

The Walls of Jerusalem

A Kent family adventure

Jennifer L. Armstrong

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CHAPTER ONE

I guess after all we've been through, I shouldn't be looking for more adventure.

But I have to admit, I'm a little disappointed when Dad announces that he's been asked to participate in a summer lecture series at the Royal Ontario Museum. It's been a quiet winter and I've been hoping that Dad is going to announce that we'll be off to another exciting dig-site for the summer.

But even if I'm not excited, Dad is. ROM is having a special exhibit called *The Walls of Jerusalem*. They have all sorts of old maps of Jerusalem and Dad will be starting early to examine them and prepare some talks about them. His partner for the project will be Dr. Lineman. Dr. Lineman is a Professor of Archaeology at the University of Toronto.

We haven't seen the Lineman's since our trip to Syria when we discovered the treasure of Tadmor. I'm kind of nervous about seeing Steve again. He was a real, well, nut-case, and he seemed to enjoy sharing all of his insane ideas with me. Of course, I was fourteen at the time. I'm seventeen now. If I've grown up a bit, maybe he has too.

My sister, Julia, is very enthused about seeing Steve's younger brother, Glen, again. She's had about twenty different

crushes in the meantime, but she's acting like Glen was her one true love. Julia is now a sophisticated fifteen and seems to think that it's time she meet Mr. Right. She's a little miffed that she still has to do her homeschooling with Mom while I'm left to study whatever interests me. I don't know what she's complaining about, though. Mom has her hands full with David, who is 16-months-old now, so Julia's mostly able to do what she wants to anyhow. In my opinion, she spends far too much time browsing through cookbooks and planning elaborate meals she never actually makes. Just as well. She'd be huge if she did.

Dad has put me down as his assistant. So, instead of traveling to an exotic foreign country, I'll get to go and look at maps of one in a museum. It's not that I don't like museums. It's just more fun being out finding things that go in the museums. But if we are going to stay home this summer, I want to be part of whatever's happening.

Mrs. Lineman, a practical, down-to-earth woman, gets everything going by inviting us all over to their apartment for dinner. We live in Etobicoke, a suburb of Toronto, but the Lineman's have a condominium downtown right on Lake Ontario.

We arrive in the lobby of their apartment at 6:00 p.m. and are buzzed into the building.

Mom and Mrs. Lineman greet each other with hugs. Then they talk about David. The Linemans haven't met David and Mrs. Lineman is thrilled to be able to see him.

"I miss the days when they were all babies," she says to Mom.

Mom nods understandingly.

Dad and Dr. Lineman are heading for the living room, already talking archaeology, while we ladies follow Mrs. Lineman into the kitchen.

"How *are* the boys?" Mom asks. David is struggling to get out of her arms. It's a new place and he wants to explore.

"Liam is living on campus," says Mrs. Lineman, sighing. "He could have lived here, of course. But he wanted to be closer to his classes."

Mom nods sympathetically.

“Steve is always busy. He's finished his home studies and he can't decide whether to go straight to university or to work a bit first.”

Like us, the Lineman's homeschooled their kids.

I'm wondering where Steve is. My nervousness is increasing.

“He has a job working in the produce department of our grocery store. He seems to like it. He's there every night.”

Then I guess I might not be seeing him. I relax a bit. But the bizarre thing is, I'm mildly disappointed. The guy tormented me when we were in Syria.

“Confidentially,” says Steve's mom, leaning closer to my mom. “His SAT scores weren't that good. He may not have an easy time getting into a university. It's hard on his father.”

More sympathetic nodding.

“We won't have that problem with Glen, of course. He's always locked in his room reading.” Mrs. Lineman looks around. “In fact, he's probably in there now.” She steps out into the living room to call to her husband. “Dear! Tell Glen to come out and say hello!”

That's all Julia needs to hear. She disappears out of the kitchen.

Mom is still holding a struggling David. Mrs. Lineman is at the kitchen counter cutting up cheese. I ask if I can help in any way and am assigned the job of arranging crackers on a platter. When that's done, I get to carry out the platter, along with a plate of fresh fruit.

Mom and Mrs. Lineman return to the kitchen and I'm assigned the job of watching David.

Julia is in Glen's room, with the door open. I can hear them talking and laughing.

“Our basic job will be to bring some order to the whole thing. Some of these maps have been sitting around in the storage of ROM for who knows how long . . .” Dr. Lineman is saying.

David is clawing at the cheese. I pick out a small piece for him and pull him onto my lap. The Lineman apartment is full of shelves of books and artifacts that he'd love to get at. Our

house used to be the same until it was all child-proofed.

“My understanding is that the bulk of the lot was donated recently?” says Dad, giving me a quick smile. He can see I have my hands full with David. David's an absolute doll. He has curly brown hair and a big grin, but he keeps us all busy. Mom brought a diaper bag full of his favourite toys but there's no way he's going to settle down and play with plastic blocks when there's all this new stuff to explore.

Dr. Lineman nods. There are small bottles of Perrier on the coffee table and he reaches for and opens a lime-flavoured one.

“A Jewish businessman. The collection belonged to his father who recently passed away. His father was a rabbi and the collection was just sitting in their basement. He doesn't want to see the collection ruined so he passed it onto the museum. It's a marvellous donation.”

“I understand there's a map that goes back to the Byzantine days? I find that extremely hard to believe . . .”

Dr. Lineman nods.

“It's certainly old and fragile, and yes, the donor thinks it might be Byzantine. But that's really for us to determine. I imagine it's a copy. Nothing is labelled, but it's obvious the collection is valuable. I mean, without a doubt, some of the maps go back to the Ottomans. One is from the British Mandate. Nothing from the State of Israel, but that's not surprising. The rabbi was ultra-Orthodox and felt that the State of Israel was an abomination.”

Dad nods but I'm confused.

“Don't all Jews support Israel?” I ask. If I'm going to be Dad's assistant, I need to know these things.

Dad shakes his head.

“Some of the ultra-Orthodox feel that only the Messiah can establish a Jewish state. My understanding is that they don't participate in the State of Israel politically.”

Dr. Lineman nods.

“There have been pious Jews living there for hundreds of years, waiting for their Messiah. They treat the State of Israel the same way they did the British and the Turks, just another foreign government.”

Mrs. Lineman and Mom come out into the living room to sit

down and David toddles across the room. He almost makes it to Mom before diverting to the full-length glass doors that lead out to the balcony. I don't blame him. The view of Lake Ontario is spectacular. It's a huge lake. You can't see the other side even 25-storays up. All sizes of boats are passing by and the water is glimmering with the setting sun.

"Oh dear," says Mom. "He's getting hand-prints all over your glass."

Mrs. Lineman laughs.

"Let 'em," she says. "Oh, he's too adorable for words! I really miss those days . . ."

David turns around and gives her a big grin. I think he knows she's a friend.

Glen and Julia seem to have picked up where they left off three years ago. Dr. Lineman and Dad are having a discussion about the walls of Jerusalem. Mrs. Lineman and Mom are talking about babies. I'm feeling really lonely.

Then Mrs. Lineman looks at me as if she's just remembered something.

"I totally forgot!" She stands up and goes over to a bookshelf. There's a white envelope on top of one of the books. "Steve said he was really sorry to miss your visit, Ginny. He left you a note."

Mom raises her eyebrows and gives me a grin.

I take the note. While Mom and Mrs. Lineman divert David's attention from a potted plant, I open it.

"Hey Partner-in-Crime!" it says. "I hear we'll be working together this summer!"

This is news to me.

"I enclose a copy of the floor plan of the Royal Ontario Museum."

I glance at the enclosure. It's actually a visitor's guide to ROM.

"Memorize it. Our very lives may depend on it."

That's typical Steve.

"I anticipate a summer of great danger. On the surface, this may seem like an ordinary assignment, but I have reason to believe that there are certain characters who do not want these maps to be seen by the public and will do *anything* to stop it

from happening. Our fathers, being the mild-mannered archaeologists that they are, will not be able to protect themselves. It's up to us. I look forward to renewing our partnership against all forces who oppose the noble world of Archaeology.

Yours in haste,
Steve.”

I sigh and put the envelope in my purse. The visitor's guide might be useful.

About a week after our dinner at the Lineman's, Dad tells me that we'll be heading into the city. It's our first trip to ROM to work on the maps. Of course, we've been to the Royal Ontario Museum many times, but now we'll be working in some of the back rooms that are off-limits to the public.

It's the beginning of May and the summer lecture series doesn't start until July, but Dad and Mr. Lineman have a lot of work to do.

They have to examine the maps and try to come up with lectures that will hold the interest of the general public. But the first thing they have to prepare for is a special presentation for some of the notables of the University of Toronto. It's not just the archaeologists who will be interested in these maps. They have relevance for the history students, the theology students and anyone who's studying the Middle East. The afternoon lecture is scheduled for the end of May, so Dad and Dr. Lineman have to have something intelligent to say by then. The upside is, they can talk all scholarly without worrying about people not understanding. But if you know anything about the academic world, there's a lot of pressure to be original and brilliant.

Dad tells me on the subway ride to the museum that he's been sending up a lot of prayers about it. Dad is known for his Christian beliefs which aren't always an asset in the world he moves in, but no one can deny that he's an amazing archaeologist.

Dr. Lineman gave us some security passes that will allow us to move freely throughout the museum for the duration of our work. Julia and Glenn were majorly disappointed that they

didn't get passes too. But today Mrs. Lineman was planning to visit our place, to cuddle and play with David. And Julia told me that Glen was coming over with her. I could have figured it out on my own. She was in our room, clearing her side of the bookshelf of all her Nancy Drew books and replacing them with books from Dad's personal collection.

I wonder if she'll be able to fool Glen. She may not have to. Julia spends most of her life in front of our mirror rearranging her hair and applying lip balm. She may like to eat chocolate chip cookies, but this morning she had on a floral summer dress with her favourite bracelets and was looking quite cute. Me, I'm wearing black jeans and a grey turtleneck. I want to look serious.

Dad and I get off the subway at Museum Station.

Then it's up onto the street.

The Royal Ontario Museum is a dignified old building, made of grey bricks. At least that's one part of it. There's a new addition that's all glass and aluminium and geometry, kind of like the pyramids if the pyramids were tossed into a washing machine with crystal fabric softener.

We go up the stone steps, through the main entrance and past the circular desk where you buy your tickets. A security guard protecting the only entrance to the exhibits glances at our passes and nods his permission for us to pass.

Dad hurries us through the galleries. There are several stories, but we're still on the main floor and heading for the back of the museum where they have a library, an archives and some small workrooms. One of the workrooms has been set aside for the maps.

Although the lighting in the museum is warm and soft, the workroom is bright. There is no wood paneling here, only work tables and storage drawers and shelves. Dr. Lineman is at one of the tables when we enter the room.

"Hi Anderson," he says to Dad. He gives me a slight nod. "I think we should start with the more recent maps."

No preliminaries. Straight into it.

"OK," says Dad, joining Dr. Lineman at the table. "The British Mandate?"

"Yes. I think we should start with the relevant information.

So much of the Middle East situation today can be traced to the Mandate. We'll start with the familiar and move back."

"For the public, yes," says Dad. "But I think for our first presentation we should go for the more esoteric first."

Dr. Lineman looks thoughtful.

"Dazzle them with what they don't know?"

"Exactly."

Dr. Lineman nods.

"I like it. OK, let's do it that way, then. Oh, Ginny," he says as an afterthought. "Steven is waiting for you in the library. We need you to do handouts. And Anderson is right, we'll go oldest to most recent for this lecture. So put the maps in that order."

I nod. I gather from this that we have all sorts of handouts to assemble. Copies of the maps, from the sounds of it.

The library is next to our workroom. The door is slightly ajar so I go right in.

"Hey!" says Steve, when he sees me. He's standing by the table with the papers. "Are you still a Jesus freak?"

I sigh.

"Great greeting," I say. "Why don't you try, hi Ginny. It's nice to see you?"

Steve grins.

"OK. Hi Ginny. It's nice to see you. You've gotten pretty."

I blush.

He's not looking so bad himself. He's eighteen now. His freckles have faded, his blond hair doesn't seem so wildly curly and he's gotten a lot taller.

"So . . ." says Steve conversationally. "Are you still a Jesus freak?"

"Yep," I say. "Are you still an atheist?"

He shakes his head.

"Actually, I went through this Muslim thing when we got back from Syria. Just to bug my parents. I even read the Qur'an."

"Great," I say, looking around the room. The walls are lined with books and any remaining wall space has posters of past exhibitions at ROM. There are a couple of lounge chairs, a desk with a computer and in addition to the large table, there is

a smaller coffee table.

“I thought you'd be impressed that I read the Qur'an.”

“Actually, I've read it too. So has Dad.”

Steve looks disappointed.

“After we came back from Baghdad,” I say. “I wanted to understand about Islam and what the difference is between Shia Muslims and Sunni Muslims. Dad told me that if I wanted to understand Islam I'd have to read the Qur'an, so I did. I was surprised at how many of the people I know from the Bible are also in Qur'an.”

“Yeah, I noticed that too.”

“I haven't read the Bhagavad Gita, though,” I say. “If you're planning to become a Hindu.”

Steve shakes his head.

“Nah. I used to read stuff like that to annoy my parents but I don't anymore. There's something I need to tell you . . .”

Now he's probably going to launch into a discussion of the suspicious person he's seen lingering around the door of the workroom and how we have to take some kind of action.

“Shut up, Steve,” I say, joining him by the table. It's the only way to handle him. “We have work to do.”

He grins.

“Yes, master. Whatever you say.”

“Your dad says we have to do it oldest to most recent.”

“Rats. I sorted it all out from youngest to oldest.”

“That's not really a problem. We just pick them up backwards.”

“You're brilliant, Ginny.”

While we're walking around the table, picking up sheets and stapling them, I ask, “So has any mysterious stranger sent you a letter saying there's treasure buried under the walls of Jerusalem.”

“No,” says Steve. “But CSIS has asked me to keep an eye on things.”

I grin and shake my head.

“Seriously, Ginny,” says Steve, putting down his stapler. “You may be onto something.”

“About treasure buried under the walls of Jerusalem?”

“Exactly.”

I nod toward the stapler.

“You’re too easily distracted,” I say. “Get back to work.”

He ignores it.

“Think about it, Ginny,” he says, staring into the distance. “Jerusalem was always falling to armies, right?”

I nod. We’re the kids of archaeologists. We know a lot of history.

“So what do people do when they know the enemy army is coming?”

“They run.”

“Exactly. But some of the smart ones think ahead. They know they can’t carry it all away with them. So what do they do with the rest of their wealth?”

I sigh.

“They bury it,” I say. “But Steve, that doesn’t really make sense. If you’re talking about gold and jewels and things like that. They’re not too heavy and people bring them along because they’ll need them . . .”

“I know, I know,” says Steve impatiently. “I’ve thought of all that. But people panic. They know they’re going to be refugees and vulnerable to anyone who wants to rob them. So they want to hide some of their things so that they’ll have something to come back to.”

I shrug and nod.

“But why not just bury it under their house?” I say.

“They could. But their house might not be there when they get back. Or someone else might be living in it. So, if they have something important to hide, what’s a good place for it?”

“A place that will still be there when they get back,” I say.

“Exactly!” says Steve. “Like the walls of the city. Even if parts of it are destroyed, the general outline will still be there. So a logical place to bury something would be under the walls.”

“At a marker point, though,” I say. “It would have to be by a significant marker, like a tree, or a . . .”

“A gate,” Steve interrupts me. “Under a gate or right by it.”

He opens up one of the handouts and starts pointing.

“Look here. They’re all still there. The Lions’ Gate, Jaffa Gate, Damascus Gate, Zion Gate. I bet there’s something

underneath one of those!”

He looks at me for my reaction.

“I dunno,” I say slowly. “It’s a possibility.”

“OK, maybe not something earth-shattering. But *something*.”

“Yeah, I guess you could be right,” I say, resuming the assembly of the handouts. “But we’re here, not in Jerusalem. So what’s the point of thinking about treasure?”

