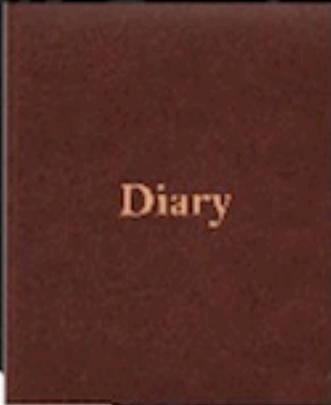


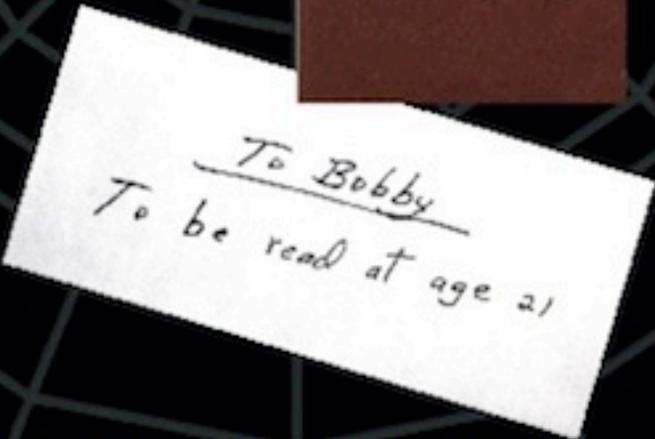
The Tangled Web

A Mother's Secret

A Jenny & Pete Mystery
by Hays Williams

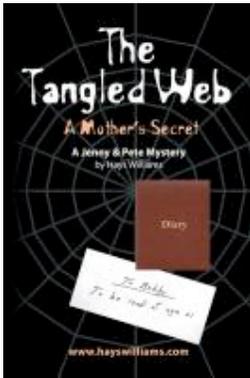


Diary



To Bobby
To be read at age 21

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When Bobby loses his mom, Jenny and Pete set out to find his dad. They create a plan to get a DNA sample from a senator Bobby resembles. Their efforts are hindered by Nigel, a spoiled rich boy who is jealous of Bobby. How far will Nigel go to stop them? As they get closer to finding out the truth about Bobby's dad, Jenny suspects that Bobby and Pete have a secret of their own.

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A Mother's Secret

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A Mother's Secret

A Jenny & Pete Mystery

Hays Williams

**Another story of adventure and friendship
for kids who love dogs, ghosts,
angels and best friends**

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Although the town of Hamilton is loosely based on a real town, this book is a work of fiction. Names, characters, places, and incidents are products of the author's imagination or are used fictitiously. Any resemblance to persons, living or dead is entirely coincidental.

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2013

First Edition

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First and foremost, my books are dedicated to my Heavenly Father — without Him I can do nothing.

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Thank you all. God has truly blessed me!

Prologue

After saying farewell to Miss Luna, Jenny, Pete, their moms, Bobby, Uncle Rudy, Amos, and Dr. Ferguson returned to Bonner House.

Bobby got on his bike and was about to leave when his mom drove up. Pete helped him load the bike into the back of her SUV.

“See you guys tomorrow,” he called from the car.

Sam stayed close to Jenny as she said goodnight to everyone and headed upstairs. She brushed her teeth and crawled into bed. At one-thirty the phone rang and she jumped to get it before it woke her mom. It was Pete, and he could hardly talk.

“Jenny, please come to the back porch. Something awful has happened.”

Jenny threw on her robe and ran downstairs. Pete was sitting on the porch steps, crying. She threw her arms around him and waited. He finally regained his composure and looked at her.

“Bobby and his mother had a bad accident. Oh, Jenny,” Pete’s voice broke. “Bobby’s in the hospital. He’s hurt bad, and his mom is dead.”

Chapter 1

Jenny and Pete sat on the back porch and talked until the sun came peeping through the oak trees. Sam snuggled against Pete, comforting him. Pete hugged the big German shepherd and buried his face in the black and gold fur on Sam's neck.

Jenny's heart ached. She thought of Bobby's comical impressions, and she wondered how long before he'd feel up to entertaining anyone again. She remembered Katie's remark at the Sanders' barbeque: "*I'm not sure, but I think Bobby's had a hard time most of his life. Probably covers up with his comedy act.*" Tears ran down Jenny's face and she wiped them on her pajama sleeves. Bobby had become part of her world. He proved he could be trusted and he'd worked hard to help them with the dogman mystery, and with Amos's problem. Pete loved him as if they were brothers. *And so do I*, Jenny thought.

"What in the world will Bobby do, Jenny? His mom was all he had."

"We can't think like that, Pete. Bobby has us and he has Uncle Rudy. He'll have a home for as long as he needs it." Jenny hesitated. "And you know what we need to do while he's recuperating?"

Pete managed a smile. "I know. We have to find his dad, and we can't waste any time doing it."

Jenny nodded. "We'll find him, Pete. I've got an idea or two, but let's talk about it later. Right now we need to get dressed and have breakfast. Soon as Uncle Rudy is up, I'll call him and break the news. He'll want to see Bobby, so we'll skip school and ride with him to the hospital. Amos may want to go too. He really likes Bobby."

Jenny thought about all Bobby had done to help clear Amos of the recent robbery charge. Discovering the hidden door in her basement and learning a man was living in the secret rooms that were connected to Bonner House had unnerved her. After she and Pete became friends with Amos and heard his story, he became the main suspect in a robbery. Bobby helped them figure out who the real robber was. Then, with the help of the Internet, Pete managed to locate Amos's mother and sister and the family had a joyous reunion. Jenny felt amazed when she

thought of all that happened in the past month. Some of it seemed unbelievable.

Pete stood up. "I guess I'd better go take a shower."

At seven-thirty Jenny called Uncle Rudy and told him about the accident. He became so quiet Jenny thought the phone went dead. When he finally spoke, his voice sounded muffled and Jenny knew he cared about Bobby as much as she and Pete did.

"I'll pick you and Pete up around eight-thirty. Before we leave the hospital, we'll need to make a list of what Bobby needs so we can go by Benson's. And we have to go by the office where Mrs. Roland worked. She probably had some insurance through her employer, so that should cover the funeral expenses and take care of Bobby's medical bills."

On the way to the hospital no one spoke. When they reached Bobby's room, Jenny went straight to him and hugged him gently.

"I'm so sorry, Bobby. I know how much it hurts."

"I know you do, Jenny, and you too, Pete." Tears spilled from Bobby's dark eyes and onto his cheeks.

Amos patted Bobby's shoulder and squeezed his arm. "Bobby." Unable to continue, he turned away to the window.

Uncle Rudy took Bobby's hand. "Son, I want you to know you're not alone. When you leave the hospital, you're coming home with me. We'll talk more about it later. Right now, we're going to help you do what needs to be done. Jenny, find some paper and a pen."

