

The Mystery of the Missing Money

The Mystery Series – Short Story No. 1

By Paul Moxham

Copyright 2012 Paul Moxham

Version Updated: 11th November 2020

Are you an avid reader of Paul's books?
Do you like giveaways? Crossword Puzzles?
Word Searches? Jigsaw Puzzles?
Then go to www.paulmoxham.com for these
things and much more

If you want to be notified whenever
Paul releases a new book, [click here](#)

If you want to ask Paul a question, email him
at paulmoxham@zoho.com

If you're on Goodreads, check out [Paul M Fan Group](#)
If you're on Facebook, follow Paul [here](#)

All rights reserved, without limiting the rights under copyright reserved above, no part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in or introduced into a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form, or by any means without the prior written permission of the copyright owner of this book. This is a work of fiction. Names, characters, places, brands and incidents are either the product of the author's imagination or are used fictitiously.

THE MYSTERY SERIES

This adventure series set in 1950's Britain will delight children of all ages.

~*~*~

Summer Holidays:

[The Mystery of Smugglers Cove](#)
[The Mystery of the Missing Money](#)
[The Mystery of the Missing Gnomes](#)
[The Mystery of Adventure Island](#)
[The Mystery of the Mysterious Man](#)
[The Mystery of the Strange Notebook](#)
[The Mystery of Hidden Valley](#)

~

Winter Holidays:

[The Mystery of Claw Mountain](#)
[The Mystery of the Golden Elephant](#)
[The Mystery of the Red Balloon](#)
[The Mystery of the Golden Dragons](#)
[The Mystery of the Howling Dog](#)
[The Mystery of the Hidden Suitcase](#)
[The Mystery of Treasure Island](#)

~

Easter Holidays:

[The Mystery of Four Towers](#)
[The Mystery of the Burning Plane](#)
[The Mystery of the Russian Spy](#)
[The Mystery of Ghost Island](#)
[The Mystery of the Perfect Thief](#)
[The Mystery of the Underwater Car](#)
[The Mystery of the Crown Jewels](#)

~

Summer Holidays:

[The Mystery of the Amphibious Jeep](#)
[The Mystery of the Escaped Prisoner](#)
[The Mystery of the Bermuda Triangle](#)
[The Mystery of the Runaway King](#)
[The Mystery of the Secret Lake](#)
[The Mystery of Crocodile Island](#)

~

Box Set:

[The Mystery Series Collection \(Short Stories 1-4\)](#)
[The Mystery Series Collection \(Short Stories 5-8\)](#)
[The Mystery Series Collection \(Short Stories 9-12\)](#)
[The Mystery Series Collection \(Books 1-3\)](#)
[The Mystery Series Collection \(Books 4-6\)](#)
[The Mystery Series Collection \(Books 7-9\)](#)
[The Mystery Series Collection \(Books 10-12\)](#)

~

Worldwide Adventures:

[International Spy](#)

~

Choose Your Own Way:

[Danger in Monrovia](#)
[Lost in the Bermuda Triangle](#)
[Escape From Sylvania](#)

~

Standalone Short Story:

[The Mystery of Santa Claus](#)

~

Interactive Fiction:

PRAISE FOR THE MYSTERY SERIES

"I was drawn in by the fast-paced plot. I enjoyed reading the book and couldn't wait to see how things turned out." --- Smashwords Reviewer

"Paul Moxham takes the reader on a whirlwind of chase scenarios that up the ante with each narrow escape." --- Amazon USA Reviewer

"I love this book, could not put it down and I felt as if I was standing beside the characters." --- Shelfari Reviewer

"This is an entertaining adventure story that would make pleasurable holiday reading for 7 to 10 year olds." --- Amazon UK Reviewer

NOTE:

This short can be read as a stand alone story, but if you want to have full knowledge of the characters, I suggest that you read *The Mystery of Smugglers Cove*, the first book in *The Mystery Series*.

This story is set in 1950's Britain and is written in British English - not American English - so bear this in mind regarding the spelling of some words.

This story is set after the events in *The Mystery of Smugglers Cove*.

Let the Adventure Begin...

It was a perfect summer's day, just right for a picnic. Not too cold, but not too hot. As twelve year old Joe gazed out to sea, he thought back to the day they had arrived in Smugglers Cove.

When his parents had announced they were going to rent a cottage in a sleepy seaside village for the summer holidays, he had imagined it would be very dull. But he had been so wrong. The events of the past two weeks had been far more exciting than anything that he had known back in London.

He glanced down at his younger sisters who were lying on the grassy slope in front of the castle. He waved to them before heading down the steps of the tower.

Reaching the bottom, he passed the courtyard of the crumbling stone fortress that was slowly being weathered away by the wind and the rain. He caught sight of several mice as they scampered across the stone floor and smiled. People might not live here any longer, but at least it was a home for animals.

Whistling a cheerful tune, Joe hurried back to the girls. Nobody would guess that they were sisters. Amy, who was the eldest, had long brown hair and blue eyes, while Sarah had short blonde hair and green eyes.

"What lazy bones you two are," Joe said as he sat down beside his sisters.

"No, we're not," Sarah said. "We're playing a game."

"What game?" Joe asked, brushing his brown hair out of his eyes.

"The cloud game," Amy replied. "Can you see a dog?"

Joe lay down and tried to see if he could spot the shape of a dog in the clouds. He saw it and looked away and tried to find another shape. He couldn't see anything at first, but the clouds were always moving, so it didn't take long for one to form. "I see a plane."

Amy searched the sky and smiled as she spotted it. "I see it. What about a fish?" She waited for the others to spot the animal, which Sarah did a few moments later.

They played this game back and forth for the next five minutes or so and then, as Joe felt hungry, he sat up and started eating one of the sandwiches their mother had made for them.

The girls also sat up and began eating. Joe glanced towards them. "What do you say we have a dip in the water afterwards?"

"We ought to wait for Will," Sarah said.

Amy nodded as she swept her long, brown hair behind her shoulders. Will was a local boy, and he'd helped them when they had been caught up in a thrilling adventure just last week that involved crooks, tunnels, an old manor, and even a boat trip to France.

She grimly smiled. It had been scary at times but, in the end, it had been worth it. After all, they had captured a bunch of crooks that would now be behind bars for a long time. She stood up. "He should be here any moment. After all, he did say to meet him here at noon."

