

Parry Hotter and the Picture of the Red Bird



by Joseph Gascho

Parry Hotter and the Picture of the Red Bird

This is the fifth in the JMAE book series by Joseph Gascho.
Previous books:

Fried Shoe Laces (2013)

*Matilda Mouse and Her Most Fortuitous Encounter with
Jed and Maggie and Annali and Eriselle* (2014)

Great-Great-Grandfather Gascho and the Blizzard of 1888
(2015)

*The Amazing Story of Four Crafty Cousins and the Thanks-
giving Chocolate Cake* (2016)

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Parry Hotter and the Picture of the Red Bird

by Joseph Gascho (Papa)
and with special assistance in
production, color, and time
management by Barbara Gascho
(Nana)

This book is dedicated to four grand grandchildren: Jed Gascho, Maggie Gascho, Annali Cooke and Eriselle Cooke.

- Papa and Nana, 12/2017



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Chapter 1

The Escape

Parry didn't know if it was his rumbling stomach that woke him up (the last thing he'd eaten was an onion and pepper sandwich at noon, and it was now 12:30 a. m.) or the voices he heard down in the living room. He decided it was the talking because he had never heard that before at this time of night, and his stomach was usually empty when he went to bed. He thought he could fall asleep again by thinking about the drawing he was working on, of a red bird flying down to rescue a mouse caught in a flood, but the loud noises kept him awake. He had seen a picture of the red bird in an old old book he had found in the closet. There were all kinds of other objects in the picture that intrigued him. Being the good drawer he was, he'd spent hours on the drawing, copying every detail with great care.

He wondered, *who is talking and what are they saying?* He crept out of bed and carefully opened the door so it would not squeak and snuck out in the hallway. He could now catch bits of talk.



His stomach went from grumbling to hurting. He thought he might have to go to the bathroom and spit up because he heard Otto say, “We cannot keep him anymore. We feed him and we give him a bed to sleep in and still he forgets to go to the chicken house and gather the eggs, and he cannot remember to feed the cow hay.”

Then Taphina said, “And he can’t be taught. You’d think that if we don’t let him eat supper at night he would remember to do his chores. It is time to send him back to the orphanage. This has gone on for three months now. He is a useless boy. All he can do is draw ugly pictures all day.”

Otto said, “I will take him back myself first thing tomorrow morning.”

Parry tiptoed back into his bedroom, shut the door and crawled into bed. He started to cry and soon the pillow was damp. This place was bad enough, but the orphanages he had come from were ten times worse. Only one of the three orphanages he’d lived in for as long as he could remember was even halfway decent. The other two had dead cockroaches in the cereal and rats the size of small cats that roamed the places at night. He wiped his eyes on the pillowcase and said, “Enough of this. I must get out of here. Right now.” He turned on the light and found the old suitcase he had brought with him when he came and opened it and



stuffed in all the clothes he had—two shirts, two pair of white socks, and a pair of blue jeans. Now he was a smart boy, even if Otto and Taphina did not realize it, so before he closed the suitcase he snuck downstairs and found the flashlight in the pantry. He was about to come upstairs when he saw the iPhone sitting on the kitchen table, the one Otto had just gotten the day before. Parry had watched Otto try to figure out how it worked and finally throw it down. (Parry was afraid it would crack, but it hit Otto's shoe before it hit the floor.) Parry shoved the iPhone into his pocket, along with the charger that was in the box that Otto had forgotten to throw away. Back in his room, he reached up on the shelf and grabbed his set of colored pencils and the 50-page art tablet and three of his last drawings, the ones on which his teacher at school had pasted three stars. And the last thing he grabbed was the picture of the red bird that he had labored over for the last two weeks.

He knew that Taphina sometimes opened his door to peak in. She never came over to the bed to pat him or give him a good night kiss—it seemed like she was checking to be sure he was there just like she would check to be sure no one had stolen the blue China dishes her mother had left her. So he rolled up a quilt and put it under the covers to make it look like a body. But he forgot to cover the top of the roll of quilt. Then he opened



the window and crawled out on the roof and pulled the window down. It had rained and the roof was slippery and he almost lost his balance since he had the suitcase in one hand. He looked over the edge and before he lost his courage he jumped down into a big lilac bush. He jumped up from the ground and was about to start walking when suddenly a huge creature raced around the corner and screeched to a stop in front of him. In the dark, it was hard to know if it was a wolf or a bear or a dog. Parry almost peed in his pants. Which would have been bad, because it was cold.



Chapter 2

Ginger

But the creature did not bite Parry. It did not even growl. It sniffed Parry's feet and then rolled on the ground and ended up lying in front of Parry with all four legs up in the air with its tail wagging. It lay there for a long time, then got up on its feet and licked Parry's hand, the one not holding the suitcase (he had been so afraid that his other hand had gripped the handle so hard that his fingers felt numb.) And then Parry could not believe his ears. The creature started to talk. "My name is Ginger. I have been sent by Herr Lumderrood to fetch you. You must come with me at once."

Parry dropped the suitcase in the grass. He finally said, "Er, er, er, ok." (What do you say the first time you here a talking dog?). He saw that there was cloth wrapped around the belly of the dog, with pockets on either side. Ginger saw Parry looking and said, "There are things in the pockets for you. Reach in your hand." Parry did. (When a dog talks to you, you obey.) From the pocket on the right side he pulled out what he first thought was a long piece of black cloth. But when he



tried to straighten it out he discovered it was a tunic with a hood that was long enough to reach his toes. Ginger commanded, "Put it on right now." Parry did as he was told. Ginger turned around and motioned with a paw for Parry to look into the other pocket. In it was a little machine with a crank handle on one side and little plastic sheets on top of it. Parry realized it was a battery charger that could be charged either by turning the handles or by placing it in the sun. "You can leave it there," Ginger said. "It will be useful."

"Now we must go. Immediately," Ginger bark-talked (sometimes what he said when he was in a hurry to talk, was a mix between talking and barking). "Follow me."

Parry grabbed the suitcase and they ran across the lawn and into the woods. Luckily it was a full moon, and it was not cloudy, but still Parry would have been lost in 30 seconds. But Ginger knew the way. Parry almost had to run to keep up with him. Once he fell on a tree root. The suitcase rolled into the brush, but Ginger grabbed it in his strong jaws and brought it back to Parry.

In twenty minutes, they came to a road. They had walked down into the woods and then before they got to the road, they had to climb back up. Parry turned around and looked back. He could see the house he had left. Not just because the moon was shining but because all the lights were on. He saw that Ginger was looking

