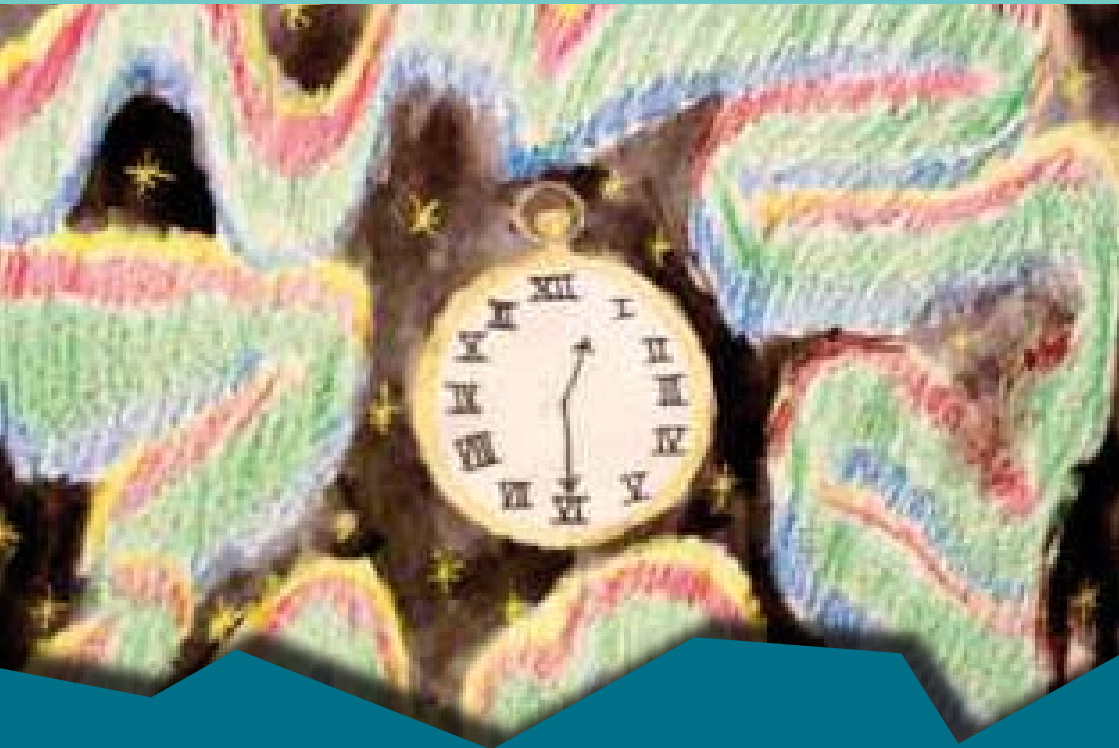


The Antarctic Watch

A Polar Mystery

Woodbridge District School / Kenai Middle School



ICE E-MYSTERY



The Antarctic Watch

A Polar Mystery

A story written and illustrated by pupils at Woodbridge District School, Tasmania, Australia and Kenai Middle School, Alaska USA





Woodbridge District School, Tasmania, Australia

Woodbridge School is situated in the stunning environment of the Southern D'Entrecasteaux Channel, in Southern Tasmania. The School has a strong community focus, and caters for the needs of students from a wide geographical area, and from Kindergarten to Year 10. Principal, Chris Barnes and staff provide a welcoming atmosphere. Specialist teachers in music, drama, design, art, home economics, computing, physical education, landcare and science provide students with a rich educational experience.

Woodbridge District School Class 7

Teacher: Melissa Wagner

Students:	Courtney Byrne
Deans Blomfield	Athena Kemp
Purdie Day	
Robert Wilson	
Gareth Aver	
Alexander Morton	
Oliver Wilson	



Kenai Middle School, Alaska, USA

Kenai Middle School is located on the Kenai Peninsula (lots of wildlife) near the Kenai River (world class King Salmon!) in South Central Alaska. It is about 3 miles from the City of Kenai and 160 miles from Anchorage. The school is a grade six through grade eight school with approximately 360 students. The sixth grade students have a slightly different schedule than the seventh and eighth graders with fewer teachers and more educational support.

Kenai Middle School Class 8

Teacher: Cynthia Romberg

Students:	Marissa Enriquez	Colin Morse
Brittney Boyes	Jacob Gilman	Katherine O'Reilly
Duncan Brewer	Sierra Glonek	Ericka Reynolds
Addison Cheek	Krystal Hamman	Darian Schaffner
Madison Cunningham	Ivy Howland	Sasha Thompson
Austin Daly	Fletcher Iverson	Joy Wannamaker
Nicolette DeVore	Lee Kempf	
Krystal Duran	Gretta Kennedy	
Rebecca Elliott	Makenzi Magiera	



Prologue

The chilly September morning warmed in the fall sunrise as my father's expedition set sail. I will never forget the look on his face when he left. Looking around I saw tears streaming on everyone's face as they were saying goodbye to their loved ones. My mother cradled me in her arms as we walked away. The feeling of her wrapped around me was comforting.

