

The Indian Burial Ground Mystery **as told by two people who actually know and care about Trixie Belden**

Notes: After re-reading *The Indian Burial Ground Mystery*, all we can say is, "Jim was too smart to be in this book!" We now present the mystery as it should have been written. *g*

Mart Belden hurried through the Wheeler game preserve. It was a clear June night, and he was wishing that he hadn't stayed at Dan's so late. It had been a while since the two friends had had a chance to catch up, though, and a companionable evening in Mr. Maypenny's simple but comfortable cabin had been just the ticket. The two had lazily played cards and listened to the game on the radio until Dan had realized how late it was getting to be—and how early dawn came in those parts. Both he and Mart rose early to begin their chores before heading in to Sleepyside for their part-time jobs. Although they both had the next couple of days off, in honor of the last Bob-White's return to Sleepyside after a long school year, they still needed to rise early. Mart needed to tend to the chickens first thing in the morning, and Dan's chore was the dawn patrol of the game preserve.

The two young men had said their good-nights, and Mart had started toward his family's farm, wondering if he was going to get the dickens when he arrived. After he had entered college, his parents had relaxed their rules about curfew, but it was really late—or early, depending on how you looked at it—and he hadn't made the expected courtesy call to let Moms and Dad know that he would be out this long.

His hurried footsteps made very little noise on the dirt path, except when he disturbed a stone or snapped a twig underfoot. Mart tried his best to peer ahead of him while he made his way on the path. The hazy light from the nearly full moon above did its best to seep through the thick foliage that covered the preserve, but it was no match for the forest canopy.

"Now why didn't I think to bring a flashlight?" Mart muttered. He continued to chastise himself. "Jim or Brian wouldn't have forgotten." He shook his head in disgust, and then felt relief and gratefulness as the path widened, following along a familiar clearing. He would have at least a few minutes of moonlight to guide his way as he crossed the small clearing.

Mart's relief was short-lived, however, as an unbelievable sight appeared before his eyes. He stopped short, his legs no longer able to propel him forward. He was frozen, unable to move, unable to breathe, as he watched a weird, glowing apparition float through the trees and swoop to the edge of the clearing. He stared, mouth agape, as the horrible thing began to wail in a high-pitched, eerie quaver.

The skeletal figure, draped in moldy-looking rags and tendrils of cobwebs and tree roots, came closer and closer. Its head looked like an old skull, with long, gray hair that fell down over empty eye sockets. An iridescent yellow glow emanated from its body as it menacingly waved a gnarled stick in the frightened young man's direction. Then, just as suddenly as it had appeared, the glowing thing floated off into the trees.

Mart stood rooted to the spot for nearly a full minute after the ghostly figure had retreated, trying to process what had just happened. And then he ran like a bat out of hell for the comfort and safety of Crabapple Farm.

"You saw *what*?" Trixie gasped as she stared at her almost twin. It was hard to process what he was saying, but her brother's face, so white with obvious fright, and his trembling hands convinced her that he had seen *something*.

She had just been about to turn out her bedroom light for the night when she had heard an urgent knocking on her door followed by Mart's voice, pleading to let him in. On her invitation, he had come barreling through the door, clearly upset. The story that had spilled from his lips had seemed unbelievable, but she was sure that his fright was quite real.

Trixie drew her knees in more closely to her chest, trying to repress a shiver. "It sounds horrible," she said in a voice no louder than a whisper. "What do you suppose it was?"

"It wasn't human," her brother said hoarsely. Mart hadn't moved much since he told his tale. He sat on the edge of the other twin bed, his hands gripped tightly to the multicolored quilt underneath him. "At least, not anymore."

Trixie hesitated, sliding a glance at her brother before she continued, "You and Dan weren't...well...drinking or something, were you?"

Some of the color came back to Mart's face as he scowled at her. "Yeah. We broke into Mr. Maypenny's stash of moonshine and gorged ourselves on it." He gave her an irritated look. "Do you really think..."

Trixie held up her hands. "No, I don't really think that all. But I had to ask." She gave him a wry smile. "You *do* have an active imagination, and you *are* in college now. So...it's a possibility you could have seen something from the point of view of a—shall we say...compromised—brain?" Trixie glanced at her brother and then pointed out in a reasonable tone, "Besides, you know Brian will ask you the same thing when you tell him."

"Well, I'm not drunk," Mart insisted. "We raided the fridge, we played cards and we drank *soda*." He shook his head. "I'm willing to go with the idea that there might be a Scooby Doo reason behind that apparition, but it was *not* part of my imagination, active as it might be."

Mart finally relaxed his grip on the bed and leaned back on his hands. Trixie was glad to see that the color had returned to his face, and he didn't look as terrified as he had a few moments before.

"What is it with us, anyway?" Trixie asked with a little laugh. "I feel like I'm in the *X-Files* or something. Like we've got radar for the unexplainable, the ghostly and the freakish."

"Well, it takes a freak to know one," Mart retorted. His lips twitched in spite of his efforts to keep a straight face.

She stuck her tongue out at him before she continued, "Maybe we can go over there and see if there's anything there." At her brother's startled look, Trixie said, "Maybe there will be left over wires. Or tracks left by people. Something to prove that it's a real person behind that fright show you witnessed."

Mart nodded slowly. "That makes sense." He gave her a sheepish look. "I would rather wait for daylight, though."

Trixie's blue eyes widened. "Of course in the daylight! Just hearing about your scare is going to make me lie awake all night wondering if the Boogeyman is going to get me."

Mart chuckled at her dramatically terrified face. "Do you need a night light?"

Trixie thumped her pillow and lay back against it with a theatrical sigh. "No, no. I'll survive. I think."

Mart got to his feet and headed toward the door. "Well, then, I'll go head off to bed. Hopefully, the Boogeyman will mistake Brian for me, and I'll get some sleep." He hesitated at the door and said, "Thanks, Trix. I feel a lot better than I did when I came in here." With a wink, he quietly exited the room, closing the door behind him.

Even though Trixie expected a great deal of tossing and turning, she quickly fell asleep. Morning rose bright and cheery, bathing the room in sunlight.

After a morning's swift ablutions, Trixie hurried down to the breakfast table, which was already set. Helen had just exited the kitchen with a stack of steaming waffles.

"Good morning, sweetheart," Helen said with a smile.

"Good morning, Moms," Trixie replied with a smile of her own. "Can I help you?"

"Nothing much to help with," Helen replied. The swinging door behind her soon made clear why. Brian and Mart both came into the dining room carrying plates with sausage links, bacon and fruit, and Bobby soon followed them, carefully carrying a carafe of orange juice in one hand and milk in the other.

"I guess that leaves KP duty for you, squaw," Mart said, by way of greeting, as he set the plate of fruit down in front of Trixie's normal place.

Trixie wrinkled her nose at him before she pulled out her chair and sat down. The others quickly joined her, and Helen motioned for Bobby to say grace. After he had finished, Trixie glanced at the opposite end of the table with a frown. "Where's Daddy?" she asked.

"He had a banking meeting in White Plains this morning," Helen replied. "Something about one of the branches there needing some help. I'm not certain what it was all about." She sighed. "I was hoping to use his car for errands this morning."

"You can have the Queen, Moms," Brian offered as he poured maple syrup over his waffle. He also scooped a generous serving of fresh strawberries on top of the syrup he'd poured. "I planned on working on that trellis that needs patching in the garden. One of the beams looks like it's rotted through."

"That'd be lovely, Brian. Thank you." Helen took a swallow of coffee before she looked at her other children in inquiry. "I know you will want to be out running over to the Manor House soon." Her eyes twinkled at her daughter. "I hear that Jim got back from school last night."

Trixie promptly flushed, busying herself with cutting her waffle into very neat squares, not wanting to deal with teasing from any of her brothers.

Mart glanced at Trixie, but didn't say a word, returning his gaze to his plate. Brian's eyebrows rose at Mart's lack of comment, but he didn't say anything either.

Finally, it was the youngest of the Belden siblings that broke into the silence. "Larry and Terry want me to come over and see their new remote-controlled car, Moms," Bobby interjected excitedly.

"If you get your bed made and your room picked up, that will be fine," Helen said with a smile. "I can drop you off there on my way into town." She glanced at Mart, who'd been quietly cleaning his plate. "I have a small list of things I'd like to have done around the house before any of you head over to Jim and Honey's." She pulled a folded piece of paper from her pants pocket and

handed it to Brian. "Between the three of you, I can't imagine it taking all that long." She smiled. "Maybe you can ask the other Bob-Whites to come over for supper. I've got some meat for hamburgers. Your father can grill outside."

"That sounds super, Moms!" Trixie said.

Her brothers echoed their pleasure as well. Helen finished off her waffle, took another sip of coffee and pushed her chair back from the table. "Trixie, will you see to clearing the table?"

Trixie nodded, and her mother turned to Bobby. "Bobby, go on and get your room straightened up quickly. I'm going to put another load in the washer and get my shopping list together."

Bobby drank the last of his orange juice and then scurried away from the table to go do as he had been asked. Helen then left the table as well.

Brian sat back in his chair and looked at his siblings, his dark eyes speculative. "So what are you two scheming about?"

"Scheming? Who says we're scheming about anything?" Trixie asked.

"You and Mart have barely said two words all during breakfast," Brian pointed out calmly. "And the two of you keep sneaking looks at the back door."

Trixie slid a glance at Mart, who avoided returning her gaze. "It's not really *scheming*. Mart and I just...well..."

"I saw something last night," Mart said, finally. His voice had a tinge of the same kind of horrified awe that he'd had when he'd burst into Trixie's room the night before.

Brian took a sip of his coffee and looked at Mart in inquiry. "You saw something? What did you see?"

Mart hesitated before he admitted, "I don't know."

"You don't know?" Brian's brow wrinkled in puzzlement. "What does that mean?"

"It means," Trixie interrupted, "that the paranormal is knocking on our door again this year." She gave Mart a sympathetic look before she continued, "Mart saw a ghost—or something like that—in the preserve on the way home from Dan's last night. And we're going over there to see if we can figure out what he saw."

Normally, Brian's sense of logic and the rational would cause him to immediately be skeptical. He had argued and scoffed for years over the Bob-Whites' encounters with the mystical. But the visions he had experienced the previous summer about one of the unfortunate murder victims of Jack the Ripper had permanently changed his outlook on the supernatural. If he wasn't a true believer, he at least was no longer a skeptic.

Brian set down his coffee and glanced at his brother before he waved his mother's list. "How quick do you think we can get this done so we can go over there and find out what's going on?"

Just as Mrs. Belden had predicted, it did not take the three Belden siblings long to finish their chores, but to Trixie and Mart, who were impatient to get over to the game preserve to investigate possible clues about Mart's apparition, it seemed to take forever. Just as Trixie was finishing her dusting with her usual lick and promise, the phone rang. Brian, who had just

entered the sunny, bright red and white kitchen after finishing his repairs on the trellis, answered the ringing phone.

“Trixie!” he called out a few moments later. “Honey’s on the phone.”

Trixie threw down her dust cloth and raced to the kitchen. “Hi, Honey!” she cried enthusiastically. “Can you and Jim meet us in the game preserve in a little bit?”

“I was just calling to invite you guys over to go horseback riding. Jim is itching to get back in the saddle now that he’s home, and Regan is thrilled that the horses are going to get exercised. We’ve been kind of lax on that lately, and with Mother and Daddy in Canada, Jupe hasn’t been getting all of the exercise he needs. Anyway, Dan’s finished his chores and is headed over on Spartan, and Di is riding Sunny over. If you want to head over to the preserve, would horseback be okay?”

Trixie’s sandy blonde curls shook as she nodded her head vigorously. “That sounds great!” she enthused, as happy at the prospect of seeing Jim again she was at the prospect of riding through the preserve on Susie, looking for clues to a new mystery.

After she had promised Honey that she and her brothers would be there soon and hung up the phone, she filled Brian in on the plans and stuck her head out the kitchen door to call to Mart, who was near the chicken coop throwing feed at the chickens. He finished with that, his final chore, and headed back to the white frame house.

“You rang?” he asked, wiping his hands off on his shirt as he entered the kitchen and headed over to the stainless steel sink to wash them more thoroughly.

“Yep, sure did. Honey just called. Di and Dan are headed over to Manor House on their horses, and we’re all going to go riding together now that Jim’s home. Apparently, he’s itching to get back in the saddle, according to Honey. Anyway, we’re all going to ride through the preserve, and we can look for clues and see if—” Trixie stopped, noticing the sudden apprehensive look that settled on Mart’s face. “What’s wrong? You’re not afraid of going back there, are you? Because it’ll be broad daylight, and we’ll all be together, and if...”

Trixie’s voice trailed off as Mart shook his head. “No, it’s not that,” he said.

“Well, then what is it?” Trixie asked, clearly exasperated at her brother’s behavior.

Mart hesitated, and Brian spoke for his younger brother. “I think I know what this is about,” he said. “He’s afraid of what Dan and Di will think about his little visitation last night. *Especially* Di.”

Trixie hooted. “Don’t be ridic! Dan and Di would never laugh at you!” She grinned teasingly at her almost twin. “/ would, but they wouldn’t.”

Mart smiled half-heartedly at Trixie’s joke, but he was clearly not convinced. Again, it was Brian who spoke up.

“That’s one thing that’s great about the Bob-Whites,” he explained. “We always support each other, through thick and thin. Logically, Mart knows that, but sometimes logic isn’t always in control.”

Trixie raised a sandy eyebrow as she stared at her older brother. Her older, *logical* brother. “*What* are you talking about? And since when do you ever admit that logic isn’t always in control?”

Brian sighed and then began to explain. “Last summer when I was experiencing those visions, I was afraid of telling you guys about it. For one, I was afraid to say it out loud, because it was like validating the hallucinations. I didn’t want to tell *you*, Trixie, because I was afraid you’d remember how hard I’d been on you all those times in the past when you insisted on believing in, uh, paranormal stuff and that you’d be less than kind if I admitted I was experiencing something along the same lines, something I couldn’t rationally explain. I was afraid of telling Jim and Dan because they’re, well, they’re guys, you know? But the hardest person to tell was Honey. When you like someone, *really* like them, it’s hard to confess to them that you might be going insane.”

