

THE  
LEGACY OF  
THE LOST KEY  
THE GRAIN OF SAND

ANISH

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# Prologue

Let me tell you about Adam and Emma, two extraordinary siblings whose adventures date back to May 2003.

Introducing Adam Wilson, a gifted fourteen-year-old wonder whose intellectual ability shines brilliantly amongst the complex puzzles of life.

It is a well-known fact that Adam possesses an uncanny ability to decipher riddles with astonishing ease. Present him with a riddle, and you will witness the marvel of his intellect as he delivers the correct answer on his very first attempt. Not just that, Adam possesses the ability to use an enigma, an encrypted mode of communication used during WW1. Yeah, you heard me right. Imagine a teenage codebreaker, and you've got Adam in a nutshell.

But within that brilliant brain of his, there was a catch. Sometimes, his memory would play hide and seek with him. It's like having a supercomputer with an occasional glitch. But hey, that just added an element of surprise to their adventures.

Then, there is Emma, his younger sister, a mere nine-year-old, yet possessing an extraordinary gift that defies her tender years.

Her characteristic survival capabilities are nothing short of awe-inspiring. She is a master of navigating labyrinths, too.

Emma's resourcefulness is legendary; she has the remarkable ability to transmute commonplace objects into extraordinary tools, a talent that often proves indispensable on their adventures. You know those moments when you're stuck in a specific problem and you're like, 'If only I had this *thing* to solve the problem'? Emma's the one who would whip up that *thing* from thin air.

In the narrative that unfolds, you will come to know Adam and Emma as two extraordinary siblings.

Their extraordinary abilities will lead them to confront the greatest mystery of all. (I will tell you what it is later.)

## Chapter 1

# The Mysterious Letter

Adam and Emma were enjoying their vacation.

They were in the middle of a game of chess. Yeah, you heard me right, chess! These two were all about the intellectual game of strategy. Their faces were full of determination and hope.

Adam completely forgot the rules at one point and tried to move his bishop like a knight. Emma couldn't help but burst into a fit of laughter, nearly tipping over her chair. 'Oh, Adam, you can't just make up your own moves!'

But Adam, never one to be outdone, quickly recovered from his blunder. With a twinkle in his eye, he retorted, 'Well, maybe I'm just inventing a new style of chess! You know, "Freestyle Chess," where I can move my bishop like a disco dancer.'

Their game continued. Each move was more outrageous than the last.

Adam had just executed a brilliant move and declared, 'Checkmate!'

Emma let out a sigh of frustration, her brow furrowing.

'I still don't get it. Why do *you* always win?'

Adam offered a reassuring smile.

'It's all about that good old strategy, Emma. You'll figure it out with practice. Better luck next time.'

'You always say that! You'll know what your so-called "strategy" is when *I* defeat you.'

Emma snapped, throwing her hands up in frustration before storming out of the room. Her enthusiasm diminished. Who knew that just a single move could turn enthusiasm into frustration?

Adam and Emma usually play chess. It's one of their many hobbies. They do love to play chess. That's what they do when they're chillin' out. But, every time they play, Adam's the one to win until Adam is kind enough to let Emma win, which... does happen, unlike what you might think.

Yet Emma has determination. Even though she lost every single time, she never quit playing with Adam. After all, that's the only thing she can do all day, as she has no interest in anything outdoors unless something like this happens.

As Emma left, storming out of the room, her curiosity led her to wander into Professor Mitchell Wilson's study. Wait. You don't know who Professor Mitchell Wilson is, do you? Let me tell you who he is.

Well, Adam and Emma had grown up as the children of two well-educated parents who were renowned archaeologists known for their daring expeditions. Yeah! Expeditions.

From an early age, the siblings immersed themselves in the world of ancient artifacts, lost civilizations, and unsolved mysteries. In their free time, their parents used to work on a secret mission, which remains concealed from Adam and Emma. And you won't believe how they love history.

Then came the day their parents left for what they had casually referred to as a quick trip to the store, promising to return shortly after buying some milk. Yet they never did. Adam was just seven years old at that time, and Emma was a mere two-year-old toddler!

They obviously needed a new guardian, right? Professor Mitchell, their uncle, stepped in to care for them, providing guidance and stability.

However, Professor Mitchell eventually accepted a job in Italy, far from their American home. Now, it



was the Professor's wife, Mary Wilson, who took on the role of guardian until now.

The siblings' aunt, Mary Wilson, is seriously one of the kindest souls out there. I mean, this lady is always ready to lend a hand and knows how to handle anything life throws at her. And let me tell you, she's like a box full of talents. (I'll speak about her talents later in this very narrative.)

But above all, it is her exceptional ability for reasoning and logical thinking that genuinely distinguishes her. Believe me, when confronted with the irrational or nonsensical, Aunt Mary's tolerance is swiftly depleted. But here's the kicker: get her into a good old logical chat, and she loses track of time faster than you'll know. She is wild. (You'll know why later.)

Now, coming back to Emma.