But Steve is still staring down at one of the maps and then slowly turning the page of the handout to look at another one.

I sigh.

I guess I’ll be doing these handouts myself.

Our fathers are too busy examining the original maps to care about food when we deliver the handouts to them.

“Just grab something to eat in the café,” says Dad taking out his wallet and absentmindedly handing me a ten dollar bill.

Dr. Lineman doesn’t even glance at Steve.

“The Crusader architecture is most evident in the Church of the Holy Sepulchre,” he says, walking over to one of the maps. “So I think we should start there . . .”

Steve and I leave the workroom and start making our way back through the museum.

“Wait!” I say suddenly. “I think I need my handy . . .” With a flourish, I pull the visitor’s guide out of my back pocket. “. . . floor plan. To help us navigate!”

Steve grins.

“Good thinking.”

“For Food Studio Café, use the Restaurant Elevator,” I read. I look up. “But first I want to look at the totem pole.”

I love the huge totem pole by the stairs. It spans several stories. When I was younger, Mom brought us here and we spent a day sketching it. I still have the picture on my wall. It took me seven sheets of large sketch paper.

“So,” says Steve, when we’re looking up and down at the totem pole. “Is this what you’re going to do with your life?”

I laugh.

I know it’s not a rude question. It’s just a way of asking about the future. I gather from what his mom said that his

future is a bit uncertain.

“Yeah, Steve. I'm going to look at totem poles. I'm going to look at paintings. I'm going to look at birds. I'm going to read a lot of books. I'm going to travel. I'm going to do a lot of things with my life.”

“But how are you going to make money?”

“I'm going to marry someone rich,” I say.

“No, seriously,” he says.

“Why not?” I turn away from the totem pole. It's fun to tease him. “I'm sure I can meet some nice rich antiquity-collector. Dad's always getting invited to those evenings where all the notables of Toronto come out.”

“Yeah, but they're all, like, 80-years-old.”

“Some of them have grandsons.”

Now we're heading for the elevator that will take us down to the café.

“Are you serious, Ginny?” Steve actually sounds concerned.

“No, you nutcase, I'm not,” I say, pressing the elevator button. “I don't care about rich men.”

“That's a relief.”

“Why?” I say as we step onto the elevator.

“Because I was hoping . . .” He looks embarrassed. “I was kind of hoping you'd fall for me.”

My jaw drops as the elevator door closes.

“Steve!” I turn to him. “You can't be serious!”

He nods.

“But I'm a Christian!” I say. “You know I'm not going to get together with someone who's not a Christian!”

“Yeah, yeah, I know all that.” The elevator door opens and we step out. It's a busy part of the museum because it's lunchtime. But Steve takes my hand and leads me to a counter that sells pizza. I'm in a daze. What is he doing? He orders a small pizza and lets go of my hand to put it on a tray. Without asking me, he grabs two cans of Coke and takes it to a cash register. I pull out my \$10 but Steve is already paying.

Then I follow him to a small table for two in a quiet corner.

“Steve,” I say, when I'm seated. “Thanks for the lunch and all, but I'm serious . . .”

“Listen, Ginny,” Steve says earnestly. And suddenly I'm

looking at a different Steve, one that's not so goofy. "Remember all that stuff you said to me on the plane when we first met?"

I nod. I have a vague recollection that we had a discussion about my faith and his lack of it.

"Well," Steve continues. "I blew it off at the time, but there have been a lot of nights when I was just lying in bed and all those things you said came back to me."

I am truly shocked.

"I mean, I didn't want to think about it and I really didn't want to agree with it because then I'd be agreeing with Dad and Mom and I was so mad at them when they became Christians. And I didn't want to go along with their kooky new religion that made them all shiny and happy."

I nod. I can understand what he's saying. My parents have always been Christians so I didn't have to go through what Steve did.

"But your family seemed OK and I guess I never stopped thinking about you . . ."

I think I'm turning red.

"So, I ended up reading the whole Bible and to make a long story short, I became a Christian."

"Really?" I say. "I mean, for real?"

"Yeah, Ginny, for real. And I don't blame you if you think this is just one big prank. I was stupid when we were in Syria. But it's different now."

"What do your parents think?"

"Oh, they're all happy. Glen's a Christian too. He became a Christian before I did. He's the kind of guy who just naturally loves to read commentaries. You should hear the conversations he and Dad have. It's like listening to two encyclopaedias talking to each other. Liam isn't a Christian. But they blame that on the fact that he's older. I don't. I just think it's one of those things. Liam is a lot like Dad, very analytical. So Dad's proud of him no matter what . . ."

"Ahhh!" I say.

I get it. Steve may be a Christian. But Dr. Lineman isn't proud of him the way he is of Liam and Glen who are both scholars.

“Anyway, they have a future. I'm working in a produce department.” Steve bites morosely into a slice of pizza.

“Actually, I think I know what you mean,” I say. “I really have no idea what to do either. Julia's all sure she's going to take an administrative assistant course and work for a lawyer. Either that or she's going to work for a doctor. Either way, she's always talking about making money. But I really don't know what I want to do. Sometimes I feel a bit panicky.”

This is something I haven't talked to Mom and Dad about. I guess I'm kind of embarrassed that I have no idea what to do with the rest of my life.

Steve nods.

“Me too. My job's OK, but it's not a career. But I have no clue what to do next.”

“I guess you've prayed about it?”

Steve nods.

“Of course I have. But it's like, it's totally silent up there.”

“That's exactly what's happened to me!”

It's a relief to know Steve is going through it too.

Steve nods. Up til now I haven't touched the pizza, but all of a sudden I realize how hungry I am. I reach for a slice and open my can of Coke.

Of course, there's the whole issue of what Steve said about me falling for him. I look across at him. He was never gorgeous, but now he has a very grown-up face, more narrow and more interesting to look at. His eyes are blue and intense. His blond hair is wavy. And whereas he used to look like he just rolled out of bed and went with it, now his hair looks as if it's actually had a comb go through it.

He catches me looking at him.

Quickly I take a bite of pizza, and immediately choke. After my coughing fit has passed he says, “So what about it Ginny? Partners-in-crime?”

I laugh.

“How about partners-in-solving-crime?” I say. “Or even, partners-in-finding-long-lost-treasures-underneath-the-walls-of-Jerusalem?”

He's grinning broadly.

“Lost treasures it is!”

Then he does something that nearly makes me faint.

He grabs my hand and kisses it. Right there in the café! Like some medieval knight kissing the hand of his lady before going into battle.

But somehow I'm not surprised. That's just Steve.

OK, so that's where we're at. It's a bit weird to go from being practically adversaries to now being in some kind of a partnership-thing with romantic undertones. Especially since Steve is treating me as if I'm the love of his life. He's all cheerful and attentive while we eat. He asks me all sorts of questions about what I've been doing and studying and whether I've ever thought about him in the last three years.

Is it possible that he's been thinking about me all of these years? I tell him he's not the type of person you easily forget.

I wonder how things are going for Julia and Glen? She'll never believe the day I'm having.

After lunch, our dads want us to read some books and summarize what we've read. The information we gather will be for the public lectures. I have a thick book about Jerusalem in the days of Rome. Steve has a slightly thicker book about the Turkish period.

We return to the library and settle down in the lounge chairs with our books, some notepads and a laptop to share.

Rome took control of Jerusalem before Jesus was born, but from what I read, a lot changes between the days of Jesus and the days after the Jews were defeated by Rome in 70 AD.

When they conquered Jerusalem they destroyed the entire city, rebuilt it and even renamed it Aelia Capitolina. So, if you want to know anything about Jerusalem in the days of Jesus, you have to do some digging. It's not on top anymore.

After 70 AD, about a third of the city was taken up with the Camp of the 10th Roman Legion. The Jewish temple was replaced by the Temple of Jupiter and there was a large statue of Hadrian built on the mount. A temple to Aphrodite was also built nearby. The pool of Bethesda where the angels were said to stir up the waters and where Jesus healed a man was still considered an important site. The pool survived and beside it was built a Healing Temple. And then, of course, all the usual

Roman features were present, the Praetorium, the bathhouses .

..

Steve interrupts my thoughts.

“I have to go now,” he says, standing up. “I’ve got to get to work.”

“I know,” I say, looking up. “Your mom said you worked evenings.”

“Yeah. I help stock the shelves when the store closes so I’m not out of there until about midnight.”

“You’ll be tired tomorrow,” I say.

“I don’t care.” He grins. “When my dad told me that you were going to be Dr. Kent’s assistant, I told him I’d be his.”

I laugh and stand up.

“Did he want an assistant?”

“I dunno,” says Steve. He hands me his book and his notebook. “I’ll get back to this tomorrow.”

I take the books and watch as he leaves the room. He gives me a quick wave and another grin before he’s gone.

The room was quiet when we were both reading, but now it seems even more still.

CHAPTER TWO

I dunno, Ginny,” says Mom at dinner that night. She's trying to get David to eat some mashed peas and he's not going along with it. The rest of us are eating spaghetti. “Are you sure it isn't just one of his jokes?”

Dad and I came home during rush hour traffic so we didn't talk on the crowded subway. But now at home I've told them all about Steve becoming a Christian. I don't tell them about his professions of love. At this point, I'm not sure where it's going and I'm not silly about love the way Julia is. (She's already told the family all about how smart Glen is and how amazing he is in every way and how he's going to be a university professor. She's now planning to become an administrative assistant to a university professor. The amazing thing is that Dad and Mom can listen to all of this with a straight face.)

“No, Helena,” says Dad to Mom as he reaches for more parmesan cheese. “It's not a joke. His dad was talking about it. They're all Christians now, except for Liam. They blame it on the fact that he was older when they became Christians.”

I smile to myself.

“That's wonderful news!” says Mom. “About Steve and

Glen, I mean.”

Well, that's about it for my news. But Julia senses there might be more.

“Is he cute?” she asks.

I shrug.

“He's Steve. He's just more grown up.”

“Does he have a girlfriend?”

“He didn't mention a girlfriend,” I say, truthfully.

“Is he still crazy?”

I smile.

“Yep,” I say.

Dad and I meet after dinner to discuss the kind of research I need to do for him. He says that tomorrow I should take a look at the Middle Eastern gallery and see if there's anything I can tie into the maps. It would add something to their lectures if they can refer to items already on display in the museum. Beyond that, I'll be doing a lot of reading.

Dad's goal for the lectures is to bring each era to life and an artist has been assigned to work with us. The idea will be to create identical scenes but in different eras. For example, the souk in the days of David. The souk in the days of Jesus. The marketplace during the Roman period. You get the idea.

At this point, Dad launches into a lengthy conversation about the Crusader map which is going to be particularly useful for historians because it shows all sorts of places of commerce including, Saint Elia's bakery, the various money exchangers, the Street of the Furriers . . .

He interrupts himself.

“Then there's the Mameluke period that is really an extension of the Arab period. And we'll be finishing off with the Turkish period. We'll get into the British Mandate with the general public.”

I nod. I'm fairly familiar with the chronology of Jerusalem.

“I'm telling you all this because what I'm looking for are interesting anecdotes about the various time periods. Ideally, they should have some kind of relevance to the maps. So look those over too.”

I nod. I kept one of the handouts for myself.

“Dr. Lineman and I will be handling the scholarly end of

things. But you and Steve should look for anything that would interest the general public.”

“Rumours of buried treasure under the walls?” I say.

He laughs.

“Was that one of Steve's ideas? Anyway, I'll be meeting with the artist tomorrow and he may come and talk to you too. So if that happens, just tell him whatever you can to help him with his pictures. If we manage to put together something worthwhile, ROM will publish it to accompany the exhibit.”

Our bookshelves have a lot of ROM publications so I know how important they can be to scholars.

“Anyway,” says Dad, standing up. “Get a good night's sleep. We'll be heading out early tomorrow.”

We travel into the city with the rush hour traffic which means we get to the museum before it opens. But there's a side entrance for employees and with our passes a security guard lets us in.

We walk through the quiet, dimly-lighted museum to the library and workrooms.

“I know you have the handout,” says Dad. “But you should take a look at the originals too.”

So I follow him into the workroom and Dad opens the drawers that contain the maps. The maps range in size. The most recent, the one of the British Mandate, is the largest, about the size of a door. Dad tells me it's so highly-detailed because it's thought that it was used by Jewish terrorists to plan their attacks on the British occupiers. The smallest is a sketch of Crusader Jerusalem, about the size of a piece of writing paper. The rest are about the size of a large poster. Dad is pointing out all the details on them, the various streets, when Dr. Lineman comes in.

“Good morning, Anderson. Good morning, Ginny,” he says briskly.

“So, why don't you take a stroll around the museum today,” says Dad to me. “See what relates to Jerusalem.”

I nod.

I don't want to ask if Steve is in the library so I figure I'll just check in there first before I start on my tour. But Steve is

in the hallway.

“Hey Ginny!” He gives me a broad grin. “I was looking for you.”

“Hi Steve!” I say. “Dad says I should look around the museum.”

“Then I’ll go with you.”

“Will your dad mind?”

Steve shrugs.

“Why should he? I’m an unpaid assistant.”

That’s news to me. I’m getting a small salary for helping Dad.

“Where should we start?” I say, pulling the floor plan, that is, visitor’s guide, from my pocket. My eyes are skimming the guide. “I think we can skip Bat Cave, Birds, Canadian Mining Hall of Fame . . .”

“Bat cave’s pretty cool though,” says Steve.

The museum is still closed, so apart from an occasional security guard, the rooms are empty. We’re passing by a giant Buddha at the moment. This gallery is devoted to China.

There are galleries for a lot of different continents and nations: Africa, Cyprus, Europe, Greece, Japan, Korea.

“The Middle East gallery is really the only one,” I say.

“I like the dinosaurs,” says Steve.

“So do I,” I say, returning the guide to my pocket, “but they have nothing to do with the walls of Jerusalem.”

“You’re very focused, aren’t you?”

“Yeah, I guess I am.” The Middle East gallery is on the third floor. “Do you want to take the stairs or elevator?”

“Stairs. That’s why Mom says you’re so good for me.”

“What?” I look at him.

“Because you’re so focused,” Steve explains as we start up the wide stairs that circle around the totem pole. “She says you’re just the kind of girl I need. One who will keep me focused.”

“Focused on what?” I say. We’re up to Level 2 now.

“I dunno. Whatever I’m supposed to be focused on.”

“Right now we’re supposed to be focused on the walls of Jerusalem.”

“See!” says Steve, pausing on the steps. “That’s exactly my

point! You even know what to be focused on!”

I shake my head as I smile.

We arrive at Level 3. I take one last glance at the totem pole before we head through one of the European galleries. This one is full of display cases of fine china. I'd love to stop and look, but as Steve says, I'm focused. We pass through a large room with African, Asian and American artifacts and then we're in the Middle Eastern gallery.

“Pottery,” says Steve looking at rows and rows of clay pots. “Yay. The archaeologist's first love. Pottery.”

Pottery isn't exciting but it helps the archaeologist to date what level he's at. At the dig-site, pottery is mostly what we find and every afternoon, all the workers sit around and wash the dirt from their pieces. Then the archaeologists work for the rest of the day, studying the pieces and attempting to assemble the bigger ones.

But there isn't just pottery on display.

There are statues of fertility goddesses, some examples of early writing, a stone plaque of a winged creature, bronze work, various glass pieces. I linger to look at the jewellery collection while Steve checks out some armour from the early days of the Turks.

“That could be useful,” I say when I join him. “There's a Turkish map of Jerusalem.”

“Yeah, but there wasn't any battle in Jerusalem. The Turkish Sultan drove the Mamelukes out in a battle at Aleppo.”

“I'm impressed!” I say.

Steve shrugs.

“Don't be. It was in that book I was reading yesterday.”

“Still,” I say. “I'm going to mention the armour to Dad.” I look around. “I don't see anything else that directly ties into the walls of Jerusalem.”

“Would it be slacking off to go get a coffee?” asks Steve.

