

## **Cammy of Ottawaquechee**

### ***Storm Hazard and the Hidden Treasure***

***By Dave Clark***

## Chapter 1

It was the dead of winter. It had been cold for too long. Temperatures had been below 32 degrees for over 90 days straight. Not really that cold, but the constant chill had made me less adventurous.

With the cold had come snow—lots of it. The picket fence around the yellow house was completely covered under the pile from shoveling the driveway. Elsewhere, higher up, friends were reporting snow depths of six to seven feet.

March arrived and with it an easing of temperatures. We celebrated 40 degree highs by standing in the sun on the front porch in our wooly socks and shirtsleeves. But with the warmth came a new kind of snow—huge, heavy flakes fell from the sky, splattering and sticking against any thing they hit. The weight of the snow bent small trees almost to the ground and the stillness of the winter nights were shattered by rifle shots—the sound of cracking wood as the monstrous flakes relentlessly bore down upon their prey.

One morning, I was at work in my office when I heard a heavy tromping on the front porch. The door burst open and there stood my friend, Dan.

“Tree down on River Road,” he said. “Need your phone.” Dan was built like a bowling ball with a boyish grin and a sparkle in his eye gained from years of practical jokes. “I can’t get through,” he said into the receiver. “No, really,” he protested.

The downside of being a great practical joker with a poker face is that no one ever knew what to believe. Dan enjoyed keeping everyone guessing.

“Well, I can’t make it, and you might want to call Emergency Services if you can afford the dime,” he puffed and hung up the phone. “Hey,” he said, settling down on his stool and picking up a guitar, strumming. “What’s new?”

“I hear there’s a tree down on River Road,” I said. “Did you walk far?”

“Nah, just came from the cemetery,” he said, crooning, “Big tree down on the road, bless my soul, bless my soul. Here I am on the commode, bless my soul this morning.”

“Cemetery?!” My heart jumped. We had spent many hours protecting the giant pine trees in the cemetery—and one of them was especially important to us. It held a secret treasure with which we were entrusted.

“Yeah, one of those big old pines on the bluff overlooking the river snapped right off near the base. There’s no way anyone’s getting through for a while.”

“I want to see,” I said, getting up. “Let’s go!”

“Not me,” he said. “Been there, done that!”

I pulled on my Sorrel boots and tucked my jeans in before lacing them. What if it was our special tree—the tree with the treasure? Old Mr. Detweiller had described the treasure box that he had bolted into the tree and asked us to care for it in case something happened to him.

But we had decided not to disturb the treasure, that knowing there was a treasure up there somewhere was better kept as a secret. But what if our special tree was down? I would have to move quickly to save the treasure before emergency workers arrived.

I grabbed a few tools and put on my coat. “Come on, Cammy,” I said. “Let’s go!”

## Chapter 2

The air sparkled and steam rose from our mouths as Cammy and I stepped outside. It was the most beautiful kind of winter day—blue sky, still air. The porch thermometer read 28 degrees—cold enough to keep everything frozen and yet warm enough to feel like 60 degrees in a sunny sheltered spot.

We walked out the front gate and turned east toward Dewey’s Pond down the road. Immediately I could see a massive green wall where River Road unexpectedly ended and a forest began. As I walked closer, I marveled at how large the tree was and then I remembered my mission and looked up on the bluff. The ancient pine had suffered rot damage near the base of the trunk where two branches had formed a double crown. It was at that point that one half of the tree had fallen down, rolling down the steep embankment and coming to rest, blocking River Road with a 30 to 40 foot length of greenery.

I stepped up my pace and broke into a trot—Cammy was way ahead of me, running full speed with no particular destination in mind. She was happy to get out where she could run.

When I got to the tree, I started at the break and carefully worked my way toward the top, inspecting all sides of the trunk. Mr. Detweiller had said that he had used large bolts to fasten a metal box to the main trunk. But he had never described the exact location. “It was fairly high up back in 1915,” he had said.

“But 86 years later—who knows?” I thought.

I was feeling the underside of the trunk when my hand sensed something square and flat and a corner. “This must be it,” I thought. Quickly I cut a few branches away to get a better angle and slid on my back under the trunk of the tree. There, right in front of my face, was an old gray electrical box, wired shut. My hand shook as I snipped away the wire and pulled it free from the decrepit hasp. I began tapping with my hammer and screw driver, softly at first soft and then harder and harder as my excitement grew. Then I noticed that the handle was still in the shut position. I reach over, opened it and gave the frozen lid one final blow. It opened!

Inside was a wooden box nearly the size of the metal box that contained it. I reached my finger in and pulled it out.

“You need a little help?” a friendly voice called from the road. I slipped the wooden box inside my coat and slid out.

“No thanks. I think I can handle it with this,” I laughed, holding up my hacksaw.

“I didn’t realize how large these trees are,” he said. “Hey, aren’t you the guy whose dog got kidnapped?”

“Yeah,” I said. “But it all got worked out. It was just a case of misplaced priorities.” I shifted uncomfortably in my coat.

“I think I’d better get a bigger saw,” I said, taking a few steps toward the house.

“Don’t worry about it,” he said. “Emergency workers are on the way. I just called and they already know about it.”

“Okay,” I said eager to get home. “I’ve got work to do anyway.” I pulled my coat around me a little tighter and started toward home.

### Chapter 3

I put the wooden box in the cupboard in the mud room by the back door. I was intensely interested in its contents and a couple of times that afternoon I got up and walked to the mud room, opened the cupboard, stared at the wooden box, then turned around and left again. It was like that feeling of joy in your heart when you get something that you've cherished for a long time after you've been afraid that it had been stolen.

I decided not to open the treasure until Helen, Cassady and Cailey were on hand. After all, Mr. Detweiller had made us all caretakers of the secret treasure so we should all be together when we saw the contents for the first time. I spent most of the afternoon thinking about what kind of person Mrs. Tinkham must have been to go hiding her valuables up in a tree. Her diary had indicated that she did it out of concern for her son, who was away at war. She seemed to be of fortunate means—she took tea regularly at the Parker House and her husband was the owner of the Tinkham block—containing a bank, general store and post office. But she was a bit eccentric—for instance it was common knowledge both from her diary and from local stories that she was very energetic for her age and loved to play games and cards at the Parker House. She was an avid contra dancer and organized the construction of the first walking and bike paths on Mount Tom.

Until everyone got home, it was as if old Mrs. Tinkham herself was sitting on my guest stool, fidgeting, just waiting to tell her story.

Finally at 5:30, the door burst open, accompanied by loud singing and pounding of feet amid the occasional crunch of a paper bag or heavy thud of something being dropped on the floor. Screaming ensued as Cassady ran into my office accusing Cailey of looking at her funny.

"Hi guys!" I said, not looking up. "I've got the treasure."

"Sure, Dad," said Cailey, poking Cassady in the belly and quickly moving away as Cassady took a swing at her.

"Yeah, Dad. Anything you say, Dad," giggled Cassady. Both ran out of the office. About 15 seconds later they both came back in and stood staring at me.

"Where is it?" "Where's what?" I asked innocently. "The treasure, you dummy!" Cassady yelled.

"You guys promise to quit screaming for the rest of the week?" I bargained.

"Dad," Cassady whined. I looked at Cailey who just scowled.

"Okay, then. Two weeks." I upped the ante.

"Okay, Dad. One week of silence." They both promised.

"Great," I said. "We'll open it as soon as Helen gets home."

"Argggggggghhhhhhhhhhhhh!"

"Hey, what happened to the week of silence?" With that, they both went to the living room to read.

A few moments later, line one rang on my phone. "Dad," Cassady said. "How come you took the secret treasure out of the tree?"

After I explained all about the tree falling down, the girls got all excited and went out with Cammy to wade around in the waist high snow. And look at where the tree had been.

## Chapter 4

After dinner, and many quiet discussions about why we couldn't open the treasure right that minute, Helen, Cassidy, Cailey and I sat down in the living room to inspect the box. It was plain wood—with no special markings. It looked like balsa wood, except that it was very hard.

"Dad, we tried to open it but we can't," Cassidy said. "You try."

I picked up the box and inspected it closely. I could see no seams but there was a slight shaking inside so we knew that it could open.

"Let's cut it open," Cailey said, bouncing up and down on the sofa.

Suddenly, I felt part of a panel push in a bit. A square magically appeared where the wood had become indented. "Wait a minute," I said. "I think I'm getting it." All the girls' heads leaned in closer to the box—then Cammy pushed her nose into my arm, prying my hand away from the box.

"She needs to walk," laughed Helen.

"She'll have to wait," I said, concentrating on the box. I had pushed the square panel in as far as it would go and was searching for another when a lovely music began to come from the box. I set it down and stared in wonder as something went click inside the box the lid started to open slowly.

"Wow," we all whispered in amazement. An intricate mechanism inside the box had held the top secure. The hidden panel had unlatched the spring that ran the music box and as the "Blue Danube Waltz" played, the lid settled back into its full upright position.

A single sheet of paper was folded inside the box. I opened it and began to read:

Dear Son:

I hope you enjoy this wonderful box as much as I did. It's yours to decorate however you wish. I had it made, but left it plain so as not to draw attention to it.

I have preserved my side of the family fortune for you in case you came to a point in your life when you need a fresh start. If you are reading this, Alan Detweiller must have felt it was time to share the whereabouts of this box with you. I know that you are an outstanding and capable young man so it shouldn't be too difficult for you to solve the riddle and discover the spot where the family fortune is hidden.

