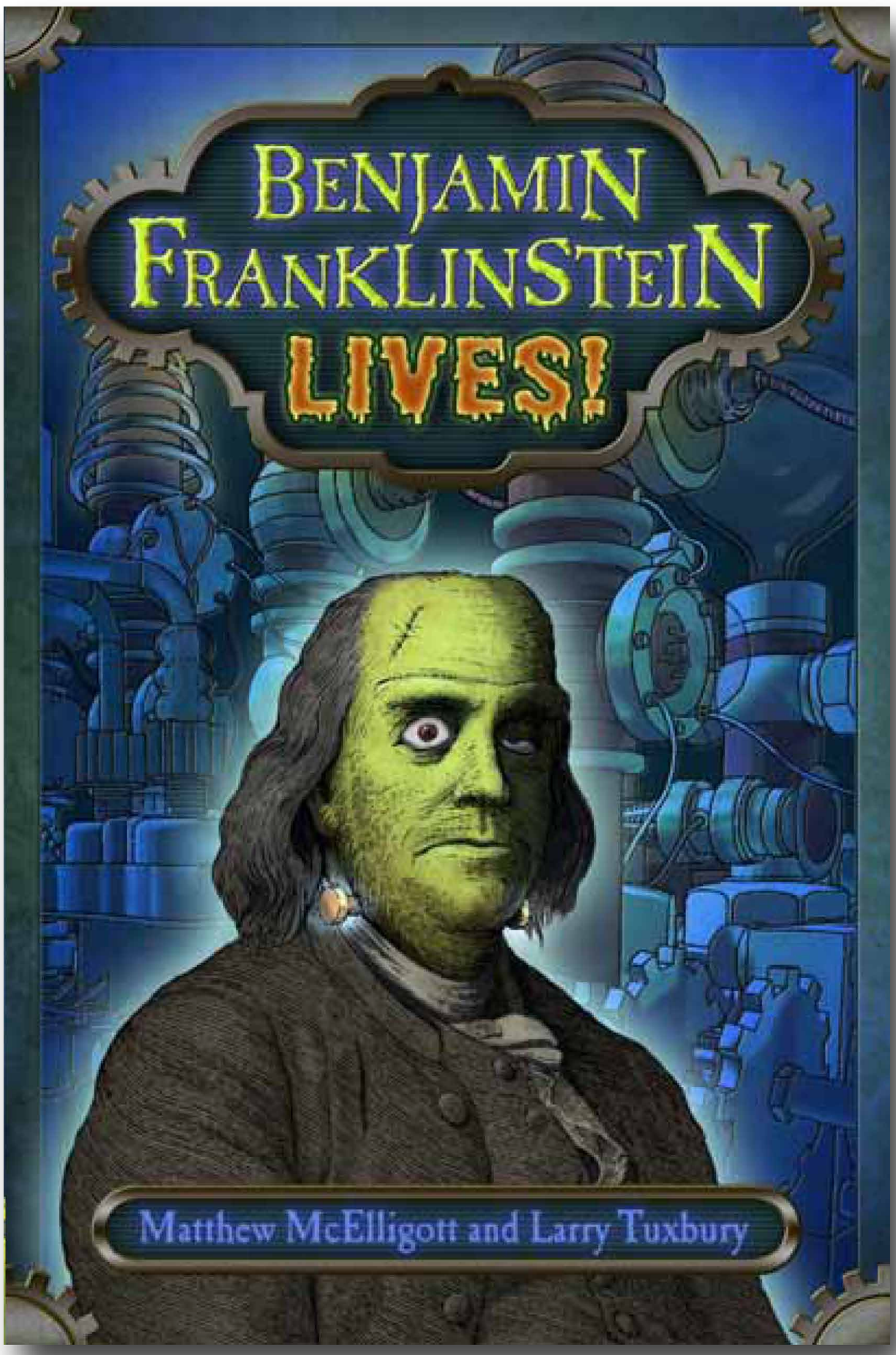

BENJAMIN FRANKLINSTEIN
LIVES!
Matthew McElligott and Larry Tuxbury

BENJAMIN FRANKLINSTEIN LIVES!

Wherein is contained

An Accounting of the Preparation,
Suspension, and eventual Reawakening of the Subject in Modern Day, and his Quest to discover the Great Emergency.

By Matthew McElligott
& Larry Tuxbury. Philom.

Illustrated by Matthew McElligott
Printed and fold by *G. P. Putnam's Sons*,
at the New Printing Office near the Market.