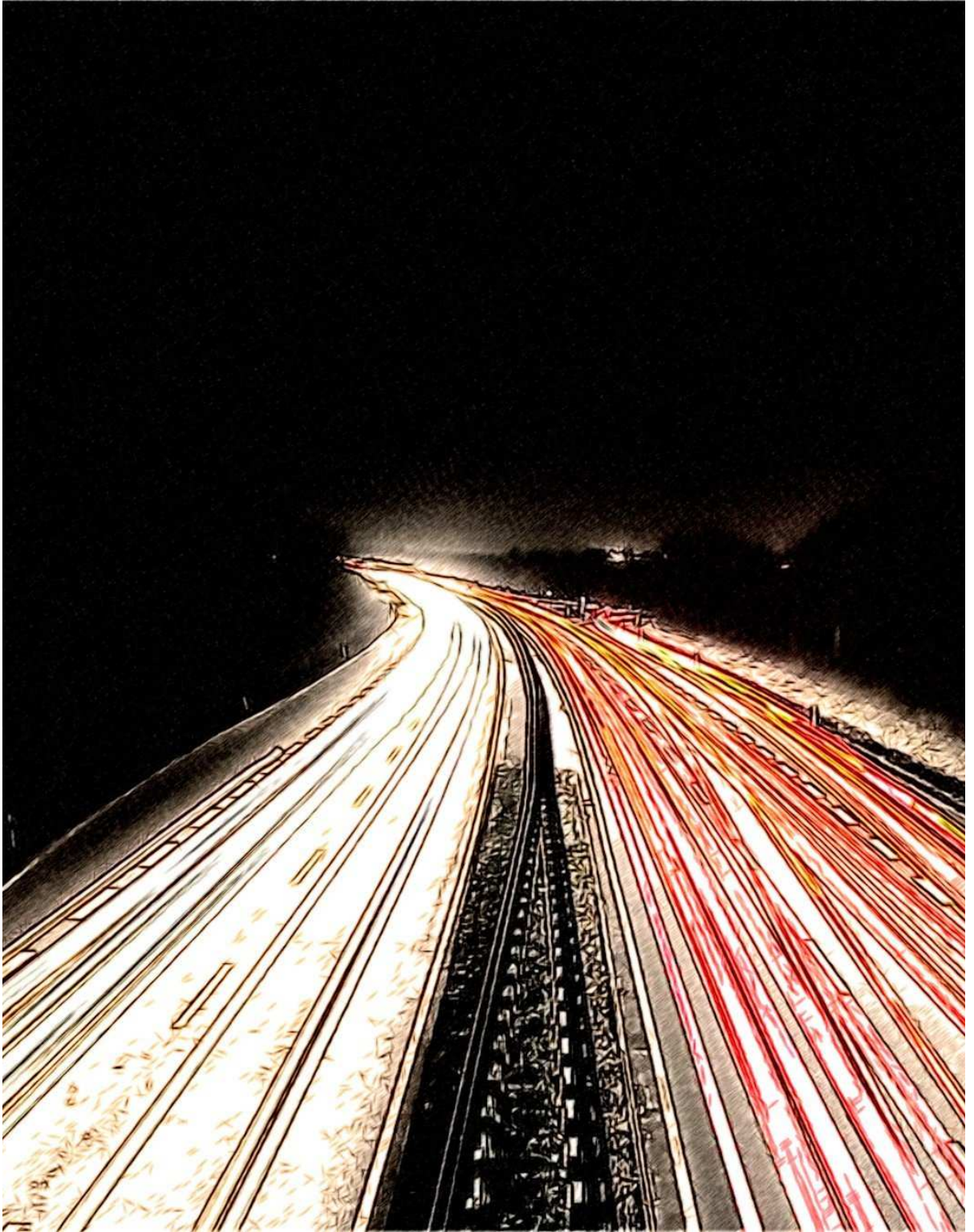


back, too. Ginger said, “It is good we left when we did. They have found out that you are gone. We must hurry.” But Parry wondered how they would every cross the road. There were two lanes of cars going in each direction and even though it was still early in the morning, it seemed like it was rush hour. And it suddenly hit Parry—someone, really lots of people, would see him running across the road and then when those people heard that there was a boy missing, they would remember and report it to the state police.

Ginger could tell what Parry was thinking. He said, “Don’t worry.”

Parry was about to cry. He said, “What do you mean, don’t worry? I will be seen, the police will come, they will put handcuffs on me and drag me back to Otto and Taphina, who will whip me and then Otto will drive me back to the orphanage.”

Ginger again said, “Do not worry.



Chapter 3

The Tunic

“The tunic you are wearing is a magic tunic,” Ginger woofed (he was in a hurry now, his words sounded like yips), “and when you're wearing it, you can't be seen.” Both Ginger and Parry could see lights in the woods through which they had come. They could hear Otto’s booming voice, yelling, “Hey, you kid. Get back here. I will catch you. You can’t get away from me.” (He'd not really seen Parry, but had noted some suspicious footprints.)

“Quick”, barked Ginger. “We must get across this road.” They saw a tiny break in the traffic and raced across the first two lanes of traffic. A Greyhound bus slammed on its breaks. All the passengers who were awake saw was a giant dog. Parry and Ginger caught their breath on the strip between the roads and then dived across the other two lanes. They were almost hit by a man on a motorcycle who swore at the dog and pulled out his gun and fired it at Ginger. But his aim was not good (even though the moon was out, it was still dark), so he missed.

Parry and Ginger raced into the woods on the other



side of the road. They looked back and saw Otto fuming on the other side of the road. Otto had arthritis and high blood pressure, and on top of that, was pooped out from rushing through the woods chasing Ginger and Parry. So, he did not try to cross the road. He did see a big dog on the other side.

The dog and boy walked for an hour. Ginger led the way. Parry legs were getting weak. He suddenly remembered how long it had been since he had eaten. The suitcase felt like it was filled with stones. Just when he was about to give up, they came into a clearing. There were three tents pitched, and there was a man stirring something inside a kettle held above the fire by some wires. Parry didn't know what it was but it smelled very good. Was it safe to go into the clearing?

Ginger motioned for Parry to stay behind. Parry watched, holding his breath, as Ginger walked out into the clearing, up to the man stirring the fire. Just like he had done when Ginger first saw Parry, Ginger ran up in front of the man, and rolled over and stuck his four paws straight up in the air. He lay there for a few seconds, and then slowly got up and licked the man's feet.

The man stopped stirring and jumped back when he saw the huge dog. But when Ginger licked his feet again and looked up at him, the man seemed less afraid. He bent down and patted Ginger on the head and scratched behind his ears. And then he jumped back and flung his



hands in the air...



Chapter 4

The Oatmeal

...because Ginger started talking to the man. “I have watched you for ten minutes now and I can tell you are a good man. You think I am a dog but I am a mog, a creature that looks like a dog but can talk and think like a man.”

The man did not know what to say. He stirred the pot because the oatmeal was about to burn.

“I am on a special mission,” Ginger said. (He was talking slowly and carefully, so his words sounded very human). I have a special special person with me and we need your help.”

Parry had not been listening very carefully but when he heard the words “special special” said about him (who else could it be?) he perked up his ears.

Ginger continued. “Please hear me out before you think I am crazy. My mission is to deliver this boy to my master, Herr Lumderrood, who has sent for a special boy. And that special boy is with me. But we are being followed by an evil man, Otto, and we are afraid we will be caught. We need your help.”

The man laughed. He said, “I thought I was awake,



but I must be dreaming. A dog who talks, a special mission, a man named Herr Lumderrood. No, this cannot be true. I will give you some hotdogs left over from last night and you can be on your way.”

“Yes, yes, I can understand why you do not believe me. But let me show you something.” Ginger turned his head towards Parry and motioned for him to come out. Parry left his suitcase behind and walked out into the clearing. The man heard someone walking but saw only Ginger. And then Ginger said, “Take off the tunic, Parry.”

Parry obeyed, and suddenly, **ka boom**, there stood Parry, next to Ginger.

The man dropped his spoon into the oatmeal. He didn't say a word, he just stared and stared at Parry and wiped his eyes three times. Then slowly he said, “OK, OK.” He fished the spoon out from the oatmeal with a long fork.

“So, what can I do?” he asked.

