

## Captain Walt Lincoln

# Stolen Heart

by David M. H. Butler

Walt Lincoln looked up from the newspaper that he was reading. His eyebrows arched inquisitively and he cocked his head as if to hear something better. He looked over at his father, who in turn was looking at Walt.

“Are you finished studying the comics?” his father asked. “I was hoping to do the crossword puzzle some time before they publish the answers.”

Walt waved his hand impatiently as if to say, ‘be quiet ‘

Dusk was giving way to nightfall on Seattle’s Lake Union where their ship “Resolute” lay at anchor. The rigging groaned its familiar song and from the great-room at the back of the ship where they sat the soft splash of water against the hull could be faintly heard.

“I think I heard something bump against the ship,” Walt said, springing towards the door. “I think someone is sneaking on board.”

“Are you sure?” his father responded. “Maybe Gary is up to something. Or maybe your mother...”

A yelp brought Robert Lincoln to his feet.

“Carol!” He shouted

“Mom!” Walt blurted as he pulled open the door.

He pounded down the short corridor and out onto the main deck. Only a couple dozen feet separated Walt from the forward cabins. There was very little light and the main mast obscured his view, but he saw several dark shapes scurrying along the line of the front cabins towards the railings. Walt pulled a belaying pin from its holder and raced after them. As they vaulted over the railing, Walt could see that they were young, probably teenagers, about his age. The motors on a couple jet-ski boats roared to life and Walt watched the white wakes make a bee-line towards Gasworks park.

Walt turned and hunched his shoulders. Probably just a couple of bored kids. After four months at sea he should be use to the curious people who came to check out their ship. In fact his father seemed to thrive on the publicity that their voyage aboard a three-masted schooner was causing. It was simply that up to now no one had tried to come aboard without first asking permission.

He took a step and was knocked off his feet by a third kid who came out of the shadow of the mast and rammed headfirst into his stomach. The belaying pin dropped from his hand. Walt snarled angrily and lashed out with his fist as he went down. It connected ineffectively with a rubber wetsuit. Being off balance, he didn’t have a chance to get in another swing. The boy was over the side and away on his jet-ski, while Walt crashed against a barrel and slid to the deck

The sound of feet running towards him made Walt flinch and his feet slipped on the wet deck, keeping him from jumping up. With relief he realized it was Gary Gable.

Gary held out his hand to help Walt to his feet, but Walt waved him away and stood up on his own. Gary and Walt had been friends since grade school when Gary's family had moved onto the same street as the Lincoln's. The two boys played Little League baseball together, built forts above and below ground, shared secrets and become close friends. While Walt had blond hair and blue eyes, Gary had dark hair and eyes.

"You went down kind of hard. Are you okay?" Gary asked.

"Oh yeah," Walt sighed. "But I'd feel better if I could have nailed one of those guys before I ended up on my backside."

Robert and Carol Lincoln joined their son and Gary.

"It looks like they were trying to force their way into one of the forward hatches," Robert reported. "I don't see anything missing. But in the dark it's hard to tell. I'm going to call the police."

"Oh right." Walt thought sarcastically. "We wouldn't want to pass up a chance for a bit more publicity."

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Robert Lincoln had his first taste of fame when their house was destroyed by one of the large earthquakes in California. By chance a photographer had caught him and his family in front of their nearly flattened home. The picture had made the cover of a national magazine. Maybe it was the tall, blond-haired son with the crooked smile gazing at the camera. Maybe the middle-aged, chisel-faced aerospace worker lifting a picture frame from the rubble. Maybe it was the fair-haired mother kneeling next to a shaken toddler. Whatever it was, it had bought them their first fifteen minutes of fame and Robert Lincoln had done his best to make the most of the attention.

Then the past year, when the aerospace industry went through a major downturn and Robert found himself without a job, he did just about the opposite of what most American men with a wife and family would do: He bought an old schooner, refurbished it and announced to whoever would listen that they were going to circumnavigate the world. Further, he announced, he planned on using a route that vaguely traced Captain James Cook's voyages of the 18th century.

While helping his Dad work on the boat, Walt would listen to the newest bit of information that his father had learned about James Cook: How he had been chosen to take the astronomer Edmund Halley to the south Pacific in 1769 to plot the course of Venus across the face of the sun. That Halley had proposed sending ships to Norway, Hudson's Bay and the south Pacific so that the three crews could triangulate their information and determine the distance from the earth to the sun. How, on his third voyage, Cook had been received so warmly in the Hawaiian Islands only to die there when a dispute flared up over a long boat that the natives had stolen.

Walt's imagination soared as he listened to the tales and he would alternately see himself standing on the bridge of the boat, fists resolutely on his hips as he commanded the ship, then moments later he would imagine himself as one of the swabbies racing up the rigging to get the sails set. His father's quest for the spotlight often provided Walt with opportunities for his quests for adventure.

By the time the Lincoln family had reached Seattle, one of the last legs of their voyage,

they were practically known world-wide. At least in any country that picked up their story and ran it on the local news and Robert Lincoln seemed to have a circus ringmaster's knack for catching the attention of the news media.

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Police detective Andy Katmarchek shook Robert Lincoln's hand and said he would ask a squad car to keep an eye out for anything strange. A camera from channel 5 news rolled in the background as Robert thanked him and expressed his confidence in the safety of his ship. Both of them knew that except for the jet-skis there wasn't much to go on.

"I'll stop back in the morning and we'll have another look," Katmarchek said. "But from the looks of things, your wife's shout and your son's interference kept those boys from doing any vandalism."

As the detective started down the gangway, the cameras turned on Walt. A sandy haired reporter stepped up to him with her microphone. She had eyes and a smile that said she was serious but you could trust her completely.

"You got the closest to the intruders," she said to him. "Didn't you get a good look at any of their faces?"

"Those pirates? I had only the briefest of a glance. They were wearing wet suit helmets. I can definitively say that they had two eyes, a nose and a mouth. But beyond that the best I can say is they are teenagers." Walt seemed totally at ease in front of the camera and his eyes twinkled winningly back at the reporter. "Like I told the detective, they seemed to be heading towards the old Gasworks over there. Is there a place where someone could put a boat in unnoticed?"

Forgetting for a moment her role as the question asker, the report responded, "Not at the park, I wouldn't think. But from there over to the University District there are plenty of marinas where someone might slip in or out with ease." She switched gears and asked Walt, "So how are you enjoying Seattle? Have you been over to the U-District?"

"It's a pretty cool city. People seem to be really friendly. In fact, when I was getting some maps down in Pioneer Square, a guy told me I should check out 'the Ave,' which he said was near the university. But I haven't been there yet."

The reporter turned to Robert Lincoln. "How long are you going to be in Seattle?"

"Just a couple more days," he replied. "The Wooden boat society and the people at the REI sporting goods store donated some money to our expedition and we'd like to host a small party for them. But after that we'll be on our way. We've got almost a month to go and my son needs to get back in time for his senior year at school."

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The Ave, whose real name was 'University Way,' seemed to be a sea of plaid shirts, backpacks, blue jeans and either hiking boots or gray wool socks and Birkenstock sandals. It was a great place for people watching. Hair-styles ran the gamut from short to long, groomed smooth to dreadlocks and there was even a guy with a Mohawk. There were kids on skateboards weaving through the sidewalk traffic, They would come to a

stop at a traffic light or their destination and expertly step off their boards and flip them up into a waiting hand. Others sat on the sidewalk beside shop doors smoking cigarettes and talking earnestly with their friends. Others pan handled.

A corridor of one to three story buildings faced each other running at a slight incline heading toward the water. There were used record shops, Army-Navy surplus stores, bookstores, restaurants of all sorts, and a movie theater. Walt was drawn into a small shop where lava lamps glowed in the front window and the smell of incense wafted from the interior. Bead curtains and Indian print sheets hung on the wall and the shelves were cluttered with wooden and plastic knick-knacks and smoking paraphernalia.

Walt spotted some post cards and browsed through them and picked out a couple that he liked. He took them up to the counter and waited while a pretty dark-haired girl ahead of him bought a printed sheet of muted golds, reds and oranges. As she turned to go, Walt smiled and started to say hello. She didn't seem to notice him and she left the store.

"Another lost chance to fall in love," he chuckled to himself. As many a person his age, he had thought that about a dozen times as he made his way down the Ave. Or, for that matter, in many of the cities they had visited on their voyage.

The post office was just across the street, so Walt bought a pen to go with his post cards. He walked across to the post office and sat on its steps. He picked out a couple cards and wrote notes to his friends back home. The morning had been overcast and Walt had figured it would rain, but now the sun shown brilliantly and Walt leaned back against a post and enjoyed a few minutes of its warmth.

Before walking up the Ave, Walt had made a brief tour along the waterway that ran from Lake Union to Lake Washington. The news reporter was right. There were plenty of spots where those jet-ski boats could have gone. Across the ship canal, as he'd heard one man call it, was a warren of house-boats and other marinas. Unless someone called in something suspicious after seeing the news reports, it wasn't likely that Walt was going to find any trace of those kids.

After mailing his postcards, Walt decided to head back to the boat. A number 7 bus was making its way down the street and Walt dashed across to the nearest bus stop and caught it. The bus was pretty crowded, but he found one of the last free seats and sat down. As the bus moved down University Way, Walt read the advertisements that ran in a band just above the windows.

The bus slowed to make a stop for some more passengers. Walt glanced out at the bus stop and he noticed the dark haired girl from the shop was waiting to get on. There was something a little wistful about her, but she had beautiful eyes. She was wearing a jeans jacket, blue jeans and a pair of very stylish black lace up boots. A purple scarf around her neck made her look exceedingly exotic. Walt couldn't stop himself from staring and he wondered if she was a college student.

The bus had filled up, people were standing and holding onto hand rails. To Walt's great good fortune the girl squeezed her way past the people standing up front and grabbed a rail near the back door where Walt sat.

The bus started up and Walt jumped to his feet.

“Please,” he said. “Take my seat. I mean you’ve got all those packages and...” he trailed off.

She turned and looked at him, at the seat and back at him. She gave him a smile and said, “That’s really sweet. Thanks.”

Walt could feel his face flush and he turned as nonchalantly as possible and looked out the window. Meanwhile working on what he should say next. “That’s a nice sheet you bought,” he said to himself, testing out how it sounded, “But maybe she doesn’t remember me in that store and she’ll think I’m stalking her or something.” he countered. “Uh, those are nice boots... Oh yeah, right!” he continued.

He turned and saw her putting batteries into a new flashlight and he was intrigued by who she was and what she was doing. He was just about ready to say something when he felt a tap on his arm.

“Excuse me?” a man’s voice said. Walt turned to see what he wanted. “Aren’t you the boy we saw on the news. The story about the kids who broke onto your boat?”

“That was me,” Walt smiled and nodded. He tried to turn, but the man had more questions.

“So you are one of the Lincoln’s. The family that’s been around the world!” he effused. “Any trouble coming through the China Sea? I’ve heard there are modern day pirates who prey on smaller, slower boats like yours.”

Walt stole several glances at the girl, but the man kept him occupied right up until they came to Walt’s transfer point. As he descended from the bus he took one last look back, thinking, “I guess it wasn’t meant to be.” Maybe not, but he was rewarded with a quick smile from the beautiful stranger.

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The “Resolute” was lit up like a Christmas tree. A party of nearly 50 people brought the ship to life. Chairmembers of both REI and the Wooden Boat Society along with their spouses were having a grand evening. Robert Lincoln was seeing to that. There was a cassette player playing music at one end of the ship, where they had cleared away the deck for people to dance. A small buffet table ran between two masts, filled with wine, beer, meat and cheese slices, vegetables and some small sandwiches.

The party spilled over onto the dock where some of the guests smoked and others stood back looking at the ship, waving their drink as they indicated what they were talking about.

Walt’s mother, Carol, was talking with the president of REI, Eric Baily and his wife, Jodie. After talking about the voyage and the benefits of GoreTex, Carol turned to Jodie and asked what she did.

“Raising two daughters doesn’t give me a lot of time, but I do my share of volunteer work. I’m on the board at the Wooden Boat Society, of course. That’s how REI heard about your expedition. I’m also on the board at the Henry Burke museum, up in the University District and their liaison with the Seattle Art Museum up on Capitol Hill.”

“That sounds like an awful full schedule!” Carol gasped. “I have two sons and I’m not sure I could handle all of that volunteer work!”

“I didn’t realize you had two sons. I’d only met your son Walt. Is your other son here as well?”

“Danny is 12 years old. He was with us, but his grandparents picked him up right after we got to Seattle and drove him back to California. He plays the clarinet in the school band and wanted to get back for a music camp.”

“Does Walt play any instruments?” Jodie asked. Eric nodded and pointed as if to say “I see someone I need to talk to,” and left the two of them alone.

“He has a guitar and taught himself to play, but he’s like that; he loves to figure things out. If he could sit still long enough, I think he could become a mathematician or something. But he says he wants to become a pilot or a safari guide. Last year it was Captain of a whaling ship, if you can imagine that. Hopefully college will help him settle down.” Carol chuckled and shook her head. “So do you enjoy the museum work? Is it all meetings or do you get to rub elbows with a lot of people in the art community?”

