

WHIZ TANNER  
and the  
Wounded  
Pigeon

*A Tanner-Dent Mystery*

Fred Rexroad

Cover Design/Illustration: Alexander T. Lee



Awesome Quest Mysteries

# Awesome Quest Mysteries

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To:

Sneak and Snuck

World-class detectives ... in their own little world

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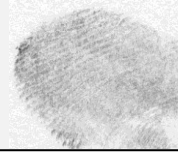


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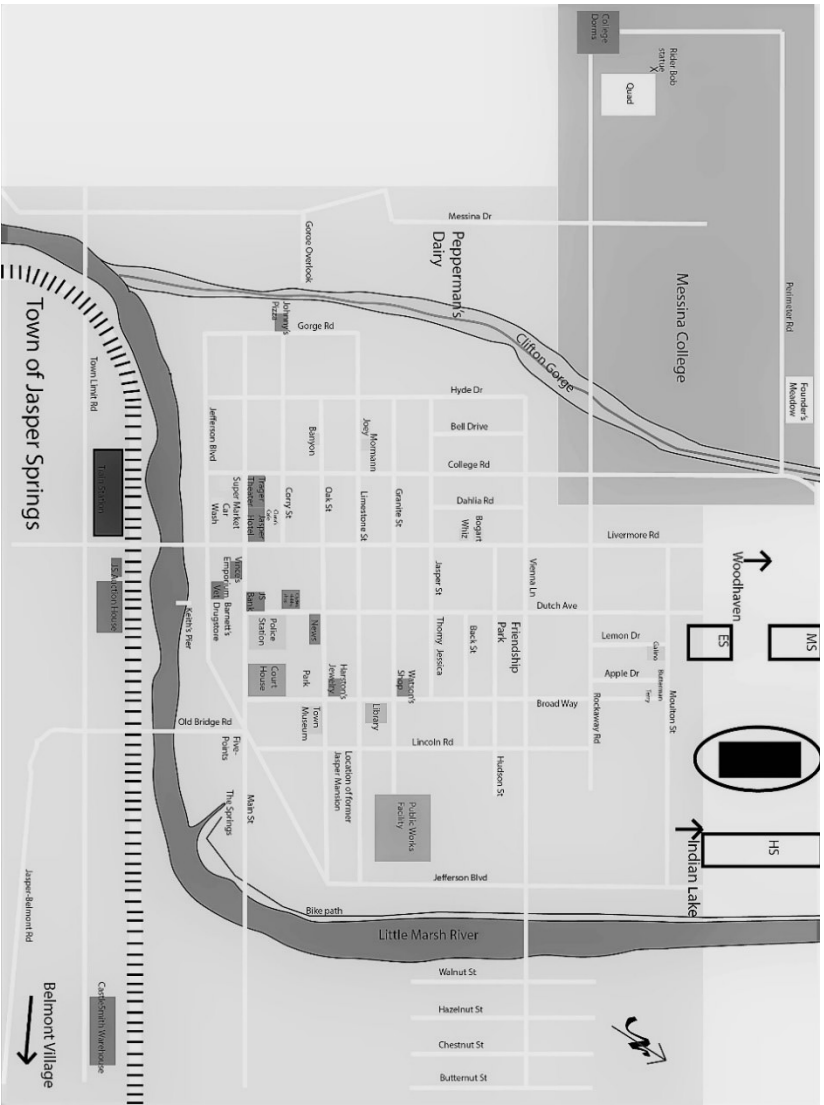
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## CHAPTER 1

### The Pigeon

**W**e must have looked quite a sight bicycling down Oak Street after turning off Hyde. Whiz Tanner was wobbling along with one hand on his handlebars and one hand holding a pigeon against his body. I was riding behind him as we raced against time to get to the Jasper Springs Animal Clinic. That bespectacled brainiac was a pretty good pitcher—about the only sport he’s any good at—but holding that pigeon was more like holding a football than a baseball and he should have delegated that task to Agent K.