As Emma left, storming out of the room, her curiosity led her to wander into Professor Mitchell Wilson's study, a room filled with an atmosphere of history and secrets. It was a place where the air seemed to whisper tales of ancient civilizations and hidden knowledge. And on that fateful day, something caught Emma's eye—drops of ink

splattered across an old parchment. Yeah, and by old parchment, I really mean *old* parchment.

‘What’s that?’ Emma said to herself.

Emma was aware that Professor Mitchell was in Italy for work, leaving no room for his involvement in the spilled ink. Furthermore, the vision of anyone entering Professor Mitchell’s room was unthinkable. Yet Emma was determined in her quest for answers.

With determination coursing through her veins, she pushed herself into the professor’s study, stepping into a chamber she had never entered before. It was her first time ever experiencing the vintage feel of Professor Mitchell’s room. For you, let’s just say it was like stepping on the moon for the first time.

The parchment, lying on the Professor’s workstation, had markings covered by the ink’s possibly accidental splatter. Yes, accidental. That’s because no one would ever want to come and splatter ink on purpose, right? That too in Professor Mitchell’s room.

And the ink? Well, it had a very unusual odor. Not something that regular ink would smell like. The distinctive odor of the ink reminded her of her school’s chemistry lab. The smell of the ink spread across the room, adding another layer of intrigue to the puzzle.

As she peered closer, Emma discovered that there were symbols and pictures on the parchment. Not words. It was something altogether unfamiliar.

Astonishment washed over her as she grasped what she had stumbled upon. Realizing that she couldn't solve this mystery alone, she hastily made her way to her brother, Adam, eager to share her discovery.

'Hey, Adam! You won't believe what I found in Uncle Mitchell's study!' said Emma, running into their room and almost tripping over a chess piece.

'Whoa, slow down, Emma!' Adam replied with a smile, setting aside the chessboard. 'What did you find? Another ancient puzzle to solve?'

Emma's eyes sparkled with excitement as she launched into her tale.

'It's something even more mysterious, Adam. Come see for yourself!'

She tugged at his arm, urging him to follow her.

Adam, always eager for a new adventure, couldn't resist his sister's enthusiasm. He took a notebook and pen and finally said,

'Alright, all right, lead the way, Sherlock. Let's see what you've got.'

Emma took her brother with a nice little smile on her face. And yeah, she totally forgot that she had lost a chess match.

‘Look! This is what I found.’

‘That’s great, and how did you find it? You did not storm into the room, did you?’

‘No, why would I? I saw this while I was walking by the corridor.’ Emma said.

‘Walking? You weren’t walking. You were *angry* at me and stormed out of the room.’ Adam corrected her.

‘Whatever.’ Emma was frustrated again. Adam had reminded her of the chess match she lost. But let the past be in the past. Let’s come back to the present.

‘Now, let me see the parchment,’ Adam said as he looked at the parchment.

At first, Adam hesitated to pick up the parchment, but how do you think he would be able to resist picking up the parchment? He picked it up.

‘I don’t think that those are words,’ Emma mentioned, pointing at the script on the parchment.

Adam examined the markings and the partially obscured text, his eyes narrowing in concentration.

‘These *are* words, Emma.’

‘How?’

‘Each symbol represents a phonetic sound. But this is obviously not a modern language. It’s some sort of ancient script, possibly from a bygone civilization.’

‘Never knew pictures could make words.’

‘And... did you find anything else?’

‘Yeah. The ink—did you smell the ink? It smells like our chemistry lab at school.’

‘Chemistry lab?’

‘Yeah. Chemistry lab’

‘Well, to me, it smells like some kind of... fruit.’

‘Fruit? How is this... Wait, it smells like... pomegranate.’

‘Right! That’s what I meant.’ Adam exclaimed.

‘But it does smell like some acid.’

‘Hmm... It smells like rusted iron, but we can focus on the text for now.’

‘Text?’

‘Yeah? What’s wrong with it?’

‘Nothing’s wrong, but how on earth are *we* supposed to know what this language is? Do you think we stand a chance at understanding it?’ Emma spoke in a cacophonous voice. Her voice held a mix of curiosity and doubt as she gazed at the script before them.

‘Easy, Emma. Keep your voice down. We don’t want Aunt to hear us.’

‘All right! I’ll be quiet.’ Emma replied in a hushed tone.

‘You know, Emma, this script looks like the Ancient Egyptian hieroglyphs.’

‘How are you *so* sure?’

‘Well, it could also be other hieroglyphs. I don’t have all the details since it’s not something I’ve studied in detail, but I remember Dad mentioning it once when I asked him about Ancient Egyptian scripts.’

‘Then how do we decode it?’

‘I remember that he mentioned how a person named Jean-François Champollion decoded the hieroglyphs. He also told me how to decode a hieroglyph, but... I forgot.’

‘Why are you so forgetful? If you had remembered how to decode it, our work would have been easier!’ Emma shouted at Adam.

‘Cool down.’

‘I wish Dad would have told *me* about it.’

‘You weren’t born by then.’ As Adam said so, Emma’s face was like, ‘Duh! Why was I not the elder one?’