“That’s ridiculous,” Trixie said adamantly. “I’ve seen some pretty strange stuff in the last few years, and I was never once afraid to tell Jim for even a second.”

Mart snorted. “The guy who would believe you if you said you saw a dinosaur appear in the bushes? Yeah, *that* counts.”

“And Di *wouldn’t* believe you?” Trixie demanded, beginning to lose her temper. “The woman who hangs on to every last one of your long-winded syllables as you bloviate? Please!”

Mart sighed and ran a hand over his close-cropped hair. “Like Brian said, *logically* I know she’d believe me. But it’s still hard to tell your girlfriend you’re either losing it or you’ve seen a ghost. Neither one inspires romance.”

Trixie sniffed. “Well, it’s too bad that you and Brian don’t have more faith in your girlfriends.” With that, she turned on her heels and left the room, calling over her shoulder, “I am going to go upstairs to my room and change into my dungarees to ride. I’ll see you two dunderheads back down here in a few minutes so we can head on over to Honey and Jim’s.”

As she headed up the steps to her room, she was very gratified to hear Brian say to Mart, “She *is* right, you know.”

“What? You think we’re dunderheads, too?” Mart deadpanned, and Trixie snickered as she reached the top step.

“No, not about *that*.” Exasperation had crept into Brian’s voice. “About me not wanting to tell Honey and you not wanting to tell Di. It is a little ridiculous given that we both know how great and understanding they are.”

Mart’s reply was lost to Trixie’s ears, but she sincerely hoped that he was beginning to come to his senses.

A half an hour later, all seven of the Bob-Whites were saddled up and riding through the preserve. At the stables, as the Beldens, Jim, and Honey had saddled their horses, Mart had described what he had seen the night before, and Di hadn’t laughed, just as Trixie had predicted. Dan had good-naturedly teased him—after all, as a guy and his best friend, it was expected from him—but no one had even hinted that they didn’t believe him or that they wanted to rush him off to a mental health professional for a head examination.

“So, maybe Sarah Sligo and that Hessian soldier aren’t the only ghosts haunting this area,” Jim, on Jupiter and following behind Mart in the lead, commented as they rode toward the location where Mart had seen the ghostly being the night before.

“I’m sure they’re not,” Trixie, contentedly riding behind Jim on Susie, stated. “But I’m also not yet convinced that what we’re dealing with is a bona fide ghost. That’s why I want to look for clues—to see if a human could be behind what Mart saw.”

“Can we please assume that it was a human was behind it?” Mart called back to his friends. “I don’t even want to *think* that that thing might be real!”

The Bob-Whites giggled at Mart’s words and then sobered as they approached the now infamous clearing. The trees surrounding this particular clearing were very tall and grew close together in a dense line. A thick mat of vines and briars would make exploring the area difficult when they dismounted their horses and searched for clues. This part of the preserve was largely unexplored by the Bob-Whites because of the thick woods and vine and briar barriers that discouraged leaving the paths. The small clearing was criss-crossed with several large fallen tree trunks, and it gently sloped up a slight rise.

The seven friends dismounted and tied their horses to nearby trees. When the horses were secure and contently munching on bushes, everyone looked at Mart for direction. He stared across the clearing toward the east and pointed.

“That’s where I saw the thing.”

Six pairs of eyes followed his gaze.

“I could see it glowing through the trees right over there. And then it entered the clearing at that spot, coming closer and closer to me before it suddenly veered off into the trees in that direction.” As he spoke, his arm moved to illustrate his words. “It’s so thick in there that it disappeared almost immediately,” Mart explained.

“It’s also so thick that I don’t see how anyone could stumble through there and look as though they were floating,” Jim reasoned as his sharp green eyes took in the terrain. “Not to mention that you would have had to have heard a lot of crashing through the bushes and brambles and whatnot.

Mart frowned. “I hadn’t thought of that.” He reflected for a moment. “But floating is definitely the right word. It really looked as though it was gliding along. The terrain didn’t bother whatever it was one bit. And other than making that awful wailing sound, I didn’t hear it make another noise, certainly not crashing through underbrush.”

Di shivered and wrapped her arms around herself despite the presence of the warm summer sunshine. “That’s not very reassuring,” she said.

No one disagreed with her, and Mart put his arm around her shoulders in an attempt to provide some comfort in a situation that was definitely lacking it.

After a moment of contemplative silence, Trixie squared her shoulders determinedly. “Well, we’re not getting any detecting done by just standing here and talking about it. The only way to see how it was done is to go investigate. Maybe those brambles and vines aren’t as thick as they look.”

The group followed Mart as he demonstrated the exact path that the figure had taken the previous night from the point that it had entered the clearing to the point that it left. Then, everyone spread out along the area that Mart had indicated and looked for signs that a human had walked that route recently. After a thorough examination, everyone reported the same thing—it did not look as though a human, or anything else for that matter, had traversed the area any time in the recent past. The grass had not been tamped down before the Bob-Whites crossed it. The vines and brambles at the edge of the clearing were thick and unyielding, and none of the young people were able to penetrate it at any point. There were no paths through the underbrush anywhere, and none of the foliage looked as though it had been disturbed in a very long time. There were no snapped off twigs or broken branches.

“What about up above? In the trees?” Jim asked, turning his gaze upward.

“You think that maybe someone did the trick from above?” Brian asked.

“Maybe. Mart did say that it floated,” Jim returned.

The seven Bob-Whites fanned out and began to study the branches and leaves above them, but a survey of the canopy did not reveal any obvious wire, string, or rope that could have been used to perpetrate a hoax. It did not look as though anyone could even get into the woods to hang any such implement.

There was no visible clue as to the origin or identity of the night visitor.

“What next?” Dan asked, his dark eyes holding a mixture of curiosity and worry.

Trixie turned to face Mart. “Was there anything about the way the apparition looked that would give you a clue as to what it was? Like, was it dressed as a soldier or something like that?” Trixie knew that as long as she lived she would never forget the horrifying vision she had shared with Honey and Jim of a long-ago soldier in this very preserve.

Honey, obviously remembering the same terrifying event, shivered involuntarily as she turned toward Mart, awaiting his answer. Much as Mart had done with Di earlier, Brian draped his arm around Honey’s shoulders, pulling her close to him in a comforting gesture.

Mart shook his head in answer to Trixie’s question. “No. It wasn’t a soldier, for sure.” Without even realizing it, Honey and Trixie both exhaled in relief. “It was more...natural. Earthy, almost. It had long, flowing hair, and it carried a gnarled stick.”

“Well, that doesn’t sound like a witch, like Sarah Sligo was, or any other colonial settler I’ve ever heard of,” Trixie mused as she racked her brain for possibilities. “If soldiers and settlers are out, then that leaves...”

“Indians,” Mart finished for her.

“I guess it’s time we head to the library and do some research about anyone who used to live in this area,” Dan stated.

“Don’t forget the historical society,” Brian said, thinking of the summer in high school that he had worked mornings at the historical society. “The archive room is filled with letters and diaries from Sleepyside’s European settlers that document a lot of Indian customs and lore. I bet there’s a treasure trove of information in that little room in the basement.”

“And it’s right across the street from the library,” Mart, who had worked with Brian that summer, added. “That makes it awfully convenient.”

“Okay, then. Brian, Jim, Honey, and I will study the letters and stuff in historical society,” Trixie directed, “and Mart, Dan, and Di will head to the library and see what kind of books and stuff there are there about Sleepyside’s history. If Mrs. Field is working, she’s bound to be able to point us in the right direction.”

“Speaking of Sleepyside’s history,” Honey said as the group crossed the clearing to where their horses were tied up, “let’s not forget Brom. He was really helpful when it came to solving the Hessian soldier’s mystery.”

“That’s a great idea, Honey,” Trixie said as she untied Susie. “Should we go there first?”

Mart shook his head. “I’d rather do the research in town first. Depending on what we dig up, we can talk to him. Maybe we’ll have a specific name or something that we can ask him about.”

“In other words,” Dan said with a grin as he mounted Spartan, “Mart doesn’t want to tell anyone else about that ghost he saw just yet.”

“And that’s a problem because?” Mart retorted, swinging up into Strawberry’s saddle.

“No problem, no problem. I’m just sayin’,” Dan said with an exaggeratedly innocent air.

Mart rolled his eyes but said no more as the Bob-Whites, happy to have a plan in place, mounted their horses and headed back toward the Manor House stables.

Dan and Di broke off from the others to head home to stable their horses, promising to meet the other Bob-Whites back at the Manor House.

The five remaining Bob-Whites entered the stables to clean and curry the horses while they waited for Dan and Di to return.

Trixie glanced over at Jim, who seemed to be lost in thought as he lifted the saddle off of Jupiter’s back. “What are you thinking about, Jim?” she asked.

Jim’s eyes came back into focus, and he smiled at Trixie. “Sorry. I was thinking about something. What did you ask me?”

Trixie grinned. “I asked you what you were thinking about. You looked like your mind was elsewhere.”

He laughed at that. “Well, it was. I was trying to remember what was over in that part of the preserve.” He shrugged. “It’s been a while since I’ve done any patrolling, but it seems odd that the thicket around there is so dense. I thought Mr. Maypenny kept the paths pretty well cleared.”

“Maybe there weren’t any paths in that part to clear,” Brian reasoned as he returned his brushes to their proper place. He glanced at Honey. “Didn’t your dad want to keep part of the preserve in its natural state?”

Honey nodded. “I think so.” She sighed. “But I don’t remember which part that was. Half the time, I can’t even figure out what part of the preserve I’m *in!*” A smile twitched on her lips. “I’m

lucky I can get back to the Manor House after a ride. My sense of direction has not improved at all since we moved here.”

“Mine hasn’t either, and I’ve lived here all my life,” Trixie said cheerfully.

“My sense of direction is just fine,” Mart said dryly. “And I think, if we were able to cross through that briar patch, we’d hit Glen Road at some point.” He waved a hand in the general direction of Glen Road. “Over by the old Depew place.”

“The Depew place?” Jim asked, a puzzled look on his face. “I thought that our houses, and Ten Acres, of course, were the only houses on this section of Glen Road.”

“They are,” Mart affirmed. “But there used to be a big old mansion across the way that the Depews lived in. I think it burned down during the Revolutionary War.”

Brian rolled his eyes. “Why am I not surprised that you know this?”

“I learned about it when I was working at the historical society. What else was I going to do all summer there but learn about local history?” Mart retorted.

“I don’t know,” Trixie said, putting a finger to her cheek as she tilted her head and gazed innocently at him. “Work, maybe?”

Mart gave her a sour look. “I *was* working. I had to sort through donated stuff and organize it for the collections librarian to catalog. And she was really interested in the Revolutionary War period. She talked about it. A *lot*.”

The other four Bob-Whites gave each other amused looks. Brian finally said, “Makes my assistant guard job at the historical society sound almost not dull compared to that.”

“Well,” Mart said with a shrug of his shoulders, “you know me and new information. It wasn’t *that* dull.”

“Sounds dull to me,” Trixie said with a grin. “Makes me glad I worked at Crimper’s instead. Oldest things I ever had to deal with were the customers.”

“Trixie!” Honey chided, even as they all laughed.

Dan entered the stables then, with Di on his heels, and looked at them in inquiry. “What did we miss?”

“Nothing,” Mart said. “Just Trixie maligning Crimper’s customers again.”

Dan’s eyes twinkled as he looked at Trixie. “C’mon, Trix. They weren’t all that old. Doesn’t your mother shop there?”

“My mother is the youngest person who ever goes in there,” Trixie cried, waving her hands dramatically. “If I have to deal with one more old lady tweaking my cheek and telling me how much I look like Moms...”

“And why is that a bad thing?” Dan asked. “Your mom is hot!”

All three Beldens gave Dan identical horrified looks. Jim also began to frown, but for a different reason, wrapping his arm around Trixie in a proprietary manner.

Diana began to laugh. "Dan, you're digging your own grave here." She put her arm through his and tugged. "C'mon. Didn't we say something about a ghost? And a mystery to solve?"

Honey put a hand on both Mart and Brian's backs and pushed them forward. "Yes. Listen to Di. Let's go!"

Within a few minutes, the group had piled into the Bob-White station wagon and were on their way into town.

Brian let Mart, Dan and Di out in front of the library before turning into the historical society's small parking lot. He pulled into one of the spots near the back of the lot and turned off the car. After they all got out, he was surprised to find the other three smiling at him. "What?" he demanded.

Trixie gestured grandly over the empty parking lot. "Don't you think we could have parked a wee bit closer to the front door?"

Brian looked at the others sheepishly. "Okay, so I'm used to being an employee here. We were encouraged to park near the back of the lot to save the front spaces for other people."

Trixie snorted. "As if this is the hotbed of Sleepyside entertainment..."

Honey threaded her arm through Brian's and said loyally, "I think it's sweet."

Jim grinned at Brian. "I'm sure all the little old ladies who come in here thought that, too."

Brian rolled his eyes. "Will you just walk, please?" He then reached over and squeezed Honey's hand with his free one in a small, covert "thank you" for her support.

Jim hurried up to Trixie and captured her hand in his. "What do you think we should look for, Ms. Co-President?"

Trixie looked thoughtful as they climbed up the short staircase to get into the historical society. "Maybe some old maps of the area?" She glanced over her shoulder at Brian and Honey. "What do you think? Do they have anything like that here?"

"I think so," was her brother's response. "Mart would know better than I would, but I think that's what was in the basement. Maps and other documents like that."

Trixie opened the door and walked inside, her eyes taking a moment to adjust to the dark, barely lit room inside.

The building was still obviously laid out like an old-fashioned house. The four Bob-Whites found themselves in a dark hallway with rooms off of either side. Brian gestured toward the light streaming out from one of the open doors. "Jake's bound to be in there," he said.

