



"Discover the coolest library
in the world." —James Patterson



Sequel to the *New York Times* Bestseller
Escape from Mr. Lemoncello's Library

MR. LEMONCELLO'S LIBRARY OLYMPICS



CHRIS
GRABENSTEIN

Bestselling author of *The Island of Dr. Libris*

EXCLUSIVE SNEAK PEAK



CHRIS GRABENSTEIN

RANDOM HOUSE  NEW YORK

#MrLemoncello #ReadingOlympics

Keep reading for a sneak peek. . . .

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First Edition

Random House Children's Books supports
the First Amendment and celebrates the right to read.

ATTENTION, READER: THIS IS AN UNCORRECTED ADVANCE EXCERPT.



Just about every kid in America wished they could be Kyle Keeley.

Especially when he zoomed across their TV screens as a flaming squirrel in a holiday commercial for Squirrel Squad Six, the hysterically crazy new Lemoncello video game.

Kyle's friends Akimi Hughes and Sierra Russell were also in that commercial. They thumbed controllers and tried to blast Kyle out of the sky. He dodged every rubber band, coconut custard pie, mud clod, and wadded-up sock ball they flung his way.

It was awesome.

In the commercial for Mr. Lemoncello's See Ya, Wouldn't Want to Be Ya board game, Kyle starred as the yellow pawn. His head became the bubble tip at the top of the playing piece. Kyle's buddy Miguel Fernandez was

the green pawn. Kyle and Miguel slid around the life-size game like hockey pucks. When Miguel landed on the same square as Kyle, that meant Kyle's pawn had to be bumped back to the starting line.

"See ya!" shouted Miguel. "Wouldn't want to be ya!"

Kyle was yanked up off the ground by a hidden cable and hurled backward, soaring above the board.

It was also awesome.

But Kyle's absolute favorite starring role was in the commercial for Mr. Lemoncello's You Seriously Can't Say That game, where the object was to get your teammates to guess the word on your card without using any of the forbidden words listed on the same card.

Akimi, Sierra, Miguel, and the perpetually perky Haley Daley sat on a circular couch and played the guessers. Kyle stood in front of them as the clue giver.

"Salsa," said Kyle.

"Nachos!" said Akimi.

A buzzer sounded. Akimi's guess was wrong.

Kyle tried again. "Horseradish sauce!"

"Something nobody ever eats," said Haley.

Another buzzer.

Kyle goofed up and said one of the forbidden words: "Ketchup!"

SPLAT! Fifty gallons of syrupy, goopy tomato sauce slimed him from above. It oozed down his face and dribbled off his ears.

Everybody laughed. So Kyle, who loved being the class

clown almost as much as he loved playing (and winning) Mr. Lemoncello's wacky games, went ahead and read the whole list of banned words as quickly as he could.

"Mustard-mayonnaise-pickle-relish."

SQUOOSH! He was drenched by buckets of yellow glop, white sludge, and chunky green gunk. The slop slid along his sleeves, trickled into his pants, and puddled on the floor.


His four friends busted a gut laughing at Kyle, who was soaked in more "condiments" (the word on his card) than a mile-long hot dog.

"Was it fun?" boomed an off-camera announcer.

"Fun?" answered Haley. "Hello? It's a Lemoncello!"

That's how all the commercials ended, with Haley saying the slogan "Hello? It's a Lemoncello!" She became a TV superstar. People all across America wished they could be Haley Daley, too. Except, of course, for the kids who were extremely jealous of her and wondered why she, Kyle Keeley, Akimi Hughes, Sierra Russell, and Miguel Fernandez had been chosen to star in Mr. Lemoncello's holiday commercials.

When they found out that becoming famous TV stars was the prize the five kids had won in a game played at Mr. Lemoncello's incredible new library in Alexandria-ville, Ohio—a game they hadn't been invited to play—they started demanding a rematch.



2

Charles Chilton sat in his family's home theater watching his classmate Kyle Keeley rocket across a seventy-inch plasma-screen TV.

It was the worst Christmas vacation of his life.

For over a month, whenever he clicked on the television, Charles was forced to look at the five cheaters who, six months earlier, had robbed him of his rightful prize.