She walked to the crest of the hill that was nearby. Looking towards the village, she caught sight of a lone bicycle rider pedalling up the steep hill. Grinning, she waved and walked back to the others.

Within a matter of minutes, a boy with flaming red hair appeared at the top of the hill.

"Over here, Will!" Joe shouted.

Will pedalled towards them. He climbed off his bicycle as he reached them. "Been here long?"

Sarah grinned. "Long enough for Joe to explore the castle by himself."

Joe smiled. "I didn't really explore it, just took a quick look around."

"You climbed up the tower," Amy said.

"Yes, but I didn't explore the dungeons," Joe replied.

"Ah, the dungeons." Will sat down and glanced towards the others. "I don't suppose you've heard of the Dobson twins?"

Joe frowned. "No. Why?"

Will unwrapped his sandwich as he spoke. "Two years ago, Oswald and Danny Dobson made Smugglers Cove famous."

"How?" Sarah asked.

"The twins broke into a bank and stole a ton of money," Will said.

"What has that got to do with Smugglers Cove?" Amy questioned.

“They were caught here a week later,” Will replied. “On the 16th of January, 1948 to be exact.”

“How on earth can you remember the exact date?” Joe asked.

“Because it happened on my ninth birthday,” Will replied. “I was having a birthday party at Darby’s when there was a commotion out on the main street. Peering out of the window to see what was going on, I saw the twins being bundled into the back of a police car.”

“Did they find the money?” Joe said.

Will shook his head. “No, and that’s where things get interesting. A lot of people searched, but they couldn’t find anything. Not even a single note. Some people think that the twins spent it, others reckon that they hid it in the woods, or even at Chandler Manor. But some people, like me, think that they hid the money at Brackness Castle.”

“What happened to the twins?” Amy said.

“They were locked up and, as far as I recall, are still in prison,” Will replied.

Joe looked across at the castle. “Did the dungeons get searched?”

“Yes, and nothing was found,” Will replied. “But with such a large area to search, the police only searched it once.”

As Amy sipped her lemonade, Joe stood up. “Let’s go.”

“But I haven’t—” Amy said.

“The lemonade can wait. You can stay here, but I’m going now.” Joe set off towards the castle.

Amy put her drink aside. “We’d better get going before he tears the place apart. Knowing him, we’ll still be searching for the money three hours from now.”

The three of them hurried after Joe. Upon reaching the castle entrance, they decided to leave the dungeons until last, so they searched the towers and courtyard, as well as the rooms that were still standing.

But they didn’t find anything. At least, nothing to do with the missing money. They spotted a fox scampering along the wall. Plus, the nest of a robin was nearly destroyed by Joe as he searched for hidden holes in the walls.

As they opened up the big door and walked down the steps into the dungeons, it went dark. Joe realised that he hadn’t brought a torch. Luckily, Will had brought one, and the darkness was swept away as he switched it on.

The children stayed together as they went from one cell to the next. The dungeons were quite large, with over twenty cells, though many had fallen in. The passageway twisted and turned quite a bit, so, if you weren’t careful, you could get lost.

Sarah stayed close to the others as they continued the search, but after thirty minutes of looking into every crevice that they could find, they walked back up the steps and emerged into the bright sunshine.

Amy rubbed her hands. “It was pretty cold down there.”

Will nodded. “Yes, especially since we’re only wearing summer clothing.”

Joe kicked a stone along the ground. “I wish we’d found the money.”

“The money probably isn’t even in there,” Sarah said. “After all, it wasn’t as though they were captured here.”

“So, what are we going to do now?” Amy asked.

“Let’s go down to the beach and make a sandcastle,” Joe suggested. “Then, once we’ve warmed up, we can play in the water.”

The others thought that this was a good suggestion, so they headed back to the big oak tree and, after collecting their bicycles, rode down the hill.

They made their way along the cliff until they came to a path that took them down to the beach. After leaving their bicycles at the edge of the sand, they raced along the sand until they reached the water.

After dipping their feet into the water, they started building a sandcastle. They didn’t have any buckets or spades, but they didn’t need any. With everyone helping, they were able to make a magnificent castle that had four walls, towers, and even a moat.

Once they had finished, Sarah smiled. “It’s a beauty.”

Will leaned back and lay down in the sand. “Now we just have to wait for the tide to come in.”

Joe looked towards their bicycles. "I'll grab the rest of the food while we wait." He rushed off and, a few minutes later, was back with the rucksack. He took out a sandwich and started eating it.

Amy grabbed the rucksack and searched through it. She found some grapes and started eating them. She passed the rucksack to Sarah. "There's an apple in there if you want it."

Sarah nodded and took out the apple. She then reached deeper and pulled out the binoculars. She munched on her apple while she peered through the binoculars. She glanced out to sea to see if there were any boats sailing past. But she couldn't see any.

The cliffs blocked her view of Smugglers Cove, so she turned around and peered towards Brackness Castle. Looking through the binoculars, the castle seemed so close. She could make out almost everything. She even spotted a blackbird on one of the towers.

Then, as she watched, the bird suddenly flew away. A moment later, a person came into view and glanced around. She watched as the man slowly turned from side to side as he searched the surrounding area. She then saw him look in her direction before suddenly disappearing.

Sarah kept watch for the next few minutes, but the man didn't reappear. She glanced across at the others who were lying down in the sand. "There's a man at the castle."

Will opened his eyes. "So what?"

"As soon as he saw me, he disappeared," Sarah said.

"He probably just went down the steps," Amy piped up.

Sarah resumed her watch but, after another five minutes had passed and no one could be seen, she put the binoculars away. "I did see someone, I really did."

"I'm sure you did," Joe replied, "but it was probably just a tourist having a look around at the castle, just like we were doing earlier on."

"I guess so." Sarah sat back down and, as she did so, cried out. "Oh, no!"

"What's wrong?" Amy asked.

"My bracelet's gone!" Sarah frantically searched, but couldn't find it.

"Didn't you tell me that it broke while we were in the dungeons?" Amy said.

"Of course, silly me." Sarah reached into both pockets of her pink shorts but felt nothing. Frowning, she felt around and then cried out again. "Look, there's a hole in this one."

Joe nodded. "The bracelet must still be in the dungeons."

Sarah looked at Joe. "I'd better go and get it now. Can you come with me?"

"But what about the sandcastle?" Joe questioned. "The bracelet will still be there later on."