I should let you in on a few facts. I’m Agent K, the Director of Field Operations for The Tanner-Dent

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Detective Agency. My real name is Joey Dent—Joseph David Dent, if you want to know the whole truth. Whiz—his real name is Wilson Tanner—is Agent M, the Chief Investigator. And, I must admit, he’s the mastermind behind much of our success. We may only be in sixth grade, but we are no kidding real life detectives. Don’t believe it? Well, you should just ask anyone from Jasper Springs, or better yet, talk to Jerry Mormann who’s written about our cases many times for the *Jasper Springs News*.

Anyway, we were now on our newest case. Tucked under Whiz’s arm was the only clue we had so far—a wounded carrier pigeon. Attached to the pigeon’s leg was a small tube. We removed it but the bird needed medical attention. You see, we found the bird in Mrs. Hassan’s front yard on Hyde Drive. It was flopping around under the hedges, so, being detectives, we stopped to investigate. The bird couldn’t move its wing and there was a lot of blood—so much it made me wonder how much blood does a bird have?

“Through Banyon’s driveway and out the alley, Agent K,” Whiz yelled. “It will shorten our journey by half a block.”

“Right behind you, M.”

We turned up Mr. Banyon’s driveway, which goes all the way to the alley, and then screeched to a halt. A gate blocked our way into the alley.

“That gate shouldn’t be closed!” I yelled. “Mr. Banyon can’t close it!”

“Obviously, Agent K, your powers of observation have not yet overridden your memory or you would not have made such an incorrect assessment.”

“But, Whiz.” Seeing the closed gate blocking us



startled me so much that I forgot to use his code name. “That gate’s been open so long that a small tree had grown in front of it so it couldn’t be closed.”

“Agent K, arguing over whether the gate should be open or closed is a moot activity. The tree is gone, the gate is closed, and we must open it or go around and waste even more precious time. Now, get off your bike and prepare the gate for our egress.”

“What?” I asked. “Speak English.” Whiz uses big words a lot—Whiz Words, I call them.

“Open the gate please. This pigeon is beginning to squirm.”

“Okay, M,” I responded sheepishly.

I jumped off my bike and opened the gate. The tree, which had been a few years old, was gone. Mr. Banyon had repaired the fence and put a fresh coat of paint on the gate. I unlatched it and began to open it. Whiz started through it as soon as there was enough room. Then, he darted off at full speed leaving me, good old Agent K, standing there. Well, I did the only thing I could. I went through, closed the gate, and followed him as fast as I could ride. Although we’re very close in size and build, I’m a bit more athletic than Whiz so catching up was easy—especially with him hampered by the bird.

As we rode, I made a mental note to look up the word egress in the dictionary when I got home. As I said, Whiz uses a lot of big words—one of the many things that makes understanding him a bit hard at times. The strangest part is that, as smart as he is, he doesn’t realize that we don’t know what he means—I think he understands other kids even less than they understand him. But if Whiz used egress, I’m sure it’s a real word—of course, I didn’t have the foggiest idea what it meant.

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We exited the alley on College Road, crossed Corry and Main, and cut through the supermarket parking lot. Jumping the curb, we crossed the carwash driveway and headed down Jefferson. In almost no time, we braked to a halt and dumped our bikes on the front lawn of the veterinary clinic.

We had been practicing high-speed dismounts for the past few weeks, and I'll have to give Whiz quite a bit of credit for the way he braked and laid his bike down while still holding the injured bird.

"The door, Agent K!" Whiz commanded and, of course, I jumped into action.

I opened the door, which sounded a buzzer, and he squeezed through rushing to the counter where Mrs. Willis, Dr. Wolfe's assistant, was sitting. Whiz held out the pigeon.

"We need to see Dr. Wolfe. We have an emergency situation on our hands."

"Whiz, Joey, hello to you, too," Mrs. Willis said as she took the bird from Whiz.

"Sorry about the lack of courtesy, Mrs. Willis, but this is an emergency and any time lost may be detrimental to the life of this pigeon."

I stood there and said, "Hi."

We followed Mrs. Willis down the hallway and entered exam room number two. We saw Dr. Wolfe in room number one as we passed. I caught a glimpse of the room and gazed at the occupants a little longer than was wise, since I nearly banged into the wall trying to make the turn into room two. Nobody saw me—I think. Mrs. Willis placed the wounded pigeon on the table.