Trixie and the others walked into the large room. The afternoon sunlight streamed into the room, highlighting the smooth wood of the floor under their feet. A large stone fireplace covered most of the wall across from them. An uncomfortable looking Victorian sofa and its matching chairs huddled in one corner of the room, and a couple of battered desks, covered in paper and old, curled manuscripts, sat in the other.

A stoop-shouldered, frail looking man sat behind one of the desks, reading a large, dusty book. Upon hearing the noise of their entrance, he looked up at them through glasses that seemed almost too large for his face. "Can I help you?" he asked.

A smile curved Brian's lips as he walked over to the desk. "Hello, Jake. How are you?"

Jake squinted at Brian before his wrinkled face broke into an answering smile. "Brian! How good to see you, young man. How have you been?"

"Fine. Good!" he answered. "And you?"

"Same as ever," Jake replied. He got to his feet and came around to the other side of the desk, peering at the group. "Brought your friends in to show where you worked, did you?"

"Sort of," Brian said with a twinkle in his eyes. "This is my sister, Trixie, and our friends, Jim Frayne and Honey Wheeler. Everyone, this is Jake Hanson. I worked for him here at the historical society."

"Ah!" Jake firmly shook hands with Trixie first, and then Jim and Honey. "Matthew's kids. A pleasure." He raised an eyebrow at Trixie. "You look just like your mother, miss."

Honey, Jim and Brian all tried to repress smiles at this. Trixie merely smiled and said, "Thank you. That's a big compliment, sir."

"You're not kidding, Missy. Your mother is a fine looking woman!" he said firmly.

At that, Jim began to cough, trying to cover his laughter. Brian and Trixie both looked a little at loss for words.

Finally, it was Honey, with her famous tactfulness, who came to the rescue. "We wondered, Mr. Hanson, if you could help us." She gave him a sweet smile. "We're trying to find some maps or some other historical information about some of the land my father owns near Glen Road."

"Your father owns quite a bit of property over near Glen Road, Miss Wheeler," Jake said. "What part of it are you interested in?"

"There's a small area that seems to be more wild—less traveled," Jim interjected. "We thought maybe there'd be some diaries or some sort of information from people who lived near there who knew about the Indians who were there in the area at the time. Mart mentioned something about the land being near a place owned by a family called the Depews. Maybe we could start with them?"

"The Depews? Well, there's a name I haven't heard in a while," Jake said, a thoughtful look on his face. "Not since Millie retired, anyway." He winked at the girls as he continued, "She was the one all into that Revolutionary War tragedy. Thought it made us special or something."

"Revolutionary War tragedy?" Trixie asked, her blue eyes already betraying her interest and curiosity.

"Yep. Spies, death, fire...all the makings of a good mini-series. All they needed was a good guy." Jake chuckled. "Too bad they didn't have one in that story."

He began to walk slowly toward the door in which they'd come in. "Follow me," he said as he walked. "The things you'd want will be downstairs in the archive room."

The Bob-Whites glanced at each other before following Jake out of the room. He led them down the hallway to the back of the house to a narrow wooden staircase. At the bottom of the staircase was a door he unlocked. After he did so, he led them into a large room with a few narrow windows near the ceiling, letting in a small amount of light.

Jake flipped on a light switch, and the room was illuminated in a cozy light from a few strategically placed wall sconces around the room. Several locked glass cabinets with various books peeking out from inside littered one wall, while tall, dresser-like cabinets covered another wall. The remainder of the room had a few large desks, obviously used for people reading the books and documents.

Jake shuffled over to one of the locked cases and opened it, muttering to himself as he looked over the books within. Finally, he pulled out a very old-looking leather-bound book and handed it to Trixie. Then, he walked over to one of the taller, thin cabinets and pulled open a drawer, carefully thumbing through the maps inside before he gently pulled out an old map and brought it over to one of the large desks.

"This is a map of Glen Road. Or at least the area where Glen Road would have been back then." Jake poked a finger toward a wide, open area on the map. "That's the general area of where the Manor House would be now." He then pointed to a square drawn on the map. "And that would be the Depew House."

Jake straightened up and gave the others a wry look. "Not that it's there anymore, of course."

Trixie, by this time, was bursting with questions. "What happened to the house? You mentioned a fire. And spies. Did they die in the fire?"

Jake chuckled. "History isn't as dull as you'd think, now, is it?"

"I must admit," Brian said with a sheepish smile, "that that sounds pretty interesting." He looked curiously at Jake. "What more do you know?"

"That book the little lady has in her hands will tell you a lot more than I can," he said. "That's a diary, written by Edward Palmer. I don't know if he'd have information about the Indians in there, but he might."

"Edward Palmer?" Honey asked. "Who was he?"

"He was a Tory spy from Sleepyside back in the days of the Revolution," Jake replied. "Spied for the British against the Americans."

"Edward Palmer! Oh, yes! I remember him!" Trixie exclaimed eagerly, gesturing at the others. "He was a Tory spy who was hanged near Sleepyside—on Gallows Hill. We learned about him in history class."

Jake's face softened into a smile. "I see that your brother, Mart, isn't the only one who remembers his history." "He was hanged in 1777, if I remember my dates right." He sobered. "Didn't spy as well as he thought now, did he?"

"Did he set fire to the Depew house?" Jim asked, glancing down at the old map in front of him.

"No one knows," Jake responded. "At least, not anyone who was interested in telling."

A buzzer sounded in the room, startling the Bob-Whites. Jake, however, seemed rather unconcerned.

"That's probably Reverend Michaels. He comes over to read some of the old sermons every week in hope of getting ideas for his own." He chuckled as he walked over to the door. "Stay as long as you like," he said. "When you're ready to go, just let me know." With that, he started up the staircase back to the main level.

Brian turned his gaze back to the others. "Well? What do you think?"

Jim shrugged. "I don't think we could go much further back than the Revolutionary War," he said thoughtfully. "I don't know if there'd be anything from a period earlier than that here at the historical society." He gestured at the diary in Trixie's hand. "I'm surprised *that* isn't in an airtight room somewhere."

"Well, I think we're lucky it isn't," Trixie said firmly. "A hanged spy and a suspicious fire...I think that's more than enough to raise a ghost, don't you?"

"But Mart didn't seem to think that the ghost was a colonial settler or a soldier," Honey pointed out. "Weren't we looking more for something going on with the Indians?"

"The Indians were involved in the Revolution, too, weren't they?" Trixie demanded, turning her gaze on Jim.

Jim spread his hands helplessly. "I think I remember something like that, but history was never my strong point."

"Well, maybe Edward Palmer did something to the Indians. Or an Indian set the fire at the house!" Trixie persisted.

"Why don't we skim through the diary and find out?" Brian asked, his eyes twinkling. "Otherwise, it's just speculation."

Trixie pulled out a chair from one of the desks and sat down, paging through the book. "Bought tea today. Outrageous cost." She sighed in exasperation. "It's got his *grocery* list."

Jim chuckled. "Keep reading, Trix. Maybe he'll tell us what chores he did. Does he like chopping wood?"

Trixie glared at him over the top of the diary before returning to page through the book. "Met with Prudence Summers today and complimented her on her bonnet...Must travel to New York next week to purchase some new cattle...blah, blah, blah..." Trixie paged through several more pages, her expression growing more and more frustrated. "What kind of intriguing spy mini-series would *this* make?"

Brian laughed. "Trixie, you really don't think a spy is going to write, 'Killed a few Americans today.' in his diary, do you?"

"Well, no," she admitted, "but..." Her voice trailed off. "Wait! Wait just a minute. What do we have here?"

Trixie had thumbed through most of the diary in aggravation and had reached some of the last entries of the old journal. But as she had done so, a yellowed creased paper fell out of the diary onto the desk.

Trixie carefully unfolded the paper, gingerly handling its fragile edges. She spread it out on the desk in front of her.

The other Bob-Whites drew in closer, looking over Trixie's shoulders at what looked to be a treasure map. On it was drawn several roads, a forest, three hills and a large X next to something that looked like a cave entrance. And near the bottom of the page was a crudely drawn house, under which was written in a faint but still legible hand one word.

Depew.

After Brian had dropped them off, Mart, Dan, and Di had hurried up the stone steps of the Sleepyside Library. Like the historical society, the library was housed in one of the oldest houses in the area. It was surrounded by huge oak trees, and every time he passed by them, Mart often thought about all of the history those stately old trees had been witness to. Local history was specifically on his mind now as he entered the cool and quiet library building.

The trio headed straight to the information desk, where Mrs. Field, the librarian, sat organizing a stack of papers. Her short, curly hair had turned gray over the years, but her sharp, hazel eyes still sparkled with a youthful vibrance. She looked up as the three friends approached her desk, and a smile lit her delicate features.

"Hello, there," she greeted them warmly. "How can I help you three young folks today?"

Mart smiled and returned her greeting. "Hi, Mrs. Field. We're doing a little research on Sleepyside history, and we were wondering if you have any information on the families who lived in this area around the time of the Revolutionary War, particularly any families named Depew. We're interested in information about the Depew house and land as much as we are about members of the family. We'd also be grateful for any books or other information about the Indians who lived in this area at the time, too."

"Depew...Depew," Mrs. Field repeated, thinking. Finally she said, "I can't say the name sounds familiar, but there are a few books about local history that you might find helpful. Do you have time to stay here for a while and do your reading? The books are in the reserve collection, so I'm afraid that I can't let you check them out."

"That's fine," Mart assured the older woman. "We've got time, and we're really interested in the information."

"Well then, if you want to find a seat at one of the tables over there, I can go get them from the reserve room. I'll be right back," she promised with a smile before disappearing behind a paneled oak door.

The library's main room had several tables scattered about, and on a warm June afternoon, all of them were empty. Dan led the way to the nearest one, and he and Mart sat down. Di headed over to the library's catalog and searched for non-reserve books on Westchester County history and Indian lore and customs. She had found several entries and was off to locate them on the shelves when Mrs. Field returned and placed three books on the table in front of Mart and Dan.

"Here's a *History of the Province of New York*," she explained. "It was written in 1757 by William Smith, and although it's a little before the time of the Revolution, it might list the old families, including the Depews. I also brought *Letters from an American Farmer* by J. Hector St. John de Crèvecoeur. He was a Frenchman, son of a count who came to North America and settled in New York to become a farmer. He was meticulous in writing about life in the colonies, and he even described what's become known as the American Dream. Even if it doesn't have information on the Depews, it's a fascinating volume. And, finally, here's a volume on architecture that covers houses of the pre-Revolutionary period. It's possible that the Depew house is in that one."

"Thanks, Mrs. Field," Dan said, reaching for the book by St. John de Crèvecoeur. "You've made this one sound so good, I'll start with it."

Mart echoed his thanks as he reached for the book on pre-Revolutionary architecture.

"I don't have any reserve books about the history of the Indians in this area." She gave a regretful smile. "Most people in the eighteenth century weren't interested in writing books about 'savages'. You may want to try over at the historical society and see if you can find personal accounts of the local Indians in letters and diaries and such. Mrs. Lewis collected quite a few Revolutionary War items before she retired."

Mart smiled ruefully. "I know. I had to sort a lot of them when I worked there."

"Oh, that's right! I had forgotten that you had worked there for a summer, Mart. Have you been over there already?" Mrs. Field inquired.

The young man shook his head. "No, we split up to get more done. My brother and sister are over there looking through the collections down in the archive room."

Mrs. Field nodded. "Well, if you need anything, please let me know," she said and then left the two to their research.

Mart examined the index of the tome he had picked up, triumphantly stating, "The Depews are listed! Hopefully, it's the same family." He gingerly leafed through the old book, trying to find the right page. The aging pages were fragile, and he was careful not to accidentally tear the brittle, yellowing paper.

Dan paused from perusing his book, his anxious eyes peering over at the pages of Mart's volume. He waited as Mart read and, unable to take it any longer, finally asked with an air of impatience, "Well? Is it the right house?"

Mart nodded slowly. "I think so. It describes a mansion belonging to a family named Depew that was located on the east side of the Hudson River a few miles inland from a former Sintsink Indian village."

"Sintsink? I don't know that I've heard of them," Dan said.

"They were a local Indian tribe. Actually, they were a subtribe of a larger tribe called the Wappingers," Mart said.

"How do you *know* all this stuff?" Dan asked, staring at his friend. "You're like a sponge of knowledge or something."

Mart smiled. "Every child in Sleepyside learns about the local Indians in elementary school. Sleepyside gets its name from nearby Sleepy Hollow, but originally this was an Indian village called Ossingsing." He shrugged. "I was fascinated with it as a kid, so I remembered a lot of what I learned. Plus, my stint at the historical society sharpened the knowledge."

Di returned then with several books in her arms. "I found a bunch of books that might have some information, including this book on the Wappingers."

Dan looked up at her as she set the books down on the table. "I take it you know all about the Wappingers, too."

Di looked surprised. "Of course. Every kid in Sleepyside learns about the Wappinger Indians that lived in this area long before our ancestors settled here. Sleepyside may have gotten its name from Sleepy Hollow, but it used to be a Wappinger Indian village."

Dan looked at Mart and grinned. "So I've heard."

Di slid into the seat next to Mart and looked at her boyfriend. "Been giving Dan a history lesson on the Wappingers, have you?"

"Yes, he has," Dan answered for his friend. "And I want to know why I've never heard of them. I matriculated at Sleepyside Junior-Senior High myself."

"Yes, but by the time you get into high school, they're trying to prepare you for college with useful things like geometry and biology. Local history goes by the wayside," Mart stated.

"Well, in any case, none of that matters now. What else does your book say?" He turned to Di and added by way of explanation, "Mart found something in that architecture book on the Depew house."

Di eagerly leaned over to look at the book lying in front of Mart. "Pretty house," she commented, referring to a detailed line drawing of the colonial mansion.