When they left the hospital, Uncle Rudy drove to the office where Bobby's mother worked. Miss Quinten, Director of Human Resources, led him to her office and closed the door. She quickly informed him that privacy laws would not allow them to release insurance information. Then she opened a file drawer and pulled out a folder. Flipping through the file she pulled out a document and scanned it. "Victoria was an organized person. She gave this to me several years ago and asked me to keep it in the event it was ever needed. According to this, her attorney will handle everything. I spoke with him just before you arrived. Here's his name and phone number if you'd like to call him." She handed a piece of note paper to Uncle Rudy. "I believe she also left instructions for the funeral with him. I'll give the hospital business office a call to let

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them know Victoria had medical insurance. Mr. Mitchell, please let Bobby know how sorry we are. When I got the news this morning it broke my heart. His mother was special to all of us.”

On the way home Uncle Rudy told Jenny and Pete what happened. “You kids give me an hour or so to hash out the funeral details with the lawyer. Then we’ll handle everything else.”

Jenny shook her head as she and Pete climbed out of the truck. “Why does it have to be so complicated?”

“That’s just the way it is, Jenny. Be back in a little while.”

Two hours later Uncle Rudy tooted his truck horn from the back driveway. Jenny locked up and they headed for Hamilton High to give funeral details to Miss Oliver. At Quality Respiratory & Medical Supply they picked up a wheelchair and a pair of crutches. The next stop was Sammy’s Men’s Shop on Cherry Street where one of the clerks found a nice suit and a pair of shoes in Bobby’s size.

“No need to worry too much about the suit, Uncle Rudy. Mom will have to split the right leg of the pants because of the cast.”

“Guess you’re right, Jenny. Bobby might need to recuperate in some old pajamas to keep from ruining all of his clothes. Good thing one of the nurses found his door key in his pocket. We can go ahead and move some of his personal things to my house. I’ll call the landlord and arrange to move the furniture and other stuff to a storage area later.”

Because Bobby assured them he had all the necessities at home, they skipped the stop at Benson’s. Instead they went to his home and packed what was needed. Jenny noticed he only had one pair of pajamas, so she made a mental note to pick up two or three pair the next day.

When Uncle Rudy dropped Jenny and Pete off at the back porch, he turned and headed back to town. “Got to go check on something, Jenny. Be back in an hour or so.”

Amos went home to Uncle Rudy’s house to study. He planned to take exams in June to receive his degree and teacher’s certificate, and he hoped to become Hamilton’s newest elementary teacher by September. Knowing he planned to study, Jenny was surprised when he called her five minutes later.

“Jenny, can you come over here for a few minutes? I want to talk to you, alone.”

He sounded strange and Jenny wondered if something was wrong. When she walked into Uncle Rudy’s kitchen, Amos was pouring soda into two glasses.

“What is it, Amos?”

“Probably nothing, Jenny, but I have to ask you something. I know Bobby will be okay, and I know his mother is gone. But what about the other lady? No one’s mentioned her.”

“What other lady?”

Amos finished pouring the soda and glanced at Jenny. “Why, the one who was in the back seat when they drove away. Was she killed too?”

“Amos, there was no one else in the car with Bobby and his mom. I don’t know what you’re talking about.”

“But there was, Jenny. A very pretty lady. I can’t believe you didn’t see her. There was something about her.”

“I’ll ask at the hospital, Amos. I can’t imagine why they didn’t mention her when we were there.”

Jenny went home and two hours later she heard Uncle Rudy’s truck in the driveway. He walked in the back door with a big smile and grabbed her in a bear hug.

“Well, I got temporary custody of Bobby. Mrs. Roland’s attorney and the child services people said he can stay with me when he’s dismissed from the hospital. I had to convince them that I had plenty of help, so they took down names—you, your mother, Pete, and Daniel. Seems they think I’m a bit too old to handle a teenager by myself. Then I told them about my time in the army when I helped the medics take care of wounded soldiers, sort of like a nursing assistant. Gave them baths and all that other stuff that nursing assistants do. That convinced them. I did learn something interesting. Seems Bobby’s mother named two people as possible guardians for him—me and Miss Quinten. For personal reasons Miss Quinten can’t accept the responsibility right now, so she asked the attorney to check me out. So, if all goes well, I may end up as Bobby’s permanent guardian.”

“I didn’t realize you knew Mrs. Roland,” Jenny said.

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“Actually I didn’t, Jenny,” Uncle Rudy said. “The attorney told me that Bobby talked to his mother about working for me and she got curious. So she had him check me out. When she read the report she told him to put me down as a second possibility, if I was willing. She said *‘I want my son to grow up under the influence of good people and Mr. Mitchell sounds like one of the best.’*” Uncle Rudy beamed and his eyes grew moist.

“The funeral is Wednesday morning?”

“That’s right, Jenny. The director suggested a small graveside service, with Mrs. Roland’s pastor in charge. Said it would be easier on Bobby than having to go to two different locations. I went by the hospital again and saw Bobby’s doctor. He’s going to release Bobby Wednesday, so I asked him to do it early before the funeral. He suggested we get a seatbelt for his wheelchair, so I went by Quality and got one. The director has arranged for a burial plot on a nice level spot at the cemetery. Should be easy to get to with the wheelchair.”

“Pete and I can pick up some pajamas, slippers, and a robe. Looks like Bobby doesn’t have much in the way of night clothes. I’ll try to find some of those soft stretchy lounging pants like my dad always loved. They have wide legs, so they’ll be perfect for him while he’s healing.”

A knock at the back door interrupted them and Pete joined them.

“You kids will have to give me lots of help over the next few weeks. One of the nurses had a private talk with me as I was leaving. Said Bobby’s having bad dreams and he keeps asking about his dad.” Uncle Rudy stopped in mid-sentence. “I thought he didn’t know his dad, so that puzzled me.”

“You’re right, Mr. Mitchell,” Pete said. “Bobby’s mom would never tell him about his dad, but he wants to find him.”

“Not much chance of that, with his mother gone.” Uncle Rudy said.

“Maybe not, but Jenny and I are going to try to find him. The Internet should be a big help.”

“Afraid I can’t help with that, Pete. I’d be afraid to touch a computer. All that modern technology is beyond me. I’m still using my old manual typewriter. Like me, it’s probably an antique by now.”

Jenny laughed. “Uncle Rudy, you’re not an antique. You’re one of the youngest people I know. I realized that when I danced the jitterbug with you at my party. I couldn’t keep up.”

Uncle Rudy turned serious. “Jenny, why don’t you get your mom to drive you and Pete back to the hospital around seven. Spend an hour or so with Bobby before they sedate him for the night. Tell him I’ll be up there tomorrow morning and visit for a while.”