“A lot of meetings, I’m afraid. But, yes, I do enjoy it immensely.” She looked around conspiratorially. “This isn’t widely known, for insurance purposes we are keeping it quiet, but we have a pretty big transfer happening tomorrow.”

“A transfer?” Carol Lincoln asked, intrigued.

“I’ve just been bursting to tell someone! At the Burke museum we have a superb collection of Native American art and cultural items. We were doing some cataloging recently and discovered a small, carved cedar totem, exquisitely painted. The manifest indicates that it belonged to Chief Seattle, the man Seattle was named for. The manifest calls it ‘the Heart of Seattle.’ It’s possible that this is the token the Chief gave to the city when he ceded lands to them. It is said that the seven faces on the totem represent the seven hills of Seattle. We were very excited to find it, and the Seattle Art Museum has asked if they could include it in a show they are doing on the Duwamish tribes.”

“Well now! That is fascinating. But I take it you don’t want that piece of news spread around.”

“Right. I probably said too much as it is,” Jodie said, smiling and shrugging her shoulders. “But watch for it on the news tomorrow night. Once the museum has it, they are hoping to get one of the TV stations to do a spot on it to generate some interest.”

“I’ll be watching for it!” Carol said, then nodding toward the dock she added, “Speaking of TV stations, it appears that we have a crew setting up on the dock. Must be a slow news night if they are considering our party as newsworthy.”

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Walt sat up in the crow’s nest writing in his journal. The sounds of the party drifted up to him, but he was only vaguely paying attention. He was writing about the dark haired girl he had seen in the U-District. He felt a pang of disappointment that he hadn’t been able to talk to her, maybe learn her name and something about who she was. In a flash of youthful inspiration (which one often cringes at years later) he jotted down, “I gave you my seat, but you stole my heart.” He rubbed his chin and reread the line. He liked

it. It kind of sounded like a poem, and he added, "Why did it have to end before it could start." He paused with his pencil over the paper. He didn't like the plaintive quality of that line and he started to cross it out.

Suddenly from down below he heard someone boom out, "Of course I can hold my liquor. I jus' prefer to drink it." The man laughed at his joke. There was a thump and the laugh turned to a giggle.

"There wasn't that much beer or wine at the party," Walt thought. "This guy must have started at home."

Walt stood up and looked down to see what was happening. The man was kneeling on the dance floor and trying to haul himself up clutching onto a makeshift table. The man's wife had her head turned and she was slowly shaking it, obviously trying to contain herself. The table started to tilt under the man's weight and the wife grabbed the edge and hissed, "Be careful, Jack."

"Well I s'pose itsh getting late. We oughta be leaving now." Jack said trying to summon some dignity. "I'll go get the car."

"Jack!" his wife called as the man started walking towards the wrong side of the boat.

"Huh?" he muttered to himself as he tried to open a nonexistent door. "Who locked the door?"

"Is this guy for real?" Walt thought.

The wife was heading over to guide him away, but to everyone's amazement, Jack simply climbed onto the railing, took one step and fell into Lake Union.

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Walt didn't miss a beat. He swung out of the crow's nest and ran out the cross spar just below it and dove into the water. He sliced cleanly into the water turned and headed for the surface. Under water it was too dark to see anything. But he knew that he was only a couple of feet from the man. As he swam upward he made several side-ways swipes with his arms seeing if he could feel anything.

When he reached the surface he hadn't felt anything and he looked rapidly around. He felt a moment of panic: The water was too dark and even from the surface he didn't have a very good view. He listened for a second, no sound of thrashing.

The wife called down frantically from the boat. "I think he is a bit further to your left."

"Have someone get me a rope ladder, I'll find him don't worry." Walt called back with more confidence than he really felt.

Walt took several strokes and was relieved to bump into Jack, who was floating face down in the water. Walt grabbed him and flipped him over on his back. It couldn't have been more than two minutes since the man went overboard. As long as he could get him back on the boat quickly, he should be fine.

"I found him!" he called. "But we need to get him onto the ship fast!"

The rope ladder clattered over the side of the ship and Gary Gable jumped over the side to help Walt get the man up the ladder.

“Whoa. This water is cold!” Gary exclaimed as his head popped back above the water. Walt had his arm under the man’s armpits and was pulling him to the rope ladder.

“Huh,” he mused. “You’re right. I hadn’t noticed until you mentioned it! Let’s get this guy on board quick.”

As the two worked together to hoist the man up the side of the ship, Walt noticed that the night had suddenly gotten a lot brighter. He looked up and saw a TV camera pointed down at the three of them. Another man was holding a large spotlight over the side of the ship.

Reaching the edge several men, including Eric Baily, the REI board president, met them and helped the unconscious Jack over the rail. Eric had CPR training and immediately set to work. He pulled off Jack’s tie, checked his pulse and listened to his chest.

“His pulse seems fine, he’s breathing. I think he may have knocked himself out when he hit the water. We should just make him comfortable and call an ambulance.”

The TV reporter stepped over. “I just called into our dispatcher and he’s calling for an ambulance. They should be here pretty quick.”

Walt’s mom came running over with a blanket and some towels. She gave Eric the blanket to put over Jack and handed the towels to Walt and Gary.

Walt thanked his mother and turned to find the TV reporter and her camera staring him in the face.

“Do you know who you just saved?” She asked. It was obviously someone special.

“Some guy named Jack?” Walt asked with a shrug.

“That’s Jack Royer. The owner of the Mariner’s baseball team!”

Walt, being a baseball fan and master of the understatement, turned to look at the man lying on the deck and said, “Oh man! I hope he’s going to be alright.”

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“You made it onto the news again,” Robert Lincoln said to his son as they sat at the breakfast table in the great-room of the ship. “Apparently it aired as a breaking news story last night and then again this morning. They seemed to love your reply about ‘some guy named Jack’.”

“Did they get his good side?” Gary asked jokingly. “Like when he was bent over Jack Royer.”

“I’ll infer from your comment that you mean I don’t have a bad side,” Walt said good-naturedly.

“I’ll say! The camera was rolling when you made your jump from the top of the mast. We all heard you call out something as you jumped out of the crow’s nest, and the cameraman had time to get you framed and follow your dive. Very impressive, son. You saved that man’s life and I’m proud of you.”

“I won’t be able to walk down the streets of Seattle!” Walt sighed. “Did I tell you about the guy who talked my ear off on the bus yesterday?”

“We’ve sure had our share of excitement here.” Carol Lincoln agreed. “I got a message from Mrs. Royer saying that Jack was doing fine up at Harborview Hospital. He’ll probably be released later this morning.”

“Oh, another thing,” Robert said, changing the subject. “ There are a couple people coming by today to apply as crew. I got their names from one of the guys at the Wooden Boat Society. I’m hoping we can make a quick decision, because I’d like to get underway tomorrow.”

If it had just been their son Dan who had left the ship, they could probably have managed, but another one of their crew had decided to leave the ship. He had family in the area and wanted to spend some time with them.

“Well I’ll go start cleaning up the deck,” Walt said. He got up from the table and walked outside. The morning air was still cool and he naturally migrated towards a patch of sun.

He looked around at the deck. It wasn’t going to be too bad. There were paper plates and plastic cups strewn on most surfaces, the makeshift tables needed to be taken down and stowed. Then there were the strings of lights that ran up the masts needed to be hauled down.

Walt grabbed a black plastic bag and started with the rubbish. He knew his Mom would probably want to reuse some of the plastic cups, so he tossed those into a separate bag. He looked at the crumbs and spills on the tablecloths and that reminded him of his own soaked clothes from last night.

“I guess I’ll have to make a run to the laundromat,” he grimaced.

He noticed that one of the tablecloths was on the floor under a table. In fact it appeared to be several of them piled up.

“I wonder if they used those last night to put over Jack Royer?” Walt mused as he moved over to pick them up.

As he got closer he stopped. The tablecloths they had been using last night were all red and white checked. One of the tablecloths in the pile had a familiar reddish-gold pattern on it. Walt felt his heart race. He knelt down beside the pile. A pair of black boots was tucked neatly to one side and a bright, new, yellow flashlight poked out of the top of the boots. She was mostly wrapped in the tablecloths, but he could see the tousled head of his dark-haired mystery girl lying on her rolled up coat.

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Walt put his hand on her shoulder and shook it softly.

“Uh,” he faltered for a second searching for what to say. “Hello? Is everything okay?”

The drowsy girl turned and stretched her legs out. She didn’t seem to concerned about being found. She looked at Walt and simply said, “Hello.” Turning the word into a yawn.

“Do your parents know where you are? Are you running away or something?”

“Actually, I’m looking for my parents. Well, my Dad anyway.” She swung her legs out from under the covers and started putting on her boots. “I haven’t heard from him for a couple of weeks and so I came to Seattle to see if I could find him.”

“But don’t you have somewhere to stay? Have you been camping out all this time?” Walt asked.

“No. But I’m afraid I’ve run out of money. I bought this blanket and flashlight thinking I’d be sleeping in some alley. But when I heard who you were on the bus yesterday and saw that you were a nice guy, I took it as a sign and decided to find you and your family.”

Walt helped her to her feet. Walt had a huge grin on his face. His prayers had been answered.

“Come inside. You must be hungry.” He stopped and held out his hand, “My name is Walt... But I guess you already know that.”

“My name’s Jackie.” she said, and shook his hand. “Jackie Bouchard.”

“Jackie,” Walt repeated. His beautiful stranger had a name.

He looked at her for a long moment. Walt was about six foot-three inches, but she must have been only an inch or two below six feet. She met his gaze and smiled.

“Um, Come in. Come in. I’ll introduce you to my parents and we’ll get you some breakfast. I’m fascinated to hear your story and find out why you can’t find your Dad.”

Jackie followed him into the great-room where his father still sat at the table working on a crossword puzzle. Gary and his mother must have been down below washing up the dishes.

“Hey Dad,” Walt called. “This is Jackie, I met her in the U-District yesterday. She’s looking for her Dad and she needs some breakfast.”

Robert Lincoln shook his head from the barrage of words. “Great, Fine. Have a seat, Jackie. Do you drink coffee?”

Jackie nodded her head.

“Walt, get your friend some juice and cereal.” He turned to Jackie. “What about granola? Or maybe toast?”

“Granola sounds delicious,” she said politely.

While Walt ran down the spiral staircase to the galley below, Jackie sipped the coffee that Robert had poured for her. She ran a hand through her hair and looked around.

“If you’d like to freshen up, there is a bathroom back off the corridor you came through. The door with the Easter Island head on it.” He pointed towards the door they had come in through.

“Oh thanks! You read my mind.”

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“My father works for the FBI. We live down in the San Francisco bay area, but he’s been working on the D. B. Cooper sky-jacking case for several years. He recently had to fly up to Seattle to investigate some new evidence.”

“Wasn’t Cooper the guy that tried to parachute from a jet after he hijacked it?” Robert Lincoln asked.

“Uh-huh. That’s right. Cooper got on a flight that started in Portland, Oregon and was headed for Seattle. When he hijacked the plane he demanded four parachutes and \$200,000 in unmarked bills which he was given. My father says that even though they didn’t actually mark the money, but they did run the bills through a high-speed copier, so that they would have a record of every bill. The plane landed here in Seattle and, once he had his money and parachutes, he released all the passengers and told the pilots to fly him to Mexico. After the plane took off he told the pilots to stay below 10,000 feet and keep their speed below 200 miles per hour. He was on one of those jets that has a rear stairway that drops down below the tail.”

“That’s a Boeing 727,” Robert cut in. His years as an aerospace engineer had made him aware of most of the planes flying. “Sorry for butting in. Please continue.”

“That’s okay. Anyway, they detected that the back stairway had been lowered and not too long afterwards they felt a bump, that the pilots interpreted as being caused by Cooper jumping. They estimate that he jumped somewhere over the Columbia River on the border between Washington and Oregon. It was the night before Thanksgiving and he wasn’t wearing very heavy clothing. Most people think he didn’t make it. Neither he or the money have been seen since then.”

“So your Dad is still working on the case?” asked Walt. “Seems like they would have moved onto other cases by now.”

“The case won’t be officially closed until a full 7 years has passed. Maybe longer. But you’re right. It wasn’t an active investigation until last month when a pair of hikers found a shoe wedged in a tree up near Mt. St. Helens. Dozens of other hikers may have seen it, but these guys had been fascinated by the whole D. B. Cooper mystery. They knew from the articles they had read that Cooper had been wearing a pair of loafers on the plane. When they saw the single loafer on a rough hiking trail it seemed strange to them, so they marked the tree and took the shoe back to Seattle where they turned it over to the police. Who, in turn gave it to the FBI.”

“And that brought your father to Seattle; and now he is missing?” asked Carol Lincoln. “The FBI office couldn’t help you?”

“I read about a shoot out up here in Seattle in which an FBI agent was killed. After that I stopped hearing from my Dad. Nothing. I kind of freaked out and took a train up here. I tried to talk to the FBI. They said Ted Bouchard’s case was under investigation, but they said they couldn’t divulge any more than that. They wouldn’t confirm or deny anything. I knew his hotel so I went there and got very little help from them as well. I even tried going to a couple of the hospitals and got no where. I’ve been going back to the FBI office and the hotel every day but nothing has shown up.”