Here is the riddle:

Where the river runs backwards  
And time stands still  
Set your sights higher

In this box you will find everything you need to discover where the fortune is hidden. Dearest, I am excited that you are about to embark on this adventure. You are a Tinkham so I have every confidence that you will discover the fortune. Good luck.

- Your loving Mother

"Oh my God!" Cassidy said.

"What else is in there?" Cailey lunged at the box to remove the tray. In a cavity under the tray was a hand-drawn map with weird markings. There was also a photograph of an old house next to a mill pond and a

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key with an old dried-up leather strap. While everyone was going crazy with excitement, I started looking carefully at the map. There was nothing recognizable about it. Just a series of dashes with measurements and some detailed drawings of wall sections.

“Dad, where is this picture from?” Cassady asked. I looked carefully at the photo. It was an old photo of a low flat-roofed building surrounded by trees. In the foreground was a river with logs floating in the water. Men in boats with matching pointed front and rear bow and stern, were working the logs into position near the mill. It wasn’t recognizable from any building that I had seen in Quechee.

“I don’t know, Cass. It looks like it might be along the Connecticut River. The photo could be from the 1850s to 1890s when those boats were used for logging. Chances are that building doesn’t exist any longer. We’ll have to keep our eyes open for foundations or other natural landmarks like that hill in the background and see if something matches up.”

Cammy pushed my elbow again. “Anyone want to go for a walk with me and Cammy?” I asked.

“Sure, I’ll go,” said Helen.

“Nah, we want to stay here and play with this box,” said Cailey.

“Yeah, Dad, we’ll stay here,” echoed Cassady, turning over the key in her hand. “Hey, there’s a name on this key—Hazard.”

“Well, put it back in the box and we’ll be back in a half hour or so,” I said.

On the way out to the Quechee Green, we stopped by the Parker House and called up to Walt and Barbara to see if they wanted us to walk their dog. Stoli is a cute little guy who can put on a burst of speed to match anything Cammy can muster—plus his small size allows him to turn on a dime. He and Cammy get along pretty well. Walt peered down over the railing of the restaurant verandah and called out “I’m sending him down to meet you. Just a minute.”

We walked around to the stone stairs leading out from the kitchen. Out sprang Stoli, a smallish gray terrier with a frizzy muzzle and a tail that curls up over his back in a long curve. We let Cammy off her leash and they sprinted off across the icy top of the snow, with Cammy occasionally breaking through while Stoli sped along anywhere his lightweight body pleased.

Helen and I walked along enjoying the blue sky, the bare white snow and the soft breeze. The Green was located up river from the covered bridge and the old rag wool mill, now occupied by a fabulous restaurant, glass-blowing, weaving and pottery studios and a wonderful retail shop called Simon Pearce. Our path took us up river along the Green about a quarter mile to the post office where we would check our mail and sometimes indulge in one of Sam’s famous scones and coffee from the Village Deli. As we approached the post office, we heard Cammy barking from behind the deli. We increased our speed and rounded the back of the post office to see the back half of Stoli digging furiously while Cammy egged him on. They were taking turns digging something out of the hill beneath a crumbling stone wall. The remains of an old estate—the last ruin of earlier days.

“Cammy, come!” Helen commanded. Cammy turned, tongue hanging out of her wide-open mouth, a wild look in her eye. I pulled a plastic bag full of kibbles out of my pocket—the Secret Weapon. “Cammy!” I shouted, crumpling the bag. Cammy turned and made a beeline for the dog treats. Stoli followed suit.

After putting Cammy on the leash, we decided to continue our walk past where the dogs had been digging. As we passed the spot, I noticed a vertical iron plate at the base of the hole. I decided to take a look. I approached the spot and bent down with a bit of apprehension. What if the dogs had been chasing a skunk? I had to put my head into the hold to read the inscription on the iron plate. “Hazard Iron Works” it read above the date 1860.

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“Dave? What are you doing?” Helen asked.

“Come here and look,” I answered. Helen crawled up next to me in the snow and stuck her head in the hold.

“I can’t see anything,” she said. “Wait a minute,” I said, pulling my head out. “How about now?”

“Wow,” said Helen. “Is it connected to the key?”

“I don’t know,” I replied “But it’s worth finding out. Let’s go home.”

## Chapter 5

Later that night after Cassady and Cailey had gone to bed, Helen and I took out the old photograph, scanned it and printed out a large-format print. We still could not see a resemblance to the ruins behind the post office. It was beginning to feel a little weird to be acting in the absence of Jack Tinkham, who was the intended recipient of all these clues but had long since deceased as the result of a drowning incident.

“It’s kind of spooky, looking for a fortune intended for a dead person,” I confided to Helen.

“Well, don’t worry, you’ll never find it,” said Helen. “It probably washed away in the flood of 1927.”

“What flood?” I asked.

“The Big One,” she replied. “Don’t you remember that history book we checked out of the Quechee Library that showed all the streets in White River Junction under water? If there was a fortune, it probably washed away in the flood or was ruined.”

I spent the next few days in the office working on various projects but every time I looked up and saw that old photo, it started me thinking. We had inquired about the metal plate and had found out that it was an old sluice gate from the mill ruin that had been used for overruns. It had since been dismantled and left there for no one knew how long.

On my way to the post office that day I ran into Wayne—the old timer who had introduced himself to me while I was under the tree. He was very interested and said that a lot of mills got washed away during the flood of 1927 and were never rebuilt and that most likely that Hazard Iron Works was a manufacturer for these small local mills.

Friday afternoon, when Cassady and Cailey got home from school, I shared with them the information I had learned about Hazard Iron Works and how the key must be related to some part of the mill.

“Of course, Dad, that’s what in the photo,” said Cassady.

“I know,” I said. Then I told them about the Flood of 1927 and how a lot of mills were washed away.

“Great, Dad, what’s so exciting about a mill being washed away?” asked Cassady. “The fortune probably washed away with it.”

“Yeah, you’re right,” I said. “We should just forget the whole thing.”

“No!” said Cailey. “I want to find the fortune!”

“So, how do we do that,” I asked?

“We’ll find out where they had mills around here before 1927,” said Cailey matter-of-factly. “And then we’ll visit each site to see if the hills and stuff match the surroundings in the photo. Then we’ll use the map to discover the treasure!”

We sat in stunned silence. It was a good plan and the idea had been nibbling at the edge of my mind but I hadn’t actually thought of it.

“Okay. First thing tomorrow morning we go to the library and do some research.” I said. “You guys want to help me make dinner?”

“Sure, Dad,” said Cassady. “As soon as I take a bath, paint my nails and do my homework.”

“Um, I think I need to clean the birdcage,” said Cailey.



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“Sorry, I’ve got to walk Cammy,” said Helen coyly.

Somehow I didn’t mind being left alone in the kitchen. The solitude gave me time to think about what it must have been like for Mrs. Tinkham in this very house in 1915 when she was worried about her son in the war. But what about before that? It was beginning to sound like she had her own money. Money that even Mr. Tinkham didn’t know about. I wondered about her side of the family—where she had come from, who she had known before she married Mr. Tinkham and why on earth she had hidden it from him. She was a strange bird all right, hiding fortunes in trees and entrusting them to a lifetime of secrecy with Mr. Dutweiler. But Mr. Dutweiler had died leaving us with the secret.

I wondered if there was anyone else in town who knew Mrs. Tinkham and I remembered one old woman who lived in a run-down house on Main Street. All day long she would sit on the overgrown porch staring at people as they drove by. That seemed to be the trouble with getting old. Everyone forgets you and you live in the past. Well, I was very interested in people like that. I’d look her up tomorrow.

## Chapter 6

The next day Cailey and I went to the library to look through old newspapers and telephone books on microfiche.

“There ought to be something in here,” I said as I flipped through a phone book from 1925. “Yup, here it is! Hazard Iron Works—they even have a small ad.--FABRICATORS OF IRON FOR MILLS, BRIDGES AND FARM IMPLEMENTS. And they were located in White River Junction.”

“But they aren’t there now,” said Cailey.

“Yeah, you’re right,” I said, “But at least they were located in this area. Maybe we can find out who owned the company and trace some of the paperwork to someone’s barn or something,” I said, not really believing it myself. “Listen, there’s this old lady who lives right across the street. Why don’t we go over there and introduce ourselves and ask her what she remembers from the early days. She might remember Mrs. Tinkham.”

Cailey’s eyes lit up. “That’s a good idea, Dad,” she whispered, “But I’ll be embarrassed to just walk up and start talking to a stranger. Don’t expect me to say anything.”

“Okay,” I said. At least I had her buy-in. “Let’s go!”

We got out of our chairs, put on our coats, and walked down Main Street to the old house. It was actually pretty warm there in the sunlight and when I looked across the street at her house, sure enough there she was rocking in her chair, bundled up, watching the traffic go by.

“Let’s go to the post office first,” I said, “And find out her name.” She lived on 1132 Main Street and I knew that Jeff, the Postmaster, would know her.

Sure enough, visiting with Jeff after picking up our mail, he filled us in on a few details. “She never leaves her home,” he said, “but her friends come down and pick-up her mail. Her name is Kate Osborne – kind of an odd one, but I bet she wouldn’t mind you asking about the good old days.”

Cailey and I walked back up the hill to Main Street and turned left. Before long, we were standing outside her picket fence.

“Mrs. Osborne?” I called out.

Kate Osborne had beady eyes and was wrapped from head to toe in an old Indian blanket. She just looked at me and blinked.

“Mrs. Osborne?” I repeated.

I think she was a little surprised that a stranger had noticed that she was there, and knew her name.

“You’re not from these parts,” she spoke in a high crackly voice. “How’d you know my name?”

“We live down the street in the yellow house with the picket fence,” I stammered, “And we asked around for your name,” I confessed sheepishly.

