

Grandma X took the twins with her through the door. Jaide stepped hesitantly across the threshold, eyes adjusting slowly to the darkness. Four tall chestnut and mahogany cabinets lined the sides of the front hall, all of them latched shut, the latches fastened with heavy old bronze padlocks. The air smelled odd, a mixture of the thick, damp smell of old wood and something else, something that neither Jack nor Jaide could identify, but made them think of ancient things. This reminded Jaide of the blue door and the weird antiques shop sign. She had been so busy chasing Jack that she hadn't seen it when they'd run around the house, and for some reason it had gone right out of her mind. Now the smell brought back that lost memory, and she wanted to check it out.

"Hang on," Jaide said, pulling free. "I want to get something from the car."

"Hang on yourself," protested Jack. He made a grab at her arm, and she was unable to shrug him off. Together they stumbled back out into daylight. There, Jaide turned to look at the front of the house.

For an instant, both the sign and the blue door were nowhere to be seen. There was only an expanse of weathered, pinkish brick where she thought they'd been.

Then she blinked, and they were back.

"I didn't imagine it," she told Jack. "I knew it!"

Jack stared at the door, and the sign, and the words: ANTIQUES AND CHOICE ARTICLES FOR THE DISCERNING.

"You were right," he said, amazed that what seemed so solid now had been barely visible before. "Why couldn't I see it at first?"

“I don’t know,” Jaide said. “And why couldn’t Mom see it at all?”

“Kids?” came Susan’s voice from inside. She sounded cross, and was trying unsuccessfully to hide it. “Come on, don’t be rude, please.”

“This is weird,” Jaide said, more to herself than to her brother.

“*Definitely* weird,” Jack responded, and he flashed her a grin that surprised her. “Maybe Portland will be more interesting than we thought.”

Something squeaked above them. The weather vane was shifting, slowly and thoughtfully, to point to the south. But the poplars in the drive and the topmost branches of the great fir tree were still bending west in answer to the *easterly* wind that had grown stronger, herding in a huge mass of dark, angry clouds.

Jaide shivered, but not entirely from the coolness of the wind. She pulled her hoodie up and hurried inside, with Jack following closely behind her.