

SECRETS OF
BEARHAVEN



BOOK THREE

HIDDEN ROCK
RESCUE

K. E. ROCHA



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Spencer Plain threw rocks and twigs aside frantically as he searched the ground for his jade bear. He rushed forward, following the row of bushes he'd hidden behind last night. *It has to be here!*

He tore his eyes away from the dirt to glance up at the sky. It was almost midmorning. He was running out of time.

He jumped to his feet and headed for one of the trees he was sure he'd climbed. He did a lap around the huge tree trunk, his eyes glued to the ground, then turned around to do another lap in the opposite direction and bumped straight into Kate Weaver.

"Oof!" He stumbled backward, startled.

"Oops!" exclaimed Kate, the chestnut-colored cub who was just scrambling down from the tree branches. "I didn't see you."

"Did you find it?" Spencer asked. He glanced at the glimmering device around Kate's neck, the BEAR-COM that translated the bears' language, Ragayo, into English. He willed it to translate the Ragayo word for "yes." It didn't.

"Not yet," Kate replied. She hurried to a nearby tree.

Her bandaged ear bobbed as she ran. She started sniffing the ground.

“It could be anywhere!” Spencer didn’t mean to yell, but today, of all the days in his whole life, was the worst possible one to lose his jade bear.

“Not *anywhere*,” Kate said. “It fell out of your pocket during training last night, right?”

“Right,” Spencer agreed.

“Well, this is where we trained, so it has to be here somewhere!”

Spencer nodded. Last night after dinner, he and Kate had come here, to the Bear Stealth training field in Bearhaven’s school yard, to practice some of Spencer’s operative skills. He was leaving on a rescue mission today, and he had wanted to make sure he was really ready. He had run and climbed and tumbled and crawled and done a million other spy-like moves. And at the end of it all, when he got back to the Weavers’ house, where he was staying, he felt really ready. Until he discovered that at some point in all that training, the jade bear had slipped out of his pocket.

So Spencer was retracing his steps around the Bear Stealth training field at a sprint, searching for the small black jade figurine he *always* kept in his pocket. Mom and Dad had given it to him on his eighth birthday. It made him feel stronger, braver, and closer to them, and he had never gone on a rescue mission without it. Today was definitely *not* the day to start because today he wasn’t leaving on just any rescue. He was leaving on the most important mission of all: to save his parents.

Something shiny and black caught Spencer’s eye. He dove

for it, snatching up a whole handful of earth as he grabbed for the jade bear. He opened his fingers and brushed dirt away from the shiny black object in his palm. Just a rock. Spencer threw it to the ground angrily. Kate was watching him. He shook his head.

“We’ll find it,” Kate said, resuming her hunt.

“We have to,” Spencer muttered, thankful, at least, that he wasn’t searching alone. Kate was Spencer’s best friend in Bearhaven. He couldn’t imagine what he would do without her. Only a week ago, Spencer had made a mistake that landed Kate in terrible danger, and there had been a chance he would never see Kate again.

Luckily, Spencer and a Bearhaven rescue team had saved Kate and brought her home three days ago. But the bandage on her ear where she had been painfully pierced with a metal tag was a reminder that seriously evil criminals had almost taken Kate away from her family and Spencer—and Bearhaven—forever. Those people—Pam, Margo, and Ivan—were the very same ones who were holding Mom and Dad prisoner now.

Pam was a bear-obsessed creep who was behind numerous terrible and illegal things that were happening to bears. His employees, Margo and Ivan Lalicki, a sister-and-brother team who did Pam’s dirty work, were almost as dangerous and definitely as creepy.

“What if I don’t find it, Kate?” Spencer said, his voice catching in his throat as he started to panic. He had faced Pam, Margo, and Ivan before but never without the jade bear in his pocket. What if without it, Spencer wasn’t brave enough to save Mom and Dad? What if the jade bear really

did have the power to make him stronger? “We’re probably late already.”

Just then, as though on cue, a black-and-brown bear came running around the side of the school building shouting their names.

“Kate! Spencer!” It was Aldo Weaver, Kate’s older brother. *No!* Spencer’s stomach twisted. They were out of time.

“What am I going to do?!” he whispered.

Kate shot him a wide-eyed look.

“It’s time to go,” Aldo called.

“Spencer’s not ready yet!” Kate piped up. Spencer dropped his eyes to the ground and kicked the shiny black rock. He hated the idea of leaving on the mission without his jade bear, but Spencer didn’t want to admit to Aldo *why* he wasn’t ready. He didn’t want to sound like a baby.

Aldo looked from Kate to Spencer. The silver cuffs on his two front legs that marked him as a member of the Bear Guard, Bearhaven’s security force, reflected the sunshine.

“We have to go,” Aldo said. Even though Aldo was on the guard, he was almost as new to being a Bearhaven operative as Spencer was, and he and Spencer *both* knew it wouldn’t look good if the two newest operatives were late for the mission send-off.

Spencer gulped. “Yeah,” he said, nodding. “I guess we’d better hurry.”

“Come on!” Aldo turned and led the way around the side of the school building at a run.

Kate hesitated. “What about your jade bear?” she whispered.

“I guess I have to leave without it.” He tried to sound

confident as he broke into a jog. Kate fell in beside him, and together they took off after Aldo.

As he ran, Spencer tried to shake the feeling that Mom and Dad's rescue was already off to a bad start. And he and the rest of the operatives hadn't even made it out of Bearhaven yet.