“I guess not,” I say, looking at my watch. It's now 10:15. The museum has been opened for fifteen minutes and I can hear quiet voices coming from the next gallery where there's an extensive collection of artifacts from Egypt. “We're due for a break.”

We walk back to the stairs, this time passing a group of

school children as they noisily look at a glass case with a colourful papier-mâché mask from Bolivia. I remember liking that one too when I was younger.

“Ginny?” says Steve.

“Uh huh?” I say, my eyes on the stairs as we start down.

Steve grabs my hand.

I hesitate and then decide, it's fine. Despite that it's all kind of crazy and sudden, there's something about Steve that I like. He's not boring, that's for sure.

We head back to the café which is a lot less crowded at 10:15 than it is at lunch. Steve buys us two coffees and we have our pick of quiet tables.

“From what Dad tells me, this job is going to be a lot of reading,” I say. “Though I'd rather read here than just stay at home and do it.”

Steve nods as he adds another sugar packet to his coffee. This is his third. I only need one.

“There's a better chance that something will happen here,” he says.

“Are you sure you haven't received a note from someone threatening us to stay away from the treasure buried under the walls of Jerusalem?” I say, teasing him.

“No,” says Steve. “Those days are over.”

“Maybe one of the maps is really a treasure map,” I say. “You never know.”

“You don't know how badly I wish something exciting would happen,” said Steve, stirring his coffee. “If I thought for a minute there was buried treasure somewhere, I'd go looking for it. Not for the money, for the adventure.”

“I know what you mean,” I say, serious now. “When Dad said he'd be giving lectures about the walls of Jerusalem, I was kind of disappointed. We've done so much in the past few years that I've gotten used to going places and doing exciting things . . .”

Steve nods.

“You don't know how jealous I am of what you went through in Baghdad,” says Steve. “I know it was probably terrifying at the time but . . .”

“Actually, it wasn't,” I say, sipping my coffee. “It was really

weird, but I knew God was with us and when it was all over, I just had this feeling like God would always be taking care of me.”

“Except that you probably don't feel like you need much protection in a museum.”

I laugh but what he says is true.

“That's the problem,” I agree. “I feel like I'm ready to face anything but there's nothing to face.”

“Do you know how perfect we are for each other?” Steve is practically ecstatic. “I *live* for adventure.”

I look across the table at him, with his tousled hair and his quick grin. I really do like the guy.

“Yeah, I guess we do kind of work, don't we?”

“We just have to find an adventure,” says Steve.

After our coffee, we return to the library and the books our fathers want us to read.

Pretty soon, I'm lost in the world of second-century Jerusalem, when the Romans had to face the Bar Kochba revolt. Not all the Jews left Judea when the Romans conquered Jerusalem in 70 AD and in 135 AD, a man named Bar Kochba raised enough of an army to attempt to take back Jerusalem. Some people even thought he was the Messiah. It's interesting reading.

There's a knock at the door. The knock is more of a formality because the door is ajar.

I look up from my book.

Into the library walks the most gorgeous man I've ever seen.

The Walls of Jerusalem

CHAPTER THREE

Hi!" he says with a smile. "I'm Antoine, here to see Ginny. Your father said you'd be here."
I just stare.

Antoine is in his early twenties, with dark eyes and wavy black hair that goes down to his shoulders.

His smile - perfect white teeth - melts me.

"I'm doing the illustrations for *The Walls of Jerusalem* exhibit," he explains.

"Oh!" I say, understanding. "You're the artist!"

"That's right," he says, coming over and sitting down on the coffee table right in front of me. I happen to glance at Steve. If thunder and lightning can describe an expression on someone's face, that's the expression on Steve's.

Antoine has a sketch pad in his hand.

He opens it to the first page.

"This is my vision," he says leaning toward me. The smell of his cologne causes me to go momentarily weak. He shows me a sketch. I try to take it in.

It is a view of an ancient souk, but from the perspective of inside a merchant's shop. You can see the whole street as well as some of the items in the shop. On the left side is the back of

the man's head so you feel like you're looking over his right shoulder.

"I like it," I say truthfully. "It really gives me the sense of being there."

"This is just a rough outline. I'm going to need help with the specifics. I can figure out what kind of pottery to do from the exhibits in the museum, but I'm going to need some help with the other details."

"Sure," I say, having to concentrate extremely hard to sound normal. "I'll do what I can to help. What era should we do first?" Then I blush for making it sound like a partnership. But Antoine doesn't seem to notice.

"We'll start with the Roman era. I understand that the time span will be from the Romans to the Turks. Possibly the British time period as well."

"Well, I'm reading about the Roman era now," I say, trying to smile a normal smile. "For the Turks, you'll need to talk to Steve." And I give Steve a weak grin. He doesn't return it.

Antoine glances at Steve.

"The Turkish era will be the last one I do," he says, which basically dismisses any immediate need for Steve.

He leans closer to me with his sketchbook. His head actually momentarily touches mine. It makes me dizzy.

"Would they have worn the traditional Roman toga in Jerusalem?"

"Uh, yes, I imagine they would have," I manage to say. "Steve, do you know?"

I look over at him. Antoine's head is still within centimetres of mine.

"I don't know, Ginny," he says, coolly. "You're the expert."

He's just being silly. Neither of us are experts. But if he's going to be immature about this then I'll just have to use my judgement.

"Yes," I say, speaking firmly. "I believe that the Hellenized Jews wore Roman clothing."

"OK, then," says Antoine, straightening up slightly as he looks at his sketchbook. "I would like to include a few soldiers, just to set the tone."

I reach for my copy of the handout that we assembled

yesterday. Antoine is nearly sitting on it.

"I have the map for Rome here," I say. "Of course, ideally you would need to study the original one."

"Of course," says Antoine, seriously. He's watching me with his dark eyes. His eyelashes are longer than mine. I can't help but notice how accentuated his face is. His lips are curved, soft, but still masculine . . .

This is crazy! I'm not reading a romance novel! This is real life and Antoine is just an artist assigned to help us with the exhibit. He's at least four years older than me, obviously a success. I'm a nobody. Just an assistant. And I'm only an assistant because of my dad. Antoine is gorgeous. He must have a girlfriend. She's probably blonde and thin and just as attractive as him and I'd die of an inferiority complex if I ever had to meet her.

I turn to the Roman map.

"I assume you would want to use the same street for each picture," I say. "So we should try to find a street that stays the same over the years . . ."

Antoine's smile is genuine.

"You understand exactly what I need to do," he says.

And so, once again, our heads are close together as we pick out a central street that appears in all the maps.

"The names change, of course," I say.

"Of course," murmurs Antoine. His eyes momentarily meet mine.

"It would be really cool if we could work the different street names in each picture, in the language used at the time," I say.

"I like that!" says Antoine.

I think I blush again.

"A Latin script for the Roman scene," he says. "What did the Byzantines speak?"

"I think they spoke Latin too."

"Well, I can give it some kind of a Byzantine look. Arabic next. Though I imagine the Turks used slightly different names for the streets but still with Arabic lettering . . ."

He's thinking out loud.

I glance up at Steve. Believe me, it's not an easy thing to do. He's pretending to read his book about the Turks. I can tell he's

only pretending because his lips are tight and his eyes are narrow.

“OK,” says Antoine, closing his sketchbook. “That gives me something to work with.”

“Great,” I say, trying to sound casual. Under no circumstances am I going to make any references to seeing him again.

Antoine looks at his watch.

“Do you want to go for lunch?”

“Is it lunch already?” I look at my watch which confirms that more time has passed than I realized.

“Let's go to lunch, Steve!” I say.

“I'm not hungry,” says Steve.

I sigh. So this is the way it's going to be.

“I am,” I say.

“Go ahead,” is his cold reply.

I take a deep breath.

“OK,” I say to Antoine. “Let's go to lunch.”

I figure we're going to go to the café but Antoine takes me in a different direction. We stay on the main level and go to the restaurant instead. The restaurant is located in the crystal portion of the museum so it's full of light. The black tables and white chairs match the geometrical exterior of the building, but the waiters are wearing lilac shirts that somehow make everything seem more expensive.

“I think this is going to cost a lot,” I say.

“Don't worry,” says Antoine, winking. “The chef owes me a free lunch. I did a sketch of him and his family a few weeks ago. He said I could bring someone here as payment.”

Why wouldn't he bring his girlfriend? Why would he waste something like this on a lunch with me? Unless he doesn't have a girlfriend . . .

I tell myself to shut up as we are led to one of the tables by the window.

The first thing Antoine does is order us each a glass of white wine. I don't tell him I'm only eighteen and no one asks so I just go ahead. It's not as if I haven't had wine before.

I let Antoine order the food for both of us.

“So, tell me about yourself, Ginny,” says Antoine, when the

wine has arrived and the waiter has gone. "You're a history student?"

"Well . . ." I take a sip of wine. For a moment I'm tempted to be something I'm not and then the temptation passes. "No. My dad is Dr. Kent. I've been with him on so many digs that he made me an assistant here for this project."

"Aaahhh," says Antoine, nodding. "Well, that's the way to do it. In this business, you have to know someone. And it seems to me that you know one of the best."

"Thanks," I say. "On behalf of Dad, that is."

"I was told that Dr. Kent has had some interesting experiences."

"True," I nod. "We were heading for a dig in Amman last autumn and we ended up in Baghdad. But it all worked out. Dad still managed to find something."

Antoine laughs.

"Steve has been on a dig with us," I say. Might as well just get everything out in the open.

"Steve?"

"The guy I'm working with," I say. "Dr. Lineman's son."

"Oh right," says Antoine, not sounding too interested. Our salads arrive and we both concentrate on the food. I think the salad has some kind of goat cheese in it, some balsamic dressing, that sort of thing.

The next course is an exotic sandwich. I can't even identify the ingredients in it. There's meat and some kind of cheese and it comes with a small bean salad that is mixed with bok choy.

I manage to ask Antoine some questions about himself. He's gone to the Ontario College of Art. He's interested in history in a general kind of way and is happy to have the job at ROM. His mom knows the museum director, otherwise he's sure he wouldn't have gotten it.

"Otherwise I'd be designing posters for subways, or something like that," he says. "I've always loved to paint, but there's no way I can make a living that way. I have a studio full of paintings, though. You should come and see them sometime."

I kind of nod.

I really don't know what to say. I'm tempted to tell him I'd

love to see his paintings. But I don't imagine Dad would let me go visit him alone in his studio. I've momentarily forgotten all about Steve.

But I guess my half-nod gives him the impression I'm interested.

"We could take the subway together after work sometime, if you want."

The waiter returns and Antoine orders us each a coffee. This lunch break has already gone on for an hour. I'm not sure how long my breaks are supposed to be.

"Dessert?" says Antoine, smiling.

"Oh, I can't," I say. "I'm full."

"Well, let's share something," says Antoine, waving for our waiter. He orders a chocolate marmalade sherbet.

"I love the way orange and chocolate go together," he says. "I hope you don't mind."

"Not at all," I say. "It sounds good."

The waiter brings the small dish along with two spoons. We both start eating on our own sides but pretty soon end up in the middle. Antoine doesn't seem to mind.

Antoine leaves a tip, but apart from that, the meal is free. He just scribbles a note on the bill and tells the waiter to take it to the chef.

Then we're back in the main entrance where there are visitors milling around and studying their visitor's guide to see where they want to start.

"I enjoyed that very much, Ginny," says Antoine. "Thank you."

"Thank *you*," I say. "It was really nice of you to invite me."

"My pleasure," says Antoine giving me a big smile. He holds up his sketchbook. "I'll work on it today and we can talk again tomorrow."

He turns and heads for the stairs. I go back through the China gallery to the quiet hallways with the workrooms. I don't know what I'm going to say to Steve.

Turns out I don't have to say anything. He's not in the library.

There's nothing for me to do but pick up my book about Roman Jerusalem and keep on reading.

CHAPTER FOUR

Steve isn't there the next day either.

Dr. Lineman is in the workroom with Dad. He doesn't mention Steve and I'm too shy to ask. I'm totally on my own with this one. I didn't say anything to Mom. I don't know what she'd say about me drinking wine with a gorgeous artist when I'm supposed to be helping Dad.

I settle down in one of the chairs with my book. Steve's book about the Turkish period is sitting, forlorn, on the large table.

I try to read, but I keep wondering if Antoine is going to stop by. He said he would. The thought of it makes it impossible for me to think. I'm looking at the book but the words aren't going in.

If only I were Julia!

She does this all the time. Falls in love with gorgeous men, I mean. Not that I've ever considered any of the men Julia flips out for gorgeous. But the point is, she does. She falls wildly in love, talks incessantly about how wonderful the man is and then in about a week has gotten over him.

Not Glen though.

She's been pretty mature about Glen. Last night at dinner,

she was being very sensible and discussing how she admires his serious qualities, how kind and sensitive he is, and how he would make a very good father. Dad and Mom's eyebrows went up at that, but Julia told them that Glen thinks people shouldn't have children until they've been married a few years and are well on their way to owning a house.

Of course, unlike Julia and Glen, I really don't know much about Antoine. I don't even know if he's a Christian, although he's heard of Dad and Dad has never hidden his faith. But then, with all of the artifacts that Dad's been associated with, most people here at the ROM have heard of him. Otherwise, he wouldn't have been asked to do this presentation.

I glance at my watch.

An hour has gone by and all I've done is stare at pages and think about Antoine. Antoine and his dark eyes . . . Antoine and his wavy hair . . . It was about this time yesterday that he stopped by. Will he stop by the same time today?

Evidently not.

The morning passes by, extremely slowly, and Antoine does not appear in the doorway.

My contribution to *The Walls of Jerusalem* presentation today is absolutely nothing. I'm so annoyed with myself.

I take a deep breath. There's only one thing to do. I don't know why I didn't do it sooner. Pray.

Dear God, I say. I have to do this for Dad. But my brain has turned to mush. Help me to be able to think clearly. I almost sign off at that point but a thought pops into my head. It's another request. But it's a hard request and one I'd rather not make. But I have to. And dear God, if Antoine isn't the one for me, please let me know. And if, and I stress if, he's not the one for me, don't let me be in love with him. I don't want to love someone I can't have. Amen.

Well, that's it then.

"Ginny?"

I jump.

But it's just Dad at the doorway.

"We're going to lunch," he says. "Want to come?"

My first impulse is to say, no. I want to wait for Antoine. I really, really don't want to miss him and maybe if I wait a bit

longer, he'll want to have lunch again. But then I realize, I'm being silly. I'm not acting normal.

"Sure," I say getting up and putting my book on the table with Steve's.

We take the elevator down to the café. I don't have to worry about conversation with Dad and Dr. Lineman. They don't stop talking the whole time.

I pick out a sandwich and get myself a tea while Dad and Dr. Lineman are over looking at the hot selections.

"Ginny!"

I nearly drop my tea. It's Antoine. And he's with someone. She's my worst nightmare. Tall, slim, blonde, well-dressed. And she's staying very close to Antoine. They're both carrying coffees. She has a museum badge on her tailored cream suit.

"Hey Antoine!" I say hoping I sound casual. He obviously wasn't planning to take me to lunch. And he doesn't introduce me to his friend. So I just smile and rejoin Dad and Dr. Lineman.

Antoine doesn't stay long in the café. He and his friend finish their coffees and walk right by our table when they leave, but Antoine is too busy laughing at something the woman is saying to notice me.

Is this a sign from God?

After lunch, I'm back to the Bar Kochba revolt. Now my mind's a little more clear.

It's fascinating to read about the effect the Bar Kochba revolt had on the early church. Since Simon Bar Kochba was considered by many Jews to be the Messiah, the Christians didn't support the revolt. So it was at that time that Christianity became a religion distinct from Judaism. I'm so absorbed in my reading that I don't realize that Antoine is in the room.

"Ginny," he says softly as he sits down on the coffee table in front of me. He could just take the other chair but sitting on the coffee table means that our knees are practically touching.

"Antoine!"

My crazy heart is pounding.

"What are you reading about?" The question sounds seductive coming from him. I look down at my book, momentarily forgetting what I was reading. Then it hits me.