Even though I was too young to understand, that day had brought a certain sadness to Ma. For a period of time, her warm heart grew cold. Year's later, reports of an expedition gone missing were coming in with every ship.

A knock on the door usually meant bill collectors and auditors, but not today. Today it was something much closer to the heart. Today it was a broken man seeking forgiveness of something that wasn't his fault.



In his hand he carried a little black package. After a few short words to Ma, she hugged him and they both broke down and cried. I didn't know this man, but he seemed to throw a blanket of sadness over the whole house. Ma handed me the package, and told me she couldn't bear to see it.

Chapter 1

'Cooper Green! Get your butt down here right now and help me with the dishes!'

'Alright mum. Just give me a second.'

I hurried down the stairs before my mum got mad. Tomorrow was my fourteenth birthday, and I didn't want my mum to take away any of my presents before I even got them. I wish we had a dishwasher, but we just couldn't afford it.

The next morning I woke up to the biggest surprise of all. My dad was sitting at the table drinking coffee. He was hardly ever home. He was an inventor, but most of his contraptions had failed, so he never made much money. I devoured my oatmeal and scurried outside. The cold September air chilled my entire body as I stepped outside of our two-bedroom apartment and waited for the bus. Today was the day that Mr. Thomas, my science teacher, would announce the winner of the 'National Youth Polar Exploration' contest. School was a lot of fun, and I am good at it too. With straight A's and a 4.0 GPA, I am known as the brainiac



of the school, not that I mind. No one really knows me, and the ones that think they do, only do because I help them with their homework every once in a while. I have no friends my age; never did except when I was six. I have a four-year-old neighbour who I trade hot wheels with in exchange for reading his dad's collection of encyclopedias. But, I hardly count that.

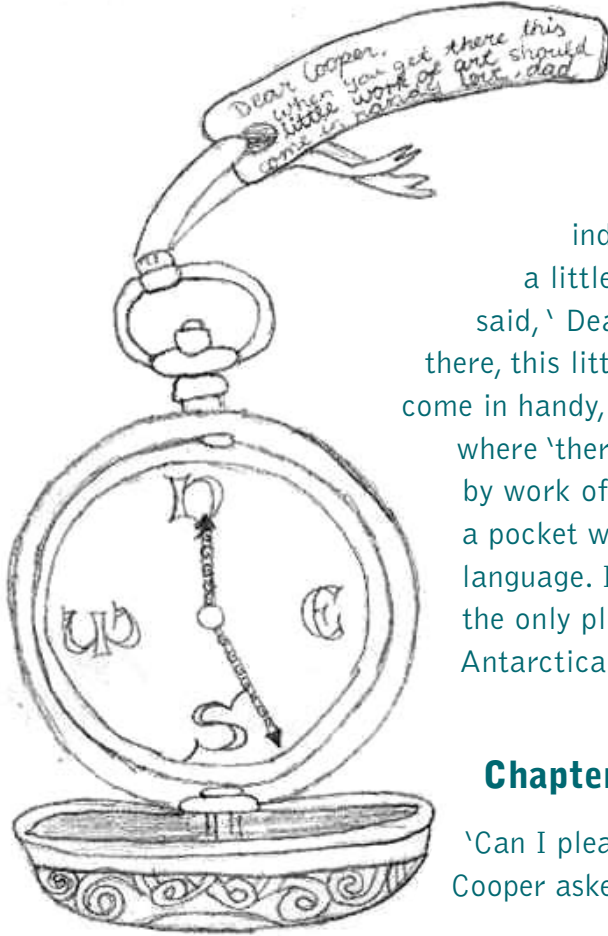
Finally the eighth hour arrived. I got my books out of my locker, and ran to room 37 with excitement. Mr. Thomas was standing in the front of the class holding a manila envelope.

'Congratulations class, we have a genius amongst us.'

Silence swallowed the room as he began to open the envelope.

I held onto my seat on the bus ride home after school. It was all I could do to keep myself from exploding out of it. When my stop came, I raced off the bus and into my house clutching round trip tickets to Antarctica. I arrived, winded, to a scene that made my heart skip a few beats and nearly stop.

Dad was lying on the floor holding a golden object to his heart. He was pale-faced and didn't look well. Ma was in the corner crying. I wasn't sure what was happening, but I immediately fell down by my dad and started crying. Seconds later I heard sirens and saw people rushing into the apartment. As they carried his struggling body out of the apartment on a stretcher, the gold object fell out of his hands, but was ignored. My mum ran out with the crowd, telling me she would call as soon as she knew anything. Usually I enjoyed being home alone. I liked the quiet. But today, silence penetrated my skin like a thousand hot knives all ending up at my heart.



I remembered the gold object and slowly bent down to examine it. It had some strange indecipherable writing with a little bow and a note that said, 'Dear Cooper, when you get there, this little work of art should come in handy, love Dad.' I wasn't sure where 'there' was or what he meant by work of art. To me it was just a pocket watch with an extinct language. In the back of my head the only place I could think of was Antarctica. But how did he know?

