CAPTAIN BLACKWELL'S TREASURE
A MYSTERY JIGSAW WITH A SECRET PUZZLE PICTURE
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"T"here it is!" yelled Josh excitedly as their grandfather’s house came into view.

Sarah, sharing her brother’s excitement, rolled down the window of the taxi and stuck her head out to get a better look.

The large stone manor sat on a cliff overlooking the sea. It loomed in front of them as their driver steered up the winding driveway to the front entrance.

Twelve-year-old Sarah Blackwell and her ten-year-old brother, Josh, hadn’t visited their grandfather in nearly four years. The flight to Bangor and the taxi ride to their destination, Otter Point, did not dampen their enthusiasm and excitement.

On the contrary, spending the summer in Maine would definitely beat the boring and uneventful prospect of staying home in Edenville, New York.

As the taxi came to a stop in front of the house, Gramps stepped out the front door waving and smiling from ear to ear.

"Welcome! Welcome!" Gramps exclaimed. "Welcome to Blackwell Manor."

Blackwell Manor! thought Sarah. Even though it had been years since Sarah last saw the house, she was once again struck by its size and beauty. The Georgian style house—with its six bedrooms, large kitchen, dining room, living room, and library-study area—was quite large for a man living alone. Gramps did have some help though; Mr. Jakes kept the outside groomed, and Mrs. Laramie came in twice a week to clean.

"Let me grab your luggage. I’ve got your rooms all ready, and supper’s on the stove," Gramps said, after giving them both a hug.

Once their clothes were put away, Sarah and Josh spent the
time until supper reacquainting themselves with Gramps and the house.

Nearly all the rooms had a masculine touch to them, with rustic oak beams, white stucco walls, and heavy, ornately carved, antique furniture. There were many reminders of the seagoing life—old ship lanterns, ship wheels, bells, barometers, ship models, and maps. And a variety of seascape paintings graced the walls.

“How about some homemade clam chowder, New England style,” said Gramps, directing Sarah and Josh into the kitchen.

Josh and Sarah sat down at the table as Gramps poured chowder into their bowls.

“Gramps, who did all the artwork in the house?” asked Sarah.

“Your great-great-great-grandfather, Captain Samuel Blackwell,” said Gramps. “He was a talented man. The Captain, as I like to call him, painted them when he was home between voyages and after he retired from the shipping trade. The last painting he did before he died was the self-portrait that hangs over the fireplace in the study.”

“I think that portrait is really creepy,” said Sarah. “I hate the way those eyes look at you.”

Four years ago, when Sarah was eight, she refused to go in that room alone. She hoped she would be braver now that she was a little older.

“You scaredy-cat!” exclaimed Josh, as he quickly looked over his shoulder.

Gramps and Sarah both laughed at Josh’s fearful glance. Josh didn’t admit it, but the portrait in the study clearly made him feel uneasy too.

“Let’s finish eating,” said Gramps. “I want to show you the widow’s walk. I was having it repaired the last time you were here, so I never brought you up there.”

“What’s a widow’s walk?” asked Josh.

“It’s a rooftop deck on a house that is used to observe the sea,” replied Gramps. “It is said that mariners built them for their wives so the women could watch for the sails of their husband’s returning ships.”

“Oh, that’s what those railings are on the roof,” said Josh. “I’m ready. Let’s go!”


After the dishes were done, Gramps led Sarah and Josh through the dining room into the study. The eyes in the portrait of Captain Blackwell seemed to stare out and follow them across the room. Sarah felt a cold chill run down her spine.

Standing in front of the built-in bookcase, Gramps took hold of a small handle and pulled. To the children’s surprise, the bookcase swung open to reveal a closet-size room and a spiral staircase winding its way up beyond the second floor.

“Watch your step, kids,” said Gramps as he turned on the staircase light. “And follow me.”

“Wow, this is awesome!” exclaimed Josh.

Sarah and Josh followed their grandfather up the staircase, through the two stories, to a trapdoor in the roof. Pushing the door open, they stepped out onto the widow’s walk which was perched on the roof between two enormous chimneys. The view from the deck took Sarah’s breath away—the cliff, beach, and ocean stretched out before her.

“Josh, could you please pull three lawn chairs out of the
cupola?” Gramps asked, motioning with his hand to the latched door on one side of the cupola.

The six-foot cupola, with its tin roof and rusty mermaid weathervane, was built right in the center of the deck. The storage area inside was large enough to hold four folding lawn chairs and had a shelf with an old telescope, a compass, and a sextant on it.

Sarah and Josh put their feet up on one of the deck rails and leaned back in their chairs. They could feel the wind begin to pick up from the northeast, sending the mermaid weathervane squeaking and turning in the wind.

“Can you tell us about the Captain again, Gramps?” asked Josh. “You know—about him being a pirate and all.”

