

## Chapter 2: Mystery Vase

“What are you doing in here?” mom asked as she tapped Bobby on his shoulder to wake him up and turn off the T.V.

Bobby woke up and remembered that he’d slept on the living room couch, “Oh, ah, I had a bad dream and couldn’t sleep.”

“Well, come in the kitchen and I’ll make you something to eat. Everyone’s sleeping late today after being on the road for three long days.”

Bobby could smell the coffee brewing as he sat down at the kitchen table still half asleep and still thinking about that bad dream.

“You boys need to help your dad today sort through those things in the garage,” and handed Bobby a Pop Tart.

“Grandpa sure does have a lot of stuff,” he said as he munched on his Pop Tart and took a gulp of milk.

“I know, he’s been collecting that stuff for a long time.”

“What did grandpa use that giant bucket for?”



“Good morning,” dad said as he sat down at the table and mom poured him a cup of coffee.

“That’s a wash tub. Not sure, but it looks like something he’d clean fish in,” he took a sip of coffee, then asked Lorene, “didn’t your dad have a fishing boat?”

“Yep, he sure did.”

“What about that can smasher?” Chris asked changing the subject as he sat down at the table, “can I have it?”

“No! I already called dibs on that!” Bobby said.

Mom motioned for them to stop and said, “we’ll see. I remember when he made that contraption.”

“It sure works great,” dad said smiling.

“We’re gonna start goin’ through the stuff in the garage first,” dad announced as he finished up breakfast. “So, you boys put on some older clothes and meet me in the garage after you eat.”

Chris and Bobby were excited about what things they would find, so they finished up breakfast, quickly changed their clothes, and met their dad in the garage as he was sorting things out.

As Chris walked through the opened garage door, he noticed the picture that hung on the door for as long as he could remember. A big growling bear standing up with his paws in the air and a quote like the bear was talking that said, “I don’t wanna hear it!” Too funny, he remembered. That was definitely grandpa.



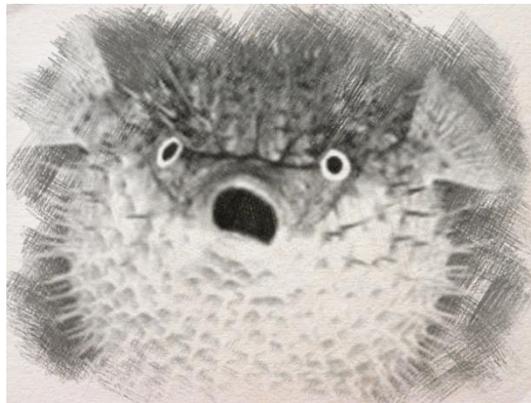
“Can we have this pool?” Bobby asked as he pulled it down from the rafters.

“No, we can’t take that home, it’s too big.”

Bobby set it aside remembering some fun times in that pool with his cousins when he was little.



“What about this blowfish?” Chris asked as he disconnected it from the rafter where it hung.



It was all dried out and puffed up with spikes all over, looking very old and fragile. “I remember buying that in San Diego and sending it to daddy years ago,” mom said as she walked into the garage. “I can’t believe that thing made it all the way here with no damage,” she laughed.

“Put all the tools on the picnic table at this end,” dad instructed, “and put the fishing gear over here at the other end.”

“Here’s some Cokes for you guys,” and she set them on the picnic table in the garage.

“Aren’t there some in this fridge?” dad asked, opening it to look inside.



“Nope,” Bobby said, “I drank the last one yesterday.”

“Yep, just beers in here,” he took one out and popped off the cap on the bottle opener hanging off the workbench.



“Thanks mom!” Bobby said as she headed back into the house.

“Turn on that fan Chris,” dad said as he was on the ladder pulling down more stuff from the rafters. “It’s getting warm up here.”

