

Detective:
YOU

YOU **SOLVE** THE MYSTERY

THE CAPTURED EAGLE



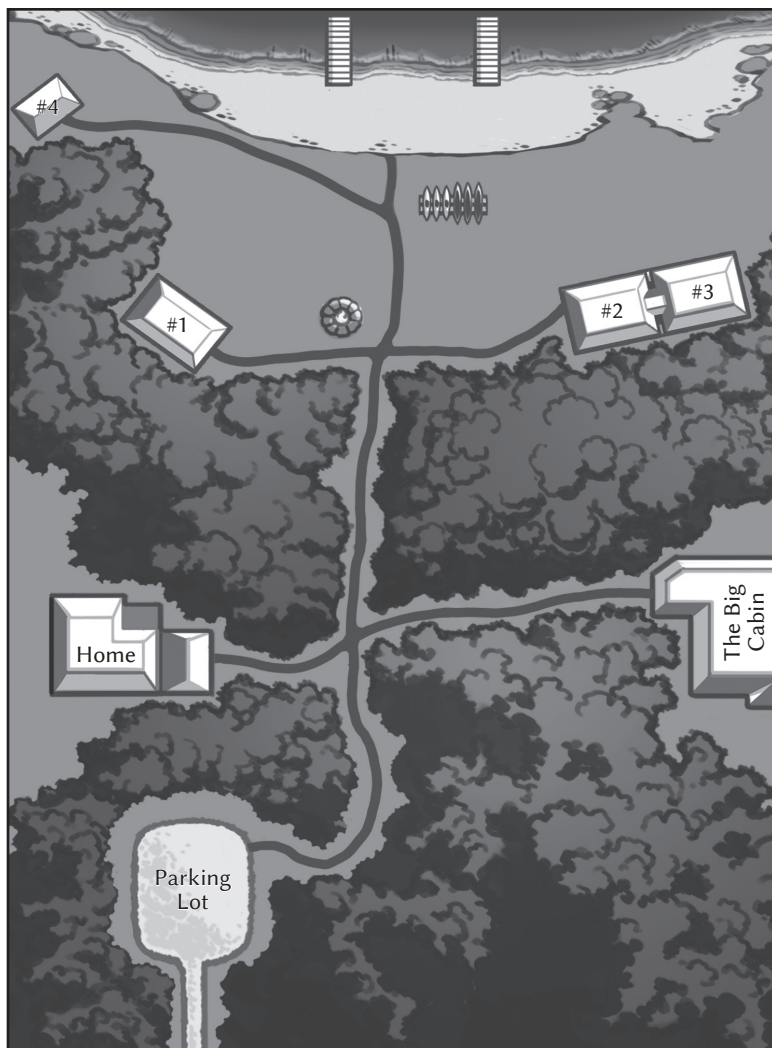
A CHOOSE YOUR PATH MYSTERY

DEB MERCIER

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|----------------------------|-----|
| How to Use This Book | 5 |
| Deductive Reasoning..... | 6 |
| Wednesday, 7:32 a.m. | 8 |
| Wednesday, 10:41 a.m. | 16 |
| Wednesday, 1:02 p.m. | 35 |
| Thursday, 9:33 a.m. | 49 |
| Thursday, 11:28 a.m. | 60 |
| Thursday, 7:52 p.m. | 87 |
| Friday, 7:21 a.m. | 106 |
| Friday, 4:36 p.m. | 116 |
| Saturday, 7:07 a.m. | 128 |
| About the Author | 152 |

MAP OF THE RESORT



HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

As you read this book, you'll sometimes be asked to jump to a distant page. Please follow these instructions. Sometimes you'll be asked to choose between two or more options. Decide which you feel is best, and go to the corresponding page. (Be careful: Some options will lead to disaster.) Finally, if a page offers no instructions or choices, simply go to the next page.

Along the way, look for suspects (people who might have committed a crime) and clues. You'll know when you've found an important clue *because it will look like this*. And you'll know when you're on a page that eliminates a suspect because you will see a magnifying glass in the bottom corner, just like the one below.

There are six suspects to find. One of them is behind the evil scheme. So keep track of all the suspects and all the clues because you'll need them to solve this mystery! A good way to do that is by creating a grid (like the one shown on page 7) on a blank piece of paper.

List every suspect, and write down any clues about them. Then cross out their names when you find proof they didn't do it.

GO TO THE NEXT PAGE.



DEDUCTIVE REASONING

Have you heard of Sherlock Holmes? The famous character from books, television, and films is a detective who solves mysteries by using a method known as deductive reasoning.