“Okay. Then Pete and I can go by and see him tomorrow afternoon. I’m going to work on that new suit right now. Mom showed me how to use her seam ripper to undo the seam in the right leg without ruining the pants. That way the pant leg can be sewn back together when he’s well and his suit will be good as new.”

“Great idea, Jenny. It would be a shame to ruin a brand new suit.”

On Tuesday afternoon Jenny and Pete parked their bikes outside the hospital and chained them to the ramp. When they reached Bobby’s room they were surprised to find three nurses hovering over him. One of them turned and waved them back into the hallway, then followed them.

“Poor kid is having terrible dreams. Almost scared us to death just now with his screaming. I think he was reliving the accident. The EMTs who brought him in said he knew his mother was gone before they got him out of the vehicle. They said only a miracle could have saved Bobby because they couldn’t imagine how anyone survived that accident. Had to sedate him on the way in.”

“Can we see him before they knock him out?” Jenny asked.

“I think so. Come with me.” The nurse led them back into Bobby’s room. After whispering something to the other two nurses, they left the room.

Bobby opened his eyes when Jenny touched his arm. He looked at her and Pete. “I don’t know what I’m going to do without my mom. She was my best friend.”

Jenny leaned over and placed her hand on his forehead. “I know, Bobby, but please remember you have me and Pete, and you have our moms and Uncle Rudy. We’re going to take care of you and we’ll be your family now.”

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“Thanks, Jenny. You and Pete are the best.” Bobby’s voice trailed off.

“Pete, can you wait here for a minute? I need to ask the nurse something.”

Pete nodded and Jenny stepped into the hallway. She spotted one of the nurses and motioned to her.

“Can you tell me anything about the lady who was in the car with Bobby and his mother? Was she killed too?”

The nurse gave her a curious look. “There was no one else in the car. The EMTs report clearly stated two passengers, one woman and a boy. Why do you think there was another woman with them?”

“I’m not sure what I think,” Jenny said, as she returned to Bobby’s room.

Bobby appeared to be asleep. Jenny leaned toward Pete and whispered, “I think they gave him a shot. We need to leave and let him rest.”

“Not yet,” Bobby struggled to talk. “Pete, remember your promise.”

Pete leaned close to Bobby’s ear and Jenny barely heard what he said.

“I remember, Bobby. I promise we’re going to find your dad.”

Chapter 2

On the way home Pete shared his research on Bobby's dad. "There's not much to tell you, Jenny. I don't have a name, so the Internet isn't much help. What we need may be gone, along with Bobby's mom."

"I know. I just don't understand the secrecy. Every kid has the right to know who his parents are."

"That's my thinking too, Jenny, but Bobby said he gave up asking his mother about it. Said the last time they talked about it she started crying and told him something he hadn't heard before, but it was no help at all."

"Care to share it with me?"

"Sure. She said his father was the most special man she'd ever known and his work was even more special. Said he's really making a difference for the world, and learning about Bobby might ruin everything. She got so emotional that Bobby promised her he'd never ask about his dad again." Pete hesitated. "Jenny, how could she tell him that knowing he has a son might ruin his dad's life? That really hurt Bobby."

"She probably didn't mean it the way it sounded. Something tells me she really loved that man, whoever he was. There must be some way to figure this out. Maybe there's something in their house, a clue of some kind that would give us a starting point. Right now all we have is Bobby's resemblance to Senator Morgan."

"Yeah, I know. Maybe we need to research the senator and see what he's done since he was elected. Maybe he's into some kind of work that's special."

"I suppose. Why don't you handle the Internet research on him while I try something else?"

"Like what?"

"Well, I have an idea, but first I'll need to see if Mr. Ziegler will let me join the journalism class and work on the school newspaper. If he says yes, then I'll suggest that my first story should be an interview with the senator."

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“But Jenny, this semester is close to half over.”

“I know,” Jenny interrupted. “But I have some previous experience that might convince him to let me in. And I don’t mind doing extra work to make up for lost time.”

“Then what?”

“I’m not sure. Guess I’ll play it by ear.”

“I’ve got it!” Pete stopped his bike so quickly that he toppled to the ground.

“Be careful, Pete! I can’t handle you and Bobby both laid up with broken bones.”

“DNA! Jenny, that’s the only way to see if Bobby and the senator are related.”

“And how do you propose getting a sample of the senator’s DNA?”

“You get into that class and land your interview, and leave the DNA analysis to me. I just learned the college is offering a course on DNA testing, with lab work included.”

“So all we need now is a sample of the senator’s DNA.”

“Yep,” Pete grinned. “Let’s hope the senator keeps a pitcher of water and glasses in his office and has a used water glass on his desk. Then, after we’ve been in his office for at least five minutes, someone will need to create a loud disturbance. When the senator goes to check on the noise, we’ll grab a clean glass and switch it with the one he’s used.”

“I get it,” Jenny laughed. “So I need something in my tote bag to hold the used glass and keep it hidden.”

“Right. And be ready to finish your interview when the senator returns.”

“Okay. I’m going to read the senator’s website and list of accomplishments so I can come up with interview questions.”

“If there isn’t a water glass, we’ll have to get hair samples. Two or three hairs will do the trick, but we need to get them without his knowledge. Any ideas on how to handle that?”

Jenny looked thoughtful. “I can use a lint roller to gather some hair from his chair or the floor underneath his chair.”

“A lint roller . . .?” Pete looked puzzled.

“You’ve seen them, Pete, those sticky rollers people use to pick up dog hair.”

“Oh.”

“I have one at home, Pete. I’ll show you how it works. We can do the same thing for Bobby’s DNA. What about the testing? Are you planning to take that course at the college?”

“After we get both DNA samples, I’ll take them and visit the instructor of the class. I’m hoping I can persuade him to use the samples as a class project and let me know the results. I’m going to tell him my friend needs to know if a certain man is really his father, and I won’t give any names.”

“And if the samples aren’t a match, what then?”

“Let’s wait and see, Jenny. I think they will match. Bobby looks too much like that man for us to be on the wrong track.”

“He certainly does.” Jenny parked her bike in the garage behind the special partition Uncle Rudy built for them after hearing about some bicycle thefts.

“I wish the Wilsons were still in town. That would solve the problem of getting someone to create a diversion in the senator’s office.”

Jenny laughed. “Yes, it probably would, but I think I may have someone else for that job, Pete. Remember that last big rain we had?”

“Yeah, I thought Hamilton would get washed off the map. What about it?”

“Well, I was talking to Lucy Mayfield about it. She lives in an area that floods easily, so I asked if her house was okay. She got pretty emotional talking about it. Said the water covered the yard and almost got into her house. Her mother keeps calling the mayor’s office about the drainage problem, but no one does anything. I suggested she might write the senator a letter and ask him for help.”

“I don’t follow you, Jenny. What could Lucy do?”

“It depends on how good an actress she is. Give me a little time to talk to her. If she agrees to help us, our problem is solved—and it might solve hers too.”