Gramps smiled. “OK, I’ll tell you about the Captain,” said Gramps, gazing out over the sea of whitecaps. “But I’ll have to make it short. It’s getting dark—looks like a storm is brewing...

Your ancestor, Captain Sam Blackwell, was a very successful sea captain and merchant. He had taken his ship, *Mermaid*, on many voyages trading and selling merchandise in ports all over the world. Some folks claimed he made his vast fortune from piracy, but I have seen no proof of this. The Captain had this house built for his wife and children. After retiring, he settled down here and painted ships and seascapes for his enjoyment.

Gramps paused for a moment and then pointed to the graveyard near the cliff’s edge. The encroaching fog was being blown around the gravestones, causing an eerie effect.

“Captain Blackwell also had that family mausoleum built in the graveyard. He made the door face out over the cliff and ocean. Even in death the Captain wanted to be laid to rest with the sea close by,” said Gramps.

Sarah knew quite a bit about the graveyard and mausoleum. She and Josh usually liked to play hide-and-seek there, running and hiding behind the gravestones of their long-dead ancestors. The mausoleum, an above-ground tomb, contained the remains of Captain Blackwell and his wife, Angelique. It stood about fifteen feet tall, twenty feet in diameter, and was encircled with Roman columns about every six feet. On the peak of the mausoleum’s roof was a four-foot statue of King Neptune with his long flowing beard and crown of shells. He was holding a long trident in his right hand. What Sarah liked best was the massive, ornately carved, bronze metal door that faced the sea. On the door was a beautiful engraving of the Captain’s ship, *Mermaid*, which was riding the waves under full sail. Above the door the name Blackwell was sculpted with two angels on each side.

“Well,” continued Gramps, “it has been a family legend—I call it a rumor—that the Captain buried treasure somewhere on the property. The legend said he hid his booty for future generations to find and left clues somewhere in the house. But if there is treasure, no one has ever found it.”

The gusts of wind were becoming stronger now, and the low, dark clouds made the summer evening’s light fade faster than usual.

“We better go down before we get blown away,” said Gramps. “I’ll tell you more about the Captain later. After all, you’ll be here for a month, and that will give us plenty of time to talk.”

Putting the chairs away, the three hurried down the steep stairway to the safety of the house. The old clock on the mantle in the study showed the time to be half-past eight, much earlier.
than it seemed from the looks of the sky.

"Why don’t you get yourselves ready for bed while I close and shutter all the windows." Gramps immediately headed to the window in the study.

"What do you think about the treasure story, Sarah?" asked Josh.

Sarah smiled and looked excited. "I love mysteries, and I plan to look for clues—starting tomorrow!" said Sarah. "I hope the story is true. But now I think I’ll head upstairs. I’m beat."

Josh said he wanted to help Gramps lock up, so Sarah went on alone. Taking a right at the top of the stairs, she proceeded down the hall to the last door on the right. The room at the back corner of the house gave Sarah a nice view of the ocean... and of the graveyard.

Looking out the window, Sarah could barely see the ocean below the cliff because of the thick mist and growing darkness.

Suddenly something in the graveyard caught Sarah’s eye. Was there something moving near the tomb of Captain Blackwell? The mist enshrouded the mausoleum, like octopus tentacles, wrapping its arms amongst the pillars, then cleared with a gust of wind. But moments later the mausoleum was enveloped again in the thickening fog.

There it is again, Sarah thought, almost out loud. Through the dark haze she could just about make out a shadowy figure of someone, or something, moving—almost floating—toward the mausoleum.

Turning quickly, Sarah ran out of the room to the hall and almost vaulted down the stairs to find her grandfather.

"Gramps!" Sarah exclaimed, as her grandfather emerged with her brother from the living room.

"What’s all the excitement, Sarah?" asked Gramps.

"I saw something moving near the Captain’s tomb," said Sarah breathlessly.

Gramps turned pale as Sarah described what she saw in the graveyard.

"So you saw it too," Gramps whispered. "I thought I was losing my mind. Stay here. I’ll be right back." Gramps turned and headed toward the back door. Just off the kitchen was a small mudroom, where Gramps grabbed his foul weather gear and flashlight. Then he ran out the door and disappeared suddenly into the fog.

After what seemed like an eternity, Gramps came back in, his yellow slicker dripping with water.

"Whatever was out there is gone now. It must have seen me coming out of the house and hightailed it out of there," said Gramps. "It’s not fit for man nor beast outside tonight."

"What could it be?" asked Josh, his voice a little shaky.

"I honestly don’t know," replied Gramps. "On two separate nights a few weeks ago I thought I saw something moving around the mausoleum. When I went out to check the graveyard, whatever it was had disappeared. Until now, I thought my eyes were playing tricks on me, but Sarah just confirmed what I have been seeing."

"Have you mentioned this to Mr. Jakes or Mrs. Laramie?" said Sarah.