This is the answer to my prayer. Sometimes answers aren't what I want them to be, but I can't deny that God is talking to me.

"The Bar Kochba revolt," I say.

Antoine nods.

"It's interesting," I continue. "A lot of people thought Simon Bar Kochba was the Messiah."

Antoine nods again, but I almost get the sense he's not really listening. But he's looking at me and smiling and a lock of hair is falling in his face. I force myself to concentrate on what I'm saying.

"You see, Bar Kochba means 'son of a star' in Aramaic and there was this rabbi at the time who quoted a scripture that says 'There shall come a star out of Jacob.' So a lot of people took that as proof that Bar Kochba was the Messiah, not Jesus."

"Uh huh," Antoine is only half-listening to what I'm actually saying but he's definitely paying attention to me.

"So, of course, the Christians couldn't go along with it," I say.

"Of course," says Antoine automatically.

And I almost know the answer before I ask it.

"Are you a Christian, Antoine?"

"Me?" He laughs. "No. Not really. Well, sort of." He leans back a bit. "My mother is Catholic and I go to church with her on Christmas. To make her happy."

I nod.

Well, that's that then.

It doesn't matter how gorgeous he is, he's not the one for me. I've been through too many things where God has answered my prayers and saved our lives for me to suddenly turn and walk away from my faith.

It's actually a relief. Liking Antoine was a torment and now I can just enjoy how gorgeous he is without caring whether he likes me or not.

"How are the pictures going?" I ask.

Antoine doesn't seem as if he wants to get down to business this quickly, but he opens up his sketchbook and shows me what he has so far.

"It's perfect!" I say. His Roman scene is detailed and he's

used some kind of pastel to give everything a soft glow.

“You know,” I say. “I know you’re a long way from doing the Turkish scene, but Steve and I noticed they have some Turkish armour in the Middle Eastern gallery.”

“We could check it out together,” says Antoine, standing up. His raised eyebrows and smile are an invitation to join him.

I look down at the book on my lap.

It’s a tempting offer to join him. The scent of his cologne still makes me dizzy and his smile takes me to another dimension.

But Dad is paying me to read and gather information, not to make pointless excursions around the museum.

“Sorry,” I say. “I have so much to do here.”

He looks disappointed.

“Another time then,” he says, before heading out the door.

I nod but my eyes are back on my book.

But it’s not long before there’s another interruption.

It’s Dad again. There’s a puzzled grin on his face as he hands me a very large white box.

“It’s for you, Ginny,” he says. “It just got delivered to me.”

I stand and take the box.

The box says, “Ginny Kent, care of Dr. Anderson Kent, Royal Ontario Museum.” It’s clearly marked “Fragile” and “This way up,” so I carefully place it on the coffee table and start opening it.

Dad is hanging around, curious.

The first thing I pull out is a large arrangement of flowers. It comes in a basket and is a bold mix of orange and pink roses, lilies, snapdragons, carnations and all sorts of greenery. It’s absolutely beautiful.

Even Dad’s impressed.

“That must have cost a fortune,” he says.

The note on top says, “From your greatest admirer, Steve.”

Dad shakes his head but there’s a broad grin on his face as he leaves the room.

He doesn’t get to see the box of chocolates, and then at the very bottom, a piece of paper.

I open the folded paper.

“He is almost a god, a man beside you,” I read.

“Enthralled by your talk, by your laughter.

Watching makes my heart beat fast

Because, seeing little, I imagine much.

You put a fire in my cheeks.

Speech won't come. My ears ring.

Blind to all others, I sweat and I stammer.

I am a trembling thing, like grass, an inch from dying.

So poor, I've nothing to lose, I must gamble . . .”

Below that is written, “How could Sappho, six hundred years before Christ, have managed to write exactly what I want to say to you? Sorry for being an idiot. Steve.”

Dad and I share the chocolates on the subway ride home. We didn't leave the museum until 7:00 which means we're pretty hungry. But at least rush hour is over and we can both sit down. And my flowers can have their own seat.

“Do you want to talk about it?” he asks. He has that broad grin on his face again.

“I dunno,” I say, reaching for a chocolate with mocha filling. “I think everything's going fine.”

Dad nods.

“Steve's a good guy. I wouldn't have said that three years ago, but I think he's grown up a lot since then.”

I nod.

“To be quite honest,” Dad continues. “I was a little worried you might fall for that artist, Antoine.”

I nearly choke on my chocolate but then I recover.

“Why Dad?” I say.

“Oh, I don't know,” says Dad, sounding a bit embarrassed. “He just seems like the kind of man that women fall all over.”

“I didn't notice anything special about him,” I say.

Dad gives me an incredulous look and we both laugh.

I reach for one of chocolates with orange filling. It reminds me of the dessert Antoine and I shared.

“I understand he has a bit of a reputation around the museum,” says Dad.

“Really?” I say, interested.

“Bit of a lady's man. Even the older women fall for him.”

“Hmmm,” I say, thinking about this. I'm glad that I've

already made up my mind about him because this kind of news would have hurt if I was still hoping that he was available.

“Well,” says Dad, patting me on the back. “I’m glad I don’t have anything to worry about.”

I’m a bit nervous about seeing Steve. Kind of nervous and excited. I don’t know why. Actually, I do. I like him. Not the way I liked Antoine. It’s different with Steve.

Steve glances up at me when I come into the library. He’s reading his book.

“Hey Ginny,” he says casually. There’s nothing on his face to indicate he’s sent a huge floral arrangement, a box of chocolates and a heartfelt poem.

I burst into laughter. It’s partly nervous energy as I collapse into my chair.

“What?” he says, his blue eyes all innocent.

“You!” I say, still laughing.

Then he grins. He knows exactly what I’m talking about. I shake my head as I pick up my book off the coffee table.

“I’m glad you’re here today,” I say, turning to my page.

“Well,” says Steve, leaning forward in his chair. “My mom told me that someone as beautiful as you is going to have other men interested in her.”

Someone as beautiful as me?

“She told me that I’d just have to be prepared to fight for you,” he continues. “So here I am to fight for you. Is the slimy toad coming around today?”

I laugh again. I can’t help it. He’s so comical surveying the room and looking as if he’s ready to leap into action.

“I dunno,” I say. “He didn’t say if he was coming back.”

“So he came around yesterday?”

“Yep,” I say. “But he didn’t come around until about one.”

“Took you to lunch again, did he?”

I smile.

“No.”

“Coffee?”

I shake my head.

Steve relaxes a bit. He even leans back in his seat.

“We have to get serious about this treasure,” he says. “Not

for the sake of actually going over and digging for it. We can leave that to someone else.”

“Not to mention that the Israelis don’t just let people come over and dig for treasure,” I point out.

“Exactly,” says Steve. “But we need to come up with something interesting for the sake of our fathers. Dad was telling Mom this morning all about what he plans to cover in these lectures and boy oh boy!” Steve shakes his head. “Bored us all to tears. Well, not Glen, but even Mom stifled a yawn.”

“She might have been tired,” I suggest.

Steve shakes his head again.

“No, it was boring. I mean, Dad is great for getting the *facts*, but apart from his fellow scholars, people don’t want facts. They want something that *sounds* factual but is really entertaining.”

I think about this. I actually agree with him.

“I like the facts . . .” I say.

“Well, I know you do . . .” he interrupts.

“But,” I continue. “I believe you’re right. Kind of right, anyhow. It wouldn’t hurt to speculate as long as we are clear about it just being speculation and of course, it has to be pretty solid speculation. There has to be a lot of compelling facts to back up our speculation.”

“I get the idea!” says Steve, holding up a hand.

“OK, so where do we start?”

“Should we go with the theory about people hiding valuables under the walls?”

“It’s as good as anything.”

“That’s good,” says Steve. “Because I’ve been doing a little reading and the walls were only substantially rebuilt a few times. The first major time was when Babylon destroyed Jerusalem and Nehemiah rebuilt the walls about a hundred and forty years later.”

I nod. This is a familiar Bible story.

“But last night I was reading about how before all that Hezekiah had to fortify the walls.”

“I forgot about that,” I say. Hezekiah was a king of Judah.

“When northern Israel fell to Assyria,” Steve continues. “Jerusalem was filled with refugees, more than the small city

could hold. Most of them had to live outside the walls, a trend that continued when Sennacherib started attacking the cities of Judah as well. A massive building program started which included expanding the walls of the city and demolishing any houses along the planned route. Isaiah mentions how the houses were broken down to fortify the walls. And then Hezekiah created a tunnel between the Pool of Siloam and the Gihon Springs so that the city would have water even in a siege.”

This is definitely the new-and-improved Steve. Three years ago he would have made fun of anyone who knew this much, especially this much from the Bible.

“And these were the same walls that the Babylonians attacked, right?”

Steve nods.

“So that means that those walls would have been around at a time when the temple still stood and when people were panicking . . .”

A crazy thought pops into my head. Is it possible . . . ? Is it just possible . . . ? My face must give away what I'm thinking.

“I think you know where I'm going with this,” says Steve, grinning. “There's only one major artifact from the temple days that isn't accounted for in the Bible.”

I nod. The Babylonians weren't just careless plunderers. They took careful notes of what they carried away from the temple in Jerusalem. All of the instruments used by the priests are mentioned, right down to how many golden bowls and goblets were brought back to Babylon. But there's one notable object that isn't mentioned.

“The ark of the covenant,” I whisper.

“Now look at this!” says Steve, his eyes sparkling. He has another book now, one that he must have brought from home, a Bible atlas. “I compared all the city walls going right back to when it was a Jebusite city.” He flips through the pages. “There's only one place where Hezekiah's walls meet with the current walls.”

“Really?”

Steve scoots his chair over next to mine despite it being a rather solid piece of furniture. Now our heads are nearly

touching as we look at the atlas. It's not making me faint like it did with Antoine, but it feels right. Partners-in-crime. Or partner-in-solving-crime.

"Right here," says Steve, pointing. "The Zion Gate. It's the same in all the maps."

I take the atlas from Steve and I look at each map. He's definitely right about that point lining up. The walls changed throughout history, but that one point is consistent.

But something's not right.

"What a second," I say, pulling out the handout we assembled. The Bible atlas only goes up til the days of Jesus and the apostles. The handout goes right up to the early twentieth century.

I turn to the Roman wall. The Romans rebuilt Jerusalem from the ground up but they seem to have followed the lines of the city walls.

I turn to the Crusader map.

"It matches too," says Steve, holding Hezekiah's Jerusalem next to it.

I nod. It does.

I skip ahead to the second-last map in the handout.

"But look at this," I say, pointing to a note on the bottom of the page about Ottoman Jerusalem.

"It says here the gates of the Old City were all restored in the time of the Ottoman rule. The Lions' Gate, Jaffa Gate and Damascus Gate were all rebuilt on the same spot they had been in Roman days. The Zion Gate is the exception. The current Zion gate is built several hundred feet to the west of where it was in Crusader/Mameluke days."

"Wow!" says Steve, grabbing the handout from me to read it for himself. "I would have never noticed that!"

"It doesn't blow our theory," I say. "It just means that if someone dug under the current Zion Gate it wouldn't be the same spot that it was in Hezekiah's day."

We look at each other and think the same thing.

"Which means that whatever might be there would never be found," says Steve.

"Exactly. It's just an arbitrary point along the wall. If something was buried under the Zion Gate, it could still be

there.”

Steve stands up and grabs my hand.

“Come on!” he says. “We have to tell our dads!”

I'm already halfway out of my chair. Still holding my hand, Steve grabs up the atlas and the handout and we go next door. I notice that Steve very carefully lets go of my hand before we go into the workroom.

Our fathers look up from one of the maps as we come into the room.

“Ginny and I just figured something out!” says Steve.

I nod vigorously.

“What is it?” says Dad, curious. We all sit down on some wooden stools while Steve pulls out the Bible atlas and goes through all the stuff about Hezekiah and how people would want to protect their valuables. He shows them how there's only one point where Hezekiah's walls meet the current walls and that's at the Zion Gate, except that (turning to the last page of the handout), thanks to Ginny, we realize that the Zion Gate today is located a bit further to the west of the original gate. Is it possible that the priests, in order to protect the Ark of the Covenant, might have buried it under the Zion Gate and that it's still there today?

Our fathers are just listening. Neither of them says anything until Steve is finished.

Then they look at each other.

“The Lions' Gate is closer to the temple,” Dr. Lineman points out.

“Why did you focus on the Zion Gate?” asks Dad. “Do you have a reason to believe that someone buried something there?”

“Well, that's the point where Hezekiah's walls meet the current walls,” I say. Suddenly, I realize the flaw in our theory. Just because that's the point where the walls meet doesn't mean that that's where treasure is buried. I can see the same thing has occurred to Steve. He looks completely deflated.

“Well, we thought you might need something interesting for your lectures,” I say, trying to save the situation. “Something that would hold the attention of the general public.”

“We'll keep it in mind,” says Dr. Lineman. But I kind of

suspect he won't.

"Thanks for letting us know," says Dad. "It's a fun theory, but we may not be able to work it in . . ."

Steve and I nod as we stand up.

We let them get back to their important scholarly work.

Back in the library, Steve groans.

"Never mind," I say and this time I reach for his hand. "I'll buy you a coffee. C'mon!"

Steve exhales but he lets me drag him out of the room. We make our way down to the café.

"Do you know what it is?" I say, when we're both sipping our hot coffee.

"What?" he says.

"We just both really, really wanted to find something exciting."

Steve nods.

"I feel stupid now. Dad's going to think I can't take anything seriously."

"Don't feel stupid," I say. "I thought it was a good idea."

"That's even worse," says Steve. "Your dad knows you're sensible. Now he's going to think that I'm leading you into all sorts of crazy things."

I laugh.

"If it comes up, don't worry, I'll tell him it was just as much my idea as it was yours."

Steve shakes his head.

"Let's just hope they forget all about it. From now on they will only get Steve the Serious."

I grin.

It's hard to imagine Steve staying serious for too long.

In fact, when we're back in the library, we have so much fun throwing out facts to each other for the rest of the day, seeing who can find the most "serious" fact, that I don't even realize until Dad and I are going home on the subway that Antoine never stopped by.

CHAPTER FIVE

And finally, to keep enemies from being able to easily enter the city, the gate is built on a 90 degree angle, slowing the enemy down and giving the defenders a chance to pick them off one by one as they come around the corner,” Steve reads to me before shutting his book about Ottoman Jerusalem. “And that’s the last time I ever mention the gates of Jerusalem again.”

I laugh.

I finished my book about Rome earlier this afternoon and Dad gave me another one about the Arabs conquering the city. It was at this time that the Dome of the Rock was built.

“I’m going to go ask Dad if I can read about the Crusaders next,” says Steve, getting up.

Steve is about thirty seconds out of the room when I hear a familiar voice.

“Ginny!”

Oh great! I groan to myself. It’s Antoine. Was he waiting for Steve to leave? Now, I’m being silly. Antoine is not loitering outside the library waiting to have me all to himself. Still, the last thing I want is for Steve to return and find me head-to-head with Antoine.

“Hi Antoine,” I say casually. There's only way for me to handle this. I get up and stroll over to one of the bookshelves. My eyes skim the titles until I find one that's remotely related to what I'm doing, a ROM publication about Arab artifacts. I open it up and flip through it. So when Steve returns, he finds me with my back turned to Antoine, supposedly immersed in a book.

Steve takes his chair and I glance over at him and wink.

“I have some sketches for you to look at,” says Antoine.

“We'd love to see them,” I say, going and standing by Steve's chair. Steve stands up and that forces Antoine to join us for a little conference.

I barely take in the pictures. But I can see they're good. And I'm really wondering how much Antoine actually needs me to advise him. In any case, I let Steve do the talking. And he does a great job. I just return to my seat and continue reading.

“Thanks, Ginny,” he says when Antoine is gone.

“For what?” I shrug, but the smile leaks out. “Why would I want to talk to a man with dreamy dark eyes and wavy silk hair and a wardrobe out of a European fashion magazine . . . ?”

