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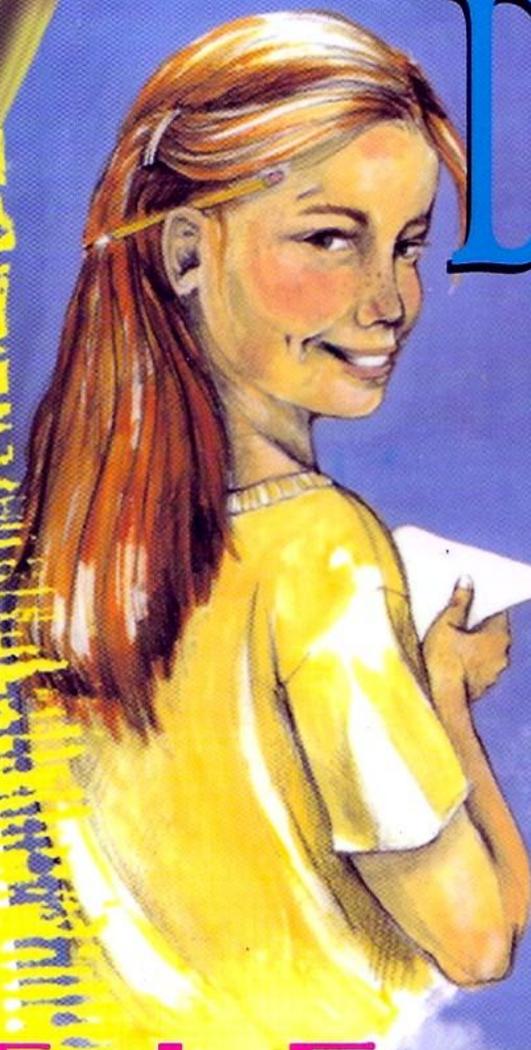
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I hope you enjoy my story.



Katey's Dream List



T. J. Fritz





"Katey's Dream List"

by

TJ Fritz

"Hey, Dad! There's the lake!" Katey Kimble yelled as she pointed out the car window. At last! After riding since six a.m. she could finally see Lake Erie.

"It sure looks great, Katey!" Dad said, glancing at his watch. "We made good time too. It's almost ten o'clock. Columbus to Erie in less than four hours."

Katey turned to the back seat where her brother, Tim, was sound asleep on a heap of blankets and beach towels.

"Wake up!" Katey commanded. "We're here already!"

Tim opened one eye, then pulled a blanket over his head. Katey nudged him in frustration. Tim was ten, and because he was a year older than Katey, and because he was a boy, he always thought he was the boss. Tim disliked being ordered by Katey, and she knew it.

"Tim!" she yelled again. "Are you going to the beach with us, or are you going to spend the whole day sleeping in the car?"

Tim sat up slowly. Now his eyes were half-opened.

"I am up," he growled. "Just leave me alone, Bozo brain." Tim was usually a grouch when someone woke him.

"Tim, be nice," Dad said. He always tried to prevent an argument between Katey and Tim if he saw one brewing. As he parked the car on the sandy lot, he took a deep breath. "Welcome to beautiful Presque Isle State Park. I called work just before we left. We'll have sunny skies today and a high near 90. Even a little breeze."

Katey's father was a meteorologist, but Katey found it difficult to say and even harder to explain to her friends. So, whenever anyone asked Katey what her dad did for a living she would just say, "He's a weatherman."

The lake was only a hundred yards away and looked magnificent. Thousands of sparkling waves rolled smoothly across the vast, teal-green water and vanished into the endless white beaches. A warm, flowing breeze was alive with the fresh smells of Lake Erie, warm sand, concession foods, and suntan lotions.

"Come on, Dad!" Katey prodded. "Let's hurry up and get to the beach!"

"Relax, Katey, we have all day."

"Yeah, Katey. Relax," Tim said mockingly.

Dad glared at him and said, "Let's go."

Dad had packed the cooler, so Katey wasn't sure what was in it. When her mom filled it, she always included cans of soda, iced tea, a variety of sandwiches, and a dozen cups of vanilla and chocolate puddings.

Katey missed her mom. Not that she didn't enjoy going to the beach with Dad. She just wanted them back together. Mom moved to Florida months ago, right after the divorce, and took a job as a news reporter for a TV station in Miami. "Mandy Kimble, reporting," she would say at the end of a story. Mandy was actually her nickname. Mandino was her last name before she got married. Because her mom had to travel so much with her television job, Katey and Tim lived with their dad back in Columbus, Ohio.

Katey unzipped her shiny red purse and pulled out a wad of crisp bills. "All right!" she shouted, the sight of the money snapping her out of her thoughts.

"What's that, Katey?" Dad asked.

"Cash," she said, waving the bills in her brother's face. "I'm going to get some things at the souvenir shop. I'm going to buy a big sweatshirt with a picture of the lighthouse, a pair of sunglasses, and a postcard with the brig Niagara on the front to send to Mom." Since Christmas she had saved nearly every penny of her allowance.

Katey was familiar with Presque Isle State Park. Their family had come here every year since she could remember. But this would be the first time Mom wouldn't be with them.

Many times during the winter Katey would close her eyes and imagine the peninsula, a narrow strip of land, that touches the city of Erie on the west, then extends northeast seven miles into the Great Lake, forming Presque Isle Bay. It's famous worldwide for the magnificent sunsets and the clean, flat, white sandy beaches stretching several miles long and a hundred yards wide. Katey also liked it because 50 feet from shore the water was still only up to her waist. She could bob up and down with the waves and never worry about getting in over her head.

The beaches were getting crowded. Hundreds of cars were parked in the lots and along the roadside. Families and couples, lugging blankets, towels, picnic baskets, coolers and lawn chairs, meandered toward the water to claim their patch of beach for the day.

"Hey, Katey, Tim, look at the ships," Dad said, nodding in the direction of the lake. In the distance, giant tankers sailed slowly, silently. Their smoke stacks left hazy gray lines in the clear sky above the horizon.

"I wonder where they're going," Katey murmured mostly to herself.

"Across Lake Erie and all the way to Canada!" Tim said. "Those are oil tankers. I learned about them in school. Hey, Dad?"

"Yeah, Tim."

"Can we go to Canada someday?"

"Why would you want to go there?" Katey interrupted.

"Because I think it would be cool," Tim said. "Especially Niagara Falls!"

"What's so special about Niagara Falls?" Katey asked.

"It's just one of the most beautiful places in the world, that's all."

"Oh, yeah? How would you know?" Katey sneered.

"Some of my friends have been there and told me. And I've seen pictures and shows on cable. It's awesome! Can we go someday, Dad?"

"Okay, Tim. Maybe someday."

Katey piled everything she could on top of the cooler while Tim unloaded bags from the trunk. Dad opened the hood of the car and checked the engine. He was always looking under the hood to make sure everything was fine.

Katey had dragged the cooler about 20 feet when everything she had piled on top fell onto the sandy path.

"Nuts!"

"What in the world are you doing, Katey?" Dad teased. He and Tim thought it was funny. Katey didn't.

"I'm trying to get all this stuff over to the lake." She gave him her special squint-eyed look to let him know she was angry.

"Trying to do it all in one trip?" Dad asked. "And all by yourself?" Dad picked up the blankets and towels and handed them to her. "You take these, I'll take the cooler."

For a moment he looked deeply into Katey's dark brown eyes. She had her mom's eyes. Katey knew he was thinking about Mom.

"I guess it's going to be a little different without Mom here, Katey." He gently pushed back her long black curls. "But we're going to have fun today, right?" Katey felt bad for him. He didn't seem to believe his own words.

"Sure," she nodded and tried to avoid looking right at him. To change the subject she turned back to her brother.

"Come on, Tim. Let's get going," she ordered.

"I am, I am." Tim moaned. "Don't rush me."

Soon all three were settled on the beach. While Dad became engrossed in the latest book by his favorite mystery writer, Katey and Tim swam, buried each other in the sand, tossed a Frisbee with some kids they met, and raided the picnic basket and cooler whenever they wanted anything.

Katey took a break to relax on the blanket on the warm sand. She was having a good time, but for some reason she couldn't stop thinking about her mom. She was all alone in Florida, while they were having fun here. Katey tried to think pleasant thoughts, but the more she tried to block it out, the more her mind drifted to that dreadful Sunday afternoon last January. It seemed that whenever she missed her mom the most, she would remember the worst day of her life.

* * *

She and Tim were watching the Super Bowl on TV when their mom and dad came into the room. Dad turned down the sound on the TV and everything became awkward and scary. Mom spoke first.

"Kids, your father and I have to tell you something that's very important. We don't want you to be worried or afraid."

With that, Katey immediately became worried and afraid. Then Dad spoke.

"Your mom and I have been talking about something for a long time and we've made a decision." There was a pause as their parents looked at each other to see who would speak next. Katey's whole body became numb. Tim stared at their parents.

Dad's voice cracked as he announced, "Your mom and I are getting divorced."

Questions flooded into Katey's head. Why? What was going to happen to her and Tim? How were their lives going to change? Katey knew kids at school

whose parents were divorced, although she didn't understand why. She thought people got divorced if they always had arguments or hated each other. Her parents hardly ever argued, and they loved each other. At least that's what Katey always believed.

Katey and Tim sat as still as statues while their parents explained how important it was for everyone to be happy and how they were sure they had reached the right decision.

