professor's Mistake

Back at Lumo Lab, Professor Lumo sat on the Master Bunk. He looked worried. *I know I should trust Mike and Kel*, he thought. *But I fear I made a mistake sending them to Underbehd. If they don't work together, who knows what could happen?*

Meanwhile, Mike skated down the massive hill! "WOOO!" he and Sam shouted. They were having a blast!

The opposite side hadn't transformed. Kel rode on Kenzo's back as he climbed down, using his claws to grip the grassy hillside.

The two heard Mike and Sam shouting. It made Kel frown. Mike was having fun *and* going down faster than him!

"Kenzo, hurry up!"

Kenzo turned his body and ran down the hill on all fours like a real lion!

On Mike's side, there was a clump of grass that hadn't folded. But Mike didn't notice until his wheels hit it!

CLONK! The clump knocked him off the hill!

"AAAHH!" he screamed.

When Kel heard Mike, he told Kenzo to stop. Kenzo stopped running and held onto the hill.

"What trouble did that loser get himself into now?" Kel wondered.

Chapter 14:

Down the Hill

Mike and Sam fell hundreds of feet through the air! Mike shifted his body to take most of the impact! Then he closed his eyes and braced himself.

THOOM! Mike crashed into the ground!

He lay flat on his stomach and didn't move. But then he slowly stood! He was shocked. There wasn't a scratch on him! He wasn't even sore!

I'm okay! he thought. *But how?*

Then Mike panicked and looked over his shoulder. But Sam was okay, too!

"Let's do that again!" Sam said.

Mike sighed with relief and looked around. He and Sam had fallen into a huge forest! The giant trees had leaves that looked even bigger than him!

"Check out this forest! I guess we can start searching for Sydney here." Mike pulled his rollerblade wheels back into his shoes and let Sam out of his backpack. Then they walked through the forest.

After a while, Sam stopped and pointed at a shrub. "That shrub moved."

Mike looked but didn't see it. "It was probably just the wind."

He kept walking, but Sam said, "Mike, look!"

Mike looked again, and this time, he *did* see it move! The shrub swished from side to side! Then two eyes appeared in the center and looked at him!

“The shrub is alive, too?!”

Two sneakers popped out from the bottom, and the shrub skipped off!

Mike chased after it and asked, “Can you help me? I’m looking for someone!”

The shrub stopped, but when Mike caught up, it didn’t answer him. Instead, it sat back down, closed its eyes, and acted like a normal shrub again!

“I guess the plants don’t talk,” Mike said.

Sam hopped over. “What if we tickle it?”

“We should probably leave it alone.”

“But what about Sandy?” Sam asked, getting Sydney’s name wrong.

Mike laughed and said, “Maybe something else in this forest can help us.”

Chapter 15:

Lost

Mike and Sam searched all day, but there was no sign of Sydney. By nightfall, they were lost deep in the forest!

"I can't believe we're lost!" Mike said. "This is all because Kel wouldn't help!"

"What happened to you two?" Sam asked. "You weren't mean to each other before."

That surprised Mike. "How do you know that?"

"I was there!"

"You remember everything from before you were alive?"

"I guess so!"

Mike recalled when Sam said he knew Kel on the hill. It was true!

"Underbehd sure is full of surprises," he said.

Then he remembered when he and Kel were five. They were in Mike's room. Mike played with Sam, who was a normal toy back then, and Kel played with a red yo-yo.

The same red yo-yo Mike had in the present!

"Mike, watch this." Kel flung the yo-yo around in a circle and then yanked it back. "It's called Around the World."

"That's so cool, Kel! Can you teach me?" Mike asked.

"Sure. You can have this yo-yo, too."

"Really?!"

"Of course," Kel said. "You're my best friend."

In the present, Mike smiled at the memory.

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“So, what happened?” Sam asked.

Mike sighed. “It’s a long story.”

Then Sam’s long ears twitched, and he looked in a different direction.

“What is it?” Mike asked.

“Someone’s talking over there,” Sam said.

“You can hear that far?”

“Uh-huh!”

Sam hopped toward the sound, and Mike hurried after him. But a fiery glow made them hide behind a tree!

Mike peeked out and whispered, “Pirates!”

Chapter 16:

Pirates and Peril

The pirates marched in a single-file line. There were seven in all. The one in front held a torch, which was where the glow came from.

All the pirates wore black boots, gray pants, and yellow t-shirts with burgundy stripes. Their burgundy bandanas covered their eyes. But somehow, they could still see!

Their bodies were identical, too! They were all six feet tall and muscular, with strong jaws and tough expressions! Their skin was lime-green, and they didn't have noses!

"Those are some weird-looking pirates," Mike said. "Can you hear what they're saying?"

"Arr," Sam said in a pirate-like voice.