"Not yet, but I plan to in the morning," said Gramps. "Well, let’s turn in for the night. I think we’ve all had enough excitement for the day."

Sarah went up to her room, and after putting on her pj’s, climbed into bed. Within minutes she was fast asleep and soon
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began dreaming of sailing ships, pirate treasure, and graveyard ghosts.

When Sarah came down for breakfast the next morning, the storm was still ferocious. Gramps had already opened many of the shutters on the first floor and now you could see and hear the rain being slashed across the windowpanes by blasts of wind.

“You kids really picked a great week to start your vacation,” laughed Gramps as they all sat around the breakfast table.

“We don’t mind,” said Josh. “I think this storm is exciting.”

“We haven’t been here long, but it looks like we came just in time for a real mystery,” added Sarah. “The storm just adds to the drama.”

“You’re right. There is something unusual going on. I believe someone has been searching the graveyard at night, hoping that the darkness hides their movements.”

They were interrupted by a loud knock on the door. A tall, thin man entered the mudroom, water streaming off his hat and foul weather gear.

“Hi, Mr. Jakes,” said Sarah and Josh, almost in unison.

“Hi, kids. Thought I’d drop in and see you before I start my day’s work,” he answered. William Jakes, Gramps’ gardener, handyman, and good friend, stood there shaking off the water and smiling.

“Come in, Will, and sit down,” said Gramps. “I just made some fresh coffee.”

“No thanks, Mr. B.,” replied Mr. Jakes. “Just wanted to welcome Sarah and Josh to the manor. Thought it would be a good day to clean out the tool shed. If you kids have nothing to do, come on down and see me.”

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Sarah and Josh both nodded.

“Mr. Jakes, have you been noticing any strangers around recently?” asked Gramps. “Sarah and I have seen some suspicious movements around the graveyard at night.”

“Nope, no strangers,” replied Mr. Jakes. “But that history professor, ya’know, from that high falutin’ college in Boston, has been snoopin’ around the last couple of weeks. He wanted to get into the house to take another look at the Captain’s paintings. I told him to come back when you were home. Sorry, I plum forgot to tell ya’.”

“Who is this professor?” Josh asked, beating Sarah to the question.

“He is Professor Jim Hardin,” answered Gramps. “The professor has been coming to Bar Harbor for over fifteen summers and has always stayed at the Blue Bell Bed and Breakfast, owned by Phil and Marge Taylor. About five years ago, he asked me to help him with some material he needed on a book he was writing. The title of the book is *The Maritime History of the British Colonies in America*. I gave the professor permission to include photos of the ship paintings done by Captain Blackwell.”

“Did you mention anything to the professor about the pirate legend?” asked Sarah, her curiosity peaking.

“Now that you mention it, I did,” said Gramps. “I have a signed copy of the book that Professor Hardin gave me after the first printing. I’ll go and get it.”

Gramps got up and left the kitchen for a minute, returning with a hardcover book in his hand. Opening the book and thumbing through the pages, Gramps stopped at one section and showed it to the children. There were five pictures of ships
painted by Captain Blackwell and also the self-portrait which now hung on the study wall. The text was mostly about the various ships in the pictures with a brief mention of Captain Blackwell being a privateer. All the pictures in the book were small but very clear and sharp in detail.

I wonder if the Professor found something in these paintings that has been missed by everyone all these years, thought Sarah.

"Gramps, excuse us for a minute," said Sarah. "Let's go Josh, I think I'm on to something!"

Gramps raised his eyebrows and smiled. "You look like you've found a clue."

"I think I have," Sarah said, rushing out of the room with Josh on her heels.

Gramps looked over at Mr. Jakes.

"How about you and I taking a look around the mausoleum," said Gramps. "Maybe we will come up with some clues of our own."

Gramps, putting on his raincoat and hat, headed out the back door with Mr. Jakes.

Sarah and Josh ran into the living room. This was the room Sarah had always called the "ship room" because there were five ship paintings hanging on the walls. The paintings were all in beautiful frames, and each frame had the ship's name etched on a small metal plate. The Captain had painted each boat under full sail. The ship names were Otter, Mary A. Fenwick, Mystic Belle, Dolphin, and, of course, Mermaid.

"Do you notice anything different about this painting?" asked Sarah pointing to the Mermaid.

Josh went up close to the painting, then turned and looked at the other walls. Then he stepped back and looked at Sarah questioningly.

"The Mermaid has no flags on its masts," said Sarah. "All the other ships have British flags, or flags of the colonies."

"Do you think the lack of flags on the Mermaid is a clue?" asked Josh.

"I do," said Sarah. "But not only that. Follow me."

