

Years 5 & 6
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The End Journey

The drawers were stuffed. Papers the colour of tea stains and goodness knows what erupted out of them. I stared at the junk in utter exasperation realisation sinking in that this was the pile I had been told to dig through. A weary sigh escaped my lips as I began to uncover the endless layers.

Countless hours of searching through the heap of doom I finally found something somewhat interesting . . . something that might actually keep me entertained for the long summer ahead. Gazing at the extremely old looking page its ink almost completely faded. I ran out of the office into my room to grab a magnifying glass and even with the magnifying glass I struggled to make out what looked like a diagram. An inscription around diagram was not written in English, instead it appeared to be a code of some sort.

I intently stared at the inscription trying to place where I had seen this code before . . . then like a light bulb I remembered . . . it was one of my favourite places in the entire universe . . . my home away from home . . . my happy place . . . the Library. Leaping onto my bike I peddled like the wind into town, palms clammy, gasping for breath I arrived at the front steps of the library. Racing through the front doors I went straight to the front desk.

“Where will I find the advanced code books?!” I practically howled at the librarian. Fiddling with my hands impatiently she took what felt like an eternity to uncover their location.

Finally finding the book I was looking for I frantically flicked through its fragile pages. That was until the librarian notified me of the delicacy of this ancient book. She made a quick retreat to her desk as I puzzled over the fact that some words decoded into gobbledygook while others I could decode fine . . . what was going on?

Whilst I was trying to figure this out, my mind wandered and before I knew it I found myself flipping to the front pages of the book. Skimming thorough the pages I found a title that intrigued me: **Varying Codes**. Realisation struck me the text was not one, but various different codes to ensure the security of the message. Why was this person trying so hard to keep this concealed . . . I looked at the message again but this time I looked at it differently; I looked at it with the knowledge I needed to reveal the hidden message.

As night was falling the library was closing. I staggered out of its ginormous doors and with a quick wave of thanks to the librarian I leapt onto my bike I sped back home. My arrival was met with the furious faces of my parents demanding to know where I had been. Not ready to reveal the unusual document to them yet, I told them I had found some old coins and I went to the library to research their significance. They just rolled their eyes; I had always been interested in historical artefacts and meant their resulting interview was shortened and Dad returned to watching the TV and Mum returned to chopping the vegetables for dinner. In the clear I darted up the stairs to my room before they changed their minds.

In the safety of my room I locked the door, pulled out the page and began examining the illustrations. The text that had taken me an eternity to decode now read:

The entrance behind the _____ in the extreme west of the house leads to the headquarters. There you will find the plans – D&C.

As hard as I tried I could not find a match for the fifth word however, the diagram closely resembled the layout of a house. Looking at it closely I realised the layout seemed oddly familiar . . . this was the layout of the house that I have many treasured memories of . . . this diagram is my house!

Fifteen minutes later I had identified and labelled the areas of my house. When I got to my room there was an extra room. One that I couldn't identify. Along with the strange room there was also the note signed **D&C**, my mind wandered as I thought about the many mysteries I had uncovered. I thought about my grandparents Claud and Dorothy who were some of the greatest explorers of all time who had lived in this house long before they disappeared. A lightbulb switched on in my head like a lightning bolt. The drawer where I had found the page had belonged to my grandparents! My room would be the extreme west . . . so wherever the entrance is it must be in my room somewhere! I turned my room inside out looking for a sign . . . any sign that this mysteriously hidden room actually exists. A trillion years later I was still trying to figure out the whereabouts of the secret room. I began to lose hope, I slumped down into my wardrobe hiding within the piles of junk. Leaning against something hard, it took me a moment to realise what it was - the box my grandparents had given me before their last journey, the one that had taken their lives.

My eyes were stinging as I remembered the days they had spent with me and all of the adventures we'd had before they had disappeared. Hot tears spilling down my cheeks, and I leant back on the wall for support. Then, to my surprise the back of the wardrobe moved backwards and slid to the side. After a couple of minutes of shock I came to the realisation that my wardrobe had a false back! And now there was a doorway to what appeared to be a narrow stone staircase leading somewhere underground . . . I gasped . . . here was the secret entrance. I was about to discover D&C's headquarters.

Gently striding onto the first stair hesitant as to what expect. I trod down each stair with as much caution as the last until, finally, I made it to a dimly lit room. Damp and smelling musty, I thought no one had been here for at least six years. Walking I traced my finger on the dusty surface of the table glancing at the papers documenting discoveries, routes, and other information about various journeys around the world. Each route I noted, was neatly planned on a huge map of pinned on the wall. However, one route was documented less, in fact the only thing related to it was its label . . .

The End Journey

I stilled . . . my jaw was so wide I was beginning to think it might actually fall off. I had heard that name before, in fact I had heard all these names before. These were the names my grandparents excitedly discussed over long cups of tea, they were their adventures, and this must be their planning room! *The End Journey* . . . was this the voyage that had caused their disappearance? *The End Journey* was this what had taken the lives of D&C, Dorothy and Claud, my grandparents?

A shiver ran down my spine, everything was linked, the diagram, my trinkets, the map, the journeys, my grandparents, and *The End Journey*. Everything added up scattered around like displaced pieces in a puzzle. Gazing at the map I notice *The*

End Journey had no end. There was no cross at the end marking a destination, in fact the dotted line marking the way went completely off the page!

Suddenly my eyes were drawn to the centre of the room, in the corner of my eye I saw a small glint of light. Swivelling around to get a better look I was drawn towards the light, slowly approaching this unknown thing. Drawing closer I noticed a small, metal box engraved with the word *END*, I gasped! So this was the final piece . . . Attempting to pry open the box with my hands it wouldn't budge. With no key in sight I pulled a bobby pin out of my hair shoving it into the lock, suddenly it snapped! Instead of risking further damage I run up the stairs in search for help.

Climbing the stairs to my bright room, my eyes have trouble adjusting as I enter the kitchen. The minute I put the box on the table Mum and Dad gasp in unison. Mum's eyes swell with tears as she slumps down next to me.

"Where on earth did you find that?" she sobs.

Crying the whole way through I explain about the false back, the staircase, the room, the map and finally the documents. Sitting in stunned silence Mum pulls out her locket and hands it to me.

"It's time we know the truth," she says quietly. I look at her in doubt and she nods. With shaky hands I gently push the locket in, the sound of mechanical clockwork fills the silence that hung in the air. With a creak the box opens . . . I peer in and take out the yellowed folded page, with trembling hands I slowly unfold it, revealing a hand drawn map but, it wasn't of the world, nor a country in fact it wasn't of any place I'd ever heard of. I inhaled sharply as I read the title . . .

The End of the Earth

"There were never any coins was there?" my Dad questions.

I shake my head and beckon for them to follow me. Leading them through the wardrobe and into the headquarters, we stand there in silence as they gaze around at my grandparent's life's work, enthralled by the different expeditions. My mum nods along with tears streaming as she recalls each and every one of them. For hours we sit down there sharing stories and looking through the vast amount of documents that surround us.

Hours later Mum picks up an empty Journey book and on the title card she writes ***The Route to truth . . .***

The End