"It's for the best, kids," Dad said. "In time you'll see."

"Your father and I still care a lot for each other. We'll always be friends," Mom explained.

"Soon, Mom will be moving to Miami to take a new job at a TV station there," Dad said. "The three of us will continue to live here and you'll be able to stay in school and be with your friends."

"On holidays I'll fly up to visit or you can come down and spend time with me," Mom promised.

"Do either of you have any questions?" Dad asked. Tim was silent. Katey wanted to speak, but her whole body seemed frozen.

"We love both of you very much," Mom said. They hugged and kissed Katey and Tim and left the room.

Katey prayed for the whole thing to be just a horrible dream, that she would wake up and find out it didn't happen. Tim stared at the TV as if he were in a trance. Katey knew he wasn't watching because when his team scored a touchdown he didn't react. He just sat there stone quiet, biting his lip. His eyes became watery. A single tear rolled down his face even though he didn't blink.

Katey slid off the sofa and ran to her room. She dove onto her bed, buried her face in the pillows and began crying uncontrollably. She felt she was somehow

responsible for the divorce, that she had done something awful. But what? How could she fix this? How could she make things right?

Katey's mom came into her room and sat on the edge of the bed. She gently took Katey by the shoulders and turned her over.

"Katey?" Mom's voice was a distant echo. "Oh, sweetheart, don't cry." Mom's soft hands wiped away Katey's tears. Katey tried to say something and started choking. Mom held her close and rocked her gently. Then Dad entered.

"Katey?" He spoke softly. "Are you all right?"

"Oh, Mom, I'm sorry! What did I do? Whatever it is, I'm sorry. I want you and Daddy to stay together forever!" Tears streamed down her face.

"Paul, she's blaming herself. She thinks she's responsible."

"I'd better go have a talk with Tim," Dad said. The floor creaked as he left.

Mom's voice got sweet and soft. "Katey, it's not your fault."

Through Katey's tears, her mom's beautiful face, dark brown eyes and long shiny black curls appeared blurry.

"Mom, whatever I did, I promise I'll never do it again!" Please, Mom. Please don't get a divorce!"

"Katey, you didn't do anything to cause this. You're the best daughter anyone could dream to have."

"But why, Mom? I don't want you to go away."

"Oh, Katey," Mom shook her head. "Your father is a good person. He's been a good husband too. It's just that, sometimes two people get so caught up in their careers and other responsibilities, that without even knowing it, they slowly drift apart. One day they wake up and find they have become strangers to each other."

"Mom, I'm afraid. I don't want to lose you."

"Katey, darling, don't be afraid. You won't lose me. We'll be able to visit each other, and I'll call you every week. Your father and I don't want to hurt you and Timmy. We just aren't happy together. Someday you'll understand. I promise."

Katey closed her eyes as her mom gently kissed her. Katey felt so helpless. Her mother's warm breath on her neck sent chills through her body.

"Oh, Mom! I feel so terrible!"

Mom held Katey and rocked her slowly. Katey could feel her mom sobbing too.

"I love you, Baby," Mom said sweetly. "I will always love you."

* * *

"Katey!"

Tim's distant call jolted Katey from her thoughts. She quickly wiped a tear from her eye before he got to her blanket.

"Hey, Katey, let's go dig on the beach for treasures."

"Good idea," Katey said loudly, trying to hide her sniffles. "I'll get a shovel. Where do you want to dig?"

"I don't know." Tim looked around, then he spotted a pile of driftwood stacked nearby on the beach. "How about over there by those logs?"

"Fine, let's go." Katey called to her father. "Dad? We'll be over there digging for treasure."

Dad was really relaxing. He was wearing sunglasses and a gigantic straw hat wide enough to cast a shadow over his shoulders. He was reading and sipping root beer through a straw.

"Okay, kids. But watch out for sharp objects. And if you strike oil or gold, you're paying for the pizza tonight." Tim and Katey laughed and headed for the driftwood.

Tim found a large flat rock and began scraping into the sand. Katey dug shallow holes randomly around the deeper ones Tim made.

In a few minutes they collected eight aluminum cans, an empty baby bottle, one old tennis shoe, a surgical mask, and two like new match box cars which Tim rinsed off in the lake.

"Lots of neat junk, huh?"

"Yeah, I guess so." Katey pretended to agree although the assortment of trash really didn't excite her. Boys are more interested in that kind of stuff than girls are, she thought.

Tim moved to another spot and started digging. After a few swipes in the sand, his rock made an irritating screech like chalk on a blackboard.

"Hey, Katey, come quick!"

"What is it?"

"I don't know yet, but I will in a second!" Tim carefully removed the sand with his hands and pulled out an old dark green glass bottle.

"Wow! Look!" Tim was ecstatic. "Maybe this old bottle was thrown into the lake by a castaway! Maybe there's a note inside and somebody is stranded on a deserted island somewhere!"

"Tim, you're crazy. Besides, people who are stranded on a deserted island don't throw wine bottles into lakes. They throw them into oceans."

"Well, maybe it was thrown into the ocean. It could have been floating around for years! Or maybe a huge fish swallowed it and brought it in from the Atlantic Ocean, then spit it out. It's possible!"

"You're right," Katey said sarcastically. "I've seen movies about people finding bottles with notes inside too. But what amazes me is how anyone who is stranded on an island in the middle of the ocean is able to find a pencil and paper, not to mention an empty bottle with a cork to put their note inside. Can you explain that one, Mr. Detective?"

Tim looked at her as if she had just asked the world's dumbest question. Katey knew he was going to say something stupid.

"They probably got everything at their neighborhood Walmart," he joked. He laughed like a lunatic at his remark; Katey rolled her eyes.

Once he stopped laughing Tim pulled out the cork and held the bottle up to look inside. Instantly, dark lumpy liquid gushed out all over his face and bare chest. It smelled like rotten fruit!

"Oh, GROSS!" Katey howled. "What is that stuff?"

"Blaaaahhhh! It smells horrible!" Tim shrieked. "It must be old wine! Oh, YUK!"

Katey laughed so hard she collapsed to the sand and fell over on her side. Tim charged across the beach, straight into the lake, and splashed himself frantically.

As Tim was returning from the lake, Katey put the stinky old wine bottle back into the hole. She began covering it over with sand when her shovel hit a small lump. It looked like a roll of paper.

"Hey, Tim? I found something! Look!" She picked up the sandy wad and examined it closely.

"Let me see, Katey."

"It feels like paper." Katey wiped off the sand. "Hah! And there's even a rubber band around it." When she tried to slip it off, the band broke with a dull snap.

"Oh my gosh, Tim! Look at this! I think it's money!"

"What?" Tim watched as Katey carefully unrolled her mysterious discovery.

"This is weird!" Katey said. "Look! They're different colors. Maybe it's play money. Or even counterfeit." She handed it to him.

"I'll bet it's Confederate money!" Tim said. "And it's been buried here for over a hundred years!"

"Let's show Dad. He'll know what it is."

"Hmmm," Tim muttered as he inspected the money. "Over here it says 'Canada,' but I can't read the other words. They look foreign." He was baffled. "Yeah, let's show Dad."

Dad was stretched out napping on the blanket. Between his gigantic straw hat and huge Mickey Mouse beach towel he was covered from head to toe, protected from the hot sun. As Katey and Tim ran up to him they accidentally kicked sand all over him.

"Hey, Dad! You're not going to believe this!" Katey yelled.

"Yeah," Tim added. "Look what Katey found!"

"What in the world..." Their dad was obviously startled. "What's all the racket? I thought I was supposed to relax today! Instead, you two are trying to give me a heart attack!"

"Sorry, Dad," Katey apologized. When she handed him the fistful of money he immediately forgot about the sand in his hair.

"We think it's Civil War money," Tim said.

"But one of the words says Canada," Katey added.

"Where did you get this?" Dad carefully examined the currency.

"There," Katey motioned, "by the driftwood. Dad, what is it? We can't read some of the words. They look foreign." Katey got down on her knees and leaned closer.

"Well I'll be... This is Canadian money," he said. "The words you can't read are French. The two main languages in Canada are English and French. Canadians print both languages on their money."

"Do you think it floated across Lake Erie?" Tim asked.

"I doubt it, Tim," Dad said. "Someone must have dropped it here."

"I wonder who it belongs to," Katey said. "It looks like a lot of money."

Dad counted it.

"Twenty, forty, sixty, ... Wow! There's more here than I thought!" He continued.

"Well? How much is there, Dad?" Katey was excited.

"Gosh, Katey!" Dad sounded astonished. "You found \$500 in Canadian money!"

"Five hundred dollars?" Katey couldn't believe it!

"That's right!"

"I wonder who lost it?" Tim asked.

"Good question, Tim," Dad nodded.

"Hey, Dad?" Katey became serious and studied him closely. "Do you think I can keep it?"

He raised his right brow, gave her a questioning grin, and held the money out to her. "What do you think, Katey?"

"Well," she hesitated, "it's probably okay to keep it... since no one around here seems to have lost it." With that she looked up and down the beach.

"It's up to you," Dad said.

Something wasn't right. Katey felt uncomfortable. If she was going to keep all this money she should feel good about it, but she didn't. She glanced over to Tim.

"What do you think?" She was hoping Tim had an answer that would make her feel better.

