

Family Cabin

Brad handed a picnic basket to his sister. “Tell Gran we’re leaving, and meet me at the water.”

He sprinted toward the shed and lifted oars and life jackets from sturdy hooks. He and Sarah had turned the rowboat over and inspected it last night. It waited for them now, bobbing in clear water beside the rickety dock.

Sarah skidded to a stop at the bottom of the hill and stepped carefully onto rotting wood. “Do you think we can replace these boards by ourselves? This is the first summer without Grandpa here to make repairs.”

“We’ll ask Gran this afternoon. She said we can cross the lake without an adult, so we don’t have to stay in the cove this summer. Let’s row to the park. You haven’t outgrown the swings, have you?”

Sarah scoffed. “Gran let me push her high last summer. She said she loved them as a kid and will never outgrow them.

“Did you check for gold on your way down? I ran too fast to look.”

Brad peered into the water. Their grandparents had always sprinkled plastic gold coins along the bank and in the shallow water. Grandpa insisted that pirates hid in their cabin over the winter and that treasure was buried in the woods. There had even been a treasure map one year that led to a box of pirate costumes.

Sarah pretended to look through a spyglass while Brad pushed off.

“Ahoy,” she shouted, “possible target sighted. Do you think they have any gold?”

Brad waved to a neighbor who was fishing from his pontoon boat. “Do you remember how we used to wear costumes and ask tourists for their gold and jewelry? Even Grandpa played along.”

Sarah nodded. “I miss him. And I miss the pirate games that we played every summer.

“Row starboard. Trash on the water. I’ll grab it.”

She reached for a floating bottle. “This is glass. Someone could really get hurt if it floated to shore and broke on the rocks. Oh, it’s sealed and has something inside.”

Brad propped the oars against his seat and opened the bottle. *My name is Martha and I don’t have anyone to play with this summer. My best friend moved away. Meet me at the park if you are 10 years old and want to play on the swings. June 8, 1962.*

“I’m ten! But, wait. That can’t be right. 1962 was a long time ago. Grandma’s name is Martha. Do you think she threw the bottle into the lake for us to find?”

Brad read the note again. “Gran was 10 in 1962, and she played on those swings. Maybe she’s waiting for us at the park?”

They waved to a skier being pulled by a vintage Chris-Craft. Brad whistled. “That’s the kind of boat that Grandpa’s family had when he was a kid. It looks brand new.”

Brad rowed to shore and tossed a rope to Sarah. “I don’t remember these huge trees. Hop out and tie us up.”

Sarah jumped from the boat. “Wow, a metal slide. It was never here before. Gran told us about slides that used to be in the water, but I never thought they would be that tall.”

Brad carried Gran’s picnic basket to a table while Sarah went toward the swings with the bottle in her hand.

“Excuse me.” A girl ran to Sarah. “I’m Martha. Is that the bottle with my note? I live across the lake in the summer, at my family’s old log cabin. I threw the bottle in the lake last night, but I didn’t think anyone would find it this fast.”

Brad joined them and pointed toward the swim beach. “There must be a car show. The beach is full of vintage cars. And look, there’s no parking lot on the hill, just big trees. That was pavement last summer.”

“What are you talking about?” Martha asked. “We always park by the water. That’s my family’s red convertible, and it’s only two years old, not vintage.

“Put your picnic basket by ours. You have to taste my mom’s blondies!”

“Our gran’s blondies are award winning,” Sarah said. “She uses her mother’s recipe.”

Brad nudged Sarah. “Gran packed blondies. Let’s taste Martha’s and see if they’re the same.

“And we need to ask Gran what color the convertible was in her old black and white pictures.”

Martha shouted to the boy removing his skis. “Join our picnic, Kenneth. We have plenty.”

“That’s Grandpa’s name,” Sarah whispered.