After fixing some sandwiches, she grabbed the phone and called Lucy. “You haven’t mailed a letter to the senator yet, have you?”

“Not yet, Jenny. I’m doing a sketch of my neighborhood to send with the letter, so it’s taking longer than I thought. I want him to really see the drainage problem.”

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“Good. Don’t mail it yet. I have an idea that might help you, and also help someone else—someone who needs a different kind of help. I’ll explain tomorrow.” They made plans to meet after school the next day. She turned off the phone and felt a twinge of guilt. Lucy sounded so happy to hear her voice. Jenny made a silent vow to pay more attention to her and include her in some activities.

On Wednesday morning Jenny and Pete went with Uncle Rudy to pick up Bobby for the funeral service. Bobby’s doctor said he could go home but he’d be out of school for a while. Jenny waited in the hallway while Pete helped Uncle Rudy dress Bobby in his new suit.

Their entire class showed up at the cemetery. At the end of the service when the pastor finished with a prayer, Bobby burst into tears. Uncle Rudy knelt down and held him and the rest of their classmates gathered around, giving support. Jenny heard one girl speak for all of them: “Bobby has kept all of us laughing for years. I hate what he’s going through.”

At home Jenny and Pete helped Uncle Rudy get Bobby settled in his new room. Sam laid his head on Bobby’s leg. As Bobby stroked Sam and scratched him behind the ears, the tears stopped and he smiled at Jenny. “He’s some dog, Jenny. Wish he was mine.”

Jenny looked thoughtful, then touched Uncle Rudy’s arm and motioned for him to follow her into the hallway.

“Uncle Rudy, would you mind if Sam stays here with Bobby while he’s recuperating? Sam has a way of making people feel better.”

“Of course not, Jenny. I think that would be great therapy for Bobby, if you’re willing to do that.”

“How can I not be willing? Did you see the way Bobby calmed down? I’m going to ask him what he thinks. If you can take Sam outside each morning, I can come over each afternoon and take him home for his dinner and a nice run. Then he can come back and stay here at night. Nights are the worst after you lose someone.”

“You got that right, my girl. They really are.” Uncle Rudy hugged Jenny and they returned to the bedroom.

Bobby grinned when Jenny proposed leaving Sam with him. “Gosh, Jenny. I don’t know what to say, except thanks a million.” He reached down and hugged Sam. “Hear that, boy? You’re gonna keep me company for a while.”

Sam looked at Bobby and thumped his tail.

On Thursday morning Jenny took her school transcript from Boston and went to see Mr. Ziegler. He reluctantly agreed to admit her to the journalism class. After explaining that she wanted to interview the senator, he gave her a spot on the paper as a reporter. Impressed with her grades, he asked her to email him some examples of her writing.

That afternoon Lucy met Jenny at her locker. Pete walked past and waved goodbye. He agreed with Jenny that she needed to talk to Lucy alone.

“Let’s get a soda and go sit under the big maple tree. We need to talk.” Jenny stashed part of her books in her locker.

Lucy glanced down the hallway. “We can get sodas from the teacher’s lounge if we hurry. It looks empty.”

“Here, Lucy. You get them and meet me at the tree.” Jenny handed Lucy money for two sodas, and then rearranged some things in her locker.

As they walked to the tree, Lucy started questioning her. “What’s going on, Jenny?”

“Well, Lucy, I’ve been thinking about your flood problem. Maybe a letter isn’t the only way to get the senator’s attention.”

“What do you mean, Jenny? You think I should go see him?”

“Yes, that’s exactly what I mean, but it won’t be an ordinary visit. What you need to do is really make him feel sorry for you and your mom. Did you say your mom is sick?”

“Yeah, she is. If we got flooded, I don’t know what I’d do. My mom couldn’t handle it and we’d have no place to go.” Lucy got quiet. “Jenny, I wouldn’t know how to talk to a senator.”

“Lucy, I think that might be a good thing, if you’re willing to go along with my plan. And one more thing, you’ll have to trust me on this. You might be helping someone else who really needs it. Are you a good actress?”

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“Actress? Jenny, what in the world are you planning?”

“Seriously, Lucy, do you think you can do what I tell you? It might do the trick and get something done about that flooding problem.”

“In that case, yes. I can do whatever you say.”

“Okay, here’s the plan. Listen carefully.” Jenny explained how she would write a script for Lucy to memorize. It would tell all about the flooding problem and how sick her mother is. “But you won’t be performing in front of the senator, at least not at first.”

Lucy looked puzzled. Jenny finished explaining and Lucy’s eyes grew wide with surprise.

“So you see why I asked if you’re a good actress. You’ll have to be loud enough to upset the secretary and get the senator’s attention, so he’ll run out to see what’s going on. That’s when you’ll start crying and talking about your sick mother and how she could never cope with a flooded house. You’ll need to keep his attention for at least three or four minutes before you give him the letter and the sketch. Keep the tears flowing while you apologize for upsetting everyone. That should give Pete and me enough time to do what we have to do.”

“And what is that, Jenny?” Lucy gave her a worried look.

“Lucy, please try to understand. I can’t tell you that right now, but if it works out I’ll tell you everything when it’s over. Can you trust me and do that?”

“I’ll do it for you, Jenny, ‘cause whoever you’re trying to help is lucky to have you for a friend.”

“Thanks, Lucy. Do you have the letter with you, and the sketch? I can write the script tonight and print it out. I want you to have a few days to memorize it. I still have to get some things done, but I’ll let you know when we’ll do this. And, Lucy, thanks so much, I really appreciate your help.” They stood up and Jenny gave Lucy a hug.

Chapter 3

Jenny felt elated and a bit frightened that the senator granted her an appointment for the interview. His secretary called back the same day to give her the details. “It will have to be next week. How does next Wednesday afternoon sound? Around four p.m.?”

“That’s fine. May I bring a friend with me? Another student.”

“Certainly. Senator Morgan believes in helping students however he can.”

Jenny was relieved to have almost a week for her preparations. Writing the script was the easy part, but she was afraid coaching Lucy might be a challenge. If Lucy could come to Bonner House each afternoon for three or four days, they might be ready. Monday and Tuesday afternoons would be important for rehearsals.

Jenny left Pete studying at the kitchen table and went to her room. When she finished writing the script, she printed one copy and ran downstairs. Pete quickly scanned it and let out a slow whistle.

“Jenny, you’d better hope Lucy is a good actress. If she is, this should hold the senator’s attention.”

“I’m hoping it will get him interested in her neighborhood flooding problem. It really is serious, Pete. I thought Lucy was going to cry when she told me about it.”

“From the looks of that sketch and Lucy’s description, you can’t blame her for being concerned. It wouldn’t take much rain to put her home in danger.”

Jenny picked up the phone and entered Lucy’s number. “Hi, Lucy, can you talk a minute?”