Mart began to read again. "'The Depew house, a classic stone-built mansion dating to the mid-1730s, is a traditional example of mid-eighteenth century architecture in the Dutch-settled area near the Hudson River.' Then there's a bunch of stuff about the architectural details that we don't care about." Dan and Di watched intently as Mart's eyes skimmed the page. "Aha! This might be something." He read:

Unfortunately, this classic architectural example burned down mysteriously during the early years of Revolutionary War. It was rumored that the owners were Tory spies, but this allegation was never conclusively proven before the Depew husband and wife perished in the fire. Their only son survived, but the loss of his parents and home proved to be too much for him. He disappeared from the area and was never heard from again. Local residents at the time believed that he went insane, but that fact is unsubstantiated. How the mansion, built of stone, burned so completely and quickly remains a mystery to this day.

Mart looked up from his reading to stare at his friends, his blue eyes round. "Wow."

"Wow is right," Dan said. "So, it looks like the ghost of an Indian, or what could be the ghost of an Indian, is haunting the former site of a mansion that was built by European settlers and also happened to mysteriously burn to the ground. Veddy interesting."

Di waved the book on the Wappingers. "I'll try to find out all that I can about the Indians that were in this area at the time and see if I can find anything related."

The three continued to skim the vast pile of books, hoping to glean more information about the tragedy that had occurred centuries before. Dan finished *Letters from an American Farmer* and put it aside.

"Nothing relevant in there," he reported as he reached for *History of the Province of New York*. "But a few of the letters to Benjamin Franklin in one of the appendices were interesting. Mrs. Field really seemed to think this book was something else. Maybe I'll come back and read it more thoroughly some other time."

Mart laughed softly. "Now who wants to be a sponge of knowledge?"

Dan rolled his eyes and turned his attention back to the old book in front of him. Silence descended over the three once again as they continued their research. Every so often one of the three would read an interesting factoid, but the tidbits were only of general interest and not specific to the case at hand.

Finally, Di let out a little squeal. "This is interesting!" she exclaimed. "This book on Wappinger history includes an fascinating little tidbit." Di read aloud:

Although most of the Wappinger people had left the area by the time of the Revolutionary War, some descendents of the Sintsink subtribe remained. They fought alongside the colonists during the Revolution and were considered valuable allies. There is a Sintsink legend about a particularly courageous Sintsink brave named Tpocho Kshachchen in his native language, which meant wind of the night. He was known to the colonists as Paul Nightwind (probably because his native name sounded vaguely similar to the European name 'Paul', and the translation of his full name turned into the more European "Nightwind"). This young Indian brave, probably around 20 years old, spied for the revolutionists and provided them with some reliable and important information regarding British plans. Suddenly, though, the young man disappeared and was never heard from again by his family or his revolutionary compatriots. His father and other members of his tribe insisted that he had been murdered by local Tory spies, but no irrefutable evidence of this ever was found by the colonists. It is said, however, that the Wappinger spirits punished the murderers in a fiery manner.

The three paused while the information sunk in. "A fiery manner," Mart mused. "Like a mysterious house fire maybe?"

"Sounds as good as any explanation to me," Dan agreed. "I suppose angry Indian spirits would be better at rapidly burning a stone house to the ground than mere mortals."

"It's interesting that the Depew son disappeared and was never heard from again, same as the Indian brave," Di commented. "The books are almost identical in their accounts of the two younger men."

Mart nodded slowly. "An eye for an eye. The Tory spies—the Depews—made the Indian son disappear, so the Sintsink made the Depews' son disappear. And they fried them to a crisp for good measure."

Dan grinned. "What? Like an eighteenth century Indian electric chair?"

Mart smiled. "Something like that."

Di wrinkled her nose. "Stop being so gruesome, you two. So, do you think that the ghost you saw was the murdered Indian, Mart?"

"Could be," Mart agreed. "Like Dan said, that's as good as any other explanation."

Di returned to her book and a few minutes later had more information to share. "It also says here that the Sintsink had a sacred Indian burial ground in the area. It was about two miles inland and parallel with their village, which sat on the east bank of the Hudson River where the village of Sleepyside-on-Hudson stands today."

"That sounds like it could be in the vicinity of Glen Road," Dan said.

"Yeah, in the preserve, even," Mart said.

Di shivered for the second time that day. "Great! We've been riding our horses over a sacred burial ground. *That's* real comforting to know."

After a little more reading, the three determined that there probably was not much more that could be learned from the books in front of them. They stood, ready to gather their books and place the non-reserve books on the reshelving cart and return the reserve books to Mrs. Field, when Honey entered the front door and made her way over to them.

"Hi, Honey," Di said. "We're just about done here."

"Good, because Trixie found a treasure map, and she's just dying to show it to you guys!"

"A treasure map?" Dan and Mart exclaimed at the same time.

"Well, we *think* that's what it is," Honey said, her hazel eyes shining with excitement. "It sure looks like it—with an 'X' marking the spot and everything!"

"But what does the treasure map have to do with what we're looking for?" Di asked.

"Don't say a word," Dan begged. "Let us put the books away so that we can get out of here and hear all about this map." He grabbed the couple of reserve books out of Di's hands and grabbed the remaining one before hurrying over to Mrs. Field, who was regarding them with a curious eye.

"Not a word!" Mart warned as he scooped up the remaining books and headed over to one of the reshelving carts near the back of the library.

Di grinned at Honey. "Well, at least that will make them hurry."

Honey laughed. "I guess so!" She looked curiously at Di's small purple notebook. "Did you guys find out anything interesting?" She gestured at the pad of paper. "I see you've been taking notes."

"We did find out a few things," Di affirmed. "Maybe when we compare notes, we'll have a better picture of what happened."

The two other Bob-Whites joined them soon thereafter, and the four walked out of the library into the afternoon sunlight to where Brian, Jim and Trixie waited in the Bob-White station wagon.

Trixie waved impatiently from the front seat, where she was seated next to Jim. "Hurry!" she said. "We've got loads to tell you."

The four Bob-Whites got into the car, where Dan immediately demanded, "What's this about a treasure map?"

Jim held up his hand. "Before we get started on the map, I want to suggest that we go somewhere to eat." He grinned at the others in the rearview mirror. "Frankly, I'm starving."

"Good point," Brian agreed. "I'd suggest Wimpy's, but you're all invited for a cookout tonight. Moms is going to make hamburgers."

"Your mom's hamburgers trump Wimpy's any day," Dan said firmly. Di, Honey and Jim all echoed Dan's sentiments.

"Well, then, where should we go?" Trixie asked. "There's the dog wagon..."

At her words, Jim made a face. Trixie laughed. "Okay, Jim does *not* want to go to the dog wagon. Any other ideas?"

"I think there are a couple of restaurants on Glenwood Avenue," Mart offered. "Or there's always the Glen Road Inn."

"The Inn's a little pricey for my wallet," Dan said ruefully. "I don't get paid until next week."

"How about the Petit Café?" Di asked. "They have sandwiches and that kind of thing. I don't think it's too expensive."

The other Bob-Whites quickly agreed on Di's suggestion, and a few minutes later, Jim pulled into a space in front of the café.

The Bob-Whites filed out of the car and were seated fairly quickly at a large table near the back of the restaurant. After they had all placed their orders with the waiter, they turned to look at Trixie with interest.

"Tell us about this map!" Dan said, his dark eyes lighting with curiosity.

"Well, we kind of stumbled across it," Trixie said. She pulled out a piece of paper from her pocket and unfolded it on the table.

"Trixie Belden!" Di exclaimed, a horrified look on her face. "You didn't take that from the historical society!"

"No, of course not!" Trixie retorted. "This is a copy I made." She tilted her head toward Jim and Brian. "Besides, do you really think they'd have let me walk out with that map?"

A grin twitched on Brian's lips. "Tell them about the map already, Trix."

Trixie spread out the map, trying to iron out the creases in the paper. "There was a diary in the archive room that belonged to Edward Palmer."

“Palmer...Palmer...” Mart interrupted. “Hey! Wasn’t he that spy that was hanged during the Revolutionary War?”

“That’s the one,” Jim affirmed.

“So, this Palmer had a treasure map in his diary?” Di asked.

“It looks like it,” Trixie affirmed. “I was just skimming through the diary at first, because it was really just a daily diary—his grocery list, people he saw and whatnot—”

“Yeah, but maybe it’s in code!” Mart interrupted again. “Could those be clues or something?”

“Maybe,” Trixie agreed. “But since the Revolution is long over, it doesn’t do us much good to go and try to puzzle them out.”

“But could they have something to do with the map?” Dan asked.

Honey smiled at Dan. “I don’t think so. He actually wrote about the map in his diary. It’s a map to his buried money.”

Mart and Dan exchanged excited looks. “Real buried treasure?” Mart exclaimed.

“I wouldn’t get my hopes up on that front,” Brian said dryly. “The diary has been passed through a lot of hands. Any money that was buried there has probably long since been found.”

Mart’s shoulders sagged. “Yeah, and if he had paper money in there, it’s probably long been destroyed just from the earth around it.”

“No,” Trixie interjected. “He buried *gold*, not paper money. It said so in the diary.” She raised an eyebrow at Brian. “And how do you know that it’s not still there? Perhaps no one has bothered looking for it, because they assumed what you guys are assuming.”

“This guy just buried some gold in the middle of the preserve? Why?” Dan asked, an incredulous look on his thin face.

“He had a diary entry about that,” Trixie said, her face expressive with her excitement. “He was worried about being caught as a Tory spy. He definitely was a British sympathizer, because he kept mentioning things like ‘loyalty to the true king’ and that sort of thing.” She tapped the map’s ‘X’ and continued, “He hid the gold so that the American revolutionaries wouldn’t get their hands on his family fortune and use it for their cause.”

“I still say they probably *did* find it,” Brian said dryly. “Someone obviously found the diary.”

“I agree that it probably isn’t likely the gold is still there,” Trixie conceded. “But that map had been in there for a long time. Maybe it wasn’t even opened until we unfolded it. He probably hid the diary somewhere safe, and maybe it was in care of his family for a long time, and they never knew about the gold.” She shrugged. “We won’t know unless we follow the map and see, now, will we?”

“It can’t hurt to look, anyway,” Jim said, his green eyes twinkling.

“But what about the ghost?” Di asked. “Do you think this Palmer guy had anything to do with the Indians, too?”

“Too?” Trixie demanded. She looked at Di, her interest immediately diverted. “What did you guys find out?”

Di glanced at Dan and Mart before she quickly summarized what they’d found out about the Depews and the murdered Indian and the sacred burial ground.

An indignant look crossed Honey’s face. “How awful! Why did they do such a thing?”

“It’s the way of the world during war, Honey,” Dan said with a shrug of his shoulders. “There are always spies and intrigue. You risk your life when you get involved in that sort of thing.”

“And it’s only a ‘bad’ thing when you’re on the losing side,” Mart said.

“Well, it certainly sounds like the Indians paid the Depews back,” Trixie said. She looked at the map in front of her thoughtfully. “I wonder if the Depews worked with Palmer.”

“Probably,” Jim said with a nod.

The waiter returned then with their food, passing around plates to the hungry Bob-Whites, who soon started eating with relish.

“Hey, you know…” Brian interjected after he’d taken a large sip of his soda. “Brom would know something about this. He can tell you just about anything you’d want to know about Sleepyside’s local history. He knows about all the original families around here, so I’m sure he’d know about the Depews and Edward Palmer. Tory spies and ghosts of murdered Revolutionary sympathizers would be right up his alley.” He grinned at Mart. “You remember those horror stories he used to tell us as kids?”

Mart’s eyes gleamed. “Between his stories of No-mah-ka-ta and the Dunderberg Goblin, I wasn’t sure what was real and what wasn’t.” He took a large bite of his multi-layered sandwich, munched for a moment and then swallowed. “But I sure as heck wasn’t going to bother to stop and check out any of the shadows in the trees on the way home!”

The Bob-Whites all laughed at that. Trixie nodded enthusiastically as she continued eating. “I think that’s a great idea, Brian!” She gestured at the map in front of her. “If anyone knows about the Depews and Palmer and Paul Nightwind, it would be Brom.” She looked at the others for confirmation. “Let’s go over and talk to him before dinner. “

“You mean you’re not ready to head out with your shovel to follow the treasure map?” Dan teased.

“Oh, I’m ready to do that,” Trixie said with a grin. “But it might be nice to get Mart’s ghost taken care of first.”

“Especially since it looks like the ghost might be haunting the same area that Palmer buried his money in,” Mart said, pointing at the map.

Jim let out a low whistle. “Wow. I didn’t even think about that.”

“I think the Depews and Palmer were definitely in cahoots somehow,” Trixie said firmly.

“And since Edward Palmer was hanged for his crimes,” Di said softly, “the Indians had their revenge on him without even having to lift a finger.”

“Let’s see what Brom has to say,” Brian said. “Maybe he can shed some light on the subject.”

“Or scare us out of our wits,” Honey said with a shiver. “I still haven’t recuperated from seeing that poor German soldier get his head cut off.”

Di clapped her hands over her ears. “Don’t talk about that again!” she cried. “I didn’t even see it, and I have nightmares about it.”

Jim reached across the table and gently pulled Di’s hands away from her ears. “We promise to keep you out of harm’s way, Di,” he said with a grin.

Mart put his arm around Di’s shoulders. “You girls don’t need to worry. We big, strong men will protect you.”

“Oh, really?” Trixie said dryly. “This from the ‘big, strong man’ who ran all the way home the other night after seeing a big, scary ghost?”

Mart’s eyes narrowed as he looked at his sister. “I’ll have you know…”

Honey laughed. “You two!” She shook her head. “Let’s just go talk to Brom and see what he has to say.” She exchanged amused looks with Brian before she continued, “It’s June. The sunlight is out for a long time. We’ll be at Crabapple Farm long before the sun goes down. We don’t have to worry about running into any scary apparitions. Ghosts only appear at night anyway, right?”

The others exchanged glances, and finally, Honey looked at Brian for confirmation. “Right, Brian?”

Brian held up his hands. “I will confirm or deny nothing.” He grinned at her. “I’ve learned my lesson about assuming things about the paranormal.”