"I guess so," Sarah said. "But what about that man?"

"Why would someone take your bracelet?" Amy asked. "I'm sure we'll find it, but why the hurry? I promise you that as soon as the sandcastle is destroyed, I'll go and look for it."

"Count me in," Will added.

"Me too," Joe said.

"Okay, I guess it can wait." Sarah sat down on the sand and the four of them waited for the water to reach the castle.

It wasn't long before Joe stood up. "The tide's breaking down the walls." He rushed over and started making the castle walls thicker.

The others joined in. They were able to contain the water at first, but then the water filled the moat and attacked the sandcastle on all four sides. They tried their best but, within a matter of minutes, one of the outer walls fell and water gushed in.

"Concentrate on the inner walls!" Will yelled. "It's our only hope." He stepped into the middle of the castle and waited as Amy grabbed some dry sand and passed it to him.

As the water circled around, it began to get higher and higher. However, due to the hard work of everyone, the walls also got higher. As each wave swept into the moat and through the outer walls, the level of water got higher and higher. Soon, the sand inside the inner walls started to get damp.

"I need more sand!" Will shouted.

The others helped gather more sand, but suddenly a stream of water entered the main part of the sandcastle through a hole that had appeared in the wall. Will lumped dry sand onto the hole and covered it up but, a moment later, another hole appeared. And then another.

Sarah was doing her part by throwing piles of sand onto the walls, but her aim wasn't that good and half of the sand was actually landing on Will instead.

As water began to stream in through the inner walls, Will yelled out and abandoned his post. He leapt over the water and hurried over to where the others were standing.

They watched in silence as the walls collapsed and water poured in. Within a matter of moments, the castle was all but gone.

Sarah stood up. "Let's find my bracelet now."

"Okay," Amy replied. She, along with the boys, followed Sarah to their bicycles.

They were soon at the entrance of the castle. Dropping their bicycles on the grass, they made their way into the courtyard. Joe glanced around to see if the man that Sarah had seen earlier was nearby, but there was no sign of him or anyone else.

"I told you he was just a tourist," Joe said as he headed down the steps of the dungeons.

Will switched on his torch and paused at the bottom of the steps. "Where shall we search first?"

"Um, over here." Sarah led the way as Will shone the torch on the ground.

The hunt for the missing bracelet lasted for a number of painstaking minutes until, finally, Sarah saw something glinting on the ground. She rushed over and reached down and picked up her bracelet. "Yes!"

Joe smiled. "Good spotting. Now, let's head back. I think it was this way." They hurried back the way they had come, but paused as they came to an intersection.

Amy frowned as she saw a glimmer of light coming from the right. "What's that?"

"It looks like someone else is down here," Joe said.

"Who?" Sarah asked.

"Maybe your mystery man." Will glanced at the others. "Do you want to see who it is?"

"Yes, let's," Amy said.

The group hurried towards the source of the mystery light. As they walked closer, they began to hear voices. The light also got brighter and Will, who was at the front, suddenly paused as they got within hearing range.

"Why are you—" Joe said.

"Quiet!" Will whispered.

Everyone paused and listened as they heard two male voices having an argument. Staying close to the walls, Will inched himself closer so he could hear every single word that was being said. A minute later, he hurried back to the others. His face was one of amazement. He pushed the others into a nearby cell before he spoke up. "You won't guess who's in there."

"Who?" Amy questioned.

"Danny and Oswald," Will said.

Joe gasped. "The twins?"

Will nodded. "Yes. They must have escaped and came here to get the money that they stole."

"We need to tell the police," Sarah whispered.

"But what about the money?" Amy said. "What if they find it before the police arrive?"

"We could place some rocks in front of the door so they can't escape," Will suggested.

Joe peered out of the cell door. "Let's get going now."

Will followed Joe out of the cell. "I'll just make sure that the men are the twins."

"But you said—" Joe said.

"The only way we'll know for certain if it is them is if I take a peek. After all, they're supposed to be in prison, and I wouldn't want to drag the police up here for nothing." Will left the others and made his way slowly towards the other cell.

When he was really close, he went extra slowly as he inched himself along the wall. He couldn't hear voices now, just grunting noises as the men tried to move something.

Reaching the cell door, Will peered around it. As soon as he saw the two men, he knew that they were Danny and Oswald Dobson. They looked almost exactly alike, except for the fact that one was a bit fatter.

They were sitting in the middle of the cell and were trying to enlarge the opening of a hole in front of them. The thing that caught Will's eye the most was the sack of money that lay beside them. There was no doubt about it. He didn't know how they had escaped, but they obviously had, and now they were on the verge of escaping with the money and disappearing forever.

Suddenly, the fat man, Oswald, glanced up. He spotted Will instantly. "Hey!"

Will turned and raced back to the others. "Run!"

The two men hurried out of their cell and the chase began. The children headed towards the steps, but Joe, who was in the lead, made a mistake and went left instead of right.

By the time the mistake was discovered, the children had lost valuable minutes. Arriving at the bottom of the steps, Joe glanced around. "Do you think we beat the men?"

"Not sure," Amy replied. "I can't hear anyone."

"Let's go up the steps," Sarah said.

They hurried up the steps. Joe pushed on the dungeon door as he reached it, but it failed to move. The others helped him, but it didn't budge.

"So they did beat us," Will muttered, annoyed.

"What do we do now?" Sarah piped up, fear colouring her voice.

Joe looked at Will. "Is there another way to get out of the dungeons other than through this door?"

"Not that I know of," Will replied.

Joe gave the door one last push. It didn't budge, so he headed down the steps.

"Where are you going?" Amy asked.

"If we can't escape, at least we can do something about the money," Joe said.

The others hurried after him and, before long, they were at the cell where the men had been. Joe walked over to the hole and saw it was deeper than he had expected. He also saw that, while the twins had gathered some of the money from the hole, still a large part remained.

"Hey, look." Sarah held up the sack of money. It had a hole in it.

"So that's what they were doing," Will said. "Trying to get the money that had fallen out."

"But why couldn't they reach down and grab it?" Joe tried reaching down the hole. He couldn't grab the money with his hands and realised that he would have to lower himself into the hole to actually get to it.

Suddenly, Will climbed down into the hole.

"What are you doing?" Sarah asked.

Will didn't answer as he knelt down and peered at something that the others couldn't see from where they were standing. A few moments later, he stood up and, still in the hole, glanced up at them. He was smiling. "I just found a way to escape."