We all use deductive reasoning. In fact, we use it quite often—and probably don't realize it. "Deductive reasoning" means that we can draw a conclusion based on two or more true statements. Maybe that sounds complicated, but it's not. Check out these examples:

Statement #1: It's dangerous for people who cannot swim to jump into the deep end of the pool.

Statement #2: Barb cannot swim.

Deductive reasoning: It would be dangerous for Barb to jump into the deep end of the pool.

Statement #1: Basketball players get better at their sport by practicing every day.

Statement #2: Larry practices basketball every day.

Deductive reasoning: Larry is getting better at basketball.

Just as Sherlock Holmes does in his stories, you can use deductive reasoning to solve this book's mystery. You might, for example, meet a suspect who has big feet. Then you might find a clue that proves the criminal has tiny feet. Through deductive reasoning, you know the big-footed suspect cannot be the criminal. So you can cross that suspect off your list.

We've already told you that this story's villain will be one of the six suspects. So when you've crossed five names off your list, deductive reasoning tells you that the sixth suspect must be the villain! That is how you'll solve *The Captured Eagle*.

| Suspect | Clues | Proof |
|---------|--|-------------------|
| Deb | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lives in Minnesota Enjoys hiking Plays the flute | |
| Emily | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Has dark hair Goes to concerts | |
| Ryan | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Big and tall Writes books Builds with LEGO | Criminal is short |
| Shane | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is an artist Is very tall Loves comic books | Criminal is short |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |
| | | |

A sample suspect list



WEDNESDAY

7:32 A.M.

You rest your hand on your homemade sign, Rickety Bridge Trail, and smile. The polished wood is smooth under your palm—and already warm from the morning sun that's pierced the canopy of leaves above. The trail is part of the rustic resort your parents own. You, your mom, and your dad live and work here every summer. The nearest town is 30 miles away—and 20 of those miles are on a winding gravel road. So if someone were to say that you spend your summers in the middle of nowhere, they wouldn't be wrong.

You glance at your hiking boots, wet with morning dew. They were a gift from Loretta, an occasional guest at the resort and your stand-in grandmother. You can't think of her without remembering the adventure you shared, which began when you found her cabin empty.

You shake away the memories. It's time to put your hiking boots to use. You have a stack of chores waiting at your seasonal home, but for now, the morning is yours.

Adjusting your pack, you start down the trail.

You're having fun, but you are also sort of working. You're hoping to find some prime birdwatching spots for the resort guests. They're in the area for the annual Festival of Birds. Thousands of people flood the northern lakes region for this week-long celebration. The nearby town—if you can call it “nearby”—transforms with colorful craft-fair tents, food trucks, a pop-up aviary, naturalist demonstrations, and the grand finale: a bird-themed parade on Saturday.

Your parents, who work as teachers during the school year, pay you a decent wage to help at the resort. You handle everything from delivering fresh towels (not so bad) to cleaning cabins (not your favorite), although once in a while you get paid a hefty tip for your trouble.

A gust of wind tousles the trees, making a sound like ocean waves. The birds are out in force, filling the air with their early-morning chatter. You spot a big one swooping across the path ahead, and you hurriedly dig out your battered bird field guide from your backpack. The bird's big, powerful feet anchor it to a tree trunk,

and it hammers at the bark, looking for breakfast. It's a woodpecker, for sure. It has a bright-red cap on its gray and white head, with black-and-white-spotted wings.

You flip a few pages as quietly as you can. There it is: a Red-Bellied Woodpecker.

It takes off in a flurry, winging directly overhead. You notice its creamy belly, stained with a faint pink patch. It should probably be called a Sort-of-Pink-Bellied Woodpecker. Sometimes, you wonder who names birds and what they're thinking.

You stuff the book into your pack and trek farther into the forest. At least you'll be able to identify one bird for the guests.

Soon you reach the trail's namesake, a truly rickety bridge that spans a small, burbling stream. You can't help but cringe. The last time you stood here, just a couple of days ago, your cell phone fell out of your hand and took a bath in that very stream. As it turns out, cell phones don't like baths—your phone is toast.

You step carefully across the bridge, avoiding the gap left by a missing slat. You mentally add "fix that" to your list of things to do.

Across the bridge, the trail splits. The left trail is the one most traveled. It eventually loops back to the trailhead

near Cabin #4. The path branching to the right is much narrower and hasn't been maintained so well. It's studded with boulders and downed branches, making for much harder hiking. And maybe better birdwatching?

You follow the trail to the right, Loretta's hiking boots keeping you steady on your feet. You hear the occasional whine of mosquitoes, but, thankfully, you gooped up with bug spray before you left this morning. The mosquitoes aren't really bugging you.

You remember why you don't hike on this route. It's a maze of trails. If you aren't paying attention, you could easily get lost out here. You focus on trying to memorize every right and left you take.

