

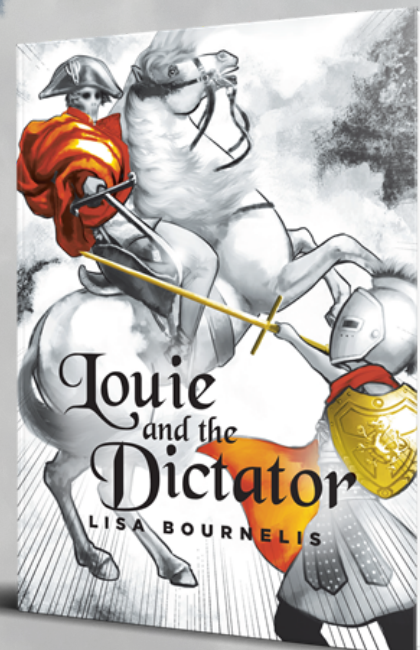
Louie and the Dictator

By LISA BOURNELIS

Louie's world is getting smaller with each passing day. An authoritarian mastermind has set out to control his every move. To make matters worse, there is an unknown virus infecting the world, forcing everyone to lock down in their home. Playdates, soccer games, and even his birthday party are cancelled!

Outside the confines of his room lies a world of darkness: the calamitous cracks, the rock of evil, the steps of doom. Even the food and air are poisoned. As the Dictator continues his onslaught, Louie worries he will be imprisoned forever in the solitude of his home, with only his Tales of King Arthur and his anxious rescue pup, Baily, for company.

Louie's dreams of living an ordinary day are shattered when his beloved Baily is lost in the forest. With the Dictator and his dark forces closing in, will he muster the courage to face his fears, lead a rescue, and bring his furry friend home?



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ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Lisa Bournelis is a mom, taekwondo black belt, healthcare change consultant, and former humanitarian aid worker. She has served all over the world, from Africa to the Balkans to Afghanistan.

Inspired by her child's experiences with OCD during the pandemic, she wanted to uplift children struggling with anxiety during this extraordinary time, by showing that they are heroes of their own stories, and by sharing a hopeful message that adjustments to the way we think can transform our circumstances.

To view her blog or listen to her podcasts on applying change management tools to support personal growth, visit www.makeoneshift.com

A portion of the proceeds of the sale of this book will be donated to local pediatric OCD research and mental health programs.

A Look Inside

Prologue

I cannot remember the first time I heard his voice. It started quietly, a soft whisper in the back of my mind with an ominous message:

Avoid the step on the landing, or you will have an awful day.

You need to hold your breath for five seconds when you see the unlucky number seven. Otherwise, bad luck will follow.

Then it started to bug me at school.

You need to write the letter so it is **EXACTLY** touching the lines in the notebook, or there will be trouble.

There now, do it again. It must be **EXACTLY** touching the lines like so . . .

It followed me when I went to Taekwondo practice.

Every time you do a spinning kick on the left side, rotate around on the right side to balance things out.

Over time, the commands increased in menace and insistence.

If you step on any of the cracks on the floorboards between your room and the kitchen, something terrible will happen.

Do not eat foods with marks on them—they are **POISONED!**

Even bedtime did not offer an escape.

If you let Mom and Dad go downstairs at bedtime, when you wake up the whole world will turn into a rock of evil. Everything will be gone, and you will be the **ONLY. SOLITARY. PERSON. LEFT. IN. EXISTENCE.**

I call the voice “the Dictator,” because I know it is not my voice, but an unwanted intruder in my head. An invisible bully. We learned in social studies that a dictator is an authoritarian, someone who wants to control others to make them do their will. Someone with unlimited governing power. That is what this is, an unwanted invader who has convinced me if I do not bow to his will, something horrible will happen to me, or my family.