“Sure Jenny. Hold on.”

Jenny heard a door close softly.

“Okay, now we can talk.” Lucy’s voice was low. “My mother is sleeping and I didn’t want to disturb her.”

“Lucy, is your mom well enough for you to be gone Monday and Tuesday afternoon, for about an hour each day? We need to rehearse this

script and be ready by Wednesday. Senator Morgan's secretary called me back and gave me an appointment for four o'clock."

"Sure, I think so."

"Okay. Here's the plan. I have the script written and I want you to memorize it over the weekend. Practice how you will act and remember those spots where you need to become emotional and loud, and especially where you need to start crying. Can you do that?"

"You bet I can, Jenny. My mom is worrying herself to death about this flood problem." Lucy stopped for a moment. "Sorry Jenny. I cry when I think what might happen if we got flooded."

"Lucy, that's okay. I'm sure I would feel like crying too, if my home was threatened by high water. See you tomorrow. And thanks so much."

"You're welcome, and I hope this helps your friend." Lucy sounded happy when she hung up.

Jenny turned around and saw Pete watching her. Usually she could read faces, but his expression puzzled her. Before she could question him he smiled.

"You're really something, Jenny. Do you know that?"

Jenny blushed. "What do you mean?"

"Someday I'll tell you." Pete's face turned red and he quickly hid it behind a book.

To Jenny's relief, Uncle Rudy knocked on the back door and she ran to let him in. "How's Bobby?"

"He's doing better and I think Sam is the best medicine in the world. Those two get along famously." Uncle Rudy's frown didn't match his pleasant remark.

"What's wrong, Uncle Rudy?"

"Not sure, Jenny. Maybe I've had a bit too much stress lately," he lowered his voice. "I think I'm seeing things, or people, that aren't really there. I could swear Bobby had a visitor last night. I walked past his bedroom and a woman stood beside his bed. While I was watching she put her hand on his forehead and appeared to be praying. I think Sam saw her too, because he glanced at me and then looked back at her. I rubbed my eyes and looked again, and she was gone."

Jenny laughed and Uncle Rudy looked startled. "Oh Uncle Rudy, I don't know the lady's name, but I think I know who she is."

“Really! Mind telling me?”

Jenny looked at Pete and he nodded. “Guess we need to tell him, Jenny.

“Tell me what?”

“Better sit down,” Jenny kept laughing. “This may take a while.”

Pete winked at Jenny and joined them. He looked amused and remained quiet while she told Uncle Rudy about Homer and Phantom and how Phantom helped in solving the dogman mystery.

“So you think that lady is Bobby’s guardian angel?” Uncle Rudy’s eyes twinkled as he spoke.

“She must be. I don’t know what else to think. Why don’t you ask Amos to describe the lady he saw in the back seat of the car when Bobby and his mom left here Sunday night? The EMTs said there were only two people in the car, but Amos saw a third one. The EMTs also said the vehicle was so damaged they couldn’t understand how Bobby survived.”

“I see. So if Amos’s description of that woman matches the one I saw in Bobby’s room.” Uncle Rudy rubbed his beard and he pulled Jenny into a hug. “That’s a mighty wonderful thought, Jenny, to know you kids have a guardian angel following you around.”

“I know. My dad promised he would send someone to watch over me, but it was still hard to believe. I know that’s who Homer is, ‘cause he’s always there when I need him. And I know Amos believes in angels too. His mother told him that he and Mary have a guardian angel.”

Uncle Rudy looked at Jenny with awe and hugged her again. “Girl, you are really something.”

“Someone else recently told me that, Uncle Rudy.” Jenny glanced at Pete and pretended she didn’t notice his red face.

“Well, whoever said it definitely sees how special you are.” Uncle Rudy let her go and stepped into the kitchen for a glass of water. Jenny looked toward Pete who stood at the window.

“Uncle Rudy, do you think Bobby has seen his angel?”

“I don’t know. He won’t talk about the accident and I can’t pressure him. Kid’s got enough worries right now.”

“You’re right, Uncle Rudy. He’ll talk about it when he’s ready. Maybe then we’ll find out. I feel sure that angel saved his life.”

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“I think so too, Jenny.” Uncle Rudy went outside, and then stopped abruptly. “I almost forgot. Bobby wants you and Pete to have this.” He held out a door key. “Said you might want to go through his house and see what you can find. That boy sure wants you kids to find his father.”

Jenny took the key and thanked him.

After Uncle Rudy left, Jenny joined Pete at the window.

“Something on your mind?” she asked.

“Yeah. I was thinking about this guy at school and how I’d love to hit him.”

“What?”

“I guess you haven’t been in Hamilton long enough to know him. His name is Nigel. He’s a sophomore and it really burns him up when he hears about Bobby performing. Nigel wants to be a comedian and he can’t stand Bobby ‘cause he knows he’ll never be that good. I heard he was at Marilee’s cookout and he got really upset when she asked Bobby to do his impersonations. I guess Nigel wanted to put on a show but wasn’t invited to.”

“What does he look like?” Jenny vaguely remembered a tall brown-haired guy watching Bobby. She wondered why he wasn’t enjoying the performance, since everyone else was laughing, and why he walked away in the middle of it.

Pete’s description confirmed it was the same guy.

“But why would you want to hit him, Pete?”

“‘Cause he’s been saying ugly thing about Bobby. I think he’s glad Bobby lost his mother.”

“That’s terrible!”

“I know.”

Friday afternoon Jenny met Pete at the bike rack.

“You got the door key, Jenny?”

Jenny nodded. “I figure we’d better get this done now, before the landlord decides to rent the place. Uncle Rudy has some movers scheduled to pick up the furniture on Monday. He said Bobby and his mom didn’t have much, so he can store it in his shop.”

When they reached the small house, Pete glanced around. “Hope the neighbors don’t think we’re intruding. I’ve only been here once or twice.”

Inside, Jenny looked around, wondering where to start. Pete made the decision for her. “Jenny, you check Mrs. Roland’s bedroom while I check Bobby’s room. Then we’ll do the other rooms together.

Jenny checked every possible place and decided it was a lost cause. She heard Pete moving furniture and other stuff around.

“Nothing in there, Jenny, Any luck in here?”

Jenny shook her head. “It would help if we knew what we were looking for.”

“That’s true,” Pete said. “I wish I knew, but there must be a clue here somewhere. Did you look behind the furniture? In the movies people sometimes tape things back there.”

“I didn’t think of that. I’ll help you move things out.”

The areas behind the chest and dresser were clear. Jenny eyed the bed with its thick headboard. “Let’s move the bed away from the wall, Pete.”

It was heavier than it appeared, but the effort paid off.

“Bingo!” Pete yelled.

Jenny heard the sound of tape ripping from wood and Pete held up a large brown envelope. At that same moment they heard a car door slam shut. Jenny ran to the window and saw two policemen heading for the front door.

