

CHAPTER II

THE TENT

The tent that covered the dig site wasn't just any tent. It had been used as a garage to store all the mine equipment before the permanent garage was erected this past summer. It was gigantic in size: 120 feet long, 50 feet wide, 30 feet high, and it resembled a huge cavern inside. Now that the permanent garage was complete, however, the tent had outlived its usefulness and was going to be destroyed. When the ruins had been discovered, Mr. Munro, the mine superintendent, decided to erect the tent over the ruins and use the remainder of the

THE AMULET

tent for storage. Without the tent, the dig could not have commenced and would have had to wait until next summer. Although it was cold inside, it still provided a safe haven from the elements.

The dig site was a favourite place for the kids, regardless of whether they were helping to excavate or playing. It was the equipment, the crates and the boxes of all sorts and descriptions that fascinated the kids the most. They spent hours rummaging through the equipment while playing all kinds of imaginary games.

Because it was used for storage, miners often came to the tent looking for equipment or spare parts that were needed to run the mine.

Some of the miners were friendly and some not so friendly. A few would stop and talk and show a genuine interest in the dig, but most didn't understand what they were digging for, nor did they care.

One of the favourite pastimes of the boys was to pretend they were driving the equipment that had been stored in the tent. This could consume a considerable amount of time and sometimes annoyed Amy. The time they spent skating and playing hockey she could understand; it was the other things that bothered her. She was usually

preoccupied with the dig and couldn't see why they weren't as interested in it as she was.

"How come the boys always want to play with the equipment? Why don't they spend more time helping us?" Amy asked her dad.

"Well dear, boys, for some reason, like to drive equipment and the bigger the equipment, the better. Why, I don't know, I guess it's just because they're boys," Max replied.

"Well, I don't understand it." Amy sighed as she continued chipping away at the frozen ground.

"I'm just lucky I've got you to help me, dear," Max told Amy as he smiled at her.

"We wouldn't be here if Mr. Munro hadn't put this tent up, would we?" Amy said.

"No we wouldn't. We're just fortunate that Mr. Munro is the mine superintendent; not many people would have done what he has done for us," Max replied.

"The boys have played all day and haven't done a thing," Amy quipped.

"Life can't be all work Amy. The boys are still young and if they choose to play rather than help at the dig, that should be okay. After all, they do help whenever you need a hand or if they're asked," Max said.

THE AMULET

"I know dad, it's just that sometimes I would like them to be more responsible," Amy replied.

Max chuckled to himself because Amy was forgetting the times that she too had whiled away the day playing with the boys as he and Bill were doing the excavating.

"It's time to go home - go find your brothers and we'll call it a day," Max said.

"Okay dad," Amy cried as she ran towards the south end of the tent to get her brothers.

Nadine was waiting for her family in the kitchen when they returned from the dig. Everyone was tired, some from working and some from playing. After supper everyone retired early.