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The Hunt For The Cave Of Moravia
(A KENT FAMILY ADVENTURE)

CHAPTER ONE

The most frustrating thing about having to baby-sit my three-year old niece, Kessily, is that I can't eavesdrop on Dad and Uncle Ken's conversation.

Kessily and I, along with my younger sister, Julia, are in the living room while Dad and Uncle Ken are going through a pot of tea and discussing where we'll be going for our next adventure. You see, Dad's an archaeologist and my uncle Ken is his research partner. Uncle Ken doesn't come along with us but he plans out all of my Dad's digs and then afterwards he helps to analyze the data we bring back.

You might wonder why I say "we." I mean, I'm 15 and my sister is 13. Shouldn't we be in school, or something? Well, that's the best part. We're home-schooled. So we all go along on Dad's adventures, and I can guarantee, we learn way more with him and Mom than we ever would back in a classroom.

"I hurt my flum," complains Kessily, showing me her thumb, just as I can barely hear Dad say, "…but then how would we negotiate the…?"

But to where?

"Yes, sweetie." I look at Kessily's thumb which doesn't seem to have anything wrong with it.

"Guess what I am!" says Kessily suddenly. "I'll make a noise and then you guess what I am."

I nod.

She pauses. "Cat! Cat!"

Julia bursts out laughing.

"Um, a cat?" I say.

"Yes!" Kessily is delighted. "House! House!"

"A house?"

Kessily grins.

She picks up her two dolls and begins taking off their clothes.

"What are you doll's names?" asks Julia.

"Geelam and Humpy."

Julia looks at me and we try not to laugh.

I love babysitting Kessily when I'm not trying to listen in on my Dad's conversations. She's a funny kid. She drives my aunt and uncle nuts. Like today, my Mom made us all pancakes and applesauce for lunch and there was Kessily drinking straight out of the maple syrup container. Or when she got a hold of the washcloth in the kitchen sink and was walking around with it on her head. Or when my aunt took her to the bathroom and she loudly told everybody that that was where people did pees and poos. Or at the prayer at lunch and Dad prayed for some people whose father had died.

"We pray for all those who are in mourning…"

"And for all those who are in night," Kessily had added.

"Dump me in the blood," Kessily is singing as she undresses her doll. "Dump me in the precious blood."

Julia and I just stare at each other until it hits me.

"I think you mean, *wash* me in the blood, Kessily," I say.

Kessily just looks at me like I'm the craziest thing she's ever seen.

"Here Kessily!" I say quickly. "Do you know this one?" I start humming, "Jesus loves me, this I know…"

"I'm Jesus," says Kessily returning her attention to the dolls and ending the discussion.

Julia is laughing as our aunt Gwen comes into the room with my Mom. Aunt Gwen is, of course, talking about Kessily.

"Honestly, I'm glad she's toilet-trained but it drives me crazy that she'll go to the bathroom once every three hours during the day and then need to go once every fifteen minutes once she's in bed…"

Mom smiles at me.

"I had the same problem with Ginny," she says winking at me to let me know she's kidding. "Hi Kessily!"

"Just call me Master," Kessily replies. Her mom sighs.

"No one has my problems, Helena," says my aunt. "Kessily is one of a kind. Don't tell people you're their master, dear."

"That's OK, Mommy," says Kessily kindly. "I forgive you."

"If you and Julia want to go listen in on Dad's and uncle Ken's conversation, go ahead," says Mom. "I think there may even be some cookies left."

"Thanks Mom!" I say, leaping to my feet.

"I promised myself I'd have a cookie," says Kessily standing up too.

"Well that sounds like a pretty binding covenant," my mom laughs.

"I'll bring her back one," says Julia, following me out of the room.

My sister Julia is cute, plump, friendly and everyone loves her. Me, I'm more serious. I like to know all about what Dad is doing and I don't always have time for trivial things when we're working hard digging out the artefacts and analyzing our findings.

"They would never let an archaeologist in, *especially* a Christian one, to explore the cave," Uncle Ken is saying, "but a family, a family that just happens to get lost, that's your best cover."

"Well, at first I wanted to do this all above-board, but your research has shown me my chance of success would be nearly nil. So, I'm going to have to agree with your plan, Ken."

Dad smiles at us as we come into the bright kitchen that Mom has decorated in pretty pastel yellows and blues.

"I'm glad you've been relieved of babysitting duty because our next expedition is going to include you in a more prominent way. C'mon. Sit down!" He pulls out a chair beside him for me while Julia grabs a cookie to take back to Kessily.

"Where are we going, Dad?" I ask eagerly.

"The Czech Republic," he says absently as he picks up a piece of paper from the kitchen table.

"*The Czech Republic*?" squeals Julia as she comes back into the kitchen. I have to admit, I am just as surprised. "Where's that?"

"Oh, your mother will go over all that with you before we leave, including some basic Czech phrases and a bit of history of the area. What I want to tell you is the basic core of the story. We'll go into greater detail as we go along. OK?"

We both nod and Julia takes a seat at the table and grabs a cookie.

"Well," begins Dad. "I think you girls both know that there is ample evidence for a young earth and the historical veracity of the Bible. We believe that since dinosaurs were made by God on the sixth day of creation, along with Adam, that dinosaurs and men co-existed with one another for quite some time, even after the great flood."

We both nod.

"You also both know," continues Dad, "that after the earth was destroyed by a flood and all civilization was wiped out, it's reasonable to think that man might have lived in caves before building towns and cities. In fact, the Bible makes several references to people living in caves, like Lot and David and Elijah, as well as 100 prophets hiding from wicked Queen Jezebel. The evolutionists will tell you that man never lived with dinosaurs and yet creation scientists have been bringing reports to the world that there are drawings on cave walls of dinosaurs, something that would be very strange if dinosaurs died out millions of years before mankind appeared. These reports go largely uncommented on by the scientific community."

I pour myself a cup of tea and help myself to one of my Mom's oatmeal chocolate chip cookies.

"Uh-huh," I say.

"Well," says my Dad. "I guess I want to add one more report that will go largely unnoticed."

He and Uncle Ken laugh.

Uncle Ken's real name is Nathaniel, but he's always been Ken. Our last name is Kent and I've been told that in high school he was called Kent by everyone and it just gradually got shortened to Ken. Dad's name is Anderson but Mom calls him Andy. Mom's name is Helena.

"It's a little bit more than that," says Uncle Ken, continuing the briefing. "We have a bit of a hunt and I think that's the part that appeals to your Dad. An interesting story came to my attention recently. I won't bore you kids with too many details, but the gist of it is, I met an elderly lady who's lived in Canada now for 40 years. She and her husband were born in Czechoslovakia. His hobby was caves. The country is full of caves and it's possible to even find a new one occasionally, which is what happened to this man. Finding a cave would have been exciting enough except that there were actually cave drawings, in excellent condition, which made the cave even more valuable. There have been axe-heads and human remains and such in other caves, so it's known that the caves were inhabited."

Julia is shifting in her seat.

"Hold on, Jul," grins Uncle Ken. "This is the good part! The pictures were actually of a dinosaur hunt! Men with spears attacking a dinosaur! This is an extraordinary confirmation of our creationist viewpoint. It's a clear indication that men and dinosaurs lived together and that dinosaurs didn't die out millions of years ago like the evolutionary model insists. But unfortunately this discovery took place in a

Communist country that upheld evolution and denied the existence of God. This man didn't know much about theology and dinosaurs but he did know about caves and that this was a valuable find and so he rushed to the authorities and told them all about the cave.

'He didn't expect what happened next. Rather than receiving fame and fortune, he and his wife were ordered to leave that area and begin their life in another part of Czechoslovakia. Furthermore, he was told to forget about the cave and pretend he had never found it.

'Puzzled and quite angry, he obeyed. He and his wife had a hard time settling into their new village and decided to try to move to Canada where the wife had a brother living here. They were amazed at how quickly they were permitted to leave."

"Why were they allowed to leave?" I ask. "Wouldn't the communists have been scared that they would tell their story and archaeologists from around the world would come over looking for the cave?"

"Good question," says Uncle Ken. "I think the communists were more concerned about internal order. They didn't want the story to be spread within Czechoslovakia so that it would undermine the theory of evolution that was being taught in the schools. If foreign experts showed up in their country trying to find the cave, they could just boot them out of the country as spies. They were very smart.

'Even in Canada, no one paid much attention to this man with a heavy Czech accent who had some crazy story about dinosaur pictures on some wall in some cave thousands of miles away. Anyone who did show an interest didn't have the resources to actually verify the story.

'Well, now the man is dead and his widow, knowing her time is short, is being a little bit more forceful about getting the story out. This time, she approached the creationists. Because she and her husband weren't Christian, they had tried to talk to secular cave experts but these scientists preferred to dismiss the story. A group of creationist scientists want to investigate the story further and your Dad has been selected to actually go and try to find the cave."

"Wow," I say. "Is it going to be hard? Are we going to have a map?"

"All I have," says Uncle Ken waving a piece of paper, "is what the widow told me. She's described the area, the closest village, any landmarks she could remember. It might not be easy once you get there and of course, there's no way of knowing what the communists did to keep the cave from ever being discovered again."

"So, when do we leave for Czechoslovakia?" I ask.

"Well, first of all," says Dad leaning forward, "it's not Czechoslovakia anymore. It's the Czech Republic. After the Berlin Wall fell in 1989 things began to change in Czechoslovakia. There were anti-communist demonstrations led by Vaclav Havel calling for the communist government's resignation. The movement was peaceful though they faced some harsh opposition. But a few weeks later a new government was formed with the communists as minority members and Vaclav Havel as president.

'Many of the Slovakian people started demanding independence and eventually there was very little they could do but separate. On January 1, 1993 Czechoslovakia ceased to exist and Prague became the capital of the new Czech Republic. That's just a little modern history. Your Mom and I will go more in depth as to the long and colourful history of the area before we go. And to answer your question, it depends on how long it

takes us to plan everything and get our plane tickets and all that. Thankfully we've all got our passports…" My Dad turns his attention back to Uncle Ken.

I look at Julia to see what she thinks of all this. She grins and wrinkles her nose. I know what she's thinking.

"Well, I guess it's going to be Czech history, Czech language, Czech culture, for the next few weeks," I say.

"I can't even say," she pauses, "Czechos..lo.."

"Just Czech Republic, Jul," I say. That's how you say it now."

"Why don't you girls go back and play with Kessily," says Dad. "We've got to work out a lot of the details here and once we figure things out we'll let you know."

Julia and I return to the living room in the middle of a conversation.

"You know, when I look back on my college days I don't think about the boyfriends and the fun and the learning as much as I do about the pleasure of walking from class to class," my aunt is saying. Kessily is tugging on the curtains which my mother is politely ignoring. She grins with delight when she sees us and immediately announces that we are going to play hide-and-seek with her.

"I long for the peace of walking through a grassy, tree-lined campus," my aunt continues. "I mean now, I'm never alone. Occasionally when I go into a store by myself it's a great thrill because I don't have to say *no dear, put that down dear, sweetie don't touch that because it might break…*"

"Just wait till you have two," Mom grins at me. "You'll never get a moments peace."

"Oh, I know," says my aunt. "And I shouldn't complain. The Bible says to do everything without complaining and arguing and I'm afraid I need to work a little harder at that."

Kessily is hiding behind our couch, giggling, and calling out, "I'm not there! I'm *here*!" as we pretend to look for her.

"It all goes by so quickly anyhow," says Mom. "Kessily will be an easy-going young lady before you know it."

"Well, I hope she turns out as nice as her cousins," says my aunt smiling at me. Julia is pretending to find Kessily and now it's our turn to find a place to hide. Kessily covers her eyes with her hands, but only barely. We don't call her for peeking. Kessily has a temper when you correct her on anything so I don't blame my aunt for wishing she could take a walk by herself sometimes.

Julia hides behind the curtain and I tuck myself behind an over-sized armchair. Kessily isn't as subtle as us and so she doesn't bother to pretend to look for us. She rushes over to Julia and nearly rips down the curtain to expose her. She then pounces on me and squeals happily when she tumbles me right over.

"So, you've got quite an adventure ahead of you," says my aunt to us.

"Yes and I can hardly wait," I say.

"Mommy, what's an adventure?" asks Kessily.

"Everyday with you is an adventure," says my aunt and we all laugh.

CHAPTER TWO

We're all munching on doughnuts (a rare treat) and watching a documentary from the library about Czechoslovakia which was, unfortunately, made in the 1970's. Dad says most of it is probably irrelevant.

It's been 17 days since we first heard that we were going to the Czech Republic.

The video and one children's book called *Let's Visit Czechoslovakia*! were the only items in our local library about the part of the world we are going to visit. The book is as old as the video so Dad says we'll have to use the internet to do most of our studying.

So far I've learned things like the Czech people are supposed to be down-to-earth and they like eating dumplings, potatoes, rice with a heavy sauce, sauerkraut, pork and lots of salt.

There are tons of caves in the Czech Republic so I hope Dad and Uncle Ken can figure out which one we're supposed to visit.

Prague, the capital, is the major attraction in the area and I know Dad and Mom won't miss at least a quick tour through a city filled with so much architecture and history. Besides, international flights only go to Prague so that's where we'll be landing.

I found a website with some basic Czech phrases so we're all starting to learn the ones that will be more useful.

As the credits roll, Julia reaches for another maple-walnut doughnut.

"Well," says Dad, hitting rewind with the remote. "About the only thing that was good for was telling you a bit about Jan Huss who lived when the area was called the kingdom of Bohemia. The documentary mentioned his many followers, the Hussites, but I would like to add that he was one of the early leaders of the Protestant movement and that he angered the Roman Catholic Church of the time by teaching people that they should read the Bible for themselves. They brought him to trial and denounced him as a heretic. Now Ginny, do you remember from the video what year he was burned at the stake?"

"14 something."

"1415. His followers were dispersed and fled to France and Germany. Since they had very little money, they lived like gypsies. Since they were from the kingdom of Bohemia they were called Bohemians. Nowadays the word Bohemian refers to people living an unconventional life usually in a colony of some sort."

"The documentary also mentioned the caves of Moravia and how tools and weapons made of flint and stone have been found in them," says Mom. "The narrator said these things were made by prehistoric man, but you girls know that the people who lived in caves were probably people needing a warm place to live after Noah's flood when everything was destroyed."

We nod. Our parents have taught us all about evolution and the idea that there were primitive men before modern man. One of my Dad's favourite topics is Out-of-Place Artefacts that don't fit with the theory that man started off primitive and has been slowly evolving. There's evidence that suggests that man started off pretty sophisticated, which fits better with the belief that God created us.

"Well, I think that's enough for tonight," says Mom picking up the box of doughnuts and standing up. Dad gets up too and heads for his office.

"Doughnuts or learning?" I say.

"Both." She heads towards the hallway to the kitchen. "Kessily will be here tomorrow. So maybe you guys can think of some fun things to do with her."

My parents are pretty flexible about our learning. If someone stops by for tea in the morning we just do our stuff in the afternoon. Learning is an ongoing activity in our house, not something restricted to a few hours with our lessons and our books.

"Let's get some cardboard and draw a village for her," suggest Julia. "We can do houses and roads and stores and all that kind of thing."

"Sounds good," I say. "We'll get out some of those cars in the bottom of your toy chest so she can drive them around it. We can draw in parking spots too."

Julia gets up to go check the recycling and see if there are any cardboard boxes we can use. I hunt for some markers in the rollback desk in the corner of the living room.

Julia and I draw the village, complete with trees, a grocery store, post office, a fire station, a park, and an abundance of homes and roads. Before Mom calls out that we need to get ready for bed we find not only a whole bagful of cars but a tin full of little people.

"She'll love it," I say.

"I love it," says Julia. "I think I'll be playing with it too."

This is Dad and Uncle Ken's final get-together to arrange everything. We haven't been in on the meetings but a lot of it has been archaeological talk. Dad's specialty is Biblical artefacts so this is a bit unusual to go and explore cave-drawings. He's been spending most of his time reading about the Czech Republic and caves and what most people call prehistoric man.

We believe the Bible when it says that God created Adam and Eve and that it happened around 6,000 years ago, so we don't believe in a prehistoric man.

Early man lived to be quite old, sometimes into their 900's, so some of unusual skulls could be explained by these long lives and the way the facial features change over such a long period of time. Dad says that when they find a skull, it often needs to be reconstructed and the person who is biased towards the idea that we evolved from apes will take a supposed prehistoric skull and realign it in an apelike way. Christian scientists have seen this happen.

Furthermore, people rarely find a complete skeleton. Sometimes they just find a jawbone and femur bone and these will even be several metres apart but they are treated as if they are a complete skeleton and a picture will appear in a magazine of an apelike man living in primitive conditions, supposedly one of our ancestors. It is only much later that a retraction is made when it's discovered that the bones weren't even from the same skeleton. It frustrates Dad that the retraction is buried deep in the magazine whereas the picture of the ape-man was on the cover.