“So where have you been staying?” Carol asked. “Have you called home? Maybe he’s there and looking for you!”

“I did call my family a couple of days ago. I’ve been staying at a girls’ boarding house up on Capitol Hill. It was pretty cheap and I could pay by the night, but then I must have gotten careless because someone stole most of my money. That’s why I’ve come to see you. My uncle told me I should just come home. He will get a private investigator to

look into the matter. I could hitchhike home, but I would get pretty hungry long before I hit California. So I was hoping I could sign onto your ship as a crew member. I've crewed on my uncle's sail boat, so I do have some experience." She paused for a moment, "I realize this might sound selfish, but it would also give me another day to try and locate my Dad."

"The pay won't be all that great, but you will get meals and a place to sleep," started Robert.

"Oh, Mr. Lincoln! That's more than I could have hoped for!" Jackie said earnestly.

"It will be great to have another woman on board." Carol said by way of sealing the decision. "But you mentioned Capitol Hill. Were you staying near the Seattle Art Museum?"

"The museum is up at Volunteer park. Great views of the city up there. But the boarding house was about a mile or so south of there. Something special going on at the museum?"

"Oh, uh, no. Someone just mentioned the museum last night. Does sound like a nice place for a visit."

"Well, I stopped Walt from cleaning up the deck. So let that be my first job as a crew member."

"I'll help." said Walt quickly. "Once we are done, I could go with you to take another shot at finding your Dad."

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Walt and Jackie walked into the lobby of the Olympic Hotel. A slate floor and massive oak beams surrounded them. Mirrors, plants and a quiet dignity pervaded the lobby. Instead of going to the reception counter where Jackie had been asking for her father, Walt steered them straight to the elevators. They got in and punched the button for the eighth floor.

Jackie had been told what room he was in and had tried to call the room, had even knocked at the door once. But Walt planned to take matters a bit further. Before they left the marina where the ship was anchored, Walt called the hotel to make sure that Jackie's father hadn't checked out. They put him through to Mr. Bouchard's room, but as expected there was no answer.

In the elevator, Walt pulled off the dark sport jacket and tie he was wearing and gave them to Jackie. She stuffed the tie into a pocket, put the coat on and tied her hair back with her scarf. She handed Walt a small leather tool pouch that she had concealed in her tote bag. He snapped it onto his belt, pulled a baseball cap from his back pocket and put it on. Under his coat he had been wearing a light-blue work shirt with a name-tag stitched on. While Jackie went from a teenager to young professional, Walt went from young professional to a maintenance man.

On the eighth floor they found that the maid service was going through the rooms doing their daily cleaning. There was a cart with clean sheets and towels and several boxes and bottles of cleaning supplies. They hadn't been planning on the maid service being there, but they weren't about to stop now. As they walked by the room that the maid was working on they could see she had left the house key in the door lock.

“I think I see our way into your Dad’s room,” said Walt.

“You keep her busy and I’ll get the keys.” said Jackie, immediately understanding what he was thinking.

“If you could get the door open and get the keys back, that would be even better. But if you run out of time, just toss them onto the towels. It’s more important that no one see you.”

As he entered the room, Walt pulled the keys from the door and set them onto the cart. He walked confidently into the room and stopped in front of the bathroom where the maid was gathering up towels.

“Glad to see that you are here,” he said. “Could you give me a hand moving the bed? I need to check the telephone jack.”

The woman seemed a bit startled, but Walt didn’t wait for an answer and walked into the main room. His height helped give him the air of someone older. The maid followed him. He quickly assessed the phone cord and was relieved to see that it actually was partially behind one of the beds.

“This one,” he indicated. “Grab an end and help me shift it over a foot or so.”

She started to leave as he knelt down.

“Oh, this will only take a few seconds. Hang on and we can move it right back.”

Walt popped off the plate, picked up the phone and listened to it, He cradled the phone between his shoulder and his ear. He pretended to tighten one of the screws, nodded his head and put everything back together.

“Great. Thanks for your help.”

At the door Walt saw the keys were back in the lock. He smiled and walked down the hall to Mr. Bouchard’s room. The door was open a crack, but he stopped and pretended to get out his keys. He looked casually back up the hall. The maid still hadn’t come out, but he didn’t want to raise any more suspicions than necessary. Satisfied, he stepped into the room and shut the door.

“Walt!” Jackie exclaimed in a hushed voice. “That was thrilling! You were as cool as an ice cube. But what if the maid is coming this way?”

“You’re right; we can’t waste any time,” Walt replied. “Anything special that we might look for?”

“Let’s just see what he left here.”

There was a razor and toothbrush in the bathroom. A couple of shirts and a pair of pants in the closet. A quick check revealed nothing special in the pockets. His suitcase had a small camera and a few sheets of paper in it. While Jackie read through the papers, Walt continued searching. On the table beside the bed was a picture of Jackie, obviously several years younger, being hugged from behind by a woman. A younger brother had his arm around the woman and they all smiled into the camera.

“Is this your Mom?” Walt asked, holding up the picture.

Jackie walked over and took the picture from Walt. As she looked at it she took a breath and sighed. "That's her and my brother Arthur."

"Do you miss her?" Walt asked. "The picture seems to make you sad."

"I miss her more than you might guess," Jackie replied. "She died about four years ago. Complications after the birth of my youngest brother."

That hit Walt like a ton of bricks, but in a number of ways it fit.

"So that's why finding her father is so important," he thought. "And it explains some of her tom boy like ways such as venturing off to Seattle on her own." Out loud he said, "Then maybe your Mom is watching out for your Dad."

Jackie smiled and nodded her head. "Thanks Walt."

"Well. We'd better finish up quick and get out of here."

"Let's just take these papers, they are mostly just some jotted down notes." She said stuffing them into her tote bag.

"Notes," mused Walt. "That gives me another idea."

He went over to the telephone and ripped off the top couple of sheets on the notepad next to it.

"Maybe we can figure out if he wrote down any messages on the pad. It might have left an impression on the underlying sheet."

Walt opened the door and checked the hall. All was clear and they headed for the elevators. Once they were back in the elevator, they made the identity switch back to what it was when they entered the hotel.

\* \* \*

On the bus they pulled out the papers and started to read them. There were a couple of shoe stores jotted down, the name of a forensics laboratory. There was also a list of names, some had been crossed off, others circled and a few that didn't have any marks next to them.

"It's a pretty good guess that the crossed off names are people he had already interviewed. The circled names could either be people he considered important or else they were the people he planned to see next." Jackie said trying to make sense of the list.

"So going on your theory, one of these circled people could hold the key to finding your Dad." Walt reasoned. "The pad of paper does have a faint phone number. If we could determine that number and connect it to one of those names, that could be a big clue."

The bus turned a corner forcing Walt to lean against Jackie. He grabbed onto a handrail and held himself back, but he felt a secret delight at the contact. He also was reminded that he had only seen her for the first time about 24 hours earlier and had learned her name only about six hours before.

"We'll have to go to the library to look through the phonebooks." Jackie said, seemingly oblivious to the contact. "They should have books from all over the Northwest. But right now we should get up to Volunteer Park. Your Mom said she'd meet us there around two o'clock and it's getting pretty close."

“She sure has taken an interest in the Seattle Art Museum. She was kind of mysterious when she said we ought to go up there for a visit. But then, she’s a grown up. I’ve given up trying to understand them.”

“When we get to the park, I’ll show you one of Seattle’s secret little places,” Jackie said. “I heard someone call it ‘the poor-man’s Space Needle.’ You get a 360 degree view, but you don’t have to pay a penny to see it.”

\* \* \*

Standing in front of the mammoth brick water tower, Walt turned and looked at Jackie.

“Little secret?” he laughed. “It’s certainly not small and, for a secret, it’s not very well hidden.”

“Well, no. But very few people seem to come here and the bazillion stairs scare off a good percentage of those who do come.” Jackie replied. “Come on, I’ll race you to the top.”

She took off and charged up the stairs zigzagging trying to keep Walt from passing her. The sound of their feet pounding up the spiral stairway and their laughter resonated in the small space formed between the huge metal water tank and the brick exterior walls. As they reached the last several steps, Walt simply grabbed the railing above and hauled himself over the top, making for a near perfect tie with Jackie who reached the last step just as he landed.

“You cheated,” she laughed, then leaned back against the wall and caught her breath.

Walt leaned over, his hands on his knees and took several gulps of air. “What an undignified accusation, Ms. Bouchard,” he said between breaths. “I was merely employing those skills which I felt appropriate for the occasion.”

“Why, I declare, Mr. Lincoln. You sure have a way with words,” she returned with a mock southern belle accent.

Having regained their breath, they made their way around the circle of windows that gave them marvelous views of Seattle, Puget Sound, Lakes Washington and Union, the U-district to the north and the regal Mt. Rainier making one of her occasional appearances to the south.

“Did you notice all the commotion in front of the art museum?” asked Walt, pointing down to the road and parking strip that ran in front of the museum. “At least two news teams, and a set of microphones and podium is set up on the steps.”

“Maybe your Mom did know something was up. Let’s go find her and see what’s happening.”

\* \* \*

Carol Lincoln was standing by a huge donut shaped sculpture, which framed the Space Needle. Seattle’s famous landmark, with its restaurant and observation deck in a quirky looking flying saucer, sat on the grounds of the 1962 World’s Fair, about a mile west at the base of Queen Ann hill.

“You two look like you ran the four minute mile! Did you run all the way up here from downtown?”

“Nope. We ran up that.” Walt said, pointing back at the water tower. “But what’s going on here. Did you know something was going to happen today. Why all the secrecy?”

“I heard about this at the party last night, but was sworn to secrecy. Apparently a very valuable item, something called the Heart of Seattle is being delivered today and they didn’t want to take any chances with someone trying to hold up the transport truck. They are going to bring it out in a special case and let the news people get a look at it.”

“The Heart of Seattle?” Jackie asked. “What ever could that be?”

“Oh, there’s Jodie Baily going up to the microphone. She’ll probably tell the story of what it is and how it was found.”

Jodie was half way into her story when a man came up behind her and whispered into her ear. Her face turned white and she let out a small gasp. The reporters and cameras surged forward to hear what was going on. Without saying a word, Jodie sat down on the nearest chair, one hand clutching her neck.

The man who had come up to the podium cleared his throat.

“It saddens me to inform you that the item we received is not the Heart of Seattle, but a very poor forgery. Even under casual inspection it has obviously been carved in the past month. The police have been notified and we will issue a statement sometime later this evening.”

Carol Lincoln hurried over to talk with Jodie. Walt and Jackie started to follow. About half way along Jackie stopped Walt.

“You should stay with your Mom. She seems pretty shaken. I’ll take the names and look up phone numbers and addresses at the Library and meet you back at the ship around six. Okay?”

“Sure. That makes sense.” Walt agreed after a moment of hesitation. He didn’t want the time with Jackie to end, but he couldn’t leave his mother at a time like this. Not to mention he was dying to hear more about this mysterious theft.

“Thanks for your help this morning! See you in a bit.” She waved and was off into the crowd heading for the bus stop.

Walt joined his mother who had reached Jodie and was sitting next to her. Carol touched Jodie’s shoulder. Jodie looked up and recognized Carol. She started to give Carol a wan smile, then, misunderstanding the concerned look, she gasped.

“Don’t tell me you talked to somebody about the transfer?”

Carol was taken aback by the accusation, but retained her composure. “No. Of course not,” she said quietly. “I just came to see if I could help. This has to be a terrible shock.”

Walt was standing back and watching the two women speak. He took in the sorrow and sense of loss that he felt from the woman and he wished he had the power to help right the wrong that had been done. But this would take a lot more imagination than he’d used getting into a hotel room.

“Mrs. Baily. Do you know if the theft was made while en route?” Walt asked. “Was the packaging tampered with?”

Jodie looked up, not quite sure who Walt was.

“You remember my son, Walt, from last night?” Carol asked.

“Oh, yes. Hello.” she said smiling politely. “I really don’t know any of the details yet. But don’t worry. The Police will handle everything I’m sure. It will all get sorted out.”

Walt pulled off his coat and handed it to his mother. “Can you hang onto this, Mom? I’m getting a little hot.”

“Sure Honey. I’m not surprised after running up those stairs.”

“I’ll be right back,” Walt said and left the two women.

“It’s like I told you last night. He just can’t sit still.” Carol shook her head and turned back to Jodie.

\* \* \*

As he walked behind one of the TV trucks Walt pulled his baseball cap out of his pocket and put it on. He also had a pair of dark glasses and put them on as well. In his mind, the moment he came around the other side of the truck, he was a member of the TV news crew. He’d been watching some of the light and sound crews and he tried to match their detached demeanor. He stood behind a two men for a moment as they talked. He nodded, shook his head and shifted his hat back mimicking them.

Breaking away from the two, he turned toward them and spoke as if to someone behind them, “Okay. I’ll see what I can do.”

