

The power of

Sharpe Thinking

The problem-solving adventures of Scott and Angie Sharpe



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Mystery #4:

Is That a Real Explorer in Our Town?



“C’mon, you two,” Mr. Sharpe said. “Mayor Avery wants me to come down to his office. Maybe you can help.”

Mayor Avery and the twins’ father had been friends ever since they were boys, and the mayor still asked Mr. Sharpe for advice. But it wasn’t often that Scott and Angie were invited to come along, too.

“What’s going on?” Scott asked as they drove toward the municipal building.

“It’s about the Bicentennial Celebration again,” Mr. Sharpe explained. Dozens of events were being planned to celebrate the town’s two-hundredth birthday. “There’s a man in the mayor’s office who wants the town to hire him to give a lecture. He’s asking a lot of money, much more than the town usually pays.”

“Why doesn’t the mayor just say no?” Angie

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asked.

“Because the man says his program will draw a big audience and generate a lot of good publicity for the town. The mayor thinks it might. Then the extra money would be worth it. But he doesn’t want to go any farther without a second opinion.”

Mr. Sharpe winked at the twins. “I guess a third and a fourth opinion won’t hurt, either.”

Inside the mayor’s office, the twins understood his dilemma at once. Before them stood a tall, imposing man dressed as if he’d just stepped out of a tropical jungle. He wore khaki-colored jodhpurs, a matching shirt with rolled-up sleeves, and a nylon mesh cargo vest with so many pockets the twins couldn’t count them, filled with utility items like pocket knives, a compass, and a bunch of other interesting-looking devices the twins couldn’t quite identify. An “Indiana Jones” hat sat on his head, and a pair of heavy-duty hiking boots were on his feet.



The strange man had an impressive outfit

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“This is Benny Bennett,” the mayor announced.

“Explorer and adventurer Benny Bennett,” the man added, reaching to shake hands with Mr. Sharpe.

Mr. Sharpe took in the man’s outfit and said, “So I see.”

“Oh, the explorer’s garb? It’s to show what I’d wear during my program,” Benny Bennett explained. “The clothes give the feel of what’s it’s really like out in the wild. Audiences are keen to hear real adventurers tell about real adventures. I do a riveting program, if I do say so myself.”

Judging from the way everyone’s eyes were glued to the explorer’s outfit, on first glance no one in the room could doubt what he said was true.

“Sit down, everyone,” the mayor said, gesturing toward the chairs around his desk.

When they were settled, Mr. Sharpe cleared his throat. “I know the mayor is impressed,” he said. “That’s why he wanted me to meet you. I hope you didn’t mind that I brought my twins.”

“Not at all,” Benny Bennett said kindly.

“So tell us a little about your conquests,” Mr. Sharpe said.

Benny Bennett sat straighter in his chair and puffed out his chest. “I’ve done all kinds of explorations, from the tropics to the poles,” he began. He named a few of the mountains he had climbed,

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and some of the remote rivers he had traveled. He got so worked up that he couldn't stay in his chair. He got up and paced the floor as he spoke.

"I once hiked the continental shelf until I was able to traverse down its slope," he said proudly. "Then I made it to the great ridge, where I bravely climbed to the infamous rift zone."

It was hard not to get wrapped up in the gripping stories.

"Well, thank you," the mayor finally said when he had finished. "We'll certainly let you know."

The moment the explorer left, Mayor Avery turned to Mr. Sharpe. "What do you think?"

The twins' father shrugged his shoulders. "Well, I have to admit," he said, "his accomplishments sure sounded impressive".

"A little too impressive," Angie added. Scott nodded. "He's a fraud."

HOW DID THEY KNOW?

(answer on page 73)

Mystery #4:

Is That a Real Explorer in Our Town?

Answer:

No. The explorer is a fraud.

The so-called explorer in the mayor's office claimed to have "hiked the continental shelf until I was able to traverse down its slope... then I made it to the great ridge, where I bravely climbed to the infamous rift zone."



It sounds impressive — in fact, it's a little too impressive. These are all **landforms on the ocean floor**. Scott and Angie know that even the greatest explorers can't breathe under water.



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