

# Parable Port



BOOK TWO

THE CAPTAIN'S CLUE



BROCK EASTMAN & SHAUN STEVENSON

**PARABLE PORT SERIES**

*The Sower's Secret*

*The Captain's Clue*

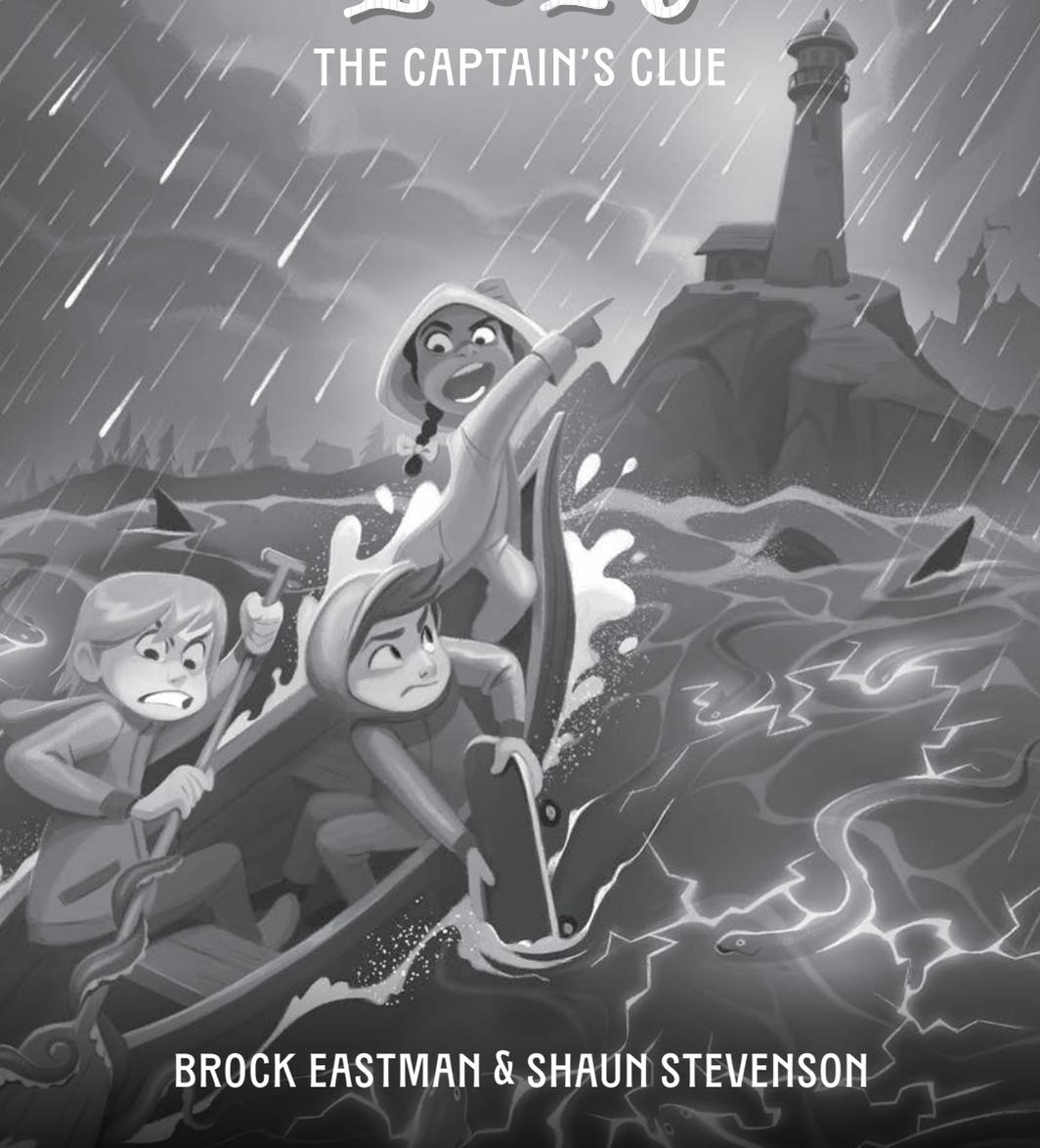


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# Note to the Reader

**WELCOME BACK, FRIEND.** We're so excited for you to return to the mysteries and adventures of Parable Port! There is a lot of noise in the world, but we pray that as you read these pages, you'll be able to hear the voice of God, who will always tell you the truth through his Word. This story is inspired by the Parable of the Wise and Foolish Builders in Matthew 7:24-27 and Luke 6:46-49. So jump into Grace's canoe, and let's row!

*Your fellow adventurers,*  
**BROCK AND SHAUN**







## CHAPTER 1

# Code Name Midnight Mystery

**IT WAS EXACTLY 12:01 A.M. SATURDAY MORNING** when Duck was jolted awake from a dream about ketchup-covered Tater Tots by a low rumble outside his window. At first, he thought it was thunder—or maybe his brother Mikey snoring again. But then headlights lit up the corner of his ceiling, and Duck sat up straight in bed.

The glow faded as the rumble gave way to a slow hiss of brakes. Duck jumped from his bed, careful not to trip on Mikey's sock pile, and tiptoed toward the window.

That's when he saw it—a massive moving truck had pulled up in front of the old cottage house. The one that had sat empty for years, maybe decades.

Duck's eyes widened. "No way."

He slipped on a hoodie over his pajama shirt and carefully nudged open the window. A cold, damp breeze swept into the room. Duck looked at his little brother, hoping not to disturb him. He crawled through the window and sat cross-legged on the sloped shingles—standard Duck surveillance protocol.

The moving truck rumbled softly in place. Headlights off. No other cars. No other people.

Then the driver's side door creaked open.