“Well, I hope we don’t see anything other than trees and bushes and things like that on the way home from Brom’s,” Di said very firmly.

“I wouldn’t worry, Di,” Jim said with a smile. “We’ll all be together and just fine, regardless.”

Trixie nodded as she finished up the last of her sandwich, wiped her hands on her napkin and then began to fold up the map, which she tucked into her pocket. “Now—let’s get going and go visit Brom!”

The Bob-Whites left the café and piled into the BWG station wagon. Mart sat in the back seat, staring out the window, thinking. Something was missing...he could feel it. Yes, the circumstantial evidence all pointed to a connection between the Depews, Palmer, and the missing Paul Nightwind—the Depew name being in Palmer’s diary...Palmer being hanged as a Tory spy...the Depews rumored to be Tory spies...a missing Indian whose tribe swore he was murdered by Tory spies...the Depew mansion mysteriously burning down...the Wappinger legend that said the murderers were punished in a fiery manner...it all added up, but for some reason, Mart had a feeling that there needed to be *more*.

Main Street passed before his unseeing eyes, but the charm of quaint buildings was completely lost on him as his mind whirled. Whether he was feeling this urgent need to find out something concrete because he identified with Paul Nightwind after seeing what was probably his ghost in the preserve the night before or whether it was because the spirit he had seen was somehow

compelling him, Mart didn't know. He just knew that this sudden, urgent need to collect more evidence had to come from *somewhere*.

Suddenly, his eyes lit on the historical society building. Before he even knew what he was doing, he yelled, "Stop the car!"

Jim, startled, quickly looked into the review mirror and when he saw that no one was following him, pulled to a safe stop. Meanwhile, everyone else was peppering Mart with questions.

"What?"

"What's wrong?"

"What did you see?"

"Is there something out there?"

"Are you okay?"

Mart sheepishly looked at his friends. "I'm fine. I mean, I think I'm fine." He sighed and threw up his hands. "I don't know. I just feel like I need to go back into the historical society and look at the diary myself."

"Why?" Trixie asked.

"It's just a...feeling I have," Mart explained, his blue eyes locking on hers. Trixie stared at him for a long moment.

"Well," she finally said, "as much as I want to get over to Brom's and see what he knows, if this is important to Mart, then let's do it. After all, we're right here."

Mart smiled gratefully at his sister. "Thanks, Trix," he said, touched knowing how impatient she was to get to Brom's.

Trixie returned his smile as Jim pulled the car into the historical society parking lot and parked near the front door.

"You're not an employee anymore, so to save time, I'm parking in the front of the lot," Jim said with a grin aimed in Brian's direction.

"Hardy har har," Brian said dryly. He explained to the three who had been dropped off at the library earlier that he had parked at the back of the lot without thinking.

"Do you want company, Mart?" Trixie asked as Mart got out of the car. It was obvious to everyone in the car that she was trying to downplay her eagerness.

Mart grinned at his sister. "C'mon in with me, Trix."

"Great!" she cried, immediately opening the car door and spilling out. The five remaining Bob-Whites grinned at Trixie's zeal as she and Mart headed into the historical society.

"Back so soon?" Jake said when he saw Trixie enter the old, converted house. His eyes lit up when he spied Mart enter on her heels. "Mart!" he cried. "It's so good to see you! What a treat seeing both you and Brian in the same day. It's like Old Home Week."

"Hi, Jake," Mart greeted his former co-worker. "It's good to see you, too. How've you been?"

"I've been just fine, thanks," Jake said. "I think it's great that you young folks are interested in studying all of these old things. Keeps the past alive."

"Yes, it does," Trixie murmured in agreement.

After a few more moments of friendly chatter, Jake led them down to the basement archive room and unlocked the door for them. "Enjoy!" he said with a chuckle and then headed back up the stairs.

Trixie pointed to the cabinet from which Jake had pulled the diary, and Mart headed over to it. Fortunately, Jake had not relocked the cabinet since their earlier visit, and Mart was able to quickly extract the leather-bound volume.

"Did you read every entry, Trixie?" Mart asked as he sat down at the small wooden table and carefully thumbed through the aging pages.

"I just skimmed," Trixie admitted. "There were a lot of entries to go through, and I didn't know exactly what I was looking for. There was a lot of boring stuff, too, like I said. Notes of crops and mundane stuff like that." Her lips twitched. "Although, he did seem to have a thing for a woman named Prudence Summers. Her name came up quite a bit."

"What about the last entries?" Mart asked as he came to the last few pages that were written on. "The ones before he was hanged. Did you read those?"

Trixie thought for a moment and then looked a little sheepish. "Honey looked at them better than I did," she admitted. "I was too excited after finding that treasure map. But she did confirm that the diary said that Palmer buried his gold in a cave so that the colonists wouldn't find it and use it against the British king."

Mart nodded. "I see that entry right here. It's dated January 3, 1777." He turned to the page after it, which lamented the particularly harsh winter and how it would effect his crops and livestock in the spring. Mart was about to turn the page again when his eye caught a phrase buried in the middle of the entry, between the description of the winter's effects on the crops and the description of its effects on the livestock. There was one sentence that didn't belong, one sentence hidden in the middle of the rest.

Mart squinted at the pale, spidery handwriting, trying to discern the meaning of what he was reading. Trixie's sharp eyes noticed his expression.

"What?" Trixie asked. "What is it? What did you find?"

"Just a sentence that really doesn't seem to belong in this entry about how the harsh winter was affecting his farm," Mart said. "It says, 'It is done, for better or for worse, and the cave shall keep the secret.'"

"The cave shall keep the secret?" Trixie repeated. "The gold?"

"Maybe," Mart mused. "I mean, that would make sense given how in the previous entry he's worried about not being able to get his gold back if the landscape changes. But something is telling me that there's something more to this."

"You said that before, Mart," Trixie said. "What exactly do you mean?"

"I can't explain it, Trix," Mart said, looking at her with serious blue eyes. "The more I think about the ghost I saw, the less afraid I am. I almost feel like it's...like it's a kindred spirit." He swallowed before continuing. "And that it's trying to tell me something."

If he was nervous that his sister would laugh at this revelation, he needn't have worried.

"Well, it wouldn't be the first time that something from beyond the grave has been trying to warn us about something or set something right," Trixie said matter-of-factly. "Have you ever thought that maybe you saw that apparition for a reason, Mart?"

"Yeah. It was because I was unlucky enough to be in the preserve too late at night," Mart joked.

Trixie shook her head. "No, I'm being serious here. Maybe you specifically were meant to see the spirit. Or there's a particular reason that you saw it when none of the rest of us ever has in all the times we've been in the preserve at night. Maybe there's a link there." She paused for a moment. "And maybe that's why you feel this urgency to find more than just circumstantial evidence that he was murdered by Palmer and the Depews."

Mart looked at her, agape. "How...how did you..."

Trixie smiled. "It wasn't so hard to deduce that you wanted more tangible evidence when you decided that you needed to see the diary yourself and when you keep going on about being compelled by this ghost. The way I see it is that there was a lot of hearsay going on when all of this happened originally. There were rumors that the Depews were Tory spies. Rumors that the son went crazy. Rumors that an Indian was murdered. And its legend, not fact, that the Wappinger spirits punished the murderers."

She took a breath and thought for a moment. "The bottom line is that no one knows what really happened. No one ever found the body of Paul Nightwind or conclusively proved that he was murdered or by who. That probably doesn't sit well with Paul Nightwind. So, maybe he's trying to direct you to prove he was murdered and set everything to rights."

"Well, that's not a big responsibility or anything," Mart muttered. Then, in a louder voice, he said, "How do I do that? It's not like this sentence offers proof or anything, especially when you add it to the previous entry. It sounds like he's worried about never seeing his gold again. All I have is a gut feeling that it means something more—that it means he murdered Paul Nightwind."

"So, go with that," Trixie advised. "Good detecting involves following hunches and gut feelings as much as it does finding evidence. So, what else does your gut tell you?"

"I don't know," Mart said as he turned his attention back to the journal. "I guess I just want to make sure that there aren't any more clues in the diary." There were only a few more pages left before the journal entries abruptly ended, and for the most part, they all dealt with the more mundane aspects of life in the late eighteenth century.

"Wait a minute!" Mart exclaimed. "You were right about him having a thing for Prudence Summers. 'Prudence Summers has a fetching new woolen coat, but I cannot tell her how becoming she looks because I can no longer look her in the eyes. The guilt of what we have done is consuming. There was no honor in our action.'"

"Gleeps!" Trixie exclaimed. "Now *that* can't be talking about the gold. And it said *we*, not I. What's next?"

“This is in the last entry. He must have been arrested and hanged for spying not long after he wrote that.”

“Well, maybe you didn’t get the definite proof that you wanted, but this has got to mean that we’re right about what we’ve put together so far!” Trixie crowed. “C’mon. Put that away and let’s go visit Brom. I just know that he must know something.”

Mart grinned. “You have a hunch, huh?”

Trixie smiled back at her brother. “Something like that.”

After placing the journal in the glass cabinet, Mart and Trixie hurried up the narrow, wooden staircase. They called good-bye to Jake and hurried out to the Bob-White station wagon. On the ride back toward Glen Road, Mart filled the other Bob-Whites in on what he had found in the journal.

“That’s great, Mart,” Di said, reaching for his hand and squeezing it.

“Yeah,” Dan said. “It looks like Trixie may have competition.”

Trixie turned around in the front seat and stuck her tongue out at Dan before flopping back around.

“And that’s all she has to say about that,” Mart quipped. The Bob-Whites laughed, and soon Jim was turning the car onto Glen Road.

“Where am I going?” Jim asked his passengers. “Crabapple Farm? Manor House?”

“If you don’t mind, Jim, can we swing by my house? I told Mummy and Daddy that I was going for a ride in the preserve with you, and they might be wondering where I’ve disappeared to,” Di requested.

“No problem,” Jim said.

“Ask if you can spend the night,” Trixie begged. “Moms won’t mind on account that Jim’s home, and it’s a special event. You, too, Honey. I just know that there won’t be enough time to ride out to Brom’s before dinner, because I promised we’d all help get it ready, so we’ll have to head out there afterward. It’ll be so much easier if you just spend the night.”

“I’ll do what I can, Trixie,” Di promised. Soon, the tan station wagon was heading up the Lynches’ long, curving driveway. Di hopped out of the car, assuring them she’d only be a minute, before she disappeared into the elegant mansion. It was considerably more than a minute before she appeared again, but she was carrying an overnight bag.

“I can stay!” she said triumphantly. “At first Mummy was against it, but eventually Daddy and I wore her down. That’s what took so long. Bobby is spending the night with the twins, apparently, and Mummy thought it would be good if I supervised. Dad said it wasn’t fair to expect me to supervise three rambunctious pre-teen boys when all of the Bob-Whites were together for the first time since Christmas. Mummy finally agreed, and then I threw everything I needed into a bag just as fast as I could!” She was breathless as she finished her account.

“No worries, Di,” Trixie said. “We’ve got plenty of time to get back to Crabapple Farm to help Moms get dinner ready. We didn’t mind waiting.”

“Well, if you don’t mind waiting, is it all right if I clear things with Mr. Maypenny? He was really cool this morning about me taking off on Spartan before I was 100 percent done with patrolling and stocking the bird stations.”

“No problem, Dan,” Jim assured him. Within a few minutes, Jim had the car bouncing along the little-used two-track that led to Maypenny’s cabin. Finally, he got to a particularly rutted patch of the drive and stopped, as usual. The driveway continued on, but because of the deep ruts, it wasn’t worth it to drive over it with the station wagon. The BWG coffers were meager enough already without adding the cost of a suspension realignment, especially when the cabin was in easy walking distance from there.

“Tell Mr. Maypenny you’re spending the night at our place, and see if he’s okay with it,” Mart requested before Dan hopped out of the car.

A little while later, they saw Dan jogging back down the two-track carrying a duffel bag.

“All set,” he said, sliding back into the backseat of the car. “I can spend the night.”

Jim had already turned the car around while waiting for Dan, so it was an easy operation to head toward Manor House.

“I assume that you want to ask Miss Trask if it’s all right to accept Trixie’s invitation,” Jim called over his shoulder to Honey, who sat in the back seat.

“Yep,” she affirmed. She looked at Brian and Mart. “Is anyone going to invite Jim to this soiree?”

Brian told her, “Of course Jim’s invited.”

Honey turned to Jim. “Are you coming in?”

“Yep, I’ll go in with you,” Jim said as he parked in front of the hollyhocks that bordered the driveway near the garage. “We’ll just be a second,” he promised the rest of the Bob-Whites as he and his adopted sister alighted from the car and headed into their house. Sure enough, it wasn’t long before they, too, left their residence with bags in hand.

“Anywhere else we need to go?” Jim jokingly asked as he slid behind the wheel of the station wagon and headed it toward the small, white frame house set down in the hollow.

A few minutes later, seven boisterous Bob-Whites were walking through the door at Crabapple Farm.

“You’re just in time,” Mrs. Belden greeted them, pulling a lemon meringue pie out of the oven. “I hope you’re hungry.”

“We ate lunch not too long ago, Moms,” Brian said, “but we’re always hungry for your hamburgers. By the time everything’s ready, we will be, too.”

“Moms,” Trixie said to her mother. “Dearest, darlingest Moms.”

Mrs. Belden set the pie down on an antique trivet that had been in the Belden family for many generations and turned to look at her only daughter.

“You look like the cat that swallowed the canary, Trixie.” She smiled. “What is it?”

“Well, we didn’t think you’d mind, you see, and—”

“And you thought that you would invite the rest of the Bob-Whites over for a slumber party, right?” Mrs. Belden finished for her. She gestured toward the bags that the non-Beldens were carrying. “I can deduce as much from the overnight bags I see.”

“Is it okay, Moms? Just this once.”