“What's the matter with my wardrobe?” says Steve, eyes wide. I look at his jeans, olive-green t-shirt and running shoes. His shirt has Arabic writing on it.

“What does your t-shirt say?” I ask.

“I'm not a Terrorist,” says Steve, looking down. “Someone gave it to Dad as a joke.”

“You're fine, Steve,” I say. My own look is casual too. I have on a long white cotton blouse from the time we went to Baghdad, a pair of jeans and sandals.

“Hey, do you want to come over to our place tomorrow?” asks Steve.

My eyebrows go up.

“My grandfather's staying with us and I thought you might like to meet him. He's dad's father but he's not like dad at all. He's loads of fun.”

I smile.

“Sure, I'd love to,” I say.

“I've got to go to work now,” says Steve, glancing at his watch. “But I'm taking the weekend off so we can do stuff

together. Can I call you tomorrow morning?"

"Sure."

Once again, with a quick wave, he's gone. And I'm alone. I used to like being alone. But now I'd rather be with Steve.

I thought I'd be invited over for dinner, but Steve says to come over right away for brunch. He doesn't have a car to come get me, but he's gallant enough to meet me at Union Station and then ride the bus down Queen's Quay Way to their apartment.

"I have the whole day planned," says Steve, on the bus. "We're going to Fort York and then we're going to the CN Tower and then we'll finish up with dinner at Medieval Times."

I laugh.

"Our life may be lacking in adventure during the week, but you're making up for it on the weekend!"

Steve nods.

"That's what's great about Grandpa. He likes to do stuff. Dad and Mom never want to go anywhere or do anything."

"Except for traveling around the world digging up artifacts," I point out.

"Yeah, except for that," agrees Steve. "But you remember how it was in Syria. Dad made sure we had lectures the whole way. Every stop we made, there was a lecture to go along with it."

I smile, remembering Steve's responses to his father's teaching assistant's lectures.

When we arrive at the apartment, the Lineman's are just sitting down at their kitchen table. Dr. Lineman doesn't seem to notice me. He's behind a copy of *Biblical Archaeology Review*. Glen has a copy of *War and Peace*. Mrs. Lineman is busy putting out a bowl of scrambled eggs, a plate of fried potatoes, a selection of rolls, an arrangement of fruit and a pot of coffee. She gives me a quick smile and then she gives Steve a similar smile. I get the feeling that Steve is the one person in the apartment that she can really talk to.

It's Steve's grandfather who is the life at the table.

"How do you do, Ginny!" he says, shaking my hand across

the table. Steve and I are across from him and Glen. "I hear we'll be taking you around town today!"

I nod and smile.

He has a full head of white hair, a sparkling smile, and looks remarkably like Steve. Although, I guess, it's really Steve who looks remarkably like him.

After Dr. Lineman asks the blessing, the books and magazines are put away and the food is passed around.

"How are you enjoying your work at the museum, Ginny?"

This question is from Steve's grandfather, not his father.

"I like helping out," I say, glancing at Steve. "Usually we're out on a dig this time of year, but Dad needs help with the research . . ."

"Research is very important," interrupts Dr. Lineman, reaching for a roll.

"It's more fun being the people digging stuff up," says Steve.

"Life isn't supposed to be fun," says Dr. Lineman, spreading butter on his roll.

Steve's grandfather is watching Dr. Lineman, but he doesn't say anything. He does give Steve a sympathetic smile, though.

"So you're going to Fort York today?" says Mrs. Lineman, to get the conversation going again.

"Yep," says Steve. "They're doing one of the battles there today . . ."

"You mean, the Battle of York," says Dr. Lineman. "During the War of 1812."

"Yeah, that's probably the one," says Steve.

"The main thing is that it will be a battle," says Steve's grandfather.

"What's the point of going to a battle when you have no clue when it happened?" says Dr. Lineman, adding potatoes to his plate.

The conversation stalls and again it's up to Mrs. Lineman to revive it.

"It's been ages since I went up the CN Tower," she says.

"I haven't been up since I was about ten," I say.

"It's not the tallest freestanding structure in the world anymore," says Glen. "The Burj Khalifa in Dubai is."

“I never said it was the world's tallest freestanding structure,” says Steve glaring at him.

“I've never been to Dubai,” I say quickly. “Are there any archaeological remains of any significance there?”

Dr. Lineman seems to like this question.

“No, it was just mud brick buildings a hundred years ago. Then they found oil and built on top of everything. However, they have a colourful history . . .”

For the remainder of the breakfast, Dr. Lineman tells us the history of the Arab sheikhdoms along the Gulf and how they used to be pirates and the British navy subdued them and then they became the Trucial States because Britain had a truce with them.

After we've finished eating, Mrs. Lineman insists she doesn't need any help with the dishes. She gives Steve a kiss on the cheek and sends us out the door for our day of adventure.

Fort York is close enough that we don't need to catch a bus. We walk down Queen's Quay Way, past all the luxury apartments and restaurants. On the other side of them is Lake Ontario, with the boats out on the sparkling water. We're not the only people out. There are a lot of pedestrians walking dogs or pushing strollers, just out to enjoy a sunny Saturday near the waterfront.

“Couldn't ask for a nicer day,” says Steve's grandfather.

I agree.

“I hear you're a Christian, Ginny,” says Steve's grandfather.

I'm momentarily startled.

“Yes, I am,” I say.

“I've been praying all my life that Steve's family would come to know God,” he says. “You see, my mother was a missionary and I was always a Christian. So it was a bit of a surprise to me when my son wasn't interested in God.”

“That would be strange,” I agree.

He nods as we walk.

“But God answered your prayer,” I say.

“That he did,” says Steve's grandfather, smiling. “Don't let your Dad get to you.” This comment is directed to Steve. “God's not finished with your father yet!”

We all laugh.

“You see,” continues Steve's grandfather. “Some people are born for different things. Not better things, exactly, but different things. My mother was. She went off on her own to all sorts of places and told people about the kingdom of heaven. It was very unusual for a woman to do that. A lot of people said it wasn't right. But she knew it was and she wanted to do it. Not everybody wants to do things like that.”

“Are you saying God gives some people a spirit of adventure?” I ask.

Steve's grandfather nods.

“That's exactly what I'm saying.”

Steve and I look at each other.

“If you have it,” says Steve's grandfather, glancing at both of us. “Don't let anyone tell you it's wrong. It's probably there for a reason.”

Steve nods.

“I think I get it,” he says. “Thanks Grandpa.”

We're all pretty tired by the time we get back from our tour of the fort (including watching the battle reenactment), the trip up the CN Tower and finally, the dinner and live show at Medieval Times. After Medieval Times, we split up. Steve's grandfather takes a bus east back to the Lineman apartment while we go west to my place.

“It's nice of you to take me home,” I say.

It's dark outside. We're halfway back on the bus and the only other passenger is a young guy in jeans, a leather jacket, with an mp3 player and a large guitar case.

Steve shrugs like it's no big deal.

“I had a lot of fun,” I say.

“Yeah, me too,” he says absentmindedly.

“What is it?” I ask.

“It's what Grandpa was saying earlier. You know, about adventure.”

I nod. I've been thinking about it too.

“I mean, I think I will honestly die if I have to just get a job, settle down and oh, I don't know . . . Do you know what I mean?”

He sounds almost desperate.

“You'll just have to get a job with CSIS,” I say jokingly. But then I see how serious he is.

“Yes, I do know what you mean,” I say. “I don't know whether it's because I've gotten used to adventure. I mean, Julia's done all the same things I have but the way she talks . . .”

“I know,” says Steve rolling his eyes. “Glen is talking all about mortgages and how they're going to settle down somewhere. He sounds about 40-years-old.”

I laugh.

“Well, that would make Julia happy. She wants a house, a dog, probably some children.”

“What about us?” says Steve. It's a bold question. I look at him.

“I think we would need something different,” I say slowly.

Steve nods but he's also grinning.

“Yeah, I think so too.”

“I don't think these maps line up,” says Dr. Lineman.

Steve and I are in the hallway, outside the workroom door. It's Monday and we're on our way to get a coffee. We wouldn't have been passing by the workroom except that I want to ask Dad if they're going to treat the two Arab periods, the one before the Crusades and the one after they'd driven the Crusaders out, as two distinct times or will they combine them in their talk?

Steve puts his finger over his lips. I nod as we listen.

“Well, we can't expect them to all be perfectly aligned,” says Dad. “The quality varies. Not each one is an accurate representation of the city.”

“This one puts me in mind of the Madaba map,” says Dr. Lineman.

We can hear them moving around even if we can't see them.

“I know,” Dad agrees. “It's very stylized.”

“This is obviously a pilgrim's map. It has all the Christian holy sites at the expense of everything else.”

“I can't help but wonder what a Christian pilgrim would think, having seen this map, and then he gets to Jerusalem and sees the Dome of the Rock sitting there on the Temple

Mount!” says Dad.

From that I gather that the map is from the Crusader period since the Dome of the Rock was built during the Arab conquest before the Crusaders came.

“Well, here's your answer, Anderson,” says Dr. Lineman. We can imagine him pointing at something. “It's labelled Solomon's Temple.”

The two men laugh.

Steve and I look at each other. It's hard to imagine a time when the knowledge of history was so limited that pilgrims would believe that the Dome of the Rock was Solomon's Temple.

I decide to ask Dad later and tilt my head toward the elevator to the café.

Steve nods and we head down the hallway.

“I live in hope,” he says.

“I know,” I say. Steve still believes in the possibility of the maps being a portal to adventure.

“How's your grandfather?” I say, when we have our coffee and are seated. The room is quiet.

“He had a great time,” says Steve. “He enjoyed meeting you. He's back home now.”

“Where does he live again?”

“Midland. We'll go visit him again in the summer. You can come if you want. He has this awesome log cabin with a loft where we all sleep. We bring sleeping bags so there's always room for one more.”

“I'd love to,” I say.

“He has all sorts of cool stuff he used to show me when I was little. A whole collection of model ships. Some toy soldiers from the British Empire days. A few Indian arrowheads. A spear from some war somewhere. His mom brought it back from some part of Africa . . .”

I smile at what Dr. Lineman would say about this vague report.

“Oh, and this huge stamp collection. What else? Oh yeah. Some marbles from when he was a boy. He taught me all these games he played with them when he was little. Anyway, you get the idea.”

I'm momentarily distracted by Antoine entering the café, this time with a short, attractive museum employee who's looking up at him as if he's the most amazing thing in the world. I look away.

"I do," I say.

We sit in semi-silence. It's not uncomfortable.

"What does your dad have planned after this?" I ask. "I mean, is he doing anything exciting in the future?"

Steve shakes his head.

"That's part of why I'm frustrated. Since Syria, we've been out of the country only once and that was to go to some archaeological convention in Michigan. What about you guys? Any hope for the future?"

"Nothing that I know of," I say.

"Anyway," says Steve. "At this point, I can't plan my life around what Dad's doing. I'm not cut out to be a scholar like him so I've got to find something different. Grandpa understands. Did you know he was homeschooled too?"

"Really?" I say.

"Yep. I only found out this visit. He was telling me that his mom didn't want him to be educated by people who weren't Christians so she did it herself. He learned a lot of cool things because she'd been all over the world. And she let him study whatever he was interested in, which wasn't anything too scholarly. But he knows all about how to survive in the woods in the winter and what kind of berries aren't poisonous. He was really into the natives and how they lived. He and his mother would visit an old squaw and she would tell him stories about the early days in Canada."

"That sounds interesting." I say. "Does that mean your father was homeschooled too?"

Steve shook his head.

"I don't know much about it. But I get the idea that he would have home-schooled my dad but my grandmother was from Toronto and didn't like the idea of having a son who could live like an Indian, so she sent him off to public school and saved all her extra money so that he could go to university too."

"Were they poor?" I ask. Then I cover my mouth. "Sorry, that's kind of rude."

Steve shrugs.

“No, it isn't. Actually, they were, kind of.”

Steve looks around to make sure no one's near enough to hear us.

“Can you keep a secret?”

I smile.

“A real secret?”

Steve can be melodramatic. But now he rolls his eyes.

“Yes! A real secret! Grandpa told me stuff when he and I were out on Sunday that he's never told anyone, not even Dad.”

“Really?” I say, leaning forward. “Yes, of course I can keep a secret.”

“OK,” says Steve. “This much I sort of knew already. Grandpa was a country boy, so when he came to the city, he ended up working odd jobs. You know, not a career, always just a job. I'm worried that's going to happen to me, but never mind that. Now, you have to keep in mind, his mom was pretty old when she got married and had him. Like, in her forties or something. So when my dad was born, she was already in her sixties or seventies. But when Dad was twenty and in his second year at university, *his* mom died.”

“Your grandmother?”

“Exactly. So, here's Grandpa, with a wife who died in her forties and a mother who was still alive in her nineties. Now, his wife had put aside enough money for my dad to go to university, so what Grandpa did at that point was move back to Midland to be with his mom who he figured needed him more. She ended up living to be 102.”

“Wow!” I say.

“Yeah, that's pretty good,” agrees Steve. “Now, this is where the story gets really interesting. Grandpa was cleaning up the house there in Midland after she died, planning to sell it since he really wanted to build his own log cabin. He found two deeds to properties here in Toronto. They went back to the early 1800's.”

“Wow!” I say again.

Steve nods.

“He figures they must have belonged to his mother's family. You see, her parents died when she was a young woman and

that's why she joined the British Empire Mission Society. Grandpa figures she lived on the rent that those two properties generated. His mom never told him where their money came from. He just assumed his father had left her with a chunk, enough to live on. But after she died, he went to her bank and found out that there were these monthly deposits in the account. She seems to have handled everything by herself right up to her death. She was in great health, she just died in her sleep.”

“That's a fascinating story,” I say. I look down at my coffee that is probably lukewarm by now.

“Anyway, that's why he came to Toronto,” says Steve. “He's had the properties all these years. Now he wants to look them over again and decide what to do with them.”

“Well, I won't tell anyone, I promise,” I say, taking my last gulp of coffee. It's worse than lukewarm. It's cold. “We'd better get back.”

“Yeah, maybe there'll be an adventure waiting for us.”

The Walls of Jerusalem

CHAPTER SIX

There's no adventure waiting for us. At least not in the Steve-sense. Just our books to read. And a note from our fathers saying we'll all go out to lunch together.

"I wonder what that's about?" I say, slipping the note into my book to use as a bookmark.

"Who knows?" says Steve. "Probably to lecture us about something. Correction, lecture *me*. I don't think Dad considers me an effective research partner. Of course, he's not paying me anything so he can't complain. But he does."

I shake my head and grin.

"Is it really that bad?" I say, turning to the page I left off at.

Steve hasn't sat down yet.

"Yeah, no, yeah, I don't know. Mom always tells me that if I have food and clothing I should be content."

"Like the apostle Paul," I say.

"Yeah, except that the apostle Paul was doing what I'd like to be doing. Going all over the place . . ."

"Being persecuted, stoned . . ."

"OK, OK, I could live without that, but you know what I mean. I'm going to end up working in a produce department my whole life if I don't do something soon."

He falls into his chair and opens his book. I can almost see the grey cloud of despair above his head.

I can so relate.

I'm really looking at a wide-open blank in my future too. I've loved my past. Going all over the world, being part of digging up history, meeting new people. I can't imagine any other life. But it's Dad's life, not mine. I don't have a PhD and I'm not sure that I really want to go to university and become an archaeologist. Dad knows so much and I just count on him knowing it. But I don't think I have what it takes to become like him.

I try not to think about my uncertain future and just concentrate on my present.

I've read all about how the Arabs first took Jerusalem, shortly after Mohammed died. Omar Ibn Khattab was the Arab general who took it from the Byzantines. He's the reason that the Dome of the Rock is sometimes mistakenly called the Mosque of Omar. But there really is a Mosque of Omar built near the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. The Church of the Holy Sepulchre commemorates where Jesus died and was buried. When Omar took Jerusalem he was invited by the Patriarch of the church to pray there, but he declined because he said his followers would then turn it in to a Muslim site. So he prayed outside of the church. Later, Saladin turned the spot where Omar prayed into the mosque named after him.