A woman stepped out. Alone. She glanced up and down the street. She wore a long, dark dress and carried nothing but a single key in her hand. She walked up the porch steps of the cottage and slipped inside like she'd lived there forever. No For Sale sign. No movers. Just one lady in the dead of night.

Duck climbed back into the bedroom and retrieved his walkie-talkie.

"Come in, Anthony. Duck to Anthony," Duck said. "Urgent code . . . Midnight Mystery."

A series of beeps. Static.

"Tonerz," Duck whisper-shouted into the walkie.

More beeps. More static.

Then finally: "Duck, it's 12:30 a.m. This better not be about underground wrestling ring raccoons again."

"First, it's only 12:17 a.m., and there are no raccoons. Okay, there is one raccoon in Mr. Walton's trash. But there is a moving truck, a mysterious lady, and the world's quietest midnight relocation. You've gotta come see this. Code Midnight Mystery."

A pause. Then: "Be right there."

"Oh, and wear a jacket. There's a storm coming," Duck added.

"Roger," Anthony said as the walkie clicked.

Ten minutes later, Anthony cruised silently into view on his skateboard. He rolled up beside Duck's porch and gave a salute.

Duck shinnied down the drainpipe and joined Anthony on the porch swing. Hidden by the bushes, they watched the cottage in silence.

"Who moves in the middle of the night?" Anthony whispered through a yawn.

"Grave robbers. Secret agents. Mafia Realtors. Take your pick."

The light mist had turned into a drizzle.

They fell into silence again, the swing slightly creaking in the breeze. They were protected by the porch roof from the rain, but the air had turned chill.

Duck slipped in through their unlocked front door and retrieved two blankets, a box of Cin-O-Crunch cereal, and two glasses of milk.

It was the last weekend of summer break and a great night for a stakeout with your best friend.

\* \* \*

"Hey! Wake up!" Duck's youngest brother was giggling while pushing the porch swing like it was a playground ride.

Anthony and Duck tumbled off the swing and into a tangled heap of limbs and blankets on the porch.