In that night's Lemoncello commercial, Keeley—the ringleader of the group that had “defeated” Charles in the Escape from Mr. Lemoncello's Library game—looked ridiculous dressed up in goofy goggles like a flying squirrel. But Keeley was obviously having a grand time starring in the commercial.

A commercial *Charles* should've starred in.

Keeley had needed four teammates to best Charles in

the past June's escape game, which was played inside the silly game maker's even sillier new library on its opening weekend.

Keeley had also needed Mr. Lemoncello's help to win.

At the very last second, just as Charles was nearing victory, the batty billionaire disqualified him on a trumped-up technicality. Keeley and his cronies went on to win the game and the grand prize.

Charles, on the other hand, went home to hear what a disappointment he was to his father.

Because Chiltons never lose.

Especially not to ordinary nobodies like Kyle Keeley.

For six months, Charles had been plotting his revenge on Keeley and his teammates: smart-aleck Akimi Hughes, library geek Miguel Fernandez, bookworm Sierra Russell, and most especially turncoat traitor Haley Daley, who had been on Charles's team with Andrew Peckleman until she deserted them to join Team Kyle.

"Mr. Lemoncello robbed me," Charles muttered miserably. "They should shut down his ludicrous library."

He'd been miserably muttering the same thing ever since the Lemoncello holiday commercials started airing. But for some reason, watching this annoying squirrel commercial made a new thought bubble up inside his brain.

He pushed the pause button on the DVR remote.

They should shut down Mr. Lemoncello.

That was a better idea.

The good citizens of Alexandriaville, Ohio, should not allow the demented Mr. Lemoncello to continue to control what went on inside their new *public* library.

Yes! His mind started whirring. That was the perfect angle. A public campaign to wrench control of the library away from the dangerous lunatic Luigi Lemoncello.

And Charles knew just who should lead the charge.

His mother.

She had a long history of championing public causes.

When he was in kindergarten, she had led the Anti-Cupcake Crusade, because Charles liked brownies better. When he was in third grade, his mother had made certain that the teacher who dared give Charles a B on his papier-mâché volcano was fired. And in fourth grade, she had yanked him out of Chumley Prep (and cut off their endowment) when the private school had the nerve to hire a history teacher who celebrated International Talk Like a Pirate Day.

Plus, Charles's mother did not particularly care for what Mr. Lemoncello was doing inside his zany library.

"Too much sizzle, not enough steak," she'd complained to friends in her bridge club. "They also lend out too many of the wrong sort of books."

Wheels were spinning inside Charles's head as he plotted his next moves.

With just the slightest nudge, taking the "Lemoncello" out of the Lemoncello Library would become his mother's next great cause. He was certain of it.

“Mummy?” he called out in his best your-little-boy-has-a-boo-boo voice.

When no one answered, he did it again. Louder.

“Mummy! Make it go away! I’m being traumatized! Mummy!”

His mother bustled into the TV room. “Charles, darling? What’s the matter?”

Charles pointed a trembling finger at the TV screen. “Mr. Lemoncello. Make him go away. His library is a petrifying place full of cheaters!”

“I know, dear, but there’s nothing . . .”

Charles started blubbering. “He cheated me, Mummy. He robbed me!”

“Yes, honey . . .”

It was time to pull out the heavy artillery.

“He lowered my self-esteem! I feel like such a failure!” He sniffled. “Because of Mr. Lemoncello, I may never go to college!”

His mother’s face turned ghostly white. *Score!*

“Hush now. Mummy’s here. Everything will be all right.”

She hugged him tightly.

Charles grinned.

Mr. Lemoncello was toast.

Burnt toast with toe-jam jelly on top.



With school out for the winter holidays, Kyle and his friends were spending a lot of time hanging out downtown at the Lemoncello Library, where, because of their celebrity status, every day was a cake day.

Cake days were a Keeley family tradition. Whenever one of them did something spectacular—like his brother Mike winning a football game (again) or his other brother, Curtis, getting straight A's (again)—Kyle's mom baked a cake.

Ever since Kyle and his teammates had won the escape game, every day had felt that way. Cakey.

"You're the dude from the commercial!" at least a dozen kids said to Kyle as he strolled through the Rotunda Reading Room.

He gave them each a jaunty two-finger salute. He'd seen movie stars do the same kind of salute on TV.

“Can I have your autograph?” said a little girl.

“Sure. Here you go.”