Mrs. Belden laughed. “Yes, Trixie...just this once. I think it’s great that you’re all back together for the first time in months, and I understand that you want to spend as much time together as possible before you go back to your summer jobs in a few days.”

“Thanks, Moms!” Trixie cried, throwing her arms around her mother. “You’re the best.”

“I don’t know about that,” Helen replied. “But I do know that we’ve got a lot of things to do to get ready for dinner. Just throw your bags in the living room, and we can take care of them after dinner. Your dad is outside cleaning the grill, since it’s the first time it’s been used since last summer. If one of you boys could help him, I’m sure he’d appreciate it.”

After Brian hurried to do her bidding, Mrs. Belden turned to the rest of the group, who had returned from the living room after depositing their overnight bags. “Jim, if you and Dan would shuck the corn and then get it out to the grill, that’d be great. The ears are sitting outside on the picnic table with a bowl to put the husks in.”

“Aye aye, Mrs. B,” Dan said as he and Jim exited the kitchen.

“Girls, you can help me get the salad and other trimmings ready. Mart, please set the picnic table. Don’t forget the ketchup, mustard, mayonnaise, and other condiments, okay? And there’s a big bowl of homemade potato salad that you can put on the table last. Just leave the plastic wrap on so that the bugs don’t get into it. Now, I’ll get to work on the hamburger patties, and I think we’ll be all set.”

The seven young people worked together with Helen and Peter, and soon burgers and corn were grilling, the picnic table was set, a mixed greens salad sat invitingly on the table next to the potato salad, and freshly cut tomato, pickle, onion, and slices were ready to top the burgers. Despite her impatience to get to Brom’s, Trixie reflected that it was wonderful to have everyone together, especially Jim, and she realized that whatever information Brom had would still be there in a couple of hours.

The meal was a lighthearted one, with all of the Bob-Whites filling each other and Mr. and Mrs. Belden in on what they had each missed while they were at their far-flung colleges and universities. Jim had stayed on at his university an extra month to take a four-week language course that was being offered, which was why he was arriving back in Sleepyside so much later than his other friends. After choosing to spend the previous summer in New York City, the Bob-Whites had chosen to find summer jobs in Sleepyside that year. New York was fun, but Sleepyside was home.

After the Bob-Whites had cleared all of the dinner dishes, insisting that Helen and Peter relax on the porch swing and enjoy the clear, early summer evening, they announced that they were going to visit Brom.

“You are?” Mrs. Belden said, rising from the porch swing. “Then would you mind taking him some of the apple cinnamon muffins I made this morning?”

"We'd love to, Moms," Brian said. "Sit back down. We'll get them ready. How many do you want to send?"

"A half dozen, I think," Mrs. Belden answered, settling back down on the swing next to her husband. "Thank you, Brian."

"That still leaves a half dozen or so for me, right, Moms?" Mart asked hopefully.

Helen smiled at her middle son's appetite. "Yes, Mart, there are plenty left for you."

"Fantastic!" Mart said.

Trixie snorted. "How you can even think of food after eating all of that dinner plus two pieces of lemon meringue pie is beyond me!"

"Hollow legs," Mart said, using the standard family comeback to describe his legendary appetite.

After the kitchen was clean and the group was headed toward Brom's cottage, Dan asked, "Are you sure it's okay for all of us to descend on him like this? He *is* really shy."

"It's okay," Brian assured him. "Remember a few years ago when we sent Bobby over to find out about Washington Irving's journal? Brom told Bobby then that it would have been okay if we Bob-Whites had all come over to hear the tale. Apparently, even though we're older, he's okay telling stories to us."

"Besides," Mart said, "we've got Moms' fantastic apple cinnamon muffins—what person in his right mind, shy or not, would pass up an opportunity to eat those?"

Everyone laughed, and it wasn't long before Trixie and her friends were knocking on the door to Brom's small cottage, which stood about 500 feet from the abandoned schoolhouse that Trixie, Jim, and Brian had spent a night in during a blizzard when they were younger. The land around the rustic cottage had belonged to Brom's family, a very old Dutch family, since colonial times, but now the wooded land was part of the Wheeler game preserve.

"Hi, Brom!" Trixie greeted the shy, old man when he opened the door in answer to her knock. "Moms sends her love along with some apple cinnamon muffins." She held out the basket of muffins to Brom, who accepted it and shyly invited them all inside his cottage.

The inside was built as plainly as Mr. Maypenny's cottage, but the wood shelves and tables were decorated with the many queer little witches and goblins that Brom carved from fallen branches he found throughout the preserve. A few sets of hand-carved wooden shoes that looked to be at least a century or two old decorated little nooks and crannies in the cottage. There were even a few pieces of Delft blue pottery in the meager kitchen that Trixie knew had been in Brom's family for centuries. One of Brom's treasures was a Delft cookie jar, which always held Mrs. Vanderpoel's incredible windmill cookies.

"It's nice to have visitors," Brom said from behind the bushy gray whiskers that hid his mouth. "Would you like one of Mrs. Vanderpoel's cookies? She stopped by just yesterday with a fresh batch."

"Thanks, Brom," Brian said, "but we just finished one of Moms' great dinners complete with lemon meringue pie for dessert, so we're stuffed."

“Okay. Let me put this basket in the kitchen, and I’ll be right back out.” He looked at Trixie. “I can tell that one is dying to ask me some questions. On a new mystery, ya?”

Trixie grinned. “Guilty as charged, Brom. I should have known your eyes wouldn’t miss anything.”

After the Brom returned from the kitchen and the Bob-Whites had settled in chairs and on the floor around him in the small living area, Trixie began to speak.

“We were hoping that since you know everything about all of the old families going back to colonial times, you could tell us about a family called Depew, a spy called Edward Palmer, and a Wappinger Indian called Paul Nightwind.”

Brom’s bushy gray eyebrows rose, and he was silent for a moment. “I wondered when this was all going to come to the surface again.”

Trixie leaned forward eagerly. “So there *is* something mysterious about all of this,” she breathed triumphantly. “Something bad happened in the past, didn’t it?”

Brom nodded solemnly. “It did. And it has been unresolved for such a long time, and the Indians, with their belief in the full circle of life, do not handle unresolved situations well. I knew that it was only a matter of time before the right person came along, and the Indian spirit would reach out to seek justice.”

His clear eyes looked at Mart. “And I believe you are that person.”

Mart looked startled. “Me?”

Brom nodded. “Yes, Mart, you. You have seen something, haven’t you? In the preserve? Something that you cannot explain—something that defies logic.”

Mart slowly moved his head up and down in affirmation of Brom’s astute statement. “Yes. I think I saw a ghost. And after doing some research, I...we think that it might be the ghost of the Wappinger Indian known as Paul Nightwind.”

Brom nodded again. “Yes, I believe that you are right. And I believe that you were chosen to receive the message.”

Mart said, “That’s what Trixie thought. But why *me*? It wasn’t just because I happened to be in the preserve at night?”

“You and Paul Nightwind have something in common. You were both born under what the Indians called the Full Strawberry Moon. Have you heard of the names of the moon?” Brom asked.

Jim spoke up. “I have. The Indians who resided in the northern and eastern United States gave a meaningful name to each full moon, describing the natural occurrences of the month in question.”

“That’s where we get terms like Hunter’s Moon and Harvest Moon,” Dan added. “I’ve never heard of a Strawberry Moon, though.”

“The Strawberry Moon was a common term throughout the Algonquian tribes, which included the Wappingers, from New England all the way over to the Great Lakes. Wild strawberries had

a short harvesting season, primarily in the month of June, and so the June moon was named for the strawberry. As you know, the moon cycle is less than a calendar month, so the dates of the full moon change. I distinctly remember that Mart was born under a Full Strawberry Moon, and I remember that because I thought of the legend of Paul Nightwind when I heard of his birth. It is said that Paul Nightwind was born under a Full Strawberry Moon, but at the end of June. We are now approaching another Full Strawberry Moon, which also is occurring at the end of the month.”

“Wow,” Trixie said, sucking in her breath. “It’s like when Sarah Sligo got really active as her date of birth approached.”

“I believe so,” Brom agreed. “And, as a soul also born under a Full Strawberry Moon, Mart is likely to be considered a kindred spirit by Paul Nightwind.”

Di and Honey shivered, not out of any particular fear, but just because of the awesome power of the story.

A thought suddenly struck Jim. “Tomorrow night is the full moon. That makes it an anniversary of sorts, even if it’s not the exact date of his birth.”

“And we all know how much spirits love the full moon,” Trixie said.

“And Paul Nightwind wants Mart to bring him justice?” Brian asked Brom.

“I think so,” the old gentleman replied.

“How?” Mart asked.

“Let me tell you the story as it has been handed down in my family. As you know, my family has been living here since the seventeenth century, and the stories from each generation have been told to the next. Johannes Vanderheidenbeck was my many-greats-grandfather, and he lived during the time of the Revolution. He knew the Depews and Edward Palmer, as they were his neighbors. Although he was too old to fight, he was a staunch supporter of the patriots who wanted to self-rule. According to the stories passed down from Johannes, there was more than enough evidence to convict Edward Palmer of spying, as well as the Depews. But, in the case of the Depews, they died in a mysterious fire before they could be tried and hanged.

“Several strange things that Edward Palmer said at the end of his life made my grandfather believe, without a shadow of a doubt, that the Wappingers were correct, and Palmer and the Depews had murdered Paul Nightwind. The story that circulated at the time was that they had buried the Indian’s body somewhere on the Depew property, but nobody knew where.”

“We read in Palmer’s diary, which is in the Sleepyside Historical Society’s archive room, that Palmer buried his gold in a cave,” Mart explained to Brom. “And Trixie found a map in the old diary that has an X right near an old cave entrance that appears to be on the old Depew property somewhere. Do you think he buried the body with the gold?”

“That would make sense. It was winter, a particularly harsh one at that, when all of this occurred, and it would have been difficult to bury a body under the deep snow in the hard ground. Burying it in a cave and then covering the entrance to the cave would make more sense,” Brom explained.

“So, we need to find the body?” Honey asked with a gulp. “Is that what will bring justice?”

Brom nodded. "I believe so. The Algonquian tribes, including the Wappinger, believed life and death were part of a continuum, and burial included a ritual ceremony that would guide the spirit toward rebirth."

"And Paul Nightwind never got that ceremony," Di said, her lovely features displaying sympathy.

"How sad," Honey said, also sympathizing with the Indian brave of long ago. "His spirit never got to be re-born."

"Which is why it's still haunting that part of the preserve," Trixie said. "Maybe that's where his body is. Mart said that the spot where he saw the ghost was probably Depew land. Maybe all of those thick brambles hide a cave entrance. Maybe Paul Nightwind was trying to tell Mart something about the location."

"We have to try to find his remains for proper burial," Jim agreed. "We can contact a local tribe to perform the rebirth ritual. One of the books Di said she found talked of an Indian burial ground near here. Do you know where it is, Brom?"

"I do know the approximate location. It is on your father's land, in the preserve. Paul Nightwind's family and ancestors are buried there. Providing him a proper burial in his ancestral burial ground would go a long way to calming his spirit, I think. But the Wappinger tribe has long since died out, and there are no local tribes of any type in this area anymore. There are Iroquois tribal reservations in Upstate New York, but the Iroquois and the Algonquian tribes were enemies at the time of Paul Nightwind, so I do not think that having an Iroquois shaman perform the ritual would bring the right kind of peace. There is a tribe with a reservation on Long Island, and they are most likely distantly related to the Wappingers," Brom explained.

"There's also the National Museum of the American Indian in New York City," Di offered. "Last year, during my internship at the Met, we visited there to see an exhibition on indigenous art. It was fascinating, and the people were very friendly and knowledgeable. Perhaps we could contact them."

"Good idea, Di," Brian said. "But first, we need to see if we can even find Paul Nightwind's remains. Anything could have happened to them during the last couple of centuries."

"Well, let's get on it then," Trixie exclaimed, scrambling to her feet. "We've probably worn poor old Brom out with all of our questions, and it is getting late." She turned to her host. "Thank you so much, Brom, for allowing all of us to come barging in on you and answering all of our questions."

"You're welcome, Trixie." His eyes crinkled as he smiled. "You all keep me young and on my toes."

The rest of the Bob-Whites echoed Trixie's thanks, and they soon headed out into the dusky evening. Between making a second stop at the historical society, the stops at all of the Bob-Whites' houses, dinner, and the length of time they had spent at Brom's discussing history, the visit was concluding much later than any of them had anticipated, and darkness was descending upon the preserve.

"You said that we'd be back at Crabapple Farm while it was still light," Di said accusingly, looking up apprehensively at the darkening sky.

"We did get a later start than I thought we would," Trixie admitted. "But we'll be fine. It's not dark yet. The dusk will hang around for a while, and the moon is very bright." She looked up at the moon rising on the horizon. "Hi, Strawberry Moon."

"Between your love of greeting Hoppy and your love of strawberry pop, why am I not surprised that you're greeting the moon?" Mart teased his sister.

Jim reached out and tugged on his favorite curl. "I think it's kind of cute myself."

Trixie smiled gratefully at him, but before she could say anything, Di was urging everyone not to dawdle any longer.

The seven friends made their way hurriedly through the preserve, and Mart, who was trailing behind the others, realized that they were going to have to pass very close by the location where he had seen the apparition the night before. He suddenly had a feeling that they were going to encounter the spirit again, but instead of being afraid of the notion, he felt a sort of harmony and serenity settle upon him.

A few moments later, they were in the small clearing where he had first seen the apparition. He sensed a motion in the trees and stopped, listening intently, his eyes peering into the woods, which were darkening in the gloaming. The Bob-Whites continued to walk and chatter for a few moments, before Jim, in the lead, stopped as well.

"What is it, Jim?" Mart heard Trixie ask. "Did you see something? Hear something?"

"No, I just...sense something," was Jim's response.