“Pete, it’s the police! Quick, hide that envelope and grab some of Bobby’s things.”

Jenny ran and grabbed two plastic shopping bags from a stash she’d seen in the kitchen. When Pete let the policemen in, she was emptying the drawers in Bobby’s bedroom. Pete held Bobby’s backpack and some books.

The police officers didn’t know Jenny or Pete and insisted on taking them to the station. At the station door two cops walked out. Jenny recognized them and breathed a sigh of relief.

“What are you kids into now?” The older cop grinned at Jenny and shook Pete’s hand.

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Pete grabbed the opportunity. “We’ve been trying to tell these two that we didn’t break into my friend’s home. Remember Bobby Roland? Well, he and his mom were in a bad wreck and—.”

“Yeah, Pete. I heard about Bobby’s mother. Tough break for that kid.”

The other cop waved his hand at the two who brought Jenny and Pete in. “These two are clean. Whatever they told you is the truth.” He glanced at Pete. “You and Jenny need a ride somewhere?”

“We sure do,” Pete said.

A few minutes later the patrol car dropped them off at Bobby’s house. Pete found the brown envelope he hid under the mattress and put it into Bobby’s back pack. Jenny stuffed the rest of Bobby’s clothes into plastic bags, and looked around.

“I think everything else can be boxed up and handled by the movers, except for Mrs. Roland’s clothes. We’ll have to ask Uncle Rudy about them. Bobby might want to donate them to the thrift store or to someone who needs them.” Jenny flipped through the pretty blouses and other clothes Mrs. Roland wore for her secretarial job. One dress was beautiful and designed for special occasions.

During the ride home Jenny thought about what might be in the brown envelope. She and Pete agreed to wait until they were home to open it and she could hardly wait. Surely Mrs. Roland left something behind that would lead them to Bobby’s father.

They parked their bikes in the garage and ran to the back door. Jenny locked it behind them and whirled around. Pete held the envelope up.

“Where’s the best place to open this, Jenny?”

“Right here. Let’s get our books and homework out on the table. If anyone pops in, we can slide the envelope into one of our notebooks.”

They set up their homework. A moment later Pete opened the metal clasp on the envelope. He reached inside and pulled out some documents, three pictures, and a sealed white envelope. It was labeled ***To Bobby—to be opened at age 21.***

“We can’t open that, Pete. It wouldn’t be right.” Jenny’s voice trailed off.

The other documents were an old resume and some letters of reference. The pictures were of Bobby doing impersonations. Bobby's mom was proud of his talent.

"What are we going to do about the white envelope, Jenny?"

"We'll talk to Uncle Rudy later. I feel sure he'll agree it should be put away until Bobby is twenty-one, since that was his mother's wish."

Scanning the resume they learned that Mrs. Roland had no work history connecting her to Senator Morgan.

Saturday morning Lucy called Jenny to say she had the script memorized and was ready to rehearse.

"Lucy, why don't you come over? Mom had to work this morning, so that gives us over two hours if you leave now."

Lucy cut the conversation short. "I'm on my way."

Twenty minutes later Jenny let her in the back door. They planned to rehearse in Jenny's room in case someone dropped in. "We'd have a hard time explaining this to anyone but Pete."

"You got that right, Jen," Lucy laughed.

Jenny was surprised at the shortened version of her name. No one had called her Jen since her father died. It was a term of endearment for him. Knowing Lucy felt so comfortable with her was nice.

Jenny went to her desk to get her copy of the script. "Okay, Lucy. I'll be the senator's secretary. Let's see how this goes. Remember, what I say is what I'm supposing his secretary will say. If she says something different or unexpected, you'll need to give an appropriate reply."

As Jenny prepared to speak, Lucy gave her a nervous look.

Secretary: "*May I help you?*"

Lucy: "*Yes, ma'am. I need to see Senator Morgan.*"

Secretary: "*Do you have an appointment?*"

Lucy: "*No, but I really have to see him.*"

Secretary: "*Well, I'm terribly sorry, but he's quite busy.*"

Lucy: "*He can't be too busy to help someone, can he?*"

Secretary: "*What kind of help do you need?*"

Lucy: "*Well, you know about the flooding problem in Hamilton?*"

Secretary: "*Certainly. I read about it in the paper. Do you live in that area?*"

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Lucy: *“My mom and I do, and that last big rain almost got us. Please, I need to talk to Senator Morgan.”*

Secretary: *“I’ll have to make an appointment for you, Miss. What is your name?”*

Lucy: *“My name is Lucy Mayfield, and I can’t wait for an appointment. My mom is sick. We need help and we need it quick.”* Lucy’s voice became louder. *“Please, why can’t I see Senator Morgan right now?”*

Secretary: *“I’m afraid that’s impossible, Miss Mayfield. He has visitors.”*

Lucy: *“But this won’t take long.”* Lucy’s voice broke and she gave Jenny a heartbreaking look. *“Please. I don’t think my mom could handle our house being flooded. She’s too sick to go through that.”*

Secretary: (Seeming not to hear, the secretary flips through her appointment book.) *“How about next Friday at—”*

Lucy (exploding): *“I told you, I can’t wait! My mom’s too sick and a flooded house might kill her.”*

As she screamed the words Lucy’s face crumpled and she sank to the floor, sobbing loudly. Her shoulders shook and she covered her face with her hands. Jenny knew she was no longer acting.

Jenny dropped her script and knelt next to Lucy. “Lucy, I’m so sorry.” She wrapped her arms around Lucy’s shoulders and hugged her.

When the crying stopped Lucy looked at her with embarrassment. “Guess you know now how worried I am,” she said softly. “Mom has some kinda condition that has the doctors puzzled. We don’t know what’s wrong with her, but we do know she’s not getting better. She’s too weak to go through a flood, Jenny. Think Senator Morgan will help us?”

“If he sees you like this, you can bet on it. He’d be doing a good deed and getting great PR at the same time. Politicians love that. Feel like running back through the script one more time?”

“Sure. I’m ready.”

When they finished, Lucy sat down to rest. “Jenny, do you know Sarah? She’s the girl with the long blonde hair. Sits in front of me in math class.”

Jenny nodded and Lucy continued. "I heard her crying the other day in the girl's bathroom. Marilee came in and they started talking. Sarah was upset because she thinks her family is about to lose their home. Something about a second mortgage. Her father lost his job and now they can't make the payments."

"Doesn't she live in that great big house you can see from the main highway? I heard it used to be a hospital during the Civil War?"

"That's right," Lucy said. "It's a real creepy place."

"Why do you think it's creepy?"

"I guess you've never been out there. There's an area close to the house that gives me the shivers. It's surrounded with a rusty iron fence and it's full of old tombstones. They say the whole place is really a graveyard and someone moved all those markers years ago to make it look like a normal place."