Kyle still signed each and every autograph individually.

His best friend, Akimi, on the other hand, passed out preprinted signature cards. “It’s faster that way,” she said.

“Hi, Kyle!” Sierra was curled up in one of the cozy chairs near the three-story-tall wall of fiction. She was reading a book, of course. Her gaze was far-off and dreamy, because when Sierra Russell was into a book, she was totally *into* it. She practically crawled between the covers to live with the characters.

“Hey,” said Kyle. “What’re you reading?”

“Actually, I’m rereading *Bud, Not Buddy* by Christopher Paul Curtis. It’s my favorite.”

“Sweet.”

“Have you ever read it?”

“Not yet. But it’s on my list.”

Sierra laughed. Probably because Kyle Keeley had the longest to-be-read list of any kid in the country.

“There’s another copy on the shelf,” said Sierra.

“That’s okay. I’m meeting Akimi and Miguel upstairs in the Electronic Learning Center. Mr. Lemoncello just installed a new educational video game: Charlemagne’s Chivalry. I think it’s about the Knights of the Round Table.”

“Um, Kyle? Charlemagne was the Holy Roman Emperor. *King Arthur* had the round table—in *England*.”

“See? You *can* learn something new every day. Catch

you later, Sierra. Don't want to keep Charlemagne or King Arthur waiting."

Kyle bounded up the spiral staircase to the third floor, signing autographs and posing for selfies with fans along the way.

He passed through the two very thick sliding glass doors that stopped the wild sounds of the Electronic Learning Center from leaking out into the rest of the building.

Once he was inside the arcade, Kyle's ears were bombarded by the blare, buzz, and bells of three dozen educational video games. His nose was blasted, too. A lot of the games in the ELC were equipped with Mr. Lemoncello's newest sensation, smell-a-vision, including one where you were a royal rat with body-odor issues, swimming through English history via the sewers of London.

"I'm sorry, I can't sign another autograph or my hand will fall off," said Haley Daley, who was holding court near the Cleopatra: Queen of the Nile game console.

Kyle didn't play that one too much, because Haley Daley always outscored him. She knew the trick for summoning crocodiles up from the Nile.

"Kyle?" Haley waved at him. "You got a second?"

"I'm supposed to meet—"

"This is super important."

Kyle made his way to Haley.

"I'm moving!" she said.

"Seriously?"

“Hello? Do you know how many offers I’ve had since I starred in those commercials for Mr. Lemoncello?”

“Actually, we all kind of starred in—”

“Hundreds. Maybe thousands. So my whole family’s going to Hollywood. My dad found a new job in L.A. Plus, my agent is already booking guest spots for me on the Disney Channel.”

“Awesome,” said Kyle.

Haley Daley and her family had needed the money that came with winning the library escape game more than any other player had. It sounded like Mr. Lemoncello’s generosity had really turned things around for them.

“I just wanted to say goodbye. And thanks, Kyle.”

“Hey, it was a team effort. We won it together.”

“Whatever. I gotta go. Need to pick out a new pair of sunglasses.”

Haley dramatically waved goodbye to Kyle and all her adoring fans as she traipsed out of the Electronic Learning Center. She did that dramatically, too.

“Yo, Kyle? We need a little help over here, bro! Like now.”

Miguel and Akimi were on the far side of the Electronic Learning Center playing Charlemagne’s Chivalry. Miguel had the stubby controller rod gripped in front of his chest, wielding it like a lightsaber.

Kyle hustled across the noisy room.

“What’s up?”

“Charlemagne needs a champion,” explained Akimi. “Someone who will defend the weak and defenseless, fight for what’s right, yadda yadda. The game is based on the ancient code of chivalry.”

“I’m kind of stuck,” said Miguel, fending off a fiery dragon with his virtual sword swishes.

“And I’m kind of bored,” said Akimi. “See you two later.”

Kyle turned to Miguel. “What are your options?”

“Slay the dragon or go feed the hungry peasants.”

“No contest. Slay the dragon.”

“You sure?”

“Definitely. If you don’t, the dragon will kill the peasants. You slay the dragon, the peasants will rejoice. Peasants always love dragon slayers.”

“Okay. If you say so.”

Miguel thrust his imaginary sword forward. His on-screen knight pierced the dragon’s hide with his steel blade.