“Oh, you live in the old Tinkham house,” she nodded.

Cailey and I glanced at each other – PAYDIRT!

“I knew Mrs. Tinkham when I was a girl your age,” she pointed a bony finger at Cailey. “So what brings you around here?”

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I cleared my throat and told her that we were doing research on the people who had lived in the yellow house before us and we hadn't been able to find out much before 1920. She invited us up on the porch and began to reminisce.

"Oh that Eleanor Tinkham, she was fun," she said. "Every time my girlfriends and I walked by she would have something nice to say or a game to play with us or a job for us to do. We were always hanging around her house visiting with her. I think she wanted a daughter real bad and since she never had one she just adopted us."

Cailey and I looked at each other again. This was too good to be true!

"But I always thought she worried a little too much."

"What do you mean, Mrs. Osborne?" I asked.

"Call me Kate," she said. She was in a kind of trance, remembering her youth. Her breathing had become very deep and she wasn't focusing on either of us.

"Kate do you want to go play?" Cailey asked quietly.

"Sure" said Mrs. Osborne, "I'll go ask my mom."

I looked at Cailey in admiration. She had gone back in time and was reliving 1915 with Kate Osborne. She had gone right to the time we wanted to know about.

"What do you want to play?" Cailey asked.

"Let's go over to the mill and watch the loggers," she said, lighting up. "Oh I love to watch the men balance on those logs."

"Can I go too?" I asked timidly.

"What do you think, Angela?" Kate said turning to Cailey.

"I think that would be O.K.," Cailey said. "As long as he doesn't try to boss us around."

"O.K. Alan, you can come too," giggled Ms. Osborne, obviously happy.

Alan? I thought. Was I acting the part of Alan Detweiller? They would have been about the same age. How strange! I kept my promise and let Cailey do the talking.

"Do you think Mrs. Tinkham is rich?" Cailey asked.

"Lord yes!" Why I hear she's got an entire fortune hidden away somewhere, but I don't know where," confessed Kate. "I hear she was sweet on a married man before she met Mr. Tinkham and he left her a lot of money. But it would be a terrible scandal to both of them if she went and got it. Anyway, she's got Mr. Tinkham now and doesn't need the money."

I looked at Cailey and she read my mind.

"Who do you think she was sweet on?" Cailey asked.

"Well I don't know for sure, but Mr. Hazard used to come around once in a while and she sure would get interested in everything he had to say ... yeah, I think it could have been him."

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Cailey and I just about fell out of our chairs.

“Well Kate, we’ve got to go now,” I said breaking the spell. Kate blinked her eyes rapidly, trying to remember where she was and why these total strangers were sitting on her porch. “Do you mind if we come to visit again?” I asked.

“No, no, of course not, she sputtered, still confused. Make sure you bring that little one with you.”

## Chapter 7

When we got home Cailey threw open the front door calling “Cassady, Cassady!”

While she filled in the details we had learned that morning, I opened the phone book and started looking up the name Hazard. There were quite a few there but not so many that we couldn’t track down someone related to Hazard Iron Works. It didn’t take long. On the third call I reached someone who knew something.

“Yeah, well he’s not a close relative, but Harold Hazard is my great uncle’s brother’s father and he used to run that place. Would you like his number? He’s little hard of hearing so you’ll have to speak up.

This was fun, I thought to myself as I dialed the number. We might find that treasure after all.

“Ehhh?” Croaked a voice barely audible after the phone had rung about 10 times.

“Hello, Harold Hazard, my name is Dave Clark,” I started.

“What’s that?” the voice asked. “Speak up!”

“MY NAME IS DAVE CLARK”, I shouted. “I GOT YOUR NAME FROM BOB HAZARD, YOUR GREAT-NEPHEW. HE SAID YOU MIGHT BE ABLE TO HELP ME OUT.”

“Well I won’t be able to help you if you shout so loud you make me totally deaf,” he spit back at me. “What’s on your mind?”

“I’m doing research on old mill sites that got washed away in the flood of 1927,” I spoke slowly and clearly. “And I was wondering if you knew of any that were built by Hazard Iron Works.”

“Sure I do,” replied the voice. “Of course they are all washed away now. Replaced by those big government dams on the Connecticut. We used to build small dams all up and down the Ottauquechee and the White Rivers. The Connecticut River was a little to big for us.”

“Would you be willing to show us the sites on a map if I were to bring one over?” I asked hopefully.

“Of course, I would,” replied Harold. “But I can go one better than that. If you’d like, I’ll show you those sites in person.”

“Great!” I said, thinking of the old photograph. “Can we get together Sunday?”

“Well, I’ve got church in the morning, but if you come by the house around noon I could be ready,” he said.

“I’ll be there,” I said breathlessly. “Do you actually remember what those sites looked like? I’ve got an old photo you might be able to identify.

“Might be able to do that, too,” replied Harold Hazard. “What was your name again?”

“Dave Clark,” I repeated into the phone.

“Folks around here call me Hap”, he said. “Not sure why,” he muttered, almost to himself.

“Well Hap, my girls and I will be over around noon to meet you,” I said, after I had gotten directions to his place. “We’ll see you then.”

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“O.K. Dave,” he said. “Goodbye then.”

We drove right past Hap’s place—mistaking it for an antique store. Hap Hazard had developed the ability to see value in everything with which he came into contact. There were hub caps hung from strings twisting in the breeze, occasionally banging against each other. Old signs from long forgotten brands of gasoline were nailed up on every square inch of the ramshackle house. From the inside one of the windows a huge cat stared out at us, unmoving. A shape moved in the interior of the house and then suddenly the door was flung open and there stood Hap Hazard.

“You Dave Clark?” He asked good-naturedly.

“That I am,” I said, drawing myself up straight. “These are my two girls and my wife, Helen. Glad to meet you.”

“So what can I do you for?” asked Hap. “Interested in old dam sites for a school project?”

Cassady and Cailey stood quietly, fidgeting. Finally Cassady replied.

“We’re looking for something.”

Hap raised his eyebrows. “Ohhh ... well now then ... what is it you’re looking for? Buried treasure?”

Before Cassady and Cailey could answer, I intervened. “There’s a scavenger hunt at school and we have to identify the location of this photo.”

Cassady started to correct me, but I caught her eye with a warning glance.

“Well let’s take a look,” said Hap. “I know I left my glasses around here somewhere. He disappeared into the house. “Come on in!”

Hap Hazard’s house was piled high with tools, books, electrical wires & parts, old toys appliances, and various boxes stacked high overhead. It was a museum devoted to junk from the 50s and 60s. A broken Etch-a-Sketch lay in the top of one of the boxes, its gears exposed. I pulled the photograph out of my shirt pocket and was looking at the photo when Hap approached and took it from my hand.

“Well I’ll be,” he said. “That’s my granddaddy and my father standing there on the dam watching those loggers. Where did you get this?”

“Oh, it was just one of the photos they handed out in school”, I lied, winking at Cailey and Cassady. “A couple of people mentioned that Hazard Iron Works made the mill works and I got your name after making a few phone calls.” I talked a little too fast and gave a little too much information, but it seemed that Hap bought my story.

“Where do you two go to school?” Hap asked.

“Pomfret,” Cailey said.

“I’m starting Woodstock Union next year,” said Cassady.

“Great, great. So you want to win this scavenger hunt, huh?” I could see Cassady’s and Cailey’s faces turning red as they agreed to the lie.

“Well I can almost remember the very day they took that picture just from all the stories they used to tell. Mrs. Tinkham came and brought a photographer all the way from Quechee to document the construction of the dam. This was the final photo taken the day they filled the mill pond. There’s no doubt that this is Old Dam #7 located just south of Sharon.

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“Do you know where it is?” I asked.

“Well, of course I do,” Hap grumped. “I used to go out there all the time, just to remember the good old days. One of my favorite places. Come on. Get in your car and follow me. I’ll show you the ruins myself.”

## Chapter 8

When we got in the car, I cautioned the girls not to tell anyone why we were looking for the mill site. “You never know when you’ll meet up with the wrong sort of person,” I said. “And there are lots of folk could get worked up over a hidden fortune. We rode in silence for a time, each of us lost in our own thoughts.

All of a sudden, Hap’s brake lights came on and he turned down what looked like nothing more than a footpath. We slowed to a crawl and arrived just in time to see Hap Hazard’s pick-up truck disappear among the trees. I put the Ford Explorer in 4WD and slowly entered the woods careful to stay in his tracks.

“Careful, Dave,” Helen said as we bumped along the path.

“Cool,” said Cassidy, I didn’t know there was a road here.

“There isn’t,” Helen said dryly.

“We must be close to the river by now,” I said. “Any further and I’ll have to get a new car.”

“Further, further” chanted Cassidy and Cailey together. The trees suddenly opened overhead and we found ourselves on a beautiful plateau overlooking the White River. It was strangely flat and manicured in sharp contrast with the strewn boulders all around us.

Hap approached the car. “This is it,” he said—leaning on the window sill of Helen’s door. “Beautiful isn’t it?” He smiled at Helen.

Cassidy and Cailey were already out of the car, running through the snow. Suddenly they stopped.

“Whooaah!” Cailey shrieked. “Dad, come here quick!”

We walked over to the edge of the plateau and looked down. The White River was a good 30 feet below us, its icy waters swirling against the steel, concrete and timber rampart that supported our vantage point.

“Yep,” Hap said. “This and the other side over there is all that’s left of Old Dam #7. We never figured the river would rise to 37 feet. During the flood 1927, the current was so strong it just ripped the whole thing out and washed it away. That was the same year I was born,” Hap said sadly. “I never got to see much of the glory days of the Hazard Iron Works Company.