The men looked at each other, they looked behind them. Walt didn’t care. He had just given himself the order to go see if he could have a look at the carving. He walked straight up the stairs and into the museum. A table with a shipping crate and some paperwork spread out on it was only a couple of steps away.

For several moments he wasn’t noticed in the comings and goings of the police and other staff. He stepped up to the table and even said “Excuse me,” to one of the staff. The man stepped aside and Walt had his first look at the phony carving.

It was about nine or ten inches long and about three inches in diameter. It looked like a small totem pole, It may have been a poor imitation but someone had gone to some effort to make it. Walt could see several faces carved into one side and some dabs of black, aqua and red paint accenting the faces. He raised his dark glasses to get a better look.

“Excuse me,” a voice from behind him boomed. “What in Heaven’s name are you doing in here?”

Walt swung around slowly while putting his glasses back on. He appraised the man glaring back at him. It was the man who had made the announcement. No real threat. Walt nodded, cool and detached as ever. ““Afternoon, Sir. Channel 7 news. We’re hoping to get a crew in here and take a few shots. Think that would be okay?”

“No, that will not be okay. I told everyone we’d have a statement after the police have completed their work. You’ll have to leave.”

“Just asking. They told me ask, so that’s what I did.” He pulled on the bill of his cap by way of saying good bye, and walked back out the door.

\* \* \*

They arrived back at the ship around 4:30. Robert Lincoln met them at the head of the gangplank.

“We’re in luck,” he said. “Dean came over earlier and said he’d like to finish the voyage with us. Apparently after he spent a few days with his family he realized that he had been a bit hasty.”

Dean Patterson was the crew member who had left the ship and was the reason they were seeking new crew. His return meant they wouldn’t have to train a new person. He was a first year college student and had been with the ship since it had left New York, bound for Europe. He was a good all-round crew member; strong, able to set the sails, fix mechanical problems and do carpentry work.

“Glad to hear some good news,” said Carol. “We just came from a complete fiasco!” And she explained about the stolen artifact and how crushed Jodie had been. “I had really been looking forward to seeing it, too! I wish I could have at least seen the phony.”

“I got a look at it,” Walt said.

His mother spun around and looked at him, “How and when did you do that?”

“I was like you, I really wanted to see it. So I just kinda walked into the Museum while things were still in turmoil. It took them a minute to kick me out, but that was long enough to sneak a peek.”

“Walt! I’m not sure I approve of all this sneaking around. First you tell me you broke into that hotel room...”

“We didn’t exactly break in. We had a key after all.”

Robert had been watching and listening with a bemused air. “This I’ve got to hear about,” he said beckoning with his hands, “Give. Give.”

\* \* \*

When Jackie arrived back at the ship, she was bursting with excitement. “I’ve got phone numbers for nearly everyone on the list! But the best clue is that one of them appears to match the impression of the number on that pad of paper. The person, Charles Deary, lives in Friday Harbor up on the San Juan Islands. I didn’t try calling, because I wanted to get you guy’s thoughts about how to proceed. I mean, if something has happened to my Dad, I certainly don’t want to tip off the wrong person and put my Dad in further danger.”

“I’ll tell you what we’ll do,” said Robert Lincoln. “Tomorrow we’ll sail up there. I was planning to go up to Port Angeles, but the San Juans would be a perfect stopping place. I wouldn’t mind seeing them.”

“Can I see the piece of paper with the phone number?” Walt asked.

Jackie had lightly rubbed a pencil over the surface, which had brought out most of the numbers. The first four digits and the last one were quite clear. Making both the match and the location of the phone number pretty reliable.

“My guess,” said Jackie looking up from the list of names. “Is that my Dad had tracked down where the shoe was sold. These names may be old employees or possibly even clients of the store.”

Dean Patterson came out onto the deck. Seeing Jackie, he visibly straightened up and gave her an appraising look.

“What’s all the fuss?” He asked casually, and then as if he hadn’t already noticed, “and say, who’s our pretty guest?”

“Hey Dean. This is Jackie Bouchard. She joined our crew this morning,” Robert Lincoln said.

“EnchantÈ!” he said smoothly. “Glad to make your acquaintance. Do you prefer Jackie or Jacqueline.”

Walt’s joy in seeing Dean return to the boat was rapidly evaporating. In fact, he wished he could just toss him over the side.

“My friends call me Jackie, but you can call me Ms. Bouchard.” Jackie said with a smile.

“Ah, TouchÈ!” he replied

“I’m sorry. I couldn’t resist the joke.”

“That’s okay. You can call me Dean,” he replied.” And when you call me, I’ll be there tout de suite!”

“Good Lord,” Walt thought to himself. “What’s with this guy?”

“Ah, C’Ètait la troisiÈme fois que vous avez dit quelque chose en franÁais, monsieur. C’est bon, ca!” Jackie’s French accent was almost flawless.

Everyone stopped and looked at Jackie. Walt and his mother spoke French well enough to understand that she had said ‘It was the third time Dean had said something in French.’ Dean and Walt’s Dad had learned a little French on their travels, but not enough to understand what Jackie had just said, at least not without asking her to repeat what she had said very slowly.

“Um, I... Je... ne parler... uh” Dean gave up, “I don’t speak French.”

Walt’s rising jealousy was soothed by Dean’s admission. But jealous or not he realized he had competition and he wasn’t sure how to handle the situation.

“With a name like Bouchard I guess it’s not too surprising that you speak French so well.” Robert Lincoln said. “Was your father a native French speaker?”

“Sort of. My grandparents were and so my Dad spoke it at home with them. I learned a lot as a kid, but after my Mom died I spent a lot of time with my Grandparents and I became much more fluent.”

“Walt and I speak a little French,” chimed in Carol Lincoln. “It will be fun to have someone else who we can speak with.”

“Moms are so great,” Walt thought. “I would have sounded like a dork if I had tried to say the same thing. She made it sound so casual.”

“Okay,” interjected Robert. “We’ve got a big day tomorrow. Let’s get some dinner and start getting this ship ready to depart.”

\* \* \*

They didn’t get off as soon as Robert Lincoln had hoped. It was well into the afternoon before the ‘Resolute’ headed down the ship canal toward the locks leading out to Puget Sound.

The rest of their crew, who had all been on shore leave while the ship was docked in Seattle, had returned either the evening before or early that morning and almost everything was ready by late morning. However, Jack Royer came by in the mid-morning to thank Walt. He insisted on taking the family out to an early lunch and then offered to get them a look inside the Kingdome stadium where the Mariners played their home games. Walt thought that the large cement dome gave the sense of being a huge umbrella; an apt image for an area that was known for its rainy weather.

As they walked into the doors at field level, the Star Spangled Banner was just starting and the Lincolns realized that an afternoon game was about to begin. They looked inquisitively at Jack Royer.

“Now you don’t have to stay if you don’t want to, but the Mariners are playing the Yankees,” he said with a you-don’t-want-to-miss-it tone in his voice. “Besides, I have one more surprise I’d like to offer Walt.”

“Box seats?” Walt asked.

“Sure. But how would you like to throw the first pitch?”

Walt’s eyes shone. “You BET!” he answered without hesitation, “Oh man. Wait until Gary hears about this. He is gonna die!”

Jack gave Walt a dark blue nylon jacket and cap with the Mariner’s logo on it. He made a call to someone up in his office and then turned to Walt.

“Ready?”

Robert and Carol stood by the dugout while Jack and Walt walked onto the field. Robert looked from Walt to Carol and back again. He was beaming almost as much as Walt.

“Ladies and gentleman,” the announcers voice boomed over the loud speakers. “Here to throw the first pitch is Walt Lincoln, the hero who saved some guy named Jack Royer!”

The crowd roared, but Walt barely heard it. He looked over at the dugouts. Some of his favorite players were sitting in those boxes. He glanced up at the fans in the bleachers and noticed all the cameras focused on the pitcher’s mound. It was all quite a step up from his high school games. Jack handed him a ball. The catcher was crouching behind the home plate. “Put it right here, hero.” he called with a smile. Walt wound up and sent the ball sailing into the catcher’s mitt.

“My, Oh My!” rang out the announcer. “Sign that kid up!”

Jack gave him a pat on the back and they both waved to the crowd as they walked off the field. They met up with Robert and Carol and rode up the elevator with Jack to his viewing box.

“They should have built it with one of those retractable roofs that I’ve seen,” Walt said as they looked out over the vast stadium. “But I suppose that would have been pretty expensive.”

“For you, I’ll see about having it torn down and replaced.” Jack said with a laugh.

When they got back to the ship, Jodie Baily was talking to Jackie and waiting for them.

“I was just getting ready to leave you a note,” she said to Carol Lincoln. “I wanted to thank you for being at the park yesterday and apologize if I offended you.”

“Oh, heavens. No!” exclaimed Carol. “Under the circumstances it was totally understandable.”

“Has anything turned up? Clues? A motive?” Walt asked.

“The police are looking for some temporary workers that the museum had hired as summer help. They apparently had been working there all summer, but left several days ago to take a short vacation before they started college. They had told some of the others that they were planning to take a hiking trip over on the Olympic Peninsula.”

“I suppose that could be just a story, if they were planning to steal the totem and wanted to throw off suspicion or at least lead the police on a wild goose chase,” Walt said.

“Exactly what the police are thinking,” Jodie replied.

“Were the workers Native Americans?” Walt asked. “It’s possible they felt that the totem should be returned to their people. I mean after that crazy raid by the FBI on Wounded Knee and the recent Fishing rights decisions, that seems like a possibility.”

“Good idea. I didn’t hear anything about the identities of the workers. Both were male. That’s about all I know about them.” Jodie shrugged and turned back to Carol. “Anyway, I should be going. It was really nice to meet you and I hope we can keep in touch.”

“Certainly!” said Carol. “Let me get a piece of paper and I’ll give you our phone number and address in California. You have to come visit us sometime.”

Robert Lincoln inspected the ship to make sure everything was ready to go, that provisions were stowed and they had enough fuel. Walt and Gary Gable followed him, talking excitedly about the baseball game and marking things off in a log book.

It was just after 5 o’clock in the afternoon when the ship motored into the mouth of the ship canal and gave a blast of its horn, indicating that it wanted the Fremont Bridge to open. A short sail from there and they and their ship were being lowered from lake level to sea level at the Hiram Chittenden Locks. Thoughts of the journey soon started to crowd out all of Walt’s questions about the Heart of Seattle.

\* \* \*

Walt liked to spend free time in the crow’s nest. It not only afforded him great views, but it gave him a place to write and think. Supper was over and the ship was motoring up Puget Sound on smooth seas. An occasional container ship passed them and the boat would rock as they crossed through the wake. The coast of Whidbey Island slid by on the starboard side, the snowy silhouettes of the Olympic Mountains to the

port side. Walt set his journal down on top of the guitar that lay by his feet. He leaned back against the mast and lazily watched the surroundings while thinking about his number one interest these days: Jackie.

At supper, Gary, Dean and Jackie had joined the family for dinner. Gary knew how Walt felt and while he certainly found Jackie pretty, he was already going steady with a girl. Walt had had a great day with Jackie the day before and hoped they could spend some time together after dinner. But he didn't want to seem too pushy so he held back asking. That left only Dean who seemed to be completely oblivious to Walt's interests, or just didn't care.

Robert Lincoln had a television turned on and was gleefully watching a sports segment showing Walt throwing the first pitch at the Mariner's game.

"You look a little nervous there," Dean said obviously trying to make a dig at Walt.

"Me?" returned Walt, innocently. "No. I knew I couldn't hurt the catcher. He's a professional after all."

As supper was ending Dean wiped his hands on his napkin and tossed it down. He turned to Jackie and asked "Let's clear the table and then we can go out on the deck for a stroll."

"Sure. I'll help clean up." Jackie said. "But then I want to do some reading in my cabin, if you don't mind."

From his post in the crow's nest, Walt could see the passage between Lopez and San Juan Island that they were headed for. They probably had about 45 minutes before they would be sailing into Friday Harbor. Walt began to wonder about Jackie's father and how they might find him. From all indications he had been missing for almost two weeks. Walt hoped that he was still alive. It seemed incomprehensible to lose both of your parents. If he was alive, then they had to be careful not to compromise any plans he might be pursuing.

A rustling of the rope ladder leading to the crow's nest caught his attention. He turned and there was Jackie smiling at him. She climbed over the railing. "I hope you don't mind me disturbing you up here?" she said.

"Not at all!" he responded. "You were so quiet. I didn't even hear you until you were at the top of the ladder."

"I guess I was being pretty quiet. I wanted a chance to talk to you in private."

"About your Dad?"

"Oh, yeah. That, and other things. Just talk. You know." She put her hands in her front pants pockets and shrugged her shoulders.

They looked at each other in silence for several seconds. Walt found himself completely tongue-tied. At the same time he didn't feel he needed to speak. A small seaplane flew over and broke their reverie.

"Looks like they are flying into the San Juans," Walt said. "I'm hoping to be a pilot someday. It's so cool how you can get places so fast."

“Flying would be fun once in a while. But I bet it would get boring to have to fly every-day. I’m thinking about learning how to program computers.”