G. P. PUTNAM'S SONS
A DIVISION OF PENGUIN YOUNG READERS GROUP.
Published by The Penguin Group.
Penguin Group (USA) Inc., 375 Hudson Street, New York, NY 10014, U.S.A.
Penguin Group (Canada), 90 Eglinton Avenue East, Suite 700, Toronto,
Ontario M4P 2Y3, Canada (a division of Pearson Penguin Canada Inc.).
Penguin Books Ltd, 80 Strand, London WC2R 0RL, England.
Penguin Ireland, 25 St. Stephen's Green, Dublin 2, Ireland
(a division of Penguin Books Ltd.).
Penguin Group (Australia), 250 Camberwell Road, Camberwell,
Victoria 3124, Australia (a division of Pearson Australia Group Pty Ltd).
Penguin Books India Pvt Ltd, 11 Community Centre, Panchsheel Park,
New Delhi—110 017, India.
Penguin Group (NZ), 67 Apollo Drive, Rosedale, North Shore 0632, New Zealand
(a division of Pearson New Zealand Ltd).
Penguin Books (South Africa) (Pty) Ltd, 24 Sturdee Avenue, Rosebank,
Johannesburg 2196, South Africa.
Penguin Books Ltd, Registered Offices: 80 Strand, London WC2R 0RL, England.

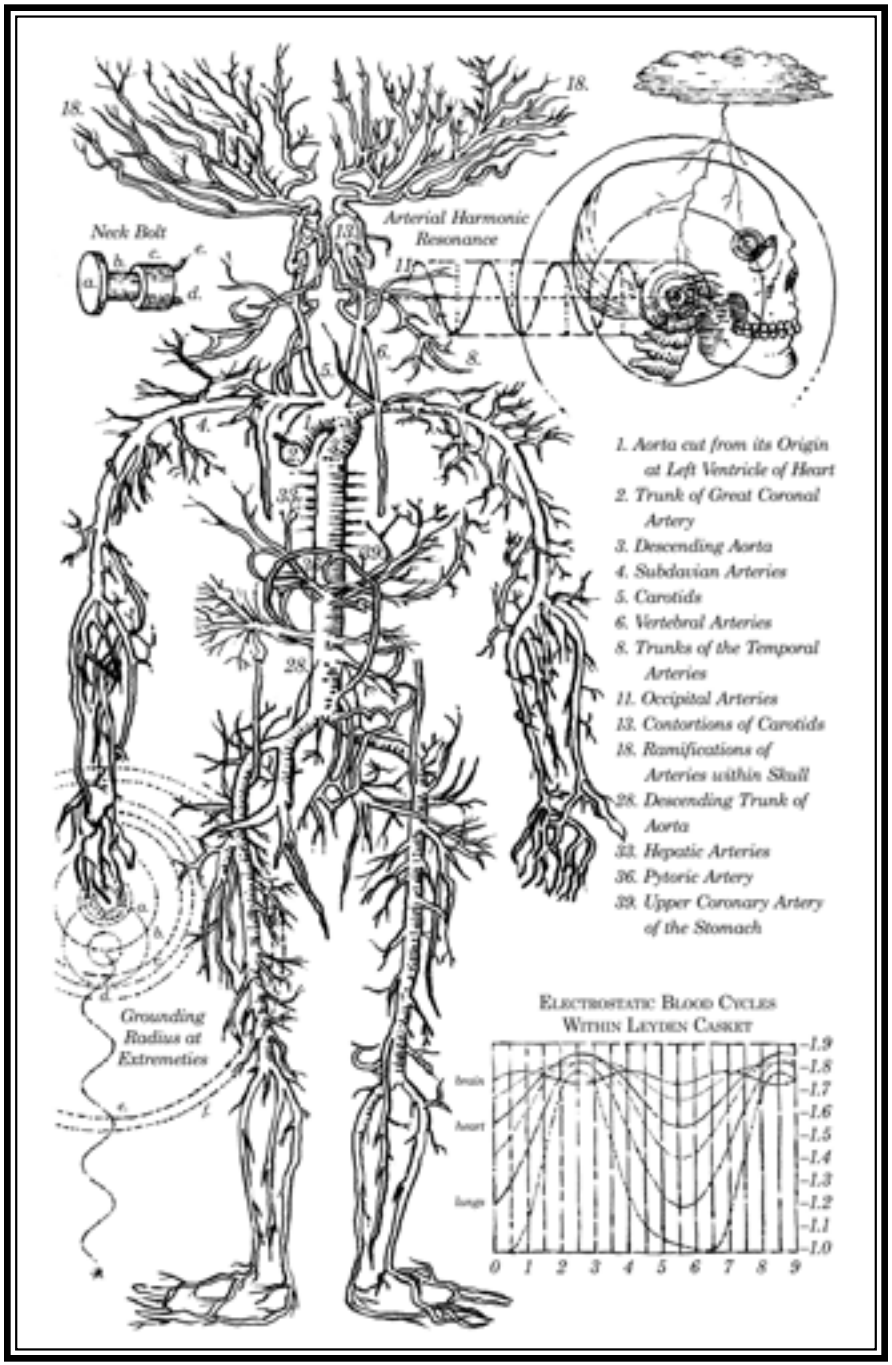
Printed in the United States of America.
Design by Matthew McElligott and Katrina Damkoehler.
Text set in ITC Cheltenham.
The art was done in TK.

