

WHIZ TANNER  
and the  
Vanishing  
Diamond

*A Tanner-Dent Mystery*

Fred Rexroad

Cover Design/Illustration: Alexander T. Lee



Awesome Quest Mysteries

# Awesome Quest Mysteries

an imprint of



Rexroad International

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ISBN: 978-1-946650-03-0

To:

Mom

For being a catalyst without knowing it



**TANNER-DENT DETECTIVE  
AGENCY**

*“We solve crimes, mysteries, problems...”*

Wilson “Whiz” Tanner

*Chief Investigator*

[www.TannerDent.com](http://www.TannerDent.com)



**TANNER-DENT DETECTIVE  
AGENCY**

*“We solve crimes, mysteries, problems...”*

Joseph “Joey” Dent

*Director, Field Operations*

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## CHAPTER 1

### The Summons

**T**ap. Tap. Tap.

An unusual sound startled me awake that Saturday morning. A strange tapping seemed to come from my bedroom window. Now, that may not seem strange, but my bedroom is on the second floor, and it took me a moment to realize what I was hearing. It was only when I had rubbed the sleep out of my eyes and had a chance to fully wake up that I realized the drumming noise was coming from my window.

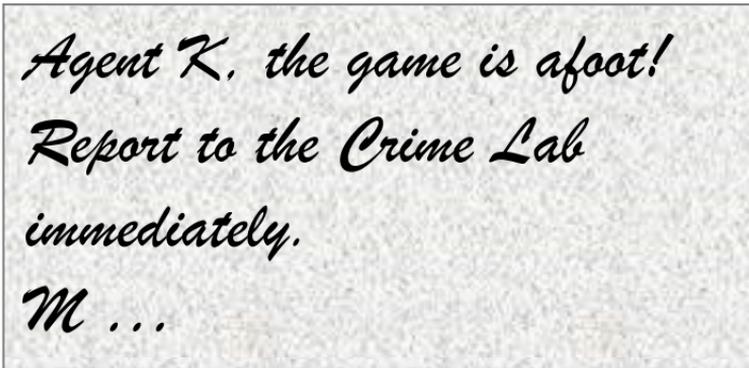
I climbed out of bed, walked over, and pulled up the shade. What I saw was the strangest thing. Stuck to the middle of my window was a ball of clay with a pencil-like wooden rod sticking out. The pencil thing stuck out of a windup contraption that moved back and forth. It had a little rubber ball on the end and each time it moved, the ball hit the glass.

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I stared at the contraption for a moment, trying to figure out what it was before my mind fully woke up. Once it did, I quickly opened the window, grabbed the sticky clay, and pulled it off—looking around as I did, not seeing anybody. That meant two things. First, I couldn't see who had thrown the clay against my window, but that really didn't matter, since I had a good idea who it was. Second, and much more importantly, there was nobody around to see me reach for it—being seen reaching out of my window for a secret message delivery device would not be good in my line of work.

You see, I'm a detective and this had all the makings of a message from headquarters. It wouldn't be good to have a neighbor, or worse, a spy, see me pull a strange lump of clay off my bedroom window. That kind of suspicion would be bad.

Sure enough, a rolled-up note poked out of the clay. I pulled it out and opened it.



*Agent K, the game is afoot!  
Report to the Crime Lab  
immediately.  
M ...*

It *was* from headquarters and addressed to me, Agent K, the Director of Field Operations for the Tanner-Dent Detective Agency. The note was from Agent M, the agency's Chief Investigator.

M was using a Sherlock Holmes reference, which meant he was extra serious. Agent M often thought of himself as a young Sherlock Holmes.

Did I mention that M and I were young? In fact, we're sixth graders. But don't let that fool you. We're the best detectives in Jasper Springs. And, I count most of the Jasper Springs Police Department in that, too.

My real name, when I'm not on a case, is Joey Dent. I live on Limestone Street, a couple of blocks north of downtown. M, is Whiz Tanner—he lives a few blocks from me, over on Livermore. Whiz's real name is Wilson, but he's been Whiz almost since he moved to town.