Panic hit Anthony like a splash of cold water. "I snuck out. I didn't tell my mom. Oh no!"

Duck winced. "I'll go with you. Take the blame like a true friend. Maybe she's still asleep."

They scrambled down the front porch steps. Anthony felt cold droplets on his face. The drizzle had continued throughout the night.

Duck grabbed his bike from where it lay on the sidewalk.

"The truck!" Duck gasped. The moving truck was gone.

"Later! We've got to hurry!" Anthony tossed his skateboard to the wet pavement and boarded it. He kicked off and started toward home.

Duck rode up behind him and said, "Hang on." Anthony grabbed the back of Duck's seat as his friend pedaled furiously.

They reached Anthony's house in record time.

The two crept up the sidewalk to Anthony's house and slipped inside. A second later, Anthony's mom emerged from her bedroom, yawning.

"You're up early," she said with a smile. "And wet."

Duck's sweatshirt was damp from the drizzle, and water had sprayed across Anthony's jacket from Duck's back tire.

Anthony swallowed. "Uh . . . yeah, just a light rain. Duck and I wanted to get an early start to the morning."

Duck raised an eyebrow but said nothing.

Anthony mouthed, "12:17 is technically in the morning."

Duck shook his head.

“Well, good for you!” Anthony’s mom said, turning with another yawn. “It’s our last weekend before school starts. How about breakfast at Parable Pastries? Duck can come too if it’s all right with his parents.”

Soon they were in the car, driving past the town square and turning onto Main Street. Rain fell from the light-gray clouds overhead. It wasn’t heavy, just a typical late-summer sprinkle.

“The truck!” Duck pointed.

It was parked downtown, outside a small, vacant shop. The back of the truck was wide open, revealing a dense jungle of green within.

The woman Duck had described seeing last night stepped out of the shop, took a large plant from the truck, and disappeared back inside.

Anthony’s mom squinted with a smile. “A new plant shop? That would be a welcome addition to Parable Port.”

Duck and Anthony exchanged glances.

“Let’s not let the mystery spoil our breakfast,” Duck blurted.

“Chocolate croissants,” Anthony suggested.

“And bacon, with cocoa powder.”

“No ketchup?” Anthony asked.

“Of course there will be ketchup,” Duck added. “Plenty of ketchup.”

But there wasn’t.

The restaurant was out of ketchup, and Duck was clearly miserable; he just glared at his cocoa powder-covered bacon.

“Boys, I’ll be right back. I’m going to ask Chef Ashley about some treats for my class. Maybe she has a bulk discount!” Anthony’s mom stood up and shuffled past the other booths toward the front counter.

Anthony leaned in. “So the truck?”

Duck sighed, lifted a piece of bacon, and dropped it back on the plate. “I think you’re right: It’s just a truck with plants.”

“Aren’t you just a little curious?”

Duck pushed his half-eaten donut around on his plate.

“Come on, Duck.” Anthony pointed at the untouched bacon on his friend’s plate. “This stuff is so good! You don’t need—”

“KETCHUP!” Duck stood up and ran toward the front door, then dug in the moss at the base of a fake plant. His hand shot into the air, a single packet of ketchup held high.

“What?” Anthony asked as Duck swaggered back over.

“Emergency packets. I’ve placed them all across town,” Duck said. “Mainly in restaurants, but in some other stores also.”

Duck squeezed the ketchup packet onto his plate, dipped his half donut into it, and took a bite. He closed his eyes and savored every bit, dipping the donut until the ketchup was gone. Then he licked his lips and sat back, hands folded over his stomach.

Anthony shook his head in disbelief, glancing out the window at the mysterious woman, who kept carrying plant after plant into the vacant store. She hefted a large

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palm tree in a planter, and for a moment, Anthony almost thought . . .

No. There was no way.

As he turned back to the booth, he couldn't shake the feeling that the woman had been watching them this whole time.