Kessily loves our village but it only holds her interest for about 10 minutes. After that she takes the cardboard box that we've put the cars and the little people in, dumps out everything, and announces that it is a TV. Then she sits down and just watches the empty cardboard box.

Aunt Gwen is upstairs with Mom helping her to pack so we're on our own with Kessily.

“What are you watching, Kessily?” asks Julia.

“Animals.”

“Are you watching a rhinoceros?” asks Julia. “Can you say rhinoceros, Kessily?”

“I can’t say rhinoceros,” groans Kessily, saying it perfectly.

Kessily continues to watch her TV.

“He’s bleeting,” she says.

“It’s a sheep?” I ask.

Kessily looks at me strangely.

“The dog is bleeting,” she says. “He needs to be doctored.”

“Oh! Bleeding!”

“Oh cover your eags!” shrieks Kessily, putting her hands over her ears. “Cover your eags!”

Julia and I stare at each other in amazement.

Aunt Gwen and Mom come hurrying down the stairs.

“What is it, Kessily?” asks my aunt running over to her and crouching down.

“It’s pretend,” explains Kessily.

Aunt Gwen sighs as she stands up.

“I remember the simple days when all she used to do was eat bubbles.”

“Eat bubbles?!” I say.

Mom laughs.

“I remember those days. Aunt Gwen has a double sink and she used to put Kessily in one while she did dishes in the other.”

“Of course those were also the days when Kessily would come out into the living room with a pair of my underwear on her head. Usually when we had someone like the pastor and his wife over,” says Aunt Gwen.

“My cheek is coming, Mommy,” shrieks Kessily jumping up and running to Aunt Gwen. “My cheek is coming, Mommy! Kiss it!”

And Aunt Gwen does.

CHAPTER THREE

We're on the second leg of our journey to Prague. The first part was a plane trip from Toronto to London and now from London to Prague. I'm getting really sick of crossword puzzles.

Dad is reading. Mom has her eyes closed. Julia is listening to an in-flight music station. I'm sort of people-watching. There's one interesting man sitting in an aisle seat two rows in front of us who I think would make a perfect spy. He has dark hair, a dark suit, and he's worn dark sunglasses the whole flight. Dad would probably tell me that spies don't look like spies.

Behind me I hear Dad muttering to himself.

"*Dobrý den*!"

I recognize that one. *Hello!*

"*Ahoj*!"

That's an informal *Hi!* between friends.

"*Na shledanou*!"

"Goodbye," I say out loud.

"*Z technických důvodů zavřeno*," replies my Dad.

I laugh.

"*Closed due to technical reasons*."

"Very good, Ginny!"

I twist around to look at him.

"We have Czech phrases coming out of our ears, Dad!"

My dad's been too busy planning the archaeological end of things to devote much time to the language side of things. But thanks to Mom and a great website that actually had a guy pronouncing the words for us, Julie and I are practically speaking Czech in our sleep.

"Here Dad, I'll test you," I say. "*Mít knedlík v krku*."

My Dad just looks at me.

"Um, how much does a hotel room cost?" he guesses.

"No Dad, it means to have a dumpling in your throat, much like we say we have a frog in our throat…"

"Ginny, I don't expect that I'll be telling anyone that I have a dumpling in my throat."

I sigh

"But those are the fun ones. OK. Let's be boring. *Prosím vás, kde je divadlo*?

"Um, where can I find an inexpensive meal?"

"No Dad, it means *excuse me, where is the theatre?*"

"Ginny, due to time constraints we won't be going to the theatre."

I sigh again.

"OK Dad, how about *Můžete mi to ukázat na mapě?*"

"Why is that music playing so loud?"

"No Dad. It means, *can you show me on the map?*"

My dad beams.

"Now that's useful. Say that one again."

"Můžete mi to ukázat na mapě?"

"Můžete mi to ukázat na mapě?" repeats my dad. "Are you sure I'm pronouncing that correctly? Will people be able to understand me?"

"Time will tell, Dad."

For those of us who are awake, there's a snack of cheese, crackers, and grapes. I've noticed that on this trip it's all been finger-food, no cutlery. Dad says it's because of September 11th. No knives and forks that might be used as an offensive weapon.

Dad puts away his Czech phrasebook in order to eat the snack. Mom stays asleep but Julia, who's beside me, takes off the headphones to join in our conversation. Julia and I are fortunate enough to have an empty seat beside us. Dad and Mom have an older gentleman from Prague sitting in the aisle seat. He's been sleeping for a lot of the trip, but before he drifted off, Dad grilled him on the topic of the Czech Republic. He didn't share Dad's interest in caves, but he was happy to tell Dad where to buy the best pants in Prague. Turns out he was a tailor.

"Are we there yet?" asks Julia.

We all laugh. When we were little and would drive long distances so that Dad could explore some archaeological site or visit some museum, it was always Julia who would ask, "Are we there yet?"

"Well, since your Mom forbade me from purchasing a global positioning satellite device I don't know. But I figure it's another hour, or so."

"What will we do when we get there?" asks Julia.

"I booked a hotel room in Prague through the travel agent, so we'll stay there for a night, try to recover from the trip and hopefully be ready to hit the ground running tomorrow. It's probably around 7 a.m. Prague time right now."

"Dad," I say, "the hotel is not going to let us book into a room this early in the day. What will do this morning?"

Dad laughs and glances at the man sleeping beside him.

"Buy a pair of pants?" he suggests.

Mom, who's in the window seat, wakes up with a yawn and a big stretch.

"How about, buy a cup of tea and a nice pastry?" she suggests.

"Or that," says Dad agreeably. He offers her one of his grapes, which she accepts.

"Here, Mom," I say, pulling out some papers from the mesh pocket in the chair in front of me.

Mom's assignment for our flight was to write a short story about somebody on our flight. I wrote about the guy who looks like a spy. Julia wrote a dramatic story about the tailor, suggesting that he had lost his family to an uprising against the Communists. Earlier on in the flight Dad read both our stories, declared them wonderful but, despite our protests, insisted that after Mom read them they would have to be flushed down the toilet or else we would be arrested trying to get through customs if they read them.

Mom's really cool about home schooling. We go out to cafes and shopping malls and Mom tells us to write a story set in that location or about somebody passing by. She's always been creative about teaching us.

When we were younger she would save up empty bottle and food containers and then we would design labels and develop advertising campaigns for our products. Another I loved was when Mom would take us to a fabric store and let us buy any amount of any fabric we wanted and make whatever we wanted. At first we would sew

pillows and simple stuffed animals, but as we got older and better at it we even learned to make clothes and more complicated toys. Julia made a quilted blanket for Kessily once and I made her a doll with a stuffed corduroy couch to sit on.

Mom has never been into curriculum as much as she's been into life and loving to learn. Occasionally we use textbooks but mostly we just go to the library and use the internet to learn about whatever we're interested in.

We're in Prague. Our luggage is not in Prague. Dad is getting a chance to use his limited Czech.

"*Mluvíte anglicky*?" *Do you speak English?* He is talking to an airline employee behind a counter near the baggage carousel.

"*Ne*," says the young man. *No.*

"*Nemluvím česky*," says Dad, *I don't speak Czech*, effectively ending that conversation.

For some reason, our little book of common Czech phrases has absolutely nothing about losing one's luggage.

"Wait! Wait!" says Mom, frantically flipping through the phrase book. "Here is *I have lost*…*Ztratil jsem*…and let's see, OK, here's bag…*tašku*."

"*Ztratil jsem tašku*, Dad tries again with the man.

The man smiles.

"*Zavazadla*," he corrects him. "*Vaši letenku prosím*." Dad stares at him.

"I think he might be asking to see our plane tickets," I say.

I must be right because when Dad hands him the plane tickets he reads them carefully and makes some notes on a clipboard.

"*Váš pas prosím*," the man then says. Dad understands him this time and pulls our passports out of his jacket pocket.

The man glances at them and returns them.

The man asks us something completely unintelligible. We stare at one another and Mom starts flipping through the phrase book.

"Hotel?" he says slowly.

"Ah!" says Dad and tells him the name of the hotel we'll be at. The man nods, writes down this information and says something that, by its tone, sounds like when they find our baggage they'll bring it to our hotel.

"*Děkuji*," says Dad. *Thank you*.

"*Není zač*." *You're welcome.*

"Well, that's that," says Mom as we walk away in search of a cab. "How are you, sweetie?"

"Patient in affliction," sighs my Dad. "Ginny, how do you say *taxi*?"

I grin.

"That's an easy one, Dad. It's *taxi*!"

The first thing we do is go to the hotel and confirm our reservation just so that if our luggage arrives at the hotel, they'll hold onto it

After the man on the plane, I guess I have spies on my brain. A man who looks like he could be the spy's brother checks into the hotel along with us – dark hair, dark

suit, sunglasses. He's carrying a slim briefcase rather than a suitcase, but I suppose that's nothing to make him suspicious. After all, we checked in without luggage.

After checking in we set out to try to find breakfast in Prague.

Prague is a charming city, full of gorgeous architecture and charming shops and plenty of interesting people. I know Dad will have a hard time convincing Mom that it's time to start looking for caves.

We find a bakery café that requires very little Czech because we can just point to the pastry we want and the teacups on the counter.

"So far so good," says Mom as we pick a window table.

Dad snorts.

"Yep. We're handling breakfast well. If only everything else goes as smoothly."

"I think we're being followed," says Julia suddenly. She has been quietly looking out the window.

"*What?"* says Dad and Mom at the same time.

"There's a man standing over by that shoe store. I won't point, but he has dark-hair, a dark suit…"

I gasp.

"That man checked into the same hotel as us!" I say.

"Well, he also followed us here," says Julia as we all take turns discreetly peeking at the man who is examining a pair of black loafers.

"Oh, I imagine it's just a coincidence, don't you, darling?" says Mom to Dad.

"Probably," says Dad still watching the man. "But I'm glad to know and I'll keep my eye on him. I don't think I'm being melodramatic to say it's perfectly within the realm of possibility that the girls are right. In the meantime, just act normal."

Well, of course, we all have spy fever now and we're having a hard time acting normal. Have you ever noticed how hard it is to act normal?

"Say, hypothetically, someone was following us," I say. "Why would they be doing it?"

"Well," says Dad, speaking softly. He's not taking any risks that anyone might know English in the café. "We may be treading on a few toes to go after this cave that has been hidden for so many years. There's still an anti-God sentiment in this country that doesn't want the historical veracity of the Bible being made known. At one time it would have undermined the Communist government. Now it may just be a matter of principle. As much as we're determined to bring the light of God to the world, there are a lot of people who are just as determined that the world stay in darkness."

We nibble at our food and keep our eye on the man. He's now looking over the produce at a little fruit market two shops down from the shoe store.

"Strange," comments Mom. "I mean, a strange thing for a man to examine apples so carefully."

"Eat slower," says Dad. "It will make his job harder." Instinctively we were already doing this. "We'll have more tea, too. After all, we can't check into our room until one o'clock. After our leisurely breakfast, we'll check out some of the sites."

"He's not even looking our way," I say. "How would he know if we just suddenly exited and disappeared into a store?"

"When he was looking at the shoes I think he must have been using the reflection of the glass to keep an eye on us. If we're long enough in here, we'll force him to have to pick a spot to settle into for a bit. I predict it will be that bench over by that tree."

We're watching our man across a wide thoroughfare with constant traffic. Where the café is located the road curves in a semi-circle so the man is not directly across from us. The stores he's meandering about are located at a three-point intersection and there is a tiny little park where the road in front of us straightens out and continues along its way.

Sure enough, after not purchasing anything from the fruit market and after carefully examining a rack of straw purses outside a ladies clothing store, the man sits down on the bench and pulls a small book out of his pocket to read.

"There!" says Julia. "He just looked at us!"

"Very briefly," agrees Dad. "Of course, he's being way more discreet than we are."

Chastened, we return to sipping our tea.

"After all," says Dad. "We don't have to worry about keeping an eye on him if he's keeping an eye on us. We're hardly going to lose him."

Dad pours himself some more tea. In this café they just give you a whole pot of tea.

"Well, I'll tell you a bit about Prague," he says, pouring some milk into his cup. "What little I know, anyhow. We're in what's called Nove Mesto, or New Town. It has a lot of shops and cafes and museums but it's Stare Mesto, the Old Town, that we'll want to do our sightseeing in. It has all that architecture that your mom loves…" He smiles at Mom.

"Romanesque, Gothic, Renaissance, Baroque, Art Nouveau…" she begins, helpfully.

"Yes, yes," says Dad. "There's also Hradcany, a famous castle. I'm looking forward to that. Hopefully we'll be able to take a walk over Charles Bridge, the oldest stone bridge in Central Europe. I don't know how much we'll be able to fit in tomorrow. I'm afraid we can only give Prague today and tomorrow before we head out to the countryside."

We didn't realize at that point how little of Prague we would see due to circumstances beyond our control.

"Dad," I say, whispering and leaning into the table. "Who knows our itinerary? I mean, if that guy's following us he would probably be very interested in our plans."

Dad nods.

"You're right. We shouldn't speak too openly about what we're doing. As for who knows what we're doing, only your Uncle Ken."

"How does anyone even know we're here?" asks Julia quietly.

"Well, unfortunately I couldn't keep this trip a secret," says Dad. "Ken and I had to approach a lot of groups to try to raise funds for our expedition. We only approached Christian organizations but that's no guarantee that the information stayed in those circles. And, of course, Mrs. Spacek, the lady whose husband discovered the cave, knows about our trip. I have no way of knowing who her friends and acquaintances are."

We all sort of collectively sigh at our own ignorance of how we came to be followed in Prague and start focusing on our food and surroundings and acting more like typical tourists. Dad orders another plate of pastries and they are quite tasty. They are

mostly fruity – danish with a generous portion of peach jam in the middle, or fruit filling wrapped in a croissant type roll. They are all sprinkled with poppy seeds and Mom's even has a buttery poppy seed filling rather than fruit.. Of course, Julia and I are constantly asking each other if we have poppy seeds in our teeth.

The people in the café are unpretentious, speaking what sounds like Czech. Since it is a weekday, there aren't a whole lot of working-aged men – mostly young mothers, some college-aged people and a few older couples. We have come in May, before the beginning of the summer tourist season.

After a very sloooow breakfast we make our way out of the café and onto the street.

"Well," says Dad, suddenly moving into action. "Let's do a little sightseeing!"

Providentially, an empty cab is driving by and Dad waves it down. We all hop in and can't help but keep our eyes on the man in black to see what his reaction will be to this sudden development. He has jumped up from the bench and is moving rapidly toward us. The cab takes off but not quickly enough that the man in black can't take note of the licence plates if he wants to.

"Stare Mesto," says Dad to the driver. The rest of us are turned around in our seats to see if we're being followed. The traffic is heavy and there are enough red lights that we can still see the man, moving rapidly in our direction. But as the light changes and we pick up speed, he gradually disappears."

"I think he might realize that we know we're being followed," says Dad, dryly.

"Sorry, Dad," Julie and I say simultaneously.

"Oh well," says Dad. "No harm, I suppose. If they want to keep on following us they're going to have to be more discreet than that if they don't want us to notice."

As we drive, the scenery becomes less and less modern and the architecture becomes more of the kind of thing that causes Mom to practically hang her head out the window and comment on everything. Finally we come to a point where the driver will take us no further because he says in broken English that from here on is for walking only.

He points us toward the road that will take us to the main square of the Old City.

Mom's head is already swivelling as she's checking out all the architecture. Dad whips out his Prague guidebook and I can tell we're in for a lecture.

While Dad tries to get his bearings on a map, Julia and I exchange glances.

"Any suspicious characters?" she asks smiling.

"Well, maybe that elderly lady over there carrying a bag that seems to be full of parsnips," I say.

Julia laughs.

"Let's just walk and enjoy the scenery," says Mom to Dad. "I don't think any of us will remember all the historical antidotes about all of these buildings and quite frankly, I don't think it matters much. Let's just enjoy Prague."

That's what I like about Mom. She's our chief teacher, but she understands that a head full of facts isn't necessarily an education.

Dad puts away the guidebook and we head across the wide square where the occasional enterprising Czech citizen has set up a little stand selling drinks or postcards of Prague. From there we head down one of the side streets. The Old City has more tourists than the newer part of Prague so for Julia and I, who love to people watch, it's a

lot of fun. People are people, but there's always a different ambience in a foreign country. Maybe it's the foreign language, or just the clothing worn with a different flair, I don't know.

The Old City of Prague is hard to get a grip on though. What I mean is, we've been to places in the Middle East where there was just a general similarity in the style of homes and businesses. In the suburbs of any city in North America, the houses may be individually different, but there is a general similarity between most housing developments. We've been to England and there's an atmosphere there that makes you feel like you're in England. The old stuff looks English and the new stuff has a kind of sameness to it.