“Well, first, the boy is very hungry. He has not eaten since yesterday at noon. Can he have some oatmeal?”

The man (his name was Joe) nodded and spooned out a bowl of hot oatmeal. He sprinkled some blueberries and brown sugar on it and went inside one of the tents and brought back a bottle of milk and poured it on the oatmeal and gave it to Parry. Parry sat on a little stool and gobbled it down in five minutes. Joe could tell



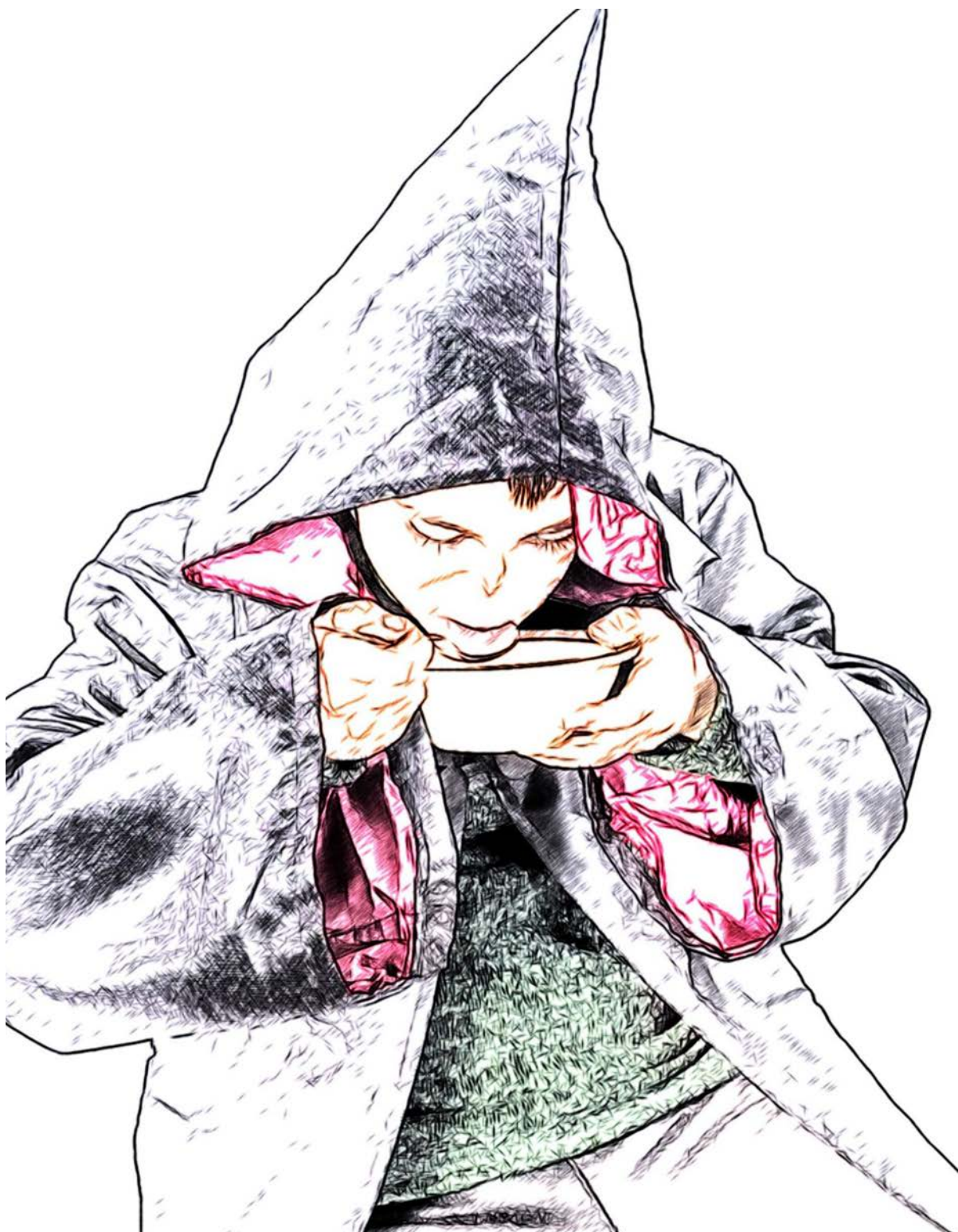
he was still hungry and so he filled up his bowl again. (It was strange to watch oatmeal being eaten by an invisible boy).

“Thank you so much,” said Ginger. “Now there is one more very important thing”.

“What is that?” the man asked.

“As I told you, evil Otto is trying to find Parry. We must come up with a way to get Parry out of here. You can help.”

“How can I help?” asked the man.



Chapter 5

The Campers

“There will soon be people searching these woods, looking for Parry. Otto is a mean sheriff, and when he does not get his way, he becomes very angry. He is a powerful man and has lots of people working for him. He is going to organize a huge posse that will comb the forest looking for Parry. We saw him chasing us. He is a little puzzled—he saw only me, but I think he knows Parry is with me. If we can travel with you when you hike back to your car in the morning, we may be able to hide Parry.”

The man nodded his head. “Yes, I will try.” As he talked, a boy came out of one of the tents. He stopped when he saw Ginger and Parry. The man said, “It’s ok, Jed. This is Parry. He looks like he is about the same age as you. And this is a, er, mog.”

Ginger wagged his tail, thinking it best not to talk at this very moment. Parry nodded his head at Jed. Jed liked dogs and so he went up to Ginger and started to pet him. He saw the little saddle on Ginger’s back and reached in, without thinking, and found the little magic charger. He suddenly realized what he had done and



quickly put it back. He almost fell over when Ginger said, “Don’t worry, that’s ok.”

“Yes, it talks,” Jed’s father said. “And while we’re at it, Parry, can you put your tunic on?”

Parry did, and Jed couldn’t believe his eyes. Parry disappeared into thin air just like that. He raced back to first one tent and then another and in a minute, there were four children gathered around Parry and Ginger: Jed and Maggie and Annali and Eriselle. They all petted Ginger and said hi to Parry. Their eyes bulged out when he put his tunic on and then took it off again. Eriselle ran back in the tent and dragged out her mother, Susan, and father, Teman, who staggered out. Joe took them aside and talked with them for a few minutes. And Maggie woke up her mother, Elena, who scratched her head but was finally convinced everything was ok when Joe explained things to her. The children wanted to go into the other tent, but their parent told them their grandparents were still sleeping and they should not be awakened under any circumstances. They had had a bad night, lying on the air mattresses below their sleeping bags.

Joe gave two hotdogs to Ginger and then he and Teman and Susan and Elena talked for a long time. Teman walked over to Ginger in a few minutes and Ginger came back with him to the circle and joined the discussion. By the time they were done it was starting to



get light. The people in the other tent, who were the grandparents of the four children, stumbled out. The children rushed to them and their talk was so fast and jumbled that Papa and Nana, as the children called them, had no idea what was going on. Finally Eriselle went over to Parry and asked him to come. Parry reached out his hand to shake Papa and Nana's hands (they were very impressed at how polite he was) and answered all their questions.

The conversation between the other four adults and Ginger ended. Joe said, "I need to make a call." He reached for his iPhone and discovered that it was dead. All the other phones did not work because the reception, with their carriers, which was different than Joe's carrier, was so poor.

Parry saw Joe shaking his head and asking to borrow the other phones. He asked Joe what was wrong. Joe told him about the dead battery and said, "Thanks, but there is nothing you can do about this." Parry said, "I think I can help you."