"How?" Joe asked.

"There's a tunnel next to the hole," Will replied. "I don't know where it leads, but anywhere is better than here."

"What about the money?" Amy asked.

Will picked up the rest of the money from the hole and gave it to her. "Put it all in the sack and bring it with us. If we leave it here, the men will be gone by the time we get back with the police."

Will handed Joe the torch. "You guard the rear."

Joe took the torch and helped the girls shove the money into the sack as Will started down the tunnel. He shone the torch at the hole so the girls could follow Will and then, after he gave the bag to Amy to hold, quickly went to the cell door.

He hadn't heard the men, but just wanted to make sure they weren't close by. He was in for a shock. As he glanced around, he heard a yell. The men were close and coming fast.

Joe rushed back to the hole, climbed in, and put the torch in his pocket. He had just started crawling into the tunnel when he heard another yell. He knew the men were right behind him.

He hurried as fast as he could and soon caught up with the others. He briefly paused to see if the men would follow him, but he heard nothing, so he assumed they had given up or the hole was too small for them. However, he didn't think they would give up so easily, and so he continued crawling as fast as he could.

~

Will paused as he caught sight of a light up ahead. It looked like daylight and, if so, that would mean the end of the tunnel. He called back to the others. "Not long to go now."

Renewed with more strength, Will crawled faster and, as he did so, the light got brighter. He couldn't see the actual light source as the tunnel appeared to bend around a rock, but that didn't matter.

He started thinking of what they should do next, when he crawled around the rock and found himself at the end of the tunnel.

He stood up and realised he was in the back of a cave. He hurried forward around another rock and smiled as he caught sight of the sea. But then he paused in shock and disbelief. He walked forward to make sure his eyes weren't deceiving him. They weren't.

He stood still, gazing upon what was in front of him. He couldn't believe it. He had thought that it was daylight and that they were free, but they weren't. He was still standing there in shock when the others exited the tunnel and walked over to him.

Sarah gasped as she saw what Will was looking at. "Goodness, what are we going to do now?"

"I don't know," Joe said. "In fact, it might have been better if we had stayed in the dungeons."

Will shook his head. "No. This tunnel was obviously made by a prisoner, so if he escaped—"

"But we don't know if he did," Amy interrupted. "Do you have any idea of how we can get down from here?"

Will didn't answer as he stepped forward and gazed down at the rocks fifty feet below. They were standing in a small cave that was halfway up the cliff. He gazed upwards and saw that the cliff went for another thirty feet or so. There was not a path to be seen and, with the sharp rocks down below, they were stuck.

Will sat down and thought things over. The others did the same. Three minutes passed and still they sat there.

Suddenly, Amy noticed a small boat out to sea. "Hey! Let's wave to that boat." She stood up and started waving and yelling. The others joined her. But the boat continued on its way.

Sarah sat back down. "We'll be stuck here forever. And all because of me. If only I hadn't dropped my bracelet. Then we wouldn't have come back to the castle and we wouldn't be here now."

Joe sat down next to her and put an arm around her shoulder as he comforted her. "If it's anyone's fault, it's mine. If I hadn't been so keen on exploring the castle, you wouldn't have dropped your bracelet."

"Blame me. I was the one who discovered this tunnel," Will said. "I thought it would lead somewhere, but it doesn't."

Amy glanced at the three of them as they sat against the wall of the cave, all looking disappointed. "Is this it? Are we going to give up just because of a small setback?"

"Small?" Sarah piped up. "You call being stuck halfway up a cliff small?"

Amy nodded. "What about when we were tied up in those tunnels last week? Or when we were held prisoner on a boat bound for France? Didn't we get out of those situations?"

Joe slowly nodded. "Well, yes, but they were different."

"I'm sure we can find a way out of this situation," Amy said.

"Why don't we just go back the way we came?" Sarah said.

"I'm sure the men will just let us walk out of the dungeons," Will replied, sarcastic.

Joe walked to the edge of the cave and glanced down. He peered upwards. There were a number of bushes growing from holes in the side of the cliff. He turned to Will. "How did you like hanging from a cliff last time?"

Will thought about when he had held on for dear life in their last adventure. "It wasn't a good experience."

"Then I guess it's up to me then," Joe said.

Will stood up and hurried over. "You're not suggesting—"

"It's the only way," Joe interrupted.

"What is?" Amy asked.

Joe pointed up the cliff. "There's a chance that someone could climb up using the bushes as handholds and the holes as foot placements."

"They would be crazy," Amy cried out. "Crazy for a climber to attempt it, but impossible for someone like you." She walked over to the sack of money. "At least we can make sure that the twins don't get the money." Carrying the sack, she walked to the edge of the cliff.

Will glanced at her. "What are you doing?"

"What does it look like?" Amy held the money over the edge and prepared to drop it.

Suddenly, Sarah cried out and, a moment later, another voice called out. "I wouldn't do that if I were you."

Amy whipped around and gasped.

The thin twin, Danny, was standing behind Sarah. He had his hands on her shoulders. "Give me the money."

"No," Amy replied.

Danny looked at each of them in turn. "I got no grudge against kids. In fact, I actually have one of my own. Just give me the money and I'll let the girl go."

Will stood up. "And what if we don't?"

Danny glared at Will. "I need the money, and I need it now. So give me my money or you'll get hurt."

Joe looked at Amy. "Give it to him."

Amy walked forward and gave him the bag of money. Danny took it and shoved Sarah forward before turning and heading back towards the tunnel.

Joe walked to the edge of the cave once more and glanced up. "You can be sure that the men will block up the tunnel to make sure that we don't get out."

"But that man said—" Amy said.

"He's lying," Will interrupted. "They know that the tunnel is the only way in and out of here."

"Or so they think," Joe said.

Will stared at Joe. "If you start that climb, there's no turning back. Why don't you wait and see if there's another way?"

"There isn't," Joe replied, defiant. "It's this way or no way. Besides, I know I can do it." He made his way to the left side of the cave and got ready to climb. "It can't be any harder than what I did last week."

"Please be careful," Sarah begged.

Joe nodded. "I'll do my best." He started climbing. He knew what lay ahead would need all of his strength. It was tough, but not impossible. He had climbed his share of cliffs in years gone by and knew that one mistake could be costly.