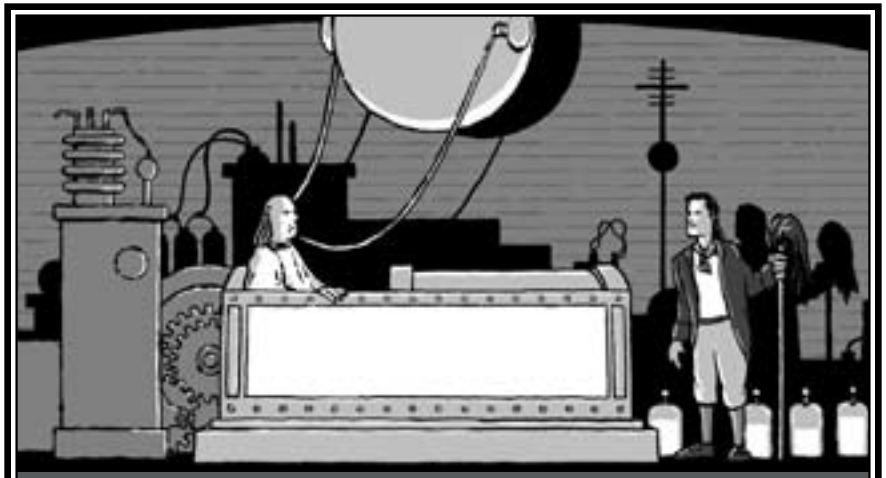
Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data is available upon request.

ISBN 978-0-399-25229-7
1 3 5 7 9 10 8 6 4 2

"I look upon death to be
as necessary to our constitution as sleep.
We shall rise refreshed in the morning."

—Benjamin Franklin
August 21, 1784





PROLOGUE

Philadelphia, 1790

KRAK-A-KA-BOOM!

A clap of thunder echoed through the dark, damp basement.

Along the floor, a series of glass jars lined the walls. They glowed eerily, casting their light on the strange, casket-shaped box in the center of the room.

The box rested on a stone pedestal, its thick glass sides framed by gleaming steel. It had been built to last a very long time. A glowing blue liquid pulsated within, like a beating heart.

The old man dipped his hand inside, shivered, and quickly yanked it out. He marveled at the bright fluid dripping from his fingers. Beneath his skin, his veins

began to glow—bright, then dim, bright, then dim again.

"The time has come, my faithful friend," he said, smiling grimly at the Custodian. "I am an old man, at death's door. I have little to lose. But you are young. The power that we are about to harness is the power of the heavens themselves. If our calculations are off by only the slightest degree, the results will be catastrophic for both of us. Are you certain?"

The Custodian nodded.

The old man stepped into the open casket and lowered himself halfway into the liquid, which now glowed even brighter. A charge surged deep within his body. It felt as if he were made of electricity itself. He shuddered, spilling liquid over the edge onto the cold floor below.

The Custodian mopped up the mess and wrung it out into a pail. He leaned the mop against the stone wall.

KRAK-A-BOOM!

"I sleep now under your capable care. God willing, I shall *continue* to sleep under the care of your descendants, until the day comes that one of them must awaken me. Their sacrifices afford me the chance to serve mankind once more, as a citizen of the future."

Two heavy wires hung over the casket from a large metal orb in the ceiling. The Custodian clipped them to bolts that had been surgically implanted into each side of the old man's neck.

KRAK-A-BOOM!

The orb hummed and a jolt of power shot through the old man's veins. He winced and adjusted his high silk collar. The skin on his neck was still sore from the operation, but without the bolts, he would die.

He turned to the Custodian. "My friend, are you absolutely certain? You risk your life."

The Custodian looked into the old man's eyes. "Sir," he said, "you, of all people, should know. Science is risk. Without risk, there can be no progress."

The old man smiled. "Wise words, old friend. *Long live the Modern Order of Prometheus!*"

He fit a copper mask over his nose and mouth, and with a salute, sank into the blue solution.

The Custodian dragged the heavy lid closed, sealing him inside. He walked to the far end of the room, gripped a large metal switch, and waited.

And waited.

And waited.

KRAK-KOW-A-TA-TOW!

Thunder crashed and the Custodian threw the switch. A flash of electricity flooded the room. A loud hum roared through the cables as the liquid glowed fierce and bright. The Custodian shielded his eyes. Sparks exploded from the casket. Test tubes and beakers shattered on the shelves.

And then—it was done.