Chapter 6

The Phone Call

Parry pulled the iPhone out of his pocket. Fortunately, it was fully charged when Otto bought it, and had stayed charged because Otto had not been able to figure out how to use it. He handed it to Joe. Then he suddenly remembered the special machine lying in the pocket of the saddle on Ginger's back. He pulled it out. A little light came on when he touched it, and the number 100 flashed—it was already charged! He showed it to Joe who plugged in his iPhone (there was a universal connector with the little charger). Joe walked off to the side of the clearing, Googled something, got a phone number and soon Parry could hear him talking to someone. He saw Joe nod his head. Then he saw Ginger get up (he had fallen asleep, the night had been long) and go over to talk to Joe. He heard the word “special” again, several times.

They were on the phone for a long time. Jed asked Parry what he liked to do. He told him about his drawings and when Jed wanted to know more, Parry pulled out his suitcase and showed him the red bird drawing



Maggie heard the word “drawing” and came to look. She ran back to her tent and brought out some-thing she was working on, a drawing of a big tree with a swing hanging from a big branch and a little girl rising high up in the air, with her father pushing her. She also looked at the picture of the red bird, and saw what appeared to be a mistake. She showed it to Parry, and he said, “Wow, you know, you are right.” He corrected it on the spot. Annali asked him if he knew anything about the rare elements in the periodic table—he shook his head and said he always spaced out in school when the teacher talked about numbers or science. And Eriselle looked at the picture of the red bird and made up a song about a red bird, right on the spot, a new song, different than the red bird song she already knew, and she sang it. The children were huddled in a little group chatting away when Joe interrupted them and said, “We have got to pack up right away and get out of here.” He talked faster than he usually did and looked worried. He said they didn’t even have time to take down the tents. He grabbed a shovel and scooped dirt on top of the fire. Within five minutes they were on the trail, all twelve of them. Ginger made sure that Parry was wearing his tunic and that his head was covered up. The children didn’t know where to walk. Every once in a while one of them would bump into Parry and say, “Sorry.” Jed offered to carry the suitcase; Ginger made sure that Parry was not



toting it. Sometimes Maggie or Annali would ask Parry a question. But they stopped when Ginger scowled at them and shook his head.

And then, half way up the trail to the car...



Chapter 7

The Encounter

...they met a posse of men storming down the trail. They wore brown shirts with star badges on the front and carried revolvers. Joe and Teman were leading the group. The leader of the posse yelled out, “Halt!”. Joe talked for the group. He said, “Hello. Is something wrong?”

“We are looking for a boy we think was kidnapped,” the posse man said. “Maybe you know something about it.”

“So sorry to hear about that,” said Teman. “We hadn’t heard anything about a kidnapping. We will keep our eyes open.”

“Who are these people?” the posse man asked.

“These are my parents,” Joe said, pointing to them. “And this is my wife, Elena. And our two children. And over there is my sister. Her husband is there (he gestured to Teman, who was standing with him). The other two children belong to them. And that is the dog, Bowser, who goes with us when we travel.” (He had forgotten Ginger’s name).



Ginger was standing next to Parry—only he knew where Parry was when Parry was wearing the tunic. He was careful to stand so that Parry's shoes would not be seen, in case the tunic was not dragging on the ground.

Teman asked, "What is the name of the boy who was kidnapped? What does he look like?"

The posse man said the boy's name was Parry, that he was 11 years old, that he had brown hair and blue eyes, and that he was maybe wearing blue jeans and a green tee shirt.

The children gasped but before anyone could hear it Susan started coughing.

The posse men looked at everyone and then went on their way down the trail the group had just come up.

Joe and Teman told the group, as soon as the posse had gone, that they needed to hurry and so they almost ran up the trail to the three cars that they had left when they came just the day before.

It was Eriselle who first heard the sounds and asked her daddy what it was. Before he could answer, everyone heard it. It came from a big helicopter. Joe said, "Great, it has come. Quick, everyone, as soon as you get to the parking lot, run to the helicopter and jump in." But one minute before they got to parking lot, they heard another sound. It was the sound of men running and yelling, and it was coming from the trail from which they had just been walking on. And the sound was getting louder



A man was bellowing, “Stop, stop, stop at once.”

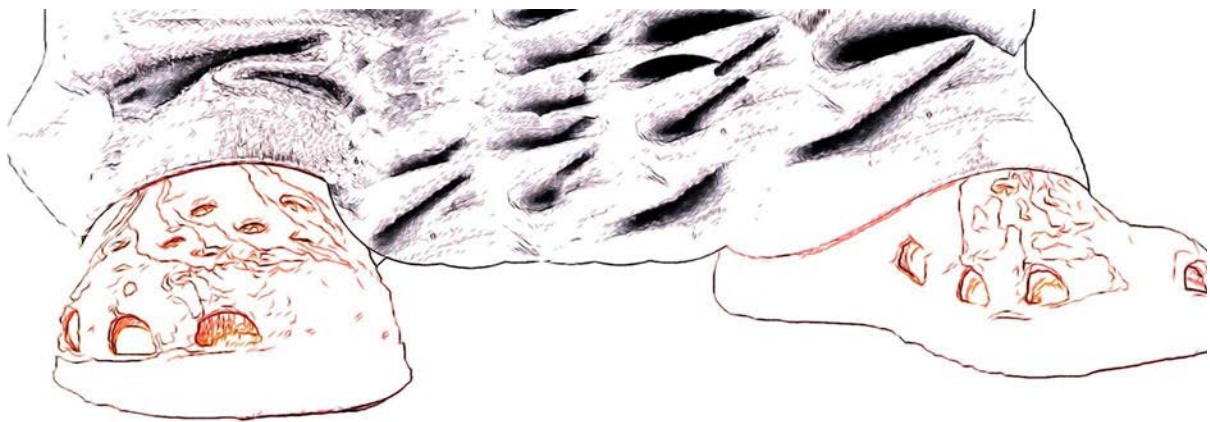
One of the men in the posse had been watching the trail after they had met the family. He had once been a guide for hunters, and because he had tracked deer and bear in Montana, he paid more attention to footprints than the other men. He saw that there were twelve sets of footprints (actually eleven sets of footprints and one set of pawprints), not eleven. He couldn't understand how that could have been, but then he looked back up at the group disappearing up the trail and saw something that caught his eye.