But Prague is different. Everywhere I look, I see a different style of building.

This is a place for people who like architecture. It gives everything a whimsical ambience. There's one building in our guidebook called the Dancing House and it's just freaky. The whole building looks like it's in the middle of experiencing an earthquake. I sure hope we get to see it.

The Old Town features horse-drawn carriages and Dad waves one down and asks "how much?"

It's possible the man understands English although he replies in Czech. I don't think Dad understands the reply but we all hop in and take a ride down the wide cobblestone streets. There are no cars but a moderate number of pedestrians and bicycles.

The driver is friendly and calls out a few things to us as we pass by a building that looks like a church. We're so busy looking around now that the pace has picked up that it takes us awhile to realize we're being followed.

It's one of the people on a bicycle. This time it's a woman. At first Dad and Mom don't believe us. Julia spots the cyclist first. Dad and Mom are facing forward in the carriage but Julia and I are facing backwards.

"That lady with the bandanna's been following us," she says suddenly.

"Oh, I'm sure she's just sightseeing like us," says Dad. "This seems like an obvious road to go along to see Old Prague."

"She's not looking at the sights though," says Julia. "She's watching us."

Dad sneaks a quick peek behind him.

"Well, she looks like a local girl and we're obviously foreigners. Maybe we're interesting to look at."

Julia shrugs.

Dad leans forward.

"Um, driver?" he says.

The driver glances at us.

"Um, faster? Can you go faster?"

"Fahter?"

Dad smiles and shakes his head, like, don't worry about it, and leans back in his seat.

"Oh well."

Dad tells us to keep a casual eye on our cyclist. Thankfully Mom doesn't quiz us when we're travelling because I don't think Julia and I noticed much of Prague after that.

The driver stops at a seemingly pre-designated spot and Dad pays him. We hop out of the carriage. Our cyclist has slowed down and seems to be fiddling around with the strap of her knapsack to explain her pause.

"Let's walk and see if this is for real," says Dad, beginning to stride firmly toward one of the buildings that looks like a church. Mom takes his arm and Julia and I stick close to them.

"Hmmm," says Dad as we stop in front of the church and all pretend to examine it. Discreetly I glance around me. The cyclist is now walking with her bike and pretending to examine the buildings too.

We continue to walk down the cobblestone streets. There are restaurants and shops mixed in with the historical buildings. Now that it is the middle of the day and the weather is a perfect mix of sun and fluffy white clouds against baby blue sky, the streets are full of people. But our cyclist continues to follow us at a discreet distance.

"Well," says Dad. "There's a lot of interesting sites here, but I suggest that we head back to the hotel and see if our luggage is there. Plus, I think that we should get a little rest before our busy week."

Mom agrees and we wander around until we find a street where there are cars and taxis. The girl with the bike keeps a short distance behind us the whole time. When we get into the cab, she hops on her bike and actually follows us for a bit. We can barely keep from blatantly staring out the back window. At first the traffic is heavy and slow but as it thins out and speeds up, we lose her.

"I imagine that we'll have someone waiting for us at the hotel, anyhow," says Dad, turning back around in his seat.

"Probably the man in black," I say.

"Probably," agrees Dad. "I'm beginning to think that they don't care if we know we're being followed."

When we get to the hotel, Dad, greatly assisted by his Czech phrasebook, gets keys to two adjoining rooms and asks about our luggage. Our luggage has arrived and the desk clerk promises that it will be brought up to our rooms.

After unlocking the doors between the two rooms, Julia and I collapse on our beds in our room and within five minutes are asleep

I'm not sure if Dad and Mom have a sleep but I wake up to the sound of Mom dragging our suitcases into our room. The clock on the bedside table says 7:34 p.m. We've been sleeping for over five hours.

Julia opens her eyes and yawns.

"Hi Mom," she says. "Thanks."

As Mom sits down on one of the chairs that go along with a small circular table, we haul our suitcases to our beds and open them up. When we do, we both gasp. Our suitcases have been totally rearranged. What was once neatly folded is now thrown in as if our suitcases were a laundry hamper.

Mom nods.

"The same thing has happened to our suitcases. We waited to see if you girls had the same experience. Thankfully your Dad carried all the pertinent information about the cave with him today in his knapsack."

"Where is Dad?" I say.

"Sleeping," says Mom, standing up. "But he left me with strict orders that we aren't to separate on this trip. We have to stick together for safety. So, do you want to order room service?"

Julia puts in an order for a hamburger while I stand in front of my suitcase musing.

"I guess this eliminates all doubt that we're being followed," I say.

"Guess so," says Mom.

"Mom," says Julia. "I'm scared."

"Me too," says Mom. "A bit. But I keep reminding myself that God hasn't given us a spirit of fear, but of power, love and a sound mind."

"That's good to know."

"God's on our side, honey. We're working for him. There's bound to be some opposition. But greater is he that is in us, than he that is in the world."

We nod.

"Now," says Mom. "What about you, Ginny? A hamburger? Or do you want to try the local fare?"

"I'll try local, I guess."

While we wait for our food, Julia and I get out our Bibles and do some reading.

When my meal comes, Mom tells me it's beef rolls in cream sauce with a side order of *skubánky* (potato-pasta balls). Julia glances with mild interest at mine before turning her attention to a burger and fries.

"Hey Gin," she says between mouthfuls. "What do you think of all this?"

"Well," I say, cautiously taking a bite. I taste beef, rice, some mushrooms, maybe some bacon. Not bad. I keep going. "I think they just want to keep an eye on us and they don't mind if we know it."

"Yeah," agrees Julia. "If we're amateurs and we spotted them they mustn't have been trying too hard."

"They're pretty committed if they even had the man in black check into the same hotel as us," I say. "They must really want to protect their evolutionary propaganda if they spend that much money on a hotel bill."

Julia stands up and switches on the TV.

"Let's see what Czech TV is like," she says.

I don't know if our experience is typical, but we can only get three stations, all in Czech, of course. One is news, another some sort of cartoon, and the other is showing Braveheart dubbed into Czech. We watch Braveheart for awhile. When we finish our food, we cautiously peek outside our door, put out our food trays and quickly shut and bolt the door. We both have a shower and then we pop into Mom and Dad's room to say goodnight. We're both still jet-lagged so it's no problem going to sleep.

CHAPTER FOUR

Married to an archaeologist, Mom has learned to be flexible. This morning she shows no sign of disappointment when Dad announces that we will be heading out of Prague and into the country-side today.

We are having breakfast in the hotel restaurant. The cuisine here seems very international – eggs and toast, cereal, waffles, pancakes, that sort of thing. There is also a wide selection of Czech pastries and breads and I'm having a big slice of egg bread with some peach jam. Julia is having oatmeal and our parents are having scrambled eggs, hash browns and toast.

"If we're going to experience any opposition," he says taking a sip of tea, "I'd rather get going with finding this cave, doing our work and e-mailing the info back to Ken. If there's time at the end of the trip we'll see a bit more of Prague."

This morning the man in black is nowhere in sight. The restaurant is moderately full with middle-aged couples and one young family who are having a hard time keeping their toddler in a high chair. She reminds me of Kessily. But nobody in the restaurant seems to be keeping an eye on us.

Dad has ordered a rental car through the hotel so after breakfast he gets up to go check and see if it has arrived while Mom, Julia and I head back to our rooms to get our luggage. Mom pushes the button for the elevator and a few seconds later, it opens.

Julia gasps. I grab Mom's arm.

The man in the black suit steps off the elevator and glances briefly at us. We hurry onto the elevator and Julia frantically presses the number to our floor as if afraid that the man might try to get back on the elevator with us. But he doesn't even look back at us.

"Well…" says Mom, once the doors are closed. "That was…"

"…scary," says Julia.

"He certainly played it cool," I say.

"It's part of spy training," says Julia.

Once in our rooms, we do a few last minute things like brush our teeth before packing our toothbrushes, and then we're back downstairs with Dad in about 10 minutes. Mom fills him in on our elevator encounter.

Glancing over his shoulder, Dad says that we may have to get used to this sort of thing. We look behind us. Sure enough. The man in black is seated in an armchair, reading a Czech newspaper. As we move through the sliding doors, he stands up and prepares to follow.

We have a little blue car with some Eastern European name that none of us have heard of. Dad loads our luggage in the small trunk and Julia and I settle into the back seat. Our destination is Moravia, which is only a couple of hours outside Prague. We pass through a lot of Prague too, but of course, Julia and I miss most of it because of our staring out the backseat at the small brown car containing the man in black. Finally, Dad insists that we ignore him and look at the scenery.

The scenery is quite lovely.

Hilly and wooded. We even pass the occasional castle and I know Dad and Mom would have loved to have gotten out and explored this area more if it weren't for the fact that we're on a mission.

“Well, according to the map, we’re in the Moravian Highlands right now,” says Mom. “We should be coming up to a town called Zdar, noted for its Baroque architecture.” Mom’s tone of voice is hopeful, like, maybe lunch in a Baroque town would be a good idea.

“Baroque is nice,” says Dad. “But we’re pushing on to Brno, the capital of this region.

Mom takes this gracefully.

“Well, as we continue to drive through the valley we should be able to see the gothic Perstejn Castle. According to the guidebook, it should be on a cliff overlooking a river.”

We take it all in.

“This area is rich in history.” says Dad. “Johan Gregor Mendel was an Augustinian friar and abbot in Brno who is famous for his experiments in hereditary. Brno is also famous for the Bren gun which was used in World War II and was a collaborative effort between the Czechs and the English. The BR in Bren stands for Brno and the EN stands for Enfield, England. How long till we get to Brno? “

Mom looks at the map again.

“We just have to pass through Tisnov. Then there’s something called the ‘Gates of Heaven’ which is a convent, and then we’ll be there. By the way, why are we going to Brno? I thought our destination was northern Moravia where all the caves are?”

Dad nods.

“It is. It’s called the Karst. But Ken gave me a name to look up in Brno. An old friend of the Spacek’s. Although, I don’t know if I want to put this man in any kind of jeopardy by contacting him if we’re being followed.”

Automatically, we look back. We’re still being followed.

“This is going to ruin our vacation,” says Julia, sounding distressed.

“No, Julia,” says Dad, looking at us through the rear-view mirror. “It doesn’t have to. We’re not supposed to fear anybody but God and while I admit I’m a bit disconcerted, I am not afraid. We’re not going to let this ruin our vacation.”

“Honey,” says Mom. “This contact in Brno, I assume he speaks Czech?”

“Well, of course.”

“How on earth are you going to communicate with him?”

Dad grins.

“That’s easy,” he says. “Mrs. Spacek wrote everything down in a letter. I just have to deliver it…If I can do it without the man in black spotting us.”

“Why don’t you mail it,” I suggest. “You can write your name and hotel phone number on it.”

“Not a bad idea,” says Dad. We’re pulling into the town of Tisnov. Dad slows down now that the traffic is a bit heavier. “It would be easier to discreetly mail a letter than to actually contact the man. Of course, we’re still going to have to arrange a meeting with the man…” Dad is thinking out loud. “Actually, what I really need is a map. You see, Mrs. Spacek described the location of the cave as she remembers it, but she doesn’t know what changes have taken place since then. This friend was one of the few people that they managed to tell about the cave. He would have a better idea of how we could actually find the cave.”

“Speaking of mail,” says Julia, “we have to mail Kessily a postcard. I promised.”

"That's a great idea, Julia!" says Dad, getting excited. "We'll buy some stamps and postcards in Brno, write a whole bunch and send them off with the letter. Our spies won't suspect that we're mailing anything more than some touristy comments."

"Glad to help," says Julia, grinning. "Actually, I wasn't even thinking about our spy. I was just remembering how Kessily asked me how does hair grow, and I told her I had no idea and she said that it was because people put seeds in their hair."

We all laugh.

Dad switches on the radio and finds a station that has some folk music, sung in Czech, of course. Before long, we're pulling into Brno.

Brno is the second largest city in the Czech Republic. It is a densely populated city among the hills of Moravia, a mix of old and new, and what strikes me the most is the large number of red roofs.

There are enough churches and other historic buildings to keep Mom happy. If we have to mail a letter and wait for a reply, we may be here for a few days, depending on how fast the mail service is.

Dad pulls up in front of an ornate hotel, parks, and goes in with his phrasebook to check the price. He's back in the car fairly quickly.

"Roughly, they're charging three hundred dollars a night."

"Maybe we should just ask our spy where the best place to stay is," suggest Julia.

Our spy has parked across the road from the hotel.

"It may come to that," says Dad, absentmindedly. He's reading his guidebook, looking under *Hotels*. "Ah, here's one that looks good. If I can just figure out how to get there… This is nuts," he looks across at the spy. "We know we're being followed and he must know that we know we're being followed and I bet he knows his way around this city, but it's going to be me trying to figure out how to get to this place. Oh well." Dad sighs and starts up the engine again.

After about half an hour of navigating through Brno we find the small hotel. It's not glamorous but Dad likes the price and we all haul our luggage out of the car.

"No adjoining rooms, though," says Dad as we're going in. "And I'm not going to have us on separate floors, so you two will just have to share a bed in our room."

"That's fine, Dad," I say.

Julia is busy struggling with her heavy suitcase.

"I wish I'd packed less stuff," she says.

The colour scheme in our room is brown. But it's a clean room and Julia and I claim the bed by the window. We're on the fifth and top floor and have a decent view of Brno and the outlying hills. Very pretty.

"Well, we may be here a few days waiting for our letter so as soon as we go to the bathroom and stuff, I want to go out and buy our postcards and stamps and some food and then get back here and get our letters written," says Dad.

"Sounds good," says Julia.

Her suitcase is open on the bed and she's hunting around for something. Finally she finds her brush. Mom is in the bathroom and I'm at the window. Directly below us is the hotel parking lot and our spy's car is parked near ours. I assume he's booked himself into here.

When we're all ready, we set out again.

Dad is serious about getting his letter in the mail so we just go straight to a little shop that sells newspaper and candy and has a rack of postcards. Julia and I quickly pick out some that have various scenes in Brno. For Kessily, I pick out one that has some horses. By pointing to where the stamp should go, Dad manages to find out where the nearest post office is. Right across the road, it turns out.

Our spy is discreetly following us which is good because he'll know that we bought postcards and won't be surprised when we mail them.

Then we're off to try to find some food. When we're travelling, Dad and Mom don't like to eat in restaurants all the time, so whenever we settle into a place they hit the nearest grocery store.

After walking for about forty minutes, we come across a grocery store. Inside it is like anything you might find in North America except that the packages all have Czech labels. But it's easy to tell what's macaroni and cheese and what's peanut butter.

Mom wants to head off to the bakery department to check out the local pastries, but Dad says that we should all stick together. Our spy hasn't come into the grocery store but is outside across the road, barely putting up any pretence of not following us.

Our hotel room doesn't have a kitchenette, so we have to stick to things that don't need cooking or refrigeration. We buy some strawberries, blueberries and apples in the produce. Then it's off to the cracker aisle. After that we buy some puddings in a cup, some juice and some water. We also add a small block of cheese to our grocery cart to eat as soon as we get back to the room. Dad picks out a bag of snack mix. Finally we're at the bakery. Mom chooses some danish and a variety of cookies. There is a wide selection of Jewish bagels and Mom picks out half a dozen.

"Well that ought to do it," says Dad. I can tell he's eager to get back to the hotel room and get going on his note to Mrs. Spacek's friend and to get us going on our postcards. He pays for the groceries, grabs up the bags and we're back on the street, huffing and puffing to keep up with him. Even our spy gets a workout keeping up with us. It's funny how the familiar can stop seeming so scary. Like our spy doesn't seem so terrifying to me and yet, he's hardly become a friend. He's still dressed in dark clothes, but when I look around on the street, most people are. He doesn't seem particularly threatening but he doesn't give the impression of being a guardian angel either.

Mom seems to sense my thoughts because she suddenly says, "That guy is like Satan, skulking around trying not to look too scary but seeking whom he may devour."

"Yes," says Dad, "but God promises us that if we tithe our money to him, he will rebuke the devourer."

"For sure," agrees Mom.

We lose track of our spy in the lobby since he doesn't get on the elevator with us. Back in the room, Dad deadbolts the door, we help ourselves to some crackers and cheese and juice and Dad insists that we sit down and write our postcards right away because he wants to get them mailed ASAP.

After about an hour and a half we're back downstairs in the lobby of the hotel. This time Dad is looking around hoping that our spy will be waiting since it would have been kind of crazy to write all of these postcards and then find out that we could have just walked out the door and mailed our letter with no one watching.

Dad has worked on an addition to Mrs. Spacek's letter, just letting the guy know his name and giving the hotel phone number and the room we're in.