Jenny stared at Lucy, wondering why she brought this up.

"I've been feeling so sorry for myself, Jenny. But when I heard Sarah crying and talking about maybe being homeless, I felt really awful. At least my mom owns our little place."

Jenny made a mental note to learn more about Sarah.

Lucy left at noon and Pete arrived five minutes later.

"So how did it go, Jenny? Think Lucy can handle it?"

"Let me put it this way, Pete. If Lucy was acting, she deserves an Oscar. But the sad part is that she wasn't acting."

"You mean the situation is that bad?"

"I'm afraid so. The doctors don't know what's wrong with her mother and she's getting worse."

Pete looked thoughtful. "Maybe Senator Morgan can help them."

"If he has a heart, he will," Jenny said. "We need you to rehearse with us Monday and Tuesday? You can be the senator."

"Sure. I can handle that. Oh, I almost forgot. I visited with Bobby this morning and you'll never guess what I learned. When he came to in the accident, there was a woman there with him, holding him. At first he thought it was his mom. Then he looked around and saw his mom, and he knew right away she was gone. The other woman stayed with him

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until the medics arrived. He said there was something about her, but he can't describe what it was."

"How interesting, Pete. Do you think Bobby knows she was an angel?"

"Maybe, but you know how guys are. No way is he going to tell anyone he saw an angel."

Jenny frowned at him. "Yes, I know."

"When the medics arrived, the woman kissed his cheek and told him to close his eyes. When he opened them she was gone. Now he's sure he imagined the whole thing."

The weekend passed quickly and Jenny finished her list of questions for the interview with Senator Morgan.

Monday afternoon's rehearsal went well, with Pete portraying the senator as a compassionate man. Jenny watched his concern for Lucy and her mother, and she hoped the real senator would be that concerned.

Wednesday morning she kept dropping things. First her books, and then the cereal box. Her mother grabbed the sweeper and helped clean the floor.

"Jenny, I'm so glad you were accepted into the journalism class. Mr. Ziegler will be too when he sees your finished article. And don't worry about the senator. He'll probably give you tons of information. Politicians love attention."

"Thanks Mom. I hope so. I'm a little nervous about the interview, so I'm glad Pete's going with me."

"You'll do fine, sweetie. Just be prepared and be yourself."

"I'll try, Mom. It's just that I've never interviewed an important person before."

Later at school Lucy met Jenny and Pete at their lockers.

"I told my mom I'd be late coming home, Jenny, so I can come to your house with you and Pete. I guess we're all set for this afternoon."

"Right, Lucy. You can leave your backpack at my house and follow us to town. After Pete and I go into that office building, you'll wait about ten minutes before you go in. We should be with the senator by then. His

Hays Williams

secretary told me to be prompt because he keeps a tight schedule. Are you ready?"

"I hope so, Jenny. Any suggestions?"

"Once you start talking to the secretary, just keep thinking about your mom and what a flood could do to her. Don't be afraid to really act if you need to and remember to keep getting louder and louder until the senator comes out. When he appears you need to get really loud and emotional."

"Okay. I can do that."

Jenny saw Lucy's concern. "If your house floods, you can stay with us. We have plenty of room,"

Lucy's eyes filled with tears as she grabbed Jenny and hugged her. "You're the best friend I've ever had, Jenny. Thanks."

Chapter 4

Outside the building where Senator Morgan's office was located, Jenny, Pete, and Lucy checked their watches before Jenny and Pete headed up the stairs.

"Ten minutes, Lucy," Jenny said. "When it's over, go back to my house and wait for us."

"Don't worry, Jen. I'm not taking my eyes off my watch," Lucy said nervously.

Senator Morgan's secretary smiled when they walked in. "Hello, you must be here for the interview. The senator is waiting for you." She picked up a phone and pressed a button. "The students are here, Senator. Yes sir."

"Through that door," she motioned toward a door to her right. Before they reached it, the door opened.

"Come in, come in," Senator Morgan smiled broadly. "You can sit over there in front of my desk." He closed the door and walked around to his chair.

"Thank you, Senator. This is my friend, Pete Montgomery. We're sort of a team and we help each other." Jenny was relieved to see a beverage area across the room and a half-full glass of water on the desk.

Pete shook the senator's hand. "Nice to meet you, Senator Morgan."

"Good to meet you, Pete. This is wonderful. I like seeing people work together. It can make all the difference."

The senator looked at Jenny. "Mr. Ziegler tells me you're quite the young journalist and that you're from Boston. Oh, I do love that city."

For the next five minutes the senator talked about his visits to Boston and the places he'd been. "This is indeed a pleasure, Jenny. I'm so happy to meet both of you. Now where shall we begin?"

Jenny pulled out her notebook, pen, and a tape recorder. "I have a list of questions I'd like to ask, if that's okay. May I use a recorder?"

"Of course. Let's hear the first question."

Jenny pushed the "record" button before she spoke. "What made you choose a career in politics?"

Each question resulted in a long elaboration from the senator. He'd had an interesting career and Jenny became fascinated with his descriptions. In the middle of the third one, she heard Lucy's voice. Senator Morgan glanced toward the door before continuing. As Lucy became louder he lost his train of thought. When he heard her crying he jumped up.

"I think I need to see what's going on out there. I'll be right back."

"Yes sir. May I get a glass of water?" Jenny asked. She glanced into her tote bag at the red nylon bag she'd brought for his water glass.

"Of course, help yourself," Senator Morgan hurried through the door to the waiting area.

"I'll get it for you, Jenny," Pete jumped up. He quickly poured water into one glass and picked up an empty glass. Keeping it out of sight, he returned and placed the filled glass on the desk. He quickly emptied the senator's water into the clean glass and slipped the used one into her tote bag.

Keeping her eyes on the door Jenny put the glass into the red nylon bag and closed it. Pete resumed his position and winked at Jenny. The door opened and Senator Morgan strode in, looking serious.

"Thank you, sir," Lucy called out behind him. "Oh, thank you so much."

The senator sat down and made some notes. "That poor kid is scared to death. She lives in an area that floods and her mother is terribly sick." He picked up his phone and pressed a button. "Clara, call Mayor Owen and tell him I want to see him first thing tomorrow morning. Tell him it's urgent and we can talk over breakfast. Make a reservation for eight-thirty at Cassie's." He turned off the phone and gave Jenny and Pete his full attention. "Now, where were we?"

Jenny turned the recorder back on and looked at her notebook. "You were telling us about your work with the local Boys and Girls Club. Did you say you helped persuade Mr. Hamilton to donate that big building for the project?"

"Yes, I did. He had other plans for the building, but the size and location were perfect for the club. He's a good man and he finally agreed and came through. He recently told me it was one of the best things he's ever done."

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Senator Morgan looked at his watch. “Jenny, would it be possible to continue this via email? When I spoke with Clara just now she reminded me of something I promised to do.”