Chapter 8

The Briar

In the rush to run up the hill to the parking lot, Parry had stumbled and fallen. When he got up his tunic caught on a briar, and a piece of the tunic tore off when Parry ran on up the trail. So the tracker man in the posse, when he looked back up the trail, saw something very strange—six inches of the bottom of the legs of a pair of blue jeans, and two tennis shoes—walking up a hill! It was so strange a sight that he took off his glasses and wiped them on his shirt sleeve and put them back on, just to be sure his eyes were not deceiving him. But there it was again, when he looked through his just-cleaned spectacles. He yelled out to the leader of the posse and told him of his strange sighting. The boss man at first didn't believe him. It was lucky for the escaping group that the posse spent five whole minutes arguing about what to do, so that by the time they decided to turn around and run back up the hill, the group was within a minute of the helicopter. And it was lucky that the men in the posse had had pancakes and eggs for breakfast, along with sausages, that very day, (and that



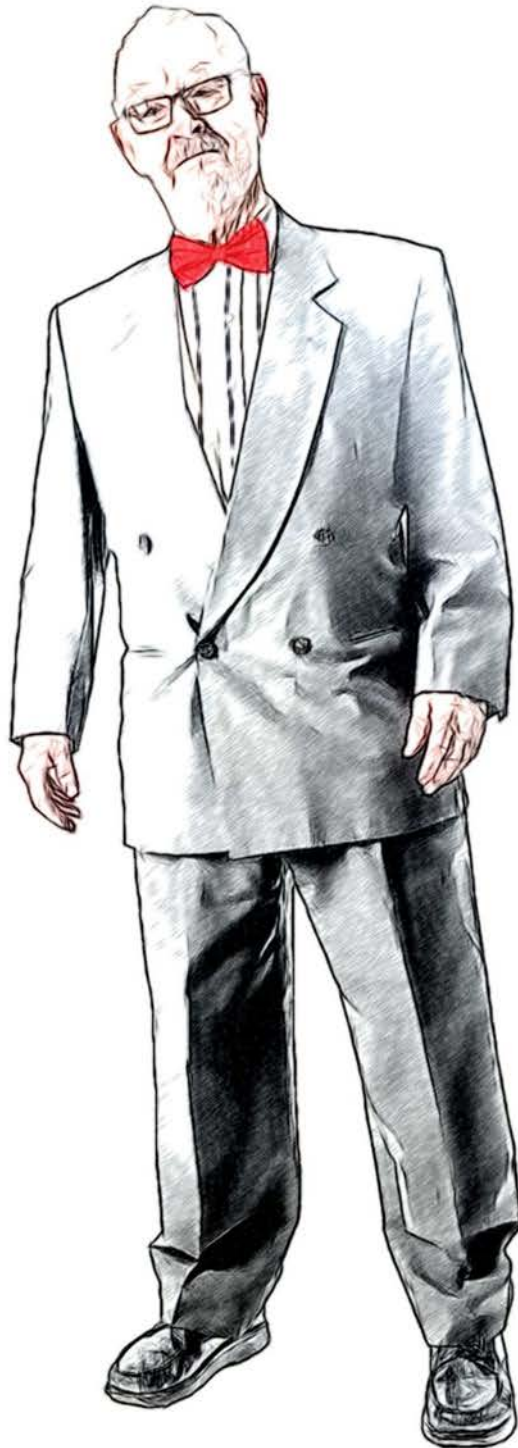
that is what they had for breakfast every day) and that they sat at home and watched wrestling on TV every night instead of going to the gym to exercise, because they had to stop every minute to catch their breath.

So because of all these things, Parry and Ginger and the people they were with made it to the parking lot and ran to helicopter which was now on the ground, blowing the tree branches crazy and making so loud a noise that no one could hear anyone else even though Joe was screaming at everyone to get on the helicopter. Everyone jumped in. There were two strong men on board who reached down and pulled the children up. Everyone but Ginger. It was only after everyone one was seated and the helicopter was flying straight up in the air that first Parry, and then the others, saw that Ginger was not with them. They looked down and there he was, charging at the men in the posse who had just made it to the top. They had their guns out and were going to shoot at the helicopter but Ginger barked so loudly and started to bite them that they did not have a chance to shoot their pistols at the helicopter. That was the last thing they all saw as the helicopter flew away: Ginger lunging at the men. Although Parry had known Ginger for only six hours, he had become very fond of him and he was especially sad. What he was worried about was that the men would shoot the mog. The last thing Parry saw was Ginger skidding to a stop, turning around, and racing off



into the woods. And the leader of the posse shooting at him. The helicopter had risen high into the air so that Parry could not see what happened.

Parry turned around and was startled to see a very old man with white hair and a long beard, wearing a black suit and a striped shirt with a red bow tie sitting across from him. The old man smiled at him and stuck out his hand and said, “My name is...



Chapter 9

Herr Lumderrood

Herr Lumderrood. It is an honor to meet you.”

It took Parry a second to recall that this was the man that Ginger had talked about. This was that man that had sent Ginger to fetch him. Parry shook his hand and tried to smile.

Herr Lumderrood looked around the helicopter at the other people and then on the floor. He was looking for something. Finally he said, “Parry, where is the suitcase?”

Parry suddenly realized that the suitcase was not in the helicopter. When he was trying to get on board he had hoisted it up on an aluminum bar just below the door and then climbed up and in himself. In his hurry he had left it outside. He was sad that he had left it there, but Herr Lumderrood was horrified. Because Herr Lumderrood knew what was inside the suitcase. He was not interested in the clothing or the pencils or the art tablet or the three drawings that had each received three stars from Parry’s teacher. What he wanted to see was the drawing of the red bird.

Herr Lumderrood knew that the picture that Parry



saw in the old book, the one Parry was copying, every day, instead of gathering the eggs from the chickens and instead of milking the cow, was a very special picture that was not a picture at all but the map of a building that contained a gold ring with magical powers. People had been searching for the ring for centuries and had not been able to find it. And then one day, Herr Lumderrood had a dream (and when Herr Lumderrood had a dream, it was more than a dream—whatever he dreamed was real and was happening somewhere, or had happened somewhere or was going to happen). He dreamed that there was an old old book that someone had found in a junk heap and that book was now in a closet. And Herr Lumderrood also dreamed that a boy would find the book and that he would open the book and his eyes would be drawn to a certain picture and that he would be so intrigued by the picture that he would draw a picture of it. Herr Lumderrood did not know what was in the picture: a tree? a boy and girl? a rainbow? But in the dream it was revealed to him that the picture was really a map of the building in which the gold ring was hidden, and that if one studied the picture long enough and hard enough, one would be able to find the gold ring.

And then the next night he dreamed about the book again. This time he learned where the house was and that that were an old man and woman who lived in the