At that moment, Mart saw it. An iridescent glow floated through the trees and then entered the clearing. A collective gasp arose from the rest of the Bob-Whites, as they, too, saw the skeletal figure emerge from the forest. Its fingers still grasped a stick in its claw-like fingers, but Mart didn't see the gesture as menacing like he had the night before. The ghost of Paul Nightwind floated before them and slowly pointed the stick toward a spot in the brambles before disappearing.

Mart stared for a long time at the point where Paul Nightwind's ghost had been. The experience was so completely different than it had been the first time he'd seen it. He felt an overwhelming drive to help—to resolve the long-suffering Indian's quest.

The beautiful reds and golds of the fading sun illuminated the back of the rocky crag that rose from behind the brambles that littered that side of the clearing. He knew, deep within, that he needed to get to the other side as quickly as possible.

He had already stepped forward, barely noticing the others around him, when the bite of Diana's fingers digging into his arm brought Mart firmly back into his surroundings. The strange, but not unwelcome, kinship with the long-dead Indian spy still lingered, still urging him onward. But Diana had a more earthly pull on his body and his senses. Mart reached over to squeeze Diana's ice-cold hand with his own. "He isn't going to hurt you, sweetie."

Diana visibly swallowed, her violet eyes still riveted on the point where Paul Nightwind's ghost had vanished. "I keep telling myself that," she said hoarsely, "but..."

"I know what you mean," Honey whispered. "I don't care how many times I've seen ghosts. It still creeps me out every single time."

Trixie didn't comment, but Mart could tell that her skin was a little more pale than usual, and her freckles stood out in greater relief than they normally did.

"He seemed to be pointing toward a specific spot. We should check that out before we forget where it was." Brian's voice was matter-of-fact as he spoke and did more to reassure the others about what they'd seen than Mart's simple words to Diana.

And the strange sense of peace mingled with purpose vanished. Mart repressed a sigh as he avoided looking at his older brother. *And thus, it always is.* He glanced over at the others, who were already gearing up to follow Brian's instructions. Trixie grabbed Jim's hand, and Honey put her arm through Brian's as they headed toward the area where they'd last seen the ghost.

Dan grinned at Mart as he pushed past him and said in a low voice, "You've still got the girl clutching your arm, Belden. That counts for something, doesn't it?"

Mart gave Dan a startled look before he turned his gaze back to Diana. His eyes softened as he looked at his girlfriend, who still had fear etched on her features. "Do you not want to go, Di?"

At his words, she convulsively tightened her hand around his arm before she slid it down to interlace her fingers with his. "I'm...I'm fine," she said, exhaling a long breath. Diana gave him a tremulous smile. "I just needed a minute."

He tightened his hand around hers and led her into the clearing to follow the others. As he neared the area of the brambles to where he had seen Paul Nightwind pointing, he wondered to himself if the young Indian had had his own pretty girl and what else he had given up in the service of a young, struggling country.

Mart reached the others, even more determined to give Paul Nightwind this last service that he seemed to be asking for. "Find anything?" he asked in a husky voice, trying to peer through the thickly knotted branches.

"It's really hard to tell," Trixie said with a frustrated sigh. "The thicket is so dense. We'll need some sort of tools to clear out enough of the branches to see what we're dealing with."

Di looked as if she wanted to cry. "Please tell me we're not going to stay here longer," she begged. "It's going to be pitch black soon."

Trixie hesitated, glancing at the others, her reluctance to leave obvious on her freckled face.

"Di's right, Trix," Jim said gently. "It'd be easier to come back in the morning in the daylight." He put an arm around her shoulders and continued, "Plus, I think we'd have a lot of explaining to do if we walked off with pruning saws and shovels this late at night."

Trixie let out a long sigh. "I guess you're right." She looked over at Mart. "Are you okay with that?"

Mart again felt that sense of kinship, but it was an old, familiar one—when he and Trixie found themselves on the same simpatico wave length. He knew that his frustration and impatience mirrored hers.

He could see that terror still lurked in the back of Di's violet eyes, and as he glanced over the other Bob-Whites, he found that Honey didn't look as serene as she normally did, either.

Mart nodded in answer to her question. “What Jim says makes a lot of sense.” He forced himself to continue lightly, “And besides...I think Moms has fresh lemonade chilling in the fridge—and I haven’t forgotten those apple cinnamon muffins! Those sound really good to me right now.”

“Oh, man,” Dan said reverently. “I have so missed your mom’s cooking!”

“How the two of you can even *think* about eating is beyond me,” Trixie said dryly.

“Seems to me I’ve heard that somewhere before,” Mart retorted. “Can’t you think of something *new* to say?”

“You so continually surprise us with your awesome digestive capabilities that our normal capacity for diversified speech is limited,” Brian said, giving his sister a sly wink. “They ought to have you two examined for making medical history for actually walking around on hollow legs.”

“Hey! Don’t lump me into this discussion! I’m just making up for lost time. I haven’t had Mrs. B’s cooking in weeks!” Dan protested as the Bob-Whites headed back into the forested area of the preserve. “But as for eating, I can’t begin to compete with Mart on that front.”

The joking continued, with the boys making a concerted effort to keep Honey and Diana’s minds on their teasing as opposed to the darkening shadows that lingered in the woods as the light from the sun disappeared over the horizon.

Mart’s mind, however, kept stealing back to the clearing in the woods. The urgency with which his quest was calling him took his breath away. He knew he *needed* to help Paul Nightwind—and soon.

They reached the path that wound down from the preserve toward Crabapple Farm, and the death grip Diana’s hand had on his own lessened a little. Mart felt guilt shoot through him.

Diana had never enjoyed some of their more scary adventures—whether paranormal or not—and he surmised that the peace he’d found about the murdered Indian had not extended to his girlfriend.

He turned to look down at her as her hand unlaced from his. Diana circled her arm around his waist and leaned into him. “Thanks for that,” she whispered. “I know that was hard for you to leave so quickly.” Di gave him a rueful smile. “I promise I won’t be such a scaredy cat tomorrow.”

His face softened as he looked at her and brushed a strand of ebony hair out of her face. Mart leaned down and kissed her lightly on the lips. “For you, I can wait,” he said gently.

She smiled at him and squeezed him tightly as they followed the others through the canopy of crabapple trees toward the house.

“And besides,” he said with a grin, “I wasn’t kidding about those apple cinnamon muffins.”

Diana laughed, her lingering fear totally gone, and Mart joined her, a joyful warmth stealing around his heart.

The next day, the Bob-Whites rose early, eager to start on their quest to find the burial place of the gold and, they hoped, the burial place of Paul Nightwind.

After a hearty breakfast, the Bob-Whites gathered together to discuss what they were going to do.

"We've got a pruning saw and a couple of shovels in the garage," Brian said.

"I know we've got at least two saws and maybe some shovels up at the Manor House," Jim offered. "I can run up and get those."

"I'll go with you," Dan proposed, "and Brian and Mart can bring the tools from here. We can meet them down at the site."

"What about us?" Trixie demanded. "You can't seriously think you're going to leave us out of this!"

Di glanced at Mart before she said, "Someone needs to call some of the places to ask about the Indian burial customs and how we'd go about getting someone out to perform the burial rites, right?"

Honey nodded. "Maybe you can call your friend at the Met, Di, and I'll call the reservation in Long Island." She looked around at the others. "We can ask them some questions about general questions about burial customs, so we can find the right person to talk to later, and then we'll walk over and meet you, okay?"

The others agreed, but Trixie was still scowling. "What can I do?"

"You can carry a shovel, little sis," Brian said, patting her on the head. "It'll save Mart and I from dirtying our hands too much."

Trixie rolled her eyes, but did as Brian suggested. The other girls went to go make their inquiries, and the remaining Bob-Whites split up, with Jim and Dan hurrying up the path to the Manor House and Brian, Mart and Trixie heading for the garage.

After they'd reached the garage, Brian pulled the pruning saw out of its place on the wall, and Mart grabbed the two shovels, handing one to Trixie.

"I think Di's really creeped out by all of this," Brian said as the three siblings walked toward the door. He glanced at his brother and sister as they made their way across the yard toward the preserve. "I hope that the fact this treasure hunt will be in the daylight will help."

"I have to admit I'm a little creeped out myself," Trixie said with a shiver. "We're digging up what probably is somebody's *bones*."

"He wants us to do it," Mart said a little defensively. "How would you feel if you were murdered and just buried in some shallow grave away from all your friends and family?"

"Take it easy, Mart," Brian said lightly. "Trixie and I are helping, aren't we?"

Mart blew out a long breath as they hiked through the pines. "I'm sorry. I just...well, I feel this connection with the guy...and I want to make it right for him." He ran a hand down the back of

his neck, an uncomfortable look on his face. "But I hate making Di—or any of you—feel creeped out by all of this."

"She'll be fine," Trixie said. "I think the daylight will help." She spread her arm expressively. "It's a gorgeous summer day. Perfect weather, beautiful sunshine." She smiled up at Mart. "A great day to right a wrong, I say."

"I agree," Brian said firmly.

A small smile curved Mart's lips. "Thanks."

The siblings reached the clearing and walked across to where they'd seen the ghostly apparition the night before. Trixie immediately lay her shovel down on the ground, heading toward the twisted bramble in front of them. "Would you say it's about here, Mart?" she asked, even as she crouched down, peering through the branches.

"Yeah, about there," he agreed, joining her a few moments later. "Do you see anything?"

"It's still really hard to tell," she said with a sigh. Trixie glanced over her shoulder at Brian. "Why don't you cut some of this away and we'll see what we've got?"

Brian quickly went to work on the front branches and had cleared through quite a few of them by the time Dan and Jim joined them, each carrying a pruning saw and a shovel.

The three young men rapidly made a path through the twists and turns of the gnarled branches. The ground rose quickly from the small clearing, running up against some of the rock and dirt that reminded Mart yet again that they lived in the Catskill Mountain range.

"Be careful, Trix," Jim warned. "His 'cave' could be just about any opening in the rock. I don't want you falling into it by accident."

"Why would I be the one to fall in?" Trixie said indignantly, looking up at Jim with her hands on her hips. "Why not any of you?"

"Because you always dash in where fools fear to tread," Mart quipped.

Trixie stuck her tongue out at Mart, but did fall behind Jim, Brian and Dan as they carefully cut through more bramble.

Finally, Dan swiped his forehead with the back of his arm, looking at the wall of solid rock in front of him. "Well, we've reached a dead end." He glanced at Mart. "Are you sure this is the place?"

Mart hesitated. He wasn't sure—it had been dark, and he'd been half worried about Diana. "I..."

Trixie interrupted him with a small cry of excitement. She had been carefully inching along the rock, looking for anything that would appear to be a "cave". Several feet from where the young men were standing was a large opening in the rock...not more than three feet high. Green moss grew around its edges. She crouched down and then glanced up at the others. "What do you think?" she asked.

Brian cut away some of the growth around the area, making space so the others could peer into the dark hole in the rock formation. Dan and Jim both peered into the opening before turning back to look at Mart.

“What?” Mart asked.

“What do you think?” Trixie asked again impatiently.

“I can’t see anything. It’s a dark hole,” Mart replied, his own voice mirroring her exasperation.

“I’ll go back to the house and get a flashlight.” Jim set down his pruning saw before turning to go back down the path they’d cleared. A few moments later, he returned with a flashlight and the remaining two Bob-Whites.

“Look what I found,” he said with a teasing smile as he handed Mart the flashlight.

“We thought you might need one,” Honey said, her hazel eyes twinkling.

“What did you find?” Di asked.

“Well, right now,” Trixie said, “it’s just a hole in the wall.” She grinned. “We’re hoping it’s the cave we’re looking for.”

Mart crouched down close to the opening in the rock, switching on the flashlight as he did so. It could hardly be called a full-blown “cave”—it was more of a large crevice carved into the rock. But as Mart shone the flashlight around inside, he saw that it extended for more than a few yards inside the rock.

He then turned the flashlight to look at the ground of the cave. There had obviously been animals using the cave over the years, as the floor was littered with small bones amongst the dried leaves and other debris.

The floor was a hard, compacted dirt that didn’t reveal any secrets. Mart hesitated a moment before crawling inside the confines of the crevice. Small, enclosed spaces still sent shivers down his spine after his experience of being buried alive in the avalanche in Vermont.

But he knew he had to be the one to look—to determine whether this was Paul Nightwind’s final resting place—so he took a deep breath and began to edge forward.

“Be careful, Mart,” Jim called out from behind him. “Don’t go past where we can see you. Even this kind of cave can have a cave-in, you know.”

“I’ll be careful,” he promised.

Mart crawled on his hands and knees, wondering whether this was truly the cave of which Palmer spoke. True, the crevice was wide and tall enough for a grown man to inch through and perhaps even to bury a small cache of gold coins. But to bury a dead man?

He tried to picture digging a grave in the small tunnel and could not.

Mart had crawled about 25 feet, shining the flashlight in front of him when he felt dripping water on his face. With a frown, he shone the flashlight up and noticed that the tunnel opened up into a large cavern, easily 30 feet by 30 feet. And the height of the cavern had to be 20 feet above him. The dripping water he felt was from a small stalactite extending from the cave’s ceiling.

“Holy cow,” he breathed.

“Mart?” Trixie’s voice echoed eerily behind him. “Where are you? Are you okay?”

Mart didn’t answer her for a moment, too enraptured in the still beauty of the cave he’d found. And, suddenly, that same restless urgency built up inside him once again. This was the place. It *had* to be.

“Mart!” Brian’s voice now thundered through the tunnel. “Answer us!”

With a reluctant regret, Mart turned around and crawled back down the tunnel toward where his anxious friends were waiting for him. He got to his feet, wiping off his dirty knees. Before he could say a word, Trixie and Brian were in his face, scowling at him.

“Why didn’t you answer us?” Trixie demanded.

“Don’t *do* that to us! What the hell were you thinking? Have you forgotten what happened to Trixie in Missouri?” Brian asked angrily.

Di’s arm stole around his waist, her hand gripping his side tightly. Almost absentmindedly, he put his arm around her shoulders and squeezed. “I’m fine,” he said.