Chapter 2

'Can I please have a hot chocolate?' Cooper asked the waitress politely.

'Sure, I will just be a minute.'

As Cooper was waiting he decided to take the watch out of his pocket and have another look.

'Mum have you ever seen this before.' Cooper asked enthusiastically.

'Well Cooper let me see if I can remember the story your father told.' Coopers mum thought. 'Ah that's it. I remember,

it is something to do with your great-great-great-grandfather. He went on an expedition to Antarctica and he modified this when he was there. He sent it to his wife, your great-great-great-grandmother, so she could keep it safe. Unfortunately when she received it, she also got the bad news that her husband was missing, presumably dead, in the great white wastes of Antarctica. She passed the watch to her son. Her son past it down and so on, so that every other member of the family before you has held this watch and wondered what it all meant, as your father did and so will you.'

'Here is your hot chocolate. That is a pretty cool watch where did you get it from?' asked the waitress.

'Um, well, my dad gave it to me.'

'Speaking of dad can we go see him now?' Cooper asked eagerly.

'Sure. Let's go see him kiddo.'

'That kid Cooper has a watch that looks exactly like that picture you have. The really old picture.' The waitress exclaimed to the chef.

'Really you don't say! That's interesting.' The chef said, trying to hide his excitement.

Chapter 3

'Hi dad. How are you going?'

'I'm good now that you're here. Cooper promise me you will take care of that watch when you go on that adventure of yours. Just remember that watch will help you in more ways then you think.'

'Wait, I thought you didn't know about my winning the contest yet?'

'Well son, Mr. Thomas gave me a phone call when he found out, which was last week,' he sighed. 'Keeping it a secret was one of the hardest things I've had to do in my life.'

Ma listened at the door as her husband and son had one of those tear-jerking moments. When she heard silence, she walked in.

'Well, Cooper, we best get you home.'

Walking out of the hospital, a strange man was staring at me. His appearance startled me and I felt kind of weird. Chills ran down my spine as he winked at me. I tried to ignore him and just kept walking. As we drove home, I tried my hardest to forget about that odd encounter.



A UPS package addressed to Mr. Cooper Green, sat on the doorstep. Immediately after spotting it, I ripped it open. In it were all the necessities to go to Antarctica. There was also a letter with the alarming news of my plane departing from LA to Hobart, Tasmania, tomorrow. I had to dodge my mum's maternal instincts as around almost every corner she was holding a pen and asking if I had any more underwear to initial. Eventually, the night came and I was left to wonder what Hobart had in store for me.

Two days later I was at the training camp in Hobart, Tasmania. They taught us lots of things about survival, frostbite, how to build snow shelters, and many other practical things. When we were done for the day, I walked to the dormitory to write a letter to mum and dad. As I walked down the hallway, the door to my room was wide open. I figured I must have been tired and left it open, but when I opened my suitcase, my belongings were scattered. Someone had been through my stuff. I frantically searched through my suitcase for the pocket watch, but I couldn't find it. Then I realized I had it in my pocket the entire time.

It seemed strange because none of my things were missing. Later, I reported the break in to the camp manager. He had no idea who could have done such a thing, but said the only people with keys to my room would be the maids. I had no other troubles at the camp, and was now certified to go to Antarctica.

As I lay in my bed that last night in Hobart, the butterflies in my stomach and the visions of dazzling aurora displays, giant ice floes, curious penguins, and bloodthirsty leopard seals kept me from falling into a peaceful slumber. When my eyes opened tomorrow, the greatest adventure of my life would begin.

Chapter 4

Beep, beep, beep, beep, beep...

'Ah, time to get up. Man I slept badly. I am so excited, but I couldn't sleep.' Cooper thought to himself.

Suddenly a strange lady walked in to his room and offered him a vegemite sandwich, and said, 'Hi, I am Sarah and I will be your caretaker for the trip. We are going to become great friends.'

'Hhhhhiii Sarah. Um, you startled me. I didn't know that I was going to have a female caretaker.'

'Well there was a bit of a mix up but anyway we will have heaps of fun. We have a little bit of time this morning before the ship leaves, so I'm going to show you some of my favourite Hobart sites.'

Cooper blinked twice. It was all a little too much this early in the morning. Especially Sarah's Aussie accent! It was so different to what he was used to at home. 'I thought this morning we could go to the Australian Antarctic Division at Kingston. It's about 20 minutes drive South from here.'

Cooper and Sarah spent the morning trying on clothes and looking at krill in Kingston. Then they went to the Botanical gardens and looked at their Sub-Antarctic plants. Sarah bought Cooper an ice-cream. Then they wandered around Salamanca Place where the Saturday market was on. Cooper bought some souvenirs for his mum and dad. He also tried a wallaby sausage from a stall. Sarah explained they were a type of kangaroo, which made Cooper feel kind of strange. He wrote a postcard to send to his parents and Sarah arranged for a friend to post it for him Monday morning.

