

The Hunt

“Come on Addie, hurry up!” the guy shouted to his girlfriend. “I thought you were a runner! You should be able to keep up with me!”

“But Will, you know where you’re going, and I don’t!” Addie yelled back to him. She tried to keep up with him, but failed. She looked ahead of her and could see that he had stopped running. She soon caught up to him. “Thanks for waiting on me.”

“It’s no problem, slow-poke,” Will said laughing just a bit. They stood there on the path in the woods and caught their breath. After a few minutes, they continued up the path.

After a couple of hours of hiking, Addie began to get nervous. “Where are we, Will? We should’ve been at your parents’ cabin by now…”

“It’s okay, Addie. I think I see the edge of a building up ahead. This is going to be such a romantic weekend,” Will told Addie reassuringly. He turned onto a side path that led straight to the building that Will saw.

“Will, I don’t think this is your parents’ cabin. This place is abandoned.”

“Maybe we can find someone around this old place that can at least tell us where we are.”

The two walked up to the doorstep. The front of the mansion was massive. There were two beautiful grand doors. There were owl statues on each side of the doors, which also served as flower pots. The place looked as though its owners left decades ago. There were vines growing up the sides of the mansion, and the brush was taking over the yard. It was a pitiful to think that such a beautiful home had just become ruins of a seemingly perfect home.

“Hey, Will! Look over here.” Addie kneeled beside of the welcome mat. Will walked over beside of Addie. She was holding an old, rusted key.

“Where did you find this?”

“It was lying beside of this statue,” said Addie.

“Addie, I don’t think we should go in... there could be someone in there. And if not, we could be walking into trouble. I mean look at this place. All that is left of it is ruins. You never know what is behind those doors. And plus, I thought you were scared of this place? What happened to that?”

Addie knew that Will had a point, but she didn’t want to admit it. *But what if there’s something in there... Something that nobody else has ever seen before...* “I know, but it can’t possibly be that bad, and you know it. Come on!” Addie walked over to the door, put the key into the keyhole, turned it to the left, and opened the door. Will refused to go inside, so Addie told him, “Fine, Will. I’m going in with or without you.” He gave her a look of disapproval, but she shrugged it off and went inside.

There was at least two inches of dust on the walls and furniture. *Creeeeeeeak.* Addie looked down at the floor. The floorboard was very loose. She bent down and raised it up. *Oh wow! What is that?* She reached under the floor and pulled out a stained piece of paper. “What’s that?” She jumped around and saw Will standing in the doorway behind her.

“Oh my gosh, Will! Don’t do that again! You scared me to death! Anyway, I’m not sure exactly what it is...” Addie told him, while unfolding it. “But I think it is a...map?”

“Is that what I think it is? Is that a map of the property?”

“You know what?” Addie said with a grin, “I think it is.”

“What could that lead to? Hidden treasures? Dark secrets?” Addie turned to look at Will, but quickly turned away. Will had his eyes drawn down at the floor when she first turned around, but they almost jumped when he seen her looking at him.

“I’m not sure, but do ya want to find out?” Addie said hopefully.

“Well, I don’t know about you, but I’m not leaving here until I find out.” Will got the map from Addie and began to walk up the massive, spiral staircase. Addie stood back up, put the board back, and followed after him. When they got to the top of the staircase, they looked at the map again. “Look here. Do you see that little drawing? It looks like it is leading to that room right down there,” he said pointing to the last door on the left side of the hallway. Before she could answer, Will started off down the hallway, so she followed after him. He tried to open the door, but it was locked.

“Here let me try this.” Addie got the key that she found on the doorstep and put it in the keyhole. *Click.* It opened. *What is this? There’s nothing here...* Will walked over to the open window, and looked outside. “Why would this map lead us here if there’s nothing in here?”

“Well, I don’t know. Unless someone got here first...” Addie looked over to Will. *What did he just say? I think he’s getting a little too into this...* Will looked at Addie and said, “What is it? What’s wrong?” At about that time, the wind picked up outside. *Whoosh. Whoosh. Bam!* The door closed behind them. Addie ran over to the door and tried to open it, but it wouldn’t open. She hit her shoulder against the middle of the door, but it wouldn’t budge.

“Will! Get over here and help me!”

“Addie, calm down. Going to pieces isn’t going to help us get out of here.” By that time, Addie started pacing across the floor. Suddenly, the floor opened up, and Addie fell down a shoot.

“Help! Will! Help!” Addie screamed as she slid down to the basement from the trapdoor above. When the door closed, it was completely dark. *Where am I? What am I going to do?! I have to get out of here! I can’t just sit here and do nothing. I’m stuck...*

Addie was down there for what seems like hours. Eventually, Will finds his way to Addie. “Oh, Will! I’m so glad you finally found me! I was getting stir crazy down here! Where am I?! Will, just get me out of here. I have never been so happy to see you!” Will’s expression hardened. “Will, what’s wrong?” For a moment, Will didn’t say anything. He just stood there and looked at her. “You’re scaring me, Will. What’s wrong? Please tell me.” *Something isn’t right here. I just know it...* “Will, you know that you can tell me anything, right? Will! Say something!”

“Shut up, Addie!” Will shouted. “I don’t want to hear a word from you!” Addie backed away from him, cringing. “Don’t you get it, Addie?! There was a reason that I wanted to come up here.”

“Will, you’re really scaring me... What is going on?” Addie was hysterical. *This is it. I’m going to be stuck down here forever. I’m never going to get out.* “If you let me go, I promise I’ll never say anything about this! Please just let me go!”

“I said SHUT UP! Didn’t you hear me the first time?” Addie shuddered and began crying. “You really have no idea where you’re at, do you?” he said after regaining his composure. “You’re at the old Hollings’ manor. You know? He was the biggest gangster of all

time? This was his home.” Will seemed to be *admiring* him. “It is rumored that before he died, he hid all of his stolen jewels, gems, and money all over his estate.”

“What does that have to do with me?”

“It has everything to do with you. Don’t you see that? I desperately wanted all of his fortunes, but I had no idea how to get my hands on it. You’re the only person I know that was smart enough to figure it out. I mean look: you found the key and the map and the trapdoor. You found it all.”

“Okay, so I see what you’re doing, but why won’t you let me go?”

“I can’t take the chance of you getting away and telling on my entire scheme. I’ve told you too much now to turn back. But right now, I have to find the rest of Mr. Hollings’ hidden fortunes. Don’t go anywhere,” Will smirked as he left her in the chamber.

As soon as the door closed, she was in the dark all alone again. *I have to find a way out of here. If I wait much longer, he’ll kill me. There’s just one problem. How am I supposed to get out of here?* Addie sat there in silence and darkness for almost an hour. *It’s now or never...* Addie felt the ground around her, but didn’t find anything that she could use. *This is hopeless. There’s no getting out of here alive. I might as well say my final prayers now.* She stood up and began pacing again. As she was pacing, she tripped over something. She stopped and kneeled on the ground. Since she couldn’t see it, she felt it up and down. She had stumbled upon an old, rusty crowbar. Addie was ecstatic! She jumped up and, carefully, ran in the direction of the door.

A second later, she ran into it. She found the edge of the door and pried it open with the crowbar. The light shone into the chamber. *I’m free! I’m free! I’m free!* Addie quickly and

quietly found her way back outside. There was no sign of Will anywhere. *Thump. Thump.*

Thump.

Oh no! That's him. I've got to get out of here! Addie ran back down the pathway leading to the Hollings' mansion as quietly as she could. As she ran, she had the gnawing feeling that she was being followed. It just made her run faster.