A hand holding a stone mallet over a stone block. The background is a textured, aged parchment or stone surface with some faint circular patterns and a small map-like illustration.

A GHOST WARRIOR ADVENTURE

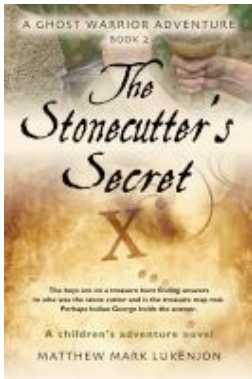
BOOK 2

*The
Stonecutter's
Secret*
X

The boys are on a treasure hunt finding answers
to who was the stone cutter and is the treasure map real.
Perhaps Indian George holds the answer.

A children's adventure novel

MATTHEW MARK LUKENJON



THE STONECUTTER'S SECRET spins a mystery of discovery for the three friends as they work to discover who Joe the stone cutter really was and if the map they found, which he had drawn in a letter to his family, would lead them to a hidden treasure. The boys stretch their small world across the ocean to Italy looking for answers. Perhaps Indian George holds the golden key that will unlock the Stonecutter's secret...

The Stonecutter's Secret

A Ghost Warrior Adventure

Book II

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THE STONECUTTER'S SECRET

A Ghost Warrior Adventure - Book II

**AN ADVENTURE TO FILL YOUR DREAMS
BE YOU YOUNG OR OLD
SECRETS ARE FUN!!!!**

Matthew Mark Lukenjon

A children's adventure novel

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First Edition

Chapter 3

A PLAN OF ATTACK

We broke camp early, loaded Ghost Warrior, and headed across the mirror smooth waters of Donner Lake toward home. Tippy was perched in the front; ears up and nose into the wind.

Two hours later we were unloading the tools we had quietly sneaked into the canoe. Tippy was waiting patiently on the beach while we pulled our canoe ashore.

I laid the coiled hose across my shoulder, picked up a rake and started toward the mystery rock.

Once there we cut the hose into six pieces, each long enough to reach the bottom and lay over the edge of the rock. We started to lay the hose down into the rock when Jimmy coughed up a bright idea.

"Hey guys, it would probably be better if we get as much stuff out as we can before we lower the water. If we do it now we can stir it up and rake it off the water. If we let all the water out we'll have to get down inside and lift the crud out."

Steve and I looked at each other with our eyes wide open. "The boy has brains," I said, in mock amazement. "He's right though. Let's see how much crap we can get out first."

We all dug our rakes in and started scooping out gobs of waterlogged pine needles, moss, and slimy green algae. Every now and then we would snag a limb or pine cone that had fallen in. Easy it was not, but we kept at it until it felt like we had most of the stuff out. This was great. Pretty soon our jeans and shoes were soggy with mucky dirt that splashed us as we pulled stuff out and threw it to the ground.

I stopped and leaned on my rake. "Whew! I'm bushed. All in favor of starting the siphons put down your rakes." Sweat was running down my face leaving a salty flavor on my lips.

"Yeeeeeehah!!!" Steve cut loose with his famous, down home, rebel yell and launched his rake in a graceful arc. Unfortunately he miscalculated and it landed in the water, disappearing into the murky depths.

"Way to go spaz," Jim kidded.

"Let me guess. You planned it that way, right?" I added, rubbing it in a little.

"Well, not really," Steve conceded, with a shrug. "but we can get it when the water goes down I reckon. C'mon dipsticks, let's see if we can get these siphons started."

We put all six pieces into the muddy water, wiped off the ends of the hose and started sucking. The air in the hose had a stale, nasty smell that made me gag. I could feel the water rising in the hose. I tried to time the suction, but the putrid water went into my mouth any way. I spit out the water feeling like I was going to barf. Luckily the water started flowing from the hose so I laid it down. "Ychhh! That water tastes like horse manure," I said, wiping my tongue on my shirt sleeve.

Jimmy laughed. "Since when have you been tasting horse manure Dave?"