"Whiz, please hold the bird gently until the doctor arrives. She'll be in soon. She's finishing up an

exam on the Carlton's Shih Tzu," Mrs. Willis said as she left the room, heading back to the front desk. The front door buzzer sounded again letting her know someone new had entered the clinic.

"I'll bet Jessica's old Fluff Puff has a dirty spot on her fur or something just as life threatening."

"Joey, you should consider a little leniency toward Jessica. Like all pets, show dogs need routine health care, and Jessica is very good at keeping her pet in top shape."

That statement took me back a step. I guess I *was* being a little hard on Jessica. And I don't know why since I kinda liked her. Jessica Carlton was not much older than Whiz and me, but enough to put her in the seventh grade. She had long, very straight, jet black hair, which was not much darker than her complexion, and she was very athletic. In fact, she was the only girl I knew who could beat me in the 100-meter dash. Her passion, however, was dogs. Her fluffy little dog—hence the name Fluff Puff—has won or placed second in her category, in every Jasper Springs' dog show for the past three years. Her parents own a kennel, breed several varieties of dogs, and sell them all over the state.

I had to make a comeback so I said, "That dog visits more doctors than any person I know. If Fluff Puff has as much as a single hair ruffled, Jessica rushes her to the vet to find out what's wrong."

Dr. Wolfe entered the room, cutting our conversation short.

"Hi, boys. What do we have here?"

Whiz turned his body, allowing Dr. Wolfe to see the pigeon.

"We found this pigeon beside the road. It has been shot, Doctor Wolfe. From the shape of the

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wound, I would say one or two small pellets from a shotgun hit it near where the wing meets the body. The size of the damaged area indicates that pellets from the edge of the shot pattern may have only grazed the poor bird. I would estimate from this that the shooter was a good deal away from his target.”

“Well, let’s have a look, Whiz,” Dr. Wolfe said. Whiz released the bird into her hands.

Dr. Wolfe held the pigeon gently and turned it over several times looking at the injury.

“The wing has only superficial injuries. There is extensive damage to some feathers, but I don’t see evidence of broken bones. That’s the good news. The bad news is right here.”

She held the bird out so Whiz and I could see the small hole in the body.

“One of the pellets must have entered right here, but I see no exit wound. The pellet must still be inside. I’ll need to do a little digging to check it out and remove it if possible. You say you found it ... so, this is not your pigeon?”

“No, ma’am,” replied Whiz.

“This is not a wild bird, it’s definitely someone’s pet. The leg shows markings from where a message canister was attached. Do you have any idea whose it might be?”

“There was ...” I was going to say there might be a name and address in the message canister, but Whiz cut me off.

“Again, no, ma’am. But, that is something we can investigate.”

He didn’t say anything about the message tube we removed from the leg. I followed his lead and said nothing more.

“Well, you’ll have to leave it with me for a while. But it would be helpful if you found the owner. Check back tomorrow, and I’ll let you know what I find and what the prognosis is.”

Dr. Wolfe carried the bird out and called for Mrs. Willis to help her in the operating room.

“See you tomorrow,” Dr. Wolfe called as she disappeared down the hallway.

“What do you think this is all about Whiz?” I asked. “I mean a pigeon with a message tube on its leg and someone trying to stop it. And why keep it a secret?”

We hadn’t had a chance to discuss the importance of the pigeon or the tube since we found it flopping around under the hedges.

“We do not know any facts until we have had a chance to examine the evidence. Until then we should not talk about it in public ... to anyone. We must get to the Lab. There we will proceed with our investigation.”

Whiz and I walked down the hallway, past the waiting room, and left the clinic. As we walked over to where our bikes were laying on the ground, Whiz stopped dead. I nearly knocked him over as I bumped my face into the back of his head.

“What’s up, M?” I asked, as I rubbed my nose. I wish I could say this was the first time this had happened.

“Look, Agent K!”

Whiz was pointing at the bike rack next to the walkway.