“How were you related to the builders of the dam?” I asked.

“My dad owned it,” said Hap sorrowfully. “But my brother and I never gained much from it financially. Dad didn’t believe in insurance. We’re still a little sour about the outcome.

We looked out over the river.

“That photo,” said Hap. “I’d like to know where that came from. It sure brings back the memories. I don’t have any photos that go back that far.” I could tell he was fishing for me to give it to him.

“As soon as the Treasure Hunt is over, I’ll stop by and give it to you,” I offered.



## Chapter 9

Not much happened that next week. Helen and I promised Cassady and Cailey that we wouldn't go Fortune Hunting with the map. We couldn't go see Kate Osborne without bringing Cailey. So we tried to put it out of our minds and set to work each morning after walking Cammy.

There was one exception. That was the morning we were returning from our walk when we saw an ancient flat bed pick-up idling in our driveway. As we approached, we could see the shape of a bearded figure smoking a cigar and wearing a short brimmed sailor's cap. He was sitting quietly staring straight ahead waiting for us. The problem was we didn't know him.

The window creaked as it rolled down. Two gray bloodshot eyes glowed from a face full whiskers, eyebrows and filthy skin. He held a knife in his hand that looked like it had skinned a few hundred deer. Rancid smoke poured from the cab.

"You the people been up to see my brother, Hap?" he growled.

"Might be," I answered. "Who's asking?"

"You two like livin' here?" he continued.

"What is this, twenty questions?" I responded. Most people just smile and wave and keep on going, why don't you do the same." Helen and I started to walk around the truck, but it jumped forward, blocking our path. At the same time the horn blared for what seemed like an eternity. We froze and stared at the mangy face. The cigar was hanging by a shred as he shouted at us.

"I DON'T WANT TO SEE YOU FOLKS VISITIN' MY BROTHER AND IF I CATCH YOU SNOOPIN' AROUND THE OLD DAM SITE AGAIN. I'LL MAKE YOU WISH YOU'D NEVER BEEN BORN. YOU WON'T THINK VERMONT IS SUCH A NICE PLACE AFTER I GET THROUGH WITH YOU."

There was a loud grinding of gears, then the truck jolted backward out of the driveway, nearly causing an accident from an on-coming car. "DON'T MESS WITH STORM HAZARD," he shouted, then spat on the driveway before driving away.

Shaken, Helen and I went into the house.

Later that day, after Cassady and Cailey had arrived home, we all sat down to discuss the situation.

"Helen and I had a visitor today," I announced.

Cassady and Cailey looked up "Who?" they said together.

"Well no one you know and I hope you never get to meet him," I replied. "Hap Hazard's brother, Storm. He's mean as a snake. You don't want to get in his path. He'd just as soon run over you as look at you.

"What was he doing here," Cassady gulped. Her eyes were wide and her face had gone white.

"He seemed to know who we were," Helen said. "And why we were visiting the old dam site."

"Um ... dad," Cassady said sheepishly.

"Yes, Cass" I replied, looking up.

"Well, I, uh ..."

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“Go ahead, what is it?,” I said.

Something was bothering Cassady and it had to do with Storm Hazard.

“Well, Abby and I rode our bikes over to the old dam site on Tuesday,” she said. “I know we shouldn’t have, but I wanted to go over there so bad. Dad, we found some other places left over from the original dam.” As we were leaving, we heard a truck coming down the path, but I don’t think they saw us.”

“Well, something has upset Storm Hazard,” I said. “That might have been it.” I regarded Cassady gently. “From now on, no one goes anywhere without our permission. I don’t want anything to happen to either of you.” I was thinking about the time when Cammy was kidnapped by Wolfgang Stevens. I didn’t know what kind of fortune we were hunting but the stakes were beginning to get uncomfortably high.

“Dad,” Cassady complained. “I don’t need you to worry about me.”

“And I’m won’t,” I said. “As long as I know where you are at all times. So what did you find at the old dam site?”

## Chapter 10

Hap Hazard looked up from his work bench. The sound of metal slammed on metal. Storm had arrived and was coming up the steps as Hap stretched to an upright position. “I’ll bet those damn kids were out there again today”, snarled Storm. I told them to stay away but they don’t pay no attention. Seems like they are looking for something. I just know that old lady Tinkham hid her treasure out there and you never listen to me, you stubborn-headed cuss!”

“Whoah”, said Hap. “Hold up! Aren’t you jumpin’ to conclusions? They said they were on a scavenger hunt,” said Hap calmly, smiling at his brother.

“Yeah, they said a lot of things,” snapped Storm. “They said they were doing research, they said they were looking for something, then they said nothing at all and told me to get lost,” he spat in a remote corner. “Damn it Hap!” He shouted. “They are gonna get our money and you’re just sittin’ there workin’ on that toaster oven!”

Hap put down his tweezers and looked at Storm. “There’s no treasure,” he said. “There are just rumors. And people react to rumors, get all worked up about them, just like you are. Now I want you to settle down, help me hold this wire in place while I solder it.”

“Shut up, Hap!” Storm yelled as he swept his arm across the table top, knocking everything to the floor with a horrendous crash. “If you won’t help me, I’ll do it myself!” He pushed out the door and spun his wheels as he backed out the gravel driveway.

Hap bent down and starting picking up the contents of the table off the floor. Then suddenly he straightened, grabbed his coat and headed for the door.

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Cassady spread the treasure map out in front of me. There were hand-scrawled markings combined with engineering drawings of wall sections with a few short paragraphs describing the general surroundings.

“Dad, when Abby and I were out there we went to the spot where we thought the photo was taken, just to compare the backgrounds. Right near where we were standing was a metal grate over a concrete hole in the ground. It makes sense that the point where the picture was taken might be the starting point in the treasure map, especially since these drawings show arrows that point down. I really think we should go back there with the map and see. Can we, Dad?”

I let out a deep sigh. This was getting a bit risky, especially with Storm Hazard on our trail. But Cassady had a good theory. Anyone looking for the fortune would assume that it was in the dam somewhere. And now that she had stumbled upon the grate it was hard to ignore the pounding of my heart as my imagination took over.

“Storm Hazard is watching for us,” I cautioned. “If we show up there with a map and a treasure-hunting party, we’re going to have some unwanted company.”

“We need a diversion,” Cassady said. “Something to distract him for a while. I wonder what he likes to do?” She thought aloud. “I know! I know! Sugaring!” She said excitedly. “Everyone who is anyone in Vermont likes to gather maple sap and boil it down with their friends. I’ll bet Storm is not different from anyone else.

Maple sap runs from the roots of the trees into the branches when day time temperatures exceed 40 degrees and night time temperatures fall into the twenties. These fluctuations in temperature act as a pump on the trees and the taps drilled into a maple tree’s core drain a small portion of the sap. Each March men, women and children take off from their normal routines and gather to help each other doing what is known as “sugaring”. If the temperatures were right, it was a cinch that Storm and Hap would be out gathering sap.

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We looked at the 5-Day weather forecast. Sure enough, both Saturday and Sunday looked like good days to make our first attempt.

## Chapter 11

Saturday morning dawned to a big surprise. More than 10 inches of heavy snow had blanketed the landscape. I was shoveling snow out of the driveway when I heard someone behind me.

“Good to see you working for a change.”

Wayne leaned on the picket fence, a slender twig between his teeth. “You had a visitor last week,” he said.

“Had lots of them, always do,” I said. “It’s a drop in house, you know.”

“I mean a visitor you didn’t necessarily want,” he smiled at me knowingly.

“Oh, him,” I said remembering the ugly face of Storm Hazard.

“Stay clear of him,” cautioned Wayne. “He’s bad news.”

“What do you know about him,” I asked?

“Well, there’s people who appreciate what the good Lord gave them and there’s those who think the world owes ‘em,” he said. “He’s the latter,” Wayne eyed me carefully. “You need to know more,” he asked.

It was a rhetorical question. An end to to the discussion. But I decided to push farther.

“Yeah, I’d like to know more. Why is he so protective of his brother, and what did we do to make him so angry?”

“I’ve know Hap Hazard for a long time. Went to high school with him over in Hartford. Nice guy, knows how to get along with folks. But his brother . . .” Wayne paused. “He’s been in and out of prison all his life. Rumor has it he killed a man for sayin’ something about his mother. He always was in Hap’s face about something. I think he blames him for his mother’s death.

“How could he come up with that idea?” I asked.

“Well she died in childbirth when Hap was born,” said Wayne. “He was nearly 12 and remembers the good old days. Then he lost his mother and the floods came and his whole world fell apart. There’s something else too,” said Wayne. He was staring straight into my heart.

“What is it,” I asked. From the way he was looking at me it seemed like he was reading every secret I’d ever tried to keep.

“There’s been a story going around that Mrs. Tinkham hid a substantial treasure somewhere around here and it came from Old Sam Hazard—Storm and Hap’s granddaddy.”

My heart stopped, but my brain kept working. “Yeah, I’ve heard that,” I said. “You know, people say the yellow house has ghosts, too, but I haven’t seen or heard any.”

“It’s none of my business,” said Wayne. “But you may be in way over your head. You sure you don’t know anything about that treasure?”

“Come on Wayne, lighten up,” I jostled his arm. “It’s people like you who get Storm Hazard all riled up.”

“O.K., O.K.,” said Wayne. “You know I could have sworn you had found something in that old pine tree when it was down. You showin’ up with that tiny saw and all and me finding you under it.” He raised one eyebrow in a last ditch effort to pry the truth from me.

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“:Dave!” Helen came out on the porch. “Telephone!”