Dear Mum and Dad,

This morning, I met my caretaker for the trip. Her name is Sarah, and she is very nice! First we went to the Australian Antarctic Division and tried on some snow suits and big boots, then we went to the Botanical gardens and looked at the Antarctic garden. It was so cool. Sarah bought me an ice-creamvery yummy!!!!!! We made our way to Salamanca market. I had a wallaby sausage for lunch, which is a small kangaroo. Anyway, have to go. Sarah wants to take me to the TMAG so I can put my hand on the ice.

Lots of love from Cooper xoxoxoxoxoxoxox

P.S missing you already

To escape from the heat of the sun Cooper and Sarah went to the TMAG (Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery). Cooper had been excited all day and now he was a bit tired. Sarah said, 'It's OK Cooper, you'll enjoy this, and after, we can make our way to the icebreaker.'

Sarah was right. Cooper did enjoy the museum. There were strange animals and rocks and artefacts from the Tasmanian Aboriginals. But Cooper enjoyed the Antarctic exhibition the most. In the centre was a map of Antarctica made out of ice. There were lots of people there touching the ice, both old and young. Some kids had made a handprint in the ice. Cooper put his hand into the handprint and thought, 'Soon, I'll really be there.' He watched a 3D film about the early explorers, looked

at pictures of the giant Patagonian tooth fish, and a harpoon so twisted in a whale it looked like a piece of black string that had been tied into a knot.

They sat in the round room near the entrance to the exhibition, looking at the map on the floor. It was created in MMVI (2006) but made to look like an ancient map. At the top it was almost fully mapped, but at the bottom it showed the southern part of the ocean with shipwrecks and monsters of the deep. 'Here be dragons,' said Sarah. Cooper didn't understand what she meant at first. But after a little while he realised it was another part of the adventure he was on. More people had climbed Everest than explored Antarctica.

Sarah and Cooper left the TMAG. Their bags were already on the ship. They stopped for a drink and a packet of hot chips wrapped in white paper at a Fish N Chips store shaped like a whale.

The sun was still high in the sky as they boarded the ship. Cooper spent the next hour looking around his room and setting up his stuff. He blu-tacked a picture of his parents to the wall next to where he would be sleeping.

Chapter 5

The night had not been an easy night to sleep. For hours, I was awake tossing and turning, thinking about the upcoming adventure . I know that I had slept long enough to have a terrifying dream about what awaited him on the icy continent, but sat up sharply, awoken by the rock and sway of the huge ship crashing through the open waters. I thought about today's events.

I had nothing planned, so thought I better go and find Sarah.

Not paying any attention as I walked down the hall, I tripped over an inconvenient wrinkle in the hall carpet. About to hit the cold hard floor, a pair of huge, strong hands grabbed me, spilling coffee, hash browns, and ketchup everywhere.

'Oh, gosh! I'm so sorry, sir!'

'That's quite all right, son. Just try to be more careful.'

'Okay, sir. Thank you for saving me. Where can I get a mop for this mess?'

'Just go on to breakfast, I'll take care of this.'

Just then, the breakfast bell rang.

I hurried to the cafeteria. The sounds of scientists chatting, forks and glasses clicking and clinking, and the occasional shatter of a dropped plate filled the room. I got in the buffet line and heaped piles of scrambled egg, fried potatoes and bacon onto my tray. This was the first morning I felt well enough to eat.

After filling the tray I looked around for Sarah. There she was, the tallish, blonde haired, athletic looking girl with those striking green eyes, sat at a round table chatting with the other scientists. I sat down by her and ate quietly. I was thinking.

I looked around the room as Sarah and I ate. All of a sudden I spotted the man that had saved me from sprawling in the hall, staring at me from a corner. The look he gave me sent shivers down my spine. 'Sarah, have you seen that man before?' I asked looking his direction.

'Where?'

'There,' I pointed at him.

'Uhm, no I don't think I have. Why?'

'I'm just wondering. He looks familiar to me.'

'Okay. With all the people you've met in the last week, I wouldn't be surprised if everyone looks familiar.' She smiled at me, but I couldn't help noticing the concerned look that crossed her green eyes like a shadow.

Later that night, as I lay in my bed, looking at my pocket watch, thinking of my dad, Sarah's voice came from out side my door, startling me.

'Cooper! Come outside! Come look!'

'What is it?' I asked nervously.

'The Aurora!'

I was so excited. Would it be really as beautiful and breathtaking as they said it was? YES! The green, red, purple, pink and white lights danced as if they'd been practicing for years. In a way, I guess they had been. This was infinitely more beautiful than the pictures I'd seen before. Playfully running and leaping across the blackened sky, the aurora seemed endless.

All of a sudden I noticed a faint glow coming from my pocket. I reached inside and pulled out ... my pocket watch. Stranger still, the watch was glowing. Unusual and unfamiliar symbols seemed to be drawn onto the back of the watch by the light rays all around.



The next few days passed by uneventfully, and before I knew it, I was unloading the ship with all the scientists and crewmembers in Antarctica. It was a slow, tedious trip to Casey station, but what we found when we got there, was even stranger than the incident with my pocket watch.