The man in black isn't in the lobby. Dad sighs.

"OK, let's walk," he says. "See what happens."

You can mail a letter in the lobby of most hotels, but Dad would rather use a public box to decrease the chance that his letter will be found by our opponents. A night clerk at any hotel could probably be bribed to let someone look through the outgoing mail.

The street is quieter now. The sun is going down. We're walking at a brisk pace to the nearest mailbox because my parents don't like being out after dark in a foreign city.

"Oh bother," says Dad quietly, almost to himself. "The one time you want them to follow you, they decide to take a coffee break."

Somewhat dejectedly he drops the postcards and the letter into a mailbox and we head back. Suddenly I spot something.

"Dad!" I whisper excitedly. "The girl that was on the bike in Prague is across the road and she's watching us!"

"Hallelulah!" says Dad, grinning.

We all beam at each other. I think we're nuts sometimes but I also think that's one of the reasons I love my family so much.

CHAPTER FIVE

Well now we have a predicament. We have to make sure there is always someone in the hotel room to answer the phone. But under the circumstances Dad doesn't want us to split up. So there won't be much sightseeing in Brno.

Dad figures the letter won't be delivered until at least the afternoon and that's being extremely optimistic so we take advantage of that time to have breakfast at a local restaurant.

The man in black trails us, spending the time we eat breakfast reading a newspaper and drinking a coffee in a café across the road.

"What if mail is really slow here?" asks Julia.

Dad sighs.

"Don't think I haven't thought about that."

"They'll wonder why we aren't leaving our room," Julia continues.

Dad thinks about that.

"That's true. I guess they'll assume we're sick. Well, let's just say a prayer that it won't be a long wait." Despite the moderately crowded restaurant we bow our heads. "Father in heaven, we pray that Jan will receive our letter speedily and contact us immediately upon receiving it. Thank you in advance. In Jesus name, amen."

"Amen," we say and look up. Some people are giving us a strange look. But one older couple give us a shy grin. Dad and Mom don't notice but I grin back.

On our way back, we stop off at a little store that carries a selection of magazines from around the world. Since we're going to be stuck in the room for awhile, we stock up on news magazines, a popular science journal, a home and gardens magazine for Mom, and an archaeological publication for Dad.

Since we're walking distance from the Old City centre, Dad says we'll take a quick tour. We start in the square which is dominated by the Old Town Hall. According to our tourist guide, it has a crooked central pinnacle because the carver who made it wasn't paid as much as he had expected and did it out of spite.

As we pass through Zelny trh or Cabbage Market Square with all of its fruit and vegetable stands, Dad and Mom buy more fruit, as well as some bread and more cheese, since we'll be eating our meals in the room.

Walking briskly, we head up Petrov Hill to take a quick peak at the Cathedral of St. Peter and Paul. Its twin spires are the highest points of the city. Our man in black is following us as usual.

Then we head north, across Dominican Square, to the centre of Brno. The centre of Brno is Freedom Square.

On one side is a Renaissance Palace with an unpronounceable name.

Just beyond that we can see the St. James church with its needle thin tower.

But by this point it is early afternoon and Dad says we should head back to the hotel. According to the guidebook we can hop on a tram that will take us about two blocks away from our hotel. We get in line with some natives and wait for the tram. The man in black hangs back. But when the tram comes, he hops on last minute.

He stays at the front of the tram while we head to the back. It's a short trip back to the hotel and the man in black gets off one stop ahead of us, as if to trick us into

thinking he's not really following us. Of course, he's still behind us when we go into the hotel. Once in the lobby we lose him when we get on the elevator.

Back in the room, Julia reaches for a magazine and flops on one of the beds. Mom sorts out the food and sends Dad out for some ice to keep the cheese cool. I sit down on one of the chairs with my Bible and open it up. Dad returns with the ice and settles down with his archaeology magazine.

It's quiet for a couple of hours. Then all of a sudden the phone rings. We all jump.

"Hello!" says Dad eagerly. "I mean, *dobrý den!*"

We all lean forward intently as Dad listens to the caller. The enthusiasm ebbs from his face. "No thanks," he says. "*Ne*." He hangs up.

"Something about a special in the dining room, I think."

We ponder this.

"Maybe our spy checking up on us," suggests Julia.

"I wouldn't be surprised," says Dad. "It is a bit strange to phone every room and tell them about a special in the dining room."

We settle back into our books and magazines. The evening passes without another phone call.

Having no plans for the day, we all have a chance to sleep in. Dad orders a pot of tea from room service and we have a breakfast of fruit and crackers.

By noon we're restless.

Somebody switches on the TV and we catch up on our world news even if it is in Czech. After the news, what appears to be a Czech soap opera comes on. To our surprise, Dad keeps watching.

He laughs at the looks on our face.

"I'm hoping it will help me with my Czech. Honestly, when that phone call came yesterday, it was petrifying to try to figure out what the person was saying."

Dad watches Czech television while the rest of us read. But no phone call comes.

By lunch the next day we're all getting pretty antsy.

"Well, do we have a cut-off point where we say, *that's it, he's not calling*?" asks Mom.

"I hope it doesn't come to that," says Dad. "But we'll talk about it this evening. I'm going into the bathroom to pray."

While Dad is in the bathroom, Mom leads us in some prayer about the whole phone call thing.

By dinner we're getting a bit tired of fruit and crackers so Dad orders some authentic Czech cuisine from room service. I don't even know if Dad knows what he has ordered but when it comes it appears to be pieces of chicken in a heavy white sauce, a couple of side dishes of rice and roasted potatoes, a fruit flan for dessert and a plate of cheese and crackers. We laugh at the cheese and crackers since we've already had an abundance of both. There are four bottles of beer even though Dad insists that he ordered us ginger ale. But he lets us have the beer since it is a national drink and "part of your education."

Dad tips the man who has delivered the food and locks the door behind him. Julia gives us all the willies by announcing that the man looked like our spy. Mom looks horrified and suggests that maybe the food is poisoned. Dad assures her that the man was not our spy and that he has a hard time imagining there being any benefit to poisoning a family of tourists.

"I have no doubt that we will face obstacles and that these people are trying to thwart us but it not in their interest to kill us. They would have a hard time covering it up and it would only have the result of bringing sensational and unwanted publicity to the cause of creationism."

Dad turns out to be right. After a satisfying meal we all go to sleep without experiencing any nasty convulsions or severe abdominal pains.

But still no phone call.

CHAPTER SIX

We awake to the sound of the phone.

"Hello?" says Dad grabbing it. "I mean…" He grabs for his phrasebook.

"Ya! Ya! I speak little bit English," Dad tells us the man says when he is recounting the conversation later.

Mostly Dad says "Uh huh…Uh huh…OK…OK."

When he gets off the phone he says, "Pack your bags and let's get out of here! We've got a guide to the Moravian Karst!"

"Great!" says Mom.

"What about our spy?" asks Julia.

"I explained about all of that as best I could in my letter to him," says Dad, throwing open his suitcase and rushing into the bathroom to grab his toothbrush and shaving kit. His example inspires us all to go to our suitcases and pack whatever we took out. "He says he's old, he has no living relatives and he doesn't care about the Communists anymore. But just to play it a bit safer, we're going to rendezvous at a castle called Lysice, north of here on our way to the Karst. If we can make it look like a chance encounter, great. If not, oh well. The bonus is that we'll get to see Lysice, famous for its glassware and Japanese arms."

"A strange combination," says Mom, zipping up her suitcase. None of us have taken more out of our suitcase than our daily clothes and toothbrushes, so we're ready to go in five minutes.

We take our spy by surprise. He's sitting in the lobby reading a paper. If it weren't for Dad having to return our room key we might have even been able to exit without him noticing us he's so absorbed in his paper. It must have been an awfully boring couple of days for him with us holed up in our room.

Within minutes we're zipping out of Brno and heading north. In North America it can take several hours just to get to the outskirts of some cities, but in Europe the distances are smaller. By lunchtime we've arrived at Lystice and had a good look around the outside.

Dad says the plan is to meet Jan in the little restaurant at noon so we skip the tour through the glassware collection and the Japanese arms, neither of which have any great appeal for our family, and settle down in the restaurant with a lunch of delicious onion soup and crusty fresh bread.

Our spy hasn't entered the restaurant but remains outside with his own provisions of bottled water and an apple.

"How will you know who Jan is?" whispers Julia to Dad.

"He said he'd be wearing a green shirt," says Dad softly. "At least, that's what I think he said!"

Dad must have understood him correctly because a few minutes later, an elderly man wearing a dark green sweatshirt and jeans approaches us with a tray of food. Just as he passes by our table, his elbow knocks over a glass of water right beside us. The plastic cup survives the fall but the water splashes all over the floor and even splashes on our shoes.

"*Prominte!*" he exclaims. He beams at us and we smile back. He gives us a little wink as he puts his tray down on our table and with Dad's help and a lot of napkins, makes a reasonable attempt to clean up the water.

"Would you like to join us?" asks Dad when they are done and the napkins are in a nearby wastebasket. Our spy has been watching all this with a vague interest.

"Pleased to join," says Jan taking an empty seat beside Mom. "You like this castle?" he asks as he starts eating his soup.

"It's very pretty," says Mom. "We've had a nice look around outside."

"Is nice," agrees Jan. "You like caves better though?"

Dad laughs.

"On this trip, we do. We're eager to do some exploring."

"Then I will show you around some of the finer ones," says Jan taking a bite of his bread. I think this conversation is all for the benefit of anyone who might be listening in on it. Jan certainly isn't speaking softly.

"Marvellous!" says Dad.

Our spy is thoughtfully watching all of this, but still from a distance through a window.

"Do you have a car?" asks Dad.

"Oh yes," says Jan. "Works fine."

"Would you like to follow us then?"

Jan laughs.

"Maybe you follow me?" he suggests.

Dad grins.

"Maybe that would be a better plan," he agrees. "You wish to see Olomouc?"

"The capital of northern Moravia?" says Dad. "Tempting. Unfortunately I think we'll have to head straight for the Karst."

Jan nods as he finishes off his bread and slurps his soup.

"There are thousands of caves," says Jan suddenly, conversationally. "Many are open to public. Some you can take a boat ride through…"

Dad and Mom nod.

"We've read a lot about, how do you say the Karst in Czech…?" says Mom.

"Moravský kras," replies Jan. "But we're not going to the places you read about. Not open to public. That is why no one has found it." He is finishing off his soup. "To my knowledge," he adds.

"How long do you think it will take us to get there?" asks Dad.

"We get there by night. Too dark to explore so we stay overnight at Mrs. Spacek's daughter…"

"Mrs. Spacek's *daughter*?" Dad's eyes widen.

"Pardon. God-daughter. I phone her and she is very excited to meet you and have you stay in her home."

"But we're four people," says Mom concerned. "Shouldn't we stay in a hotel?"

Jan laughs.

"We are not going to a tourist spot where there is a hotel. Yinetta is very happy that you stay with her."

"Well that settles that then," says Dad, pushing back his chair to stand up. Jan has finished his lunch and there is no reason to stay any longer.

With our spy following us, Jan points out his car in the parking lot and says that he will wait for us before he gets going.

"But I cannot guarantee I will wait for our spy," he chuckles. The man in black does not seem to bother Jan.

Jan is a wild driver and I'm sure that if he were alone he would have shaken the spy off of himself within a kilometre. We're probably passing a lot of wonderful scenery but with the entertainment of Dad trying to keep up with Jan and us constantly turning around to see how our spy's doing I don't see a thing.

There is one stop for gas and a bathroom break about two hours into our travels and by evening we are pulling into a small town.

"I don't even think this place is on the map," says Mom, turning the map all over the place in an attempt to figure out where we are.

"Well, it is quite small," says Dad.

We exited the main highway about ten kilometres ago and are now on a quiet, badly paved road with about five houses surrounded by fields. Jan is pulling into the dirt driveway of one of the small homes. Our spy is maintaining a discreet distance.

By the time we pull into the driveway, Jan is out of his car and hoping towards the front door with great enthusiasm. Consequently, by the time we're opening our car doors, a plump middle-aged woman has exited her house and is rapidly approaching us.

"*Dobrý večer! Dobrý večer!*" she says, beaming. *Good evening*.

"Are we putting this lady in danger?" Mom wonders aloud.

"Let's pray we aren't," replies Dad taking her hand and Yinetta signals for us to come into her home. She and Jan are already heading back through the front door of her small white house.

"Hungry?" asks Jan as we come into a tiny kitchen. It barely has room for the appliances and a bistro table with two chairs. Yinetta signals for us to take our shoes off and follow her into a slightly larger living room. The furniture is old, more like what North Americans would have in their basement than their living room, but it is comfortable. I can tell Dad is fascinated and curious about all of the photos scattered around the room.

"Um," says Dad, hesitantly. I can tell that he feels uncomfortable arriving at a stranger's home and instantly asking for food.

Yinette says something in Czech to Jan.

"She has made sandwiches for us," says Jan. "And some cake."

"Oh well, of course, then," says Dad. "If it's no trouble we'd love to eat."

Jan goes back into the kitchen with Yinetta and comes out five minutes later carrying a beer for himself, Dad and Mom. Yinetta follows him with a tray with a large plate of cheese sandwiches and some small plates for us to put them on. Jan gets Julia and I cans of lemonade.

"I be excited," says Yinetta to us as we reach forward and take sandwiches from the plate. This seems to be the extent of her English because she turns to Jan and speaks rapidly in Czech.

He translates.

"She has known Mrs. Spacek when she was a little girl. Before she went to Canada. Her father told her about Mr. Spacek's cave. Before the cave, Yinetta's father believe in evolution, man from apes, you know. But after Mr. Spacek find the cave he

knows that what he's been taught is not true and he begin to study the Bible to find the truth."

"I am Christian," says Yinetta, pointing to herself and grinning. "You too, yes?"

"Praise God!" says Dad leaning forward in his chair. "Yes we are!"

Yinetta speaks some more to Jan and when she's done he translates.

"It was not easy being a reader of the Bible during Communists. Very very bad. They had to hide Bible. Bibles very hard to find at this time. Now it is much better. Yinetta can go to church without fear and meet with other Christians."

"I've read that about half of the population is an atheist, doesn't believe in God," says Dad to Jan and Yinetta.

Jan thinks about this.

"Probably true," he agrees.

"Are you a believer in Christ?" Dad asks Jan.

Jan laughs.

"The cave made me know that what I was taught may not be true. I want to see it again. I don't know if I believe in your Christ but I know I don't believe in evolution."

It's great that Yinetta is a Christian, but I'm wondering about our spy. I try to take a discreet peak out of the window but the heavy lace curtains make it hard to see clearly. Jan says there's no place to stay out here so I wonder if he'll have to sleep in his car or what he'll do.

Just then there is a loud knock at the front door.

CHAPTER SEVEN

We all jump.

Except for Yinetta. She doesn't seem overly concerned that someone is at her door but just stands up to answer it.

We sit quietly as she goes to the door, even Jan, waiting to see who it is. All we hear is a Czech conversation. A few minutes later Yinetta comes back and says something to Jan in Czech.

"A man selling insurance," says Jan slowly to Dad. His look tells us what his words can't. It is our spy.

"Should we tell…" Dad begins but Jan jumps in, deliberately, to stop him. He starts talking cheerfully in Czech, making Yinetta laugh and translates afterwards.

"I ask her is it for life or for home because paying for life is a killer say nothing." His last two words are thrown into the sentence as if they are part of it. It is so Yinetta won't realize that he's not translating but giving us a message.

"Cake?" says Yinetta standing up. We all smile agreeably.

"Say nothing!" repeats Jan softly when she is in the kitchen. "It was hard for her as a girl. She is very afraid of Communists."

Dad nods.

"I understand."

"You pray," says Jan. "Maybe God will protect us."

Yinetta comes back in with a plate of coffee cake and a pot of chamomile tea. Jan hops up to be the one to bring in the tray with the teacups and sugar.

We're pretty tired from the travelling and the adventure and the chamomile tea makes us sleepy so after dinner we tell Yinetta that we'd just like to go to bed. She and Jan stay up chatting in the kitchen while Dad and Mom sleep on the couches in the living room and Julia and I share a small bedroom just off of the kitchen. It's more like a pantry because it has some shelves with some canned peaches and preserves, but Yinetta has set up a couple of cots in it and we're so tired we don't even bother with our usual bedtime chattering.

Dad is pretty excited.

Today is the day we'll try to visit the cave.

Yinetta serves us poppy-seed cake and peppermint tea. Dad has the map he and Uncle Ken made up back home and now he and Jan have it spread out on the table.

"Yes, yes," Jan is nodding. "That is the area, yes. As I recall. I'm not sure about this…" He points.

"Hmm," says Dad. "Well, Mrs. Spacek wasn't too sure…"

They continue to debate back and forth comparing Dad's info with Jan's memory.

Mom makes conversation with Yinetta.

"You have a Bible in Czech?" she asks.

"Oh yes," says Yinetta, nodding vigorously. She is a youthful looking middle-aged woman. Her arms and face are tanned, probably from working outside and she is strong-looking. Her mostly wavy brown hair with a touch of grey, comes down to her shoulders. "Read at bed. Night."

"Yes," Mom says. "I like to read my Bible before going to bed."

"Is good. Is good," nods Yinetta, nodding. Her English is very limited. It's funny how easy it is to think that someone who speaks broken English isn't very smart when, in fact, the person could be quite intelligent and just unable to communicate it into a foreign language. I imagine we sound pretty juvenile trying to speak Czech.

Jan speaks to Yinetta and she replies emphatically.

"Yinetta wants to come with us," says Jan to Dad.

"Well, of course," says Dad, a bit surprised. "But would it put her in any danger…"

"I don't know," interrupts Jan sharply. "I hope not."

"Picnic," says Yinetta, as if to explain.

"What a good idea!" says Dad, sitting up straighter. "We'll go on a picnic and we'll just happen to end up going for a walk and we'll just end up finding a cave…"

Mom helps Yinetta make some sandwiches and pack some fruit and some bottles of beer and cans of lemonade into a box.

When we're ready to go Dad asks Jan if we can pause for a moment of prayer. Yinetta likes this idea. Jan goes along with it.

"Father in heaven, we ask that this day glorify you and that we find the cave we're looking for. Keep us in peace and safety and from all evil. All these things we ask for in Jesus's name, amen."

"Amen," we all agree.

I'm wondering how we're going to keep it from Yinetta that we're being followed. Our spy is parked across the road but Yinetta doesn't seem to notice him as we set out across the field behind her house.

Jan and Yinetta take the lead. Mom, Julia and I are in the middle and Dad follows behind. Normally he would be out in front but I know this time he wants to stay between us and the spy. We're visibly carrying our picnic stuff. Mom even has a big plaid flannel blanket in her arms. Only Dad's knapsack contains a high-powered flashlight, a long stretch of rope in case we all need to hold on and stay connected in the dark, and, of course, his camera to record everything.

"This is beautiful!" Mom calls out to Jan and Yinetta.

"Yes!" agrees Yinetta cheerfully, glancing back briefly. The sky is blue with white fluffy clouds and the fields are green and colourful with wildflowers.

The only thing marring the scene is that back in the direction of Yinetta's house, I can see the spy getting out of his car, stretching, and lazily beginning to follow us.

Dad has noticed too.

I drop back to walk with Dad.

"How are we going to lose him?" I ask softly.

"I'm still working on that one," he says. "Pray that I get some inspiration."

Jan begins to reminisce.

"Petr and Marie lived in that house right over there," he points to a house in the distance on a road that runs perpendicular to Yinetta's.

"Mr. and Mrs. Spacek," says Dad to clarify.

"Where did you live, Jan?" asks Mom.

Jan points in the same direction.

"Past there, on the other side of the road, about a five minute walk from Petr's. I moved when my wife died and I was tired of farming. Petr liked to walk and look for

caves. Marie was always scared something would happen to him and sometimes I would go along with him to make sure nothing did!"

We smile.

I glance back as discreetly as I can. Our spy has started heading across the field. I'm just glad that Yinetta isn't looking back. There is a forest up ahead and that is where Jan is heading. Maybe we'll be able to lose him there though I doubt it. We're a very conspicuous group and we're certainly not the Marines.

"One day he come home all excited," says Jan. "He rushes down the road to my house and tells me he has found something. Something that will make him rich and famous. I say, what? He says that he has found drawing on a cave wall and that he is going over to the school to tell the teacher of science so that they can study it."

"When did you get to see the cave?" Dad asks.

Jan nods.

"Yes. This is the lucky part. Petr took me the next day. But after that the teacher of science called a professor in Prague. He comes out with all his Communist friends and after that Petr is not allowed to go back to his cave."

"Did anyone know that you'd seen it too," asks Dad.

Jan shakes his head.

"I told my wife and that was it. Petr told Marie and that was it. Otherwise I wouldn't have been able to stay here. They would have moved me too."

There is a pause.

"He was like a brother to me. I was very sad when he was gone."

We acknowledge this heartfelt emotion with a sympathetic silence. Then Jan laughs.

"But Yinetta is always saying to me that if I love your Jesus, he will be like a brother to me." He translates his statement to Yinetta and they begin an animated conversation.

"That makes me think of Kessily," I say. "Remember when we were trying to teach her the scripture where Jesus says that whoever does the will of God is my brother and sister and mother?"

Julia laughs.

"Yes," she says, "and she kept insisting that it was teacup. Whoever does the will of God is my teacup. She wouldn't budge on that one."

"I tried to explain to her that Jesus probably didn't even have a teacup, but you know Kessily…"

"Yes we do," agrees Dad.

We are now entering the forest. It feels about ten degrees cooler than the sunny field. The forest is thick and the trees are old, but Jan is leading us along a well-worn path.

"There will be an opening up ahead," he says, looking back at us. "A little clearing. Nice place for a picnic."

After about five more minutes of walking we come to a clearing. It is still shaded by the trees but it is a grassy area that we can spread our blanket out on and there is even some room to play with the badminton rackets and the birdie that Yinetta had given to Julia to carry.

Yinetta consults with Jan before saying something to Mom.

"I like to pick wildflowers here. You help?"

"Sure," says Mom. She has spread out the blanket so now her hands are free.

"Stay where I can see you," calls out Dad. His tone is light but his message is serious.

"Yes Daddy," says Mom.

While Julia and I play badminton, Mom and Yinetta pick flowers in the clearing and Dad and Jan talk. It's a beautiful day – sunny with a breeze – and I know this is going to a wonderful memory of the Czech Republic.

We are all keeping an eye on the forest, wondering what the spy is going to do, if he's going to make an appearance.

When we sit down to eat the sandwiches Dad asks a blessing.

When it's done and we've all got a sandwich or a piece of fruit in our hand, Jan and Yinetta begin to talk to each other in Czech. Dad takes advantage of this to let us know what he and Jan have decided.

"Due to circumstances I don't think we could locate the cave without it being observed. Jan and I don't want to do that. We've decided we'll try to sneak out tonight after dark and take a visit, him and I."

"Hmmmm," is Mom's reply.

Julia and I look at each other. This is bitterly disappointing!

"I'm sorry," says Dad. "I know this is hard for you all…"

Suddenly Jan laughs. We all turn to look at him.

"Yinetta has just told me that for our information, there is a spy, probably a former Communist party member, following us."

We are all astonished.

"She did not want to tell us yesterday and scare us," continues Jan. "But she knew that the man who came to her door wasn't selling insurance."

"But aren't you scared?" blurts out Mom.

Jan translates.

Yinetta smiles and replies.

"If you make the Most High your dwelling then no harm will befall you," translates Jan, "no disaster will come near you."

Dad laughs.

"Well, we've all been taught a lesson and Yinetta is absolutely right. If it's OK with you Jan, let's just go ahead and visit that cave in broad daylight."

Jan shrugs.

"I will have to get to know this God of yours who makes everybody so fearless. OK. Let's do it."

CHAPTER EIGHT

After lunch we pack up the picnic stuff and carry on with our walk.

This time our spy can be seen. He is discreetly following us at a distance.

"Of course they couldn't eliminate the cave all together without drawing attention to themselves," says Dad. "How did the Communists keep the cave a secret?"

Jan shrugs.

"I don't think you understand what it's like to live in a place where you are afraid all the time."

We walk in silence for about half an hour. Finally Jan stops.

"It should be around here. I remember a big maple tree and here is a big maple tree. They are not so common so I noticed it."

We are all looking around.

"The entrance was not big. Big enough for two men to go in at a time, maybe."

There are trees and bushes everywhere but nothing that looks like a cave. We put the picnic stuff down and start poking at bushes and looking behind trees.

After a few minutes, Yinetta finds the entrance behind a particularly bushy bush.

Dad has his flashlight out and is already to plunge in. Jan laughs at his enthusiasm.

"OK," he says. "How about we take turns? I don't want our spy surprising us. Yinetta and I will stand guard while you look around. Then we will go in when you are done."

"About how far in are the drawings?" asks Dad.

"Not far at all," says Jan. "The cave is deep but the drawings are in the front, in the first room you go in."

"Well," says Dad looking back at us. "This is it. Are you ready?"

We nod.

He and Mom duck their heads to go into the cave and we follow right behind. Without Dad's flashlight, it would be pitch black but we keep close to Dad and Mom and squeeze through the narrow passageway. Sure enough, within a few metres we are in a room.

Dad is flashing the light around the room. It is a big room so it takes some time to thoroughly cover the walls. After a few minutes of just looking at bare walls, Dad is getting edgy.

"I really hope they didn't do anything crazy like decide to destroy the picture…" He gasps. We all stare. There it is!

"He was right!" says Dad happily. "Here, hold my flashlight, dear." Dad hands the light to Mom and digs around in his knapsack for the digital camera. Mom keeps the light on the wall and we get to look at the crude drawings of men, with what look like horses, but in the same landscape are some big creatures, clearly unlike any animal we have on the earth today. Some of the men in picture are holding spears of some sort.

"My guess is it's an Apatosaurus," Dad says as he adjusts his zoom. After he takes about ten pictures Dad finishes off scanning the walls, but there is only the one drawing.

Suddenly we all freeze.

Up until now we have been aware that Jan and Yinetta are outside the cave because they have been carrying on a conversation in Czech. But all of a sudden, a new voice can be heard. A male voice.

We look at each other in horror. Can it be our spy?

Unfortunately the conversation is in Czech and we have no idea what is being said. It's one thing to memorize a few conversational phrases and an entirely different thing to understand a rapid exchange between natives.

"Have we been betrayed?" Mom whispers.

"I dunno," says Dad. He is looking at the camera. "I only have two more shots because I'm using the highest resolution." He directs the camera back towards the dinosaur picture and snaps two pictures. Then he takes out the little memory disk and sticks it in a pocket on the leg of his pants and buttons the flap.

"Just in case," he says, quietly. "They can have the camera, if that's what it comes too."

"Let's say a prayer," says Mom.

We bow our heads.

"Father in heaven," says Dad. "We commit our lives in your hands and pray for safety and direction. In Jesus name…"

"Amen," we all whisper.

Then we head out of the cave to see what's going on.

CHAPTER NINE

Jan is laughing.

When he sees us he doesn't look the least bit perturbed.

"You will not believe," he says, waving towards the man in black who is now standing right in front of us. Up close, he is older than Mom and Dad, but not by much. His face is worn but at the moment he looks like he's holding back a smile. "This is Dominik…" Jan says some unpronounceable Czech surname.

We just stare.

"He is friend!" says Jan. "Not a spy!"

"Good," says Dad, looking puzzled. "Then why has he been following us?"

"Simple. Simple," the man in black speaks for himself. "It is because I want to know more about creation."

We are all very flabbergasted.

The man clarifies.

"I am Communist…"

"Was Communist," interrupts Jan.

"Yes, yes. But I find Petr Spacek's file and I read it even though it is confidential…"

"You worked for Communists?" asks Jan.

"Yes, yes," agrees the man. "I was young and very good Communist and in charge of a lot of things. But I read about cave picture and I wonder if it is all true what I have been taught about evolution and dinosaurs. But I never go look for myself. And I want to be good Communist. But now I am Christian, for maybe four months." The man grins at us. We grin back. "When I hear you were coming I decide to follow you. I want to meet you.

"How did you hear I was coming?' asks Dad.

"I work for government. Intelligence service. Your work is known here and to be honest, I don't know much about it. I am not assigned to your case. I am on vacation."

"Are we being watched?" asks Dad.

Dominik laughs.

"Yes. By a young lady. One of ours. But you lost her. Nobody knows about Jan and Yinetta."

"But they know about the cave?"

"Well, yes, of course."

"So somebody will probably show up here soon."

Dominik laughs again.

"I know the young lady. She won't admit she has lost you. She knows I am following you but she thinks that I am doing it to keep an eye on her, maybe to promote her. But yes, she will show up here. Soon. Maybe now. I don't know."

"What now?" asks Dad. "How do I know that you're not just saying all this so that we trust you and show you what we've got and all that sort of thing?"

Dominik laughs with delight.

"Like an American spy movie, yes? Nobody trusts anybody. OK. I understand. I tell you what. I take you to my church, OK?"

Dad thinks for a second.

"OK," he agrees.

"But first," says Dominik. "I want to see this famous cave too!"

We are back in Prague, in church, Czech style.

It is a Baptist church, one of only 26 in the whole country, according to Dominik. Even Jan has come along for the experience. Dominik and Yinetta have hit it off and even though I'm no matchmaker, I would definitely say there are some warm feelings developing between them. She's staying with Dominik's sister while we're going back to the hotel we were in before. Dominik will also check into the hotel to continue the charade of following us. Rather than go back to Brno and miss any excitement, Jan decides to share Dominik's room.

The music is a lot like our praise and worship back home, but in Czech, of course. There are about 200 people in this church and they are really clapping and waving their hands for the Lord. Dominik says the Czech culture is very secular now. When Communism fell, people started to pursue money instead of God.

Dominik is just as enthused as the people around us, clapping and singing, and everyone seems to know him so I think Dad trusts him now.

We have to be careful now because our lady on the bicycle has reappeared. Dominik doesn't want to appear to be socializing with us but wants to continue to make it look like he's following us too. We arrive at the church first, followed by Dominik. Later, Yinetta and Jan come with Dominik's sister, all who are unknown to Tereza, the lady on the bike. Once inside the church we are able to all sit together because Tereza stays outside.

"She is an atheist," says Dominik smiling. "She would not want to come into a place like this." His face becomes serious. "Actually, it is very sad how many there are like her in this country. It is because for so many years we are told there is no God. Science has proven there is no God." He snorts. "I will do all I can to see that your pictures of the cave become known here."

The singing is easy to go along with even if we don't know the words because it's all so upbeat and we can just clap along, but the sermon is wasted on the Kent family. None of us understands a word and once again I realize that being able to ask your way to the bathroom is not the same as understanding a language.

After the service we split up but Dominik says we will rendezvous in our hotel room since Tereza only stakes out the lobby and will never know.

The first thing Dad did when we got back to the hotel was to fire up his laptop and e-mail the pictures to Uncle Ken.

Now Uncle Ken has e-mailed back to say he's overjoyed to receive them and is already in the process of negotiating for their publication.

When everybody is in our hotel room we order room service. Dominik insists on selecting the food. For an appetizer he orders *smažený sýr*,thick slices of cheese that have been breaded and fried. For the main dishes he selects *plněná paprika s rajskou omáčkouor*, stuffed bell peppers with tomato sauce and *svíčková na smetaně knedlík* which is beef sirloin with dumplings and vegetable cream sauce. For anyone who is still hungry after the feast, there is a plate of fruit-filled dumplings for dessert. So far I can't complain about the food here.

Dad, Jan, and Dominik are conferencing around the table in Mom and Dad's room. The topic is how to get the pictures out to the Czech Republic since secular magazines won't touch the topic of creationism and even Christian magazines may not want to take on the former Communist party. Dominik doesn't want the pictures to end up in some small obscure magazine that will only be read by a few hundred people. So while the men discuss strategy the ladies end up hanging out in mine and Julia's room with a pot of tea and the dumplings.

Dominik's sister, Nikola, knows a lot of English because, like Dominik, she works in the government and part of her job is something to do with international relations. But she doesn't want to talk about her job. She wants to ask us about Christianity in the West and Mom is happy to tell her all about our church. Nikola is Mom's age so they have really hit it off. She is unmarried and spends a lot of her spare time taking care of her brother.

While Mom and Nikola are seated in the two chairs that accompany the small table in our room, Yinetta has picked a seat at the foot of my bed which allows her to look through the double doors and keep an eye on Dominik. Julia and I grin at each other. Even Nikola notices after awhile and comments.

"Now take my brother, for example," she says winking at us. "He has gone on for too long without finding a wife. I am getting very tired of washing his socks and making him his goulash and dumplings."

Yinetta blushes.

"Maybe someone else will take over for me and do this job."

We all laugh.

Yinetta is bright red.

Thankfully, the men are too absorbed in their talk to be paying attention.

When they are finally done their conferencing, Dad informs us of their decisions. What they've decided to do is to have a scientific lecture by Dad, hopefully in a prominent location, something totally unaffiliated with any church, and then when Dad is lecturing about early life in this region, he'll drop the bombshell that men and dinosaurs lived together here less than six thousand years ago

"A high school may let you speak," says Dominik. "They might be interested in an archaeologist from the West."

The only problem is that Dad doesn't speak Czech very well and needing a translator would decrease the whole impact of his presentation.

Nikola snaps her fingers with an idea.

"The university," she says. "Not the archaeology department but the language students. The ones studying English. The teachers would be delighted to have a scientist from the West give a talk in English and they wouldn't be so concerned about the content. You see, if you give a scientific lecture, you will be subject to an intense check-up of what you have published in the past and they will very quickly realize you are a Christian…"

"Good idea!" says Mom. "You're fully qualified to talk in English so they wouldn't be as concerned about what you're actually going to say."

"It is a good idea," agrees Dominik. "Maybe it won't get as much publicity as I would hope for, but the word will get out and it will spread through the students that hear it."

Our visitors stay and talk with Mom and Dad about Christianity in the days of Communism and now in the days of freedom. Before they leave, Dad says a prayer that he will be able to have an opportunity to speak somewhere in Prague.

By Tuesday night, Dominik, Nikola, Jan, and Yinetta all declare it is hopeless. They have asked everyone they know if anyone knows any faculty member in a Prague university and the only thing Jan was able to come up with was that a son of one of his neighbours teaches a night course on welding.

Dad has even phoned around and tried to talk to some of the faculty himself but without any reference or referral, nobody has showed any interest in having him come speak.

We are gathered in our hotel room, glum, eating pastries and drinking lemonade (Mom said there was no point in suffering on an empty stomach.) Dad is sending off a message to Uncle Ken, letting him know what's been happening since he sent him the photos.

"Oh, he's online," says Dad as he gets a reply back within minutes. "Well, what's this…?!" Dad starts reading the message. 'Will you believe this, guys?" he says to all of us as he's reading. "One of the people who sponsored our trip is on the board of directors for the University of New York/Prague, a joint effort between Americans and the Czechs…. The guy was born in Czechoslovakia and that's why he was interested in helping to fund this project… " Dad continues reading. "All the teaching at the school is in English…Ken is going to give the guy a call and see if he can do something about getting me to speak…Hallelujah God!" says my Dad jumping up for joy.

Everybody else looks thrilled and the feeling changes from a funeral to a celebration.

Uncle Ken has even e-mailed some info that he got off the internet about the university.

Dominik is examining the map how to get there over Dad's shoulder.

"Yes, of course. Very easy to get to. I just never paid attention to it before."

"One thing I'm concerned about," says Dad to Dominik. "Our spy. Does she suspect anything? Will the government do anything to stop me speaking? Do they know I visited the cave?"

"Yes," says Dominik. "It is most certainly known that you visited the cave. Tereza knew that was your destination so she was always close behind you even if she didn't actually follow you out to the cave. The problem for them is that if this was the old days they could steal your film, or something, but in the days of digital cameras and e-mail they know the pictures are out of the country. Most people nowadays don't care. But there are a few people who are violently opposed to God and want to make sure that the Czech Republic does not turn to God. They fear the power of the church over the people."

"Unfortunately that is a concern," says Dad. "Many churches in history have abused their power and given Christianity a bad name."

"If they knew you were going to deliver a talk, yes, they would do everything to stop it, including doing you bodily harm. But if it doesn't go outside this room, there is no way they could know…"

Dominik pauses as something occurs to him. He slaps his forehead in frustration.

"Unless, of course, this room is bugged…"

We all stare at each other in horror until suddenly, Mom laughs.

"You sillies. There's always been someone in this room since we checked in, so how could someone bug it? And we've just taken our towels and soap from the maid at the door and made our own beds."

Dominik is relieved.

"I'm glad to hear it."

"I just don't understand why anyone cares," says Julia. "I mean, isn't this a free country?"

"It is," nods Dominik. "This is not something being done by the government, only by a few people in government who genuinely believe that the old ways are better and see Christians as being a threat to society."

Just then there is a knock at the door.

We look at each other with alarm.

"Room service?" asks Nikola softly.

"We haven't ordered anything else," says Dominik quietly. He signals to Jan, Yinetta, and his sister. "We will lay low, as you say, until we find out what it is." He directs them into the bathroom and shuts the door while Dad calls out, "Who is it?"

"Maid service," calls out a female voice.

We look at each sheepishly and Dad heads for the door. Dominik has flung open the bathroom door to intercept him.

"Don't open it!" he whispers urgently.

"Uh, sorry!" Dad calls out loudly. Dominik is peaking through the peephole. "Not today thanks!" While Dominik continues to look out the peephole, everybody is quiet and the occupants of the bathroom tiptoe out to sit on the chairs and beds.

After about two minutes Dominik turns around.

"OK," he says. "She's gone. Tereza."

"Did you recognize her voice?" asks Mom.

Dominik shakes his head.

"I've never talked to her. No, it was the fact that she called out in English, for your benefit. A true Czech maid would not bother to speak anything but Czech."

"Wow," says Mom. "And we would have fallen for it. Especially since we haven't had maid service yet today. What would she have done if she had gotten in?"

"I don't know. Gather information at the very least. She is probably desperate to know what is going on since you've been keeping to yourself here in the room and of course, she wants to know what I have to do with it all so if she were to find me here actually socializing with you it would be the death of my career."

Dominik waits about ten minutes before exiting the room, just in case Tereza is still on the floor. He heads for the elevator that will take him down to his room. Then Nikola and Yinetta head out giggling and talking in Czech, prepared to completely ignore Tereza if they see her.

Finally it is Jan's turn.

"It is all very interesting knowing you Christians," he says before opening the door. "Such excitement."

There is a knock on the door. Dad, Mom and I wake up with a start and look at each other in horror. Who knocks on the door before 8 a.m.?

Dominik, as it turns out.

He is in full spy mode, being furtive and scooting into the room as soon as the door is opened.

"I would have phoned," he whispers. I'm not sure whether this is because he's afraid that Tereza might hear him or whether it is because Julia is still sleeping soundly. "But I'm afraid it might be bugged."

"Why do you think that?" asks Dad in a regular voice.

"Because when I came back to my room yesterday, it had been searched. Not in an obvious way but things were not the way I had left them. My Bible had been moved slightly. You see, I had made a point of placing it very precisely on the table so that I would know if it had been moved and sure enough, it was about a centimetre out of line."

"The maid dusting, perhaps," suggests Mom. She and Dad seem oblivious that they are having this conversation in their pyjamas. I am very self-conscious of the fact.

Dominik shakes his head.

"She had come earlier. What I came up to say was, while you are waiting for your e-mail back from Ken, please don't leave your room unattended unless you are willing for it to be searched and possibly bugged."

"Hmmm," says Dad. "That means we'll either have to go out in turns or else have a severe case of cabin fever."

Mom looks concerned.

"I don't like the idea of dividing up," she says. "Whoever stays here may end facing an intruder so it would be better to have more than one in the room. But on the other hand, we don't want to send anyone out alone either. Quite frankly, I don't like the idea of splitting up."

Dominik nods.

"I have thought of all this," he says. "So I will stay in your room while you get out and sightsee."

"But Dominik," protests my mother. "Then *you* may have to face an intruder!"

Dominik shrugs.

"I don't think it will come to violence. At this point it is only Tereza. Should she come to the door again, I will just call out in my best Canadian accent, "No thank you!"

We laugh at his imitation of our accents.

Julia's beginning to wake up.

"What's going on?" she asks.

"Well, I think we're going sightseeing," says Dad, grinning at her.

"Yahooo!" Julia leaps out of the bed, hardly concerned about the presence of Dominik, grabs a pair of jeans and a t-shirt from her suitcase and flies to the bathroom to get ready.

"Do you trust him?" asks Mom as soon as we are on the street. It is 9 o'clock and we are heading out in search of breakfast.

"Dominik? Definitely," says Dad. "He doesn't gain anything that he doesn't already know by staying in our room. All my photos and information about the cave are

safely out of the country and the only concern now is to get a message out to the Czech people before we head out next week."

Tereza is following us which probably means that Dominik will have a boring day. But it is necessary for him to stay there if we want to be able to meet and talk freely in the hotel room. Tonight, Nikola, Yinetta, and Jan will all be coming to our room for dinner. Dad insists that they come to our place because he doesn't want to jeopardize their safety by us going to their place. To Tereza they are just unknown Czech citizens and Dad wants to keep it that way.

"Today we will see Hradcany Castle," announces Dad, his nose in a guidebook. "We'll be heading to the Mala Strana district which is supposed to be a very charming, old world area, according to my book. I guess we'd better get a cab. It has a lot of restaurants so we should be able to get a good breakfast. I think rather than stand here on the street and try to catch a cab, let's go back into the hotel and have them order one for us."

Fifteen minutes later we're in our cab. Since we let the hotel order it for us, we've given Tereza enough time to order her own cab and she is following us quite spectacularly with her bike hanging out of the trunk.

The cab driver drops us off in the old town and we take the Charles Bridge across to the castle district.

"What gorgeous Baroque architecture," says Mom looking around.

"It says in the guidebook that many of the houses here have been converted into embassies," says Dad to no one in particular. "There's the castle on the hill." Dad points in case any of us have missed this obvious landmark.

"This bridge was built by King Charles IV in 1357," reads Dad from his guidebook. "At that time it was the only link between the two halves of Prague and remained that way for four hundred years."

"That's a pretty old bridge," says Mom.

As we're walking Julia is watching an artist with his easel and little umbrella to shade him from the sun. He draws quick sketches of the tourists for a price. Since it's early there aren't too many people around at the moment.

There are other entrepreneurs setting up their stations along the bridge – some selling postcards and souvenirs, others selling drinks and candy.

"Beautiful sculptures," comments Mom, not noticing the artist who is trying to get our attention for a family portrait.

Dad is still in his guidebook.

"Across the river is the Perin District. The tower over there is a 60 metre high replica of the Eiffel Tower and is used as a TV transmitter…"

Dad continues to read about bridges and towers and spires and something being erected in the 15th century and some steps you can climb for an excellent view of the city.

When we reach the end of the bridge Dad makes us look down at a small island called Kampa with houses and a square and a park.

"We'll go up Mostecka Street," says Dad. "That will take us to the main square. There we'll find the 247 foot high dome of St. Nicholas. It's a baroque masterpiece built by the Jesuits in the early 18th century…"

"We could also find a restaurant," Julia suggests.

"Yes, we could do that too," says Dad absentmindedly as he reads his guidebook.

I glance back to see how Tereza is doing. Because the bridge is so quiet this time of day, she is still only halfway across, riding slowly on her bicycle, trying to keep a bit of distance.

"We'll have to go up Nerudova Street," says Dad. "In days of old, it was the main road leading up to the castle. We'll have to keep our eyes open for the signs that mark the houses because before 1770, the homes didn't have numbers, only names. Oh, this is interesting…Mozart and Casanova both resided at No. 33…"

"Breakfast," Julia reminds him.

"We'll keep our eyes open," promises Dad.

We find a small family restaurant on Nerudova Street, just across the road from Mozart's house. The interior of the restaurant is full of pictures of Mozart and sheet music. Breakfast is a plate of eggs with crispy fried potatoes and an assortment of pastries.

Poor Tereza has a breakfast of a doughnut and a coffee in a Styrofoam cup from a kiosk near the restaurant. Just to make her life easier we take a seat right in the front window.

When we're done our breakfast we continue along Nerudova Street. At the end of the street there are some steep stairs that lead up to Hradcany Square

We're at the bottom of the stairs when suddenly there is a commotion behind us. A young man in a cap and a long black trench coat is having a shouting match with Tereza. She doesn't look scared of the man but she does look concerned. After some yelling back and forth in Czech, with tourists walking wide semi-circles around them, it seems as if Tereza reluctantly points at us.

The man whirls around, a violent expression on his face and sure enough, he is looking right at us.

"Run!" declares Dad. He grabs Mom's arm and pushes Julia and I ahead of them. Instead of going up the stairs, we turn left on the road and sprint through a narrow alleyway next to Mozart's house, past an impressive place called the Schonborsky Palace (which we find out later is the American Embassy) and along Trziste Street, back to Karmelitska Street. I didn't know the street names at the time but when we get back to the hotel, Dominik and Dad go through the whole route together. Ooops! I gave it away that we survive!

But at the time I didn't think I would. We're running and running and huffing and puffing and behind us this guy is chasing us and yelling in Czech. And it isn't friendly yelling. I have a feeling that if we could understand him we'd be shocked.

We head south, doing our best to sprint past the Church of Our Lady of Victory. (When we get back to the hotel room, Dad actually mentions to us that the church was the first Baroque church to be built in Prague and that it dates to 1611. "Easy to remember," he says, "because that's the year the King James Bible came out for the first time.") I can't believe he even notices that we're passing a church because all I'm thinking about is the fact that I feel like I'm about to burst and my legs are killing me.

We cross the street and dash through another narrow alley. Our pursuer is still going strong. Tereza is following on her bike but although she has the advantage, she is not trying to overtake the man in the trench coat.

We end up in the Maltese Square. ("Where the Knights of the Order of St. John established a monastery in the 12th century," says Dad when we're back at the hotel.)

There is a beautiful Rococo palace dominating the square. Dominik later tells us that this is the Japanese Embassy.

Across the square is another church. ("The Church of the Virgin Mary Under the Chain," says Dad later. "Gorgeous Baroque interior, supposedly.")

By now we're coming up to a section that has many restaurants and a lot more people. We have to slow down just because we can't keep up the pace.

"When I say turn, turn!" says Dad. It's a bit of a cryptic instruction but we get the gist.

Our pursuer doesn't have the clear view that he used to have of us now that there are more people on the street. We had a late breakfast and by now it is getting closer to lunch and a lot of people are going in and out of restaurants.

"Turn!" hisses Dad. He grabs the door of a small restaurant and we duck inside. As discreetly as four out-of- breath people can be, led by Dad, we head for an empty booth in the back of the dim restaurant.

Instinctively we slip quickly into our seats and keep our heads down. Dad only looks up to keep an eye on the window. He sighs with relief when our pursuer continues past the restaurant, head swivelling, obviously frustrated.

"Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness," says Dad, taking a deep breath. We're all trying to get back to breathing normally. I'm sure we're quite a sight with our red faces. "For theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

"At some point he's probably going to figure out what we've done," says Mom.

Dad nods.

Just then a waitress comes up and since we're not really hungry having just had breakfast, Dad orders us all some orange drink.

"I wish I knew who he was," says Dad. "And whether he represents a serious threat to us."

We drink our orange pop quickly because we're all so thirsty and Dad pays the bill.

"Well," he says getting up. "We can't stay here forever so let's be brave and go out. We'll just make our way back to the hotel, I think."

We're not thinking about sightseeing anymore as we cautiously exit the restaurant. The streets are crowded and it makes us feel safer than if things were quiet. We look back and forth but none of us can spot Tereza or the man in the trench coat.

I don't think Dad consults the guidebook. We just move. We end up on Tomasska Street which takes us to Wallenstein Square. We are surrounded by fellow tourists because to the east of the square is Wallenstein Palace, which Dominik tells us later is occupied by the Czech Senate. The palace itself seems to be closed to visitors, but the flower gardens are being heavily visited.

"Let's pick it up a bit," says Dad. "I don't like being on foot like this."

"I have an idea," says Mom. "Excuse me, *S dovolením*," she says turning to a younger couple walking close to us. "Where is the tram?"

They looked puzzled for a moment but recover quickly.

"Ahhh, tram! "says the man. "*Ano.*" He begins to speak in rapid Czech which none of us understand but thankfully he does a lot of pointing.

"Thank you!" says Mom. "*Děkuji.*"

"Není zač," he replies.

Instinctively, we all start walking briskly in the direction that the man did most of the pointing. This takes us to Charles Bridge, now much more crowded than when we first crossed over.

"I don't remember seeing any station or any tram stop around here," says Dad looking around when we've gotten across.

"Better find it quick!" says Julia. "Tereza and that guy are on the other side of the bridge!"

"Tram!" says Mom desperately to a man selling helium balloons.

"Malostranska?" he asks.

Mom looks puzzled.

"Sure," says Dad nodding his head emphatically. "Yes!"

The man points and we all start running in that general direction. The man in the trench coat has spotted us and broken out into a run. Tereza, who could easily overtake us on her bike, is just riding slowly behind the running man.

We don't have much of a choice. We run too. But thankfully up ahead a tram is rounding the corner and there are a few people waiting at what appears to be a stop. We charge ahead. If we miss this we're doomed.

If there hadn't been any people at the stop we wouldn't have caught it, but having to stop and open its doors gives us that extra little bit of time to get close enough to the tram stop for the driver to realize we want on and wait for us to sprint that last 50 metres.

Once again we're bright red.

As the doors shut, Dad starts putting change into the fare box until the driver seems satisfied and then we sit down in the seat behind him. The man in the black trench coat is still running but his quandary seems to be that he is in between stops and, for a moment, doesn't know which one to head for. Since he missed the stop we got on, he clearly makes up his mind to catch us at the next stop. Although we're zooming by the man in the trench coat right now, our driver was so nice to wait for us that we're afraid that he might wait for this guy.