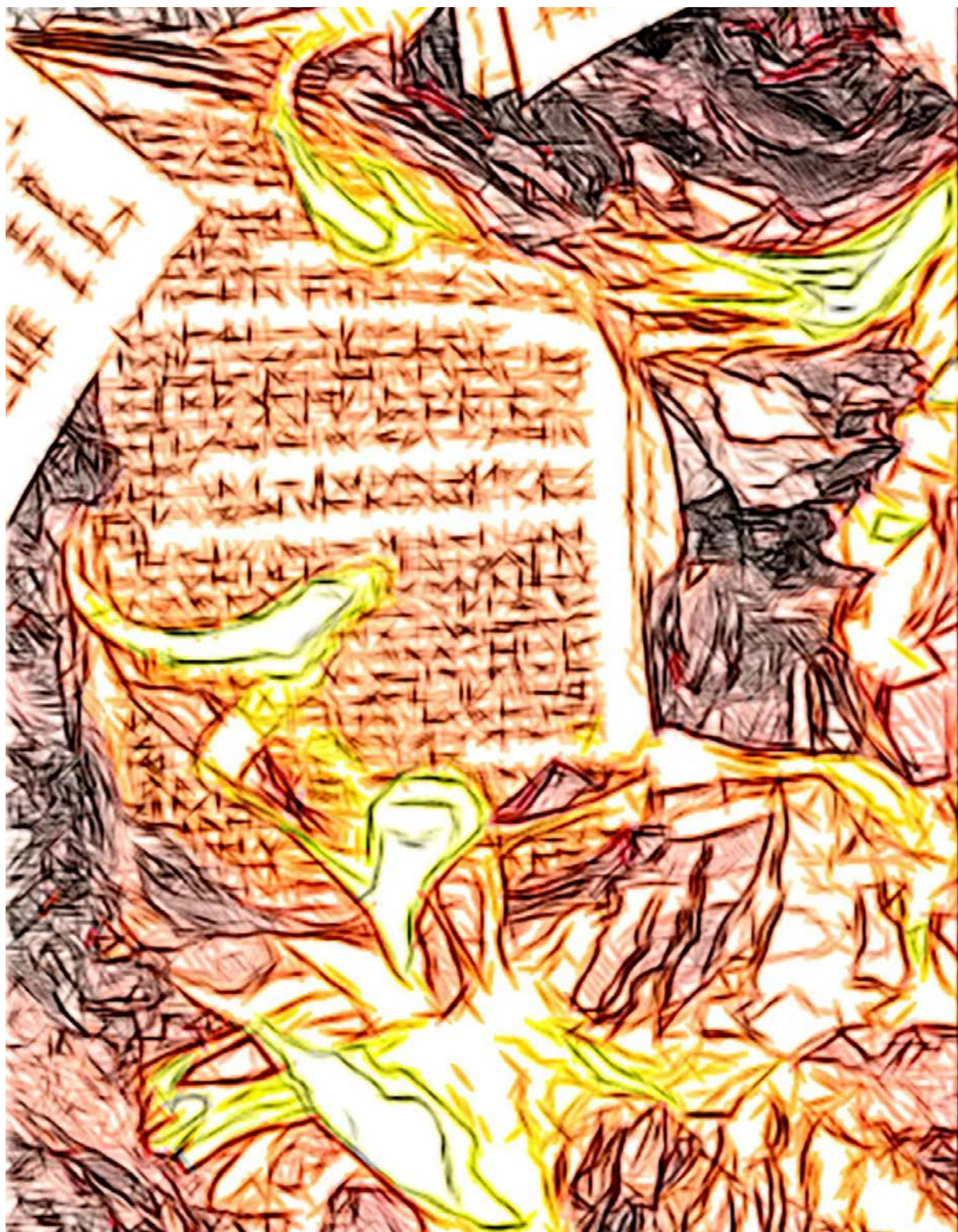


house.

And then the next night he had a third dream. This was a scary dream. Someone was about to throw away the drawing of the page in the book and throw the book into the fireplace.

He knew he had to act immediately, and it was then that he called out for his mog, Ginger, and it was then that he sent Ginger on his special mission. It was just in time that he did it, for had Ginger gotten to the house any later, Parry would have been caught and his drawing torn up.

And now, the suitcase that contained the drawing of the special page in the special book was missing.



Chapter 10

The Rescue

Herr Lumderrood rushed up to talk to the pilot. The copilot came back to where Parry and Herr Lumderrood had been sitting and got down on his knees and pulled back the carpet. Suddenly it was possible to see the ground far below because the floor of the helicopter was made of thick glass. And below them, they could see... the suitcase. It had gotten wedged up against the helicopter, but it was in a very precarious position and it was teetering and looked like it could fall off and plummet to the earth any second. What could be done?

Herr Lumderrood did not have time to explain to the copilot why the suitcase was so important. He commanded the man to open the door. Herr Lumderrood was so stern and he bellowed so loudly and with such authority that without thinking the copilot opened the door. Herr Lumderrood told Joe and Teman to hold on to his legs with all their strength and he curled himself outside the helicopter and leaned down and bent himself in a U shape (he had once been a gymnast and he had kept up his exercises so that even though he was now 120 years old, he was still limber) and reached down



and grabbed the precious suitcase. It started to fall a half second before he touched it but he was able to catch it. He unwound himself and curled himself back into the helicopter, suitcase gripped tightly in his arms. His red bow tie had fallen off and fluttered down into a tree but he didn't notice that. Everyone clapped and said what an amazing feat it was.

No one else knew anything about the meaning of the special picture that Parry had so carefully copied (he had just finished copying it the evening before he escaped from the house of Otto and Taphina). Not even Parry. So when Herr Lumderrood opened the suitcase, everyone wondered why he was so eager. They watched him throw Parry's clothes into a mess on the floor. They saw him glance and smile and nod his head at the three pictures Parry had drawn that had earned him three stars each. And then they looked at each other and asked each other what was going on when he found the drawing of the picture of the red bird. Herr Lumderrood stared and stared and stared. He turned it sideways and held it up so he could see it better. He kept muttering to himself, "Special, special boy. Special, special boy." He took out his iPhone and tried to take pictures of it, but discovered that his iPhone was dead (although Herr Lumderrood was a brilliant man, he was very forgetful and would sometimes even forget his shoes when he went out in the cold, so it was no surprise that he had



forgotten to charge his iPhone the night before). So Parry used his (really Otto's) iPhone and took pictures of his drawing. He wanted to send the pictures to Herr Lumderrood, but there was no email account set up. Jed said, "May I?" and grabbed the phone and set up email services and within two minutes Parry was able to email the pictures to Herr Lumderrood. At least he tried. Herr Lumderrood wasn't sure if his email account address was HLumderrood@gmail.com--or Lumderrood @magician.com, or maybe abracadabra@abracadabra.com. And, just to be safe, quick-minded Annali grabbed her iPad and took pictures of the picture, too, and sent them to herself.

And it was just in time that the pictures were sent because...