Chapter 6

The sun was shining in Antarctica. Cooper felt so warm that he would be happy in a T-Shirt. 'This is really, really weird,' he thought. 'I was sure it would be freezing! I know it's the Southern Summer—but this is Antarctica!'



Sarah laughed. 'Every five years there's a warming season where a lot of ice melts. If we're lucky, we'll get to see some of Wilkes Station in the thaw. Do you know about Wilkes station Cooper?'

'Not a lot,' admitted Cooper.

'Well, in 1957 the Americans built a station big enough to hold twenty-four American Naval officers and eighteen scientists. It was designed to be used for about two years—but parts of it are still here. In 1959 the Aussies took it over, but there was a bit of a problem in the transition and who had control. By 1964 the buildings had become a fire hazard, and continually having problems, being covered in ice and snow. Casey was commissioned in 1969, and Wilkes was closed down. It's about 3 kilometres across the bay. It's still pretty toxic. It's basically

an Antarctic waste dump that really needs to be cleaned up. I guess that's enough of a history lesson. There will be some of our scientists visiting in the next few days. They will be able to tell us more, if you're interested. It's a special favourite of mine. Especially after I read the book *Ice Station* by Matthew Reilly. It's kind of based on Wilkes station.'

'Visiting a toxic waste dump?' thought Cooper to himself. 'I don't know how much fun that'd be, or safe for that matter!' He looked at Sarah who in turn was looking across the ice. 'Sure,' he said to her. 'Let me know more when you know more.'

That night the aurora's danced in the sky. The watch next to Cooper's bedside table glowed. If Cooper had been awake, he would have heard the Cook loitering outside his room.

Chapter 7

'Cooper, did you hear about the body they found this morning?' said Matt. He was one of Sarah's friends and a PhD student looking at Penguins in Antarctica.

'What body?' said Cooper.

'Well it wasn't really a body, just the hands and feet. It's strange. We're doing tests on it now trying to work out what happened. We don't even know how long it's been there—this has been a pretty big melt.'

Cooper didn't really know how to feel. On one hand it was really interesting and strange. On the other hand it was the remains of a person.

Just then Sarah walked through the door. 'Oh, Cooper, there you are,' she said. Then she saw Cooper's face. 'Matt, you told him about the body didn't you. I wasn't going to until we knew more.'

'Sorry Sarah, but you know how gossip travels here.'

'I guess,' said Sarah. 'This probably puts some things on hold until we know what happened.'

'He can come with me for a bit,' said Matt. 'I'm going to watch the gentoo penguins today. The young ones should be about to head out on their own. We might even see some seals.'

'Gentoo penguins!' Cooper said. 'That would be great. Thanks.'

Sarah agreed reluctantly, but with Matt he would be fine.

That night Cooper talked animatedly with Matt and Sarah about the penguins. They talked about Cooper's prize, family and home. Cooper brought out his watch and showed Matt. 'That's really cool,' said Matt. I really like the way it has the compass points and that when you twist the fob the letters I, L, K, and E, they appear between the W and S. Is Wilkes a family name Cooper?'

It took a minute for Cooper to realise what Matt had said. HIS WATCH SAID WILKES! In all the hours he had spent looking at it—it had never happened before.

Chapter 8

The next morning I woke up earlier than usual. It was about an hour and a half before breakfast. I couldn't sleep any longer, as I lay awake wondering what in the world "WILKES" had to do



with me, the watch, or anything at all. I had to know. I felt as if an unseen force were drawing me toward the encased, frozen skeleton of Wilkes station. I was so distraught about it last night that Matt arranged for me to go with him and the scientists to explore Wilkes today. I hurried as I dressed and thought about the adventure looming before me. Sarah decided to stay behind despite how much she was looking forward to it. She had several things to do in the next couple of days and felt she couldn't afford the time.

Finally, the clock slowly dragged itself to 7:00 A.M. I headed down the hall to find Sarah. I saw her sitting at a table chatting with Matt. I walked over and said hello and got in line for some food. While waiting in line, I looked around. Again, that strange,

familiar face appeared from behind the buffet line. The man I had collided with on the ship stared back at me, sending a chill down my body. I tried to ignore him. Sarah had told me he was just the cook, but I couldn't shake the uncomfortable feeling of worry and fear.

Just then Matt stormed into the dining hall as if he were about to explode. He didn't even say hello before he blurted out...

'So, you know those body parts? The hands and feet?...'

Yeah,' Sarah and I said in sync.

'Well, I tested them.'

'And?' I questioned, eager to get more.

'They date back to almost the exact year the Golden Ridell entered this bay! Isn't it exciting these remains are from the Golden Ridell!'

'The Golden Ridell?' I stuttered. 'You mean THE Golden Ridell?'

'Yeah! Exciting, isn't it?'

'I'll say! My great-great-great-grandfather was a member of the crew.'

I could feel the mood of the room change.

'Cooper Green, you hang onto that watch of yours.' Matt said with his eyes saying the rest.