The others watched as Joe slowly edged himself up the cliff. They could see how much he was struggling and could only imagine what it was like.

"If Mum knew what he was doing—" Sarah said.

"It's a good thing she doesn't know," Amy interrupted. "I can't imagine she would be taking it well. After all, how many people would have climbed this cliff and lived to talk about it?"

~

On the cliff face, Joe hung on tightly to a small bush with only one hand as he used his other one to reach upwards for a little hole that he could see. He had to strain himself, but he made it.

Clutching tightly onto his newfound grip, Joe moved his legs away from the small ledge he had been standing on and brought them up higher. Once he had found a small crevice, he let go of the bush and placed both hands in the small hole.

This procedure for moving was agonizingly slow, but there was no other way that he was going to be able to climb up this particular bit.

Joe knew that time was running out. He had to hurry. There was no point in climbing the cliff if he was going to be slow. He spotted another bush just to the right of him. It didn't look as though it would carry his body weight, but he had to take a chance. He released his left hand and inched himself along a very small ledge until he could grip the roots of the bush. He pulled on it. It seemed strong enough.

He glanced around and realised that, apart from the bushes, it was sheer rock. This was the only way to climb up this part of the cliff.

There was no use waiting, so Joe acted immediately. He grabbed the bush with his other hand and pulled himself up. He could hear the roots groaning and part of the foliage started to pull away from the cliff, but he continued. This was it. He couldn't stop now.

He reached the top of the bush and reached for another handhold. But he couldn't find any! He dragged himself up higher so his feet were resting in the same holes as the branch and tried again. He still couldn't reach.

He glanced upwards and spotted three bushes in almost a straight line. They were roughly three feet apart from each other. And that was all. The rest of the cliff was sheer rock. He would have to leap from one bush to the next. This was going to be tough and scary. If the bushes didn't support his weight, it would be all over. He could feel the bush he was currently on giving way, and knew that unless he moved in the next half a minute, it would be all over.

Taking a deep breath, Joe pumped himself up and flexed the muscles in his arms. It was now or never. Using the bush as a platform to push off from, he leapt up to the first bush.

Gripping tightly, he waited ten seconds before he leapt again. Reaching that, he waited and then leapt. So far, he had been lucky. But now he had run out of bushes. He was quite close to the top. Only one leap remained. But it was going to be the hardest leap yet.

There was a small ledge. A ledge that he could place his hands on and pull himself up. But only if he could grip it. It would only be possible if there was a crevice in the ledge big enough for him to slip his hands into.

He had no idea if the ledge was flat or not, but with the current bush being ripped away from the cliff by his body weight, he only had two options. Stay clutched to the bush and fall with it when it broke away from the cliff, or make the leap.

Joe leapt. His fingers touched the ledge and started to slip. But then they dug into a small crevice and he held on. He breathed a sigh of relief as he hung there, suspended only by his arms. The bush that he had previously been hanging onto plummeted down the cliff face.

By this stage, his arms were really hurting. But he couldn't stop. He had to pull himself up. Once he did that, he would be on grass and the danger would be over. The longer he waited, the harder it would be.

Joe took a deep breath and pulled himself up. He grimaced and yelled out in pain, but still he continued.

A few moments later, he flung himself upon the grass. He had made it! But now wasn't the time to rest. He stumbled to his feet and raced to the castle. He climbed over a half-broken wall and leapt down into the courtyard. He rushed over to the dungeon door and opened it.

Listening carefully, he couldn't hear anything. Was he too late? But then he smiled as he heard the men's voices. After hurriedly closing the door, he searched for whatever rocks he could put in front of it. They had to be heavy enough to stop the men from opening the door, but light enough for him to carry.

Joe spotted a bunch of rocks that were nearby. He ran towards them and got to work. He had managed to put two rocks in front of the door when he heard voices on the other side. This spurred him on and he had just managed to get the third rock in front of it when he saw the door move.

It budged a bit and then stopped. He heard the men yell out in anger and he realised he didn't have much time. He turned and raced to where he hoped his bicycle would be.

It was right where he had left it. Thankful, he hopped on and rode down the hill. It was a relief to rest his tired legs as he whizzed down the grassy slope. As he slowed down, he turned the pedals as fast he could.

He had hoped that he would spot a car, but none could be seen as he turned into the main street. And then, to his surprise, he saw three police vehicles in front of the police station.

Joe braked hard as he skidded to a stop in front of the station just as Inspector Price stepped out of the building. He was surprised to see the inspector, whom he had met last week, but he was glad to see someone that he knew.

Inspector Price smiled. "Hello, Joe, what—"

"The twins are at the castle!" Joe interrupted.

The inspector's expression changed to one of astonishment. "You don't mean Danny and Oswald Dobson, do you?"

Joe nodded. "I locked them in the dungeon."

Inspector Price grinned. "Great job." He glanced at his men. "To Brackness Castle." He hurried to his car. "Jump in my car, Joe."

Joe dropped his bicycle, raced to the shiny police car, and climbed in the back. A moment later, the powerful engine started and the car zoomed down the road. The other police cars followed as the inspector's car headed out of Smugglers Cove.

Joe didn't know if the police cars were going to drive up the steep hill, but they did. He hung on tight as the vehicle bounced over rocky ground as it headed up the slope. The car came to a stop at the entrance to the castle and everyone climbed out.

The inspector waited until all the officers were ready, and then he told them to circle the castle. Joe had told him that he didn't know if the door would have held, so the inspector wanted to make sure that, if the men were still in the area, he would catch them.

Once the police officers were in position, Inspector Price, along with two officers and Joe, entered the courtyard. They paused and listened, but they couldn't hear anything.

"Maybe the twins have escaped," Joe said.

"Possibly," the inspector replied.

The group hurried over to the dungeon door and Joe smiled. The rocks were still in place and, by the banging noises coming from behind the door, the crooks weren't ready to admit defeat.

The inspector whispered to one of his men and he hurried off. Joe waited as the other police officers arrived at the scene. Then, as the inspector gave the word, two officers began removing the rocks in front of the door.

Once they had been removed, the officers withdrew. With their weapons at the ready, the police officers waited for the men to try to open the door again.

Seconds later, the door burst open and Danny and Oswald came into view. They hadn't been expecting the door to open so quickly, and so the forward momentum of their bodies sent them onto the ground. They stumbled to their feet only to discover that they were surrounded by a number of armed police officers.

