

Ben and his brothers, Zach and Tim played adventurers every day after school. Sometimes, even their mom and dad played a part in their make-believe world.

"Your majesties," Ben said, bowing down to the King and Queen. "We must leave to Edmondar now, to fight the dreaded Kanzorak." Their mom and dad looked to each other and smiled. "Sounds scary! Don't break anything."

"We won't!" The boys replied.

Captain Ben led the way, his head-mounted radar sweeping the area in search of the Kanzorak—a ten-foot-tall, evil-eyed monster with a razor-edged tail.

"Once the radar finds the Kanzorak," Captain Ben whispered to Lieutenant Tim, "we attack."

Shortly after, the radar signaled the creature's location.

"We just located the Kanzorak," Major Zach confirmed.

Charging forward, Major Zach and Lieutenant Tim unleashed laser blasts on the Kanzorak.

"The Kanzorak is way too strong!" Major Zach pleaded.

Captain Ben jumped into battle, pointing his blaster at the wicked monster.

“The Kanzorak is dead!” They shouted.

The Kanzorak had exploded, covering Captain Ben in its poison, which could turn him into a Kanzorak.

“This antidote will destroy any traces of the Kanzorak, once and for all.”

Captain Ben declared, pulling a vial from his armor.

Now free of the poison, Captain Ben reminded his brothers:

“The Kanzorak drained every bit of life from whatever it touched. We need to soak the ground with healing fluids.”

Once Edmondar was restored, Captain Ben declared: “We shall now return home as heroes!”

Back home, their majesties awaited their arrival.

“Welcome home, sons!” the King and Queen declared, placing a gleaming badge of honor on Major Zach, Lieutenant Tim, and...Ben?

“Ben, what’s wrong?” Zach asked, with concern in his voice.

“I don’t feel good,” Ben murmured and dropped to the ground.

“This looks serious!” Their mom and dad said in unison.

Without delay, they climbed into the car and sped toward the hospital.

In the waiting room, hospital staff bustled in and out of doors, chatting with patients and delivering meals on a... spaceship cart?

Before Ben could ask about it, a doctor approached.

“I’m Doctor Starbeam. Welcome to my space station,” he said with a wink.

*Is that his real name?* Ben wondered, noticing all kinds of space-themed details all around.

“You have the heartbeat of a fighter,” the doctor said as he pressed the stethoscope to Ben’s chest.

“I’d like to run some tests.” Doctor Starbeam said.

With test results in hand, Doctor Starbeam’s expression turned serious.

“We found a lump. The first move in our fight is to remove it.”

Ben’s stomach tightened.

“Will it hurt?” he feared.

“Ben, remember when you protected us from the Kanzorak?” Tim asked softly.

“This time, we’ll protect you.”

“Be brave, Ben.” they all said together.

And brave Ben was.

Ben put on his superhero gown and followed Doctor Starbeam to the operating room.

When he awoke from surgery, Doctor Starbeam explained.

“The lump is gone, but you’ll need to take some medicine to make sure it doesn’t come back.”

Ben’s expression grew serious.

“Will it make me feel sick?” he wondered.

“Ben, remember when you took the antidote after the Kanzorak hit you?” Zach asked.

“It wiped away every last trace of the monster.”

“Be brave, Ben.” they all said together.

And brave Ben was.

While Doctor Starbeam tended to him, his brothers played a game of silly faces, sending Ben into fits of laughter.

When the treatment ended, exhaustion washed over him, and Ben drifted into sleep.

In his dreams, he was back on Edmondar. He watched the planet bloom again, its wounds healed after the Kanzorak’s defeat.

And there, atop a mountain he stood proud and strong, a hero who had fought with courage.

When Ben awoke, everyone was asleep—except Doctor Starbeam, who stood at his side.

“Your body needs special soldiers in your bloodstream, and we need a pathway for them to get in,” the doctor explained.

Ben’s gaze fell on the needle, and he frowned.

“I don’t like needles,” he said worried.

He glanced around at his sleeping family, looking for help—then remembered:

He defeated the Kanzorak.

He healed the planet.

He had saved Edmondar!

Just then, he stood and shouted, waking everyone.

“I am Ben! And I am brave!”

And brave Ben was!

“Want to ring the bell, Ben?” Doctor Starbeam asked. “You faced your first treatment like a real hero!”

They all watched proudly as Ben Brave rang the victory bell and headed home with his family.