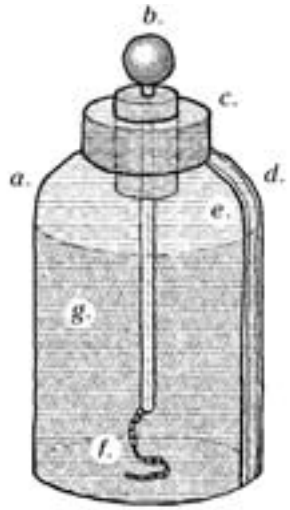
The Custodian stepped forward cautiously. He

studied the body floating in the casket. Was he dead?

No. His chest moved, ever so slightly. He was breathing. Just enough.

It was time to let the old man sleep.

Construction of the Harmonic Leyden Jar



a. glass jar
b. metal cap
c. insulated cap
d. metallic outer shell (negative charge)
e. metallic inner shell (positive charge)
f. charging chain
g. harmonic fluid

Weather Forecast for the Week of April 11, 1790

Sun. 11	*Mon. 12*	*Tue. 13*	*Wed. 14*	*Thu. 15*	*Fri. 16*	*Sat. 17*
☀	☀	☀	☀	☁	☁	⛈

CHAPTER ONE

Philadelphia, Today

Victor Godwin knew it was going to rain. It didn't matter what the weatherman said. The weatherman was a doofus.

Victor had done the math. He had cross-indexed satellite imagery with data from the National Weather Service. By his calculations, there was a 92 percent chance of a thunderstorm within the next twelve hours.

On TV, the weatherman, Skip Weaver, called for sunny skies as he danced back and forth in front of the weather map. Skip Weaver unbuttoned his shirt. He had painted a big yellow sun with a happy face on his belly and was making it talk by breathing in and out. The other newscasters cheered him on. It was a circus.

This man called himself a meteorologist? A scientist?

Victor dropped his umbrella into his backpack. As usual, he would be the only one at school who had thought to pack one. When would people learn? It was easy to figure out what was going to happen with the weather—or anything, really—if you just paid attention.

He arrived at the bus stop ten minutes before the school bus was scheduled to arrive. Victor had noted that the driver tended to show up anywhere from six minutes early to six minutes late. This gave Victor a buffer of four minutes, which was an acceptable margin of error.

Fifteen minutes later, Scott Weaver arrived. Scott missed the bus at least once a week. This never seemed to bother Scott, but it drove Victor nuts.

"Hey, Victor," said Scott. His shirt was inside out. "Did you catch my dad this morning? Pretty funny, huh?"

Victor glanced up at the sky. It was still clear, but clouds would form soon. "If he were smart," Victor said, "your dad would have painted a big lightning bolt on his stomach instead of a sun."

Scott grinned. "Yeah, that would have been way cool. And he could have painted the rest of his skin red, like the Flash."

Victor shook his head. "That's not what I meant. If he had just checked—"

"Want to see my science project?" Scott interrupted. "It's a potato battery. But I modified it."

"Modified it?"

"Yeah, with paint and stuff, to make it extra powerful. Check it out."

Scott reached down into his backpack and pulled out a shiny object the size of a softball. He tossed it to Victor.

Victor inspected the potato. Some of the paint came off on his hands. "*This* is a potato battery?"

"Well, it's a potato with batteries inside. Like I said, I modified it."

Victor examined the object. It was a huge potato, covered in a thick coat of silver paint. At one end, Scott had scooped out a hole and pressed in a handful of 9-volt batteries. Some of them were leaking a strange gray foam. Victor held it close and sniffed.

"What's that smell?"

"Beats me. I think there's something wrong with the potato. Or it might be the paint. I found it out in the shed. But it looks cool, huh? Like an asteroid."

Victor sighed. "You should always check for chemical interactions before applying an unidentified paint. That way, you'll know exactly what will happen."

"Yeah, I guess you're right." Scott took the potato back from Victor. "It feels kind of hot. Think it's going to explode?"

"Don't be ridiculous," said Victor.

Comparing the Common Asteroid with the Weaver Potato Battery

Common Asteroid	Weaver Potato Battery
	
Comes from outer space	Comes from beneath the earth
Made of rock	Made of potato
Coated in ice	Coated in unidentified silver paint
Powered by the gravitational pull of stars and planets	Powered by 9-volt batteries

CHAPTER TWO

Lightning Strikes

Scott Weaver's potato exploded in the middle of science class.

Technically, it was more of a loud pop, followed by a small, intense fire. It burned a hole straight through the top of his desk. Angela Willbrant said it was the coolest thing she had ever seen.

After school, all the kids wanted Scott to make them an exploding potato. No one wanted to talk about Victor's project: a detailed demonstration of the variable resistance of ceramic insulators. Victor shook it off. It didn't matter what the other kids thought. What mattered was the grade, and his grade was an A. Victor always got an A, except one time in fourth grade when