What I like about this story is that it ties the two Arab periods together. Omar first conquered Jerusalem for the Arabs. Then the Crusaders took it. And then it was Saladin who reconquered Jerusalem for the Arabs. I'm on the laptop, typing the story so that Dad can use it.

At around twelve, our fathers stop by and tell us it's lunchtime.

I assume we'll be eating in the museum, but we actually exit out the main entrance. We cross the busy intersection and walk down Bloor Street to get to a small restaurant called China Garden.

We sit down at a table close to the window. Across the road is the modern addition to the museum.

A waitress brings us four glasses of ice water and menus,

but Dr. Lineman tells her we'll just have the lunch special for four.

"Well kids," says Dr. Lineman, after he takes a sip of water. "The reason I've asked you here is . . ."

"You want us to solve a mystery?" says Steve.

"No, Steve . . ."

"Something's been stolen from the museum and you want Ginny and I to investigate?"

"No, Steve," says his dad, sounding annoyed. "We just wanted to thank you for the job you're doing."

Steve looks disappointed.

"You're welcome," I say. "I love Chinese food."

"At least someone appreciates it," mutters Dr. Lineman.

"Also," says Dad, "we wanted to let you know we'll be doing our first lecture tomorrow. Some of the professors from U. of T. are coming. So we'll need you to set up the chairs."

"Where are the chairs?" I ask.

"There's a storage room just at the end of the hallway. It's not locked," says Dad.

"Where do we set them up?"

"It'll be pretty informal. We'll actually be doing it in the workroom since there will just be twenty of them. So, first thing tomorrow, twenty chairs arranged in some kind of order, OK?"

I nod. Although Steve doesn't roll his eyes or do anything to show it, I can almost feel his boredom radiating beside me.

Lunch for four turns out to be a mix of authentic Chinese dishes. I'm more of a sweet-and-sour chicken balls kind-of-person, but the cashew chicken and the beef and broccoli are both delicious.

When we're done, the waitress brings us our fortune cookies.

"A surprise is in store for you," I automatically read out loud.

Dad reads his.

"Good news from afar will make your day."

In our family, we always read our fortunes out loud. Dr. Lineman raises his eyebrows at both of us but then takes a sip of ice water and reads his.

“The path you are on is the right one.” He nods his agreement.

We all turn to Steve. He glares at us.

“Come on!” I say. “Your turn!”

Now he glares at the little piece of white paper.

“True happiness comes from being content where you are.”

I can't help it. I laugh.

Steve looks ruefully at me.

Dad and Dr. Linemen are pushing their chairs back and standing up. We follow them out through the doors, down some stairs and back to the street. They're already talking about the afternoon's work.

“I guess Mom, the apostle Paul *and* a fortune cookie can't be wrong, eh?” he says to me, while we walk along behind them.

“Yeah,” I say. “I guess it's a sign.”

“OK,” says Steve, resignedly. “I am content. I am content right where I am. Actually . . .” He thinks for a moment. “I *am* content.” He turns toward me. “It's great that we're working together. I love getting up everyday and knowing I'm going to see you.”

I feel myself blushing.

“So, I guess I can honestly say I am content where I am,” says Steve.

“Good,” I say. I clasp his hand for a moment. I guess if Dad wasn't a metre in front of me, I would keep holding it. But just that gesture seems to do loads for Steve's morale and he cheers right up.

There are school buses parked in front of the museum and the main foyer is full of young people milling around. It's hard to tell whether the students are arriving or leaving, but in any case, we move through the crowd, past the stairs with the totem pole, through a high-ceiling gallery that contains an eclectic mix of historical pieces, and back to our work area.

Just as Dr. Lineman is about to unlock the door to the workroom, a woman wearing a navy blue museum blazer, matching pants and black pumps calls out, “Dr. Kent?” She is hurrying down the hallway. She's in her midtwenties with a swinging brown bob and a bright smile.

Both men look at her.

“My name is Tammy,” she says. “I have some news for you.”

“This must be my good news from afar,” says Dad, giving me a grin.

“Will you all follow me?” says Tammy.

We are led down several hallways not open to the public until we come to an office with an open door. Tammy waves Dad and Dr. Lineman toward the door and then walks back in the direction we came.

In the office, there is a large cluttered desk with a lady behind it who seems to be in the middle of looking for something amid all the papers. She's in her late-fifties, with a greying wavy bob and a plump figure that's well-dressed in a purple suit and a lilac blouse. Glasses are hanging on a gold chain around her neck. She looks up and says, “Come in Dr. Lineman! Dr. Kent!”

Dr. Lineman shuts the door.

Whatever it is, it doesn't seem to affect us, so after a few minutes Steve and I return to the library.

“I am content,” says Steve picking up his book about the Crusades. “And I will be content when we have to put out twenty chairs tomorrow.”

One thing about Steve is he keeps me smiling. And however cranky he gets, he always seems to recover pretty quickly.

He's cheerful as he tells me about the siege to take Jerusalem. It was led by Godfrey of Bouillon, a Frankish knight who had brought an army to Jerusalem in 1099. There were other men leading small armies and all the nobles had to work together with their armies positioned around the walls of the city. Wooden ladders had to be built and it was Godfrey and his knights who first made it up and over the sides.

This gets me telling him about Saladin taking the city back in 1187.

We're in the middle of a lively conversation when Dad opens up the door to the library.

We both look over. His face is serious.

“Kids,” he says. “Come with me.”

“What is it?” I ask, as we both stand up.

His answer is terse.

“One of the maps is missing.”

CHAPTER SEVEN

The old Steve would have gloated. He would have looked thrilled. He would have been unable to hide his excitement.

The new Steve looks at me and there's concern in his eyes. We shut our books and follow Dad.

Dr. Lineman is in the workroom, bordering on agitated.

"There you are," he says. "Tell me what you know about this!"

We just stare at him.

"One of the maps is gone!" he says.

"Which one?" asks Steve, quietly.

"The most valuable one! The Crusader one."

The small one. I can understand it going missing. It's the size of a sheet of paper.

"We don't know anything about it," says Steve.

"You're reading about the Crusades now," says his father giving him a look. "Did you take the map?"

"Of course not!" says Steve. "Why would I?"

His dad stares at him and then sighs.

"No, why would you?"

"We've only looked at the maps with you," I say.

“That's true,” says Dad. “The maps never left this room. Until now.”

“I don't understand,” I say to Dad. “What's going on?”

“We don't really know,” says Dad, sighing and sitting down on a stool. “The museum director wanted to tell us that we're having a special gala opening for the maps, funded by one of the local synagogues. So that was big news.”

“But the strange thing was . . .” Dr. Lineman interrupts him. “She said she was going to come around this afternoon to tell us herself. She'd never heard of anyone named Tammy and she hadn't sent anyone to get us.”

“That *is* weird,” says Steve. “But Tammy looked like a museum employee.”

“Exactly,” says his dad. “But she just kind of disappeared. Then when we came back, we unlocked the door, went straight back to the maps and discovered the Crusader one was missing.”

“Did it disappear while we were at lunch or in that short time while you were with the museum director?” asks Steve.

“That's what we want to know,” says Dad. “Did you kids hear anything or see anything?”

Steve and I look at each other.

“Nothing,” we say at the same time.

“Our door was slightly open,” I say. “But I didn't notice anything.”

“Me too,” says Steve. “But we were talking about the Crusades and I wasn't looking out into the hallway.”

“Still, if someone had passed by, would you have noticed?”

“I think we would have,” I say. “Both our chairs face the door so we would have seen someone going by.”

“But you didn't?” says Dad.

We shake our heads.

“Oh, that doesn't help!” says Dr. Lineman, his agitation increasing. “The hallway goes in two directions. Anyone could have come along from the other end, taken the map and gone back the same direction they came without passing the library door.”

“My guess is that Tammy was a lookout,” says Steve. “The person stealing the map was probably in the workroom when

we came back. And she distracted you long enough for him to get away.”

“The same thought occurred to me,” says Dad, nodding.

“But you would still need a key to get into the workroom,” I say. “The door wasn't broken into. Who else has a key to the room?”

The three males in the room look at each other. One thought occurs to all of them at the same time.

“Antoine!”

They all turn to me for a reaction.

“Antoine?” I say. “No way! He's an artist, not a thief!”

“He's the only other person who has a key,” says Dr. Lineman, grimly. “We gave him one because he needed to look at the maps for his drawings.”

Dad nods.

“I think we should go have a talk to the museum director.” He turns to us. “OK, kids. That's it. You guys can go back to the library until we know more.”

Steve has the decency not to say anything about Antoine when we get back. All he says is, “It sounds pretty open and shut.”

“Yeah, it does,” I admit. “I hope the map's OK and I hope they get it back.”

Steve agrees and we return to our chairs. But we can't exactly just start talking about the Crusades again. So we wait.

We don't wait for long. Steve and I stand up as our fathers return with a hysterical museum director and some bad news.

No one has seen Antoine today. They've phoned his cell number and there's no answer. There isn't even an answering service. To make matters worse, they've pulled out Antoine's resumé and they're beginning to have doubts that he was even an artist in the first place since most of it can't be verified.

“Oh he was definitely an artist,” I say. “I saw his drawings.”

Even Steve nods.

“Yeah, the guy could draw.”

“We don't know anything about the man,” says the director, sinking into one of the chairs in the library.

“I know a bit about him,” I say. “I mean, if what he said was true.”

Dad looks at me with surprise when I have to confess that I had lunch with Antoine. Steve looks annoyed but less so than he did at the time.

I sit down on the coffee table, the same way Antoine did.

“We ate at the restaurant here,” I say. “He said that the chef owed him a favour since he did a sketch of his family for him.”

The museum director looks annoyed.

“He shouldn’t have done that,” she mutters. I don’t know whether she’s talking about the chef or Antoine.

“Did he talk about himself?” asks Dr. Lineman eagerly, moving a little closer. “A crook will sometimes slip up when he’s talking to a pretty girl.”

“He did,” I say. “A bit. He said his mother knew someone here to get the job. Actually!” It comes back to me. I look at the museum director. “He said his mom knew you, that’s how he got the job!”

The museum director looks startled and shakes her head.

“I never knew the guy. I’d never seen his resumé or heard of him until today.”

“He went to the Ontario College of Art,” I say.

She shakes her head.

“That’s what his resumé says but we’ll have to contact them and see if it’s true.”

“What I don’t understand is,” I say. “The museum is full of valuable things. Why did he just focus on this map?”

“Everything else is locked up,” says the museum director. “This is the only thing he had access to.”

“But why not take all the maps?” Steve asks, sitting down beside me.

“They’re too big,” says Dr. Lineman. “He could stick this one in his sketchbook and just walk out the door.”

“That’s true,” says the director. “But there’s more to it than that. I didn’t tell you at the time because I didn’t know it myself. When I first received the collection, I had the maps appraised. I wanted to know whether they were originals or copies.”

She has Dad and Dr. Lineman’s attention.

“I know you men have probably formed your own opinions about the maps and their authenticity, but I had the materials

analyzed in order to know for sure.”

Both our fathers nod.

“We've come to the conclusion that the more recent ones are originals but the older ones are copies,” said Dr. Lineman.

“My analysis indicated that as well, but with one . . .” says the museum director.

“But, obviously, excellent copies,” continues Dr. Lineman. “And in the case of the Crusader map, it seems to be a copy of a map that no longer exists, so it's of extra value. The detail is incredible. And it's in a fragile state so we have to treat it carefully.”

“It *is* an incredible map,” the museum director agrees. “And it is fragile. But I have to tell you, Dr. Lineman . . .” At this point the museum director groans. “Of all the maps, it's the oldest and it *is* an original.”

The Walls of Jerusalem

CHAPTER EIGHT

We all gasp.

“It must be worth a fortune!” says Dad.

The museum director nods.

“In terms of antiquity, yes, I would say it's priceless. In terms of selling it on the black-market, I think that this Antoine character may get anywhere between \$50,000 and a million, depending on who his contacts are and how much of a hurry he's in to get rid of it.”

Dr. Lineman and Dad are looking at each other.

“If he sells it, we'll never see it again,” says Dr. Lineman.

Dr. Lineman, Dad and the museum director all leave the library in a daze. They don't even seem to remember we're here.

“Well . . .” I say, feeling weak as I ease myself into the chair so recently vacated by the museum director.

“I'm not going to be an idiot and say let's solve this one,” says Steve, sitting down just as slowly. “It's too big. And the deed has been done. I mean, if we suspected Antoine from the start, we could have kept a closer eye on him and maybe been ready when something happened. But the problem was, I was blind, blinded by jealousy, of course.”

I roll my eyes.

“Antoine was no threat to you,” I say. “He was an artist. Very sophisticated. Hardly going to fall for someone like me.”

“No, really Ginny,” Steve insists. “He *was* a threat. You don't realize it, but you've grown up really nicely. I think I fell in love with you on the plane ride over to Syria and you weren't half as beautiful as you are now.”

Words fail me. Then a thought occurs to me.

“He has a studio!” I say.

“Antoine?”

“Yes! He wanted me to come visit it sometime.”

“The swine!”

“I said no, silly.”

“I don't suppose he gave an address for the studio?”

“No, he just said we could take the subway after work sometime.”

Steve shakes his head at the thought.

“Probably would have wanted you to pose, or something.”

“Of course not! He just wanted me to look at his paintings. But anyway, here's the thing. He did a sketch of the chef and his family. He might have done it at the studio!”

“I guess he might have. So the chef will probably tell the museum director where he lives and they'll get him.”

“Not necessarily,” I say. “They're not going to tell the chef he stole a priceless artifact.”

“Exactly!” said Steve, snapping his fingers. “So the chef won't know to tell them he has a studio and where it is!”

I nod.

“Let's go!” says Steve, jumping out of his seat and now halfway to the door.

I shrug. Why not? It's not like we haven't done adventure before.

It's only because we have museum identification passes that we manage to make it into the kitchen. The kitchen is a busy place, with long shiny counters and people moving about with bowls and platters. But it's past the lunchtime rush and a woman wearing a hair-net and chopping red peppers tells us that the head chef is having a coffee in the office. She points.

There's a small office in one corner. The door says Manager, but there's only the chef, sitting at the desk with a mug of coffee while he flips through a magazine.

He's a middle-aged man, slim in his white uniform, with greying hair underneath the white hat.

The look he gives us when we appear in his doorway is one of annoyance.

"Do I know you?" he asks.

Steve shakes his head.

"We've come regarding Antoine."

The chef just stares at us and doesn't invite us in.

"Antoine?" he says.

Steve moves right into the office.

"He's an artist. He did a picture of you and your family."

"Oh *that* Antoine. What about him?"

"We're looking for him," says Steve.

The chef's look is contemptuous.

"Well, he's not here."

"Actually," says Steve, lowering his voice. "You're right. He might have left work early today because he had a museum artifact tucked into his sketchbook."

I'm sure the museum director is going to hate us for this. But at least now we have the chef's attention.

"I see," he says thoughtfully. He waves a hand for us to sit down. We pull up a couple of chairs.

"First of all," he says. "Who are you two?"

"I'm Steve Lineman and this is Ginny Kent," says Steve. "We're here for the summer. Our dads are doing a summer lecture series."

"*The Walls of Jerusalem*," says the chef nodding. "I was planning to attend it."

"It might not be quite as interesting now," says Steve. "With one less map."

"Hmmm," says the chef, leaning back in his chair, nodding. "OK, I hear what you're saying."

"I was with him that day he had lunch here," I say. "He said he had done a sketch of you and your family."

The chef nods.

"Yes," he says. "The man is extremely talented. The free

meal was a small price to pay.”

“Did you go to his studio?”

The chef smiles.

“Ah, I see where you're going with this. No, we had it done right here. After museum hours.”

Steve and I must look disappointed.