Dad groans. There is only one person at the next tram stop but it is a woman with a baby carriage.

As the doors open for the lady, my parents spring into action. Dad leaps down the steps to help the woman with their carriage. She seems startled by his almost superhuman agility as he grabs the bulky carriage and swings it easily into the aisle of the tram.

Meanwhile, to distract the driver from the man who is charging at the tram and will have overtaken it in about thirty seconds, Mom leans forward and says to the driver, "Hradcany Castle?"

Thankfully the man is behind us so the driver doesn't notice him as he shuts the door and answers Mom with a nod and a point.

"Ah yes!" says Mom, with a *how silly of me not to have noticed that big castle up there on the hill* tone of voice.

The woman with the baby carriage has paid her fare and taken her seat so thankfully we're moving again. And it's not a moment too soon because the man in the trench coat is close enough to touch the back of the tram.

CHAPTER TEN

We are heading up the hill to Hradcany Castle. Rather than taking it all in, I'm afraid we're all just trying to catch our breath.

"Well, the man in the trench coat and Tereza will certainly figure out where we're headed," says Dad. "So we're not out of the woods yet. I wouldn't be surprised if this thing just turns around and heads back down the same hill and past Charles Bridge again once it's dropped everyone off at the castle."

"So we can't stay on it," says Mom.

"I don't think we should," agrees Dad. "They'll do one of two things. Either wait for us to come back down that way, or come up to the castle looking for us."

But, as it turns out, the end of the line isn't Hradcany Park but Strahov Monastry.

Since it's the end of the line, we get off the tram.

"Taxi?" says Mom to one of the few people getting off with us. The lady smiles and shrugs and points back at the disappearing tram. Mom nods her thanks.

"Maybe we could dress up as a monk," suggests Julia. "With a hood and long robes and then we could take the tram back down and nobody would recognize us."

"Well, whatever we do we should do it soon," I say. "That sky is getting kind of dark over there."

There are rain clouds moving in rather rapidly and the temperature has dropped a few degrees.

Dad snaps his fingers.

"We can't dress up as monks," he says. "But we can do even better!" He points to a little kiosk where a man is selling chocolates, bottled water and pop, and most significantly, big blue raincoats – one size fits all. Dad marches over and buys four.

As it starts to sprinkle, we aren't the only ones donning these gigantic blue garbage bags. The rain is coming down in a steady drizzle as we head over to the stop to wait for the tram to return us to where we started. It's a moderate wait but just as we're getting on the tram, a huffing, puffing and very wet man in a black trench coat appears over the hill.

Due to rain, a lot of people want on the tram. With all of the umbrellas up and all of the blue plastic raincoats around, he doesn't spot us as we hurry into the open door of the tram.

"Keep your hoods on," says Dad quietly as we sit down.

"Tereza must still be at the Charles Bridge," remarks Mom.

We don't see Tereza though, as the tram heads down the hill. As we pass Charles Bridge and are heading down Letenska Street then, Karmelitska, Ujezd, across the river and then into central Prague, Dad finally lets us take our hoods off. These plastic raincoats get pretty hot when you're not in the rain anymore. We get off along Narodni Street and from there we make our way back to the hotel with a little help from the map in Dad's guidebook.

Dominik has had an uneventful time in the hotel room, passing most of it with the television on, tuned to a news station. He is shocked to hear about our day.

He and Dad confer about the whole thing, tracing out our whole route on the map in the guidebook and speculating as to who might have been following us. What is especially interesting to Dominik is Tereza's passive acceptance of the whole thing.

"It is impossible for me to think that this man works for the government," says Dominik. "Young men in black trench coats rarely do. So the question is, how does Tereza know him? The only thing I can think is that he is a friend, a brother, maybe?"

While they discuss the day, Mom tidies up a bit since everyone is coming over for dinner tonight. Dominik is preoccupied, so Mom gets us to help her pick out the dinner from the room service menu.

We select some chicken paprika, dumplings, potato latkes, and for dessert, some plum squares. Julia suggests that we also try the *obycejné vdolky* or Bohemian doughnuts so we order those as well. Mom asks that it be delivered at 6:00.

Everybody has arrived by 5:30 so we sit around and drink some grape pop that Jan has brought until dinner comes. Everybody is amazed to hear about our day.

"Good news everyone!" says Dad who is online with his laptop. "Ken has got me the speaking opportunity!"

Everybody cheers.

"When?" asks Dominik.

"Two days from now," says Dad, his eyes on the computer screen as he continues to read the e-mail. "That's great. I was thinking he wouldn't be able to pull it off that soon and that I'd either have to stay here a month or give up and go home."

"How about the pictures?" asks Jan. "Your photos. Will they be published?"

Dad nods.

"We've got a definite publication with an American creation magazine. Ken is also looking for secular media outlets. I worked on an accompanying article last night and it will probably be the base for my talk in two days."

There is a knock on the door.

Mom calls out "Who is it?"

There is a Czech reply rather than an English one, so Mom gets up to answer the door after peeking cautiously through the peephole. But it really is room service and our food helps to make the evening more fun. Nikola and Yinetta sit and chat in Czech, getting to know each other better.

Since Dad wants to have all day tomorrow to himself to work on his talk, Nikola and Yinetta convince Dad that they want to take Mom, Julia and I out. Jan will be our bodyguard, they giggle. Jan looks a bit surprised at this but readily agrees. Dominik says he will stay with Dad and be *his* bodyguard.

"Well, I guess that will work," says Dad, thinking about it for a moment. "It'll be a good chance to see the real Prague."

I have to admit, Julia and I are a little doubtful about this day. I mean, Yinetta and Nikola are nice, but they're *old*. We figure we'll end up seeing another castle, or maybe get to see what a Prague department store looks like. Mom has us up and ready at 8:30. She's already ordered a light breakfast of juice and buns and fruit which we eat quickly since we're supposed to meet them in the employee's parking lot behind the hotel at 9:00. Yintetta and Nikola have discovered an employee's stairway and exit. You have

to take the elevator down to the second floor but then you go to the end of the hallway and there is a door to the outside and some metal steps leading down to the parking lot.

Dad wakes up when Dominik knocks on the door at about ten to nine. Mom has ordered enough food for them and when we leave, Dad is in the bathroom getting dressed while Dominik butters a roll.

We exit through the employee's way and find Yinetta and Nikola waiting for us in Nikola's small, manufactured-somewhere-in-Eastern-Europe, car. Jan is already squeezed in between Nikola and Yinetta in the front so that leaves us three the backseat. And we're off! Nikola is a fearless driver. We go so fast and take so many narrow, twisting one-way streets that neither Mom, Julia or I are able to tell Dad where we've been when the adventure is over. The advantage to this style of driving is that no one could keep up with us, especially Tereza on a mere bicycle.

After about fifteen minutes of driving, Nikola finds a parking spot practically on the sidewalk of a one-way road.

"Do you like art?" she turns and asks before we get out, almost like an afterthought since it is pretty clear the question has just occurred to her and she has assumed that we will.

"Sure," says Julia for all of us. "Art's cool."

"Well," says Nikola, grabbing her purse and getting out of the car while the rest of us follow her example. "We will show you some art."

This is the art gallery district because we go to about nine or ten galleries all within a short distance of each other. There is quite a wide diversity of styles. We see everything from traditional landscapes to authentic Prague-style modern art. While there are a few tourists in some of the bigger galleries, Nikola takes us to some very small galleries run by the artists themselves that only have fellow artists and students walking around examining the paintings and sculptures.

By the end of it, Julia and I have an increased respect for Nikola who is clearly a cool person.

Our respect increases when she takes us to Káva Káva Káva, a quiet patio café, hidden in a courtyard that's full of artistic people dressed in black or other avant-garde outfits. There are innumerable kinds of coffee and dozens of teas to choose from so Julia and I try some Passionfruit Mango tea while Mom goes for Blackberry. Nikola insists that we all try the carrot cake which comes in huge slices and basically constitutes lunch for us since we're starving by this point.

"Well, thank you, Nikola and Yinetta," says Mom as she takes a sip of her tea. "This is wonderful."

"Yeah," says Julia. "We're getting to see the real Prague. I like it."

"Good," says Nikola smiling.

"Oh *no*!" says Julia suddenly.

"What is it?" says Mom, concerned.

"It's *him*!" Julia whispers loud enough for us all to here. "The guy who chased us!"

"Where?" I gasp.

"The corner table. He's with three other guys and they're having an intense conversation. I don't think he's seen us."

I have to admit. I'm terrified. I don't mind facing things like this with Dad present but Jan just doesn't seem like a man who can handle danger seeing as his philosophy is basically 'I'm so old, I don't care what they do to me.'

"This is terrible!" says Nikola looking upset. Yinetta and Jan are sneaking peeks at the corner table as we all are, as discreetly as possible.

"Oh it's not your fault!" says Mom patting her hand. "I mean, he obviously didn't follow us here since he was here before us. And how on earth would you know that he would be here?"

Nikola doesn't look convinced.

"Nikola!" insists my mother smiling. "It's not your fault!"

"OK," sighs Nikola. "But now we must do something about it."

"Yeah," says Julia. "Like eat fast!"

"Not necessarily," says Mom boldly. "We're surrounded by large plants. This place is pretty crowded and he's not expecting us to be here. Let's wait a bit and then when he leaves, let's follow *him*!"

Julia and I are surprised by Mom's boldness.

Nikola laughs.

"Dominik will kill me but I like your idea. I say we do it."

We look at Jan who looks at Yinetta.

Yinetta nods her agreement.

"I think this too. But first pray, yes?"

Jan sighs and says, almost to himself, "Well, I'm outnumbered."

"Yes we'll pray!" says Mom agreeing with Yinetta. "I'll start and you finish. Father, we commit this to you. We ask for safety and wisdom. Lead us to truth, truth that will help set this country free from the tyranny and ignorance of evolutionary teaching." Mom smiles at Yinetta who bursts into a quiet but intense prayer in Czech. When she's done we all agree with an "amen".

There is no danger that the guy is going to get up a leave while we're eating since he and his friends seem to be here for the long haul, making a cup of coffee last as long as a five course meal. Accordingly, when we're finished our carrot cake, we sip our drinks slowly.

"I've got to go to the bathroom," announces Julia.

"Me too," admits Mom.

All the ladies agree that after the long morning and a large mug of tea that we're all in the same boat.

"One at a time?" suggests Nikola.

"That could take awhile," says Mom. "If they pick up and leave suddenly, there could be some of us still needing to go. Where are the bathrooms, anyhow?" She is looking around.

Yinetta points. Inside, down a little hallway that starts right by the table where our guy in the trench coat is.

Mom sighs.

"If we go one at a time we increase our risk of being noticed as an individual. If we all go at once, we'll definitely be noticed, but hopefully only as a bunch of ladies, not as individuals. Plus, we'll get it over much faster."

“Sounds good,” says Nikola standing up. Leaving Jan to hold the table, we all get up, trying to keep our faces away from the guy in the trench coat, kind of hard to do when we have to walk right by him. But Yinetta and Nikola are on either side of us, laughing and talking to each other in Czech, and even though the men briefly glance at us, there is no cry of recognition from our guy. Of course, I am too petrified to look. Mom, Julia, and I just intensely pretend to be listening to Yinetta and Nikola.

The bathroom only has two cubicles so it still takes us some time but we all move efficiently and we’re out of there in about five minutes. If it had taken six minutes we would have lost our man because as we come out of the bathroom he and his friends are leaving the restaurant. Jan looks like he would have just let them get away.

Nikola whips out her wallet and throws down a tip on the table and we hurry, discreetly of course, out of the restaurant.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

The narrow roads make following our guy and his friends a little bit scary. We're so conspicuous compared to a wide road with lots of tourists and vendors. But the conversation between the young men is too intense for them to turn around and notice us.

I'm a lot more comfortable when they turn onto a wider road with heavier traffic and an abundance of people out enjoying the clear, warm day.

"Well, you get to see the real Prague at least," laughs Nikola. "This is not a tourist district."

It seems to be more of a business area with tall office buildings and restaurants to service the office people. The people we see are dressed up to work and are obviously out just enjoying the day on their lunch break. While some people are relaxing on wooden benches as they eat a sandwich out of a bag or a sausage dog purchased from a vendor, there is still a more hurried feeling than in a tourist area. I've noticed that in tourist areas there's more of a feeling of milling around and a kind of aimlessness that comes from constantly pausing to either read from a guidebook or to confer with others about where to go to next. But everyone in this area has a place to go and knows how to get there.

Our young men have a definite destination too. Since there are four of them, when they walk side-by-side they take up most of the sidewalk, much to the annoyance of anyone who is meeting them head on. They are all dressed in black and are somewhat intimidating so no one challenges them but instead, people move to the extreme side of the sidewalk to avoid confrontation.

"They're probably just going to somebody's apartment to drink more coffee," says Julia.

Yinetta shakes her head and says something in Czech.

Nikola nods in agreement to whatever Yintta says.

"This isn't a residential neighbourhood," says Nikola. "It will be interesting to see where they are heading since they don't seem to have a job."

A church?!

We are all startled when after a few more blocks of walking the young men head up the steps of an ornate church. It is an active church rather than just a tourist site because out front is posted the time of the service on Sunday.

"Should we go in?" Mom asks Nikola and Yinetta.

Nikola shakes her head.

"Way too easy for them to see us." She pulls out a notebook and a pen and scribbles down the name of the church and the name of the pastor which is just below the service time. "Come. Let's go back to Dominik. He may have some information about this."

Since there is no discreet place to wait outside the church, like a nearby café for example, we all agree since if we remain here we will be spotted as soon as the guys come out.

We retrace our footsteps back to Nikola's car and I have to admit, I'm pooped. Except for our tea and carrot cake break, all we've done is walk all day. It is a relief to collapse into the backseat of the car and even more of a relief to be back at the hotel

where Julia and I flop on a bed while the ladies describe our adventures to Dad and Dominik.

Dominik is excited, pulling out his cell phone to make some calls in Czech, while Mom orders a room service dinner on our hotel phone. This time she decides to skip authentic cuisine and just order two pizzas and a lot of Coke.

The pizza is a fascinating novelty. I don't know what Mom thought she was ordering for toppings but we have big chunks of artichoke and hot red peppers on one and process cheese and zucchini on the other. No one seems to mind, we're all so hungry, although the Coke goes quickly with the hot red pepper pizza.

Dominik's cell phone rings halfway through dinner. He carries on an animated conversation in Czech and then hangs up, excited.

"This church those guys went to is no church at all. I talked to my pastor. The church leadership at that church is never interested in any ecumenical get-togethers and they show no interest in evangelizing or even teaching their members. It is an old congregation that survived the Communist years by actually teaching evolution from the pulpit. Even now they teach that God is an impersonal force that created a little pond of life and then let evolution do the rest."

"Wow," says Dad, wiping his mouth with a napkin. "Though that shouldn't surprise me. There are churches in North America that teach that God used evolution to create his world."

"This young man who was harassing you probably didn't do it because the church told him to," continues Dominik, "but he clearly is hostile to what you stand for."

"I'm flattered that we're stirring up a bit of a response, even if it's negative," says Dad.

"I am convinced that he is a friend or brother of Tereza, simply because no one else knows why you are here. You are known in certain circles, of course, but mostly for your archaeological accomplishments. But now you are in a position to offend a lot of Czech people who are passionate evolutionists. You will be using a cave in their very own country to cast doubt on their convictions."

"Did you get a lot done today?" asks Mom to Dad.

Dad nods.

"I'm as ready as I'm ever going to be. The rest is in God's hands."

So we say a prayer and then after another half hour or so of chatting the party breaks up so that we can all get a good night sleep for tomorrow's big day.

The University of New York/Prague is quiet when we arrive.

Dad's lecture is scheduled for a 10:00 o'clock class but we have arrived early just to check out the place and to make sure that Dad gets to the right building in time.

We're quite the group. Dad and Mom drove with Dominik.. Julia and I came with Nikola and Yinetta. Jan has come separately and is waiting for us in the faculty parking lot, seemingly not perturbed that he is in a spot reserved for Professor Novotny.

When the rest of us are safely parked in the Visitor's section he gets out and comes over to us.

"What class have they got you speaking in?" he asks.

"Communication and Mass Media," laughs Dad. "So I've geared my talk towards censorship in the media and how even in countries where there is freedom of the press,

the bias of the media can prevent some news from becoming common knowledge. I challenge the students to examine their own prejudices and biases and to choose to pursue truth regardless of the outcome."

"What other classes do they have here?" asks Julia.

Out of his pocket, Dominik pulls a printout from the University's web-site.