Danny quickly raised his hands. Oswald hesitated, but after glancing around, he realised that he had no other option, so he also raised his hands.

Danny caught sight of Joe. "Hey, how did you escape?"

Joe grinned. "Wouldn't you like to know?"

Inspector Price stared at the two crooks. "Where's the money?"

"On the steps," Danny said.

One of the officers quickly went over to the steps and found the sack. He opened it and peered in. "It looks like it's all here, Inspector."

Inspector Price looked over at Joe. "Good job. Now, where did you say the others were?"

Joe climbed over the wall and walked over to the cliff as the other officers led the twins away. He went as close to the cliff as he dared to go and peered down. He yelled out. "Amy? Sarah? Will? Are you still there?"

A moment later, Will cried out. "Have the police come yet?"

The inspector called down. "It's Inspector Price here. We've caught the twins."

"We'll meet you at the hole!" Amy yelled.

Joe looked at the inspector. "The crooks probably blocked up the hole. We'll have to clear it."

The inspector nodded as the two of them walked back to the castle. He called out to two men and the four of them headed down into the dungeons.

~

That afternoon, a shiny black, police car pulled up outside Rose Cottage. As Inspector Price climbed out and walked down the path, he couldn't help but admire the place.

With a fruit tree in the front garden and rose bushes climbing up the veranda posts, the two-storey thatched roof cottage really did look nice this time of year. He knocked on the door and waited.

A moment later, it was opened by Mrs Mitchell. "You must be Inspector Price."

The inspector smiled. "Yes. Have those children of yours been telling you stories about me?"

Mrs Mitchell laughed. "Only good ones. Come on in. I'm sure they will want to see you."

The inspector stepped inside and the two of them walked into the living room where the four children were playing a card game. They stopped as soon as they saw the policeman.

"Hello," Joe said.

"I just wanted to say that we've counted the money and every single pound of it is there." The inspector glanced at Mrs Mitchell. "I expect the children told you what happened earlier today."

Mrs Mitchell nodded. “Well, not the whole story, but enough to work out what happened. But I don’t understand one thing. How did the twins escape in the first place?”

The inspector grimly smiled. “They were lucky. The van that was transporting them and several other prisoners flipped on a wet road late last night. I arrived at the scene of the accident to find the guards injured and the prisoners gone.”

“Did you catch the rest of the men?” Amy said.

“By the time morning came, we had rounded up most of them, and by afternoon we were just missing the Dobson twins. I had just arrived in Smugglers Cove to start a search of the surrounding area, when Joe arrived and told us the news.” The inspector glanced at Mrs Mitchell. “You have some fine kids, ma’am.”

Mrs Mitchell smiled. “I know.”

“Well, I’d better get going. See you around.” The inspector turned and left.

Will glanced at the others. “That’s another case we’ve helped the inspector on.”

Joe smiled. “Yes, it’s starting to become a regular occurrence.”

“Just as long as it doesn’t happen too often,” Sarah said.

Amy looked at her younger sister. “Why not? I thought you liked adventures?”

“Well, yes, but I’ve had enough of dark places for a while,” Sarah said. “I just want a few days where I can sunbathe and laze around.”

“Isn’t that what you do every school holidays?” Joe said. “I’m enjoying this bit of excitement. Though, I don’t expect we’ll have another adventure anytime soon. But, if one did come along, I’m sure I would enjoy it.”

The End

Are you an avid reader of Paul’s books?

Do you like giveaways? Crossword Puzzles?

Word Searches? Jigsaw Puzzles?

Then go to www.paulmoxham.com for these things and much more

If you want to be notified whenever Paul releases a new book, [click here](#)

If you want to ask Paul a question, email him at paulmoxham@zoho.com

If you’re on Goodreads, check out [Paul M Fan Group](#)

If you’re on Facebook, follow Paul [here](#)

If You Enjoyed This Book...

If you enjoyed this book, I would appreciate you leaving a review of the book on Amazon. Good reviews encourage an author to write as well as help books to sell. A review can vary from a few words to a few sentences. If you could spend 30 seconds writing a review, I would really appreciate it: you can review this title right now if you [click here](#).

CHECK BELOW FOR MY NEWEST STORIES

MYSTERY OF CROCODILE ISLAND

Are you up for a thrilling adventure?

When a rich man returns to England after being missing for five years, the Mystery Kids are excited to hear his tale of survival, but soon wonder if he's telling the truth.

Follow the children as they are captured by pirates, hunted by crocodiles, trapped by the rising tide, flee a terrifying volcano, survive a raging typhoon, and more!

Book 14 in the Mystery Series, this adventure novel is set in 1950's Britain and will suit anyone who enjoys Nancy Drew, the Hardy Boys or the Famous Five.

[BUY NOW!](#)

AND

INTERNATIONAL SPY

Are you up for a thrilling adventure?

Meet Joe, Amy, Sarah, and Will. Together, these intrepid youngsters spend their holidays solving mysteries while enjoying life in 1950's Britain. Join them on their travels throughout the UK and beyond as they visit exotic locations, meet interesting people, and fall headfirst into adventure.

Enjoy these three short stories:

***International Spy**

***Danger Island**

***Haunted Lighthouse**

These short adventure stories will suit people who enjoy Nancy Drew, the Hardy Boys, the Boxcar Children or the Famous Five.

[BUY NOW!](#)

Want More?

Here is Chapter 1 and 2 of The Mystery of Smugglers Cove, the first thrilling novel in The Mystery Series

~

The Mystery of Smugglers Cove

~

Chapter 1: Smugglers Cove

The bicycle skidded to a halt as Joe Mitchell stopped beside a huge oak tree. His slim frame rocked forward, causing a lock of brown hair to fall into his eyes. He glanced back at his two sisters who were still pedalling furiously. Grinning broadly, he called out to them. "I told you I'd win!"

“Well, your legs are much longer than ours,” Sarah panted. “Next time we race, Amy and I need a head start to make it fair.” Only eight years old, she was the younger of Joe’s two siblings and had short blonde hair.

“Look!” Joe exclaimed as he caught sight of a large house in the distance. “That old place looks interesting.”

They headed down a dirt road and, a minute later, found themselves in front of two big, steel gates. At the end of a long, overgrown driveway was a three-storey mansion.

“I wonder who lives there,” Amy said. “It looks terribly old.” The curious ten year old twirled a strand of her brown hair around her finger.