Adam reached for the notebook and pen.

‘I think I’ll rewrite the script we can see here.’ He said.

‘Yeah. It might be a starting point for further research on Egyptian hieroglyphs.’

Adam starts copying the script as Emma watches him do so.

He ends up writing down something that looks like this:



Weird? I know that you have no idea what this means, but don’t worry. Our buddies, Adam and Emma, will decode it for you. All you have to do is sit tight and read on.

‘Good thing I’m good at art.’ Adam started. ‘It looks like there are three words. I hope we can find some source for knowing more about this hieroglyph.’ Adam said with hope. ‘What do you think?’

‘I think it’s time to leave,’ Emma said with a short laugh.

‘Not the answer I expected...’ Adam smiled. ‘...but yeah. We must leave.’

As Adam and Emma quietly exited the room, they came across an unexpected sight.

Aunt Mary stood at the door, her expression a mix of surprise and concern.

Caught in the act, the siblings exchanged nervous glances, their hearts racing as they wondered how much she might have overheard.

‘Uh... What are you doing here?’ Adam asked Aunt Mary as he stuttered.

‘You’re asking what I’m doing here? It feels like the question should be, what are *you two* doing here?’

Her tone conveyed a sense of suspicion, leaving Adam and Emma aware that their secret discovery might not remain a secret for long.

‘Umm... We discovered that some ink was spilled in uncle’s room, so...’ Yeah. Adam was trying to make up a story, but he was interrupted by Emma.

‘Actually, Aunt Mary,’ she began hesitantly, ‘we were just exploring around, and we stumbled upon something in Uncle’s study. It’s... It’s something strange, something we don’t quite understand yet.’

Her voice quivered slightly, conveying a sense of nervousness.

Adam nodded in agreement.

‘Yes, that’s right. We were just curious, and we didn’t mean to intrude. We were about to come and tell you.’



Emma glared at Adam, as they were not actually planning to tell Aunt Mary about it.

‘Oh... So, what is it that you discovered? Is it something about your uncle?’ Aunt Mary asked with curiosity.

Aunt Mary’s curiosity and interest in the topic were surprising.

The siblings expected Aunt Mary to scold them or something, but that didn’t happen. She seemed to praise and encourage them for their discovery indirectly. Good old Aunt Mary!

‘It’s not related to Uncle Mitchell, as far as we can tell,’ Adam began, ‘but it’s something uncommon to be found in his room. Come and see for yourself.’

Aunt Mary entered the room. And as she saw the spilled ink, she said, ‘You didn’t spill it, did you?’

‘Obviously not. Why would we?’ Adam said.

‘Okay, but how did you find it?’

‘I was just walking-’ Emma started.

‘You weren’t walking-’ Adam interrupted. He couldn’t help but tease her.

‘Argh... fine. I stormed out of the room...’ Emma corrected herself, ‘...after losing the chess match. And then, I stumbled upon the spilled ink.’

And then Aunt Mary was like, ‘Uh, huh? What made you come in?’ Emma felt a bit irritated with

Aunt Mary asking a lot of questions. I don't know about you, but Emma couldn't tell whether Aunt Mary was about to scold them or not.

'When I saw it, I came in to... I don't know why I came in.'

'You were curious, right?' Adam asked.

'Yeah. I was just curious. Then I saw the parchment on the table.' Emma said, agreeing with Adam's point.

'What about the rest of our discovery?' Adam asked.

'Right! I found out that the ink on the parchment smelled like our chemistry lab. Adam said that it smells like pomegranate and iron.'

Aunt Mary smelled the ink. 'You're right. This smells like rusted iron and a bit like pomegranate, too.'

'Also, the script on the parchment is probably Egyptian hieroglyphs. And again, I do not know for sure.'

'I must say,' Aunt Mary remarked with astonishment, 'you two have the makings of a great detective.'

'More like untrained historians and archaeologists,' Adam said.

'May I ask why?'

‘This writing here can only be deciphered by someone who knows the Ancient Egyptian hieroglyphs. This is something that we may not be able to decode easily. It could be anything. As far as I know, I can say that three different words are waiting for us to decode them.’ Adam mentioned desperately.

‘We will find out what it says,’ Emma said with determination.

Aunt Mary nodded, her pride in their curiosity and determination evident.

‘I have a feeling you two are onto something fascinating. Please let me know when you uncover the meaning behind those ancient symbols. I’m genuinely interested in this mystery.’ Yeah. You read it right. Aunt Mary didn’t scold them but... praised them.

Aunt Mary had been a part of their lives ever since Adam and Emma could remember.

She was their mother’s younger sister, and while they had known her throughout their childhood, it was only after their parents’ disappearance that Aunt Mary had become their guardian. Adam and Emma had become her responsibility, and she was determined to ensure that they were not just cared

for but also educated in ways beyond ordinary schooling.

With Aunt Mary's unexpected support and encouragement, the siblings felt even more determined to unlock the secrets of the hieroglyph. Their shared journey into the unknown had just gained a new ally. How wonderful

END OF PREVIEW

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