

FOCUS ON THE FAMILY PRESENTS

Adventures in
ODYSSEY



16
Mysteries
to Solve
Yourself

JONES & PARKER CASE FILES

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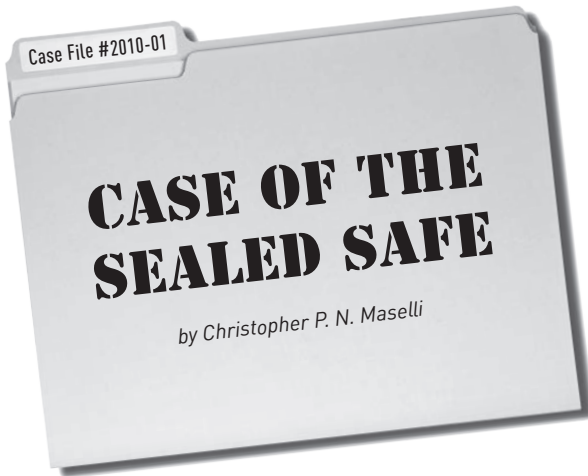
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IN THE DETECTIVE AGENCY BUSINESS, cases can show up in the most unlikely places. Take last Monday, for example. My protégé, Matthew Parker, and I were waiting to get flu shots in the office of Dr. Lilly Graham, a new doctor in Odyssey. We went early so we wouldn't miss too many classes at school.

I have to admit, doctors' offices make me nervous—something about the smell of rubbing alcohol and disinfectant. This office was especially creepy because no other patients had arrived.

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Come to think of it, the receptionist hadn't even arrived.

Suddenly from the back room, I heard a loud splat and a shriek of "Oh no!"

Just as suddenly, my detective instincts kicked in. "Hurry, Matthew. Someone's in trouble!"

I followed the sound down a hall to a quaint office. Freshly opened packing boxes and papers littered the floor. A small woman, who appeared older than my mother but younger than my grandmother, was looking over a puddle of coffee on her desk. The tipped-over cup told me what I needed to know. The stethoscope around the woman's neck told me the rest.

Dr. Graham had spilled her coffee.

"Are you all right?" I asked.

"I'm just fine. Thanks for asking," the woman answered as she mopped up coffee with a paper towel.

"I'm Emily Jones, and this is Matthew Parker," I said.

"Jones and Parker?" she said. "As in the Jones and Parker Detective Agency?"

"You've heard of us?" Matthew said, wide-eyed.

"A patient told me about you yesterday," Dr.

Case of the Sealed Safe

Graham said. "You solved the mystery of his missing bow tie."

"Ah!" I said, remembering the case. "Alan Jakes and the Case of the Missing Neck Adornment."

Dr. Graham smiled. "It's good you're here this morning, because I now have a mystery to solve."

My ears perked up.

"A mystery?" Matthew asked. "Here? Now?"

Dr. Graham nodded. "That's right. I can't open the safe. I was about to call a locksmith, but since you're here—"

"My sidekick and I would love to help!" I said.

"I'm her *partner*," Matthew said.

"Sidekick," I whispered to Dr. Graham.

"I'm right *here*," Matthew said. "I can hear you."

Dr. Graham looked amused. "This is a first for me. I've never worked with such a *young* detective agency before."

"You can count on us!" I said, grabbing my detective notebook from my pocket. "Start from the top and leave nothing out."

Dr. Graham reached down and opened a large cabinet door. Inside was a black safe with a gold dial on the front. "This is the problem."

"It's a *safe*!" Matthew said.

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I smiled. "He's keen at observation."

Matthew rolled his eyes.

"So what's the problem with it?" I asked.