“Your Dad has a pretty cool job. Maybe I could become an FBI agent.”

“I’m not so sure that I agree. I mean, he’s missing. Maybe hurt...” her voice trailed off and she looked down. “Uh. What’s that?”

Walt followed her glance. “Do you mean my journal? I like to come here and write. I, uh,” he hesitated a moment.

“What?” Jackie asked.

“Remember the other day. On the bus?”

“Sure. I was having a very bad day. I’d lost my money, didn’t know where to turn and then there you were. You gave up your seat and I thought that was so sweet. Since then things have been going much better.”

“When I got off the bus, I didn’t think I’d ever see you again. But you intrigued me. I wished we could meet again, so that night I started a little poem.” He pointed at his journal. “I kind of made a song out of it tonight.”

Jackie eyes sparkled, “And you are going to let me hear it?”

He took a breath. “Yes.”

He slung the guitar around his neck and picked up his journal, flipped it open and set it on the railing. He didn’t need it, He’d repeated the words enough times to himself.

“I have to warn you it’s pretty short.”

Jackie just smiled. He cleared his throat, played a couple of chords and sang softly:

“I gave you my seat, but you stole my heart.

“That’s where the story began, but it’s only the start

“Let me sit beside you and tell all I’m thinking of

“Looks to me like I’m falling for a bus-stop love.”

Walt hadn’t once looked at the page. “I guess it’s kind of...”

Jackie put a finger to his lips. “Shh! It was beautiful!”

Walt felt an electric charge at her touch. She pulled her hand back and they both just smiled at each other. A shout from below brought them out of their trance.

“Walt!” Gary called. “We’re about to enter the harbor. Your Dad wants you to help get the boat ready for mooring.”

“Be right down, Gary,” he replied. He turned to Jackie and shrugged. “I gotta go.”

He put his journal into his shirt pocket and swung the guitar around onto his back. As he climbed over the railing of the crow’s nest, Jackie called him softly. “Walt!”

He turned and looked at her.

“Your heart is safe with me.”

\* \* \*

The town of Friday Harbor seemed to have more boats than buildings. The ferry terminal was one of the largest features. There were a couple of streets that stepped up the hill from the terminal and a few restaurants sat along the waterfront. The morning was cool and a fine misty rain was falling.

The “Resolute” was moored off shore near a small island at the mouth of the harbor. They had a small skiff to take them to shore. Walt, his father and Jackie were preparing the skiff for launch when Dean came out on deck.

“Are we going to be staying here long?” he asked. “I thought we were heading for Port Angeles?”

“I guess I was thinking we’d spend a day or two here,” replied Robert. “Why? Something up?”

“Oh, no,” Dean quickly responded. “Just have some cousins there. I told them I might be stopping in.”

“Well, I was kind of hoping you could repair that cracked hatch cover while we were here. But I’ll tell you what: I’ll ask around town. Maybe I can find someone who is heading over to Port Angeles today and I can get you a ride.”

“Hey, that’s pretty cool, sir. But don’t bother. It can wait a couple days. I’ll get right to work on the hatch.” Dean was holding something. He smiled and distractedly pointed it at Jackie as he talked. “Now if you get bored, don’t say I didn’t warn you.”

Walt noticed it was a carving. Dean often carved items as a pass time. The Easter Island head on their bathroom door had been made by Dean. But there was something different about the style of this one.

“So Dean,” Walt said. “Looks like your stay in Seattle has affected your choice of carvings. Getting tired of the Easter Island motif?”

Dean looked down at his carving and back at Walt.

“Yeah. Did you see that Totem pole down in Pioneer Square? I kind of studied it one day and have been wanting to see if I could make something similar.”

“You are a quick learner,” Walt replied. “It looks pretty convincing.”

“Oh yeah? Thanks,” Dean replied nonchalantly. “Maybe we could use this one as the masthead.”

\* \* \*

Walt manned the oars and took them to shore using deft strokes that spoke of many hours of rowing. No one spoke as they covered the short distance, but it was obvious something was bothering Walt. He maneuvered them up to a dock and Robert tied the boat off to a hitch and steadied the boat while his wife and Jackie got out.

Walt could hold it back no longer. “Did you see that carving? It sure looked suspiciously like the Heart of Seattle. He’s always carved stuff with a single face. That one had at least four or more faces that I could see.”

“Hold on Walt,” his father countered. “That’s not jealousy talking is it? Dean has been with us for a long time. He has a knack for carving and what with our stay in Seattle and all this talk about the totem poles, it’s no wonder he would try something new.”

That stung Walt. It was true that Dean had been a good crew member. It was also true that Dean's silly remarks to Jackie did cause Walt to resent his presence. Still Walt felt he should keep his eye on Dean.

"Ok. Ok. I'll drop it. But I am the only person here who has seen the phony Heart of Seattle and I still say there is a strange coincidence if nothing else."

"Good. Now your mother and I are going to do a little sightseeing, do some shopping. We'll meet you back here in two hours." He looked at his watch. "Let's say 11:30. That is, unless you want us to come with you on your hunt."

"Oh yeah, right!" Walt laughed. "Two teenagers with their parents. We'd stick out like sore thumbs."

Robert and Carol headed for a row of shops. Walt and Jackie decided to get directions at a boat rental and fishing supplies shop. As they walked in, the man at the cash register greeted them. "Are you kids from the old ship out there in the harbor by Brown Island? I just saw you rowing in."

"Yes," said Jackie. "Are you interested in old ships?"

"Sure am," he replied. "I heard that one's been around the world."

"News travels fast," Walt said.

"Couple of fellas were in this morning asking if I knew anything about your boat. Which, I'm afraid to say, I didn't. They apparently saw a program about your trip on TV. Don't watch much television myself. But they said you made quite a stir down in Seattle. Some big shot nearly drown and all."

Taking advantage of a pause, Walt jumped in. "Oh, he just fell overboard. He's doing fine. You know how the news people like to inflate things." Before the man could start again Walt added, "We were looking to get some directions. Could you tell us how to get to Cattle Point Road?"

"Well now. There's a coincidence. Those fellas I was telling you about. The ones asking about your boat. They live out on Cattle Point Road. Do you have friends out that way?"

"Uh, no.," Walt improvised. "Just heard there was a good view out that way."

"That would probably be 'American Camp.' Nice little park."

"Can't say that I heard the name," Walt replied honestly, but relieved that his gamble had worked. "Just thought we would check it out."

"Probably could have gotten them fellas to give you a lift. Except now that I say it, I remember that they was heading up to Roche Harbor to catch a plane to Port Angeles. Which makes me think: If you have the time, get yourselves up to English Camp on the north end of the Island. Not as good of a view, perhaps, but I think it is a much prettier setting. American Camp is pretty exposed."

"American Camp? English Camp?" Jackie asked. "I'm intrigued what's the story there?"

"You haven't heard about the Pig War that was fought here on San Juan Island?" the man asked. "In the 1850s or so the British and Americans kind of shared these islands. Both claiming ownership, but living an uneasy peace. One day someone shot a pig and

that was the straw that broke the camel's back. There was a lot of saber rattling, with the Brits camped out up on the north end of the island and the Americans here on the south shore. But it finally came down to a ruling in some international court that set the boundaries and split up the islands. The Americans got San Juan among others."

"So, is it far out to Cattle Point Road?" Walt asked.

"Well now that depends on which end of the road you are talking about," the man chuckled. It starts over on the west edge of town, but its probably 5 miles out to American Camp. You could probably rent a couple of bikes over at the sports shop," he pulled out a small map of the island and circled a spot on it, "It's just over here by the bend in the road. You can take the map. Might come in handy."

Walt and Jackie thanked the man and headed for the sports shop.

\* \* \*

Walt scowled at the map as they walked along. There was no scale of miles on the map and he was trying to convert the man's guess of 5 miles out to American Camp into a working scale.

"I'm thinking we should forget the bikes. I have a hunch that our suspect doesn't live too far outside of town. We can easily walk 3 or 4 miles in two hours. And that way we don't have extra equipment that just gets in our..." Walt trailed off.

Out of the corner of his eye he had seen someone standing in a doorway across the street. A dark haired man with a close trimmed beard had watched them intently as they passed. Now Walt could sense he had come out of the shadows and was following them.

Walt put his hand on Jackie's shoulder. "Don't turn around," he whispered. "I think we are being followed and I don't want him to suspect we know."

"Just one person or two?" Jackie asked. "Do you think it could be the men who were asking about the boat?"

"I only saw one man. But the other might be behind us." Walt thought for a second. "Can you fake a sneeze?" Jackie nodded. "Let me get a half step ahead of you. That would give me a valid reason for turning more abruptly."

Jackie let out a pretty credible sneeze and Walt turned quickly. The man across the street seemed to flinch, as if he wanted to get out of sight. It was pretty subtle, but he was definitely looking at them. On the other side of the street, Walt didn't see anyone.

"I can't be certain. But I think he's following us," Walt told Jackie. "One way to find out for sure. Let's turn down the next street."

They turned the corner, a brick building blocked them from the other man's view and, once out of sight, they quietly hurried to the alley at the back side of the building. They flattened against the wall, hidden by a downspout and brick cornice.

"Walt," Jackie whispered. "What if he has a gun. This could be the worst place to hide"

"Get behind that garbage can. I won't take any chances. If he comes into the alley I'll nail him with the garbage can lid."

Seconds later the man appeared at the head of the alley and stopped. Walt saw his shadow. He braced himself for the swing. Sure enough the shadow started into the alleyway.

As Walt started his swing he heard Jackie scream. It was too late that he realized she was screaming at him and not the other man.

And the word she was screaming was, "Daddy!"

\* \* \*

The garbage can lid was slicing down towards Ted Bouchard's head. A split second move by Jackie's father sent the lid clattering away. A second punch caught Walt in the shoulder as he stumbled back. Adrenaline was racing through the two of them. Walt was strong and quick, but he could tell that Jackie's father had some martial arts training that made him dangerous. Walt had a second disadvantage. He knew his attacker was Jackie's father and didn't want to hurt him all he could do was defend himself. Ted Bouchard didn't know who Walt was, and very likely only saw him as an attacker.

Walt fended off another punch, and jumped over to the garbage lid cover. Taking a cue from the skateboarders he'd seen in the U-District, he stepped on the upturned edge and flipped it up. Catching it in his hand he swung it up in time to protect himself from the next attack. Ted's hand slammed into the lid and he barked out a muffled cry.

Jackie jumped between them. "Daddy. Stop!" she shouted. "This my friend Walt Lincoln. Don't hurt each other."

Finally catching his breath, Walt looked from behind his shield and said "Mr. Bouchard! I'm so glad we found you."

"Walt Lincoln? That's a familiar sounding name," Ted mused as he rubbed his knuckles and studied Walt's face. "Sure. The kid who saved the Mariner's owner. The family sailing around the world."

"Right on both counts," Walt grinned. "You may not believe this, but I thought I was protecting your daughter. We heard about some suspicious guys asking about our ship and since we deduced you were here on the island and maybe in trouble..."

"How in heck did you know I would be here on the island. That is supposed to be the utmost secret. When I saw you earlier, I thought my quarry had gotten wind of my presence and had abducted Jackie to use against me. I heard that sneeze of Jackie's and it didn't sound like her normal sneeze. I thought she had seen me and was trying to warn me or something." Ted Bouchard looked around. "I want to hear all about your story, but let's get out of here to somewhere a little less public. I have a small truck just down the block. I'll go get it and pick you up."

Before he could leave, Jackie threw her arms around her father and hugged him. "Oh Daddy! I was so worried about you. I'm so glad you are all right."

\* \* \*

Within minutes they were all squeezed into the cab of the truck and travelling down Cattle Point Road. As they passed a walled yard with a black grilled gate Walt asked. "Is that your quarry's house?"

"Again you surprise me! Tell me your story... and don't stare at the house."

Walt and Jackie alternated telling him the story of how Jackie had come to Seattle; of her fruitless search and losing her money; of Walt finding her on the boat; getting into his hotel room; and finding the names and matching them up with the phone number impression on the note pad.

“Sounds like you have a future as an investigator or else a second story man,” Jackie’s father chuckled. “You sure defended yourself very well back there in the alley.”

“Defend is about all I could do!” Walt replied. “Your technique is awesome. I’ve been on the high school wrestling team, but I’m going to enroll in some martial arts class when I get back to California. Any recommendations?”

“If you are planning to get into any more alley fights like today, then I’d suggest Karate or Tai Kwan Do.”

“But Daddy,” Jackie interjected. “I read about some sort of shoot out. There was an agent who was killed. I was so afraid that it was you. So that was someone else?”

“Actually it was me. I just didn’t die. The story is a little complicated, so let me start with the loafer and the D. B. Cooper investigation. As you know, I came up to Seattle to see if I could determine if that loafer had belonged to Cooper. Forensics said that the shoe was old enough. The weathering wasn’t quite right, but the technicians said there were several reasons why the weathering was inconclusive. So I took over and started checking with the local stores that sell this brand of shoe. I was able to get names and addresses of customers and employees from the early 1970s. I had made a number of calls and was getting no where. Then I made a call to this guy on San Juan Island.”