The animated dragon fizzled out a geyser of gas and shriveled into a heap of crinkled plastic.

“Aw, man. It wasn’t a real dragon. It was a big balloon. Like in the Macy’s parade . . .”

A swarm of peasants armed with pitchforks stormed across the screen. They attacked Miguel’s knight.

“Why didst thou not bringeth us food?” screamed the leader of the peasant army. “Death to the selfish, unchivalrous knave!”

Kyle heard the unmistakable *BLOOP-BLOOP-BLOOP*

sound of video-game death. Miguel's knight took a pitchfork in the butt and wilted into a heap of pixels.

"Okay," said Kyle. "Now that we know what *not* to do, we'll play again and win."

"Why bother? We don't need Charlemagne to tell us we're champions. Am I right?"

Kyle grinned. "Totally."

Then the two of them knocked knuckles and chanted the lyrics to their favorite classic-rock tune: "*We are the champions, my friend. . . .*"



On the Monday after New Year's, Kyle stood shivering at his bus stop.

Ohio gets very cold and slushy in January.

Finally, the bus pulled up and swung open its door.

"Well, hel-lo," said Mrs. Logan, the driver. "It's another Lemon-cel-lo!"

Kyle shook his head. Bus drivers watched TV commercials, too.

"Good morning, Mrs. Logan," said Kyle, climbing up the steps.

"Got a riddle for you." Ever since his team had won the Lemoncello Library game, *everybody* was constantly trying to trip them up with riddles and puzzles.

"Go for it," said Kyle.

"What two things can you never eat for breakfast?"

"Easy," said Kyle. "Lunch and dinner."

Mrs. Logan waved her arm at him. “Ah, go sit down.”

Kyle high-fived his way up the bus aisle to his usual seat, next to Akimi. Sierra sat behind Akimi, her nose buried in another book.

“What are you reading?” Kyle asked. “That *Butter Not Nutty Buddy* book?”

“Actually,” said Sierra, “I’m rereading *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, because everybody keeps saying Mr. Lemoncello reminds them of Willy Wonka. But Mr. Lemoncello is much kinder.”

“And he doesn’t have Oompa-Loompas,” quipped Akimi.

“Or Augustus Gloop,” added Kyle.

“Actually,” said Akimi, “I think Charles Chilton was our Augustus.”

“Really?” said Sierra. “He reminds me more of Veruca Salt.”

Wow. Sierra Russell cracked a joke. She had definitely loosened up since joining Team Kyle.

“So,” said Akimi after Kyle peeled off his parka, “did your grandmother give you that sweater for Christmas?”

“How’d you guess?”

“It looks like something you’d buy at a pet store. For a dog named Fluffy.”

“I think I might lose it in my locker today.”

“Good idea.”

“Um, excuse me?” said Alexa Mehlman, a sixth grader seated across the aisle from Kyle.

“Hey, Alexa,” said Kyle. “What’s up?”

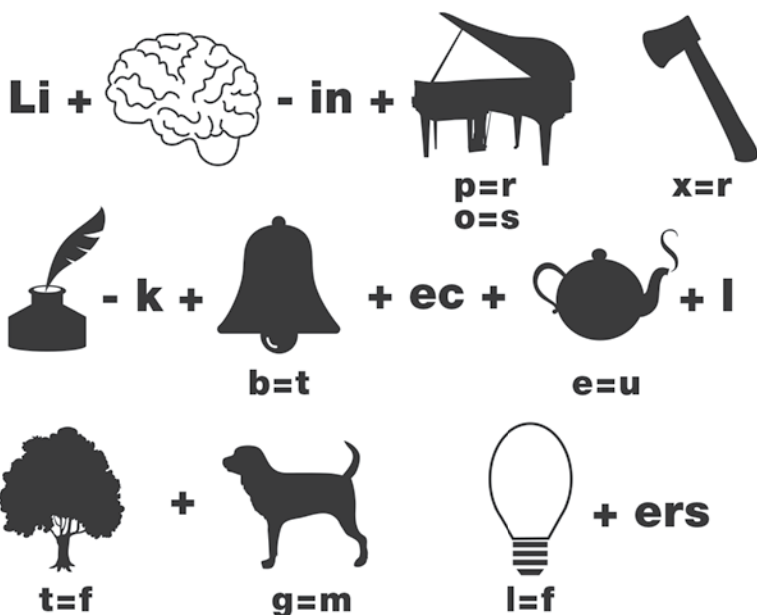
“I don’t mean to bother you. . . .”

