

Boy-magician discovers a powerful cape that Red saboteurs will kill for.

Kid with the Cape

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# *Kid<sup>with</sup> the Cape*



*by Edward Bereta*  
*Illustrated by Charlotte Tarlitz*

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**by Edward Bereta**

**(Based on a screenplay by R.E. Spakowski)**

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## **Chapter 8**

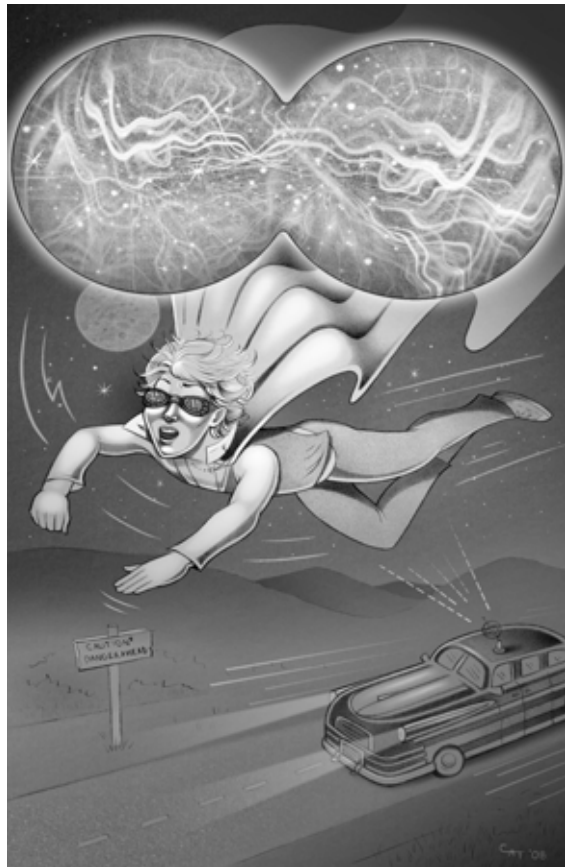
### **The Cape That Flies**

High in the air at five hundred feet altitude, Stanley drifted along the ribbons which crisscrossed the heavens—upwards, downwards, diagonally and every which way in between. Some magnetic waves emanated from ground level and arched skyward much as rainbows but not nearly as orderly.

Riding a wave to its crest, Stanley focused on the long pathway downward and responded by screaming his lungs out much as a person experiencing the downward plunge of a roller coaster ride—only much steeper.

"O-o-o-o-o-h!" yelled the frightened boy, barely aware of the low lying mountains ahead and a moon that was very bright and big.

Below, the limo raced along in a similar direction at a high rate of speed. In the back seat, wearing earphones, The Leader calibrated a compact electronic device that emitted electrostatic buzzing. Scripted across the machine was: 'ELECTROMAGNETIC RANGE-FINDER'.



Reading its flashing lights and needle-operated oval gauges, The Leader grinned, knowing the machine had detected and was locked onto the cape at least temporarily.

He then briefed his goons, "We must keep within fifteen miles of the cape; otherwise we will lose it!"

Both goons nodded in unison. "Yah," croaked Tresky.

On the limo's roof, the antenna spun in the wind at a fantastic speed, its eerie whir screaming now at a higher pitch.

"Turn right at the fork," Chekhov ordered, monitoring the machine. The limo veered into the right side of a fork in the road and began an uphill climb.

Two miles ahead, due east, Stanley was caught in a descending magnetic spiral and began to spin clockwise while losing altitude rapidly.

He tugged at the cape wildly and was able to slide from the downward spiral to a long, looping upward one.

He screamed both in fear and ecstasy as he was thrown into a free fall that ended when he caught another mild horizontal wave.

Leveling off, the cape scraped the top of the invisible wave, leaving a trail of electrical sparks, some of which stung Stanley's arms and legs.

"O-ouch!" cried Stanley several times over. The entire cape—now highly energized—began to glow.

Stanley gazed about through the special goggles—the cape, the glow, the clouds, the multi-colored waves—and uttered, "Jeez!" but then shrieked "Oh God!" as an ear-piercing droning alerted him to something flying nearby.

Startled, he quickly swerved just in time, missing a Douglas DC-3 diving through the low-hanging clouds—WHOOOSH!—by inches! Too close a call.

Inside the cockpit, the pilot, oblivious of the near collision, radioed the nearby regional airfield. "Delta Flight 39 approaching landing pattern. Over and out."