Saved, I bid so long to Wayne and climbed the stairs to the front porch.

“Don’t forget!” Wayne cautioned as I turned around. “He’s bad news!”

I took the old map out of the old wooden box and spread it out in front of me. Cassidy had a point. If there was a hidden treasure, no one else would have had the photograph or thought to use the position of the camera as a starting point. Climbing down into a concrete hole would be cold, dark, and filthy. We would need good flashlights and coveralls to keep us clean and warm. And once we went down in the hole there seemed to be a lot of twists and turns on the map. Plus there was the added factor of Storm Hazard looming in the front of my mind. We were in for a big day tomorrow.

“Hi Dad,” Cailey came into my office and walked around my desk, backing herself up into my lap. I held her next to me and smiled. “Can we go back over to see Mrs. Osborne today? Cailey asked. She asked us to come back. I like her.”

“Hmmm,” I thought a bit. “That would be interesting, but what if she gets a crush on me? She thinks I’m Alan Detweiler!”

“Yeah Dad,” Cailey smiled. “Maybe she wants to run away with you. Dad? She called me Angela. I wonder who that is?”

“I don’t know,” I said. “We should ask her before she goes into her trance.”

“Cool!” Cailey said excitedly. “Can we go now?”

“Don’t see why not,” I said. “I need to check the mail and she’s right near there.” I was hoping she could clue us in on Storm Hazard, too.

## Chapter 12

Kate Osborne was sitting in the same chair on her front porch staring across the street at nothing in particular, but she seemed to remember us. As we approached, she shifted from side-to-side adjusting her blanket. She seemed to be settling in to make herself comfortable for a long conversation. “Good morning, Kate. Mind if we visit with you for a while?” Kate nodded her head and looked at Cailey blinking her eyes and staring.

“Who was Angela?” Cailey asked.

“She was my daughter,” Kate replied. “But everyone thought she was my niece. No one knew but I kept her here I kept her in the house for five years before I came up with the story of her coming to live with me because my sister died.”

“Who’s my Dad?” Cailey said quietly, aware that Kate had one into a trance.

“Jack Tinkham.” She seemed proudly matter-of-fact. “He would have married me, too, but that damn river took him away from me.”

“We read about that in Mrs. Tinkham’s diary, I said quietly. He was returning from seeing you and he broke through the ice.”

Tears began to stream down Kate’s face. “He loved that river as much as he loved me,” she sobbed. “It was as if the river was jealous of me and took him away.” She took long deep breaths and flapped her lips as she breathed out. I hated watching her cry. It was awful.

When she had calmed down, I asked the question that I had been considering all week. “What else do you know about the Hazards?”

“Well there was Sam Hazard. He moved here from St, Johnsbury and started the iron works. He was handsome and he was going places. He and Eleanor wanted to marry but she was promised to Mr. Tinkham. Sam finally did get married but you could tell his heart wasn’t in it. They had a son named Jonas—that would be Hap and Storm’s father. Sam was a tough old bird – never gave his son’s anything – a real penny pincher. They never seemed very happy. And then, when all the dams got washed away and the business went downhill – well they just never recovered. Hap and Storm went a little off in their minds, if you ask me. Hap’s good for nothing and Storm’s just plain mean. He tried to kill his Daddy one time and he got put away for twenty years. He’s been out of the prison for a while, but he didn’t learn any manners there. Ever since he got out he’s been nothing but trouble. “Angela, do you remember the time we saw him digging out at the old mill site?”

“Yeah,” said Cailey.

“Well I think he was burying someone. Or hiding something.”

“Or looking for something,” Cailey said.

Kate looked up surprised. “You mean the treasure?”

“I was just thinking,” said Cailey. “It would be the perfect spot. Do you remember the exact location?”

“No not really. But it seemed like it was away from the dam, like in the side of the hill. Good thing he didn’t see us, or we might not be here now.” Kate Osborne flinched and her eyes opened a little wider as we heard one of her neighbors coming up the steps to deliver her mail.

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“Well, thanks for the visit Kate,” I said good-naturedly. “We’ve got a few more errands to take care of before the day is over.

“Goodbye,” she said faintly.



## Chapter 13

It takes planning to run errands efficiently in the Upper Valley. First, you make a list. Then you call all the stores you intend to visit to make sure that they are 1) open; and 2) that they have what you need. It takes a while to get around and you can easily waste half a day on a wild goose chase.

Cailey, Cassady, Helen and I made our plan for our fortune-hunting expedition. Helen would stand guard and warn us in case Storm and Hap Hazard showed up. Cammy would stay, with her in case she needed protection. Cassady and Cailey would come with me.

I made the following list:

- Coveralls
- Rubber Gloves
- Wading Boots
- Headlamps
- Hack Saw
- Pry Bar
- Screw Driver
- Hammer
- Chisel
- Fluorescent Lamp
- Rope
- Matches

Then I started calling around. We just needed a few things, but I thought it might be difficult locating coveralls for kids. I found some at the army surplus store and we loaded into the car for our shopping trip.

“I sure hope there’s enough money in that family fortune to cover all these expenses,” I joked.

“I’ll bet there’s a million dollars in there,” said Cassady.

“That would just about cover it,” I laughed.

Cailey chimed in. “I’m going to get a Mustang convertible when we find the treasure.”

“That would be a waste,” said Helen. “Seeing how you’d have to wait six years until you can drive.”

“Not to mention the cost of building the garage we’d need to keep it in,” I said.

“Uncle Jason could drive it for me,” Cailey said. “It’s the perfect California car.”

“I think we’re all getting a bit too worked up over the treasure,” I cautioned. “Let’s just take things one day at a time.”

Sunday dawned overcast, but was rapidly turning bright. After a light snow fall, the sun broke through the clouds and the temperature began a rapid ascent headed for the predicted 45 degrees.

“Perfect weather for sugaring!” I said as we loaded Cammy and the equipment into the car. Helen looked at me doubtfully. She wasn’t 100% committed to any idea that put us in the position of coming face-to-face with Storm Hazard. As we drove north on Old Quechee Road, I detailed my plan to Helen and the girls.

I would pull in the Ford as far as I could and leave Helen and Cammy to watch for Storm and Hap. Cassady, Cailey, and I would put on our coveralls, rubber boots, and head lamps and walk in from there. If

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the Hazard brothers showed up, Helen was to give three long blasts on the horn to alert us. Then we would head down river and cut back through the woods to the road. Helen would pick us up.

“But Dad, what if they take Helen with them,” Cassady questioned me.

“Well she’s got Cammy in the car and if she keeps the doors locked, she should be all right,” I said. “I’ll park the car somewhere that will allow you to observe the entrance from a distance,” I added. “This isn’t my idea of the best way to spend my day,” Helen said, looking up from the book she was reading.

“Don’t worry, you’re not going to be disturbed. . . we’ll only be gone for an hour or so.” I pulled up on a shoulder with a small turn in and backed into it. “The path to the old mill site is down there by that speed limit sign.” I pointed to a clump of trees. “You can take us down to the end, drop us off—then back in here like we’re doing now. If you see anyone go in there, give us three blasts on the horn. We’ll come out through the woods and find our way out the road in this area. O.K.?”

I looked at Helen. Her face showed the stress of being in this crazy situation, but she was willing to go through with it. “I want you to promise to be careful.” She said.

“O.K.” I replied. I turned to the girls. “Shall we go?”

I put the car in gear and slowly pulled on to the road, traveling the 400 or 500 feet with the engine idling. When I found what I thought to be the path to the old mill site, I pulled in as far as I could and put the car in park. “All right, let’s get our coveralls and boots on and get started.” I was a little concerned, but with Helen on watch, I thought we would be all right.

“O.K., I’ve got the key, the map, the photo, and the backpack full of tools. Are you guys ready?” I called to the back seat.

“Yep, all set,” said Cassady from the back seat.

“Cool outfits, Dad.” Cailey complained. “Couldn’t you have gotten a better color?” She looked like a cross between an auto mechanic and a coal miner.

“All you need is my baseball cap to wear backwards on your head,” I offered.

“No thanks, Dad. Let’s go!” She was ready.

“O.K. Helen, we’ll see you in an hour. It’s 12:45 now. We’ll be back out here by 2:00 at the latest.” I grabbed my backpack full of stuff and we stepped out into knee deep snow. The air was still and all around us the white stuff was piled on every available branch and rock, exaggerating the shape in a fairyland setting. Sounds disappeared into the banks of powder becoming muted and hushed. We plowed down the path to the river. In some places the depth of the snow reached Cailey’s waist. We came out to the level plateau and Cassady led us to the place where she had seen the grate.

“It’s somewhere around here,” said Cassady as she started kicking snow away from the ground. Finally—  
“Here it is,” yelled Cassady after about ten minutes of digging and tromping snow we found the grate.

I brought my backpack over. “Let’s see if I can open it.” I broke out my hammer and chisel and began hitting the metal grate cover sharply, hoping to see some movement. There was none. I pulled the prybar from my bag and slipped it between the grate and the concrete wall and pushed down on the bar. It moved up slightly.

“It’s bolted down,” Cailey said.

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“I can fix that,” I said as I grabbed the hacksaw from my bag and began sawing away at the rusted bolts. It took about fifteen minutes, but I finally got the grate open. We lifted the heavy iron bars and set them down in the snow. We looked down into a black concrete hole.

“This must be it,” I said eyeing the iron hand holds that disappeared into the black space below. “Who wants to go first?”

Cassady and Cailey pushed against me. “You, Dad!” They pushed me toward the hole. “Hurry, we’ve used up a lot of time,” said Cassady.