“It’s no bother. What can I do for you?”

“Well, my uncle gave me Mr. Lemoncello’s Phenomenal Picture Word Puzzler for Chanukah and I can’t figure out this one rebus.”

“Let me see it.”

“The category is ‘famous slogans,’” said Alexa, passing a cardboard square to Kyle. It was filled with a jumble of letters and pictograms.



“The first word is ‘librarians,’” said Akimi. “L-I plus B-R-A-I-N minus I-N gives you L-I-B-R-A. Then you add P-I-A-N-O, but make the ‘P’ an ‘R’ and the ‘O’ an ‘S,’

so you end up with L-I-B-R-A, R-I-A-N-S, or, you know, ‘librarians.’”

“Wow,” said Alexa. “You guys are amazing.”

“Not me,” said Sierra. “I’m not very good at games.” She dove back into her book.

The bus bounced over a speed bump and pulled into the school parking lot.

“You have ten seconds to finish the puzzle, Mr. Keeley,” said Akimi. “Go!”

Kyle studied the card again and handed it back to Alexa. “‘Librarians are intellectual freedom fighters.’”

“Awesome!” said Alexa. “I kept getting stuck on the bottle. I thought it was perfume, not ink. You’re my hero, Kyle Keeley!”

Kyle smiled. It was good to be someone’s hero.

Especially when all he had to do was play a game.



“You guys?”

Miguel was waiting for Kyle, Akimi, and Sierra when they walked through the school’s front doors.

“You have got to see what I found!” He led them down the hall to the library. Miguel Fernandez was super enthusiastic about everything, especially libraries. That’s why he’d been president of the Library Aide Society for three years straight.

“What is it?” asked Kyle as they entered the media center. “A new Dewey decimal number or something?”

“No. A whole bunch of book lovers all across America who don’t like us.”

“What?” said Akimi. “What’s not to like? We’re very likable people.”

“They’re wondering how come *they* didn’t get to play Mr. Lemoncello’s library game.”

“Um, because they don’t live here in Alexandriaville?” said Akimi.

“Only seventh graders at this school were eligible to enter the essay contest to win a spot at the library lock-in,” added Sierra.

For the first twelve years of the Alexandriaville seventh graders’ lives, school media centers were the only libraries they had ever known. The old public library, the one Mr. Lemoncello had loved when he was a boy growing up in the small Ohio town, had been bulldozed to make way for a multilevel concrete parking structure.

“They just wish they could be us,” said Kyle. “You can’t really blame ’em.”

“It’s worse,” said Miguel. “They think they could’ve *beaten* us.”

Miguel waved for his friends to follow him to the rows of computer terminals.

“I was Googling us again this morning, and all these blogs and posts started popping up. None of them are very nice.”

“Greetings, heroes!” called Mrs. Yunghans, the middle school librarian, who absolutely *loved* having the most famous library card holders in America checking out books in her library. “Don’t believe all those nasty things people are writing about you kids on the Web. They’re just jealous.”

Kyle and his teammates huddled around a monitor while Miguel clacked the keyboard.

“Check it out.”

They scrolled through the top search results for “Escape from Mr. Lemoncello’s Library.”

“It took them a whole day to find their way out of the library?” wrote one blogger.

“I could’ve done it in half a day,” commented another.

“I demand a rematch,” said more.

“This isn’t fair, Mr. Lemoncello.”

“We demand a chance!”

“Put *us* in that library. We could beat Team Kyle with one 612.97 tied behind our back.”

“That’s the closest Dewey decimal number for hand,” explained Miguel. “Actually, it refers to regional physiology of the upper extremities.”

“Wow,” said Kyle. “What a bunch of library nerds.”

Miguel cleared his throat, prompting Kyle to quickly add, “Not that there’s anything wrong with that.”

“Ouch,” said Akimi. “Listen to this one.”

She clicked open a post with even the subject line screaming in all caps.