"Well, as you may know," Dr. Graham said, "the previous doctor retired and handed his practice over to me. I was trying to get things organized

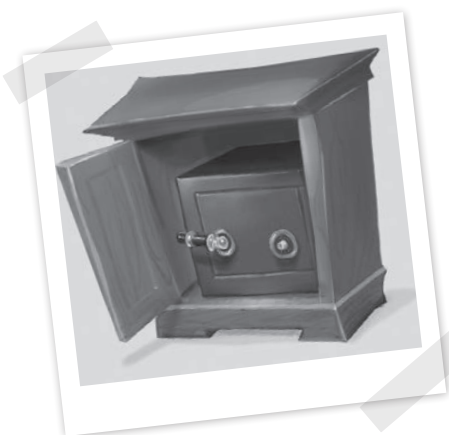
when I found a note from Dr. Swink that said he put some patient files in the safe. But I don't have the combination."

"Did he forget to leave it for you?" I asked.

"No, Dr. Swink is one of the most

meticulous people I've ever met. He left the combination in a note taped to the front of the safe. I had just pulled it off when my coffee spilled on it."

With two fingers she held up a small piece of notebook paper drenched in brown liquid. Only the top and bottom of the note were readable. The note was written in blue ink with a ballpoint pen, and the handwriting was neat.



Case of the Sealed Safe

I read:



I looked at the paper for a few moments, trying to decipher what I could.

“Why not just contact Dr. Swink?” Matthew asked.

“He’s vacationing where there’s no phone or email service on a remote island in the Caribbean,” she replied.

“I could fly down and talk to him,” I offered.

“I need those records *today*,” Dr. Graham said, smiling at me.

A chime rang in the lobby, and Dr. Graham jumped up. “That must be my receptionist. I’ll be right back.”

“We’ll keep sleuthing,” I said.

“This is a tough one,” Matthew said.

I knelt down and skimmed my finger along

the bottom of the safe. I grabbed the handle and pulled. It clicked but didn't open. I spun the dial and tried again. Nothing happened.

I turned my attention to the soaked note and noticed that the paper was the same color and size as a nearby notepad.

"May I borrow your pencil?" I asked Matthew.

He pulled it out from behind his ear. "What are you up to?" he asked.

"This is an old trick used by private eyes." I pressed the edge of the pencil against the top sheet of the notepad and lightly rubbed the gray lead back and forth.

"I get it!" Matthew said. "If Dr. Swink wrote a note on the top page of the pad, the pressure of the pen would make an impression on the page underneath."

"That's right." I held up the paper. We could see the impression of Dr. Swink's neat handwriting.

"Brilliant!" Matthew said.

"Mere detective work," I said, then frowned. "But this isn't the note he wrote to Dr. Graham."

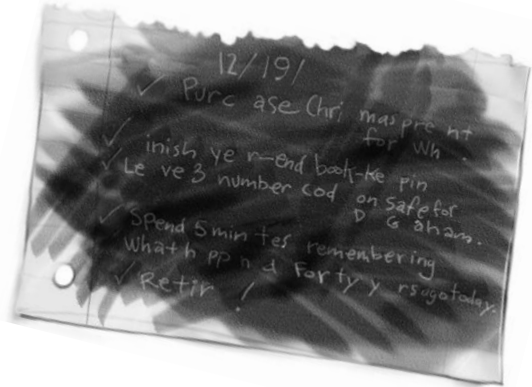
"It looks like some kind of checklist," Matthew observed.

Case of the Sealed Safe

“He made a checklist on his last day in the office,” I said.

Matthew shook his head. “He was really detailed. Look, he even scheduled time to ‘remember.’”

“Interesting,” I said. “Who schedules time to remember?”



Matthew laughed and pointed to the third check. “He left a *cod* on the safe. I bet that fish started to smell!”

I wasn’t amused. “No, the *e* just didn’t show through. It says he left the *code* on the safe.”

Matthew pointed to numbers at the top. “Is that the code?”

“I assume that’s the date he wrote the note,” I said.

Matthew and I peered at the safe once more. It stared back at us defiantly.

Dr. Graham came back in the room. “Well? Have you figured out how to open the safe?”

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I nodded. "I think so."

Matthew's eyebrows shot up. "What?!"

"The answer has been right in front of us this entire time," I stated.

"I can't wait to hear it!" Dr. Graham said.

I told them my solution. And I was *right*.

* * *

Do *you* know how Emily opened the safe?

What are the clues?

Turn to the "Case Solved!" section on page 100 to find out.