"I'm not sure," he replied. The two looked at their dad.

"It's your decision, Katey." Dad put his hand on her shoulder. "Whatever you decide."

Katey felt trapped and her dad seemed to sense her uneasiness.

"Look at it this way," Dad said. "If this was your money and you lost it, what would you want the finder to do with it?"

"That's easy, Dad. I'd want my money back. So, I would want whoever found it to return it to me."

"Sounds fair enough." Dad smiled with approval.

"So, now what?" Katey asked.

"Maybe we should call the police," Tim suggested.

"Good idea, Tim," said Dad. "Let's go find a phone."

"Wait. What about asking a lifeguard to call one for us." Katey pointed to a lifeguard perched on a tall white chair with a giant orange umbrella. "I think they all have walkie-talkies for emergencies."

"Let's find out." Dad started for the lifeguard and the kids followed.

Katey guessed the lifeguard was probably twenty. He was tall, tanned and athletically trim. He wore a white safari hat, expensive sunglasses, and a red bathing suit. A silver whistle dangled from a thin rope around his neck. He was applying sun block on his shoulders and arms when they approached him.

"Good morning," Katey called from the base of the chair.

"Good morning," he replied. "I'm Jeff. Can I help you?" He took off his sunglasses and looked directly at Katey. His tanned face and blonde, sun-bleached hair electrified his deep blue eyes. Katey thought he was gorgeous. She was so taken by him that she didn't realize she was staring.

"Is there something I can do for you, Miss?" Jeff smiled at her and Katey felt herself blush.

"Huh? Oh, yes... My name is Katey Kimble. This is my dad and my brother. I found something in the sand, and we thought we should tell the police about it."

The lifeguard leaned toward her.

"What did you find in the sand that you'd want to tell the police about?"

"This." Katey reached up and handed him the money. His eyes opened wide.

"Wow!" he exclaimed. "You found this in the sand?"

"Yeah," added Tim. "Over there." He pointed in the direction of the driftwood.

"That's amazing!" said the lifeguard. "Hold on for a second." He unhooked the walkie-talkie from a bracket on the arm of his lifeguard chair.

"Station six to control, six to control, over."

A few seconds passed, then came a crackling reply.

"This is control, over."

"Judy? Could you send Jack over to the concession stand? There's a young lady here by the name of Katey Kimble who would like to talk with him."

"Sure, Jeff. What's up?"

"Katey found something on the beach she'd like to return to its owner."

"Okay. What does she look like?"

The lifeguard quickly scanned Katey up and down.

"She's about nine, long black curly hair and dark brown eyes. And she's wearing a bright blue one-piece bathing suit trimmed with white ruffles."

His remarkably accurate description both flattered and embarrassed her.

"She'll be with her dad and brother."

The voice crackled back. "Ten-four. Jack's ETA is five minutes." Katey remembered from TV police shows that ETA means estimated time of arrival.

"Thanks, Judy. Six out." The lifeguard looked down at Katey. "A park officer by the name of Jack Hale will meet you at the concession stand in five minutes. He'll be driving a gray and black Presque Isle State Park patrol car." He paused and smiled at Katey. "You're a pretty lucky lady. You're also very honest."

Katey felt herself blushing again and didn't know what to say. She was glad when Dad came to her rescue.

"She is honest," he said. "Thanks for your help, Jeff."

"You're welcome, Sir." The lifeguard's electric blue eyes connected with Katey's. "Good luck, Katey. It was a pleasure meeting you." He smiled and winked.

"Thanks," she said. Goose bumps popped up all over her body. If I start to drown today, she thought, I hope he's the one who rescues me!

"Well, kids, let's get over to the concession stand," their dad said.

As they headed across the beach, Tim tapped Katey's shoulder.

"Hey, Katey? Are you going to keep all that money for yourself?"

She almost said, "Sure, why not," just to be nasty, but she knew Dad was listening.

"What do you mean?" she asked, acting innocently.

"Well, there's plenty to share, and it was my idea to go digging for treasure in the first place."

Katey didn't answer.

"Well?" Tim persisted. "What are you going to do?"

"Look, if I get to keep it, I'll share some of it with you, okay? But I don't even know if I'll be allowed to keep it yet."

"How much will you give me?"

"I don't know. It depends."

"Depends on what?"

Katey lost patience with his badgering and looked at him squarely.

"Just don't worry about it, okay?"

The mid-afternoon sun became so bright everyone without sunglasses was squinting. With the temperature above 90, the sand was almost too hot to walk on. Long lines formed around the concession stand as people waited for cold drinks and snacks.

"That's probably him now." Tim pointed to an approaching patrol car.

Katey made a tight fist around the Canadian money. She didn't know what to expect. She wished the money was U.S. currency and that no one knew she had found it. Katey had never held so much money, and the longer she held it the more she wanted to keep it. She thought about her savings account back home with a meager \$27.50.

Officer Jack Hale parked the patrol car and sauntered toward them. He was tall and husky, and his uniform was stretching around his bulging belly. As he drew near he took off his sunglasses. His gray, handlebar mustache moved up and down as he talked.

"Hello. You must be the folks who wanted to see me."

Katey's dad shook hands with the patrolman and introduced himself. "Hi, I'm Paul Kimble. These are my kids, Tim and..."

"And I'll bet you're Katey," the patrolman said in a deep and friendly voice. "How can I help you?"

Katey examined him, trying to guess what he'd say after he saw the money.

"I found this in the sand on the beach." She handed it to him.

"Boy, oh-boy, oh-boy, oh-boy..." Hale repeated in disbelief. "I've seen all kinds of things come from the beaches, but this tops everything!"

"What do I do with it?" Katey asked.

"She wants to know if she can keep it," Tim said.

"Yes," Dad said. "Katey doesn't know if she has to turn it in, or if she can keep it? That's why we called you."

Hale pondered for a few seconds.

"Hopefully, she can do both"

That didn't make any sense to Katey. Hale saw in her expression that he confused her. He explained that according to the local law, he'd have to take the money to the park office to see if anyone had reported losing it. If no one had, the money would be kept for 90 days.

"What happens after 90 days?" Tim asked.

"Then Katey can keep it," Hale said.

"Do you know if anyone has reported losing it?" Dad asked.

"No, I'm sure I'd remember something like that. I don't recall any reports."

"Gosh!" Katey blurted. "Five hundred dollars! I've never had that much money before!"

"Katey," Hale said. "This is Canadian money. It's not worth \$500 dollars."

"Huh?" Hale puzzled her again and she looked at Dad for help.

"Oh, that's right," Dad said. "I forgot about the currency exchange rate. Canadian money doesn't have the same value as U.S. money, Katey." He turned to Hale. "Any idea how much it's worth?"

"To guess, I'd say about \$400 right now. The rate changes every day. It goes up and down."

Katey didn't care. She only hoped that no one would claim it. Then she'd be the richest kid in Madison Elementary.

Dad explained to Hale that they were from Columbus, and gave the officer their address and phone number. Meanwhile, Katey began dreaming of all the wonderful things she could buy. She'd get something for everyone: a beautiful necklace to send to Mom; a portable radio with headphones for Tim; maybe a new watch for Dad. For her best friend, Jenn, she'd buy a gold bracelet.

And for herself! She'd buy her own stereo boom box with CD player and dual cassettes. She would join a CD club, get pierced earrings, a white silk blouse, new jeans, and barrettes for her hair.

Dad interrupted her dreaming.

"All we can do now is wait, Katey."

Hale leaned toward her. "I think a lot of people would have just taken the money without saying a word. I sure hope you get to keep it." Katey sensed doubt in Hale's deep voice and that bothered her.

"Do you think someone will claim it?" she asked.

"I don't know. At this point I would say your chances are 50-50. But every day you get closer to that 90-day mark, I would think your chances would improve."

"Why's that?" Dad asked.

"I'd imagine that whoever lost the money would try to find it right away," Hale surmised. "But after a month or so, they'd probably just give up."

"I sure hope so," Katey said. She thought to herself, if she ever lost \$500 she'd never give up looking!

"Well, Katey," said Hale, "today is August 20th. You'll have to be patient from now until the 18th of November. Feel free to call me here at Presque Isle

anytime. I'll let you know what's going on. And we'll be sure to call you if someone claims it."

Officer Hale said good-bye, got into his patrol car, and carefully drove through the crowd and disappeared.

Katey's imagination raced with more ideas for spending the money. A telephone for her room so she could have total privacy when Mom called. Her own TV. She wondered if Dad would let her buy some makeup.

"What are you thinking, Katey?" Dad asked.

Katey felt like she'd been caught doing something bad. "I'm thinking about what I'd do with the money," she stuttered. "That's not wrong, is it, Dad?"

"No, Katey, it's only natural. I just don't want you to set your heart on something then be disappointed, okay?"

"Okay, Dad, I won't."

Katey couldn't wait to get home and write in her secret diary all the exciting events of this day. She'd make a list of everything she wanted to buy on one of the blank pages in the back of the book. She grinned and said to herself, "I'll call it my '*Dream List*'."

The adventuresome day passed quickly and soon the Kimbles were sitting side-by-side on their blanket savoring the sunset. The shimmering orange globe sank slowly and paused briefly on the lake's edge before dipping below the horizon.

Tim suddenly became more interested in leaving and began gathering everything. Dad and Katey sat quietly with their arms wrapped around their legs, and their chins on their knees. Katey glanced at her dad. She could sense that his thoughts were off in another world.