“OK, put on your headlamp and bring that map. You’re right, we’ve only got forty-five minutes.” I climbed down the hole, pushing through a large amount of snow and old dried branches before reaching the bottom. It was relatively dry and my eyes were quickly adjusting to the dark. “Come on,” I called. “Before Storm Hazard gets here.” In a flash, Cassady and Cailey climbed down, crowding the small concrete vault.

“Look,” Cailey said crouching down. “There’s an opening.” Sure enough there was a dark circular opening just big enough for me to squeeze through. I looked at the map.

“OK, it just shows arrows down and then straight to another circle, so I guess we follow that until we come to another pipe, I said, adjusting my headlamp.

“This is spooky,” Cassady said as she followed Cailey down the corrugated metal tube.

“How far can you see?” I asked Cailey.

“Pretty well, but there are lots spider webs and rocks and dirt.”

“OK,” I said. “Just go slow and be careful.”

We crawled for what seemed like an hour. I looked at my watch. 1:30. We were running short on time. It had taken a long time to find the grate, break it open and get this far.

“Hey Dad!” Cailey said excitedly. “There’s light ahead!”

“Good,” said Cassady. “I can’t believe that we’re in here crawling through old spider webs.”

“Be careful when you get to the end,” I cautioned, there might be a drop off.

When Cailey got to the end of the tube, she kicked a hold through the snow and bright sunlight poured into the dark tube. It took a minute to adjust. When my eyes returned to normal I started reading the map. “It says we turn left and go 50 paces to the left to a square shape.

“I see it, said Cassady. “But it’s really steep here and the river is right below us.”

“Hold on a minute and I’ll tie us together with the rope. The three of us should be able to keep each other out of the river.”

Slowly, we crawled from the metal tube and edged along the face of the steep embankment. It appeared that we had crawled down an old emergency drain designed to keep the mill pond from flooding the mill structure. We had followed it through a hillside and had emerged on the other side. We were now traversing a steep embankment on our way to a small concrete building built into the side of the bank.

“Try to stay above a tree—it will hold you if you start sliding down,” I called. I checked my watch again. 1:45—it would take at least another five minutes to get to the small square building. We would be hard pressed to find what we were looking for and get back to the car in the time remaining. Maybe we should

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head back to the car. As I looked back up the hill to the horizon, I felt the rope tighten and saw Cailey crashing through the snow head over heels right toward the river.

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Helen fidgeted with her wedding ring. It was 1:30 and there had been no sign of Dave, the girls, or Storm Hazard. She was getting nervous about the whole idea. She wanted to be home in the sunny living room with a nice cup of tea and some soothing classical music. She shifted around in her seat and looked at Cammy for the 100<sup>th</sup> time. Cammy pressed her nose out through the half open window and whined.

“Do you need to go out?” Helen asked, stroking her back. Cammy did her best impression of a train engine, huffing and puffing to indicate her need to relieve herself. “OK” Helen said soothingly. “Hold on a minute.” She opened the door and stepped in a snow drift up to her thighs. Struggling, she pulled herself up and over to the rear door of the Ford. “OK, OK,” she repeated as she opened the lift gate.

Before Helen could put on her leash, Cammy bolted out the door and without hesitating, ran down the road and disappeared into the turn off toward the old dam site. “Cammy!” Helen yelled, but Cammy seemed to remember where she was going and never looked back. “Darnit!” she grabbed Cammy’s dog treats, took the keys out of the car and began walking down the road.

## CHAPTER 14

Hap Hazard was on the phone in the sugar shack. “Last time I saw him he was out by the White River maple stand. He should have been here by now. Yeah, do that would you? I’ve got a good 12 gallons of syrup ready to pour off and I don’t want to lose it.” Hap settled in watching the temperature and reading the boil of the sap. This was the critical time – the difference between fancy and Grade B Amber. If the sap cooked too long it would be worth a few dollars a gallon less and would be more difficult to sell.

It wasn’t a time to worry about his brother. But he had been gone two hours. Probably the tractor had gotten stuck, but he feared something worse. Much worse.

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Storm Hazard adjusted the throttle on his John Deere tractor. The sap was over flowing most of the buckets he had collected along the White River maples stand. This was his third trip since 9 AM. It was going to be a good day for sugaring. As he rounded the stand of trees and started heading up the hill, his eye caught the movement of a black shape running in small circles head to the ground. He changed course and turned toward the river. He could see an entire area where snow had been trampled; the furrows in the snow leading to the area indicated the presence of people. And that looked like the same dog owned by those flatlanders from Quechee.

Storm was mad. Not only had they come back to the mill site, they were interrupting his sugaring. He pulled his tractor as close to the river and surveyed the scene.

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Cammy was in no mood for dog treats. There was adventure in the air and lots of great smells. She ran everywhere at once digging her head under the snow whenever she found something really good. This was fun! When she came to the open hole in the snow, she stood perplexed. She knew that her people had been here but where had they gone? She loped through the heavy snow trying to pick-up their trail but she kept coming back to the same place. Here people had disappeared! She laid down and waited.

Helen came to the edge of the clearing and surveyed the scene below her. Cammy was running to and fro, looking for Dave and the girls. She followed the trail and saw a black hole in the snow where the tracks disappeared. Then she saw something that made her heart jump. There on the far bank stood Storm Hazard, his hands on his hips, separated from her only by a deep stretch of icy water. As she watched in horror, he started to climb down the bank.

Helen called Cammy one last time and turned to run to the car, but it was slow going. The snow was so deep and she had a long way to go.

## CHAPTER 15

Cassady screamed as Cailey slid toward the icy river. I pulled on the rope in vain as the slack played out in the rope, threatening to take Cassady with her. I wrapped the rope around a tree as best I could and braced myself for the impact. As the rope tightened I saw Cailey slow to a stop in the bushes by the edge of the river. Cassady hung by the rope about mid way down the slope, scrambling to get up the steep bank.

“Get your feet under you and lean back against the rope,” I called out to them. Cinching the rope around the tree, I coached as Cassady and Cailey pulled themselves slowly up the steep incline. “All right!” I cheered as Cassady made it up to the trail. We pulled the rope to assist Cailey the rest of the way. “We’re almost out of time,” I panted looking at my watch. “We’ve only got seven minutes before we need to get back to the car. I think we should check out the block house and see if it looks promising. Then we can come back another time. I don’t want Helen to worry.”

We carefully made our way the remainder of the distance to the small squat concrete shed. It looked like an old well house that might have been used for collecting water. It had a slate roof and was still in pretty good condition. I poked my head in and found myself face to face with a huge rat. It bared its orange teeth and came at me. I fell back and the rat disappeared in the snow.

“Gross,” yelled Cassady. “I’m not going in there!”

“I am,” said Cailey. “Come on, Dad, you first.”

We ducked out heads under the low door and switched on our headlamps. I looked around. It was a brick structure smoothed over with concrete and didn’t appear to house any secret compartments. Then I noticed that the ceiling seemed to be supported by square wooden wedges driven into holes in the wall. I glanced at the map. “Look at this wall section drawing,” I said excitedly. “The ceiling looks like it is held up by pegs just like these!”

“Cool Dad!” The fortune must be up there,” said Cassady. Cailey tied to pull one out by hand but it wouldn’t budge. I grabbed my hammer and started working the wedges back and forth, loosening them.

“Cassady, help me push the ceiling up while Cailey pulls out the wedges,” I said. We both crouched and pushed the ceiling up slightly—just enough for Cailey to pull out the wedges.

Then we heard the horn. Three loud blasts, followed by silence. “Shoot, we’re late” I said, looking at my watch. Cassady, let’s lower this down enough so Cailey can get a look and see if there’s anything up there. Just then I looked out the entrance and saw Cammy come bounding over the hill. She looked like a tiny tornado approaching as her deep chest sprayed snow in all directions.

“Dad! There’s something up there,” yelled Cailey. “It’s a brown leather folder.” Then I saw something that made my blood freeze. Someone was coming up over the hill following Cammy’s trail and he looked a lot like Storm Hazard.

Storm surveyed the scene below him—catching his breath. Then he did something strange – he smiled. Then he started chuckling. It started in his throat and then filled his chest. Soon he was out right laughing. It wasn’t the kind of laughter that was contagious. It had a strange high-pitched, evil quality to it, like a cackling of the witch in the Wizard of Oz.

“Jeez,” said Cailey. “What’s wrong with him?”

“That’s Storm Hazard,” I whispered. “He’s a little crazy and he wants what you’ve got.” Cailey clutched the leather satchel closely. “Put that in my backpack. I’ve got an idea.” I wasn’t sure how long Storm would find us humorous, so we had to move fast.

## Cammy of Ottawaquechee – Storm Hazard and the Hidden Treasure by Dave Clark

“Do you see that tree over there?” I pointed to an old tree with huge branches.

“Yeah I see it,” said Cailey. “So?”

I want you to sling this rope around your shoulders and climb out on that limb overhanging the river. Go as far as you can and tie the end of this rope securely around it.” I looked at her. “Do you think you can do that?” Cailey nodded.

I coiled the rope and slung it around Cailey’s shoulder and over her head. “I’ll keep him occupied,” I said. “just remember to bring the other end of the rope down the tree with you.”

“O.K. Dad, but these boots are terrible for climbing.” Cailey rubbed the soles of her army surplus wellies.

“Just do the best you can,” I replied. “Focus on what you are doing, not on us ... and don’t go beyond where you are comfortable.” It was a long shot, and Storm was sure to find it entertaining.

