

Chapter One

The wind whipped through Ian's hair as he and Drew raced each other through the gently rolling hills of England's Salisbury Plain. Spring had opened the boy's senses to smells unlike anything he had ever experienced. They brought their bicycles to a stop at the entrance of Stonehenge. How many times had he looked at this site with renewed amazement?

His aunt and uncle had gone to extraordinary lengths to make him feel welcome after his parents were "lost" in a boating accident along the River Avon. He still used the word "lost" even though his parents had drowned when their boat capsized more than ten years before.

People still wondered how it had happened. The detectives determined the cause to be anchor ice. They found the life vests floating in the water next to Ian and assumed his parents had drowned trying to save him, but Ian knew there was more to it than that. Early on, his uncle, Robert Prescott, advised him to drop the subject and be happy that he had survived the accident.

The Prescotts were not his "aunt and uncle" in the proper sense of the word, but rather first cousins, once removed. His grandfather had emigrated to the United States, but the two families had remained close over the years. After his parents' death, Robert and Sarah adopted him and raised him as their own. His only other living relative, their son Drew, was like the brother he never had, even though they were technically second cousins.

He shook off his momentary reminiscence and again looked out across the site of Stonehenge. The construction crew was busy digging holes and setting up the stones in an effort to restore the ancient monument to its original glory.

They got off their bikes and walked along the fencerow. As usual, the construction crewmembers ignored them. Six months ago, the crew had restored the circular bank. Just

inside the posts, the crew had created a ditch and placed six large standing stones around the perimeter, from one side of the avenue to the other.

Presently, they were working outward from the inside of the mound. The Altar Stone was in place, surrounded by the Bluestone Horseshoe. The crew had almost completed the Trilithon Horseshoe, and next week would begin work on the Sarsen Circle. The renovation would soon be completed and tours of this magnificent site would again commence.

Ian would not have known anything about the renovation process if Drew's friend Fred had not been part of the construction crew. Drew waved at Fred from along the fence. Fred looked up at him and quickly looked away. Ian looked around but did not see anyone or anything out of the ordinary. He could not figure out what was wrong with Drew's friend.

While he was pondering this, the supervisor walked up to Fred, pointed at the two cousins, and said something unintelligible. Fred nodded glumly, laid his shovel down, and began walking towards them. When he reached them, his gaunt face was flushed and a look of urgency flashed in his hazel eyes.

"You have to get out of here!" Fred said in a hushed tone. "We've just discovered something I can't talk about. I'll tell you more tomorrow, but for your own safety you have to leave immediately!"

Ian saw a fear in Fred's face he had never seen before and nodded, "All right. We'll leave."

Drew earnestly added, "But you have to stop by the farm as soon as you get done."

Fred swallowed hard and licked his lips, "I'll try, but please go. Now!" Without another word, he turned and headed back to the site, his supervisor watching from the distance.

They started off, Ian glancing over his shoulder as he left. Something was wrong, but he had no idea what it could be. Fred had never been so curt with Drew. They hopped back on their bikes and sped off towards the farm. Glancing back over his shoulder, Ian saw a tall, shadowy presence near the northern standing stone. He was stroking the head of a large hound. He called for Drew to stop and when he looked back again, he saw Fred moving to confront the figure. “No Fred,” Ian whispered, “just leave him alone.”

He watched the figure raise his arm as Fred approached, causing him to collapse in the grass. The work site became one of turmoil and workers moved to help Fred. Only Ian and Drew noticed the figure and dog as they disappeared behind the stone once again.