“Charles Deary?” Jackie asked.

“That’s the name. Everything was proceeding normally. He said he was going to be in Seattle the next day. We set up to meet at a restaurant in the International District. So, I was sitting at the table and starting to wonder if the guy was going to come, because it was about 15 minutes past our meeting time. Suddenly two guys walk in. I recognized one right away from an FBI ‘person of interest’ list. Everything about them said ‘beware.’ They were wearing overcoats and I knew that they weren’t planning on eating. A waiter turned to talk to them and they shot him. I kicked over my table and had just enough time to drop behind it as a shotgun blast sent splinters showering around me. I had my gun, but I was in a very awkward position. I heard a second shotgun fire and hunched down, but nothing happened. No splinters. But I did hear one of my attackers let out a yelp of surprise. It turns out the owner had a shotgun behind the counter and he shot the man holding the gun. The blast also winged the other man, who fled. A car was waiting for him on the street and he was gone before I could even get out from behind the table.”

“Was the other guy Charles Deary?” asked Walt.

“Oh no. Charles Deary doesn’t do that kind of dirty work. He pays for it.” Ted Bouchard replied. “Shortly after the shooting I did some research. That’s when I realized that the shoe was pointing me to a smuggler we had been seeking for several years. How his shoe ended up on Mt. St. Helens I don’t know — maybe he gave his shoes to D. B. Cooper, for all I know,” he chuckled, “I doubt it, but it doesn’t matter. Suddenly I had a very different case: To track down Charles Deary. I knew that both I and my family would be a lot safer if this guy thought I was dead. The man who escaped hadn’t seen me after I

hit the floor, so I figured he couldn't confirm or deny if I was still alive. To try and keep Deary off guard, the FBI put out a statement that said a gang, believed to be from south King County, had a personal grudge against the waiter and that one of their agents had been killed in the gun battle."

"So now you have been waiting here in Friday Harbor for the guy to come out of his house?" asked Walt.

"Actually, I am waiting for him to come back to the house. My research shows that he left for Canada the day of the shooting. He flew up to Victoria, BC on a small float-plane. This guy has connections and I'm guessing he is trying to determine if I really was killed before venturing back. Which is why, when I saw you two together, that I jumped to conclusion Deary had kidnapped you. Anyway, while I've been waiting, I've been following the movements of his two henchmen. A couple of thugs who act as his gardener and chauffeur and trying to get a better sense of his property and security systems."

"Any other people living with Charles Deary, besides the gardener and chauffeur?" Walt asked.

"As far as I can tell that is it. I have a feeling that the man who was wounded in the shoot out may be inside. But he hasn't shown his face out in the yard or in town."

"Then we may be in luck," said Walt.

"Explain," replied Ted Bouchard.

"The man at the boat rental shop told us they were flying over to Port Angeles. Maybe while they are gone we could get inside."

"Bad idea for two reasons. I don't want Deary and his men to have any reason to think they are being watched. Second, people know that Ned Tackle over at the boat rental place loves to talk. If they said they were going north, odds are they were really going somewhere else. But we should check that out. If it's true it would be the first time they've left the island since I got here. Maybe they've gone to meet Deary.. There is a ferry that goes back and forth between Victoria and Port Angeles every day."

"It's getting close to noon," Walt said checking his watch. "I told my parents I would meet them back in town." He hesitated saying 'we,' since he wasn't sure what Jackie would do now that she had found her Dad.

"Maybe we could all have lunch together," Jackie suggested, who was equally torn about what she should do.

"I need to check on your story and see if those two henchman have left the island. If so, I may need to get over to Port Angeles myself. For your sake Jackie, I think you are safer on the Lincoln's ship."

"Our next stop is in Port Angeles. Now that we have found you we don't need to stay in Friday Harbor. Maybe we could take you over to Port Angeles;" Walt offered. "Or at least we could meet back up with you over there."

"If I go, I'll have to get over there in a hurry. Probably take a sea-plane," Ted replied.

“But I tell you what. I’ll leave you a clue if I go. My truck will be parked at my hotel. If it’s backed into its stall, I’ve left. When you get to Port Angeles, I’ll have no trouble finding you.”

\* \* \*

Walt and Jackie were bursting to tell Robert and Carol Lincoln their story, but they knew that they couldn’t talk about Jackie’s father until they were in a more private situation. The Harborside Cafe where they had decided to have lunch was not the place for telling their story, especially when they saw Ned Tackle come in and sit at the counter.

They watched several sea-planes take off and land during the course of their meal. Walt wondered if Jackie’s father was on one of them. His and Jackie’s eyes met and they gave each other a quick smile and Walt knew she was wondering the same thing.

“Any luck on your mission?” asked Walt’s father.

“Yes,” said Walt, giving his parents an exaggerated wink, as if to say ‘play along with me,’ and finished by saying, “We got out to Cattle point and saw some great sights. I can’t wait to get back to the ship and check out our Coast Guard maps.”

Walt saw Ned Tackle look over at them. To further underline his unspoken message, he pulled out the little map Ned had given them and held it up.

“Thanks for the map, Mister. It came in handy.”

“No problem. Did you rent them bikes I was telling you about?”

“No, we decided to hitchhike.” Walt replied. There was no sense getting caught in a lie.

“Hitchhike?!” Walt’s mother chimed in. “I’m not sure I like you catching rides from strangers.

This was going to be a long lunch.

\* \* \*

Once they were away from the dock, Walt and Jackie began telling their tale in hushed tones. About how they met Jackie’s father and explained why he was there, and why they hadn’t been able to talk about it at lunch. They also explained the reason they had taken a walk after lunch: To see which way Ted Bouchard’s truck was facing. It was facing out, meaning he was on his way to Port Angeles.

“Mr. Bouchard is a cool guy,” enthused Walt. “You should have seen his moves. I’m starting to think that maybe I should become a detective. Maybe one of those sky marshals that flies on planes to stop hi-jackings.”

“Your son is a pretty cool guy, too,” said Jackie. She was sitting behind Walt in the front of the boat and she moved carefully behind him and gave him a squeeze around the chest, resting her chin on his shoulder. Walt fumbled the oars momentarily but quickly regained his control. “He helped me find my Dad! Of course he almost beamed him one with a trash can lid!”

Walt turned his head and their cheeks brushed. Jackie let go and moved back to her seat. Robert and Carol gave each other a knowing glance.

The skiff bumped up against the side of the 'Resolute' and Jackie and the Lincolns climbed the waiting rope ladder. While Jackie and Carol Lincoln carried some supplies they had bought into the great-room, Walt and his father hauled the skiff back on board. Gary Gable met them and started pulling up the rope ladder.

"Any luck finding Jackie's Dad?" Gary asked.

"I'd rather not talk about it," Walt replied. But then he leaned closer and whispered, "Success! I'll tell you more later."

"Walt," his father called. "Go find Dean and let him know we'll be leaving right away."

"Aye aye, Captain."

Dean was in his cabin sitting on his bed carving. When Walt knocked and came in, Dean tossed the wooden object into his chest and stood up, dusting a few wood shavings off his clothes. Walt also detected the faint smell of paint.

"What's up, Lincoln? Here to tell me to stay away from Jackie?"

Walt wondered if Dean was just trying to change the subject. Walt resolved to find out what Dean was up to. But for now that would have to wait.

"Just here to tell you we are getting ready to leave for Port Angeles."

"That was quick. Your Dad said we'd be here a couple days. Did they kick you out of town for being such a loser?"

"Dang. What is the matter with you these days? My Dad says we're leaving, so we're leaving. Do you have a problem with that?" Walt turned to walk out the door. Hanging on the wall was a wetsuit.

"Taking up diving?" He asked.

"I was going to give it to Jackie. She'd look real good in it." Dean leered.

"Forget I asked," Walt said as coolly as he could, while inside he was ready to stuff Dean through a port hole.

When he reached the main deck and met his father he was still fuming from Dean's rude behavior. Though he tried to control the agitation he felt a scowl betrayed his anger.

"So where is Dean?"

"He's coming," replied Walt curtly. "At least I think so. But if he stays in his cabin for the rest of the trip that would be fine with me."

Robert Lincoln watched his son storm off to help some of the other crew. He shook his head. If this kept up either Dean or Jackie was going to have to leave the ship. He couldn't have such tensions among the crew.

He stood watching the activity on the ship for a few minutes. Then went up to the bridge to direct the boat out of the harbor. As they maneuvered into the northbound shipping lanes Robert realized that Dean still hadn't come out on deck and he decided to go get him. He was back on the deck only a minute later.

"Walt," he called.

“What is it Dad?” Walt said running over.

“Dean was okay when you left him, right?”

“Sure. What’s up? Did he cut himself?”

“That’s not funny, Walt,” he replied soberly, “Dean’s dead.

\* \* \*

Walt and his father went back to the room. Dean lay face down on the floor. Someone had caught him from behind and cut his throat. It must have been quick and heartless.

“We probably shouldn’t touch the body. The police are going to want to see it to help figure out what happened,” Robert Lincoln said.

“Dean was acting really weird when I was in here earlier. I think he was trying to get rid of me or else goad me into a fight. I can’t decide which. He also was trying to hide his carving from me. Before the police take all the evidence, I have to take a look at what he’s carving.”

“I’m not so sure you should touch anything in this room,” Walt’s father started.

Walt stepped carefully around Dean and using his handkerchief, he nudged open Dean’s chest and inspected some items inside it. It was mostly clothes, a few tools and several other odds and ends. But the carving wasn’t there. Dean must have moved it after Walt left the room, or else it was stolen.

Walt turned towards his father and stopped short.

“His wetsuit,” Walt mused. “It’s missing. When I was in here before he had a wetsuit hanging on the wall right behind where you are standing.”

“I didn’t know Dean had a wetsuit. Maybe the person who killed Dean stole it,” replied his father. “If they had to escape from the ship, they would need something to protect them from the cold water. I don’t think you could last more than 20 minutes in the ocean around here.”

“Whoa, Dad! That gives me an idea. Remember the guys who snuck onto our boat in Seattle. They were wearing wetsuits. Do you think Dean might have been one of those kids? He might have bought it to use with the jet-ski. The question is: What would he have wanted on the ship that would make him sneak on.”

“Maybe he and some buddies had been drinking and he was just showing them he was some sort of big shot by sneaking onto the boat.” Robert Lincoln suggested. “Anyway, I think we had better assemble the crew and make sure that no one is missing.”

As they left the room, Walt noticed some wood shavings on the hall floor, heading towards the front of the ship. Remembering the image of Dean dusting off the shavings, Walt wondered if maybe Dean had left the room to hide the carving before coming on deck. When he got back to his cabin, someone had been waiting and killed him. But who? And why?

\* \* \*

The police in Port Angeles took Dean’s body and his carving knife, which appeared to be the murder weapon. They dusted for prints and asked for statements.

Learning that Walt was the last person to have seen him alive and hearing from several of the crew that Walt and Dean had been arguing, they told the Lincoln's that Walt was going to have to be taken to the police station for fingerprinting.

The family was stunned. Jackie and Gary stared in disbelief. Walt seemed unfazed.

"Don't worry, guys. I'm sure I will be back in no time. But Mom and Dad; what was the name of Dean's Aunt and Uncle in Seattle. Weisward, right."

"Walt! The police want to take you to the station and you are worried about notifying his next of kin?" Walt's father exclaimed.

"I think the answer will help my case," Walt replied. "Find out their kids names and then call Jodie Baily and find out the names of the two guys who are suspected of stealing the Heart of Seattle."

"Carol, you take care of that. I'm going down to the station with Walt," Robert said, "No way am I letting my son be dragged off without someone to look out for him. He's only 17 after all!"

At the station Walt was fingerprinted and interviewed by two detectives. The two men peppered Walt with question after question. Walt seemed more fascinated by the experience than unnerved. He answered the questions carefully, and slowly began to win the detectives respect. At one point he even started analyzing the evidence with the officers.

"I was noticing that the angle of the cut on Dean's neck sloped down towards the back. Doesn't that suggest a shorter person? Or am I missing some important piece of forensics?"

"No, you make a good point. But there is a possibility that the victim was standing on his bed as he was attacked."

The phone rang in the room. The head detective picked it up and grunted a few "uh-huhs," a couple of "okays." and a final "what ever." The call lasted for less than a minute.

"You're free to go," he said. "Turns out the FBI is taking over the investigation. The murder is considered to have happened in international waters. There is an agent named Johnson Trevor waiting to talk to you."

They left the interview room and turned a corner. There, waiting at the front desk, was Ted Bouchard.

\* \* \*

Carol, Jackie and Gary were almost more surprised by the return of Walt with his and Jackie's father than they were when he had left with the police. Before they started to talk, Ted Bouchard asked if they could get off the deck. He was still trying to keep a low profile.

Once they were seated in the great-room at the back of the ship and introductions had been made, Ted began his explanation.

"In brief: I had been watching the harbor hoping to catch sight of those thugs from Friday Harbor, when I saw your ship come in. The quick arrival of the police concerned me and I contacted some agents back in Seattle to do a little checking on what was

happening. Then when Walt and Robert were lead off the boat I became even more intrigued and determined to help you guys if I could. As soon as I got the details from the Seattle office I put into motion the transfer of the case to the FBI. Once they agreed, I came to get you.”