## CHAPTER 16

Helen looked at her watch. 2:15 and still no sign of Dave and the girls. She leaned on the horn three times, then opened the door and got out of the car. Helen was somewhat shy, but in desperate times, she was not adverse to flagging down total strangers to gain their assistance. She looked up and down the road. It was silent. The moment seemed to be suspended indefinitely—broken only by the cawing of crows and the rustling of snow falling from the pine trees and the shifting of the wind in the boughs.

A car approached in the distance. It seemed to take forever to get near and as it did, Helen stepped out into the middle of the road and raised her arms. The driver pulled up and rolled down the window. Helen bent down and looked in.

“Name’s Wayne,” he said. “Friend of Dave’s ... I got a call ... thought I’d better check up here ... sure glad I did.”

“I’m glad, too,” Said Helen. “I saw Storm Hazard across the river when I went to find Cammy,” she said anxiously. “Dave and the girls were supposed to be back here by 2 PM and there’s been no sign of them. I think we should call the police.” Helen was sobbing and tears were running down her face.

“Let’s take a look first,” said Wayne. “I think Hap wants to keep the police out of this. Storm’s spent enough time in the pen. Jump in!”

Helen opened the door of Wayne’s Jeep and prayed.

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As soon as Cailey headed toward the tree, Storm stopped laughing and started coming down the steep embankment toward us. The snow gave way as he came, threatening with each step to avalanche into the freezing river below. Cailey turned to me with a worried expression on her face.

“He’s coming down the hill, Dad, do something.”

“Don’t think about what’s going on over here. Work quickly and concentrate on what you are doing. As soon as you have the rope tied, do you think you can swing to the other side.?”

“Ummm, Dad?” Cassady’s eyebrows shot up. “What if we fall into the water?”

“All you have to do is hang on tight. Don’t look down and the rope will carry you across to the other side. There’s plenty of snow so it should be a soft landing. Whoever goes second should stand a little down hill so you can grab the rope. There’s a bridge about a mile half mile up stream. Do you think you can make it through all that snow?” It was a lot of information and I hoped that they caught all of it.

Cassady nodded doubtfully.

Storm Hazard was moving slowly, but even from this distance I could see the large hunting knife clutched in his hand. “You might want to get down there with your sister,” I said to Cassady, looking up the embankment. “He’s getting closer.” I strapped my backpack to Cassady’s back. Cailey had reached the tree and was beginning to shimmy up the trunk of the tree.

“Stay in line with the rope so you can grab it after Cailey goes”, I said.

“Yeah, right,” Cassady muttered as she turned and headed down the hill. My heart sank. I hoped the girls took me seriously. They hadn’t met Storm so they didn’t know just how bad things could be.



## Cammy of Ottawaquechee – Storm Hazard and the Hidden Treasure by Dave Clark

I wasn't sure what I was going to do so I just stood and watched Storm Hazard come down the hill. Vaguely, I thought I could handle the old guy, even armed with a knife. I could wait for him to thrust his knife at me and hope that I could help him lose his balance and topple down the hill.

Storm stopped about 50 feet above me. "I told you to stay away from here," he yelled. "Now you gone and done it. Storm Hazard only gives one warning. Too bad about your girls. You're stupid to have brought them here. Now I'll have to get rid of them, too. He was catching his breath as he spoke. Suddenly three heads appeared at the top of the hill above him.

"I don't think so, Storm, we've got company," I said as I pointed up the hill. As Storm turned to look, I heard a sharp crack and a 20 foot ledge of snow let loose under him. Storm fell backwards, arms flailing. He gained speed as he passed where I was standing. His feet flew over his head as he began to tumble down the hill. I couldn't believe it had all happened so fast. Cassidy turned and stared in amazement as the human snowball tumbled down the hill toward the river. Cailey hadn't even turned to look. She was about 30 feet out on the tree limb, her legs firmly clenched around the trunk of the tree. She was just finishing tying the knot in the rope.

Storm Hazard's body splashed into the river. But he wasn't dead. He began flailing his arms and tried repeatedly to pull himself out. But he kept slipping on the rocks and sliding back under. "Cailey, throw him the rope," I shouted. At first Cailey didn't understand, but then she nodded her head and slung the rope from her shoulder to the struggling man below.

I heard a shout and looked up the hill. Helen, Wayne and Hap Hazard were waving their arms at us. Cammy was bouncing around them, wagging her tail and barking.

"Grab the rope, Storm," I turned back and yelled as I started down the bank. He wasn't going to last long in that river and I wasn't going to get there in time.

The rope had dropped into the water five feet behind Storm. He had heard me and was thrashing about looking for it. Finally, he saw it floating nearby and tried to get to it, but he was slowing down. The current kept moving the rope just out of his reach.

Cailey reached down and swung the rope closer to Storm. As she did, he made a final lunge and got hold of the end. With the help of the rope, Storm was able to haul himself out of the water and lay breathing hard on the icy shore when I arrived.

"Cassidy, toss me that backpack," I yelled. "And be careful!" The backpack came sliding down the hill, gaining speed. I was able to intercept it before it went into the water. The matches were still dry. I gathered up some dead twigs into a good sized mound on top of a piece of paper thin birch bark and crouched over it shielding the wind. Striking a match, I held my breath as the tiny flame caught the birch paper, then jumped to the pine needles and caught one twig after another. "Come on, come on," I whispered. Finally a larger branch showed an orange flame under it and I knew we were going to have heat. I lit another match and started a flame in a different part of the pile of kindling.

I heard a swooshing sound and looked up. Wayne and Hap were coming down in a controlled slide—taking first one angle and then another. Helen had done the same maneuver and had caught up with Cassidy. I went to get more wood.

## CHAPTER 17

Dan Wilson leaned back in my office chair. “So you’re telling me that there was a treasure hidden in that tree that fell down over River Road and that’s why you went out there that day?”

“Yep, well it was more like clues to the treasure’s whereabouts,” I said, picking up the key and dangling it in front of him.

“What’s that?” He said, grabbing at it.

“We’re not sure,” I said. “It was in the box but we never found anything that it would open. . . maybe it was just the Hazard name that was on it that was the important clue. I held the key just out of arms reach of Dan.

“No way,” said Dan. “You’re pulling my leg.” He turned in his chair as Helen came in the room. “Helen, do you believe this stuff about treasure hidden in a tree and old photos and a treasure map?”

“Nah,” said Helen. “I think Dave is just making it all up.” She winked at me.

The phone rang and Cassady picked it up. “Oh my God, Abby. . . you wouldn’t believe what happened. We went down in the tunnel and came out on the other side of the hill . . . and there was this really bad guy who tried to kill Dad, but he fell in the river and we saved him, and... oh, yeah . . . and, Abby—we found the treasure . . . umhmmmm . . . I’m not sure what the treasure is. It’s just a bunch of papers.”

Dan stood up and poked his finger in my chest. “Hey! You didn’t tell me you weren’t lying!” Then he softened his voice. “So what’s the treasure worth?”

I looked at Dan. “I haven’t really had time to read over the papers, but it appears to be an unsigned land trust which entitles the holder to ownership.”

Dan’s eyes lit up. “And you haven’t had time to read it? That would have been the first thing I would have done. Let’s read it!”

I opened my desk drawer and pulled out the cracked leather binder. As I flipped that the pages, I realized that the deed covered numerous properties of various sized parcels. Sixty acres for one, 800 for another – even 1100 for the largest. The deeds entitled the bearer to vast amounts of land in the counties of Lamoille, Washington, Caledonia, Essex and Orleans in the Northeast Kingdom of Vermont. And taxes had been paid out of a cash account held in escrow for all these years.

Dan started laughing and we danced around my office. “You’re rich!” he laughed like a maniac.

## CHAPTER 18

The next day, I spread out the documents on my desk and took inventory. All totaled, the land grants came to a little over ten thousand acres of prime timber land, scattered in parcels that had gone unharvested for at least 75 years. It was a huge amount of timber and I was stunned by the sudden responsibility of managing such a large base of assets. It wouldn't do to just sell the land—though that in itself could net well over ten million dollars. But the taxes would wipe out half and the lawyers and sellers fees would use up another big chunk.

No, it would be better to go up there and scout out the situation—find a few good forest managers and lumbermen who were interested in making a reasonable living and doing a good job protecting the environment, not just taking down every tree that stood in the forest. That way, we could tap into a constant flow of income. As the trees got older, they would be cut and removed.

“A nice supplement to my retirement,” I was deep in thought when the telephone rang. On the other line I heard a familiar voice, one that sent shivers down my spine. “You're dead.” There was a slight sound of breathing and that was it. I decided to wait him out. My blood boiled in rage but I refused to give him the pleasure of hearing me screaming in futility over the phone. “I've got you in my sights.”

Abruptly, I turned and glanced out my window. There, standing in the grave yard was Storm, a cell phone in one hand and a handgun raised in the other. Simultaneously, a shot rang out and glass shattered all over my desk. I hit the floor and was grateful that Helen and the girls were not around. Cammy roared her disapproval. And Mr. T. the cockatiel, screeched so loudly it made my ears squirm.

“I coulda killed you,; said Storm. “That was just a warning. You've got something that belongs to me. You know what I'm talking about. I want it back and I won't rest until I get it.”

I crawled to the stairs and made my way up to the sitting room and peeked out the window. Storm wasn't there. “Damn,” I cursed to myself. The girls were due home any minute and I didn't want them getting tangled up in this. I picked up the phone, dialed 911 and got a busy signal.. “Just my luck,” I thought. I looked around for an idea, anything that would get me out of this jam—and quick.

I picked up the phone and dialed \*69. I heard Storm's phone ring behind the house. So he was back there trying to get in the house. This guy was nuts! Then I heard voices outside and the sound of a car door slamming. There was a whistling at the door and Pete Meijer poked his head in. “Lo!” He called out. “Anybody home?”