She remembered summers past when Dad would tease her about the sunset. "If you listen real close," he'd say, "you can hear hissing when the sun touches the lake. Like when a blacksmith dips a glowing hot horseshoe into water."

Now, Dad said nothing. It felt odd not to have him tease her. It was also painful to watch the beautiful Presque Isle sunset without Mom. Maybe that's why Tim started packing their things already, Katey thought. She realized that all three of them privately must be thinking of Mom.

"Dad?" Katey spoke softly. He didn't answer. "Hey, Dad?"

"Huh? What? Oh, Katey, what did you say?"

"I think I can hear the hissing."

His smile had a trace of sadness. Katey noticed his eyes getting watery and she glanced away feeling sorry for him. He hugged her and kissed the top of her head. Poor Dad, Katey thought. She closed her eyes and cherished the comfort of his loving arms.

Chapter 2.

The final weeks of summer zoomed by and Katey and Tim were soon back in school. Katey and her best friend, Jenn, spent hours together searching through magazines and catalogues for things to buy on the *Dream List* that Katey kept in her secret diary.

Every Friday after school she called Presque Isle State Park to find out if anyone had claimed the money.

"Presque Isle State Park. How may I direct your call?" the lady would answer.

"Hello, this is Katey Kimble from Columbus, Ohio. May I speak to Officer Hale, please?"

"Just a moment."

Seconds later Officer Hale picked up.

"Hello, Katey. How's everything down your way?"

"Fine, Officer Hale." She promised her dad she'd keep the long distance calls to Presque Isle brief so the phone bill wouldn't be outrageous. However, it was difficult because Officer Hale sometimes got friendly and talkative.

"And how's your dad and your brother doing? And everything at school?"

"They're fine. And school is all right. I'm calling to see if anyone has claimed the money yet."

"Nope, Katey. It's still here in the safe. In a couple of months I hope it'll be yours."

"Me too! Thanks, Officer Hale. Bye."

"You're welcome, Katey. Bye now."

Next, Katey dialed up the bank at the mall to find out what the latest exchange rate was for Canadian money.

"Good afternoon, First American Bank. This is Annette. How may I help you?"

Great! Katey thought. Annette answered. She's the one Katey talked with before and had told about finding the money.

"Hi, Annette. It's me, Katey Kimble."

"Hello, Katey. I thought you might be calling so I checked the latest exchange rate about an hour ago. Let's see... Here it is... Today, \$500 in Canadian currency is worth \$445 in U.S."

"Wow, Annette. That's even better than last week."

"Good luck, Katey."

"Thanks!" After hanging up, Katey wrote the new amount in her diary.

This made the third time Katey had talked to Annette, who was always polite and friendly. Because Katey never saw her, every time she called the bank she would try and picture Annette differently. The first time she pretended that Annette was tall and thin with green eyes and short blonde hair. The next time she imagined her as petite, with long brown hair and brown eyes. Today Katey pictured her with wavy red hair, a pointy nose and lots of freckles. After Katey got the money she would go to the bank and see which description was the closest.

Meanwhile, Katey's *Dream List* grew longer every day. The only problem was, she wanted to add something to the list that might help bring her mom and dad back together. But what? On the way to her room to hide her diary, she saw Tim limping down the hallway.

"I just called Presque Isle," she told him. "No one has claimed the money yet. And the lady at the bank said it's worth \$445."

"That's nice." Tim didn't seem to care and kept lumbering along painfully.

"Why are you limping?"

"I fell in the playground during recess. The school nurse said I'll be fine in a week or so. But Dad's going to kill me."

"Why?"

"I ruined my new jeans."

"Well, in about eight weeks I should be getting my money. If I have any extra, maybe I'll get you some new ones."

"Oh, yeah? It was just dumb luck that you found the money instead of me. I think it's only fair that we should split it!"

"You're just jealous! I found it and I'll do what I want with it!"

"Well, you're mean and selfish. I don't want any of it, and I don't want anything from you."

"Just for that, I won't buy you anything! You can forget new jeans, and that stereo radio with headphones too! I'm taking you off my *Dream List!*"

He limped away as quickly as he could and went into his room.

"You're just an ungrateful JERK," Katey yelled. She heard him mumble something that she couldn't understand. Then he slammed his bedroom door.

"You wouldn't have split it with me!" Katey shouted and went into her room and slammed her door even harder.

Chapter 3.

Dad made his famous 'confetti spaghetti' for supper. He put steamed vegetables into soup bowls, piled on angel hair pasta and covered everything with Ragu spaghetti sauce. Katey loved it so much she could eat it every day.

Tim hobbled into the kitchen and took his place at the table. He still seemed to be in pain.

"What happened to you?" Dad asked.

"I tripped at recess, but I'll be okay." Tim didn't say anything about ruining his jeans, and Katey was no tattletale.

"Be more careful, Tim."

Dad said the blessing and they began eating.

"Well, how was school today for you two?"

Tim's mouth was already stuffed so Katey spoke first.

"Mrs. Jackson is teaching us about a disease call AIDS. She said it's really a terrible illness because there's no cure for it yet," Katey said.

"That's right," said Dad. "Do you know what part of your body is affected?"

"Mrs. Jackson said a virus gets into your blood and breaks down the immune system," Katey explained.

"Do you know what the immune system is, Tim?" Dad asked.

"Uh-huh," Tim said then stuffed more spaghetti in his mouth, probably because he didn't know, Katey thought. So, she answered instead.

"Your immune system is in your blood. It fights germs and things that can make you sick. But if you get AIDS, then your body can't fight those things."

"Good for you, Katey. You've learned a lot." Katey felt proud.

"Jenn and I are doing a school project. Mrs. Jackson wants us to work in pairs, so Jenn and I teamed up. We have to do a 1,000-word report on anything we want. After learning about AIDS, we decided to do it on blood."

"Blood?" Tim tried to say it with his mouth full and it came out 'blub'. Then he started choking.

"Serves you right, pig!" Katey said while Tim gulped down half of the milk in his glass.

"That's a good topic, Katey." Dad ignored Tim's horrible manners. "But let's not get too descriptive on the subject during supper, okay?"

"I know, Dad. I understand." While Dad wasn't looking, Katey stuck her tongue out at Tim. "Can I go over to Jenn's tonight so we can work on our project?"

"Okay, but be home by eight." Dad spread some butter on a thick end piece of Italian bread, the part he called the heel. "Do you two know what your blood types are?" Dad asked.

"I have the red type, and Katey has green," Tim said and laughed at himself. "She's Vulcan, Dad. She keeps her hair long to cover her pointed ears."

"Oh, yeah? Well..." Katey gave him her squinty-eyed killer gaze and tried to think of something mean to say, but Dad interrupted.

"You both have your mom's blood type. It's very rare. You each have AB Negative."

"Katey has green blood, Dad." Tim could see he was getting to Katey. "I know because I saw it once when she cut her finger."

Katey ignored him. Sometimes that made him mad.

"Dad? Is having rare blood good or bad?" Katey asked.

Dad pondered for a second, and it must have caught Tim's attention because he stopped talking.

"If you need an emergency blood transfusion you could have a problem. The hospital may not always have your type available," Dad said. "But the important thing is, you're both healthy. And that's what counts."

"Hey, Mrs. Spock," Tim said to Katey, "I'll bet you don't even know what a transfusion is."

"Yes, I do! That's when they put a needle in your vein and put somebody else's blood into you."

"Oh, yeah?" Tim went on. "So where do you get green blood when you need it? Beam it down from the mother ship?"

Katey ignored him again.

Tim finished his supper and pushed aside his bowl.

"Can I get some ice cream now?" Tim asked. He liked ice cream more than Katey liked confetti spaghetti.

"Okay." Dad nodded and Tim quickly made up three helpings of Rocky Road. As usual, his was the biggest.

Chapter 4.

The days passed slowly for Katey as fall came to central Ohio. The trees changed from even shades of green to swirls of bright autumn colors. It helped that she spent a lot of time with Jenn working on their report. As the two girls sat at Jenn's kitchen table, Jenn watched as Katey quietly counted the words in their report on blood.

"How many does that make?" Jenn asked as Katey finished. "Seven hundred and thirty-three. We have 267 more words to go, Jenn. Want to work on it again tomorrow?"

"Sure. Maybe we can finish it. I'll stop at the library and get another reference book."

"Great! Now let's look at my *Dream List*." Katey took her secret diary out of a big brown envelope and opened it to the back pages.

"I called the bank after school. Today my Canadian money is worth \$440!"

"Wow! That's great! Thanks for putting me on your *Dream List*, Katey."

"It's okay, Jenn. You're my best friend. You'd do the same for me." Katey and Jenn examined Katey's list.

MY DREAM LIST

Dad.....	jogger's watch	\$39
	travel alarm	\$15
Mom.....	silver necklace	\$35
	silk blouse	\$30

Tim.....	headphone radio	\$19
	X-Men comics	\$10
Jenn....	pierced earrings	\$15
	bracelet	\$10
Me.....	telephone	\$50
	Boom Box	\$95
	CD's	\$40
	pierced earrings	\$15
	barrettes	\$10
	Total:	\$383

"This is all so weird, Jenn. It's like when Dad buys a lottery ticket and waits to see if he wins."