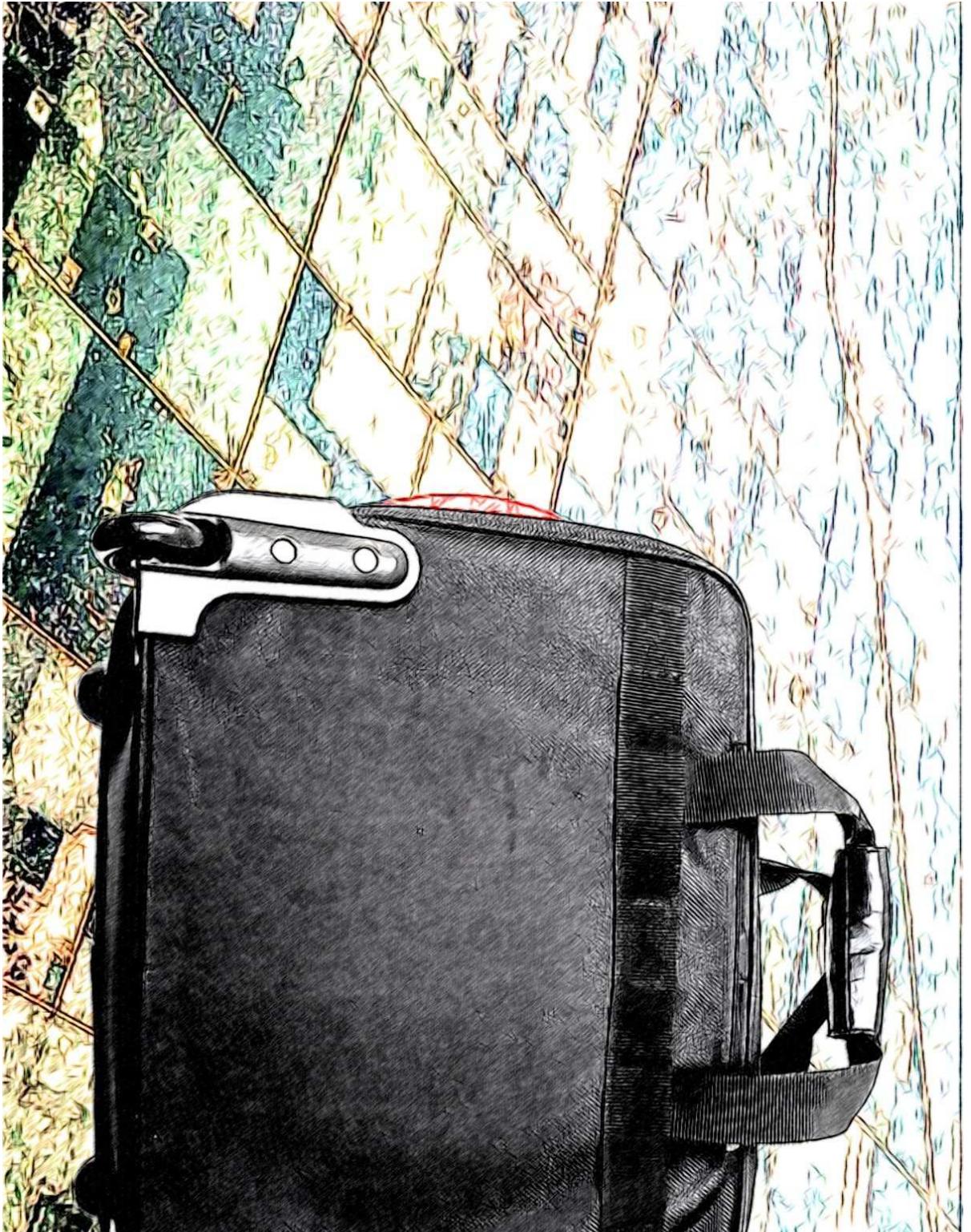


Chapter 11

The Big Gust

just then the helicopter door flew open (Herr Lumderrood had forgotten to latch it) and a gust of wind blew in and swirled around the cabin and before anyone could do anything blew Parry's clothes and his drawings out the door. Worst of all, the special drawing was pulled out of Herr Lumderrood's hands and it, too, flew out. And, not only the drawing, but Parry's iPhone flew out the door, as did Annali's iPad. Everyone gasped. Luckily everyone was strapped in (even forgetful Herr Lumderrood had absentmindedly snapped his seat belt into place before the gust of wind.) And fortunately the photo of the red bird drawing had been sent (it turned out that Herr Lumderrood's email was LumderroodL@gmail.com, but quick-witted Annali had saved the day--they were able to get the picture by accessing her account).

The helicopter flew for half an hour and then landed in a field beside a big house—not where the pilot had planned to land it, but Herr Lumderrood had talked him into the new destination. The passengers looked out the window as they landed and saw a big red carriage drawn by 12 horses. Out jumped four men dressed in purple



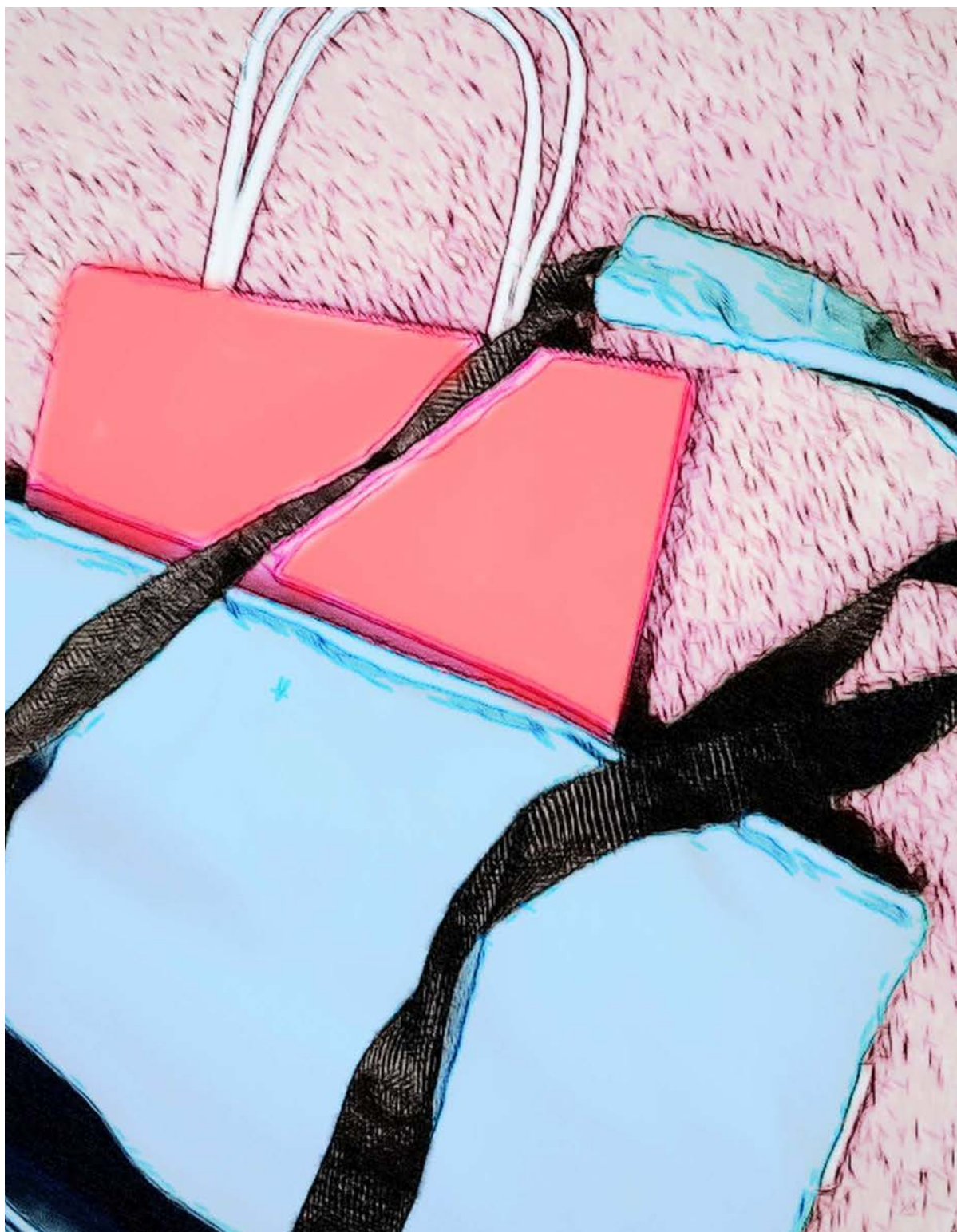
and white uniforms who escorted everyone into the carriage. They were driven to the house and ushered inside. A large table was set for 15. No one could figure out why 15—there were ten family members, plus Parry and Herr Lumderrood and the two pilots—that made 14. It was after the first course, of shrimp cocktails and before the Caesar salad that Parry glanced up and saw, sitting on his haunches, Ginger! It turned out that Herr Lumderrood had talked to the pilot and got them to radio another helicopter to fly back to the parking lot. The men were going to go out looking for Ginger, but as soon as the door opened, he leaped in (he had heard the helicopter coming and figured out that he was going to be rescued.) Parry snuck out of his chair and patted Ginger lovingly.