“Whiz,” I said with unhidden annoyance in my voice. “I know we should’ve used the bike rack but we were in a hurry. No one’s going to fault us for that.”

“You are not using your powers of perception,

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not to mention deduction.” Whiz gave me a bewildered look. “What else do you see there?”

I looked at the rack trying to see some mysterious clue. But, I couldn’t see anything unusual.

“There’s nothing there except a bike.”

“You missed two points, K.”

I looked again. I still saw nothing out of the ordinary for a bike rack.

“I give up. What?”

“First, that bike was not there when we arrived. Second, do you know who owns that bike?”

Then it hit me and I should have seen it coming. “Thorny Rose!”

“Right, Agent K. It appears Thorny was the one who came into the clinic while we were in the examining room. That means he heard us discussing the pigeon. And as far as I know, Thorny does not own a pet. He must have seen us racing here and followed. I fear we can expect a tail from him for a while.”

“Whiz,” I said, trying not to move my lips. “Don’t look now but Thorny’s looking out the window—second from the front door.”

He didn’t bother turning around. “Move out. We will worry about him later.”

We jumped on our bikes and rode to the Crime Lab—after first going a half a block in the opposite direction to confuse any possible tail from Thorny. He was okay most of the time, but Thorny has been trying to nose in on Tanner-Dent investigations since the beginning of the school year. When he thinks we’re onto something, it can be a real chore to lose him.

Just as we managed to put a building between us and the animal clinic, I stopped to look back. Thorny was on his bike and looking all around—he lost us.

Everything went like clockwork all the way to Whiz's driveway. We braked to a halt, leaned our bikes against the wall of the garage, and headed toward the backyard.

"Agent K." Whiz stopped and pulled on my arm. "This way—around the garage to confuse Thorny, if he anticipated our destination and is watching us now."

I stooped down and shuffled toward the left side of the garage with Whiz right behind me. We half walked, half crawled to the back and stopped to look around the edge of the building. No sign of Thorny, or anybody else.

"I don't see anybody, Agent M."

"The way appears to be clear, K. Go quickly. Just in case."

I ran full out, straight to the back of the shed and dropped to my knees between the shed and the bushes lining the backyard. Whiz was right with me as we pushed up against the wall and waited—and listened. My heartbeat always went up a little when I hid back here, as I got ready to enter the Crime Lab.

End of Chapter ONE

For more adventures with Agent M and Agent K,  
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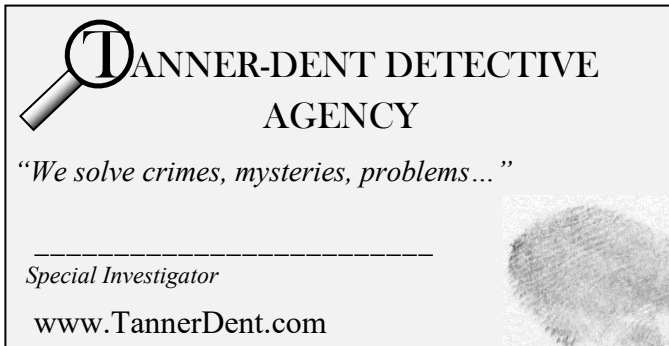
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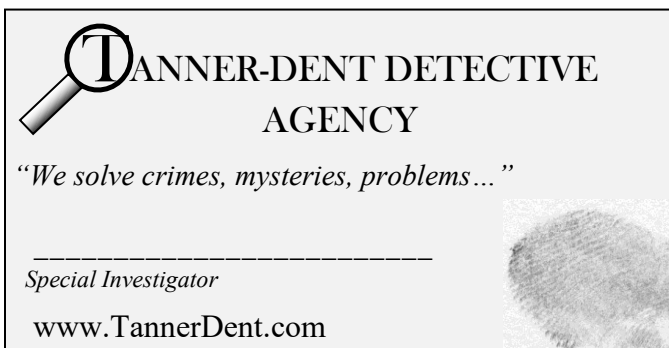
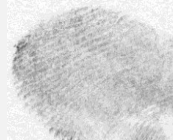



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