“Yes sir, that would work. Could we take two or three pictures before we leave?” Jenny pulled out her digital camera and handed it to Pete.

The senator agreed and Pete captured two shots of the senator at his desk. Stepping back, he took one that included Jenny. He showed them to Senator Morgan.

“I like the one with Jenny in it, but you may use any of them.” Turning to Jenny, he continued. “If you’ll email me your list of questions, I’ll take more time and give you enough information for a great article. Here’s my card, Jenny. Be sure to send me a copy of the paper.”

“Yes sir, I certainly will. And I’ll send you the article for your approval and editing before we use it. The paper is due out in about two weeks, but I’ll get a draft to you by next Monday.”

They shook hands with the senator and left. As they walked past the secretary’s desk Jenny spotted a framed photograph on the wall facing the senator’s office—a picture of Senator Morgan and another boy when they were about fourteen. Twins! Their resemblance to Bobby stunned Jenny.

Pete stared at the picture. “They look exactly alike, don’t they?”

The secretary laughed. “Identical twins usually do.”

Pete smiled at Jenny and they left.

In the elevator Jenny couldn’t contain her excitement. “Now we have two possibilities.”

“Maybe, Jenny. Let’s hope one of them is Bobby’s father. We won’t need DNA from the brother since they’re twins.”

On the way home Pete rode in front and Jenny kept staring at him. Something was different about him today. She’d been impressed with his professional manner in the senator’s office, but that wasn’t it. Suddenly a car came toward them and slowed down. Some boys from Hamilton High. One of them hung his head out the window and yelled at Pete, “Hey runt, where’s your high waters?”

The car sped away and Jenny gave Pete a puzzled look. “High waters?”

Pete laughed. "That's what they call pants that are too short for you, allowing too much of your socks to show."

"Oh," Jenny laughed with him, remembering she'd noticed recently that his pants did seem way too short. "I knew something was different about you today. You're wearing a new outfit."

"Yep. Mom said it was about time. I've grown close to three inches in the past few months and she said I'd probably double that by January. Said some boys have growth spurts at my age. She went shopping yesterday morning and got four new outfits for me. Probably spent all of her tip money for the past six months."

"She wanted you to look good for today's interview," Jenny said. "She's got good taste in clothes. Very nice, Pete." She noticed how the blue striped shirt looked perfect with the navy slacks and socks and the shiny brown loafers.

Lucy sat on the back porch steps waiting for them.

"Did I do okay, Jen? Did you and Pete do what you needed to do?"

"Yes Lucy and you did great. Senator Morgan is going to help you. He's meeting with Mayor Owen tomorrow morning."

"Maybe I should be the one thanking you. If he gets the drainage problem fixed so we don't get water in our house." Lucy got quiet.

"Is your mom okay, Lucy?"

"Sorry, Jen. Yesterday was a bad day for her. I had to help her back to bed when I got home. I wish they could figure out what's wrong with her. She's seeing a new doctor next week. Maybe he can help her."

"I sure hope so, Lucy. I'll keep both of you in my prayers."

"Thanks, Jenny. See you tomorrow."

After Lucy left, Jenny and Pete checked the Internet, typing in 'Senator James Morgan's twin brother'. In seconds they had a link to a news story headline: *Identical Twins take Different Roads*. The story explained how one twin chose politics and the other chose the ministry. The next story was more recent, stating the senator's twin brother, Reverend John Morgan, planned to be in Hamilton for the Christmas season to visit the senator and his family.

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Reverend! The twin brother was a minister. Jenny wondered if that would rule him out? Probably not, she thought, and his work would certainly be classified as special.

“Pete, we have to get that DNA checked soon. We need some answers while both brothers are here.”

On Thursday morning Pete followed Jenny to the lockers. “How about Saturday morning for getting Bobby’s DNA? Is that a good—?”

Jenny broke in. “Sure that’s great, Pete.” She was too late to warn him that another student was close enough to hear them. He was taking a long time to stash his books and was obviously listening to them. Jenny discreetly nodded in the boy’s direction and Pete glanced over his shoulder. He gave Jenny a look of acknowledgement and they headed to their first class.

“Wasn’t that—?”

“Yep. That’s Nigel Young. He’s the guy I mentioned to you, the one who’s jealous of Bobby.”

“But why—?”

“He wants to be something he isn’t,” Pete said. “He’d like to be as funny as Bobby, but he’ll never manage that and I think he knows it. He turns green every time he sees Bobby perform.”

Jenny frowned. “Well that explains his behavior at the barbeque. I hope he didn’t hear what we were saying just now.”

“No harm if he did. He’d have no idea what it’s about. So we’re set for Saturday morning, right? I’ll keep Bobby company while you find some of his hair.”

“Okay. That should work,” Jenny said, as they hurried into first period English.

That afternoon Jenny checked her email and found a long message from Senator Morgan. In addition to answering all of her questions in great depth, he referred her to three websites for more information on his career. Jenny smiled as she read the information. Senator Morgan was definitely a civic-minded man with a lot of concern for others. Still smiling, she opened a new file and began her article: **The Senator with a Big Heart**. She looked at the title and remembered what Pete told her:

“She told Bobby his dad was the most special man she’d ever known. She said his work was even more special and very important. Said he was making a big difference for the world and learning about Bobby might ruin that.”

Jenny continued writing for a few minutes. She stared at the computer screen and leaned back in her chair. The senator had to be Bobby’s father. Everything fit too perfectly.

Pete tapped lightly on her bedroom door. “Jenny, how’s it going?”

“Great. Come over here and read this.”

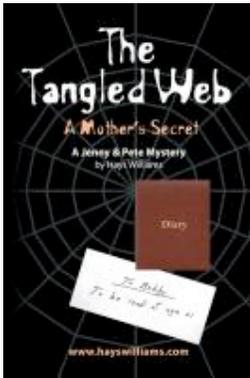
Pete leaned over her shoulder and read the full page she’d just finished. “That’s a great title, Jenny. He’ll love it.”

“I’m wondering if he might let me include what he’s about to do. You know, helping Lucy and her mother.”

“Why don’t you finish with what you have? See if adding a few paragraphs about the flooding problem will fit anywhere. If it will, send him the draft and ask him.”

“Great idea. Thanks.” Jenny got quiet for a moment before she continued. “Pete, the senator’s work could certainly be called special.”

Pete grinned. “I know. We may have found Bobby’s dad.”



When Bobby loses his mom, Jenny and Pete set out to find his dad. They create a plan to get a DNA sample from a senator Bobby resembles. Their efforts are hindered by Nigel, a spoiled rich boy who is jealous of Bobby. How far will Nigel go to stop them? As they get closer to finding out the truth about Bobby's dad, Jenny suspects that Bobby and Pete have a secret of their own.

The Tangled Web

A Mother's Secret

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