He then lifted his thermos cup in a mock congratulatory gesture and turned to the copilot who—smiling—pulled a lever to activate the flaps. The DC-3 slowed down greatly, causing the craft to vibrate while the men in the cockpit bounced around a bit.

As the pilot took a final sip of coffee, he saw Stanley and his glowing cape appear through the side windshield. At such an unearthly surprise, he nearly choked on his coffee—"A-a-g-h-h!"—poking the copilot to view the impossible beyond the wing tip.

Braving the rustling wind whipping above and below the plane's wings, Stanley waved at them and then quickly drifted up and away out of their view, veering away from the Northeast Regional Airport.

From above, he glimpsed its dimly lit runways and a control tower beacon that blinked methodically in the distance.

Far below, the DC-3 neared the landing strip. Beyond, in the distance, Stanley peered at the electromagnetic lines which danced and flickered but more faintly.

The cape vaulted onto a large, white wave which propelled Stanley past the airport towards a hilly, forested area.

Back at the airport, the DC-3 taxied up to a hangar. "I ain't telling nobody nothing," said the pilot to his mate who nodded in total agreement.

"Yeah, they'd think we was nuts and take away our licenses!" remarked the copilot after a bit of contemplation.

"That was . . . um, a kid with a cape . . . wasn't it?" said the pilot. "A glowing . . . cape, um, wasn't it?"

The copilot was speechless for a while. "I ain't saying nothing . . . to nobody. Not even my wife."

At that moment, nearby on the road running adjacent to the airport, the black limo blew by a lighted sign marked: 'NORTHEAST REGIONAL AIRPORT'. The sign swayed slightly in the wake of the speeding car.

Skyward—to the east—Stanley's long white wave suddenly ended. Losing buoyancy quickly, he half glided and then began a long free fall towards the ground.

He screamed his lungs out—then tried to steer the cape towards some faint electromagnetic ribbons in the distance.

The fear of falling to his death overcame him, and he shrieked, "A-a-a-a-a-a-h! Help me, Robert! Help me!"

Stanley was scared stiff. Mlle. Fouchart's words seemed to split right through his ears, "Beware! You surely take your life in jeopardy!"

Suddenly the cape flared out, slowing down the boy's descent and again providing him with some degree of maneuverability. He floated atop a faint wave at a low altitude when he spied a speeding train dead ahead and found himself attempting a landing.

Again, Robert-Houdin's words as spoken by Mlle. Fouchart echoed in his ears, "Landings are most dangerous! It has almost killed me thrice!"

Approaching the top of the coach cars at an angle, Stanley's flight pattern was erratic, almost completely out of control. Yet he managed to bring his legs to a perpendicular position and touched down on the roof of a car. The impact of the landing caused Stanley to stumble forward and fall, sliding off of the roof. In desperation, he caught hold of the top of a window ledge and hung on for dear life, his screams subdued by the strain of this latest predicament.



Sitting on the other side of the window, an elderly lady was reading a book; she was immediately startled by the ruckus of Stanley's clawing and jostling outside, just a foot away. Not noticing the boy, she glanced about a little sleepy-eyed, but soon got back to reading.

Again, she looked about, certain she had heard something. Then, drawn by some strange sound—out of the corner of her eye—she caught sight of Stanley's goggled, pressed visage against the outside glass. At that moment she opened her mouth, but all human sounds deserted her.

There they stared at each other—face to face. His was a face that wished to cry out in fear, hers one of disbelief and bewilderment.

Stanley attempted to smile at her, but slowly lost his grip and began to sink lower and lower down the window. The old lady's face—nearly nose to nose—followed his down.

She could read Stanley's lips which said something that she interpreted as "Please help me!" Completely bewildered, she could do nothing but watch as Stanley's face steadily disappeared from view.

Traversing a deep ravine, the train blew its horn as it rounded a bend and approached a long, narrow bridge. Stanley—unable to hang onto the side of the seventh car any longer—fell headlong towards the bottom of the ravine, screaming all the way down—"A-a-a-a-a-gh-h!"

Twisting, he spotted an electromagnetic ribbon bursting out of the ground, close enough for him to bounce off the edge of it. Gaining buoyancy, the cape billowed in the wind, producing sparks as its lower edge grated on the quickly rising wave. The wave catapulted him like a geyser spewing out of a rock, up and over the top of the train where the wave dissipated—leaving the

boy descending swanlike. He landed atop the moving train, more graceful than before.