"I guess that makes sense for pirates. What else?"

"Just 'Arr.' Should we follow them?"

Mike thought about it. "That might be a good idea. Maybe they can lead us out of here."

"They can?"

"Wasn't that your plan?"

Sam shook his head. "I just thought it'd be fun!"

Mike smiled and thought, *Sam is just like I always imagined he'd be.* Then he said, "Alright, let's follow the pirates!"

Mike and Sam followed the green pirates through the forest.

They're looking for something, Mike noticed. *I wonder what.* He and Sam followed them for over an hour but eventually got tired.

“Do we have to keep following the pirates?” Sam asked.

Mike yawned and said, “No, we’ll find our own way out...in the morning.”

Mike lay down on the ground and used his backpack as a pillow. Sam snuggled into his arms. And seconds later, they were asleep.

Another hour passed.

“PLEASE! LET ME GO!” someone screamed from afar.

It woke Mike up!

“DON’T HURT ME!”

Mike stood, tossed his backpack on, and grabbed Sam, who was still asleep! Then he ran toward the screams!

Mike dashed through the dark forest as fast as he could! The screams led him to the exit, but he stopped and hurried back in!

Sam yawned as he woke up, but Mike signaled to be quiet. Then he pointed at what made him retreat. A small shore bordered the forest. A rowboat sailed away from the coast. The boat was filled with the green pirates!

Was one of them screaming? Mike thought. *But I thought they only said “Arr.”*

Moonlight peeked through the clouds. It gave Mike a better view of the boat. One passenger was tied up and gagged! And that passenger wasn’t green!

Mike remembered the professor’s photo. The tied-up passenger was his missing research assistant, Sydney Ray!

We found Sydney! Mike thought. *But why do those pirates have her? And where are they taking her?*

PREVIEW SAMPLE

While Mike was thinking, Sam hopped to the shore! By the time Mike noticed, Sam was already at the coast!

Sam stared out at the sea, far past the rowboat. Mike caught up and looked too and then got one of his answers.

The rowboat was heading to a pirate ship!

Chapter 17:

The New Mission

“We should swim after the pirates!” Sam said.

“Do you remember Gina Thompson’s pool party?” Mike asked.

Sam laughed. “I sunk *all* the way down!”

“Exactly.”

“But I’m alive now, so it’ll be different!”

Mike was *not* willing to take that risk. But they still needed a way to reach the pirates.

If only we had a boat, too, Mike thought. Then he got an idea and hurried back into the forest.

Left alone, Sam inched closer to the water.

But Mike knew his toy and shouted, “No!”

So, Sam joined him in the forest by one of the giant trees.

“Wait here,” Mike said. And then he climbed the tree!

After a few minutes of climbing, Mike glanced down. Sam looked tiny from up there, but Mike hadn’t even reached the lowest limbs yet! The tree was over 400 feet tall!

Mike finally reached the limbs, crawled onto one, and went to the branches. Their leaves really were bigger than him! He kneeled over one and thought, *Now, how do I get this down?*

Then Mike raised his hand over the leaf’s sturdy stem, took a deep breath, and swung! *Slock!* Mike chopped the leaf off the tree!

Doing so was way easier than Mike thought! He remembered how he fell from the giant hill and wasn't hurt. He was different in Underbehd! Somehow, he was *much* stronger! He wondered if it was linked to what happened in the void.

Mike climbed down, and Sam followed him as he dragged the leaf to the coast.

"Why did you get a leaf?" Sam asked.

"You'll see," Mike said. He pushed the leaf into the sea, and it floated! Then he hopped onto it! It was strong enough to support his weight!

And then Sam understood. "It's a boat!"

"Yep! Hop on!"

Sam hopped onto the leaf boat. Mike turned to the back and chopped off the remaining stem. He then used it as a paddle and rowed away from the coast!

"Our new mission begins now," Mike said. "Operation Rescue Sydney!"

Chapter 18:

The Captive

Mike slowly rowed after the green pirates.

“Why are we going so slow?” Sam asked.

“I don’t want the pirates to notice us,” Mike said. “We can’t face them here at sea.”

“Why not?”

“For one thing, the boats could tip over.”

“But then we could get Susie and swim away!”

Mike gave Sam a stern look.

“I can swim!” Sam insisted.

“Let’s go with my plan instead,” Mike said. “We’ll row to the pirate ship and sneak on board while it’s dark. Then we’ll rescue Sydney and escape before they even notice us.”

Mike yawned. He was still tired. His rowing slowed. His eyelids closed. And then he fell asleep! But as he dozed off, the stem paddle slipped out of his hands!

“Eep!” Sam hopped onto his leg and caught it just in time!

Sam watched Mike sleep. Then he looked at the pirate ship, which was still miles away. He dipped the stem paddle back into the water.