Josh followed Sarah into the study. Captain Blackwell's eyes seemed to lock onto them as they entered the room and slowly approached the fireplace. Sarah's heart was pounding. Nervously, she looked up at the Captain's self-portrait and for the first time really began to study it in detail. The stern-looking face, the long hair, the sharp pointed beard and mustache had always reminded her of the pirate, Captain Hook, in Peter Pan. Behind the Captain was a curtain, and to his left was a window. Through the window one could see a ship with a mermaid figurehead and a house on a cliff.

Obviously those were the Captain's ship and house, thought Sarah.

Below the window, on a table, sat a skull and bone. A large piece of parchment, held down by one edge of the skull, fell over the side of the table and almost out of the picture. The writing on the parchment was very difficult to read because of the years of soot and dirt that covered the surface of the painting.

Sarah tried to read the writing, but the garbled words didn't make any sense.

"Josh, I think this could be a message," said Sarah excitedly. "The dirt may be covering up the words along with other details in the painting. Even some of the sails and masts are covered."

Just then Gramps entered the room.
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“I’ve found some evidence of tampering at the tomb door, but no one got in,” said Gramps. “Someone was also trying to dig below the door at one time, but the mausoleum was built on solid granite rock, so the person didn’t get anywhere.”

Sarah was hardly listening to what her grandfather was saying. Grabbing his hand, she pulled him over to the portrait.

“Gramps, forget that for a minute,” said Sarah excitedly. “I think I may have found a clue that tells where the treasure is hidden. Can I clean the Captain’s portrait?”

“Sure,” said Gramps in bewilderment.

Sarah ran into the kitchen, then returned with a damp cloth. Taking down the portrait and placing it on a table, Sarah carefully began to remove the grime from the painting’s surface. Slowly the images, which had been hidden by soot and dust, were being exposed. Expecting to clear up the words on the parchment, Sarah was surprised to discover that the words remained scrambled.

“Wait a minute. It looks like Captain Blackwell had terrible penmanship!” exclaimed Sarah.

“Yeah, but he signed his name on the painting neatly. Maybe he wrote sloppily on purpose, as a way to confuse us . . . or to hide a secret coded message!” Josh explained with excitement.

“Josh, you’re right. We have to put ourselves in the Captain’s shoes,” said Sarah. “If I were him I would have put the clue in a place that was safe. It would have to be someplace where it would remain hidden for many years without being found by accident. It would also have to be hidden close to the painting.”

Sarah stood for a moment staring at the painting’s surface.

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Suddenly, her eyes brightened as an idea crossed her mind.

“Gramps, help me turn over the painting!” Sarah said with excitement.

They carefully turned the painting over and placed it face down on the table. Stretched and tacked to the back of the painting was a piece of canvas that was used as a dust barrier. Sarah and Gramps began removing the tacks around the frame, being careful not to rip the old, yellowed canvas.

“Look! I think I found it!” yelled Sarah.

Lodged securely in the lower right corner was a piece of parchment about the size of the scroll in the painting. Painted on the parchment were markings that looked a lot like the scrambled words on the painting.

Quickly they turned the painting back over and placed the parchment decoder on the scroll in the painting. Like magic, the words on the scroll could suddenly be read.

“What does it mean?” asked Josh, still looking puzzled.

A few minutes later Sarah jumped for joy. “I know where the treasure is hidden!” she exclaimed.

**Now assemble the puzzle and align your secret pirate scroll over the scroll in the puzzle to see what Sarah discovered. If you need help, read the hints below.**

**HINT #1:**

After cleaning the painting's surface, Sarah could see the pirate flag on the ship's mast during exactly when the攻克 was found. Sarah placed it over the scroll, revealing the message: "I have good fortune signaling many seas under clear and stormy skies that I will ship mermaids and trinkets looking the sea.

**HINT #2:**

Sarah discovered a clue hidden in the portrait's frame. By analyzing the old, yellowed canvas, she was able to decipher the secret message: "The treasure lies beneath the ruins of the old castle, hidden in the underground rooms.

**HINT #3:**

Upon further investigation, Sarah found a hidden compartment in the mausoleum. Inside, she discovered a key and a map leading to the final destination of the treasure. "The key to the secret room, the map to the final treasure. I've found the missing link to solving this mystery!" Sarah exclaimed.
Can you identify the clues in the parchment and find the treasure?

**HINT #2:**

- Look through the window.
- Look at the mirror.
- Look at the clock.
- Look at the map.
- Look at the book.
- Look at the clock.
- Look at the map.
- Look at the book.

**SOLUTION:**

The treasure could not be put under the painting in the living room.
Because the painting could have been put in the living room. The picture was under the painting. The museum was built on solid rock. So no one could dig under the floor. She then asked Grandma to remove some of the old wooden boards. She was able to find a small stone block with a wooden chest filled with jewels and gold coins.

Now after the family found the chest, the Blackwells decided to donate money to the Histori:

- History
- Science Fiction
- Mystery
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Additional Comments: