

PART ONE

*Max unlocks the past by mistake, and the children end up in
1892*

ONE

THE KEY TO ALL OF IT

There were plenty of popular places to go in town but Wallingford Antiques & Heirlooms was never, and probably never would be, one of them. Even Prints Charming, the photocopy center that closed years ago, still had more people peeking through its dark windows. Most people figured there was nothing sold, said or done inside the antique store that could be of any interest to anyone under the age of one hundred (or someone younger if they were the kind of person who enjoyed watching dust settle).

The store wasn't going to win any award for pushing the boundaries of New England architecture either. It looked like every other old building in the area—quaint in a run-down way, shingled, and in need of more parking. That last detail was the result of being a carriage house two hundred years ago. Whoever built it had no way of knowing the future was in cars and not hitching posts for horses.

Inside, relics from around the world hung from and overflowed every inch of floor and wall space. A heavy smell—some combination of furniture polish, mothballs, and musty leather—kept everyone but the most serious antique collectors away.

Making It Home

It didn't matter how uninteresting or unmemorable the rest of Connecticut found it. The store was like a second home to fourteen-year-old Peregrine Gaspar. It was there, upstairs in the office, she curled up to read on a nineteenth-century fainting sofa that was in desperate need of reupholstering.

Of course, Peri (as she was called) hadn't always loved it. In fact, when she first saw her grandfather's store two years ago, she thought it was creepy and dull, like everyone else in town. It took a while for Peri to gain an appreciation for all the strange stuff that had been acquired over the years. By the time her dad took over the store, Peri decided even antiques deserved a place in the world. She liked the idea that everything in the shop had a story somewhere in its past.

It was safe to say her new stepbrothers didn't feel the same way. Sure twelve-year-old Henry and nine-year-old Max Hawkins came to the store after school every day, but only because they had no choice. While Henry sat in the back of the store doing his homework or working on his scout badges, Max tried to look busy so he wouldn't be asked to sweep the store or carry something to a customer's car.



An antique fainting sofa

As far as Henry was concerned, there was a very, very fine line between an antique store and a garage sale. And from the look on Max's face earlier today, spending a few hours at the store was about as exciting as watching tree rings form.

On this particular afternoon, Peri was nestled on her sofa reading when she noticed that there was no sound coming from downstairs. Her first thought was her stepbrothers had finally locked themselves inside the Early American grandfather clock or fallen through one of the old wooden floorboards. She finally

Making It Home

decided to check on them...less to rescue them and more to avoid being blamed for some mishap of theirs later.

Halfway down the creaky stairs, Peri peeked over the railing to find Henry assembling his first aid kit. It was going in a metal lock box he'd found in the shop. Beside



The keys Max found

him sat Max, rubbing his itchy eyes and playing with a bunch of old skeleton keys. He was trying each of them in the lock on Henry's box.

"None of those are going to fit," Henry told him. "I bet they're a hundred years old. Look how rusty some of them are."

It was at that moment Peri saw the mistake she had made. The gigantic, irreversible mistake. On the table beside the boys was *Roger's Encyclopedia of Antiques and Extraordinary Curiosities*. It was a thick, heavy book of photographs and details of every antique imaginable. Peri cringed. How could she have been so careless as to leave it there?



Her grandfather had locked it away in a mid-century teak credenza before he left for an extensive "picking expedition." It was an invaluable and influential source of information that needed to be protected, he said. It didn't take long for

Making It Home

Peri to pick the lock and find the encyclopedia. “Influential” didn’t even begin to describe it though.

Max took a closer look at the keys. “What do you think they go to?”

Henry shrugged as he rolled up a gauze bandage. “Probably nothing anymore.”

Max nodded his head while he sneezed. Just as he was about to set the keys down, Peri yelled over at him.

“Whatever you do,” she said, “don’t put it on *Roger’s Encyclo—*”

Which was exactly what Max did. Which is when it happened.

Making It Home