

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

I tell you what, the Olympic team should be talking to me next time they're in the market for a gold medal. I covered the ground between the pier and the breakwater in exactly 9.137 seconds. Before Jerry Block's Cadillac was cruising to a slow stop, I was sitting pretty between John and Dillon Garret on the breakwater.

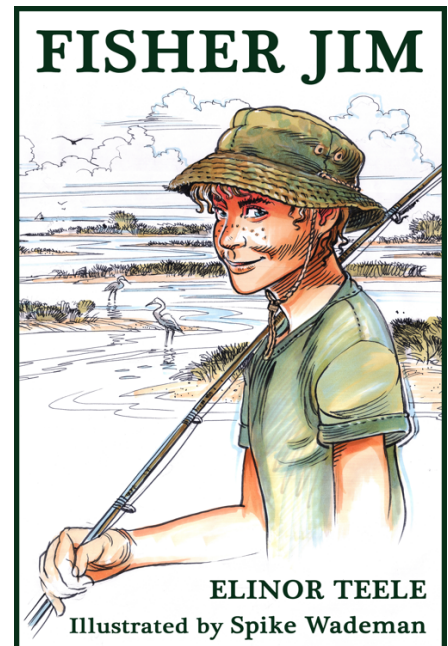
"Afternoon, Danny."

"Afternoon, Jerry."

Jerry Block is what I call a "Grease Spot." He's the sorta guy that sticks around no matter how hard you scrub at him. Jerry is a councilor-at-large for the city council, which basically makes him think he's entitled to stick his honking nose in your dog's business.

I remember one time Mom and Da were fighting in the supermarket—not one of their rip-roarers, just a typical "I'm too effing tired" kinda spat—and Jerry slithered up next to them to eavesdrop. I could tell he was listening because he was pretending to read the ingredients on a box of Ladies Sable Hair Color.

"We don't need it, Lily."



About Fisher Jim

A Free eBook for Kids Ages 8-12
Written by Elinor Teele
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"I like the smell."

"It's too expensive. We could buy a six pack of toilet paper for that price."

"You're really going to argue with me over a bar of soap?"

"I'm not gonna argue with you. I'm gonna put it back on the shelf and walk away."

"God, Pete, you are such a cheapskate!"

"Yeah, well, I'm the one paying the bills this year. Or not."

Jerry took that stupid conversation and ran like a swollen river with it. Next thing I'm hearing in school is that my Mom is roaming the streets, my bankrupt Dad is talking to the Mob, and I'm being treated with special soap for lice. The jokes went on for days.

"What are you up to, Danny?"

What Danny was up to was hiding the Rita Anne under Willy and Billy's tarp. But he wasn't gonna tell Grease Spot that.

"Nothing much. Enjoying the improbable weather."

"Hmmm."

Jerry Block is a big fan of the word "hmmm." A few years ago, somebody called it in that Granddad was building an illegal sauna in the woods. Jerry came over to our house and spent five hours asking Granddad questions and saying, "hmmm." A day later, the DPW bowled the whole thing.

That was the day Granddad replaced the Stars and Stripes on the rotary pole with a yellow flag that said, "Don't Tread on Me."

"What's under the tarp, Billy?"

That's another thing about Jerry Block. He always gets Billy and Willy confused. It's easy to tell which is which—Billy's the one with greeny eyes and thick eyebrows and Willy's the one with bluey eyes and a scar on his knee—but Jerry's more interested in what folks can do for him than folks themselves.

"I'm Willy. And that's my cousin Moony."

"Moony's under that tarp?"



“Sleeping off last night.”

You could tell that Jerry didn't believe a word of what Willy was saying. So Benjamin, who was sitting next to Dillon, started up a low snore. He stopped when he saw Jerry's scowl.

“I'd like to say hello.”

Jerry leaned over to grab the end of the tarp and Billy clamped him on the wrist.

“I wouldn't disturb him,” Billy warned. “Remember what happened last time Moony had a hard night out?”

Everybody on the Eastern seaboard remembered that.

Da says that Moony was walking home cross the island and got tired of waiting for a stop sign to go green. When the sign kept saying STOP, Moony ripped it straight out from the concrete and used it to charge the statue of Joan of Arc. It took six cops to get him off the horse.

Jerry let go of the tarp and took a few steps back.

“We've had a report from the Fisher Harbormaster that Jim Tucker has stolen a boat. Seems he eluded the Coast Guard and is out somewhere on the Bay. You haven't seen him?”

Danny laughed.

“I haven't encountered that rascal since his mother departed for California. The Tucker men keep themselves to themselves these days.”

“Hmmm.”


Jerry began a slow scan of the boats in the harbor. When he came to the feet of the first kid on the breakwater, he stopped. I grabbed the brim of my hat and ducked my head into my chin.

“You up there, blond girl. What's your name?”

“Katie Garret.”

My heart did a flip flop. I once put a garter snake in Katie's sleeping bag when we were having a camp out in the Garretville woods. Of all the Garrets on the breakwater, she was the one most likely to have it in for me.

“Well, then, Katie,” Jerry's voice got sorta sickly sweet. “Have you seen a tall boy, gangly, with a slightly crooked shoulder, driving a Woodbury skiff?”



In my head, I made a silent prayer. Please, oh please, Katie, don't tell him anything.

"Yeah, I've seen him."

My stomach nearly dropped out of my knees. I was busted for sure.

"He was headed up the Bass River. Bout a half hour back."

My heart did Mom's silly dance of joy.

"No, he wasn't!" Benjamin called out. My stomach, which had been crawling its way back towards my belly button, flopped to the ground. "He went over to the Fisher, round the end of Kramer's Neck. I saw him go."

"He's tied up at Little Neck!"

"He's gone round the point!"

"He's staying with his Auntie Deena!"

There were so many voices blasting at Jerry that he put his hands over his ears and shook his head.

"Enough!"

Everyone stopped. John, who was snorting with laughter, made a noise like a cow with the hiccups.

"Dillon Garret. Tell me the truth. Where did he go?"


I could feel Dillon straighten up beside me.

"Katie's right, sir. He blew by around lunchtime and said he was running up the river to the cut. Said he was going to try and hide himself along the way or hole up in Peterborough Harbor."

I blessed the soul of Dillon Garret that day. Bass River was long and windy, and there were plenty of places that the Coast Guard would be forced to investigate. It could take hours.

"Hmmm."

I was squeezing the end of my rod so hard that I'd lost all feeling in my fingertips.



“Yes, Harbormaster? This is Jerry Block. Turns out your fugitive is heading up Bass River for the cut. I suggest the Coast Guard takes the river while you call the Peterborough Harbormaster. He can’t hide forever.”

Oh yeah? I thought, as Jerry Block got back in his Cadillac and gunned it for the road. That’s what you think.