There he stood serenely; the wind rushing through his hair, his magnificent cape flapping in the breeze. He placed his hands on his hips and postured much as he imagined any comic book hero might. He pushed up his goggles and breathed deeply, enjoying his aerial prowess and newfound powers.

Once again, he resumed his commanding stance and in doing so found himself terror-stricken. Directly in front of him was the beginning of a tunnel with only two feet of clearance above the passenger cars.

Stanley screamed instinctively and threw himself backwards just in time—the cape cushioning his fall. The train swooshed into the tunnel without hesitation or decrease in speed.

He clung to the coach roof as the train rambled through and into the open air once more. He staggered to his feet just as a gust of wind caught the cape and blew him off the rail car. He spun downward towards a one-hundred-foot deep forested gully.

Acting like a parachute, the cape slowed Stanley's free fall from the top of the gully to where he crashed into a towering, thickly-shrouded spruce. He was thrown into a slide down its slope, where he was dumped unceremoniously on the vegetated crust covering the forest floor.

Everything had happened so fast that Stanley had forgotten to be afraid. He was stunned, but definitely not afraid.

Remarkably, he stood up and checked his body parts—all there. Trying to relax, he felt the goggles wrapped around his neck. That gave him some assurance and he took a deep breath, glad to be alive.

Then without warning, he heard the loud, brittle

snap of a branch followed by a menacing growl which quickly froze him in place. He adjusted his goggles over his eyes, quickly scanning the environs.

Ahead, he spotted two serpentine magnetic ribbons undulating skyward but a good distance away. The rumbling growl, now very close, provoked Stanley to make a run for it.

A rustle in the thicket and yet another growl came, this one angrier and even closer. Stanley knew something was chasing him but was too afraid to waste a crucial millisecond to glance back. Behind him a large, raging black bear was closing in!

Aware by now that electromagnetic lines often change course or disappear completely, the boy was grateful to see the pulsating ribbon ahead. All he had to do was get to it.

The beast let out a conclusive growl, and Stanley sensed the bear at his heels. Just as the animal lunged, he leaped onto the wave, the cape flaring out and carrying him safely out of harm's way.

An extremely swift, quivering shaft of energy propelled the boy up and eastward with great velocity—far ahead now of the speeding train below. Like lightning a thought struck him—"I'm flying as fast as a duck hawk!"—and left just as quickly.

Gliding effortlessly, the boy grinned, enjoying for the first time—the thrill of flight. He skimmed over a row of low-lying mountains, maintaining an easterly course the best he could by traveling at a ninety-degree angle to the North Star.

Far off in the distance, the black limo whizzed along the highway at a tremendous speed.

In the back seat, The Leader—clenching his fist angrily—announced to his comrades, "We lost him! No doubt he is beyond that mountain. Faster!" The car

surged forward up a steeply inclined road, fading quickly into the darkness.

Below the clouds but above the low-slung mountains, Stanley flew serenely. Bobbing and sliding from EM wave to ribbon-like spiral, his cape took full wind.

The cape glowed slightly as a few strands of blue static flashed over it. Suddenly, all light and energy ceased—as if a plug were pulled.

The cape fluttered and abruptly lost its velocity, collapsing around the boy who found himself in a headlong dive towards the unknown blackness below. His face became twisted with fear, but that didn't change his resolve to survive.

Goosebumps sprouted throughout his body. Trying to spread the cape to catch the wind, Stanley cried out, "Help-p! Robert! A-a-a-gh!"

The cape availed itself to the wind somewhat, but it was too little too late as the ground approached faster and faster. At the bottom of a long mountainous slope, Stanley saw something below: a small cabin with lighted windows was situated next to a barn with a clearing, which edged up to an ominous patch of heavy timber.

Billowing, the cape slowed the boy's skyward fall just enough for Stanley to land feet first at the rear of the barn roof. His momentum sent him careening off-balance along the roof's apex. Grabbing for a handhold, he slipped over the roof's edge but snagged and snapped off the stem of a weather vane—CRACK!—which slowed his free fall into a small mound of hay below—PLOP!

Almost immediately from somewhere near the cabin, a dog barked, warning of an intruder. Its discourse became louder and louder.

“Oh, God! I’m going to die!” cried Stanley as his mind blacked out.

A door opened and was slammed shut. Footsteps—first on wood board, then on gravel—came nearer and nearer—CRUNCH! CRUNCH! CRUNCH!

Shortly, a large, tan mixed-breed retriever bayed at the haystack, wagging its tail with the coming of its owner.



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