I came downstairs. “There was this old guy standing in your yard,” Pete said. “I pointed him down the road. He seemed a little disoriented.” Pete was the kind of guy you'd want on your side come the revolution. Tough and kind. A charmer with the women. I was sure glad to see him now.

“That old guy has it in for me,” I said and pointed to the glass shards all over the office floor. “He took a pot shot at me.”

“Holy shit dude!” Pete's eyes grew wide. “What did you do to him to deserve that?”

“It's a long story,” I grinned. “You'll have to read the book.”

“Well, he sure as hell isn't safe to have loose on the street,” Pete said. “Let's go find him.”

I questioned the wisdom of trying to chase down an armed man who was threatening to kill me. But then my eye rested on a lifelike “old geezer” mask I had purchased for Halloween. It was so real it, grossed people out and I hadn't worn it much. I grabbed it, put it on, and started hacking and coughing. “O.K., I'm ready. Let's rumble.”

## CHAPTER 19

Storm Hazard wasn't one to give up easily. Everything he had made of himself, he had earned through blind stubbornness and hard work. He wanted those papers and he wouldn't let some flatlander take them from him. He cursed to himself as he closed the door of his old flatbed truck parked next to the Quechee Bridge. If that young buck hadn't shown up he could have had the upper hand. He reached under the seat and took a big slug of whiskey from a rancid looking bottle. He sat for a while and then took another. He would watch the house until everyone was gone and then just go in and ransack the place until he found what he entitled to. It would take some time – but that's something Storm Hazard had plenty of. He turned over the engine, shoved the gear shift into 1<sup>st</sup> and drove away.

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Helen, Cassady and Cailey walked up the steps to the front porch and walked in the house. "Dad, we're home," yelled out Cassady.

"He must have gone out," Helen said. "But his car is here and so is Cam—" she stopped short at the sight of broken glass all over the office floor. "Oh my God," she cried out. "Dave!" Cassady and Cailey came running in and found Helen barring the office door. "Don't go in there," she warned. "There's broken glass everywhere."

"What happened to Dad?" Cailey asked.

"I don't know," Helen said soberly. "But I think we should stay here."

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Pete cruised down River Road slowly checking out the few vehicles parked within sight of the road. "So he drove an old flat bed truck," he asked. "That shouldn't be too hard to find." He grimly held the wheel. "I know people like that. Once then get an idea in the head, nothing else matters and even though you saved his life, you took it away when you found that treasure. You know what I think?" He looked at me and took a drag off his cigarette. "I think you ought to give the treasure back to him."

The idea hadn't occurred to me. I had gotten so caught up in discovering the treasure and then solving the riddle that I considered it to rightfully belong to me. After all, it was deeded to the possessor of the title. But the more I thought about it the more it made sense.

"Bingo," Pete pointed to an old truck making a right hand turn at the Strong House Spa. "Is that him?"

"Yep," I said sitting up straight in my seat. "Let's see where he goes." We followed the old truck around the back side of Dewey's Pond, past the old Dewey's Mansion and up and around the old mill works. When we pulled up behind the truck, Storm pulled out quickly into oncoming traffic and began accelerating away at a high rate of speed. He was having trouble staying in his lane and spent a good deal of time on the shoulder. As we came past the Fat Hat Factory, he was already doing 70 MPH.

"He's running," said Pete. "He knows we're behind him. He must have recognized my Bronco.

"He's drunk, too." I said. "Look at him swerving."

By the time we reached the Mobil Mart he had pulled ahead of us and must have been doing 90 MPH or more. We didn't dare go any faster for the type of road we were on. When we rounded the curve a sick feeling came over me. There in front of us was a construction zone for the Interstate 89 overpass. Barricades had been set, making the bridge a one lane that was now controlled by traffic lights on both ends. There was a gaping hole in the guard rail and smoke a fire coming up from below the bridge. Traffic was stopping in all directions.

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We parked, jumped out, and ran to the bridge. There in the middle of Interstate 89 was Storm's truck—upside down with wheels still spinning, engulfed in flames. "Poor old buzzard," Pete's voice broke. "I don't think he survived that."

## CHAPTER 20

I felt horrible. Storm's death weighed heavily on my mind. In some small way, my self-interest had contributed to his demise. It was easy to say that Storm got what he deserved and that he would have ended up in prison anyway, but deep down I knew that I had been insensitive and I was partially to blame for his death.

I slept fitfully and had been awake since 4 AM. The morning light was now illuminating the trees on the back hill and the beautiful colors of the sunrise filled our bedroom.

"You're been awake," Helensaid sleepily as she stretched out and faced me, snuggling up against me.

"Yeah, I couldn't sleep," I said. "It's like Storm's ghost is flying around the house. I don't think I'll ever get over this feeling that I am to blame."

"Well, don't be so hard on yourself. That could have been you that died. I'm just grateful it wasn't." She reached out and traced my eyes, nose and mouth with her fingers. I felt a bit calmer lying there with her like that.

"I'm going to call Hap." I said. "And bring him the deeds."

"Really!" Said Helen. "You're giving up a lot of money."

"Well, no amount of money will fix the feeling of doing the wrong thing," I said. "I think it what Mrs. Tinkham would have wanted."

"You're so handsome and kind," Helen snuggled even closer. "Come here."

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Hap was tinkering with an old Apple Classic computer when he heard the news. He dropped his screwdriver and just sat there, dazed. He and Storm hadn't been that close—heck, Storm had spent half his life in prison—but in a way Storm had always been his responsibility. He was always getting Storm out of a fix or covering up for him or giving him money or praying for him. Now, he had only himself to think of. He looked around at the disheveled house and seemed to see it or the first time. A tear rolled down his dust caked face. And then he started to cry.

He cried for the lost Hazard fortune. He cried for Storm's miserable life, and he cried for the single-minded devotion he had shown his older brother. Now he was alone, penniless, drifting. What would he do now that Storm wasn't around. Most of all he cried for himself.

When I called, he had pulled himself together somewhat. "Halloo," he said. "Yep, I'm here for a while ... nothing to do... yep ... OK, then ... if you want ... I'll see you then."

"O.K. then, I'm going to see him," I said aloud to nobody in particular. The girls were still asleep and Helen was upstairs reading. I slipped the leather satchel in my briefcase.

"Going to see who?" Cassady stood in the doorway and stretched.

"Hap Hazard," I said. "I'm going to give him the treasure."

"Dad, that's ours," she glared at me. "That's our money!"

"Actually, it's not ours. We didn't earn it and no one really left it to us. If there's anyone it rightfully belongs to it would be Hap. And with him losing Storm and all, I think its only right for him to have it for himself and his family."

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“That’s nice of you, Dad,” Cassady smiled. “I like him, he’s nice. I breathed a sigh of relief. Cassady was growing up. I liked her, too. She had a good head on her shoulders and she was turning into a beautiful young lady.

“Want to go with me?” I asked hopefully.

“No thanks Dad,” she said as she turned to leave. “He’s not that much fun.”

## CHAPTER 21

I drove up the winding highway to Hap Hazard's place. The spring thaw was beginning and the small picturesque stream that normally ran along the road was swollen and overflowing in places. The bright sunlight exposed a tinge of green in the trees up on the ridge. Forsythia, daffodils and tulips bloomed everywhere. Normally, I would be elated with the promise of spring, but now Storm Hazard's death followed me everywhere. When I pulled up to Hap's house he was sitting in a rocking chair on his front porch. I patted my jacket and felt the old photo I was carrying in my pocket.

"You heard about Storm?" He asked as I sat down next to him.

I nodded. "I brought you something you mentioned you liked," his hands flinched in his lap.

"What's that?" He asked. I pulled the old photo out of my pocket and handed it to him. "Oh, did your girls win the scavenger hunt?" Hap asked.

"Well Hap, that's what I'm here to talk to you about. There was never a treasure hunt. We just made that up to explain why we had that old photo. Truth is, we found it as part of a riddle and a key that led us to the treasure we found at the old dam site.

"Treasure?" Hap breathed in sharply. Storm was always talking about a treasure buried somewhere that belonged to Grandpa. "Is that what all the commotion was about over at the dam site?"

After I explained the entire story to Hap he leaned back in his chair—a contented smile across his face. "So old Grandpa Hazard was sweet on Mrs. Tinkham. Well now that explains her making such big fuss about the completion of the Sharon Mill Site and all the mail he used to get from the Tinkham General Store.

"I suppose it does," I said. "But Hap, I think that the treasure rightfully belongs to you. Jack Tinkham is long gone and you're the one that deserves to have it back."

Hap's eyes welled up in tears. "There's no one left but me," he said. "I've got no one to take care of. No one to look after now that Storm is gone."

It was a sad moment. Hap's world of gadgets and gizmos and other devices was just a way to spend his time while he looked after his brother. He had as much goodness in him as his brother had meanness. "You keep it," Hap stared intently at me. "Send your girls to college, put it away for your retirement, throw a party. I don't want it.

I looked at Hap in disbelief. But I understood. Money doesn't really mean much unless you have something or someone to spend it on. "I'll tell you what," I offered. "How about I give you as much as you need every month from now on so you don't have to worry about the expense of turning up the heat or having to fix your roof yourself?"

"Now that might work out," said Hap taking off his cap and rubbing his hand over his head.

"But there's one stipulation," I said sternly. He looked over at me with a question mark in his eyes. "You have to come to dinner at our house every month to get the check so we can keep up on things."

Hap smiled broadly. "Now that would be nice. That would be real nice," he said softly.

THE END