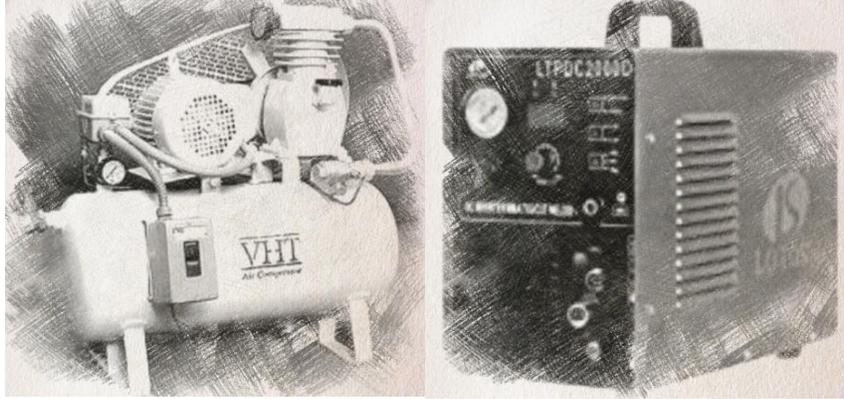
Chris put the last of the fishing gear on the table, “I think we found all the fishing stuff dad, what should we work on next?”

“Did you guys put all the tools on the picnic table?”

“Yeah,” Chris answered and pointed to the table.



“Except for the heavy stuff over here,” Bobby said pointing to the welding machine and air compressor.



“Just leave it there for now,” dad said.

Chris walked out of the bathroom as they walked into the garage,  
“Hey Uncle Larry and Aunt Lynn.”

“Is Danny and Denise coming over today?”

“No, my sister’s family is out-of-town visiting family,” Aunt Lynn  
said, “and Danny has a baseball game today.”

“I’d like to have that air compressor if no one wants it,” Larry said  
as he walked over to get a better look.

“Fine with me, I sure can’t carry it back to San Diego,” Bob said.

“I asked Gary already, and he didn’t want it,” Larry said as he  
opened the fridge to grab a beer, “that welding machine is way too old,  
so we should probably toss that.”

Larry gulped down a swig of beer, “Gary said they’d be over in a  
little while,” as he looked over all the tools laid out on the picnic table.

Larry picked up a small tool and cranked it, “I remember this,” he said with a chuckle. “I used to play with this a lot when I was little, even though I knew that dad’s tools were off limits.”

That got Bobby’s attention, “what is it?”

“It’s a manual drill,” Larry explained and put down his beer to show him how it worked on a piece of wood.



“Does it really work?”

“Yep, sure does,” he picked it up and cranked it, then walked over to the workbench, “see this hole in dad’s workbench?”

“You must have gotten an earful from Carl when you did that!” Bob said.

“Oh, believe you me,” Gary said, as he walked into the garage with B.J. holding little Ricky, “he got a lot more than just an earful!” and everyone laughed.

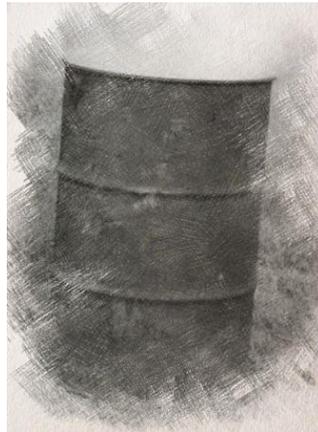
“By the way,” Bob asked Gary and Larry, “would it be OK with you if I take that can smasher with us?” he said and laughed, “Chris told me about that thing, and he has fond memories with his grandpa.”

“Sure,” Larry said.

“Yeah,” Gary agreed, “we don’t have a garage to put it in that’s for sure.”

“Brad, help Chris and Bobby put that air compressor in your Uncle Larry’s truck.”

“What are we gonna do with dad’s burn barrel?” Larry asked.



“I’d just leave it there,” Bob said, “the people who buy the house may want to use it,” and the others agreed.

“Have lots of great memories around that barrel with daddy and everyone telling stories,” Gary remarked.

“Sure do,” Larry agreed.



-----

B.J. and Lynn went into the kitchen to say hello to Lorene.

“Hey Lynn and B.J.,” Lorene said as she was taking things down from on top of the cabinets.

“Can we help?” Lynn asked.

“Yeah,” so she handed her one of the pig cookie jars.



“I think these have been up there for over forty years at least!” Lorene said.

“Yeah,” Lynn agreed, “as long as I can remember.”

“Mama thought she could hide the cookies up here, but Carla and me knew how to climb up and get them anyway,” she remembered and laughed. “I’d like to take these home with me if Carla doesn’t care,” so she set them aside.