Whiz and I are alike in many ways. We're about the same size and have similar interests. A couple of big differences are the slight red in his hair and his blue eyes, which need glasses to see far away. He's also the smartest kid I know and, he uses big words a lot, which I call Whiz Words, and nobody knows what he's talking about.

But enough introductions, I needed to get to the Crime Lab, pronto!

I dressed as fast as I could and ran downstairs. Mom was in the kitchen talking with Dad. He had a cup of coffee in his hand and was heading out to the garage. Normally, he shuts himself up in our basement playing with his ham radios on Saturday mornings, but today, car maintenance was on the top of his to-do list. Though, I'm sure he'll get to his radios when he's done with his chores. It's nice to know I'm not the only one around here with chores.

“Good morning, Joey,” Dad said. “You're up early for a Saturday. Did you get up to help me change the oil in the car?”

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“Sorry, Dad. Whiz and I have plans ... he’s expecting me.”

“Not before breakfast,” Mom chimed in.

“Just a quick bowl of cereal for me, Mom.”

“Next time on the oil change then,” Dad said as he headed to the door, coffee in hand. “We need to make you an expert at car repair before you learn to drive.”

Learn to drive? Man ... that was years away.

“Hey, Dad? If I learn to change the oil, can I drive sooner?”

He chuckled.

“If we lived out on Uncle Mason’s farm, perhaps a little bit early, but not on the streets. Chief Reid would have something to say about that.”

Well, it was worth a try, right? Dad left and I got a bowl from the cupboard and filled it with Panda Puffs as my sister, Patty, came in and sat down. Patty’s a freshman at Messina College here in town. I don’t know what she’s studying, but she’s always got a textbook open in front of her.

“So, I hear you want to drive soon?”

“Of course. Once you have a driver’s license, you can go anywhere. It’s ultimate freedom!”

“It’s not magic, little bro. You still have to have someplace to go.”

“I have plenty of places to go.”

“To Whiz’s house and back?”

I finished my bowl and didn’t have time to explain to Patty how having a car would make the detective business so much easier. Right now, I had much more important things to do.

“See ya, sis. See ya, Mom,” I called as I left the room. I brushed my teeth as fast as I could and made

my way outside—but not before grabbing the lump of clay. Dad had already crawled under the car by the time I got my bike from the garage. With a quick goodbye, I was off.

It's three or four blocks to Whiz's house, depending on how you count the blocks, and I made it there in very good time. Early on a Saturday, there's very little traffic so I didn't need to slow down much at the intersections. When I arrived at Whiz's driveway, I skidded to a halt and parked my bike next to his garage.

You can never be too careful when approaching a secret location, so I gave a good look around before making my way to the shed in the backyard. Then, I snuck around to the back and crouched. After another quick look for spies, I pressed the fake knot on one of the cedar shingles on the back wall.

"Name?" came a computer sounding whisper from a hidden speaker.

"Agent K," I replied, softly into the hidden microphone.

This prompted the next command.

"Password?" the computerized whisper requested.

"Tomato is a fruit." Whiz creates our passwords, and he's mighty fond of strange facts.

The secret doorway at the back of the shed popped open an inch or so. I pulled it farther and walked through. As I closed the door, a black light came on making the white surgical tape on the stairs glow eerily. Like so many times before, I climbed down into the bomb shelter that was home to the Tanner-Dent Crime Lab.

The bomb shelter—some say it was a storm shelter, but bomb shelter sounds more interesting—was

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a concrete room under Whiz's back yard. Whiz and I, with the help of both our fathers, built a shed on top of the opening. We also put in a secret entryway separated from the real shed by a wall. That took some fast talking by Whiz, but since both our fathers were kids once, Mr. Tanner eventually agreed and my father—who's head of town maintenance—worked with the building permit office to approve it.

After we built it, we covered the entire shed in cedar shingles to match the Tanner's house. Whiz installed a special matching shingle with a very realistic knot that was a push-button switch. When I pressed it, a buzzer sounded in the Crime Lab. Whiz then started a recorder with the instructions. If I answered with the correct responses, Whiz unlocked the secret door.

Inside, we created a very complete crime investigation laboratory, which rivals any lab in any small police station in the country. And we—mostly Whiz—could use it all.