“Urgh!” Sam grunted as he rowed. His fluffy little arms could barely move the leaf, but he wasn’t discouraged! He kept rowing and said, “Here we come, pirates!”

The green pirates reached the dark pirate ship, which towered over the rowboat. The pirates rowed to the starboard side.

One shouted to the top of the ship. "Arr!"

Then three long ropes were thrown down the hull. Two were used to tie the rowboat down. The third was grabbed by the pirate who made the call. He put Sydney under his arm and used the rope to climb the hull. The others followed.

The pirate holding Sydney reached the top of the hull. He stepped onto the ship's upper deck and then *threw* Sydney!

"Aaahhh!" she screamed through her gag.

Another green pirate stood by the mast. He caught Sydney and used her ropes to tie her to it!

Then the pirates from the rowboat and ten more from the ship surrounded Sydney, scowling and growling at her. The one who threw her stepped forward and yanked the gag off her mouth!

"Arr," the green pirate said.

"Huh?" Sydney asked. She was more timid than she looked in Professor Lumo's photo.

"Arr," another pirate said.

"I don't know what you mean."

"Arr!" said the pirate who tied Sydney to the mast. He yanked the rope even tighter!

But no matter which pirate spoke, Sydney couldn't understand them. Or so it seemed.

"I wasn't following you. I came to Underbehd for research," Sydney said. She *did* understand them!

"Arr?" asked the pirate who threw her.

"I can't say what kind of research. But it has nothing to do with you Arrgonauts! I promise!"

"Arr!" the Arrgonaut growled.

PREVIEW SAMPLE

“I’m not lying! If I could, maybe, meet your Captain...”

“ARR!” The request made the Arrgonaut raise his fist!

“I’m sorry! I’m sorry! Please don’t hurt me!”

Sydney’s fear made the Arrgonauts laugh. The one with his fist raised calmed down and laughed, too. Then they all walked off and returned to their jobs on the ship.

And Sydney was left tied to the mast and alone.

Chapter 19:

Plan G

“Mike, wake up!” Sam said.

Mike’s eyes opened. “I fell asleep!”

“Uh-huh! But look!”

Sam pointed at the pirate ship! It was right beside the leaf boat! Mike noticed something else, too. The sun was shining!

“We’re at the ship?! And it’s morning?!”

“Uh-huh! Uh-huh!” Sam said. “I can’t row as fast as you!”

“Why didn’t you wake me up?”

“I wanted you to get your sleep. You were really tired.”

Mike couldn’t be mad even if he wanted to. He smiled and said, “Thanks, Sam.”

Then he looked up at the pirate ship. With daylight, Mike could see all the details. The ship was green, including its flags. Each one had a picture of crossbones behind a scowling Arrgonaut face.

The name of the ship was carved into the hull. It was called *The Green Maureen*.

“Since it’s daytime, I can’t use Plan A,” Mike said. “Or Plans B and C. Plans D, E, and F won’t work either. I’ll have to try Plan G.”

“What’s Plan G?” Sam asked.

“It stands for good luck,” Mike said nervously. “It’s everything from Plan A but in broad daylight.”

“Sounds good to me! Let’s go!”

“You stay here.”

“Aw, but I can help!”

Mike shook his head. “If things don’t go well, there could be a fight.”

“So?”

“You can’t fight.”

“You’re right,” Sam agreed. “But I *can* swim!”

Mike patted Sam on the head. Then he grabbed the rope that the Arrgonauts used to climb the hull. And he climbed, too.

Mike reached the top of the hull and peeked over at the upper deck. To his surprise, Sydney was there! She was still tied to the mast and still alone!

Mike imagined his moves. He would sprint to the mast and untie Sydney while she was unguarded. Then they would hurry to the leaf boat and quickly row away!

But Mike was so distracted planning that he forgot to check his surroundings.

“Arr?” asked a confused Arrgonaut.

Mike looked left and right. 20 Arrgonauts had stopped working and stared at him!

Mike gulped and said, “So much for Plan G.”

Chapter 20:

Plan H

The Arrgonauts didn't stay still for long. They dropped their mops, crates, and tools and ran after Mike!

Mike looked down the hull and considered escaping. But he couldn't leave Sydney! So, he climbed onto the edge of the hull and jumped to the upper deck! In the air, he popped out his shoes' rollerblade wheels!

Mike landed and said, "Plan H, hope for the best!"

The Arrgonauts were so intrigued by Mike's shoes that they stopped and stared again. Mike used that break to quickly skate to Sydney!

He knelt behind the mast but couldn't untie her ropes! "Why are these knots so tight?!"

"Who are you? Sydney asked.

"I'm Mike Wonder. And you're Sydney Ray, right?"

"How do you know that?"