“‘KEELEY’S TEAM ONLY WON BECAUSE THEY CHEATED!’” she read aloud. “‘MR. LEMONCELLO IS BLATANTLY LYING TO THE WORLD ABOUT WHAT REALLY HAPPENED ON THAT DREADFUL, GHASTLY, AND ABOMINABLE DAY LAST SUMMER. HE SHOULD BE TARRED AND FEATHERED AND RUN OUT OF TOWN ON A RAIL.’”

“That’s horrible,” said Sierra.

“Of course it is,” said Akimi. “Look who wrote it.”

She pointed to the semi-anonymous signature: “C.C.”

Charles Chilington.



Dr. Yanina Zinchenko, the world-famous librarian, dragged a lumpy mail sack to the far end of the Rotunda Reading Room, where her boss, Luigi Lemoncello, was flying up and down in front of the three-story-tall fiction bookcases.

“I’m looking for a good book,” said Mr. Lemoncello as his hover ladder jerked vertically, then skittered sideways. “But I’m not exactly sure what I’m looking for.”

The hover ladders were floating platforms with hand-rails, book baskets, and ski-boot safety locks that allowed you to float up to retrieve any book you wanted simply by entering the book’s call number into a computerized keypad. The system worked with the same magnetic levitation technology used in Germany and Japan to propel bullet trains with magnets instead of wheels.

“Perhaps I can be of assistance,” said Dr. Zinchenko in her thick Russian accent. “Do you have the call number?”

“No need,” Mr. Lemoncello said, laughing. “I wanted to test-drive our new ‘browse’ function.”

After several patrons had complained that the hover ladders’ demand for a specific book code eliminated the ability for patrons to leisurely peruse the shelves, the imagineers at Mr. Lemoncello’s game company had come up with the new and improved hover ladders, which featured a browse button.

Once you pushed it, the hover ladder randomly flitted in front of the shelves, using advanced biofeedback technology, heart-rate monitors, and complex algorithms to figure out what sort of story you might be interested in.

“But we have a very important matter to discuss.” Dr. Zinchenko pointed to the mail sack. It was the size of an overstuffed duffel bag.

“Oh, dear. A V.I.M.? I don’t know if I have the vigor for a V.I.M.”

“We also have visitors. . . .”

“Visitors and a V.I.M.? I’ll deal with both as soon as I finish browsing.”

“Mr. Lemoncello?” bellowed a voice below.

He glanced down and saw a very properly dressed lady flanked by six other very properly dressed ladies and one properly dressed man in a bow tie.

“I’ll be right with you!” shouted Mr. Lemoncello as his

hover ladder caromed across the wall of books like an out-of-control Ping-Pong ball. “I’m busy browsing.”

“My name is Susana Chiltonington,” the lady said operatically. “Mrs. Susana *Willoughby* Chiltonington.”

“Hello, Susana. Don’t you cry for me. The doctors say they can easily remove the banjo on my knee.”

Mrs. Chiltonington wasn’t amused.

“Perhaps you’ve heard of my brother?” she said. “The head librarian for the Library of Congress? James F. Willoughby the third?”

“What happened to the first two?”

“I beg your pardon?”

“Never mind. I am finished browsing. Pull me down, Captain Underpants.”

The hover ladder gently lowered the happy billionaire to the floor.

“Now then, how may I help you, Duchess Susana Willoughby Chiltonington the third, Esquire, PhD?”

“I’m not a . . . Oh, never mind. My colleagues and I represent the recently formed League of Concerned Library Lovers. Winthrop?”

The gentleman in the bow tie opened a leather briefcase. “As a public library, Mr. Lemoncello, this institution needs a board of trustees to oversee its finances and champion its mission.”

Mrs. Chiltonington snorted a little. “It is quite customary.”

“So is pumpkin pie on Thanksgiving, but I prefer pineapple rhubarb,” said Mr. Lemoncello.

“As concerned library lovers,” said the gentleman, brandishing a thick document, “we are here today to volunteer our services.”

Mr. Lemoncello ignored the man and focused on Mrs. Chilington.

“You’re Charles’s mother, aren’t you?”

“Indeed.” She snuffled and adjusted her clothes to make certain all the seams were lined up precisely the way they were supposed to be.

“Might I humbly suggest, Mrs. Chilington, that your considerable concern might be better spent on your son instead of my library? Now then, Dr. Zinchenko, I believe we have a very important matter to discuss?”

“Yes, sir.”