“I might still be able to help,” he says. “I have a daughter. She's kind of flaky. Wants to be an artist but thinks art is where you throw paint at a canvas. What am I saying? Her stuff will probably end up in the Art Gallery of Ontario, but that's beside the point. She and Antoine got talking and I think she may have visited his studio to look at his work.”

“Really?” says Steve. He and I are both excited.

The chef nods and reaches into his side pocket for a cell phone. He hits a speed dial button and is soon talking.

We very quickly gather that the daughter did visit Antoine. In fact, not only was it a studio, it was obvious he lived there as well, although there were at least three other people sharing the space. Sort of an artist's colony. She doesn't know the exact address but she can give pretty good directions. Her father is scribbling it all down on paper for us.

“OK,” says the chef handing us the sheet. “Queen Street West. Past University Avenue but before you reach Spadina. The doorway between the music store and some kind of a place that offers tattoos as well as a wide selection of jewellery. Go up the stairs. First door on your left is the studio.”

“Thanks so much!” says Steve, taking it and putting it in his shirt pocket.

The chef nods.

“Go easy on him, OK? He's just a struggling artist.”

We nod as we get up and go back out through the kitchen.

“We have to get over there right away!” says Steve, taking my hand. “That map was stolen less than an hour ago. He could still be there!”

“We have to tell our dads first!”

“I know,” says Steve, practically dragging me along. We're almost running now. It's a good thing the museum is quiet.

We dash back to the workroom. The door is shut and locked, but Steve bangs on it. There's no answer. The library

door is slightly open, but it's empty too.

"No time to wait!" says Steve, still holding on to my hand. "We'll have to do this ourselves!"

I agree. Time is essential. Antoine may still be on the subway, for all we know.

Toronto isn't like New York. You can't just run out and grab a cab. Most cabs are on their way to pick someone up or are already occupied.

But the museum is right by a subway station so we hurry out into the sunlight and then back down the stairs to the underground. Steve reaches into his pocket and tosses two tokens into the container as we fly through the turnstile. Then we're running down more stairs to the trains. We can hear one coming and as it turns out, it's the one we want. It's only seven stops from Museum Station to Queen Station. On a different day we could have walked it, but today we don't have the time.

We still have a bit of a hike anyhow, from Queen Station to the point where all the shops and restaurants along Queen Street begin. As we're hurrying along, Steve pulls the piece of paper out of his pocket.

"Between a music store and a tattoo/jewellery place," he says before stuffing it back in his pocket. "I think I know the music store. It's pretty big. I almost bought a guitar there once."

I'll have to ask him about that later. I'm almost out of breath at this point.

Normally, Queen Street is something you stroll, not jog. The cafés are cool, the stores are eclectic and nowhere in Toronto is the people-watching any better.

Dad and I have been down this street many times to poke around in the secondhand bookstores. But today I'm too focused to even glance in the storefronts.

"Here it is!" says Steve, as he stops suddenly. It's the door we're looking for. The paint is brown and chipped. There are six mailboxes on the wall beside it. Thankfully, the door doesn't have a lock and we start up the dim staircase.

"First one on the left, wasn't it?" says Steve when we get to the top.

I nod.

Now it's a bright blue door, freshly-painted. A sign hanging below the peephole says, "Winnie's Studio – a fine selection of art for the home." Steve knocks.

No one answers at first.

Steve knocks again, harder this time.

A tired-looking girl wearing glasses and a pink bathrobe answers. Must be Winnie.

"Yes? Can I help you?" she says, with forced enthusiasm.

"Is Antoine home?"

"No, I dunno." The girl turns away from the door. I guess she was prepared to be nice to us if we were customers, but clearly she is going back to bed.

Steve looks at me and shrugs.

We go inside. The girl has already disappeared back into a room and closed the door.

The apartment does not have a communal area. There's a small kitchen that we glance into, but beyond that, everything is divided into the individual studios. The first door is closed and locked. (Steve tries the knob.) The second door is the one the girl went into. The third door is slightly open. Steve boldly pushes it open.

In one corner is an unmade bed. The rest of the room is a studio. Right away, we know it belongs to Antoine.

"It's Jerusalem!" I say. All around the room are the paintings we talked about, Jerusalem during the ages. They're magnificent. I walk over to the Crusader one. As we had planned, all of them are street scenes, but set back and viewed from the dimness of a merchant's shop. This one has a shop with bales of silk and baskets of spices. Out in the street are some rough-looking Crusaders strolling through the souk. They are not menacing, just dirty-looking, and one gets the sense that the East, with its silk and spices, is going to have an effect on them soon.

All the pictures are evocative of some future event. For example, the one from the British Mandate replaces the Crusader knights with British soldiers. The merchant's shop is now a Jewish one with menorahs and mezuzahs. One knows that the Jews are just waiting for the British to leave so they can become a nation.

Finding the room filled with paintings momentarily bewilders us. Antoine wasn't just playing along with us until he could steal the map. He was working on the pictures of Jerusalem at the same time.

"Ginny!"

I recognize the voice.

I turn and look at the doorway. It's Antoine. He's smiling and holding a paper cup of coffee.

"Thank you for coming to my studio," he says, glancing at Steve. Antoine is completely relaxed, no sign of guilt. "If I had known you were coming, I would have picked up a coffee for you too."

He sits down on his bed, waves a hand and says, "So what do you think?"

I look around at the paintings again.

"They're perfect," I say. "They're incredible."

I look helplessly at Steve. What is happening here?

Now Antoine's looking at Steve.

"Do you think your dad will be OK with them?" Antoine asks him.

"Uh, yeah. Sure," says Steve. He doesn't know what to do either.

"You weren't at work, today," I say, perching on a stool, the only other thing to sit on in the room.

"No," he says, sipping his coffee. "It's my day off." He grins. "Did you miss me?"

I'm probably turning red. At this point, Steve steps in.

"Look, Antoine," he says, moving in closer. "We're here because today the Crusader map went missing. You're the chief suspect."

"I'm the chief suspect?" Antoine almost spills his coffee.

"Well, you have a key," I say.

"So?" says Antoine, putting his coffee down on the window ledge by his bed. "So does half the museum staff."

"The museum director had a look at your resumé and she's doubtful whether . . ."

"She's?" Antoine interrupts him. "The museum director is a man." He turns to me. "I think I told you that my mom knows him."

"I remember you saying your mom knew the director, but we met her today," I say.

"Well," says Antoine, reaching for his coffee. "You didn't meet the museum director if you met a woman. And furthermore, the museum director is in Greece right now." He takes a sip of his coffee just as Steve collapses on the bed beside him.

"What the . . . ?!" Now Antoine really has spilled coffee on himself. But Steve is too busy groaning to notice.

"Oh, Ginny!" he says. "Don't you get it? Oh this is bad!"

I nod. I'm beginning to get it.

"What is going on?" says Antoine, annoyed.

"Do you have a phone I could use?"

Antoine just stares at him and then he reaches into a pocket and hands him a cell phone.

"I've got to get me one of these," mutters Steve. "Now what was his number again?"

Steve has to call his home to find out what his dad's cell number is. When he finally gets his dad he gives him a quick summary of what we've found out. From what I gather, there have been more developments at the museum.

Steve clicks a button and hands the phone back to Antoine.

"Now all the maps are gone," he says.

"What?!" says Antoine who sounds more confused than ever.

"It's like this," says Steve. "Today, two ladies masquerading as a museum employee and the museum director stole the maps. I think the idea was to blame it all on you since you had a key to the room. The fake museum director certainly wanted to give us the impression that you were the prime suspect. In any case, while we were all running around looking for the Crusader map, they walked off with all the rest."

Antoine shakes his head. The coffee is back on the windowsill.

"This is unbelievable," he says.

"It may be to you," says Steve. "But Ginny and I are used to it." He takes my hand again. "We're needed at the museum."

"I'm coming too," says Antoine, following right behind us.

We head back down Queen Street at about the same pace

that we came. Within a half hour, we're back at the museum. Now the police are there. The workplace is a crime scene and all the additional action is in the library. We quickly gather that Dad and Dr. Lineman now know that they didn't meet the real museum director.

Antoine's appearance means that he gets a whole investigator to himself. He isn't a suspect anymore, but it's possible he may know who the women are. They are obviously familiar with the museum.

Despite Steve's optimism that we are needed at the museum, we really aren't. We sit in a corner of the library on the floor since all the other chairs are taken. Doing research seems pointless since without the maps there won't be *The Walls of Jerusalem*.

The Walls of Jerusalem

CHAPTER NINE

I think Dr. Lineman still suspects Antoine. He certainly keeps a suspicious eye on him while he's being questioned. And much to the annoyance of both father and son, when the investigators are finished with Antoine he comes over and sits down on the floor beside me.

I smile pleasantly. Steve will just have to deal with it.

"How did it go?" I ask.

Antoine shakes his head.

"Crazy," he says. "I knew that girl, Tammy. She went out of her way to talk to me. I guess it was just to get at the maps. They say she doesn't even work here. She just got a hold of a blazer and everyone thought she was an employee."

"Wouldn't she need a security pass?" I say.

"Not if she wasn't going into any of the secure areas," says Antoine. "Besides, she was only here a day or two."

"Do you think the women knew about the maps?" says Steve, obviously deciding to consider Antoine a source rather than a rival.

"I dunno," said Antoine. "Probably. She asked me a lot of questions about my work. In retrospect I think I must have told her everything she needed to know to steal the maps. I thought

she was interested in *me*.” Antoine ruefully shakes his head. I guess this is a first for him.

“Well that’s understandable,” mutters Steve. It’s a spontaneous remark, a thought spoken out loud. It says so much about the tension between us that we all end up smiling at each other.

“Anyway,” says Steve. “I think we’d better do something about this, eh?”

Antoine looks surprised.

“Without those maps, our dads are out of a job,” says Steve. “You have a studio full of paintings that the museum won’t be able to use. We have to get the maps back.” He stands up.

“How are we going to do that?” says Antoine. We’re all on our feet now.

“Nobody steals a whole bunch of old maps unless it’s for a reason. They must have a seller all lined up.”

“The police will look into that,” says Antoine.

“We have to move fast,” says Steve. As we’re heading out the door, I give Dad a look that tells him I’m-with-Steve. He nods and his eyes say Keep-safe. He’s too busy with the police to be leaving anytime soon. The hallway is a little quieter.

“They’re probably on their way to some antiquity dealer right now,” says Steve.

“They’re long gone,” says Antoine. “You would need a large vehicle to hold those maps. Especially if they kept them in their protective sheeting.”

“My guess is they won’t be too far from here,” says Steve.

“They must have a vehicle of some sort,” Antoine says again. “And there’s nothing we can do to catch up now.”

“I don’t think there are too many dealers in Toronto who would be interested in old maps of Jerusalem,” says Steve. He and Antoine are not on the same wavelength. “Who would be interested in these particular maps?” He answers his own question. “A Jew. Definitely a Jew.”

“Yeah,” says Antoine. “A rich Jew. That’s fine. But that’s where the police come in handy. I don’t know of any rich Jewish people who are interested in black-market maps of Jerusalem.”

“Obviously the person would never be able to show them to

anyone,” continues Steve. “So it would be something he would buy for his own personal satisfaction. My guess is it's someone who's already involved with ROM. Maybe someone who's funded things in the past. He knows about the maps because he's an insider . . .”

Antoine seems to have given up.

Meanwhile, a thought has occurred to me. Antoine is right. One of the maps is large. You would need a van to lay it out without bending it. I combine that with something Steve said, *my guess is they won't be too far from here.*

“The maps are still in the museum,” I say suddenly.

“What?” Both Steve and Antoine look at me.

“They're too big to just walk out the door with,” I say. “Two women would be hugely conspicuous carrying a whole pile of old maps. The guards would have noticed. *Someone* would have noticed.”

“That's true!” says Steve. “They must still be around here somewhere!” His head starts swivelling.

Antoine nods and looks thoughtful.

But Steve's imagination is just getting going. “They hide them and then come back for them. It's brilliant. Maybe it's not even them that come back, but different people. Dressed up as workmen carrying something large, that sort of thing.”

I nod.

“Let's go!” says Steve. He's about to dash off.

“Uh-uh.” I shake my head. “This is too important to do on our own.” I grab his hand and drag him back to the library.

Dad raises his eyebrows when he sees me holding Steve's hand, but he quickly focuses on what I have to say. The investigator talking to him is also pretty focused and soon everyone in the room is listening and nodding.

I'm glad I turned to the professionals because within a matter of minutes, they have floor plans out and have organized into teams to methodically search the museum.

Even though it's my idea, once again we are relegated to the fringes of the investigation. Even Antoine has gone off with the others since he knows the museum better than we do.

Steve and I are left alone in the library.

“Well?” I say. “I guess that's it for us.”

Steve is deep in thought.

"There's just one thing that bothers me," he says finally.

"What's that?" I say.

"That whole visit to the fake director's office. You know, Tammy coming along and saying that we're wanted in the director's office. What was the point?"

"A decoy," I say automatically.

"Exactly," says Steve. "But a decoy for what?"

My eyes widen.

"A third person!" I say. "I totally forgot about that third person! Someone was in the workroom. Stealing the Crusader map."

Steve nods.

"It's a possibility that has to be considered. Otherwise, why do something to get us away from the workroom? But even there, that doesn't really make sense," Steve continues. "Because it isn't until later that the entire collection disappears. Let's think about this." He leans forward. "The Crusader map is stolen. Right away, Antoine is a suspect. So you and I dash off to capture him."

I nod.

"Meanwhile, Dad and Dr. Lineman are roaming around the museum with the supposed museum director doing their own investigation. They are away from the workroom. That's when the rest of the maps are stolen."

"That's true," I say. "That would be the only time it could happen."

"Now at that point," says Steve. "It could have been Tammy hiding the rest of the maps."

"Why Tammy? Why didn't the third person take them all when he or she was in the workroom earlier?"

"Because it was deliberately done in two stages," says Steve. "I think the fake museum director was correct when she said the Crusader map was real. And by a happy coincidence, it was also the smallest and easiest to carry out. But the rest are valuable too. They can be hidden and retrieved when it's convenient."

"So now we have three thieves, two women and a third person." I think about this. "But who was the third person?"

"I think we know who the third person was," says Steve quietly.

I just stare at him. It takes me a moment to get it.

"Antoine?" I say. I have tingle in my spine. Is it possible?

"It makes sense," says Steve. "He has a key. He could walk out with his sketchbook without anyone being suspicious. The museum director accuses him, but even without us showing up at his apartment, he'll easily be cleared of all suspicion when the other maps disappear. Did you notice how he had a takeout coffee?"

I nod.

"I noticed several coffee-makers on the counter of that kitchen. It's cheaper to drink it that way. But Antoine went out and made sure that someone saw him at the same time that the rest of the maps were being stolen."

"Stolen by Tammy?"

Steve nods.

"Three people. All working together. And all creating distractions," says Steve. "We find out from Antoine that the museum director is a fake. The museum director tells us that Tammy is a fake. And to add to the confusion, the museum director implies that Antoine is a fake. It's as if they wanted to keep us guessing until they'd gotten away."

"That means Antoine's out there wandering around," I say, feeling panicky. "What are we going to do? He could be getting away!"

Steve shakes his head.

"I don't think it's going to work that way. I think the plan was that Antoine would be a suspect and then he would be cleared. Then he could just carry on here."

"But how can you be sure?"

"Because of the women. There was really no need for them. Antoine could have done the whole thing himself. But then he would have been the biggest suspect. This way, the women are the focus of an investigation and Antoine can carry on as a museum artist. But it's my guess that he's going to be the one who will somehow get the rest of the maps out of here."

"I guess I really wrecked things for him then," I say, my eyes wide at the thought. "He was probably just going to carry

away the rest of them at his leisure. Maybe one at a time. And now everyone's out looking for them.”

Steve nods.

“If our theory is correct, he'll probably panic and do something foolish.” Steve sounds like a detective novel.

“But everyone's out looking!” I say. “No matter what he does, they're going to find the maps!”

Steve shakes his head. “Nope,” he says. “I think they're looking everywhere but where the maps actually are.”