“I was really glad to see you,” Walt interjected. “Though I have to say, it was pretty interesting talking to those two police detectives. I think they were kind of getting into the case.”

“I get the idea that you must be working undercover, since you were using an alias at the police station.” Robert Lincoln said.

“Correct. I’m still officially dead and I don’t want my real name getting into the papers.”

“Speaking of names,” Walt said looking over at his mother. “Did you get a hold of Jodie Baily?”

“Oh, yes I did.” Carol Lincoln replied. “And you seem to have been onto something. Dean’s cousins, Neil and Ray Weisward, are the two boys who are suspected of stealing the Heart of Seattle from the Burke museum.”

“Neil and Ray Weisward?” asked Ted Bouchard. “Now there’s a coincidence.”

“Do you know them?” Walt asked.

“I guess you could say that. They are the hikers who brought in the loafer that was suspected to be D .B. Cooper’s. I interviewed them when I first got to Seattle,” Ted explained. “And what is this ‘Heart of Seattle’ that you mentioned? Something that was taken from a museum?”

“That’s right.” replied Carol. “The Heart of Seattle is a small totem pole that was given to the city of Seattle by Chief Seattle back in the early days of the city. It was being transferred between museums a few days ago when it was discovered to be stolen and replaced by a hastily made duplicate.”

“This gets even more interesting. The man I am after, Charles Deary, is an art smuggler. He’s a major connection in the black market sale and transfer of stolen art pieces.”

“There are a couple more interesting tidbits,” Walt chimed in. “The two suspected thieves were said to have gone for a hike over here on the Olympic Peninsula. Meanwhile, remember how Dean seemed anxious to get to Port Angeles because he was going to meet up with some cousins?”

His father nodded. “That’s right!”

“So maybe the cousins were going to meet Deary and his men here. It probably would be a lot safer than trying to make the swap in Seattle. Like you were saying there is a daily ferry that could quickly get the Heart of Seattle out of the country.”

“That could explain why the two henchmen came over. If Deary was arriving to pick up the stolen goods, he would want his men around to protect him and to do the actual dirty work.” Ted put in.

“But why were they waiting for Dean,” asked Walt, “unless Dean had the totem stashed here on the boat. The trouble is that, now that he’s dead, how will they get the totem off the boat?”

“Maybe that is why he was killed. Could one of his cousins have met him in Friday Harbor to make the pick up? Then killed him for some reason.” Ted proposed.

“We’ll have to see if any of the crew was aware of someone sneaking on board while we were in town.” Robert Lincoln said.

“Sneaking on!” Walt exclaimed, “I know why those three kids snuck onto the boat back in Seattle. I think it is like we guessed earlier: It was Dean and his cousins. But they weren’t going to steal anything. They were hiding the Heart of Seattle on our ship! After making the swap of the phony version they needed a safe place to hide the real one. Dean knew our schedule and he knew we were planning on stopping in Port Angeles on our way home. He also knows our ship from bow to stern.”

“Here’s the plan,” Ted said commandingly. “Let’s get going on those two avenues of investigation. Robert, you should talk with your crew and see if anyone saw a stranger on board. But be careful not to give away too much information. We don’t know yet who killed Dean. Okay. Second avenue. Let’s do a thorough search of the ship. I want to know for sure if that Heart of Seattle is or isn’t on board. And while you are doing that, I want a chance to read through the police reports.”

\* \* \*

Walt and Jackie started at Dean’s room. They stood at the door and tried to recreate the last movements of Dean.

“So when you left the room he was sitting on the far-side of the bed?” Jackie asked.

“Correct. And we found him on this side of the bed with his back to the door.”

“Then there is the wood shavings you saw out in the hall. Indicating that he may have walked out of the room to do something.”

“Which would dovetail nicely with the idea that he was killed as he re-entered his room. Maybe by someone who had slipped in while he was gone and was hiding behind the door.” Walt mused.

“So he walks out the door brushing his pants. You’ve just told him he’s wanted on deck, but he goes the other way.” Jackie said trying to further imagine the scene and what might have been going through Dean’s mind at the time.

Walt stepped around Dean’s bed and picked up one of his wood-carvings to use as a prop.

“So, I’ve got this carving that I don’t want anyone to see. I carry it around the bed and,” Walt hesitated a second looking around. “and I see my wetsuit hanging on the wall and I decide to stuff it down one of the arms and then...”

“Hang it in someone else’s closet!” Jackie chimed in. “That’s brilliant. It makes sense that the wet suit is still on board. If a crew member killed Dean, he or she is still on board. If it was someone else they either would have been wearing a wetsuit all ready, or they probably had another way off the boat.”

“Let’s just test that theory out.” suggested Walt. “We can check the other cabins on this passage way and the forward bulkhead lockers.”

It took only minutes. A wetsuit is a hard thing to hide on a ship where there are very few hiding places to start with. It was in the bulkhead locker with some other rain gear. It looked very natural there. Under other circumstances no one on the ship would have given it much of a thought; it was just some more gear stored in a normal manner.

They took the wetsuit out and patted it down. Walt was wrong about the object being stuffed down the arm: It had been stuffed down a leg, instead.

It was carefully wrapped in a tee shirt. They set the bundle down on the floor and gingerly unwrapped it. Walt recognized the seven faces of the Heart of Seattle. But once again, it was a fairly recent carving. Walt wasn’t an art expert, but even he could see that this one was better finished than the one he had seen at the Seattle Art Museum. Dean had even started to paint it.

“Do you think Dean was planning to doublecross his cousins or the art smuggler?” asked Jackie. “He certainly didn’t have much time.”

“We had told Dean we would be staying in Friday Harbor for 2 days. Maybe he thought he did have enough time. But then the plans changed.”

“I suppose it didn’t have to be that sinister. He might have wanted to just make a copy for himself.”

“That’s very possible. He really enjoyed carving things like this. But it would have been difficult, because he couldn’t show anyone this piece without drawing attention to himself in connection with the theft. I mean, how would he have known what it looked like? A picture of it may have appeared in the papers after the theft, but the photo wouldn’t have been good enough to make such a good replica.”

“But either way, could he have made this replica from memory?” asked Jackie. “If we are right, he did have the original somewhere on board. Maybe the original is hidden in the same bulkhead.”

They pulled everything out of the bulkhead and began going through it. There were two tarps, a couple of foul weather suits and several life vests. They inspected each one carefully, but came up empty handed.

“The Styrofoam bats in these life vests are about the right size and shape as a wrapped up Heart of Seattle,” Walt said holding the carving up next to the vest. “Let’s go back and check the vest in Dean’s room.”

The life vest hung on the wall at the head of the bed. Walt pulled it down and hefted it several times to test its weight.

“H’mmm. The weight seems fine,” he said and began squeezing each of the bats that ran down the back and front of the vest. “Nothing. But the interesting thing is, I don’t think this is Dean’s normal vest. My Mom wrote everyone’s name along the back neck-line of the vests. This one just says Resolute, which she wrote on the spares. Like the ones we saw a few minutes ago.”

“So then he probably didn’t have the real one in his room.”

“The duplicate is pretty well complete. It’s possible he didn’t need it, or else he put it away before we got back to the ship this morning.” Walt said. “And I’ve got an idea where that would be.”

\* \* \*

Gary Gable and Carol Lincoln met Walt and Jackie as they came back out onto the deck.

“Your Mom and I’ve been all through the starboard cabins,” Gary said. “We didn’t find anything.”

“We had a little more luck,” replied Walt. He looked around to make sure they weren’t being watched and turned back a corner of the tee shirt so that Gary and his mother could see the carving. “It’s a duplicate, but I have an idea where the other might be located, if it’s still on the ship.”

First they took the duplicate into the great-room and showed it to Jackie’s father, and explained Walt’s theory of how the other might be hidden in a life vest.

“There’s a hatch up on deck that was slightly damaged the night those kids snuck onto our boat. There was nothing stolen from it, so we never looked much closer,” explained Walt. “But that hatch is where we store our extra life vests!”

“Impressive.” nodded Ted Bouchard. “Let’s put this fake somewhere safe and go take a look.” He thought for a moment. “Uh, let’s keep this as simple as possible. Walt. Go take a look and if you find a suspicious vest bring it back here. ‘Prying eyes’ and all that, you know.”

It didn’t take long to find a vest with Dean’s name written on the back. The weight of the bulky vest was almost imperceptibly heavier, but there was an extra seam on the inside held together with Velcro.

Walt quickly arranged the other vests back into the hatch, slipped Dean’s vest into a black plastic garbage bag, and went back inside. On opening the Velcro seam they found a hollowed out piece of Styrofoam wrapped in plastic. Inside that lay the Heart of Seattle.

\* \* \*

The two relics lay side by side on the table where Ted Bouchard and the small group of amateur investigators stood looking at them.

“This really is a very good likeness,” Carol Lincoln marveled. “Not as weathered and it needs a bit more painting, but otherwise an excellent piece of work.”

“And, I am hoping, an excellent trap for the art thieves and smuggler we are after,” added Ted Bouchard. “There are a few tricks we can use to add some weathering to the fake, and we can finish up the painting easily enough.”

“So do you think Dean’s cousins will try to sneak back onto the ship?” asked Walt.

“Why not? They know where they hid the carving. And with luck they haven’t seen us find it. We also have to make sure they don’t think the FBI is still here. So I will be leaving shortly.”

“But what if they do come and get the live vest with the phony Heart of Seattle? How do we catch them with you gone?” asked Walt.

“I actually hope they do take it,” replied Ted. “But we’re going to do a little more than weather this carving. We are going to add a small homing device.”

“Ah! And then you can follow it straight to the art smugglers hideout.” Walt added.

“With a little luck, exactly.” replied Ted. “It’s past supper time, so I had better leave. But first we’ll drill the hole for my device and I’ll show you some techniques for adding some weathering to the wood. The real important thing is to have everything in place well before nine o’clock. Eight to be safe. Then I want Robert and Carol to go to a movie and you kids to have a brightly lit party back here. When your parents get back, lights out and go to bed. Anyone watching your boat will see what appears to be a relatively unconcerned crew, doing normal things. I’m pretty sure that any attempt to retrieve this will be done after midnight.”

“Do you think everyone will be safe?” Robert Lincoln asked.

“As long as you stay in your cabins and they don’t see you, you’ll be fine. I’m sure that they want to get this recovered as quietly as possible and get it out of the country.”

\* \* \*

Walt and Jackie found themselves alone in the great-room. Another couple who crewed on the boat had joined them for their party, but at 10 o’clock they decided to go to bed. Gary had wanted to call his girl friend and since they didn’t have any kind of phone on the ship, he went to a nearby convenience store to use the pay phone. They were playing some 8-track tapes and dancing.

As one song ended they walked to the windows that swept across the back of the ship and gave them a panorama of the small city. Walt slid his arm around Jackie and she moved in close to him and put her arm around his waist.

“You know,” said Walt. “I wish I could relive the last few days all over again. To see you again as a mysterious woman on the bus, to discover you on the ship again with your tousled hair, to learn your name, to learn more about you, to sing you your song and find your father. It has been fantastic.”

“Mmm,” purred Jackie. “Would I still get to steal your heart again?”

“I would happily relive that moment over and over for a life time!” he exclaimed.

They turned to face each other and Walt picked up her free hand as is to dance a waltz.

“I suppose...” he said moving slowly closer.

“What?” she said softly.

“If you have my heart,” he continued.

“Yes?” she moved a little closer to him.

“You should also have this.” he finished in almost a whisper.

Their eyes closed, their lips met and they kissed tenderly for several seconds.

“Mmm. That tasted like more,” Jackie said as they broke away.

In the middle of their second kiss, the door opened and Walt's parents entered the room. They'd been caught and there was no sense in trying to disguise what was happening. But at the same time, there was no sense in pushing their luck. They let each other go and each searched for the appropriate face to use. Smug, guilty, embarrassed? Those expressions hardly crossed their minds. Happy seemed to be the only emotion they were feeling.

Robert and Carol sighed. "So where is everyone?"

\* \* \*

Robert Lincoln sat with his son for a few minutes in Walt's cabin. Walt thought he knew what was coming, at least the gist of it, but he was surprised by his father's words.

"Jackie is really a wonderful girl," he said. "Make her your friend first and you two will go a long way." He stood up and patted Walt on the knee. "Think about that, and get some sleep."

Walt stared at the door for a few minutes thinking about his father and what he'd said. He'd been expecting stern warnings not a simple piece of advice. Parents. Go figure.

He read for a while, wrote several pages in his journal and another several-page letter to give to Jackie. Just before midnight he turned off his light and tried to sleep.

As midnight came and went, Walt was restless. He turned over several times in his bed and each time he was re-settled he would tune his ears to try and pick up any sounds on board. He was dying to go up on deck or onto the bridge and see what was going on. But he knew that he didn't want to run the risk of spoiling Ted's plan to use the bugged totem to catch even bigger fish.