Mr. Lemoncello walked over to the wall of bookshelves and tilted back the head on a marble bust of Andrew Carnegie, revealing a red button hidden in his neck.

“Mr. Lemoncello?” trilled Mrs. Chilington. “A public library requires public oversight—guardians who will safeguard the institution’s well-being and stability.”

“I know! I’ve been thinking about that very fact for months. I’ve also been thinking about lunch for at least fifteen minutes. I thank you for your time and concern.”

He bopped the red button.

A door-sized segment of bookshelves swished sideways. Mr. Lemoncello and Dr. Zinchenko disappeared with the mailbag down a dimly lit corridor. The bookcase slammed shut behind them.

“Mr. Lemoncello?” Mrs. Chiltonington called after them.
“Dr. Zinchenko?”

She banged on a row of books as if she were knocking on a door.

“Mr. Lemoncello!”

A burly security guard—maybe six four, 250 pounds, his hair in long, ropy dreadlocks—came up behind her.

“Ma’am? I’m going to have to ask you to leave the library if you keep punching the books.”

Mrs. Chiltonington swung around.

“I’m not . . . Oh, never mind.”

She glanced at the guard’s name tag.

“Clarence?”

“Yes, ma’am.”

“Well, Clarence, don’t worry. We’re leaving. But kindly inform Mr. Lemoncello that we shall return.”

“Wonderful,” said Clarence. “Mr. Lemoncello loves it when people come back to visit his library.”

Mrs. Chiltonington gave Clarence a frosty smile.

“I’m sure he does. And next time, there will be more of us!”



Early in the second week of January, each member of Team Kyle received a thick envelope in the mail.

When they opened it, they found an engraved invitation:

**SPLENDIFEROUS GREETINGS
AND SALUTATIONS!**

YOU AND YOUR FAMILY ARE HEREBY
CHERRY CORDIALLY INVITED TO THE
ANNOUNCEMENT OF MY STUPENDOUS NEW NEWS.

FRIDAY NIGHT
SHALL WE SAY 7-ISH?

THE ROTUNDA READING ROOM OF
THE LEMONCELLO LIBRARY

REFRESHMENTS SHALL BE SERVED,
INCLUDING CHERRY CORDIALS.

AND THERE *WILL* BE BALLOONS.

REGARDS,
LUIGI L. LEMONCELLO

* * *

Friday evening, Kyle and his family piled into their mini-van and drove downtown to the library.

“Isn’t this exciting?” said Kyle’s mother. “I should’ve baked a cake.”

“Any idea what the big announcement is?” asked his dad.

“Not a clue,” said Kyle. “But we’re hoping Mr. Lemoncello is going to ask us to star in more TV commercials.”

“Please, no,” moaned Kyle’s brother Mike. “Your head’s big enough already.”

Snowflakes swirled in the misty beams of light flooding the front of the domed building that used to be a bank until Mr. Lemoncello turned it into a library. Kyle noticed several TV news satellite trucks taking up the parking spaces along the curb.

“You better get in there, Kyle,” said his dad. “We’ll go find a place to park.”

“Have fun!” added his mom.

Kyle dashed up the marble steps and into the library's lobby.

Miguel and Sierra were waiting for him near the life-size statue of Mr. Lemoncello perched atop a lily pad in a reflecting pool. The statue's head was tilted back so the bronze Mr. Lemoncello could squirt an arc of water out of his mouth like he was a human drinking fountain. His motto was chiseled into the statue's pedestal:

KNOWLEDGE NOT SHARED REMAINS UNKNOWN.

—LUIGI L. LEMONCELLO

"Hey, Kyle!" exclaimed Miguel. "The place is packed. Everybody was invited! All twelve of the original players."

"Including Charles Chiltonington?" asked Kyle.

"He's a no-show."

"I hope Andrew Peckleman doesn't show up, either," said Sierra with a slight shiver. Peckleman had been Chiltonington's ally in the escape game and had tricked Sierra out of her library card so he could spy on Team Kyle.

"He was definitely invited," said Miguel. "But he won't be coming. Ever since he got kicked out of the game, Andrew doesn't really like libraries. He even quit being a library aide at school."

"That's sad," said Sierra.

"You guys," said Akimi, coming in from the Rotunda Reading Room, "there's all sorts of TV news crews inside. Including that reporter from CNN."