"I sure hope you win, Katey. You sure have a lot of nice things on your *Dream List* for everybody."

"Thanks. I just wish I could think of something special that I could get my parents that might bring them back together."

"Like what?" asked Jenn.

"I don't know," Katey said.

"By the way, how's Tim doing?" Jenn asked. "He really got hurt on the playground today."

"Yeah, he told me," said Katey.

"Monster Mealy is a real jerk! It's no wonder nobody likes him."

"Tim never said anything about Mealy," Katey said. "What happened?"

"Mealy folded his arms like a football blocker and started shoving Tim around until Tim got really mad. Then they got about a hundred feet apart, and ran toward each other at full speed, like they were going to ram. At the last second, Mealy dropped to the ground and made a roadblock. Tim didn't have a chance. He tripped and went tumbling across the ground. I couldn't believe it! Tim lay there for a long time. I think he wanted to cry, but he didn't."

"What did Mealy do then?"

"He just laughed and walked away," Jenn said. "When the bell rang Tim got up and went back into the building."

"That must have been when he saw the school nurse," Katey said. "He probably told her he tripped and fell." So, that's why Tim was in such a lousy mood after school, Katey thought.

"That Mealy is a rotten creep," Jenn said. "He picks on a lot of kids, but mostly on Tim."

"Why Tim?" asked Katey.

"Because Tim is a pretty big kid and he doesn't like to fight," Jenn explained.

Before closing her diary Katey added one more item to her *Dream List*.

Tim..... a new pair of jeans.

As Katey was walking through Jenn's family room to leave for home, she notice a large photograph on top of the television. It was a picture of Jenn with her parents. The three were all dressed up and smiling.

"Is that new, Jenn?" asked Katey.

"Yeah," said Jenn. "We got it taken at the portrait place in the mall."

"Nice," said Katey. "See you tomorrow."

"Thanks. See ya."

Chapter 5.

That night before Katey went to sleep, she knelt beside her bed as she did every night, and whispered to heaven.

"Please, God, bless Mom and Dad. Help Timmy feel better. Bless my best friend, Jenn. Please make sure no one claims the money so I can get everything on my *Dream List* for everybody. And more important than anything, God, please bring Mom back to live with us, and don't ever let her leave."

Katey was about to say "Amen" when she remembered one more request. "Oh, I almost forgot. Please let me think of something that I can get with my money that will help make Mom and Dad want to be married to each other again. Thank you! Amen."

Katey climbed into bed and pulled the covers up to her chin. She was almost asleep when an idea popped into her head and she yelled, "Yes! That's it!" Then she froze with her eyes wide open. She wasn't sure if she actually said those words out loud or only in her mind. She listened to hear if her dad or brother had been disturbed. Everything was quiet.

That's the answer, she said to herself. A family portrait! With Mom and Dad and Tim and me. All dressed up, happy and smiling, the way a family should be!

Katey had it all figured out. She'd have the money by Thanksgiving when Mom came to Ohio to visit. They'd have the picture taken, then Katey would have two copies made, one for Mom and one for Dad. Katey would make sure they would put the pictures someplace where they would see them every day and think what a nice family they are, and how they should be together.

First thing in the morning Katey would add "family portrait" to her *Dream List*. Just before drifting off to sleep, Katey opened one eye, looked up to the ceiling and whispered, "Thank you!"

Chapter 6.

Katey and Jenn turned in their report to their teacher, Mrs. Jackson. Jenn had printed it out with her dad's computer and it looked great. The two sat at their desks while Mrs. Jackson scanned their report through her half-glasses.

"Did you girls learn anything about blood that you didn't know before?" Mrs. Jackson asked. They both said yes. "Share with the class some of the things you learned. Jenn? How about you going first?"

"Okay, well... there's blood plasma, which is a clear fluid that contains the different blood cells and other substances."

"Explain a little about blood cells, Jenn," their teacher prompted.

"Sure. There are red cells and white cells. They're both called corpuscles. The red ones give the color and are responsible for the exchange of oxygen and carbon dioxide from the lungs to the rest of the body."

"Very good, Jenn," complimented Mrs. Jackson. "Katey, tell us about white corpuscles."

Katey hated talking in front of the class and was glad the teacher allowed her to stand beside her desk.

"White corpuscles are sort of like tiny soldiers that defend the body from invaders." The whole class was looking at Katey and seemed interested. That made her feel better. "If germs get into the body, the white corpuscles attack them and kill them so the body doesn't get sick."

"Very good analogy, Katey," said Mrs. Jackson. "We hear a lot about an illness called AIDS these days. Do you know what that has to do with our blood?"

"Yes," Katey answered. "When someone gets AIDS, for some reason their white corpuscles stop working. So, when harmful organisms get into their body, there's no defense and the person can get very sick."

"Excellent, Katey." Mrs. Jackson's compliment made her feel proud about her project.

"Jenn? What did you find out about the blood groups?"

"Well, Mrs. Jackson. There are four blood groups. O, A, B, and AB."

"And which type is the most common, Katey?"

"Type O. The other ones are considered rare. And when you need a transfusion, you must get the same type. My Dad told me I have type AB Negative, which is very rare."

"Well, take good care of yourself," Mrs. Jackson advised with a smile. "It may be tough to get some if you ever need it."

"That's okay, Mrs. Jackson. My brother has the same blood type. I'm sure he'd give me some if I ever needed it." Katey thought about what she had just said. The whole idea of sharing blood with somebody else seemed weird.

"Thank you girls. You two did a superb job and you learned some very important information too." Mrs. Jackson took the next report from the stack on her desk. "Okay, Jack and Tommy, tell the class about the history of Major League Baseball."

Chapter 7.

When the bell rang, Katey met Jenn in the hallway outside of their classroom and they headed for the cafeteria. It was Friday, spaghetti day, and Katey was hungry.

"Katey, I sure hope we get a good grade on our blood project." Jenn always worried about her grades. She was an only child, and her parents demanded that she get straight A's. She did, but she worked really hard.

"Don't worry, Jenn" Katey assured her. "We did fine!"

As they descended the stairs the aroma of fresh-cooked spaghetti grew stronger with each step.

"Mmmmmmm... Doesn't that smell awesome, Jenn?"

Jenn looked at her like she was crazy.

"I know it's not like my dad's, but I'm starving!"

As they walked down the stairs to the cafeteria, Katey saw dozens of students lined up on both sides of the hallway. They were shouting.

Standing in front of the glass doors leading to the cafeteria was Monster Mealy. His arms were folded as if for protection and he was leaning forward. The screaming and yelling became deafening. Katey saw her brother running full speed from the other end of the hallway.

"Tim! Stop!" Katey shouted and ran down the stairway. As she reached the bottom, Tim dashed past her.

"Tim!"

A split second before the collision, Mealy dropped to the floor and clipped Tim below the knees.

"No!" Katey shrieked.

Tim sailed over Mealy and crashed headfirst into the plate glass door. Screams from the horrified students echoed with the sound of shattering glass.

Mealy stared in disbelief at what had happened. Katey charged at him, smashing into him with all her might. She screamed at him and pounded his back and arms and shoulders.

Unshaken by her attack, Mealy turned slowly and glared at her. When he raised his arms, Katey stopped. He towered over her. Katey waited for him to crush her, but he didn't. She saw no anger in his eyes, only panic.

Katey lunged at him again and a dozen arms grabbed her and held her still.

Kids were yelling frantically. "Katey!" "Stop!" "Don't do it, Katey!" "Leave him alone!" "Help your brother!"

She looked past Mealy and through the jagged frame of the shattered door. She saw Tim lying face down in a glittering pool of broken glass and blood.

Chapter 8.

Katey stared with indifference at a soap opera on a television which hung from the ceiling in the corner of the hospital waiting room. Dad was down the hall in the emergency room with Tim who was surrounded by doctors and nurses. Granny and Grandpa Mandino, Katey's grandparents, arrived and came up to her.

"Katey! Sweetheart! Are you alright?" Granny asked as she kissed and hugged her.

"Your father called your mom," Grandpa explained. "She called us and we came as soon as we could."

"I'm fine." Katey's reply was unconvincing. She felt scared and helpless. She could still hear the horrid crash of Tim going through the glass door. The tragedy kept replaying in her head. The awful sight of Tim lying on the cafeteria floor flashed into her mind again and again. The more she tried to forget, the more it haunted her.

"How's Timothy?" Grandpa asked. He patted her head as if she were a cute puppy. Grandpa was not a hugger.

"I haven't heard anything yet," Katey said. "Dad and the hospital people are with him. I think we've been here about two hours."

"I wish there was more we could do," said Granny.

Dad entered and Katey tried to understand his empty expression. He walked toward them like a zombie. For an instant Katey had the dreadful thought that her brother might be dead.

"How's Timothy?" Grandpa's voice cracked. He seemed fearful of the answer.

"The doctors said he is lucky," Dad answered softly. He sounded exhausted. "Tim's whole right side was cut pretty badly. He has over a hundred stitches."

"Oh my Goodness!" Granny said bringing her hands to her face.

"They stitched his arm, leg, shoulder, and the side of his head."

Although that sounded terrible, Katey was relieved just to know that Tim was alive!

"Dad?"

"Yes, Katey."

"Is Tim going to be all right?"

"We hope so. They aren't sure. That's why I have to talk with you." Dad put his arm around her and took her out to the hallway.