Dan’s dark eyes searched Mart’s face for a moment, satisfying himself that his friend was okay, before he asked, “So...what did you find?” A grin curved his lips. “I mean—if you’re going to terrify us all with your disappearing act, you better have found something interesting.”

The excitement Mart had felt when he’d entered the cavern came flooding back. “It’s the place. I know it is.” He described how the tunnel opened up into a large, spacious cavern at its end. “There’s plenty of room in there to hide a body, let alone a small cache of gold.”

“Wow,” Honey said, her hazel eyes wide. She looked at the small crevice in amazement. “You’d never know that cave was even there!”

“If it’s as big as you say it is, Mart, it sounds like we’d need some lanterns,” Jim said thoughtfully, “to see what we’re doing.”

“Is the place big enough for all of us?” Honey asked doubtfully. “And all these tools?”

“Plenty big,” Mart assured her.

“But we’ll go in a few of us a time,” Brian said firmly. “So if there are any problems, there’ll be someone on the outside to run for help.”

Diana spoke up quietly at that point. “We probably should try to disturb his body as little as possible, should we find it. The people at the reservation mentioned that they had special rituals they performed for their dead. The closer we leave things to how we found them, the better.”

“Hopefully, we can find him,” Mart said, “and some of the members of their tribe will come and do their ceremony.”

“I hope so, too,” Trixie said, her face lively with interest.

"Well, I hope so, three," Diana said, "Because Paul Nightwind won't get any rest if they don't. The man I talked to said that only members of the tribe are allowed to perform or attend those ceremonies."

Trixie's face fell at Diana's words. "I was hoping we'd get to see it."

Jim squeezed her hand. "We're giving him rest, Trix. That'll have to be enough."

Dan tousled her curls as he said lightly, "We don't want to have any problems with the Indian spirits around here. They obviously mean business. People who don't take them seriously do so at their own peril."

"You're right," Trixie said with a sigh. "I know you're right." A little frown etched between her brows as she said, "I'm still disappointed, though. I think it'd be interesting to see."

"I do, too," Mart said simply.

Trixie smiled at her brother, but did not comment further.

"In the meantime," Jim said, "I'll go back and get some lanterns from the house so we can see what we're doing in there." He raised an eyebrow at Trixie. "Want to join me, Trix?"

"Sure," she agreed. Jim grabbed Trixie's hand, and the two of them headed back out through the cleared path toward the open preserve beyond.

Dan looked at the others before he said, "Well, I'd like to see this cave." He stuck out his hand. "Can I borrow the flashlight, please?"

One by one, the Bob-Whites took turns visiting the cave as they waited for Jim and Trixie to return with the lamps. After Trixie and Jim returned, they carefully filed into the cave, with Di and Honey choosing to remain outside to keep watch and wait.

Jim set up the lamps and lighted the wicks with matches he'd taken along with the lamps. The oil lamps lent an eerie glow to the cavern. The stalactites and stalagmites covered most of the room, leaving a long strip down the center of the cavern as the only place likely where a dead body could be buried.

It took only a few careful digs of the shovel to locate bones that quickly were identified as probably being human. Mart carefully marked the place with the point of his shovel and returned the upturned dirt back over the uncovered bones.

"It's just so sad," Trixie whispered. "He never got to *live*."

"He got to die for a cause he believed in," Mart said firmly. "What more could any of us ask for?"

"What, indeed?" Jim murmured.

Dan looked around the cave with a slight frown. "We haven't found the money," he said.

"I told you guys before," Brian said in amusement. "Someone else found it long ago."

“Oh, yeah?” Trixie demanded. “In this cave that was tucked back here that no one knew about? That still has a dead body in it? Why didn’t they find *him*?” She swept her arm toward the center of the cave.

Brian had no answer for that. He merely shrugged.

“We’ve got enough shovels,” Dan said. He pointed with one of them to several places in the cave. “I rather doubt the guy would have buried his money with the body. He wouldn’t want to have to have a reminder of what he did right in the middle of his money when he wanted to retrieve it, would he?”

“Or, he buried it with the body in the hopes that anyone who stumbled across the cave would find the body first and leave the money alone,” Jim said quietly.

“I’m sure he wouldn’t want anyone to find the body *or* the money,” Trixie said firmly. She gestured to various parts of the cave and said, “Let’s look. It can’t hurt, anyway.”

The Bob-Whites spent a long period of time digging in various spots in the cave, but came up empty after their search. Mart didn’t even have the heart to tease Trixie as he wiped his brow wearily. As he glanced at the other Bob-Whites, he could tell that they felt the same way.

“C’mon, Trix,” Jim said finally. “It’s late. We’re all hungry. The treasure is obviously long gone. There’s no sense in continuing to search for something that isn’t here.”

A stubborn look crossed Trixie’s face, but after meeting Jim’s steady gaze, she acquiesced, stalking over to the open crevice to climb back out to the preserve.

Jim and Brian silently picked up the shovels and soon followed Trixie out of the cave. Dan glanced at Mart before picking up one of the lanterns to turn out its light. “It’d have been nice to find that money, wouldn’t it?”

“Yeah,” Mart said as he picked up the other lamp, following Dan back to the crevice. “It sure would have.” He flicked on the flashlight before he turned off his lantern. He hesitated, flashing the flashlight around the inside of the cave one last time before turning with a sigh to follow the tunnel back out into the daylight again.

After they’d confirmed Paul Nightwind’s whereabouts, Di made another call to the Long Island tribe that was distantly related to the tribe Paul Nightwind had been a part of. Some of their representatives agreed to make the trip to Sleepyside to perform the needed burial ritual rites.

The next day, Di, Dan, Jim and Honey were all on hand to meet them when they arrived at Crabapple Farm. After some small talk about Indian customs, the shaman and his two assistants walked with Mart to where they’d found the body.

After he’d reassured himself that they had light for the cave and everything they needed, he left them to perform their burial rituals.

Several hours later, the men returned, looking tired and somber. They thanked the Bob-Whites and left to return to the city.

Mart tried to focus on the chatter of his friends as they hung out that evening in the Belden living room, but he was very firmly distracted by wondering whether the rituals were sufficient to give Paul Nightwind the rest he needed.

The four non-Belden Bob-Whites finally took their leave in the Bob-White station wagon. Mart stood in the doorway, watching them go for a few moments before he turned to go do what he knew in his heart he'd needed to do all day long.

He walked back toward the kitchen and headed out the back door to the terrace, where he found his brother and sister waiting for him, lanterns in hand.

Mart hesitated, looking from Brian to Trixie and back again. "What's going on?"

"You're going back there again," Brian said matter-of-factly.

"And we're going with you," Trixie said in an equally rational voice.

Mart's face softened, and he picked up one of the lanterns. "You guys know me too well."

Brian shrugged as he picked up the other lantern. "I have to admit I'm a bit curious myself about whether or not it worked."

"My curiosity, I'm sure, goes without saying," Trixie said with a grin.

Mart laughed at that and gave Trixie a squeeze before they all started down the path toward the preserve. "We may be going on a wild goose chase, you know," he said as he walked.

"We've been on those before," Brian said with a shrug. "We'll be on them again. No big deal."

Mart felt a strong warmth fill him. Despite his reputation for facility with language, he found that in this situation, words failed him.

Instead, he contented himself with hiking through the preserve, the comforting presence of his siblings providing him an added measure of support.

They reached the clearing, each of them looking expectantly toward the path that they had cleared earlier that day.

But instead of a path, they found, again, a twisted mass of brambles blocking the entrance to the cave.

All three of them stared, dumbfounded, at the sight in front of them.

"I don't believe this!" Trixie breathed.

"Wow. I just...wow," Brian said, shaking his head.

Mart's disappointment was breathtaking in its intensity. Somehow, he'd expected to be able to go into the cave and to say his own goodbyes to the young Indian who truly had defined the word "brave".

But before he could even begin to verbalize his feelings, a tree branch shifted and the silvery light of the Full Strawberry Moon shined down on the clearing. In the stream of light stood a young, handsome Indian, his long dark hair plaited, dressed in full leather warrior gear. The apparition looked nothing like the skeletal figure they had seen previously.

Mart swallowed convulsively under the penetrating gaze of the young man. The Indian never once broke eye contact with Mart, even as he knelt near the ground, placing something there before he rose to his feet again. He did not smile, but placed his hand over his heart and inclined his head.

A sudden breeze blew through the clearing, rustling the branches and again blocking the light of the moon. And with it, the Indian brave disappeared.

Trixie looked back at her brothers, her eyes wide. Brian continued to shake his head in incredulous disbelief.

But Mart suddenly felt propelled into motion. All he could focus on was the movements of Paul Nightwind before he had vanished from their sight. He hurried over to where he'd last seen the apparition and knelt down to the ground.

There, on the ground, was a rusted, tarnished metal box.

Holding his breath, Mart carefully opened it.

Inside were stacks of gold coins. British gold coins imprinted with the image of George III.

"Oh, my god," he whispered.

"What?" demanded Trixie. Her footsteps were loud in the quiet of the clearing. "What is it? What are you looking at?"

Mart held up the box of coins to show Trixie, who let out a loud squeal. "Palmer's gold!"

She whirled around to look at Brian, who had, by that time, joined them. "I told you it was still there. I *told* you!"

Brian just stared at the gold, speechless.

But Mart let out a hoarse laugh. "But someone *did* find the gold, Trix." He picked up a coin and gestured toward the trickles of silvery light that broke through the tree canopy. "Paul Nightwind found it."

Trixie laughed and hugged him. "And gave it to *you*."

"Entrusted it to me," he corrected her. "So it would get to his family." He glanced at his brother and sister. "I'm not going to keep this."

"Of course not," Brian replied.

"Maybe the Long Island tribe can use it," Trixie said with a smile. "I think Paul would like that."

A sense of deep calm came over him as Mart looked down again on the old pieces of gold. A soft breeze brushed across the back of his neck, sending peace through his heart. *Using Palmer's money as payment to help put an old wrong right.* He gently closed the box and said, "Yes, I think he definitely would."

THE END

Author Notes - Susan

Wow! I can't believe we're on year SIX of this universe already. Didn't we just write that 92 Second Street last week?

Again, it is an absolute pleasure to write these stories with Dana. She's got so many great ideas and has a vision of the characters that's so simpatico with mine. I 'dore writing these stories with her! And, I must add, that she works great under pressure!!! (Especially with dealing with a brain-dead partner for the majority of our tag-team writing this time!)

We've got a whole list of websites we used to research this story—from ones about New York Indian tribes to coins to geological stuff...all sorts of interesting things. If you'd like to do some more research, click on some of those!

Any discrepancies between what the real Wappinger Indians did is all our fault (well, and the evil KK's fault). Any resemblance to anyone living or dead is purely coincidental.

The events about the Indian burial ground and Edward Palmer and the Depews are from that imaginary book #38 that Dana and I keep hearing about but refuse to believe exists.

This is how *we* think *Indian Burial Ground* turned out. ;)

See you next year!!

Author Notes – Dana

I never once worked with a brain-dead partner, so I have no idea what Susan is talking about!

It really does seem like we worked on “92 Second Street” just the other day. Every time I would go back to an earlier story for reference, I was like, “Holy crap! We’ve written a lot of these stories! We’ve been doing this for *that long?* Impossible!” That first year, Susan and I started our joint story in July. This year, we started on October 16. *bag* We weren’t sure we’d get it done in time, but we’ve both been known to have Trixie’s tenacity at times.

One sad thing about starting so late is that we didn’t have our annual plotting IM session this year. :(I’ve said before that that IM session is one of the highlights of my year, and it truly is. Susan and I have so much fun plotting and planning together over IM that I really do look forward to it, and I was sad that we didn’t have it this year. Of course, that meant I was safe from standing her up. (Have I mentioned how sorry I am about that, Susan? Dearest, darlingest Susan. *g*)

Next year, we WILL have a plotting session. I decree it!

I have to echo Susan about the joy of working with someone so simpatico (*cough*Mart word*cough*). When you’re on the same page with your visions of the characters, it’s so easy to concentrate on the plot and let the story flow.

As Susan said, we did a lot of research for this story. Below are some of the websites that we found to be good sources of information. We found a lot of crappy ones, too, but those aren’t listed. Heh. But research isn’t the same as living in an era or being a member of a tribe. We did

our best to stay true to these things based on our research, but any mistakes are ours. And looking up the words for “night” and “wind” in an Algonquian dictionary doesn’t necessarily mean it really translates “wind of the night”—or that the Wappingers spoke that exact dialect. Or that they’d name a kid that. Willfully suspend, please!

As Susan also said, the Indian burial ground, the ghost, Edward Palmer, and the Depews (and Brian and Mart spending a summer working at the historical society) are from some book that has Trixie’s name on it but isn’t *really* a Trixie book. (*cough*No Jim!*cough*) This is our vision of how those elements *could* have been used to concoct a story. Not that we think this is how it *should* have been written or anything. We borrowed verbatim the description of the ghost and of the treasure map Trixie found; we didn’t add those words to either of our word counts, and no we didn’t have permission to quote them, either.

Happy Halloween!

Some websites we used (credit where credit is due, right Aleta?):

<http://www.accessgenealogy.com/native/tribes/delaware/wappingerhist.htm>
<http://www.accessgenealogy.com/native/tribes/delaware/wappingerdivisions.htm>
<http://www.native-languages.org/york.htm>
<http://www.dickshovel.com/wap.html>
http://www.bigorrin.org/wappinger_kids.htm
<http://www.coins.nd.edu/ColCurrency/CurrencyText/NY.html>
<http://www.spirittalknews.com/AlgonquianSpirituality.htm>
<http://www.ci.concord.ca.us/living/recycle/littertodecay.pdf>
<http://archnet.asu.edu/Topical/CRM/usdocs/arpa79.html>
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Treasure_trove#United_States_law
http://footguards.tripod.com/08HISTORY/08_costofliving.htm
<http://24carat.co.uk/valueofmycoinframe.html>
<http://24carat.co.uk/britishorenglishcoinsframe.html>

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