"Professor L told me."

"You know Professor Lumo?"

"Yep. He sent me to find you!"

That surprised Sydney. "Did he say why?"

"Maybe he guessed you'd be in trouble like this."

Sydney went quiet. Mike's statement upset her. But he didn't notice. He was still busy struggling with the ropes!

"These things are impossible!"

PREVIEW SAMPLE

Heavy footsteps shook the deck! The Arrgonauts were coming!

Mike skated in front of Sydney. “Don’t worry. I’ll protect you.”

But Sydney stayed quiet. She was still upset.

“I don’t want to fight you,” Mike told the Arrgonauts. “But I will if you don’t let us go.”

“ARR!” an Arrgonaut shouted. He ran ahead of the others. He was the same one who threw Sydney and raised his fist at her. He raised his fist at Mike, too!

But Mike wasn’t scared. *Hope for the best!* he thought. Then he skated to the Arrgonaut and balled *his* fist!

The two attacked! The Arrgonaut had longer arms, but Mike was faster! His punch would hit first! But if it wasn’t strong enough, he would be in big trouble!

I hope I’m right!

KOOM! Mike punched the Arrgonaut in the chest! And the Arrgonaut flew into a stack of barrels!

PREVIEW SAMPLE

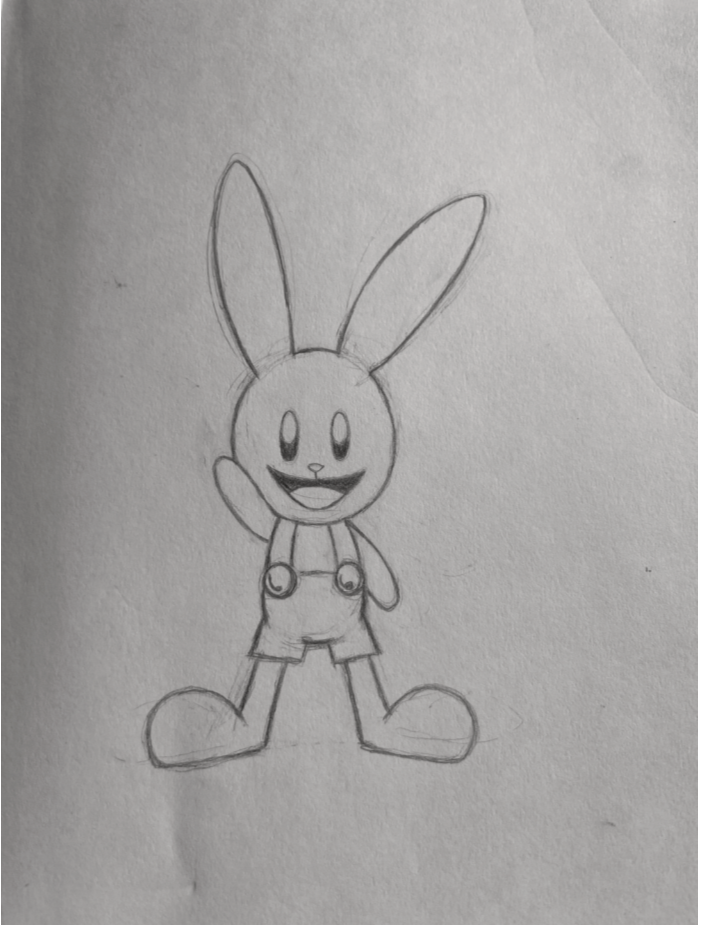
Mike Wonder



PREVIEW SAMPLE

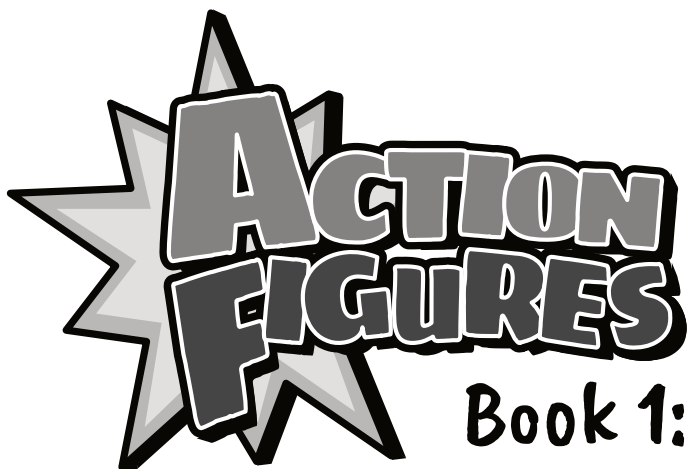
PREVIEW SAMPLE

Sam



PREVIEW SAMPLE

To find out what happens next, pick up



Book 1:

The Adventures of
Mike and Sam