"Katey, Tim needs blood right away and the hospital doesn't have his blood type on hand. A helicopter is flying some from Cleveland right now, but it may not get here in time. Would you be willing to help?"

"What do you mean, Dad?" Katey knew exactly what he meant, but she couldn't believe it. She had to hear him say it.

"Katey, honey, would you give some of your blood to help Tim?"

The thought of giving blood terrified her. She didn't know what to expect. But she knew she had to help her brother.

"Dad, if I don't give Tim some of my blood, will he die?"

"Katey," Dad choked as he spoke, and he looked scared. "Even if you do help, they said they can't be sure."

Katey closed her eyes as she answered.

"I'll do it."

Her father hugged her and they walked down the hallway.

Chapter 9.

The emergency room radiated with whiteness and light. Weird electronic sounds echoed from high-tech hospital equipment. Smells of alcohol, latex gloves and disinfectants penetrated the air. Four people dressed in pale blue hospital attire and wearing surgical masks blocked Katey's view of Tim.

"Doctor, this is my daughter, Katey." As Dad introduced her the doctor and three nurses turned around. "She has the same blood type as Tim, and she wants to help."

"Wonderful! Hello, Katey. I'm Doctor Orr. Let's not waste any time." Doctor Orr instructed the nurses to get Katey ready. When they moved, Katey caught a glimpse of Tim. He lay still, his eyes closed. White bandages covered him everywhere. Long plastic tubes were attached to his arms and an oxygen mask covered his nose and mouth.

"Climb up here, Katey, and lie on your back," one nurse directed.

Dad went around to the other side of the tall bed and helped her. "Please relax, Honey." He spoke softly. "This won't take long, and you'll be fine."

One of the nurses opened a plastic envelope and pulled out a long clear plastic tube that had a sharp needle on one end. The other end was attached to a small plastic bag for collecting the blood. The nurse attached the bag to the side of Katey's hospital bed. Another nurse pulled a curtain around to separate Katey from Tim. Katey stared up at the white ceiling tiles and tried to be brave, but her heart pounded.

"Okay, Katey, close your eyes," one of the nurses said. "Now we're going to hold your right arm steady while we do this." She felt two small hands in rubber gloves gently brace her arm.

"Now," the nurse said, "I want you to hold this rubber ball in your right hand and squeeze it slowly." Katey gripped the ball and started squeezing.

"We're going to rub the inside of your elbow with alcohol, then put in a needle," the nurse continued. "It's going to pinch a little, but only for a second."

Katey could smell the alcohol, then felt a cool wet cotton ball being rubbed vigorously on her arm. Next came the needle. She hated needles!

"Ouch!" Katey couldn't help the outcry. It hurt, but the pain went away quickly, just as the nurse had said.

"Good girl!" the Doctor said.

"Now just relax and keep squeezing the ball," the nurse told her.

Katey lay there with her eyes closed and squeezed the ball. She could actually feel her blood draining out of her body, flowing through the clear tube and into the bag. The sensation frightened her. Please, God, she prayed, let this be over with soon! And let Timmy be all right!

She felt her heart pounding harder and faster. A nurse placed a cold stethoscope against Katey's chest to check her pulse. Her dad gently stroked Katey's forehead.

"You're doing fine, little one," Dad whispered.

"Almost through," the Doctor said.

"You can stop squeezing the ball," said a nurse.

"That's it," said Dr. Orr. "Thank you, Katey. You did great!"

A nurse quickly pulled the needle from Katey's arm. It felt like a huge splinter had been removed. The nurse then placed a cotton ball over the spot where the needle had been, and folded Katey's arm over the cotton to keep it in place.

"Katey," a nurse said, "you can open your eyes now. Just relax for a few minutes."

Everyone in the room began moving quickly. The door burst open and Tim's bed was wheeled out in a flash. Katey looked over the side of her bed where the blood collection bag had been hanging, but it was gone. A nurse took away the cotton ball from her arm and pressed on a small bandage where the needle had been.

"How do you feel, young lady?" asked Doctor Orr.

"Okay, I guess," Actually, Katey felt strange, weak, and a little dizzy. Two nurses helped her to sit up and one pulled Katey's legs around so they could dangle over the edge of the bed.

"You have a lot of courage, Katey," said Doctor Orr. "Thanks to you, I think your brother is going to make it just fine."

Oh, thank you God, Katey thought.

Dad hugged her. "I love you, kiddo! Let's go tell Granny and Grandpa the wonderful news!" He had teary eyes but looked relieved.

Katey slid off the bed and began walking. After a few steps her stomach felt queasy, she became tingly all over, and her legs got rubbery.

"Dad!" Everything grew darker, as if someone were slowly dimming the lights. Sounds in the room became distant. "Dad!" She reached out, blindly groping for him. "Dad! I can't..."

Chapter 10.

Katey opened her eyes and found herself lying on the tall emergency room bed and staring at the ceiling again. A nurse was holding her wrist and looking at her Mickey Mouse watch as she took Katey's pulse. Dad was beside her. Everyone else had gone.

"Welcome back, Katey." Dad whispered.

"What happened?"

"You fainted," said the nurse.

"But why? I never did that before."

"It happens sometimes," the nurse explained calmly. "With all the excitement you've had today, plus giving blood for the first time, it's understandable."

"Will I be okay? Will this happen to me again?"

"You're fine, Katey," Dad assured.

"You're perfectly healthy," the nurse confirmed. "You may feel a little weak the rest of the day, but by tomorrow you'll have all your strength back."

Katey looked at her dad who was nodding. "If you're up to it, Katey, how about a huge strawberry milk shake?"

"Oh, that would be fantastic! I am kind of thirsty."

"Keep your diet light tonight, Katey," the nurse instructed. "Don't make your stomach work too hard. Forget about hamburgers, French fries, and pepperoni pizza until tomorrow. And drink as much liquid as you can, like fruit and vegetable juices, and soup."

"Why?"

"It'll help your body work faster to replace the blood you gave."

"Does that mean I can have that milk shake?"

"Absolutely," the nurse responded with a giggle. She checked the time with Mickey Mouse. "The hospital cafeteria is still open if you'd like one right now."

Dad thanked the nurse for her help and escorted Katey out to where her grandparents were still waiting and worrying. When Dad told them how Katey had donated the blood, and that Tim was going to be fine, there was a wild and happy exchange of hugs and kisses.

"We're so glad Tim's going to be all right," Grandpa said. His gold tooth sparkled when he grinned.

"And we're so very proud of you, Katey!" Granny praised her, and kissed her again. "You know, you may have saved your brother's life!"

"Oh, Granny." Katey glowed inside, but she really didn't want any more praise. The thought of saving Tim's life gave her goose bumps. She was just so thankful that her brother was going to be okay.

Katey, her dad and grandparents went to the hospital cafeteria. It was a huge room made almost entirely of stainless steel, and where even the slightest noises echoed. Dad brought Katey a strawberry milk shake, a bowl of tomato soup, and a plate of lemon lime Jell-O covered with whipped cream. Katey ate everything.

After dinner the four of them wanted to see Tim, but they weren't allowed. The head nurse said he was sleeping and that it would be better to let him rest until tomorrow.

"Granny and I will be going home then," Grandpa said. "If there's anything we can do, let us know."

"Thanks for coming down. We really appreciate it." Dad shook hands with Grandpa and hugged Granny. Katey got a hug and kiss from Granny and another pat on the head from Grandpa.

"Paul, do you want us to call Mandy when we get home and tell her that Timmy's going to be all right?" Granny asked.

"I'll call her, but I'm sure she'd like to hear from you too."

"We'll phone her then," Grandpa promised.

"She may have left Miami already," Dad reminded. "She was going to catch the next flight out."

Suddenly Katey felt warm inside and thought to herself, "Mom's coming home!"

Chapter 11.

On the drive home from the hospital, Katey talked about giving blood. She told her dad that she wanted to help Tim, but was really scared. Her dad reminded her that she may have saved Tim's life, and that he thought she had a lot of courage.

It was after seven o'clock when they got home. The ordeal at the hospital had exhausted them both. They sat facing each other at the kitchen table.

"How about a cup of hot chocolate, Katey?"

"Okay." Katey remembered what the nurse had said about drinking plenty of liquids.

Before going to the cupboard for the mugs, Dad pushed the button on the telephone answering machine. It clicked, whirred, and began playing back messages.

"Paul? This is Frank. I'm sorry to hear about your son. I hope he's all right. Let me know if you need some time off from work. Talk to you later."

"Hi, Katey. It's me, Jenn. I know you're at the hospital right now, but call me as soon as you get home, okay? Let me know how Tim is. See ya."

"Hello, Mr. Kimble? This is Sears calling. The warranty on your microwave oven runs out soon. I'll call back about having it renewed. Goodbye."

Dad and Katey looked at each other and began laughing. It felt wonderful to laugh.

"Paul? (It was Mom's voice.) I'm so relieved to hear that Timmy will be all right! I'll be in the air by the time you hear this. My flight arrives in Columbus at midnight. Mom and Dad will pick me up, and I'll meet you at the hospital in the morning. I heard about Katey giving blood for Tim. I'm really proud of her!"

Why did they have to get divorced, Katey thought? Please, God, somehow get them back together again, soon!

Dad set a mug of hot chocolate in front of Katey and plopped a dozen miniature marshmallows into it. There was one more message on the answer machine.