There's a thrill to exploring this new-to-you territory. You wander up and down the various trails for who-knows-how-long.

A bright patch of sunlight ahead signals that you're coming upon a clearing, just the type of place you're looking for. It's like a scene from a storybook. The path opens into an impossibly green meadow, tall grass bending in swirled mounds, the dew sparkling like diamonds. Wildflowers dot the meadow with splashes of yellow, pink, purple, and white, the tallest flowers gently swaying in the breeze.

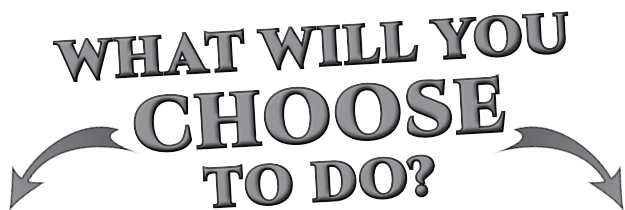
You squint and blink until your eyes adjust to the sudden brightness.

When they do, you have to look twice.

On the other side of the meadow, at the edge of the clearing, sits a huge black box. Shading your eyes and focusing more intently, you see it's a box covered by something black, like a tarp or canvas.

You glance at your watch. Uh-oh! You're already late. You need to get back to the resort and start your chores. Your parents—and you—treat your contributions to the resort like any other job. You are expected to take it seriously and not be late.

But that box has you curious. If you're quick about it, maybe it's worth a couple of minutes to investigate.



Go back to the resort.

GO TO PAGE 44.

Check out the box.

GO TO PAGE 52.

You reach the clearing and point. "It's right over—" You pause in confusion. "—not there."

The cage is gone.

"I swear it was here," you say.

"Are you sure? This is the right trail?" your dad asks.

You tamp down a swell of annoyance. "It was right over there, Dad."

He sighs. "I believe you, Sam."

"Wait. You do?" You had expected some pushback for leading your dad on a wild goose chase . . . or wild eagle chase.

Worry darkens your father's eyes. "I'm not sure I should share this with you. Your mom doesn't want you to know."

"Now you have to tell me, with a lead-in like that," you say.

He barks out a short laugh. "I suppose I do." As an English teacher, he's all about following through with one's words. "About a month ago, we were contacted by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. They asked us to keep an eye out for anything suspicious on the property."

"Suspicious like how? Weird people? Loud noises?"

Your dad shakes his head. "No. Well, maybe? They had a tip that someone was trapping bald eagles in the

area and wanted your mom and me to know about it, in case we saw anything fishy.”

“Have you?”

“Not really. But here’s the thing: The last eagle taken was one that Fish and Wildlife had tagged—and its nest was on our resort property.”

“Tagged, like wearing a transmitter or something?”

“Exactly,” says your dad.

“How did they know it was gone?” you ask.

“The signal hadn’t moved in a couple of days, so a ranger came out to check it. He found the band on the ground close to the nest.”

“Couldn’t it have just fallen off? Maybe the band got worn out,” you suggest.

“It was cut. That eagle was taken. If the one you saw is from our property, too . . .” Your dad trails off, gazing toward the spot across the meadow.

“What?” you ask.

“Nothing. We’d better go.”

* * *

Back at the house, your dad pulls you aside. “I want you to keep your eyes and ears open, okay?” he says.

“But only to tell me if there’s anything I should know about. You’re not to do anything without me or your mom. Got it?”

“Sure, Dad,” you say.

“I mean it.”

You know he’s thinking of your investigation into Loretta’s disappearance—and how dangerous it became.

“Got it,” you say. “Eyes and ears open. Nothing without you or Mom.”

Your dad smiles. “Thanks, Sam-I-Am.”

You roll your eyes at the nickname you haven’t been able to shake since before you could walk. You give him a quick wave as you start your morning chores.

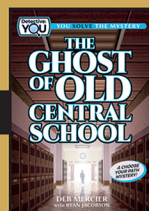
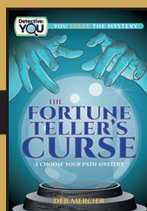
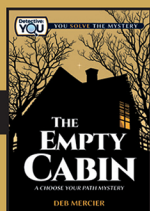
GO TO THE NEXT PAGE.



Your parents' cabin resort is a wonderful place to spend the summer, but something about the area's bird population is off: Where are all the bald eagles? When you find an eagle caged in the woods, suspicions turn toward your family. Not only are the eagles in jeopardy, so is your parents' business.

You're the detective in this mystery. Identify suspects. Gather clues. Make choices that affect what happens next. Navigate puzzles, from mazes to secret codes. Then use deductive reasoning to determine who committed the crime! You're the main character. You make the choices. Will you solve the case?

SURVIVE & SOLVE!



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