“Yeah,” Lynn laughed, “Danny and Chris did too, I remember catching them once.” They all laughed.

“Brad tried it once and got caught,” B.J. said, “he almost dropped it on the counter when I caught him in the act, but didn’t,” she continued, “no cookies were in it, so he didn’t bother trying that again as far as I know.” They all laughed.

“After boxing up these dishes, I’m gonna start on the attic. Wanna help?” Lorene asked.

“Sure,” Lynn said with a sigh, “I hate to even think about all the stuff that’s up there.”

“Right,” B.J. agreed.

“Yep,” Lorene said, “me too, but gotta do it.”

“I know,” Lynn said as she placed things in the box.

Lorene pulled down the attic door and climbed up with Lynn close behind.

“Man, oh man,” Lorene said as she looked around the attic, “this will be a big job!” So, she took down the clothes that were hanging and putting them in bags. “Guess we should give these to the Salvation Army,” she said to Lynn as she arrived at the top of the stairs.

“Are you sure they’d want them?” B.J. said, “they’re awfully old.”

“Well, they can always throw them out if they want,” Lorene said, then she recognized something. She could see part of a dress through the unzipped bag and opened it. *Mom’s lavender gown* she thought. She and her sister used to put it on when they played dress up in the attic when they were little. “I can’t get rid of this,” Lorene said.

“What are you gonna do with that?” Lynn laughed.

“I can’t get rid of this, Carla and I used to play dress up in this with mom’s heals,” so she put it aside.

“Almost finished bagging up these clothes. I’m *not* gonna open any more of these bags,” she said, and they all laughed, “can you help me take these down and put them in the backyard Lynn?”

“Sure,” she said as Lorene handed her the bags.

“Now you sit here Ricky,” B.J. said as she put Ricky down, “and listen to your Aunt Lorene,” then she helped Lynn take the bags of clothes down the stairs and out to the patio.

“What’s that?” Chris asked when Aunt Lynn and Aunt B.J. brought out the bags and put them in one corner of the patio.

“Just some old clothes from the attic,” Aunt Lynn said.

“You guys are in the attic?” Bobby asked and looked over at Chris to see his reaction.

In an instant Chris and Bobby dropped what they were doing and went up the stairs, then walked over to the old trunk.

“Mom,” Chris opened the old trunk and pulled out the vase to show her, “What’s this?”

Mom laughed and said, “Oh,” mom took it from him. “That’s great granny’s urn.”

“What’s an urn?” Bobby asked.

“It’s her ashes.”

“Yuk!” Bobby exclaimed.

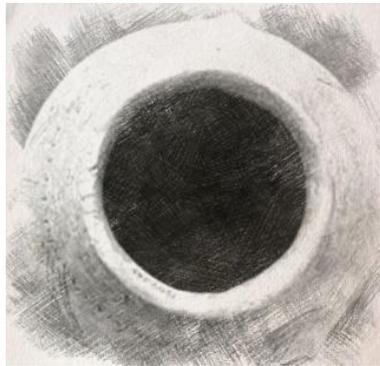
“Yeah,” mom continued, “they cremated her, and we never got around to spreading them out anywhere. They found them in your great-granny’s house after she died,” she said as she opened it.

“Don’t open it!” Chris yelled.

“Why?”

“Cause yesterday,” Chris explained, “I opened it and it seemed like something came out of it!

“What? That’s ridiculous”, and she popped off the lid and looked inside and showed them. “It’s just ashes.”



They peaked inside then looked away and Chris said, “it’s creepy.”

“I heard that if someone has an evil spirit when they die, the evil spirit tries to get into one of their family members,” Aunt B.J. said just kidding, “so *look out!*” she said laughing, teasing the kids.

They both jumped, “Mom!” Bobby asked still afraid, “is that true?”

“Of course not! she gave B.J. a disapproving look for scaring them and Lynn agreed.

“At least,” Aunt B.J. said, “as long as you are a good boy, you should be OK.”

“Now stop it B.J.!”

Aunt B.J. laughed as she began to look through some books in an old bookcase with Ricky tagged along wherever she went.

But Chris and Bobby weren't laughing.