Whiz was sitting at the Crime Computer when I entered. He and his father had been building it for several weeks and it was now complete.

"Fantastic, Agent K," Whiz said, as he looked up at me. "Did you notice any difference in the entrance procedures?"

"None, Agent M. Should I have?" We used our code names while in the Crime Lab, it kept us professional.

"Actually, no. That proves it works."

"What works?"

"The voice recognition program works. Remember all those words I had you read into my Dad's laptop last weekend?"

"Of course. I read words for hours."

“Those words established the database I used in the voice recognition system. The Crime Computer controlled your entire entry. The sequence started when you pressed the button. The computer then asked for your identity. Your voice pattern matched your profile so the Python computer program I wrote moved on to the next routine and asked for the password. If there was no match, the program would initiate a distress subroutine and stop any further communication.”

“What does the distress routine do?”

“At the moment, other than preventing entry, it does absolutely nothing. But in time, it will sound an alarm of some sort. I must work on that. Anyway, after you gave the password, it compared your response with the database and then opened the latch permitting your entry.”

“That’s pretty cool, M. But what is *this* all about.” I plopped the lump of clay down on the workbench.

I had already pulled the windup spring mechanism out of the clay to get a better look. It was from a small toy.

Whiz gave a little chuckle. “Tammy actually gave me the idea for that.”

Tammy was Whiz’s little sister.

“But why? I was enjoying a nice rest. It’s Saturday, and I was gonna sleep in.”

“Perhaps you were enjoying a pleasant weekend rest, but we have a job to do.”

Of course, I was hoping he had a pretty good reason to call me to the Crime Lab this early on a Saturday, but with Whiz it could’ve been anything. He can get excited about stuff that nobody else cares about.

“So, out with it, M ... where’s the fire?”

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“In the palm of my hand,” was his reply.

He held out his left hand. His fist closed.

“Is this some sort of joke?” I asked.

Then, he opened his fist and his hand burst into flames!

End Chapter ONE

For more adventures with Agent M and Agent K,  
point your browser to

[www.WhizTanner.com](http://www.WhizTanner.com)

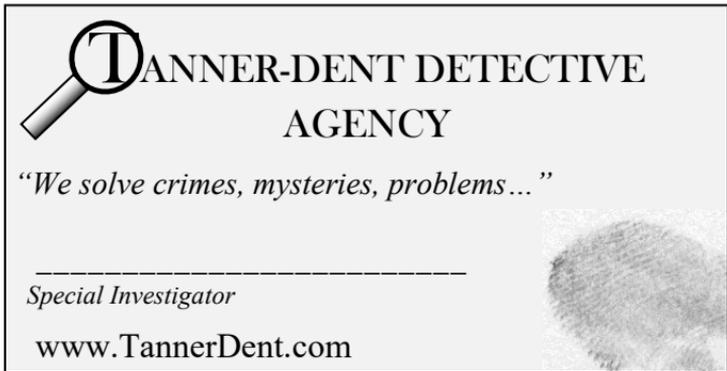
or go to the official web site of the

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Copy or cut the business cards and fill in your own name to become an official special investigator of the

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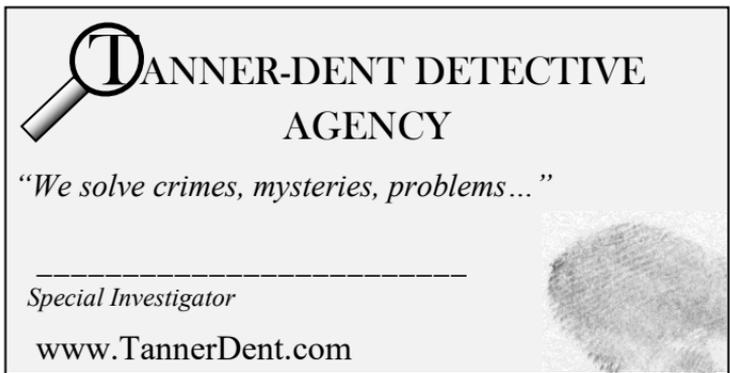


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