“I bet nobody does,” Sarah stated, her green eyes filled with doubt. “Look at all those weeds and bushes everywhere. If someone lived there, wouldn’t they keep the garden tidy?”

“Let’s see if the gates are open.” Like many twelve year old boys, Joe was always on the lookout for an adventure, and this place looked very intriguing. He tried to open the gates, but they didn’t budge. “Help me, you two.”

The girls threw their bicycles on the grass and joined Joe in trying to move the rusty gates but they had no luck.

Joe stepped back and glanced around. “I wonder what this place is called.”

“Chandler Manor!” Amy exclaimed triumphantly a moment later. She pointed to an old metal nameplate attached to the gatepost.

“Yes, that’s right,” a cheery voice called out.

The children spun around and saw a boy of about Joe’s age with flaming red hair. His freckles and cheeky smile gave him a goofy look, but he looked as though he would be fun to have as a friend.

“My name’s Will,” the boy said. “Actually, it’s William, but most people call me Will. You’re new here, aren’t you? I haven’t seen you around Smugglers Cove before.”

“We just arrived yesterday,” Joe said. “We’re staying at Rose Cottage. It’s a little place on the cliff overlooking the cove.”

“What a coincidence,” Will said. “That’s where my father and I stayed while we were looking for a house to buy. “Have you got the bedroom with the skylight?”

Joe grinned. “Yes, it’s fantastic.”

“There was a fire at our house,” Sarah piped up. “That’s why we came here.”

“Were you there at the time?” Will asked.

“No, it happened while we were at school,” Amy replied. “The house was too badly damaged to stay in, so our parents decided to rent a place here for the summer holidays. It’s a lot smaller than Danfield, though.”

“Isn’t that in London?” Will said.

“Yes, but how did you know?” Joe asked.

Will grinned. “We used to live quite close to Danfield.”

“Why did you move here?” Amy asked.

“My dad wanted some peace and quiet so he could write his novels, so we moved here after the war ended,” Will replied.

Joe turned back towards Chandler Manor. “Does anyone live here?”

Will shook his head. “No. The owner died five years ago, just after we moved in.”

“It looks very mysterious,” Joe said. “I wouldn’t mind exploring it.”

“If you want to do some exploring, I know just the place,” Will said. “Have you heard anything about the history of Smugglers Cove?”

“No, do tell us,” Amy said.

“How about we go and buy ice creams and I tell you all about it?” Will suggested. “There’s a place called Darby’s that sells really yummy ones.”

Sarah looked disappointed. “But we don’t have any money.”

“Don’t worry, my dad gives me heaps of pocket money, so I can buy ice creams for all of us,” Will replied.

The four children rode back into the village. As they passed the police station, they saw the local constable talking to the baker. Both of them were plumpish with round faces, but the constable was taller than the baker and wore thick-rimmed spectacles.

They brought their bicycles to a halt a few moments later outside Darby's. It was an attractive little shop with tables and chairs both inside and outside. After grabbing an ice cream each, they went outside and sat at a table surrounded by pots of red geraniums.

Will launched into his story. "A long, long time ago, smuggling was a roaring trade around here. Ships used to anchor off the coast and smugglers would transport the goods to the beach and into the caves where, as legend says, there were a maze of tunnels. These tunnels criss-crossed all over Smugglers Cove, but to this day, only a few have been found."

"Why didn't the police discover where the tunnels came out?" Amy asked.

"Well, apparently the smugglers made the exits to the tunnels underneath houses," Will replied. "That way, they could slip down to the cove, get the goods, transport them to the tunnels, and be back in bed by sunrise, all without going out the front door."

Joe frowned as he licked the ice cream that was dribbling down the cone. "That sounds a bit farfetched."

"Why would anyone go to all that trouble?" Sarah asked.

"Smuggling was an easy way to make money back then." Will glanced around. Apparently satisfied that no one was listening, he looked back at the others. "Can you keep a secret?"

As the others nodded, Will continued talking. "Last week we had a massive storm that washed away a huge amount of sand and opened up a number of caves. I know the previous ones didn't have anything in them, but if you believe the rumours, there's a chest of gold hidden somewhere underneath Smugglers Cove."

Joe's eyes gleamed with excitement. "A chest of gold?"

"Yes," Will replied. "But even if that isn't true, I'm sure there would be something valuable in one of the caves."

"Let's get moving then," Joe said, getting up from his seat.

Will shook his head. "We can't go now. You can only get to the caves at low tide, so we can only explore them in the afternoon or early in the morning. By the way, how long are you staying here?"

"For the whole school holidays," Sarah said.

Will smiled. "Great! That will give us plenty of time to explore."

Joe looked at his watch. "We'd better go home for lunch. Why don't we meet somewhere this afternoon?"

"How about the beach near your place?" Will said.

"Okay, we'll see you then," Joe said.

They parted ways. Soon, the three siblings were pedalling up the steep hill towards Rose Cottage. When they reached the top, they paused for a moment to rest their legs.

As Joe glanced around, he couldn't help but think that the view was magnificent. The sea was a glorious shade of blue. The cliffs, edged with a narrow strip of golden sand, wound around the cove. Seabirds soared above the cliffs.

A minute later, they rode towards Rose Cottage, which was perched on top of the cliff. With its dazzling whitewashed walls and rose bushes climbing up the veranda posts, the two-storey thatched roof cottage looked like a picture postcard.

After throwing their bicycles on the grass, they rushed down the path, almost bowling over their mother as she opened the front door.

After eating lunch, they set off for the beach. Once there, they paddled in the water and made a sandcastle. The afternoon wore on, but Will never arrived. Wondering what could have happened to delay their friend, they headed back home disappointed.

~

It was early morning when Joe, awakened by a strange noise, sat up. He had been having a wonderful dream, flying in the sky with a number of seabirds, when something had disturbed him. He slipped out of his bed and walked over to his window. As he did so, a small pebble struck the glass.

Curious, he waited a moment and then opened the window slowly in case more pebbles flew in his direction. When it was fully open, he peeked over the side and, to his surprise, saw Will.

Will waved and called out softly. "Open the door."

Joe headed downstairs. A few moments later, he opened the door and found Will waiting outside.

“I can’t stay long,” Will said. “My grandmother is sick and I’m going to see her for a few days.”

“What happened yesterday?” Joe asked. “We waited the whole afternoon and you didn’t come.”