And then when the meal was done, after the lobster and the crème brulee and the espresso, Herr Lumderrood excused himself and beckoned to Parry. They went down the steps and Herr Lumderrood pulled out his iPad and opened the photo of the drawing that Annali had sent him (he'd noticed her taking the photo). Arm in arm with Parry, they followed the map hidden in the red bird picture. The map led them to a painting on the wall, of a red bird. Herr Lumderrood pulled the painting off the wall, and there, behind the painting was a little door. He opened the door (actually he had Parry do it as in his later years he had developed a bit of a tremor and really



couldn't have done it himself).

When the door was opened, they saw a blue bag, and when they opened it, there was another bag, this time a red bag inside it, and inside that bag was a note...



Chapter 12

The Note and the Box

With trembling hands Parry pulled it out (Herr Lumderrood's hands were trembling even more and he would have torn the note had he tried to pull it out.) They laid it on the table and smoothed it out carefully so it would not be ripped. Parry pulled out the flashlight he had brought with him and they shined it on the note. This is what they read:

Walk five steps down the hall. Stoop down and pull out the brick that is a little darker red than the other bricks. Pull out a box. The box can only be opened by having four special people each putting their left thumb on one corner. These people are Jed Gascho, Maggie Gascho, Annali Cooke and Eriselle Cooke.

Parry raced upstairs and without thinking yelled for Jed and Maggie and Annali and Eriselle to come. The tore down the steps. They carefully put their thumbs on the box---and presto, all by itself, the lid rose up and inside...



Chapter 13

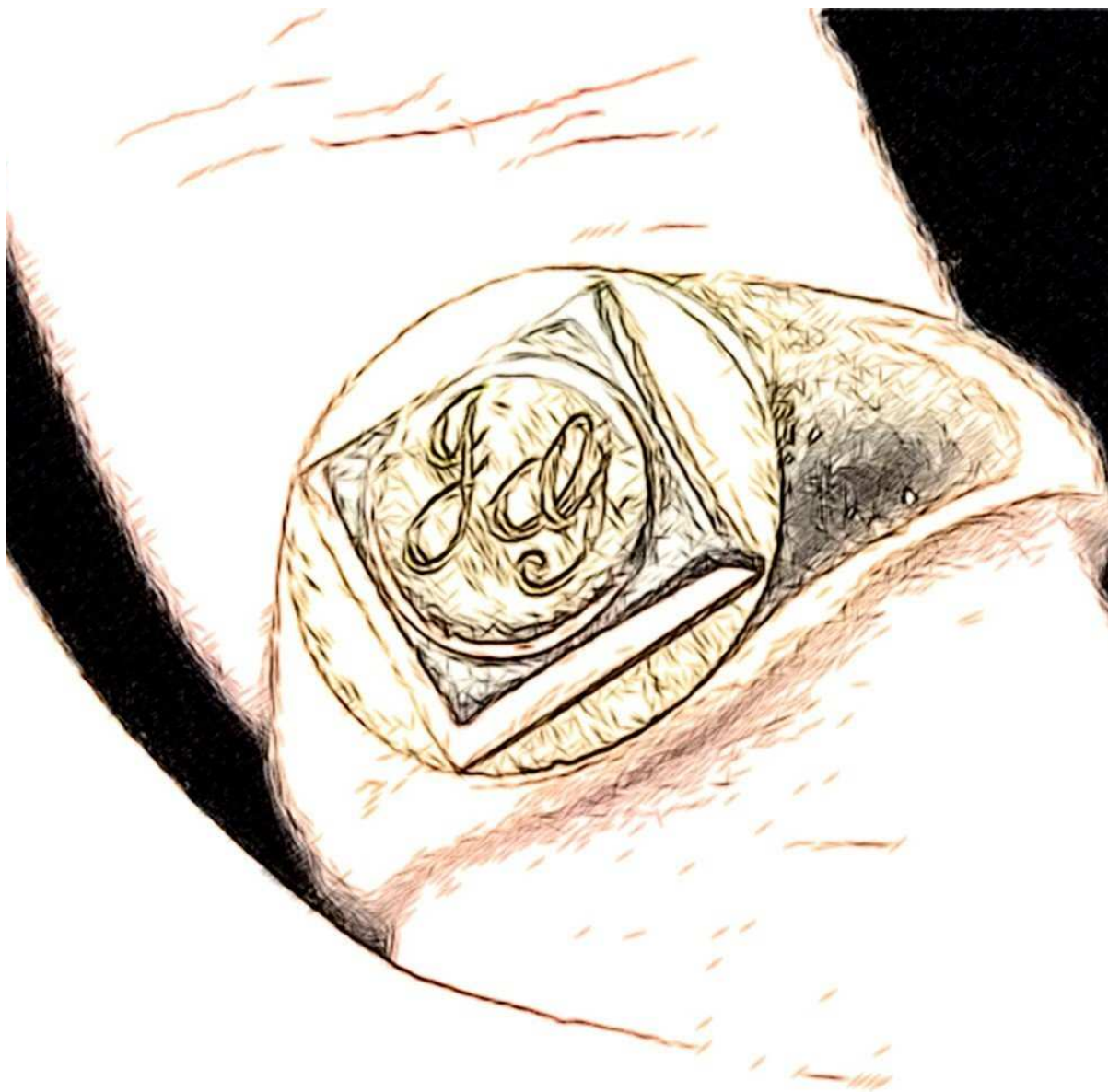
The Gold Ring

was the gold ring. It was big; it would have slid off the fingers of any of the children, but it perfectly fit Herr Lumderrood's left ring finger. He put it on...and suddenly a voice came out of the ring. *Ah, the time has come. At last I have been found. I have a very special power. If you write your name on a piece of paper, and then rub me over the name, I will tell you the names of your parents and where they are.*

So Jed and Maggie wrote down their names and just like that a voice whispered *Joe and Elena, one floor up.* Even though they knew, Annali and Eriselle wrote down their names and within five seconds they heard *Teman and Susan, upstairs.*

All of a sudden it hit Parry. He had lived in orphanages for ten years before he had come to the home of Otto and Taphina. No one would ever tell him about his parents. Were they living? If they were, why was he not with them? Were they dead?

His hand was shaking so badly that only the ring could make out his name after he wrote it. And in two



seconds out came the words *Howard and Isabella Hotter, 23 Crescent Circle, Wood Creek, Alabama*. And then the ring said something more; it whispered *They have been looking for you for ten years. You were stolen from your carriage while your mother bought a ham and cheese sandwich. She and your father and the authorities searched for you for years and could not find you. The person who kidnapped you was afraid she would be caught so she dropped you off on the doorsteps of an orphanage in a town a thousand miles from where you were born.*

Parry started to cry. Herr Lumderrood grabbed him in his arms and hugged him and said, “You poor boy. Tomorrow we will fly you home.”

And next day fly home he did, with a new suitcase filled with new clothes and with his drawings with the stars and with a printout of a very special special drawing of a picture with a red bird. His parents thought it was a wonderful picture and they framed it and hung it on the wall and pointed it out to all the visitors who came to their house.

The End





I was enchanted. Parry is so much like me, I could not believe it.
- Harry Potter

Creative, the characters are well developed. An author to remember. In the fine tradition of J. K. Rowling.
- Times of New York

A tearjerker, for sure, in the best sense of the word. I could not put the book down. Combines the best of *Gone with the Wind* and *Ulysses*.
- Chicago Tribunal

Harry Potter, meet your twin. What would happen if the two met? How the world might change!
- Wall Streets Journal

I thought it was me--except for the red bow tie. I am honored.
- Professor Albus Percival Wulfric Brian Dumbledore