"Mr. Kimble? This is Officer Jack Hale from Presque Isle State Park. Please tell Katey that someone has claimed the money she found at the beach. Tell her I'm sorry."

Katey looked at her father. For a moment she became lightheaded and nauseous. She felt a little like she did at the hospital before she fainted. Then a wave of anger overcame her and she yelled, "No! That can't be!" She stood up.

"That's my money!" She thought about her *Dream List* and the family portrait. As tears ran down her cheeks she said, "I need that money! It's not fair." Katey slowly sank into her chair. "Dad..." she said weakly.

Her dad said nothing. He slid his chair around the table next to her's and put his arm around her shoulders.

"Oh, Dad. This has been an awful day!" She laid her head against his chest and sobbed quietly.

"Yes it has, little one, and through everything you've been very brave."

Dad lifted Katey from the chair and guided her to her room. Katey stretched out on her bed and her dad sat on the edge. She was exhausted. Dad put his hand on her head and made tiny circles in her hair the way he used to when she was little and he wanted her to go to sleep. For a while she allowed her tears to flow freely. When they finally stopped she let out a deep sigh.

"Feel better, Katey?" Dad kissed her forehead.

"A little."

"Some days can really wear you down, huh?"

"Yeah," he said. "I'm sorry someone claimed the money. I know how much you dreamed about spending it on so many things and for so many people. That was a lot of fun, wasn't it?"

"Yeah," Katey nodded. "I guess now I can throw away my *Dream List*. I don't need it anymore."

"Why don't you keep it a while longer? Everyone needs a *Dream List*."

"Really, Dad? But you don't have one...do you?"

"Sure I do. I'll bet everybody has a *Dream List*."

"Where's yours?"

"I guess I keep it hidden in here." He tapped his chest.

"What's on your *Dream List*?" Knowing how private he was, Katey was hoping he would reveal it to her anyway.

He hesitated before he spoke. "On my *Dream List* I want a happy home for you and Tim. I pray for you both always to be safe, and healthy. And I want you and your brother to know how much I love you both."

"Dad? Want to know what else is on my *Dream List*? I mean, my really secret one?"

"What?"

"I dream for Mom to come home."

Her father said nothing, so Katey continued.

"Dad, do you want Mom to come back?"

"I love your mom just as much as you do, Katey. If she ever decides to come back to live with us, she would be welcome."

"Dad? What can I do to bring Mom back?"

"Just be very patient, Katey. And don't ever stop hoping."

Katey thought he was holding something back.

"Do you have any other dreams, Dad?"

He thought for a moment and smiled when something came to mind.

"Actually, it's more of a wish than a dream. An impossible wish, really."

Katey's eyebrows furrowed.

"What's your impossible wish?"

"Well, I wish that no matter how much time passes, you would always be my little one. And you will live here and be nine-years-old forever."

"Okay, Dad." Katey smiled at the thought of staying nine forever. "I'll try."

"Katey," Dad shook his head, "you have such a good heart."

She didn't know what he meant by that. As her dad caressed the side of her head she thought, "Tomorrow I'll see Mom!" She closed her eyes and fell fast asleep.

Chapter 12.

The next morning Katey and her father arrived at the hospital as soon as visiting hours began. Tim was wide awake watching Saturday morning cartoons on a television hanging from the ceiling at the foot of his bed. A nurse was taking his pulse.

"Good morning," the nurse said. "Tim is doing just fine, and I'm sure he'd like some visitors." She turned to Tim. "I'll be back later with your snack."

"Thanks," Tim said to the nurse as she left. "They're really nice here, Dad, but they wake you up really early for breakfast."

Katey was glad to see that Tim was in good spirits. He was still covered with bandages, but all the tubes that were in his face and arms yesterday were gone. Katey was hoping that her mom would have arrived by now, and was disappointed that she hadn't.

"Well, Tim, how are you feeling?" Dad asked.

"Great! But I can't wait to go home."

Katey kept looking at Tim. She didn't know what to say.

Tim smiled at her and said, "Hey, that green blood of yours works pretty good."

Katey laughed. "Oh, yeah? Well, you'd better be nice to me from now on...or I'll make you give it back." Katey turned to her father. "I wonder where Mom is."

"Oh, she'll be here soon," Tim said. "Grandma called just before you got here and said they were on their way."

Katey and her dad sat down and passed the time with Tim by watching TV and talking. A little while later Doctor Orr entered followed by a nurse.

"Good morning, Mr. Kimble. Hi, Katey," greeted the Doctor. "Tim is doing excellent. We'll send him home Monday afternoon, but he can't go to school for a couple of weeks." A huge smile grew on Tim's face.

"I don't think he'll mind," Dad said.

As the doctor and nurse were leaving, Katey heard familiar voices in the hallway. Seconds later her mom and grandparents walked in.

"Hi, Mom!" Katey said, holding back her excitement.

"Hi, Katey," her mom said warmly and opened her arms. Katey ran across the room and hugged her mom with all her might. "How are you doing, sweetie? You had such a rough day yesterday." Katey couldn't take her eyes off her mother; so tall and beautiful. I hope I look just like her when I grow up, Katey thought.

"I'm doing fine, Mom." Katey wanted to tell her about losing out on the money, but it didn't seem like the right time.

While everyone made their greetings, Katey watched her parents. Although they were friendly to each other, they didn't hug. Everyone gathered around Tim and visited for a long while.

When the nurse came in with Tim's snack, she said that everyone should leave soon and allow him to rest. That's when Katey's dad suggested that they all go out for breakfast. All were in agreement but couldn't decide on where to go.

"Katey, what would you like for breakfast?" her mom asked.

Katey was starving. "A huge waffle covered with blueberries and whipped cream," Katey said. "And a mug of hot chocolate with marshmallows."

"Oooo, that's sounds wonderful," said her grandfather. "But I think I'll have mine with coffee. I'll get the car and meet everybody out front in five minutes."

At the restaurant they were seated at a large round table. Katey made sure she sat next to her mom. She was half finished with her Belgian waffle when Dad told her mom about the money.

"Mandy? Katey probably didn't say anything, but on top of everything else that happened yesterday, we got a call from Presque Isle telling us that someone claimed the money Katey found last summer."

"Oh, Katey, I'm sorry," said Mom. "You must be so disappointed. I know how much that meant to you. I loved the letters you wrote talking about your *Dream List*."

Katey shrugged her shoulders and kept working on her waffle. She was more than disappointed, she thought. How was she going to get that family portrait now?

Later that day everyone visited Tim again then had supper together at another restaurant. Katey spent every moment at her mother's side; watching her, listening to her talk about her work. Katey filled her mind with pleasant memories of her mother so she would have them after her mom left.

On Sunday morning they all met at the hospital one last time before Katey's grandparents were to take her mom to the airport to return to Miami.

After Mom said goodbye to Tim, she put her arm around Katey. "Let's go for a little walk." Mom led Katey down the long hallway to an empty waiting room. They sat together on a sofa. "Are you doing all right, Katey?" Mom asked.

Katey looked away. "Yeah, I guess so." Then she looked up into her mom's eyes. "I really miss you, Mom."

"I miss you too, sweetheart. I think about you every day. And I wish that we could be together."

"Do you think you would ever move back with us?"

Please don't say no, Katey thought. "Maybe someday, Katey. Not right now. But maybe someday." Katey knew she had to be satisfied with that, and she felt there was hope.

"Katey? I have to leave now. Before I go, is there anything you need or want?"

Suddenly, Katey had an idea.

"Mom? Is it too early to ask for a Christmas present?"

"What?" Katey's mom asked with a little laugh. "What do you want, darling."

"Well, actually...I'd like to have a family portrait. You know, with you and me and Tim and Dad, all together." She looked up to her mom with puppy eyes. "Please!"

"A family portrait? Are you sure?"

"Oh, yeah! That's all I want. I don't want anything else. Just a family portrait. One for us up here in Columbus, and one for you down there in Miami. Okay, Mom."

"Sure, if that's what you want."

"We could have it taken when you come up for Thanksgiving. Then it would be ready by Christmas."

"Okay, Katey. When I come up for Thanksgiving we'll do that."

"Thanks, Mom." Katey said. She felt wonderful. She'd get the family portrait after all. Katey leaned against her mother. "Mom, I wish you didn't have to leave." Katey tried to be strong and not cry, but a few tears rolled down her face. Her mom hugged her. "I know. But you keep writing to me and I'll keep writing back. And I'll call every week. And if you or Tim ever need me, you

know I'll be here on the next flight." Her mom kissed Katey on the cheek. "I love you, baby, with all my heart."

"I love you too, Mom."

Chapter 13.

When Katey arrived at school Monday morning, her teacher told her that the principal wanted to see her immediately.

"Am I in trouble, Mrs. Jackson?" Katey asked.

"No, Katey." Mrs. Jackson shook her head. "There's nothing to worry about. Mrs. Taylor wants to talk to you about what happened last Friday."

Katey went to the school office and was greeted by the school secretary who escorted her directly to the principal's office.

"Mrs. Taylor? Katey Kimble is here." The principal was a large, elderly lady with curly white hair. Katey had always been afraid of her.

