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ODYSSEY

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25

THE IMAGINATION STATION



Poison at the Pump

CHRIS BRACK & SHEILA SEIFERT

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Poison at the Pump

BOOK 25

**CHRIS BRACK AND SHEILA SEIFERT
ILLUSTRATIONS BY SERGIO CARIELLO**



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This book is dedicated to

C.B. – Brad, Jordan, Bailey, Clayton, and Jack.

S.S. – Penelope, Rose, Blakely, Zion, and Kolby.

Poison at the Pump

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A Focus on the Family book published by Tyndale House Publishers, Carol Stream, Illinois 60188

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Cover design by Michael Heath | Magnus Creative

For Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data for this title, visit <http://www.loc.gov/help/contact-general.html>.

For manufacturing information regarding this product, please call 1-855-277-9400.

For information about special discounts for bulk purchases, please contact Tyndale House Publishers at csresponse@tyndale.com, or call 1-855-277-9400.

Printed in the United States of America

ISBN 978-1-58997-974-1 Hardcover

ISBN 978-1-64607-093-0 Softcover

29 28 27 26 25 24 23
7 6 5 4 3 2 1

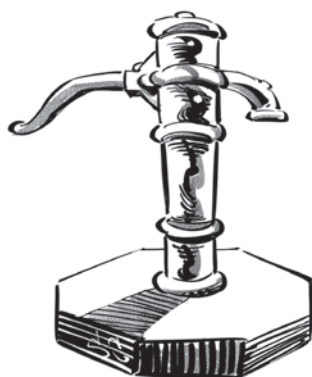


Contents

1	Cracked	1
2	Closed	9
3	Dr. John Snow	18
4	Curate Henry Whitehead	26
5	Mobbed	35
6	Off and Running	42
7	Escape	51
8	Pumps & Cisterns	61
9	Locked Away	71
10	Aunt May	78
11	The Workhouse	88
12	Digging	99
13	The Problem	108
14	Hiram's Store	117
15	The Green Light	126
	Secret Word Puzzle	134



Cracked



Beth sat on a wooden crate in the basement of Whit's End. The room was filled with gadgets and tools. Someday Mr. Whittaker, also called Whit, would use each of them in one of his inventions.

Beth's cousin Patrick stood next to the newest Imagination Station. Its shiny black

POISON AT THE PUMP

hood was open. Patrick wore large magnifying goggles.

Beth laughed. "Your goggles make your eyes look enormous," she said.

Patrick laughed too.

The sharp sound of metal scraping metal filled the air.

Beth put her hands over her ears.

"Sorry about that," Whit said. He was tinkering with the engine of the Imagination Station. His white hair bobbed up and down. "That should do it."

Whit stood and wiped his hands on his white apron.

"What are you fixing?" Beth asked.

"I'm not fixing anything," Whit said. "I'm improving the Imagination Station."

"How?" Patrick asked. "It's already perfect."

"Well, thank you," Whit said. "I added a new gadget. It stops germs from traveling from one

adventure to the next. Let's say you catch a cold on your adventure. You won't have it when you return to the Model T."

"Oh good," Beth said. "I hate colds."

Whit tilted his head, as if listening. "Oh no!" he said. "Duck!"

Patrick dove to the ground.

Beth hopped off the crate and shielded her face with her hands.

Ping! Boing! Ping!

Two springs shot out of the engine.

The parts landed on the tile floor near Patrick.

"Anyone hurt?" Whit asked.

"Not me," Patrick said. He picked up the springs.

"I'm fine," Beth said.

Patrick handed the parts to Whit.

"Thanks," Whit said. "Let's see. They should go here and here."

POISON AT THE PUMP

Whit reached into the Model T's engine. He said, "Tesla made the container for the power source out of glass. I used it to rebuild the Imagination Station. I hope the springs didn't smash into it."

Beth walked closer to the Imagination Station. She remembered Tesla from an earlier adventure. He was an inventor like Whit.

"Is it broken, Mr. Whittaker?" Patrick asked.

Whit's hands reached deeper into the engine. "I think it's fine," Whit said.

Beth peered under the Model T's hood. It looked very different from a normal car engine. Rods and hoses went in all directions.

Whit pointed to a glass tube.

"The Imagination Station doesn't run on gas like other cars. It runs on this bubbling liquid," Whit said. "The glass holding the liquid is only half full. The Imagination Station needs time to make more."

“Can we help?” Patrick asked.

“You can,” Whit said. “The three liquids inside the glass can be found in different places and times.”

Whit’s eyes twinkled.

Beth knew what that meant. She said, “We get to go on an adventure!”



Patrick took off his goggles. “I’m ready,” he said. He jumped into the driver’s seat of the Model T.

Beth climbed into the passenger seat.

Whit closed the Model T’s hood. He said, “The Imagination Station will land near the liquid.” He picked up a small black box. It had a metal wand at the end of a curly cord. He handed it to Patrick.

“Stick the wand in any liquid,” Whit said. “Then look at the button on the box. A green light means you’ve found the right one.”

POISON AT THE PUMP



Patrick nodded. He put the small box in his pocket.

“There’s only one liquid at your first stop,” Whit said.

“What should we do with it?” Patrick asked. “Once we find it.”

“Place it here,” Whit said. He showed them a compartment on the passenger side of the car.

“It smells like lemons now,” Beth said.

“I smell oranges,” Patrick said.

Whit said, “I smell them too.” He lay down on the floor. Then he slid under the Imagination Station.

Beth sniffed. She also smelled pears and peaches.

Whit slid out from under the car. He stood up. “The spring must have cracked the power source after all. There’s a very slow leak. We’re smelling the liquid that is leaking.”

“Don’t worry,” Patrick said. “We’ll find the liquid and hurry back. Then you can fix the Imagination Station.”

“You can’t travel in the Imagination Station now,” Whit said. “I need to fix it first.” He frowned.

“How will the Imagination Station get the right liquids?” Beth asked.

“I don’t know,” Whit said. His eyes looked sad.

Beth undid her seat belt. *Our adventures have come to an end*, she thought. Beth felt sad too.

Patrick tried to undo his seat belt. But the latch was stuck. He pulled hard on it. His

POISON AT THE PUMP

hand slipped. His elbow hit the red button in the middle of the steering wheel.

“No!” Whit said.

“No!” Beth and Patrick shouted together.

The Imagination Station’s hum drowned out their voices.

The lights on the dashboard blinked. The Model T whirled and shook. It moved from side to side. Small droplets of color swirled around them. The smell of fruit was strong.

We’ll be stuck in the past forever! Beth thought.

Then everything went black.