This Wilkes Station thing is going to be more exciting than I thought. Shortly after breakfast, we took a motorboat a few kilometers across the bay. Landing at the bottom of what seemed



to be a table of ice that Wilkes sat upon. We climbed up the ice in silence. We stared across the horizon scanning the scene of icy remains. It was painfully clear why Wilkes was abandoned and left as a frozen museum.

Breaking the silence, Matt said, 'That watch of yours, do you still have it?' I nodded and gently tapped my pocket.

'Good,' he said. 'Take it out and let's have a look.' I did as he said and Matt continued, 'Cooper, you said your great-great-great-grandfather was aboard the Golden Ridell, correct?'

'Yes.' I answered.

'Where did you get that watch?'

'My father gave it to me.'

'And, did he tell you anything about it?'

'Well, no. It was kind of a bad time.' I said, remembering that unforgettable day and all the emotions.

'I suppose it's up to me then. I'm guessing this watch has been handed down over the generations.' Matt started. I nodded and he continued. 'Well, here's the deal. This watch is believed to be the key to finding the cursed treasure the Golden Ridell, carried and dropped here to relieve the crew of the awful curse.'

I was stunned. I knew my watch was special, but I never realized it could be THAT special.

Chapter 9

Sliding down the ice to the abandoned station was much quicker and more fun than the climb up the ice. Immediately, we began exploring the icy caverns and found our way into several rooms in one of the end buildings. For a place that had been under snow and ice for the last four or five years, we found some puzzling and unexpected items. We came across some freshly burned wood on a cast iron cooking stove and the remnants of some eggs on a plate. 'What in the world?' Matt said. 'I thought this station was abandoned. Hello? Is anybody here?'

We didn't really expect to get an answer to Matt's question, so when we spotted the figure of someone in the shadows of the far corner, it gave us quite a fright. Before we could ask any

of the millions of questions flying around our heads, the figure stepped into the light. Standing before us was the most unusual woman we had ever seen. Her red, unkempt hair resembled the tentacles of a squid squirming toward some unsuspecting prey. She appeared to be in her forties. She wore a smudged, white researchers coat that fitted snugly around her ample girth. Her glasses tilted across the edge of her nose. But, the thing I noticed most were her eyes. Where had I seen those eyes before?

'Well, I'm sure you are as surprised to see me as much as I am to see you,' the now smiling face with red cheeks said to us.

'Let me introduce myself,' she mumbled as she moved toward us. 'My name is Roberta, and I am a research scientist studying permafrost here and at Casey station. Although, I must admit I haven't actually been over to Casey in several years. I found working at Casey much too busy for me. I don't work well around so many other people, so when I found I could access this end building at Wilkes through an ice tunnel, even when it is submerged in its wintry covering, I convinced my sponsors that Wilkes was a better place to carry out my research.'

'Oh,' I managed to stutter, just barely recovering from the shock of finding someone here. 'Well, we are pleased to meet you Roberta,' Matt said brightly. 'I'm Matt and this is Cooper,' Matt continued while putting his hand on my shoulder and gently nudging me to the door. 'No one told us to expect to run into you. We should probably get back with our group now.'

'You mean there are more of you wandering around over here?' questioned Roberta while narrowing her puzzled but familiar eyes.

'Oh, yes,' Matt answered while continuing a path to the exit.

Stepping in front of us, Roberta blocked the door and said, 'Well, now that you are here, you should let me show you around the place. I don't get visitors very often, and my manners are a little rusty. Please forgive me for any rudeness and let me make it up to you by giving you a little tour of the facility and a look at my research.'

I sensed Matt's hesitation and urgency to get out of this uncomfortable situation, but Roberta took my elbow and pulled me quickly toward a narrow hall. Not knowing what else to do, Matt followed.

'Well, you've already seen the kitchen area. It's not much, but I get along. I receive supplies from the cooks at Casey station on a weekly basis. I'm usually busy when they come, so they just leave what I need and come back the next week,' Roberta explained while inching closer to the end of the hall.

We stopped at a corner where the hall continued in one direction and a small bedroom completed the other side. Directing us into the room, Roberta continued babbling about permafrost and how working alone for ten years or so had helped her focus on her research. She claimed she was on the brink of making the greatest discovery of her life. Two single beds were pushed against opposite sides of the walls with a small dresser between them and a night table under a picture of an old ship on the wall. Matt and I moved closer to the wall to examine the picture. We almost didn't hear the click of the door as it closed. We turned just in time to hear the door lock from the outside and Roberta's retreating steps echo as she hurried away.

Lunging for the door, I blurted out, 'What the ...,' as I



unsuccessfully tried to open the door. 'Why would she lock us in here, Matt?' I turned to see Matt studying the picture. 'Cooper,' Matt finally said. 'Come take a look at this.'

I joined Matt at the oil painting. It looked like any other painting of an old sailing vessel until Matt's finger traced some letters on the bow of the ship. 'The Golden Ridell!' I exclaimed.

'And that's not all,'" Matt continued. 'Look what this crewmember is showing to one of his mates in the doorway of the galley.'

'My watch!' I screamed inside of my head, but it left my lips as barely a whisper.

Chapter 10

Matt and I sat for hours on the bed alternately looking at the picture and studying the watch. It took awhile before we noticed the aurora lighted the sky behind the ship. Once we spotted the aurora, we took a closer look at the watch. Sure enough! There appeared to be some kind of a riddle or a map reflected in the southern display.

'Let me see your watch,' Matt suddenly instructed. Slowly taking the watch out of my pocket and handing it to Matt, I wondered if the watch was a missing link of sorts that would lead to the famed treasure.

'This is definitely the same watch,' Matt declared, putting my watch up next to the picture. 'More than likely,' this weather worn seaman is your great-great-great-grandfather!'

I stared, speechless, at the image in front of me. Taking the watch from Matt, I looked back up at the image of my ancestor. At that moment, a flash of understanding ripped through my mind. 'Matt,' I exclaimed excitedly. 'The watch will lead us to the treasure that was aboard the Golden Ridell. We must be near it. Look at the mountains and the terrain around the ship. It was docked in this bay! In fact, this station is practically the exact spot where the sailors would have landed and come to shore!'

Matt sat down on one of the beds while he processed what I had said. 'Okay,' he continued. 'The watch should give us the clues we need to get to the treasure. We obviously need the lights of aurora to reveal it. The aurora researchers at Casey station said we would be in for a brilliant display tonight.'



'Great,' I replied. 'And, here we are stuck in this dungeon.'

'Well, yes,' Matt answered quietly. 'But maybe we can figure a way to escape.'

I practically laughed out loud at the thought of either one of us having any chance of opening the metal door. Even if we did, where would we go? Where were the others? How would we find the treasure? What did Roberta have to do with all of this? What would she do to us? What would Sarah do when we didn't return to Casey Station? Were we all in some kind of serious danger? Several hours had passed since our arrival and we both knew we were running out of time.

'Since we're stuck here,' Matt began, 'why don't we get a little sleep? I'm much better at solving problems after I've slept awhile.'

I agreed and we each stretched out on top of the beds. Matt was snoring within five minutes, but I was too excited – No! I was too afraid to close my eyes for long. After tossing and turning for what seemed like hours, I finally got up and looked at the dresser and night table. On top of each were the usual things a person would keep in her bedroom: a mirror, a hairbrush, lotion, chap stick, tissues and a box of stationery. I absently opened the box and clumsily dropped it to the floor. I began putting the contents back in when I came across a paper clip. The noise must have awakened Matt. He startled me a little by saying, 'Cooper, where did you get that paper clip?'

After explaining how he used to scavenge midnight snacks from his mom's pantry when he was a kid by picking the lock on the pantry door with a paper clip, Matt worked for what seemed like hours before a resounding click rewarded his efforts, and the door to our prison slowly creaked open. We rushed down the hall, through the kitchen and out the tunnel. Once outside we were worried about Roberta finding us, so we hid behind one of the huge tires on a land roving vehicle to make a plan. The aurora was just beginning its graceful dance and I took out my watch. Suddenly, we heard footsteps approaching. I was so frightened, I could hear my heart beating wildly in my chest and my breath came out in short, frosty puffs. Matt decided to take matters into his own hands and lunged from behind the tire, tackling the intruder and rolling to a stop on top of the person, pinning his or her arms to the ground. It only took

a couple of moments before I realized the struggling mass of arms, legs, boots, and gloves pinned down by Matt, was Sarah.

Matt jumped up somewhat embarrassed and let Sarah clamor to her feet. 'Sarah!' I cried in relief. 'What are you doing here?'

She told us she was worried when we didn't come back to Casey Station. 'A search party was organized, but they were planning on waiting until morning,' she told us with her green eyes growing a bit misty. 'I couldn't wait. I borrowed a boat and came over as soon as I could.'

I began to tell her about Roberta, the treasure, the ship, my watch and everything we had learned. She looked at me with real concern and then up at Matt. 'Matt,' Sarah started. 'Is he going to be okay?'

'I don't know,' Matt replied. 'But if we're going to stay here tonight, we need to get inside. I noticed a storage room just barely past the tunnel before the kitchen. It should be warm enough to make it through the night, and still safe enough if we need to run.' We went inside and fell into our own hurricane of thoughts. Soon we were sleeping amid sacks of flour, sugar, salt and other supplies.

I woke up what seemed like minutes later. As I looked around remembering where I was, I saw Matt lying across the room still sound asleep. There was a space between us that I didn't think much about. I drifted back to sleep, but seconds later I woke up with a fright. Sarah! She was sleeping there when I fell asleep. Where was she now? Was this part of the curse?

'Matt!' I screamed, shaking him from his peaceful slumber.

'Wha... , What? Cooper, what's wrong?'

'Sarah!' I yelled, pointing to where I'd last seen her.

Matt sat pondering for a moment, and then a look of understanding crossed his face.

'They took her,' he said stunned.

'Who? How do you know?'

'Just trust me. We're going to get her back. From here on out, you just need to trust me, okay? I'll get us out of this – all of us.'

'Okay,' I said as if I had any other choice. I followed Matt out of our night shelter through the kitchen, down the hall and into a maze of tunnels that lead to a recessed door that was slightly ajar.

Matt hollered through the door, 'Hey! Give her back or you'll regret ever coming to this forsaken continent.' Matt sounded much braver than I felt. 'Give us the watch and you'll get your wish!' boomed a man's voice from inside the room.

'Who's that?' I asked quite surprised to hear a man's voice.

'My name is Robert,' came the voice just before the door slammed shut.

'Who's Robert?' I wondered out loud.

'You'll find out,' Matt told me quickly.

'Open this door, or I will,' threatened Matt.

'No you won't,' Robert's voice teased.

With a swift, strong kick Matt crashed through the door. At first, I had a hard time understanding what I saw. The realization hit me like a ton of bricks. Of course! Seeing them next to each other, it was so obvious! Robert's eyes! They were just like the man's at the hospital, the man I collided with on the boat, the cook at Casey Station! He was Robert! Robert and Roberta – twins of course! How could we not put it all together?

I came out of my trance to Matt's voice saying, 'Cooper, give them the watch.'

'My watch? But it, I, uh, why?'

'Just do it,' he said firmly.

Nervously, I did as he said. Robert snatched it greedily and held it like a precious diamond. 'Take her. She's useless to us now,' he said, whisking his knife down the ropes that bound Sarah. I ran to her and hugged her. Her arms felt warm and safe, but I knew we were far from it.

'At last, after all these years, Roberta dear, here it is in my hand—the last key to the Golden Ridell's treasure!'

'Robert, don't over react. We haven't found the thing yet.'

'This treasure was meant for me!' Robert declared with insane certainty.

'You?' questioned Roberta.

'I mean, us, dear Roberta. I've been waiting all my life since father told me about the Golden Ridell, the treasure, our lineage, and that thieving snit, Samuel Green!'

'Well shut up and go find the stinkin' thing!' Roberta's piercing voice exclaimed.

Matt motioned for Sarah and Cooper to leave. There were quickly out of earshot of the twins' conversation.

'Will you please fill us in, Matt?' I asked when we finally got to a quiet place.

'As soon as we get to a safe spot,' Matt said, and we hurried to the waterfront.

'Okay,' Matt began. 'Last night, I found a computer and some old research. Roberta and Robert have a great-great grandfather who, like your great-great-great-grandfather, was aboard the Golden Ridell. They believe the treasure is theirs.'

'And now it is. They have my watch,' I interrupted.

'Oh, come on, Coop! Have more faith in your family members! He was smarter than that. Their great-great grandfather was Captain, but it was Samuel Green that was booted off the ship to bury the treasure.'

Sarah's voice interrupted. 'But, wouldn't it be under 10 feet of ice by now?'

'Well, yeah. But, it's in a safe; a secret chamber if you will. I found it last night. It's about 30 paces from where we're standing.'

'But, isn't my watch the key? How do we open it?' I asked him.

'Like I said before, the watch is only a guide, not a key at all. Your Samuel Green was brilliant. All we need is a drop of his



blood—your blood, Cooper.’

Matt clipped off the last of his sentence quickly, as we heard the twins voices closing in on the hunt. Quietly, we followed Matt around the water’s edge to a large rock that stuck up like a lion protecting his kingdom.

‘What now?’ I whispered nervously.

‘Prick your finger,’ he said, handing me his pocketknife.

I closed my eyes and tapped my finger on the sharp point of the small knife. The wound spilled a few drops of blood on the rock. I handed Matt the knife as the ground beneath me rumbled and shook.

'What's happening?' I yelled over the splitting earth. Sarah grabbed me and pulled me away from the hole.

Lying on our bellies, we peered into the gaping chasm. There it lay in all its glory. The treasure of the Golden Ridell had been recovered after all these years frozen under this forgotten frontier.

THE END

Ice E-Mystery

This book is one of a series of e-books resulting from a collaborative writing project between Australian and Alaskan school classes based around polar science. The ICE E-MYSTERY: Global student Polar e-books project ran through 2008/9 and involved over 400 students in 24 classes from these two countries.

The Ice e-Mystery Project explored polar science through an innovative approach to science, art and literacy education. Students from throughout Australia and North America worked together (paired classes across the hemispheres) to write and illustrate on-line e-books in a predominately mystery genre focused around the themes of polar science. Students were guided by Teacher Associates trained in Antarctic science, classroom teachers trained in the project methodology and polar sciences and resources from national research organisations such as the Australian Antarctic Division, Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO), the Tasmanian Museum and Art Gallery and Antarctic related Cooperative Research Centres. Classroom activities were augmented by visits to museums, science organisations and contact with researchers in Antarctica.

A key outcome of the project was the development of an international learning community of school students, teachers, postgraduate students and scientists.

The project workspace can be viewed at www.iem.tmag.tas.gov.au where students drafted their collaborations and posted comments to each other on developmental ideas. The full range of e-books in the series is also viewable at this site.

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