"Good. Thank you, JoAnn," said the principal. The secretary closed the door as she left. "Please sit down, Katey." Mrs. Taylor motioned for Katey to sit in the giant leather chair across from her desk. It was so big that when Katey sat down, her feet didn't touch the floor. "Thank you for coming, Katey. How are you today?"

"Fine, thank you."

"I hear that your brother is doing very well."

"Yes," said Katey. "He's supposed to come home today."

"That's good," said the principal. "I'm glad he'll be all right." She looked at Katey squarely. "I'm very sorry that all this happened." Katey thought it was odd that Mrs. Taylor was apologizing. She certainly didn't blame the principal for anything. "Katey, do you have any questions about any of this?"

Katey did have one. "Mrs. Taylor? What's going to happen with Mon... uh... Michael Mealy?" Katey almost called him "Monster" Mealy.

"He has been expelled, Katey. He will never set foot in this school again." That means he will never pick on Tim again either, Katey thought. "You may return to your classroom now. Katey, please feel free to come and see me if you ever have any problems or questions about anything, okay?"

"Yes, Mrs. Taylor." Katey was glad to go back to Mrs. Jackson's classroom where she could be with Jenn and the other kids.

As Katey entered the room, two girls she hardly ever spoke to said hello to her. Then she spotted Jenn who was calling her from the other side of the room.

"Katey! Is everything okay?" Jenn asked.

Katey crossed the room to be near Jenn. "Yeah, why?"

"Somebody said you had to go to the principal's office!"

"I did," Katey said. "Mrs. Taylor wanted to talk about the accident last week. She was very nice."

"Katey, do you know you're a hero?" Jenn whispered. "Everybody's talking about how you defended your brother and went after Monster Mealy all by yourself."

Katey carefully glanced over Jenn's shoulder and looked around the room. She noticed a lot of students watching her. She heard her name mentioned. Some students were even smiling at her. Katey didn't know what to think.

In a loud voice Mrs. Jackson said, "Okay, class, take your seats and let's get started."

The rest of the day was much the same. Katey caught students staring or smiling at her. At lunch, a boy who was a friend of Tim's gave Katey a candy bar from his lunch box. He said he didn't want it and thought maybe she would like it. Katey was glad when the bell rang and the day ended.

Katey's favorite season was the fall. She loved the ever-changing sky, brisk winds and the crunching sound of walking on the curly dry leaves. Fall made walking home after school with Jenn even more fun.

"Did you say that Tim's coming home from the hospital today?" asked Jenn.

"Yep. Dad was going to get him. They might even be there now."

"Your mom flew back to Florida already, huh?"

"Yeah." Katey kicked a small rock off the sidewalk and into the street. "Even though she stayed with my grandparents, I got to see her every day. And she'll be back at Thanksgiving." Katey didn't say anything while they walked down the next block. She was thinking about her mom.

"I'm glad Monster Mealy got expelled from school," Jenn said, breaking the silence.

"The principal told me I'd never have to worry about him again," Katey said. "Maybe he'll move far away."

"I hope he goes to Borneo."

"Or Siberia."

"Or Antarctica," Jenn added. The two laughed as they took turns putting Mealy in faraway places all around the world.

"Hey, Katey?" Jenn asked. "Do you feel bad about not getting the money?"

"Yeah, I guess," Katey admitted. She thought back to that day on the beach when her dad said he didn't want her to be disappointed. "Dad even warned me, but, I really thought no one would claim it."

"Are you still going to keep your *Dream List*?"

"Sure, why not? It's fun to dream, and even though I didn't get the money, I still want those things. If I can't get them all at once, then I'll just work on getting them one at a time."

"Katey? Would you be upset if I made up my own *Dream List*?"

"Why should I?"

"Because it's your idea."

"Well," said Katey, "I won't mind, on one condition."

"What's that?"

"Make sure you include me on it!"

"That's a deal," Jenn agreed, and they laughed.

They reached Jenn's house, said goodbye, and Katey continued walking home.

Chapter 14.

Katey became excited when she saw two cars in the driveway, Dad's and Grandpa's. She was sure that Tim must be home from the hospital. Finding no one downstairs, Katey ran up the steps two at a time to Tim's room where she found everyone standing around his bed.

"Katey, look who's home," Granny presented Tim as if he were a celebrity.

"Hey, Katey!" Tim greeted her with enthusiasm, waving his good arm.
"Did you miss me?"

She paused for a moment and said, "No." She couldn't hold back a smile, then everyone laughed. Katey was glad to have him home again. "How do you feel?"

"Itchy." Tim pretended to scratch the bandages on his arm and shoulder.

"Itchy?"

"All those cuts are healing up," Grandpa explained.

"Everywhere he has stitches he'll itch like crazy while it heals," Granny added.

Katey examined Tim's bandages closely. "Nope," she concluded convincingly. "I can see the problem. It's fleas! He definitely has fleas!" There was a burst of laughter which trailed off when the phone rang.

"Katey, would you answer that, please?" Dad asked.

"Sure." She went to the extension in Dad's room.

"Hello."

"Oh, hello. May I speak with Katey, please?" The lady on the other end had a British accent, like in the movies, Katey thought.

"This is Katey."

"Good afternoon, Katey. My name is Katherine Hillier. I'm so happy to finally speak with you."

"Do I know you, Mrs. Hillier?"

"I think you could say... I know you...indirectly," she replied eloquently. "Please allow me to explain. Last summer my husband and I were on holidays in the United States. When we returned to our home here in Toronto, we discovered that we had lost our Canadian money somewhere during our travels."

"Oh, Mrs. Hillier! The money I found at the beach. It belonged to you?"

"Yes, Katey. And we received it today. Officer Hale of the Presque Isle Police sent it to us and included a note about how you found it and were so kind to turn it in."

Katey was glad that Mrs. Hillier couldn't see her goose bumps.

"We had no idea where we might have lost it," Mrs. Hillier went on. "We made dozens of phone calls to places where we had visited. And we had our doubts that anyone would return it."

For the first time, Katey felt good that she had returned the money.

"So, Katey, I'm calling to thank you."

"You're welcome," Katey replied. She didn't know what else to say. The lady's accent made her feel like she was talking with the Queen of England.

"Katey, there's one more thing. My husband and I have a travel agency here in Toronto and we'd like to show our appreciation for your honesty by treating you and your family to a holiday in Niagara Falls, Canada."

"What?" Katey was surprised. "Really?"

"Yes."

"This is unbelievable! I can't wait to tell my Dad."

"I've already spoken with him."

"You have? When?"

"I called earlier. I explained everything to him and he asked me to call back when you'd be home from school."

"What did he say?"

"He said it was all up to you. So, if you'd like, I'll send brochures on all of the attractions at the Falls. You can decide what you'd like to see and when you can come up for a few days. A long weekend, perhaps."

"Oh, I can't believe this!"

"Then I'll mail these out today. Decide on anything you'd like. Sights, amusements, wax museums, tours. We'll be happy to provide free admission passes for everything, plus take care of your motel accommodations."

Katey thought she was going to burst with excitement. "And my Dad knows all about this?"

"Yes."

"This is wonderful!"

"Good. When you're ready, have your father call me and I'll arrange everything."

"Thank you, Mrs. Hillier."

"You're quite welcome, Katey. Your honesty deserves a reward. Goodbye now."

"Bye." Katey waited for Mrs. Hillier to hang up before putting down the receiver. As she darted past Tim's room to her own, she heard her Dad call out.

"Hey? Where are you going, Katey?"

"I'll be back in a minute!"

Katey pulled out the bottom drawer of her dresser and reached in behind it to retrieve her secret diary. She opened it and began writing.

Today is wonderful! Tim is home from the hospital! And I have to add another page to my *Dream List* because I'm going on a weekend trip to Niagara Falls!

Katey carefully put back her diary and scooted into Tim's room.

"Katey?" Tim questioned. "What's going on?"

With everyone staring at her and waiting, she looked straight at her brother.

"Hey, Tim. How would you like to spend a whole weekend at Niagara Falls?"

"What are you talking about?" he asked.

"I'm not kidding," Katey assured. "If you could go to Niagara Falls, what would you want to do there?"

Tim looked at his father. "Dad? What's she up to?"

"I don't know, Tim," Dad said. "Just listen to her for a minute and find out." When Tim turned back to Katey, Dad winked at her. Katey knew her dad would play along.

"Well," Tim began, "the very first thing I would do is cross to the Canadian side and stand on the edge of Horseshoe Falls."

"What else?" Katey prompted.

"Then I'd want to have breakfast at the top the Skylon, 500 feet in the air, and sit there for at least a hour while the revolving restaurant made one complete turn."

"And that's all?" Katey asked.

"No!" Tim protested. "I'd want to take a ride on the 'Maid of the Mist' at the bottom of the falls. And I'd want to go to the wax museums... lots of stuff."

"Okay, then," Katey told him. "When you get better, we'll go to Niagara Falls and you can do all that."

Tim turned to his father again. "Dad? What is she talking about?"

"You know Katey," Dad said. "When she decides to do something, she always finds a way."

Tim looked at Katey with a puzzled look on his face.

Katey just smiled at him for a second, then said in a bossy tone. "But I'm not taking you anywhere until you get rid of those fleas!" Then she darted out of the room.

"Hey! Now where are you going?" Tim yelled.

Katey ran to her father's room and quickly dialed the telephone. Seconds later she said, "Hi, Jenn! You're not going to believe this . . ."

>>> The End <<<