“Sorry about that. My dad wanted me to do some errands for him. I got a puncture in my tire, so it took longer than I expected,” Will explained. “By the time I got back, it was time for dinner.”

“When will you be coming back?” Joe asked.

“In a few days. I have to go now. Say hello to the girls for me. Bye.” With that, Will was gone.

Joe closed the door and headed upstairs. He thought about going back to bed but, knowing that he probably wouldn’t be able to sleep, decided instead to explore the beach by himself. He changed out of his pyjamas and, grabbing his binoculars and a torch, hurried outside.

Glancing up at the sky, he was surprised at how different it looked from yesterday. The sun was slowly rising as storm clouds moved inland towards the coast. It looked very ominous. The clouds were very dark, the darkest he had ever seen them before. He sensed it was the calm before the storm, but that didn’t stop him. Will wasn’t coming back for a few days and he didn’t want to wait that long to have a look at the caves.

Joe thought he would have time to explore one of the caves before heading back. He’d brought his torch at the last minute as he thought that, even though it was daylight, it might be a bit dark in the caves. With this in mind, he headed towards the rocks.

Five minutes of brisk walking found him outside the first cave. After looking in the first three caves, he started exploring the fourth. Straight away, he noticed something weird. After looking around the cave with his torch, he found the answer. While the other caves were nearly all damp, part of this one was dry. Taking a closer look, he noticed that there was a fair amount of loose rock on the bottom of the cave.

He suddenly realised that this was the cave that had opened up after the storm. Wondering if the cave could possibly lead to a tunnel, he focused his attention on moving the rocks that had fallen down.

Chapter 2: Exploring

As Sarah and Amy climbed out of bed and got dressed, they talked excitedly about what they were going to do that day.

As Sarah hurried downstairs, Amy went to wake Joe. “Wakey, wakey,” she called, tapping on the bedroom door. Not getting any response, she slowly opened the door. She planned to scare him, just as he had done to her many a time.

She stopped in surprise. Joe’s bed was empty. Fearing a trick, she opened the cupboard. No one was there. Not knowing what else to do, she raced downstairs to the kitchen. “Joe’s disappeared.”

Mrs Mitchell frowned. “What do you mean?”

“He’s not in his room,” Amy said.

“I’m sure I can find him,” her mother replied. “You search upstairs while I look down here.”

They went their separate ways. They searched everywhere they could think of, but Joe was nowhere to be seen. Mrs Mitchell slumped in the kitchen chair after five minutes of searching.

Sarah could see that her mother’s expression had changed to one of concern. Walking over, she gave her mother a comforting smile and hugged her. “Don’t worry. I’m sure Joe is—”

Amy suddenly rushed into the room. “You know those binoculars Dad gave Joe for his birthday last year?”

Mrs Mitchell nodded. “Yes, what about them?”

“They’re gone, as well as his torch and shoes,” Amy replied. “So he must be outside.” Just as she finished speaking, lightning flashed across the sky. A moment later, thunder rumbled.

Everyone rushed to the window and looked out. Rain began to pour down. The dark and threatening clouds blocked out almost all of the blue sky. It looked like dusk instead of morning.

“Wow. That’s one big storm,” Sarah muttered.

“I do hope Joe’s somewhere dry,” Amy said.

Joe hadn't noticed that the weather had taken a turn for the worse, he had been too busy exploring. Moving the rocks had taken a lot longer than he had anticipated. By the time he had almost finished, he was tired out.

Looking around for a place to sit and rest, he was stunned by what he saw. In the short time he had been moving the rocks, water had crept in and now filled the cave entrance. He would need to duck his head underneath the water if he wanted to get out.

Luckily, the part of the cave where he had been working was still dry, but now the water was creeping towards where he was standing.

Peeking through the cave entrance, he saw that it was raining. He could also hear muffled thunder. He looked at his watch and was surprised to see that it was almost eight thirty.

The constantly creeping water was now knee deep. A shiver ran down his body. The water was rapidly rising and it would keep on rising. No longer concerned about the time, he tried to think of a way out of this mess.

With a sinking feeling, he realised that he could do nothing. He would just have to wait it out. He leaned against the wall and stared at the slowly rising water.

Time passed slowly. Joe tried to stay dry by standing on the pile of rocks that he had moved. He had thought about moving the rest of the rocks to see if there was a tunnel, but his arms were too sore.

After standing on the rocks with water up to his knees for what seemed ages, he noticed that the water was finally receding. He grimly smiled. The tide was finally going out and, by the sound of it, the storm had passed.

Moving towards the entrance, he discovered how stiff and cold his legs were. All that time standing in the water had taken its toll. He glanced at his watch. It was almost noon.

His stomach rumbled from hunger. He hadn't even eaten breakfast. He tried to forget about it as he sat down on one of the wet rocks and waited for the water to recede.



It was unusually quiet at Rose Cottage. Sarah and Amy were trying to play a board game while their mother sewed, but every few minutes one of them would pause and glance through the window to look for any sign of Joe.

As noon came and went, Amy could tell that her mother was quite worried. She was sewing, but what she had done in half an hour could easily have been done in five minutes.

Amy had to do something. Looking out of the window, she saw that the storm had finally passed. The last drops of rain were falling and the sun was coming out from behind the clouds. She stood up. "Why don't Sarah and I go outside to see if we can find Joe? I promise to be back here in an hour if I can't find him."

Mrs Mitchell thought it over. "Okay, but be careful."

"Thanks, Mum." Amy gave her a hug and rushed outside. Sarah followed her.

The girls decided they should go to the caves in case Joe had decided to explore them on his own. They walked along the beach until they reached them. However, they found that most of them were partly underwater due to the high tide. Deciding that Joe wouldn't have been foolish enough to enter one of them at high tide, they started to walk away.

Suddenly, a brief noise in the distance caught Amy's attention. It sounded like a voice. She looked across at her sister. "Did you just hear something?"

"No, why?" Sarah asked.

"I thought I heard someone call out," Amy replied.

Sarah glanced around. "I can't see anyone."

Amy suddenly realised something. "Golly, he must be in the caves! Let's yell out and see if he answers. That will save time going through all of them." She shouted out. "Joe!"

Sarah joined in. "Joe!"

"Where are you?" Amy cried out. "Please answer!" She listened for an answer. There was no reply.

[GET REST OF STORY FOR FREE NOW!](#)