"They have full-time Bachelor Degrees in Business Administration, International & European Economic Studies, Information System Management, Psychology, Sociology, Political Science, and of course, Communication & Mass Media. They also have an intensive weekend study program, postgraduate study programs in Communication and Public Relations, Human Resource and Development Training, and International Management..."

"Very informative," says Julia politely.

"Well, where do we go from here," asks Mom.

"Let's find out where I'm speaking first and then maybe we can grab a quick snack after," says Dad.

Dominik whips out a map of the campus that he has also printed off the internet. He and Dad orient themselves and we're off. Turns out we're standing right in front of the building we're supposed to be in.

"Oh well," says Dad. "That's that then. Let's get something to eat."

A couple of blocks down the street there is a little coffee shop that is serving breakfast. We go in and commandeer two tables which we push together so that we can all be together. Coffees and teas are ordered. Since they have "American-style" breakfasts Dad, Mom, Julia and I order scrambled eggs, hash browns and toast, while Nikola and Yinetta order some fruit and yoghurt. Jan and Dominik just drink coffee.

There are a few students in the restaurant, with books out all over the small tables, obviously studying.

"The prices are good here," remarks Nikola. "If I were a student I would come often."

Mom glances up at the chalkboard menu.

"I'll be honest," she says. "I haven't really figured out the prices here in the Czech Republic."

Dominik laughs.

"The vendors and shopkeepers love people like you."

Mom laughs too.

"I bet they do. So I try not to shop too much when we travel."

After breakfast we head back to the University.

"I'm just going to pop in and say hello to the professor whose class I'll be lecturing in," says Dad, glancing at an e-mail from Uncle Ken that he has printed out. "Let him know I'm here."

The professor and his classroom are located on the fourth floor. Dad hits the button for the elevator.

"Well, I think this is where we part then," says Mom glancing at her watch. "You've got half an hour and I figure you'll probably spend it making small talk with the professor."

"Well," says Dad giving Mom a hug. "Pray for me, OK?"

"Of course," says Mom. "That's probably what we'll do the whole time."

"Meet you back at the car when I'm done," says Dad as the elevator doors open.

Then Dad is gone and we're standing in the foyer. In the corner is a little kiosk selling drinks and a few small chairs and tables.

"Well," says Dominik taking charge. "Let's buy a drink and sit and pray quietly for this class, that minds and hearts will hear his message."

With us sitting two or three at a table, we take up all of the little chairs and tables. Julia and I are at one and we agree to just pray silently in our head. Dominik and Yinetta are at another table and they pray together quietly in Czech. Mom and Nikola are at the other table and they pray in English while Jan respectfully listens.

The man selling the drinks looks at us a bit strangely. Clearly we're not students and I wonder if he knows what we're doing. But he has a magazine to read and soon loses interest in us.

I can't help but notice the number of people passing by, all obviously rushing to make a class on time.

After about ten minutes both Julia have prayed as much as we can and we just sit and sip our juice and watch the people. Julia gasps.

"What?!" I say.

"It's him," she squeaks. "And his friends!"

Sure enough, the guy in the black trenchcoat and his friends have come in the door and are sauntering towards the elevator. They have books and knapsacks so they are obviously students.

Mom's still praying but Julia tries to catch her eye. She fails and catches Dominik's instead. As discreetly as possible, she slides her chair next to his and begins to tell him what's going on. His eyes widen. Yinetta leans forward and lets out a little gasp when she realizes who's only ten feet away. When Mom notices Julia in conversation, it causes her to look up and see the guys at the elevator and nudge Nikola.

As the guys get on the elevator, we quickly huddle and confer.

"If they are heading for your husband's class, he might be in danger," says Dominik. "We must go up there to be with him."

Mom looks pale.

"I don't like the idea of the girls going up there…"

"They can stay here…" Dominik suggests.

Julia and I quickly veto that idea.

"What if we're wrong and these guys go to another class?" asks Nikola.

"We are still needed in case a chance encounter happens," says Dominik.

"Dad needs us," I say, standing up. Everyone else does too and we head for the elevators. It's a squishy ride with all the students.

When we get off at the fourth floor we are in a carpeted corridor with doors to classrooms on either side.

"Which classroom?" Dominik asks Mom.

"I didn't notice," groans Mom.

There are a modest number of students in the hallway because it is five minutes to ten. Dominik stops a young man and asks him a question in Czech. The young man shrugs and offers a half-hearted suggestion.

"He thinks the Communications and Mass Media class is the one at the end of the hallway," says Dominik.

As we walk down the hallway we discreetly glance in the doorways, but we don't catch sight of Dad or the guys in black.

Near the end of the hallway a door opens and Dad comes out talking and laughing with a man who must be the professor of the class Dad will be lecturing in. From what I can see, they have just come out of a staff lounge. Dad looks shocked to see us. Excusing himself for a minute he quickly comes over and Mom fills him in. Concerned, Dad turns back to the professor who is waiting for him so that they can go in together.

"OK," he says. "Keep praying."

"We'll be out here if you need us," says Mom as he heads into the classroom. Taking a quick peek over Dad's shoulder as he heads into the classroom, Dominik groans.

"They're all there," he says. "Right in the back row."

CHAPTER TWELVE

I feel like Dad is a goldfish walking into an aquarium of piranhas.

We're out in the hallway, the door is slightly ajar and Dominik is shamelessly positioning himself where he can see the back row.

"They've seen him," he whispers. Mom and I can't help it. We move over to where Dominik is standing. Yinetta, Nikola, and Julia stay back against a wall, but I can tell they're praying.

Inside the classroom, the professor is talking to the class. All classes here are in English so we understand everything. He is introducing Dad as a renowned archaeologist with an interesting perspective on human origins who is going to give a talk on the media and how it reports such findings that it might not agree with. There is polite applause as Dad moves to the front of the class.

His presence has caused quite a stir in the back row. The guys are all looking at each other and a little bit of whispering is being exchanged which changes to note-passing when their professor glares at them.

"I came to the Czech Republic to explore your caves," says Dad. "I met the wife of a man in Canada who told me about some interesting drawings he'd seen in one of the caves here and as a creationist I wanted to explore it. By creationist I mean, I believe in Intelligent Design, that is to say, that this complex world we live in didn't develop by chance but by an intelligent higher being whom I believe to be the God of the Bible."

There is a murmur throughout the class.

In the back row the four men in black look furious.

"The cave here in the Czech Republic was reputed to have a picture of a man and a dinosaur. If you've studied the evolutionary theory, you will know that this is impossible if dinosaurs preceded man by millions of years since the cave-man would have no way of knowing what such a creature should look like. We ourselves only became aware of dinosaurs in 1822 when Dr. Gideon and Mary Mantell, an English couple who lived near Oxford, discovered first a tooth and then some fossils of a creature previously unknown to science."

"There are no drawings of dinosaurs!" calls out one of the men in black.

The professor is about to say something but Dad continues.

"Actually, there are many examples of dinosaur drawings they just aren't highly publicized. That's part of my message about the media not making these things known. I'll give you some examples so that you can look into it further. There is a stone that was found on the Nazca desert plains that depicts two dinosaurs, probably a Triceratops and a theropod similar to a Tyrannosaurus Rex or Allosaurus."

"They're hoaxes," yells out the guy in black that followed us. "You creationists make up this rock art and then try to use it to support your book of myths."

"Sorry, don't think so," says Dad. He doesn't seem upset by the interruptions. "The rock is volcanic, of a high density, has several areas deeply encrusted with desert sand and has a film of oxidation over it. Part of one of the dinosaur's lower legs and feet are well worn and the artwork itself is crude. Forgery is unlikely. Another example is a pictograph in the San Rafael Swell that looks like a pterosaur, one of the flying dinosaurs. Not far from this site, the University of Ohio quarried a fossil pterosaur. Furthermore,

the Sioux Indians have a legend of the Thunder Bird that looks remarkably like the pterosaur Pterandon."

"It's all you crazy creationists who find these things," calls out the guy.

"'Fraid not," says Dad. "One of the petroglyph's found in Natural Bridges National Monument resembles a brontosaurus and was examined by a scientist who despises creationists. Even he had to admit that it appeared to be legitimate and that there was no orthodox way of explaining it."

A young woman with long blonde hair raises her hand. Dad nods and points at her.

"How do you tell how old something is?" she asks. "How do you tell if it is, how you say, hoax?"

"For rock art, there are several dating methods," says Dad. Although he has notes, with all these interruptions, most of what he's saying comes from memory. "The first is the desert varnish. Desert varnish is an accumulation of minerals that build up in glyphs and on canyon walls. It's a dark coating and if the glyph was recent it would be much lighter than the dark background. A second way is the weathering or erosion of the rock by wind and water giving it a pock-marked appearance. A newer rock would, of course, be brighter and smoother. Lichens are another way of helping to determine a rock's age. Lichens are common plants consisting of an algae and a fungus living together. They form a scaly adherence on rock surfaces and since they grow so slowly they are an excellent way to determine if a rock is old. Certain lichens take several thousands of years to reach their final size. A modern forgery would have no lichen growth. I hope that helps you a bit.'

"Now I want to move onto how the media has been used to promote the evolutionary bias, particularly with regards to the ape-man theories."

"This is stupid!" the guy in black yells as he jumps to his feet. To emphasize his point he yells something in Czech as well.

The professor looks furious.

"Sit down!" he orders. Reluctantly his student obeys.

"Now," says Dad, calm. "So much of our worldview is shaped by the media. But are we always getting all of the facts? Many of the bones found are often proclaimed to be the missing link between men and apes and make the headlines as such. What isn't highly publicized is how after some serious studying, the bones turn out to be entirely those of an ape, or even the bones of two different animals. Let's talk about some famous examples.'

We'll start with Java Man. In 1891 Java Man consisted of a skull-cap, a tooth and a thigh bone. The skull-cap and tooth appeared to be that of an ape. The thigh bone, which was found fifty feet away and a year later appeared to be human. Doctor Eugene Dubois who found them insisted that they belong together. What Dubois failed to mention was that he had also found two human skulls in the exact same stratum as the skull-cap. This, of course, showed that real humans lived in the same area at the same time and that there was no need to link the human thigh bone with the ape skull-cap and tooth."

"That's just one example!" yells the guy in the back.

"If you have a comment," says the professor, icily, "please raise your hand and wait to be called on."

"I have more examples," says Dad, continuing. "Peking Man. Based on a tooth and a skull, a model was made of a supposed ape-man. This model was not a cast but the creation of the man, a Dr. Black, who found it. At the excavation site there was found great heaps of ash and in the ashes were the bones of many animals, including more monkey-like skulls of the supposed Peking Man. The world was informed that the remains of a primitive man had been discovered – a man who could use stone tools, walk upright, live in a cave and cook with fire. A famous authority of the day, Professor Eva Breuil, visited the spot and declared that the ash heaps were actually the remains of great furnaces. These comments were ignored. The ash remains that were supposedly the result of Peking Man cooking his own food were, in fact, two giant ash heaps. Just one of them was the length of a football field and half the width of a football field and the height of a two story building.'

"The more likely theory was that these were the remains of the industrial furnaces used to build the ancient city of Cambriolet where Peking currently stands. A leading authority, Marcellin Boule, examined the skulls and declared them to be monkeys and said that they had been food for the real men who had worked the furnaces. But Boule's opinion was not presented and his fellow scientists ridiculed his findings."

A tall, slim man in the front row put his hand up.

Dad nods to him.

"I am interested to hear what you have to say," he says in careful English. "Is the media all biased or are some stories printed even though they don't support evolution?"

Dad nods.

"In 1972, Richard Leakey found a skull in Africa that he said was human. The skull was dated to be 2.5 million year old by one estimation, 1.5 million years old by another. Either way, the skull proved to be a problem for evolutionists because this human was older than their supposed ape-men ancestors. An English newspaper reported it. This didn't cause the newspaper to turn against the theory of evolution but at least they reported the problem with the theory. Richard Leakey himself said, 'What we have discovered simply wipes out everything we have ever been taught on evolution and I have nothing to offer in its place.'"

Looking furious, the guy in black raises his hand. Dad smiles pleasantly.

"Yes?" he says.

"Ramapithecus is ten million years old," the guy says. "He is our ancestor."

Dad laughs.

"Yes, he became our ancestor after Leakey discovered the human skull. Ramapithecus consists of some fragments of a jaw bone and a few teeth. There are no links between him and man, just a gap of over seven million years. But after Leakey discovered the human skull, he became the best candidate for our ancestor. Evolutionists ignore that Ramapithecus's jaw and teeth are very similar to a type of baboon living in Ethiopia. The fossil records simply don't support the ape-to-man transition endorsed by the media."

"This is crazy!" yells the guy in black, standing up. He signals his friends to do the same. "You are crazy!" He starts walking towards Dad.

Dominik is tense, ready to rush into the room at any minute to protect Dad. I think we all are.

"Sit down!" the professor orders.

The guy, followed closely by his friends, yells something in Czech. Dominik stiffens so it can't be nice, whatever he said. Dominik pushes open the door and says "Come on!" to Dad.

Dad looks over at us and back at the guys who are now right in front of him.

"Get back to your seat or get out of this classroom!" yells the professor.

"This isn't school!" says the guy in black viciously. "This isn't teaching. This is propaganda! I won't get out! I want him to get out and to get out of my country!" He gives Dad a big shove. Mom gasps as Dad nearly loses his footing but manages to grab the chalkboard to regain his balance.

"Get out!" yells the professor to his wayward students.

"We will! And we will take him with us!" The guy signals at Dad who's quickly grabbing his notes and sticking them into his briefcase.

Dominik has had enough. He pushes into the classroom and stands beside Dad. Jan looks a little nervous but he joins Dominik. Boldly Nikola, followed by Yinetta, marches into the classroom. We are right behind them and suddenly Dad is surrounded.

The guys in black don't know what to do. Can they take us all on? They are four strong young men, but we outnumber them and the professor has joined our circle.

Looking furious, the guy in black signals to his friends and with much ado, they stomp out of the classroom. The professor almost collapses with relief.

The class is all out of control by now, students chattering back and forth and animatedly discussing the whole thing. Their professor barely notices them and they certainly aren't paying attention to him.

"Bless you," he whispers to Dad, shaking his hand. "Bless you for coming in and being exposed to this." He pauses. "You see, I, too, am a Christian."

Dominik throws his head back and laughs with delight.

"My brother!" he says. They hug like long lost brothers.

Dad takes advantage of the moment to sit down in a spare chair.

"I have to admit," he says to Mom. "My legs are like Jello."

"Well," says Mom, "I guess we couldn't get any better than this!" She holds up the paper.

It is the next morning and our little group is meeting for one final time in our hotel room to share breakfast before we have to head to the airport to catch our plane home.

"Could we expect a class full of mass media students NOT to report the going-ons in their classroom?" Dad says.

"Page 2," marvels Dominik examining the paper. "I can't believe the editor was willing to allow a student article on page 2, instead of say, page 30."

"Well, it has the advantage of being an American harassed in an international school while giving a talk. Sort of has a public relations thing attached to it," says Dad.

"Yes, but your whole lecture was repeated verbatim!" says Dominik. "Your talk has gone out to all of Prague and half of the countryside. This is answered prayer!"

"Someone must have had a tape-recorder going," says Mom. "They quoted you perfectly."

"I'm not surprised that some enterprising media student had a concealed tape recorder," laughs Dad. "And I admire his initiative."

Julia and I are sitting on the edge of Dad and Mom's bed, stuffing ourselves with fruit-filled pastries. I'm going to miss Czech cuisine. On the other hand, my jeans having been getting a little tight around the waist and it will probably be good to get back to Mom's low-fat cooking.

I wish I could say that Jan has given his heart to the Lord, Dominik has proposed to Yinetta and that the Czech Republic has been freed from the slavery of evolutionary thinking, but I guess things like that take time. In any case, we have everybody's address so that we can keep in touch.

When it comes time to leave for the airport, Dominik offers to drive us but Dad says no, we'll take a taxi.

"We'll say goodbye here," Dad says. "Airports are too hurried and too hard to say the right kind of goodbye."

"Are you going to get into trouble for being so closely associated with us?" Mom asks Dominic.

Dominic laughs.

"Not when you made page 2 of the newspaper and everyone is talking about you. Tereza might get into trouble for having such an outspoken brother." Turns out the guy in black is Tereza's brother. His name is prominently mentioned in the newspaper.

Dominic, Nikola, Yinetta, and Jan all escort us down to the lobby where Tereza no longer waits for us. There are hugs all around and a few tears between the ladies and many promises to write and stay in touch.

"But will you be OK?" Dominik fusses over us. "You will find your way to the right plane? You will be able to catch a taxi? Do you even know how to say taxi in Czech?"

Dad roars with laughter as he looks at me.

"That's one I do know! It's easy! *Taxi*!"