I just stare at him.

“You said it yourself, Ginny. Someone walking around the museum with the maps would be conspicuous. So there's really only one place that Tammy could have hidden them.”

I look around the room and nod.

The maps are somewhere in the library.

CHAPTER TEN

It's mischievous, I know.

But Steve and I have a little fun with it. The maps are behind one of the bookshelves. The bookshelves take up most of the wall so they're the ideal place to hide something large and flat. We carefully extract them and take them back to the workroom.

There we return them to the drawers. The workroom is a crime scene but everyone's out looking in the museum.

Then we sit back in the library and wait for everyone to get back.

“Ginny!”

The voice that thrilled me now chills me.

It's Antoine and he's alone.

“Oh, hey!” I say to Antoine before a quick glance at Steve.

Steve gives me a reassuring smile.

“Did you find anything?” Steve asks, leaning forward. He almost looks like he's going to pounce.

Antoine shakes his head.

“It was a good theory, Ginny,” Antoine says, sitting down on the coffee table like the first day we met. “But I think they're going to have to come up with something else.”

There's a silence.

"Oh, I forget to tell you," he says, casually. "Your fathers want you out looking too."

"Really?" says Steve. Only I can detect the slight mocking in his voice. "I thought you said they'll probably have to come up with something else."

"Well . . ." Antoine shrugs. "They have to search the place thoroughly to be sure."

"Of course," says Steve. But he doesn't move.

"They're up on Level 4," says Antoine. "Textiles and Costumes."

Steve nods pleasantly.

The tension doesn't seem to be bothering him. But Antoine wants us out of here.

"I dunno," he says, leaning back in his chair. "Ginny and I have done enough for the day. I just always seem to get into trouble wherever I go. They don't need me." He smiles.

But Antoine is serious.

"Yes, they do," he says. "They need everyone."

"Then let's all go together," says Steve, standing up.

It's an indication of Antoine's growing desperation that he doesn't pick up on the way Steve is playing with him.

"Uhhhh . . ." Antoine doesn't have a quick excuse. "OK . . ."

But he's a little more in control of his thoughts once we're out of the hallway and in the public gallery. "Actually, I was just sent to get you guys. I'm with the team covering this level."

"Sure," says Steve.

Antoine gives us a smile, not entirely sincere, and heads for a smaller room that contains artifacts from China. Once he's out of sight, Steve is hurrying us back to the library.

"Steve!" It comes out like a groan. He's dragging me along the hallway. "Why can't we get somebody . . .?"

"Because I want to be sure," says Steve.

This time we don't sit down. We move to the corner where we won't be seen until someone is actually inside the room. I have to admit, I stand slightly behind Steve. We're both silent, waiting.

Within minutes, the door is being pushed open.

I can hardly breathe, but it is no surprise when we see that it is Antoine. But he doesn't see us. He's too focused on the bookshelf.

He hurries to the bookshelf and reaches behind it.

"Are they there?" says Steve. His voice is steady. Mine would be shaking.

Antoine jumps and the bookshelf wobbles a bit.

"What?" he asks, startled but trying to recover. "Is what there?"

"The maps, of course," says Steve.

That leaves Antoine in a quandary. He has the sense to realize that the way Steve worded it, it doesn't have to be an accusation.

"I had this idea," he says. "When we were in the library. I thought, what if they're here? So I came back to look."

"Of course, you did," says Steve agreeably. "We had the same idea. That's why we came back."

"Ahhh," says Antoine. "Of course."

Steve and Antoine are just watching each other.

Neither seems inclined to look behind bookshelves to continue the charade.

"I already mentioned that our dads would be out of a job if we didn't get those maps back," says Steve. "But this is more than a summer job to them."

Antoine is quiet.

"Losing these maps could kill their reputations and their careers," says Steve.

Antoine stares at him.

"So what's your point?" he says.

"My point is, if you return the Crusader map, I'll forget I saw you here."

Both mine and Antoine's eyes widen.

"Come on," says Steve, taking my hand and walking toward the door. "My guess is it's at your studio."

Antoine is speechless. But he follows me and Steve.

A security guard is keeping a close eye on everyone who leaves the museum but since we don't have any oversized packages, we exit without being stopped.

We take the subway again. It's rush hour now and there are no seats.

Antoine doesn't say a word the whole trip.

The walk down Queen Street isn't as rushed this time, but it's still brisk. If this were some crazy thriller novel set in a city in America I'd be expecting Antoine to pull out a gun once we reach the studio. But this is real life in Canada and I doubt Antoine has anything more lethal than a butter knife in his apartment.

Back in his room, Antoine reaches under his bed and pulls out his sketchbook. Sure enough, between the pages is the map. Carefully, Steve takes it. Thankfully it's covered in a plastic protector.

"I need something to put this in," says Steve.

Wordlessly, Antoine looks around his room and then reaches under his bed again. He hands Steve a European fashion magazine.

Steve rolls his eyes but places the map between the pages.

"How did you know?" Antoine asks.

Steve shrugs.

"This isn't the first time Ginny and I have faced adventure together. We put the pieces together."

"It was a crazy thing to do," said Antoine, staring at one of his walls. "My girlfriend came up with it."

"Tammy?" I say.

Antoine nods.

"She wants to get married and she thinks people need money to do it."

"So who was the older woman?" I say.

Antoine shakes his head.

"My mother," he says. "I wasn't lying about my mother knowing the museum director. She knew he was in Greece because she had lunch with him before he went. And she knew the maps were valuable because he told her. Especially the Crusader one. Can you believe she and Tammy came up with this whole stupid plan?"

Maybe he's just trying to defend himself. But his regret sounds genuine.

I look around the room.

“You're a great artist,” I say. “You have real talent. Steve's right. We have all the maps now. We'll forget we ever saw you in the library.”

Antoine sits down on his bed. I don't know if he really heard that. But Steve's tugging at my hand. We have to get the map back.

I don't know how we're going to return it without giving Antoine away. I express this thought to Steve on the subway.

But he just puts his arm around my shoulders and tells me not to worry about it.

“It's in God's hands at this point,” he says. “I promised Antoine I wouldn't say anything and I won't. But it's going to take a miracle to pull this off.”

“I agree,” I say.

“Ginny?”

“What?”

“I've been thinking, oh, I don't know how to say it exactly . . .”

“What, Steve?” His arm is still around me and we're pretty close together because it's still rush hour and the subway is crowded.

“It's hard to put it into words. But it's a feeling I have. Like if we can do this and make it all right, then I feel as if God is with us somehow. You know, you and me together? If we can do this, we can do anything.”

I nod.

“I think I know what you mean.”

The museum is almost closing when we get back, but we show our security passes and tell the guard we're with *The Walls of Jerusalem* project and he lets us back in.

The workroom is quiet. No one has returned. The museum is large enough that everyone is still out looking in all the broom closets. But I think it might also be our miracle.

Carefully, Steve puts the last map in its drawer.

We're in the library when the first party returns from the search. Two security guards come in complaining about how they won't get overtime for this. Then one of the investigators comes in and asks a security guard about where you can get a cup of coffee around here. Then there is a shout from the

workroom.

It's Dr. Lineman. His shouting brings everyone into the workroom. Paradoxically, he can shout but he can't speak. He can only point.

The maps are back.

The police were willing to investigate the case of the stolen maps. They are really not all that interested in investigating the case of the returned maps. So despite that Steve's, and probably Antoine's, fingerprints are all over the maps, none of them stick around to analyze them and find out.

Our fathers are thrilled. Bewildered, of course. From the way Dad looks at me, I think he suspects that I know something.

But Dr. Lineman is too busy practically weeping with happiness to even consider that Steve might have had something to do with the maps being returned.

"Do you realize what this means, Anderson?" he says a few times.

"Yes, I do," says my dad nodding. Their careers are saved. Their summer is to proceed as planned.

And tomorrow Steve and I will be setting up twenty chairs.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

After two months of researching and helping Dad, it's wonderful to be able to take a break and have a real summer vacation.

Dad and Dr. Lineman are still working at the museum. But Steve and I, along with Mrs. Lineman, Glen and Julia, are spending two weeks at the log cabin in Midland. It's a five-minute walk to a lake where we've been swimming during the day and watching the stars at night.

Steve's grandfather is a perfect host. He makes us a huge breakfast every morning and then says we're on our own for the rest of the day. For lunch, Steve and I usually have hamburgers in a nearby hut that caters to the summer visitors. Mrs. Lineman makes something simple for dinner. Some nights we have a camp-fire in the backyard and Steve's grandfather tells us old Indian tales.

I know we told Antoine that nobody would ever know that we saw him in the library, but one night, when it's just Steve and me and his grandfather around the fire, Steve tells him everything. When the story is done, Steve's grandfather whistles.

"That's quite the drama," he says. "And you can count on

me to keep my lid sealed.”

“Did I do the right thing?” says Steve. Up til now, I didn't know he had any doubts.

Steve's grandfather nods slowly.

“Under the circumstances, yes. Antoine isn't a danger to anyone. And I think your dad will be more careful with his antiquities in the future.”

We all laugh. It's true. Dr. Lineman and Dad insisted on better security for the maps after that whole crazy day.

Steve and I are seated on an old log that his grandfather has carved into a bench. He has his own rustic chair made of sturdy tree branches. Steve puts his arm around me and I move closer to him. The night air is cool despite the warmth of the fire.

“Actually,” says Steve's grandfather watching us. “I'm glad you told me the story because it confirms something that's been on my mind since our weekend in Toronto.”

“What's that, Grandpa?” says Steve.

“Well,” he says, taking a deep breath. “First things first. A man would have to be blind not to see that you two kids like each other.”

I blush. Steve nods.

“I assume the best about my grandson so I know you have honourable intentions toward Ginny.” Naturally, this is directed toward Steve.

By the light of the fire I can see that Steve is grinning broadly.

“Of course, Grandpa,” he says. “I've loved her ever since I met her. If she's willing to put up with me, I'd like to keep on loving her for the rest of my life.”

They both look at me.

Is this a marriage proposal?! Yikes! I'm only seventeen! Nearly eighteen though. My mind is flying. I know my history. People used to get married when they were twelve. I feel grown up. Do I love Steve? I don't have to think about it. I do. I don't want to live without him.

“Yes,” I say to Steve's grandfather. “I'm agreeable to that.”

His laugh is one of delight.

“Well, Steve, my boy, you just keep on loving her then.”

Steve's arm around my shoulders gets a little tighter.

“And you can call me Grandpa, my dear,” he says to me.

“OK Grandpa!” I grin.

“But that's just the first thing,” Grandpa continues. “I had something to discuss with you two. But I couldn't do it unless I knew you'd be a team. Because that's what this is going to take.”

“What is it, Grandpa?” says Steve.

“I don't know if Steve told you, but my mother was a missionary,” says Grandpa to me. “She was in her forties when she fell in love with my father. They got married and had me.”

“I told Ginny a bit about our family,” says Steve.

“Good,” says his grandfather. “As a child, I never thought about what she gave up to have me. She went to Africa but she might have gone all over the world if she hadn't had me. In those days, the British Empire covered a huge amount of the Earth, so many little islands as well as the bigger places like India and Australia and Canada. In any case, she left her work in Africa to come back here.”

Steve's grandfather leans forward.

“Recently I discovered that the way she supported herself when she was with the British Empire Mission Society was through the rent she received on two properties in Toronto.”

We both nod.

“The properties were right in the heart of Toronto. They belonged to her parents. I'll cut this long story short and tell you that I have no desire to own anything more than this log cabin so a few weeks ago, I sold the properties.”

“Did you?” says Steve.

“Yes,” says Grandpa nodding. “The only thing is, now I have all the money from them. They were prime pieces of Toronto land. A developer bought them. He'll be building an 80-story building or something crazy like that. But this is the important thing. I want to use the money to pick up where my mother left off.”

This idea floats out over the fire to me and Steve.

“What do you mean?” asks Steve.

“I get the sense that you need a life of adventure,” says Grandpa to him. He turns to me. “And if you plan on marrying this guy, I'm guessing that you like adventure too.”

I nod.

“So I'm going to give you two the money from those properties.”

We both gasp.

“If you invest it wisely,” continues Grandpa, “you'll never need money. And then you can take it and go back to the places my mother visited.”

“Wow,” says Steve. He's almost breathless.

“What would we do there?” I ask.

“I believe that you'll know what to do when you get there. People still need to hear about our Saviour. If it's just a case of telling them, tell them. But you might find all sorts of things that need taking care of. I call it unfinished business. My mother never returned to those places because she had me. I want you to go back and finish off what she started.”

The idea is incredible. It's almost unbelievable. In fact, I would say it's a miracle. Our miracle.

“What do you think, Ginny?” says Steve, turning to me. Even in the dark I can see his eyes are shining.

“I don't have to,” I say. “Of course we'll do it!”

He laughs and hugs me.

“Well,” says Grandpa, leaning back. “That's settled then.”

“But Grandpa, what about Dad and Mom,” says Steve, turning back to him. “I mean, you're giving me all this money, but what about them?”

“You mean, what will I leave them when I pass on?”

“Yeah, I guess that's what I mean.”

Grandpa's eyes sparkle.

“I'll leave them my stamp collection!”

EPILOGUE

I've never heard of most of these places," says Mom, flipping through the stamp collection. "Pitcairn Islands, Nyasaland, Cocos Islands, Sarawak . . ."

Dad is seated on the arm of the couch while she looks at the heavy leather album.

"Those places were all part of the British Empire," says Grandpa, sitting down on the couch beside Mom.

I was Ginny Kent when I woke up this morning. As of about an hour ago, I'm Ginny Lineman.

Steve and I got married in the backyard of Grandpa's log cabin. It's an autumn wedding and I'm wearing a soft woollen white dress that stops at my ankles. We just invited immediate family to the wedding and now everyone is milling around in the cabin, drinking champagne and apple cider and talking about our future.

Our immediate future is to go to Gibraltar for our honeymoon. It was the first place the ship stopped when Steve's great-grandmother set out from Toronto, back in 1906.

According to her diary, it was just supposed to be a stop to pick up more passengers. But something in her told her to take her one suitcase and disembark.

Gibraltar is attached to Spain and is known for the spectacular rock that overlooks the Mediterranean. In 1906, it was a British naval fortress, protecting British interests in the Mediterranean. Today, it's part of the European Union, although officially, it's a British Overseas Territory and Spain is also said to lay claim to it.

Steve returns from the kitchen with two glasses of champagne for us and we sit down on the couch opposite Dad and Mom.

I look at Steve and smile. I can hardly believe we're married.

"A lot of the names have changed," says Dad, his eyes on the album. "It would take some internet research to figure out exactly where these places are today."

Dad glances at his watch.

"I have to get you guys to the airport," he says.

It's an overnight flight from Toronto to London's Heathrow Airport where we'll be catching a connecting flight to Gibraltar, but Midland is a long drive from Toronto so we'll have to start early.

Mrs. Lineman quickly hurries around the buffet table tossing cheese and crackers and fruit into a bag for us to take with us. Steve and I finish off our champagne, leaving me slightly dizzy. Mom is crying. She made it through the wedding without crying so I guess it had to happen at some point. Julia is just glaring at me. Dad explained it to me. She is both envious and she is going to desperately miss me, so she has spent the last few weeks being mean to me. I still love her. Maybe things will get back to normal once she grows up and marries Glen.

Our suitcases have been packed for days and Steve and his grandfather are now busy putting them in the trunk of the car outside.

I'm still in my white dress but I chose it because it's the type of thing I can wear for other occasions. Steve looks all very dignified in his dark suit but I suspect he has something casual to change into in his carry-on bag.

Then it's hugs and kisses and good-byes and we're on our way.

We may have had adventures in the past, but I think most of

Epilogue

they are still ahead of us.

THE END

The Kent family adventures

The Treasure of Tadmor
The Strange sketch of Sutton
The Hunt for the cave of Moravia
The Search for the sword of Goliath
The Buried gold of Shechem
The Cache of Baghdad
The Walls of Jerusalem
The Missionary's Diary

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