His mind bounced between three things, Jackie Bouchard, the anticipated attack on the ship, and contemplating who was Dean's murderer. He had thought that by writing everything down in his journal he would be able to set it aside and get some rest.

Suddenly he heard a sound. He held his breath and strained to hear just exactly where it was coming from and what was going on. Even at anchor the ship was full of noises and filtering out anything but the loudest noises could be pretty difficult.

Then he realized the sound he heard was a small knock on his door. He got up and opened the cabin door. Jackie stood in front of him wrapped in her Indian print sheet.

"Can I come in?"

"Sure."

Walt grabbed his blanket and wrapped it around his shoulders and the two of them sat on the bed facing each other.

"I couldn't sleep." Jackie said simply. "The thought of these guys sneaking onto the ship makes me nervous."

"I'm glad you came. I've been thinking about you."

"Your Mom came and talked to me. We talked for a little while and it was really nice. Your Mom is so sweet."

“My Dad came and talked to me. He was really cool, no hysterics, just, ‘become friends first so you can last forever,’ or something like that.”

“Basically what your Mom said, but then she also asked about my Mom and the rest of my family. Just talked.”

“Go ahead and lie down,” said Walt sliding off the bed. “I’ll sit here by the head of the bed and we can talk.”

Jackie lay down on her side and curled up. Walt put his head on the mattress. Jackie ran a hand under Walt’s temple. They lay like that for a few minutes. The next thing they knew, it was morning.

\* \* \*

Walt met his father entering the great-room at the same time as he came up from his bedroom.

“Have you been out to check and see if the fish took the bait?” Walt asked.

“I was going to ask you the same question,” replied his father. “I was wondering if we should be careful about being too obvious.”

“What if we get some tarps out and look for a place to put them,” suggested Walt.

They pulled two tarps out of a closet in the corridor and carried them onto the deck. They talked casually as they walked across the deck to the hold and opened it. Walt rifled through the life vests.

“Dean’s vest is here,” he told his father. “But the Styrafoam bat is missing.”

“Guess all we can do now is wait to hear from Ted Bouchard to see if he’s tracking them.” Robert Lincoln said. “I’m a little concerned thinking what those crooks might do if they learn they have a fake. That thing won’t fool an art expert for more than a minute.”

Walt did not want to wait. He wanted to be a part of the excitement. But his Dad was correct. They didn’t have Jackie’s father’s address in Port Angeles. He was starting to head back inside when he heard a boat blow its horn as it entered the harbor. He turned almost instinctively to see who it might be. A large blue ferry was pulling in: The ferry from Victoria, Canada.

Was it possible that Charles Deary would be coming in this morning, just to make the pick up and head back as soon as the ferry left? Walt decided it was worth checking out. He just had to look for two men or possibly two teenagers turning over a package to one of the passengers.

“Hey Dad,” said Walt as nonchalantly as possible. “I’m going to go over and watch them unload cars from that Ferry. I shouldn’t be gone too long.”

His father wasn’t fooled, but he had also watched his son over the course of their voyage and knew he would be careful. “You stay out of Ted’s way, don’t even make eye contact, and what ever you do don’t forget that these guys carry guns.”

Walt grinned at his father, “I’ll be good.”

\* \* \*

Walt jogged over to the terminal. As he passed a newspaper box he saw that their ship and Dean's murder was on the front page. He stopped and bought a copy. He tucked the paper under his arm and walked into the terminal. He figured that Deary was more likely to come over as a walk-on passenger, rather than drive a car. Besides, watching cars for suspicious behavior would have been impossible.

Walt picked up a ferry schedule and flipped through it. The ferry would be leaving again in about 45 minutes. Just enough time to unload cars and passengers, run them through a cursory customs checkpoint and then reload the boat for a return trip. That meant that if Deary was on this ferry he didn't have a lot of time. The transfer would probably happen in the waiting room.

Walt sat back and pulled out his newspaper. He casually glanced through the paper and watched people as they came through the checkpoint.

A voice from behind him suddenly said, "Don't turn around, kid. Just nod your head to let me know that you understand."

Walt nodded his head and worked furiously to figure out whose voice it might be. It wasn't Ted Bouchard, and Charles Deary couldn't possibly know who he was; but could it be one of his men?

"With your buddy Dean gone, you must be here to deliver the goods." The soft voice continued. "Right?"

Now Walt was totally thrown. Deary's men or at least the cousins had already taken the totem off the boat. If this guy didn't know about that, then who was he? How did he know about "the goods?"

Walt shook his head.

"This is not a time to get smart," the man hissed, and Walt felt the nose of a gun barrel press against his neck.

Just at that moment a truck passed by the window across the room from Walt, and it momentarily turned the window into a mirror. Walt could see that the man was shorter than he was. He had thinning hair and he appeared to be wearing a long black trench coat.

"What a crazy spot to be in," thought Walt. "I don't want to create a scene that will scare off Deary, but I also don't want to be in some quiet place with this guy either."

The paper he was holding gave him an idea. Walt held the newspaper up in front of his mouth and said softly. "I left it outside in the newspaper box."

"Show me."

Walt stood up slowly, folded the paper and set it on the seat. He turned and looked straight at the man. The reflection in the window had given him only an impression of the man. From their close proximity Walt suddenly knew exactly whom he was dealing with. The man had several scars on his cheek, neck and ear. They appeared to be small pellet sized bruises. It was the second man who had been in on the ambush of Ted Bouchard back in Seattle. He had been wounded by the same shotgun blast that had killed the other man. But that still didn't explain why he didn't know about the Heart of Seattle's whereabouts.

Walt also noticed that the man had his trench coat draped over his shoulders with his arms inside it, and it gave him an idea. As he and the man reached the ends of their respective rows, Walt jammed a chair back, momentarily pinning the coat against the man and the man against the chair behind him. Taking advantage of the split second of confusion, Walt sprinted around a corner and into the corridor that lead to the restrooms. Knowing he would be followed he spun around to meet the man at the entrance to the hall. Surprise was the only weapon he had.

Sure enough, the man came pounding around the corner and the sight of Walt caused him to flinch. Walt knew that he had to get the man to drop the gun or else knock him out. He wasn't going to get any second chances. Without hesitating, Walt grabbed the man by the belt and neck of his shirt and heaved him head first into the men's room door. The man lay crumpled on the ground

They were out of sight of the waiting room, and he hoped there was enough noise to cover up some of the fight, but Walt knew that he had to act fast. He grabbed the man by the shirt collar and dragged him into the bathroom and propped the man up in one of the bathroom stalls. He used the man's belt to bind his feet and the trench coat to bind his arms and hands. The gun fell out of the coat as Walt was tying the man up. Not wanting his fingerprints on the gun, Walt wrapped it up in several paper towels and dropped it into the waste bin on his way out of the bathroom.

\* \* \*

When Walt got back to the waiting room things had changed dramatically from when he had left a mere 7 or 8 minutes earlier. There was a lot of commotion. People were talking excitedly and shifting around so they could get a better view. Walt could see a couple of police officers with their weapons trained on a small group of men. Another was patting them down for weapons. Smack dab in the middle stood Ted Bouchard, reading the Miranda rights to the men.

"Dang!" thought Walt. "I missed all the action!"

Walt turned to a woman standing next to him.

"What happened?"

"I'm not totally sure," the woman replied. "Those 4 men were sitting over there, then that fifth guy came out of the customs area and two minutes later the police showed up. It was all over pretty quick."

Walt saw Ted Bouchard order the men to be taken away. Walt ran over to him.

"Hey Mister..." he trailed off not sure if he should use Ted's name. "I think another one of your thugs is in the bathroom."

"And how would you happen to know that?" Ted asked.

Walt looked around and then whispered, "Cause I left him there. Unless he's untied himself that is."

"Then let's go get him," he said. He waved to an officer. "Avery. Come with us. I hear we have another member of the gang to pick up."

The man was still out cold. Ted and the officer hefted him out of the stall. They set him on the floor so that they could take off the makeshift bindings.

Walt pointed out where he had dropped the gun. He explained how he had been held at gun-point, and how he had subdued the man by luring him into the corridor.

“That’s the same trick you pulled on me,” Ted said smiling. “Looks like it worked for you this time.”

“I was afraid he might ruin your sting operation, so I felt I had to get him out of the waiting room.”

“Well it worked out, and I’m glad you are okay. I’ve got to get down to the station and question these guys. I’ll meet you guys back at the boat this evening and fill you in on any details I learn.”

“I can’t wait!”

Ted extended his hand and he and Walt shook hands. “You did a fine job. You have a natural talent for thinking on your feet. But never lose sight of how dangerous this game is.”

\* \* \*

Over the next couple days most all of the details of the case became clear. The Lincoln and Bouchard families would meet each evening and go over any new evidence or confessions that had occurred that day. By the third day they had a pretty clear picture of what had happened. Dean’s death had scared the two cousins. They were afraid of the other henchmen going free and killing them. It made them more cooperative in setting up the case against the others.

“Basically, those two kids were out looking to make a lot of money as quickly as possible,” explained Ted. “When they were contacted by Charles Deary and asked how they felt about stealing art for him, it sounded like they’d found their ticket to riches. Apparently there were a lot of items in back rooms at the museum that wouldn’t be noticed for months, probably haven’t been noticed yet. Deary invited them up to his house on San Juan Island one weekend. He had a catalog of items that his clients were interested in and he wanted them to see it so they could be more selective in their thefts.”

“A catalog of specific art items?” Walt asked incredulously.

“Some specific stuff. Sure. But a lot was more styles, genres or specific artists,” Ted explained. “Anyway. The two of them had been D. B. Cooper, uh, groupies, I guess you’d call them. They knew there was a reward for clues to his whereabouts. Like I said they were on a mission to get rich quick. As they were leaving they spotted an old pair of loafers on the back porch and in a moment of inspiration Ray decided to take one of them. He figured taking one would be perfect. Deary would be less suspicious; it would look like a dog or some other animal might have taken it. At the same time, he knew that ‘finding’ both of Cooper’s shoes wouldn’t have been anywhere near as believable as finding one.”

“Thus, inadvertently they lead you to Deary.”

“That’s right. Lucky for them, Deary still hasn’t learned how I found his shoe.”

“But what about Dean? Who killed him?” asked Robert Lincoln.

“I think I know that,” said Walt. “The same guy who tried to hijack me at the ferry terminal. Right?”

“That’s where the evidence is leading us,” replied Ted. “We think the henchmen may have been trying to cut the cousins out of their share. When your boat arrived in Friday Harbor they saw an opportunity to take the Heart of Seattle. Two of them came over here to keep their eye on the cousins. The third snuck on board your boat, we don’t know exactly why he killed Dean, but once he did he had no way of finding the carving. He flew over the next morning and was still in the dark about what was going on. He didn’t have a chance to talk to his friends and then he saw you leave the boat and followed you. He’s on pain medication and we think he wasn’t making the most rational decisions.”

“Have you had a chance to search their house for clues?” asked Walt.

“Very thoroughly, in fact,” replied Ted. “Charles Deary’s art smuggling days are over. We found enough to make that a pretty clear-cut case. Also through the cousins we learned about a small house that the gang maintained here in Port Angeles. Another gold mine of evidence.”

“Did the Burke Museum get the Heart of Seattle back?” asked Carol.

“Yes. I flew down there this morning to pick up my things and settle up some other business at the FBI office. The people at the museum were very happy to see it back and said they were offering a reward for the safe return of the totem. A Mrs. Baily said she would be contacting you about all that.”

“What other business did you have in Seattle?” Jackie asked. “You don’t have another assignment already, do you?”

“No, nothing like that. I am now officially alive and Ted Bouchard once more.”

Walt was holding a glass of water and he raised it up.

“Congratulations!”

“Well, it’s time for us to get this ship back to California,” sighed Robert. “Any chance we could get you to come along for the ride, Ted?”

“You know, I do have a report to write up on all this. It would be great to take it easy for a week or so.”

“Take it easy? On this boat?” laughed Robert Lincoln. “After all the excitement we’ve seen? Let’s hope you’re right. I wouldn’t mind a little peace and quiet for a couple weeks!”

\* \* \*

Standing in the crow’s nest, they watched the coast-line of California sweep slowly by. Walt was writing in his journal while Jackie strummed a few chords on his guitar.

“Do you think it’s going to be tough getting through senior year?” she asked.

“Do you mean will the classes be harder than last year?” Walt replied putting down his journal.

“No, silly. I mean with us living over a hundred miles apart.”

Jackie handed Walt the guitar and he set it up against the railing. They stood side by side at the railing looking out at the ocean. Walt took one of Jackie's hands in his.

"I'd rather think about it this way: At least we know who we are taking to the Holiday Ball and Senior prom."

"And we'll spend Spring Break together?" Jackie added hopefully.

"Just say the word, Jay bird!" Walt smiled.

"Can I show you the word?" Jackie asked, raising her eyebrows impishly.

She reached up and pulled him closer and their lips met. They turned to face each other, hands and arms shifting to find a more comfortable position and to maintain their embrace.

"That takes care of the school year," Walt sighed "What about next summer?"

The End

Written: April to June, 2002.