I cast him an evil glance. "You know what I mean dingbat. Just wait, you'll get a mouthful too."

Steve was next to splutter and spit out the foul tasting potion, but he had another one started. "C'mon Jim," he urged. "We each have to do at least one. Quit messin' with it and just do it.

Steve and I started on another one while Jimmy labored trying to avoid tasting the slimy brew. A few minutes later we were gratified to hear him sputtering and choking like we did.

The next one I started was one too many. The pungent air and foul tasting water choked me. I jumped off the rock and proceeded to throw up. It's not very fun to listen to someone get sick. It's even worse to be the one getting sick. My throat burned and I felt shaky.

I kicked dirt over the mushy puddle that had been my lunch two hours ago. It had an evil smell that was worse than the crud that flowed out of the rock. I felt weak, so I sat down and leaned against the cool rock. There better be something neat down there, I thought. Tippy came over and licked my ear. My fingers found his ears and scratched idly until the nausea passed. "I don't know about you guys, but I'm not doing any more siphons," I announced indignantly.

Steve and Jim agreed whole heartedly. They jumped off the rock and joined me. Silently we watched the muddy water flow from the hoses creating tiny rivers that found their way down the hill.

Jim bumped me with his shoulder. "Did your lunch taste better the second time?" he asked innocently.

I looked at him with disgust. "I saved it for you if you want some.

The Stonecutter's Secret

"No thanks," He said, a big smile on his face. When Steve smiled at our smart remarks I swear the freckles on his face would sparkle with delight.

There wasn't anything more we could do so we went back to camp, took a swim which served to get most of the goop off our face and hands. After our swim we fished a little not catching a single fish. Pork chops and green beans made a fine dinner. We cleaned up and hit the sack filled with food and dreams. Tired and sore, I drifted off, making wishes on the stars sparkling over head. Tippy was curled beside me.

We woke early when the sun kissed us good morning, wolfed down some cold cereal, and scrambled up the hill to the mystery rock. To our great surprise the water was almost gone even though only three of the hoses were still working. The others must have got plugged up with gunk.

"Let's climb up to the railroad and slide down shale hill a couple of times," I suggested. "Maybe when we get back the rest of the water will be gone."

Steve agreed. "Good idea brains, that's light years better than watching water run out of a hose."

Jimmy took off. "Last one up has to wash all the dishes," he called back.

Steve and I sprinted after him taking up the challenge with laughter and yelling. We went up the hill like young mountain goats; jumping from rock to rock, looking for any advantage to take the lead. I'm not sure how he did it, but Tippy stayed ahead of us as easy as pie. Jim slipped near the top. Steve beat me by a whisker and Jim was the caboose.

"Hey Jim, do you like washing dishes," I teased.

"You're lucky I slipped or I'd be laughing now," he panted, bending over and holding his stomach.

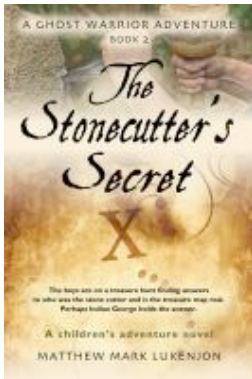
"Nah! No luck, just skill, and speed and daring," I bragged, "Right Steve?" I added, savoring our victory.

We gave him the hee haw a while longer. Then we walked down the tracks to shale hill, balancing on the narrow steel track like high wire circus performers.

We had discovered shale hill three years ago. When the railroad was built in the early 1800's, the workers used dynamite to blast through the hard granite mountain. The Chinese laborers gathered the loose rock in carts and dumped it over the side of the track bed. The

loose rock and shale formed a 100 foot wide swath that flowed a half mile down the hill. We found, quite by accident that we could lay spread eagle on our backs, pull with our feet, and get the surface rocks to start sliding down the hill with us being carried down with it.

It was really a blast. You could feel the rocks moving underneath you, picking up speed as you slithered down the hill. We had slid down together many times. Each ride we took was a little different and a lot of fun. It never occurred to us that it might be dangerous.



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