“Which one?”

“The guy with the hair.”

“And there’s food in the Book Nook Café,” said Miguel. “Tons of it.”

“So why are we hanging out here?” said Kyle. “Let’s go.”

The four friends hurried under the arch that led into the vast Rotunda Reading Room. The rotunda was packed. Clusters of brightly colored balloons were tethered to the green-shaded lamps on the reading desks. Hidden surround-sound speakers blasted a brassy, heroic fanfare.

Overhead, the Wonder Dome was a fluttering display of fifty state flags flapping against a cloudless blue sky, where, for whatever reason, a very muscular couple in ancient robes rode a chariot back and forth across the curved ceiling like it was a horse-drawn comet. They reminded Kyle of a Greek god and goddess straight out of the Percy Jackson books.

“Wow,” said Miguel. “Do you think Rick Riordan’s going to be here? That would be so awesome!”

All the animated action was displayed on ten wedge-shaped high-definition video screens—as luminous as any sports arena’s scoreboard. They lined the underbelly of the building’s colossal cathedral ceiling like glowing slices of pie. Each screen could showcase individual images or join with the other nine to create one spectacular presentation.

“Whoa,” said Akimi. “Check out the statues. They’re hardly wearing any clothes.”

“And,” Sierra said, “they look like they’re made out of marble.”

“Right,” said Akimi. “*See-through* marble.”

Tucked beneath the ten Wonder Dome screens in arched niches were ten 3-D statues glowing a ghostly green. Holograms.

“They all remind me of Hercules,” said Kyle, taking in the dizzying array of muscular wrestlers, javelin throwers, discus flingers, and runners. “Except for the lady with the horse.”

“I think that’s a Spartan princess named Cynisca,” said Sierra, who read a ton of history books, too. “She won the four-horse chariot race in 396 BC and again in 392 BC in what we call the ancient Olympic Games.”

Akimi arched an eyebrow. “You sure she isn’t that girl from *The Girl Who Loved Wild Horses*?”

Sierra laughed. “Positive!”

“Splendiferous greetings and salutations to one and all!” boomed Mr. Lemoncello’s voice from the loudspeakers as the trumpets blared their final fanfare. “Thank you for joining us this evening. It is now time for my big, colossal, and jumbo-sized announcement!”

Kyle held his breath and crossed his fingers.

He really hoped he and his friends were going to star in more commercials.

Being famous was fun.

And kind of easy, too.

Kids Everywhere Are Cheering for Chris Grabenstein!

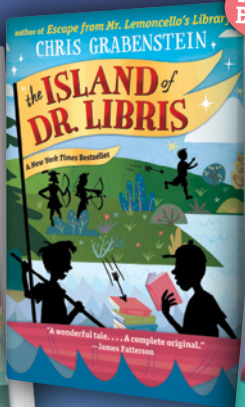
"We thought it was **awesome!**
My favorite part was **everything!**"
—Jake & Rod, elementary school students

"**One of the best books I've ever read!!**
The world couldn't have hoped for a better book."
—Maria, age 9

"This book is a **must-read!**"
—P.R., age 10

"**100%** worth reading."
—Taylor, age 12

How Many Have You Read?



Read an
Excerpt!



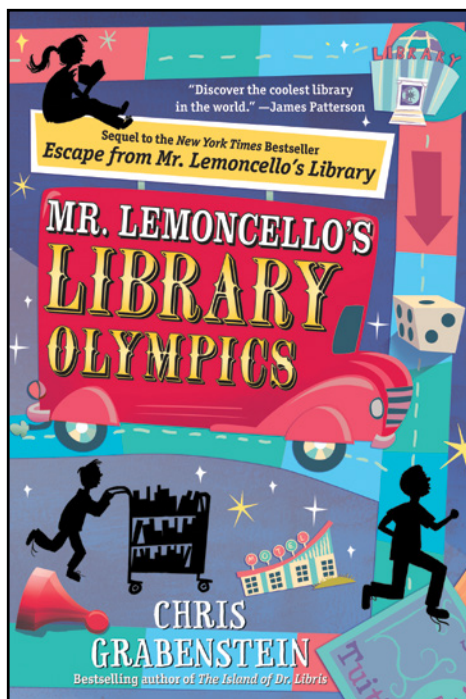

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