

## Chapter 11

**J**ean Wilson gazed in horror as the monster came closer. Its huge black eyes seemed to stare right at her. Sharp front claws reached out as if to grab her. A gaping mouth opened wide.

Jean sat on the couch. Next to her was her twin brother, Jared. He could hardly keep from laughing. The black-and-white movie Jean was watching had been made more than fifty years ago.

“Hard to believe Jean’s in college,” Jared teased. “Anyone can see that giant ant is a fake. Anyone but my sister, that is!”

Jared grabbed a couple pieces of popcorn. He tossed them at his sister. She didn’t budge. “Man, you are so into it,” Jared said.

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He glanced at the clock. The baseball game was about to start. He didn't want to miss a minute of it. But first he had to pry Jean away from the old horror flick.

Jared reached out and poked his twin in the ribs. She jumped and screamed at the same time. This pleased him.

"Don't do that!" she yelled, glaring at her brother.

Jared laughed. "Oh, come on. You've seen that stupid movie a dozen times."

"Only three times," Jean said. "And it's a lot more exciting than a baseball game."

Now it was Jared's turn to glare. "Look, you promised," he said. "You said you'd turn off the movie when the game came on, remember? And I promised to go bug hunting with you tomorrow."

Jean sighed and stood up. "Oh, all right," she said. "But you'd better help me find some great specimens, or—"

"Or what?" Jared said, laughing. He

grabbed the remote and switched channels. “Don’t think you can scare me by saying you’ll put bugs in my sock drawer. Remember which one of us is studying insects.”

Jean grinned. “I’m not threatening to put bugs in your socks. But how about if I show all the girls at school your baby picture?”

Jared picked up a pillow to throw at his sister. Then he noticed that the game had started. He threw the pillow down. “I’ll get you later,” he said.

Jean threw a handful of popcorn back at him. Then she wandered into the kitchen.

It was great to be home for the summer. She poured herself a glass of juice. With a happy sigh, she sat down at the kitchen table. She reached for the cookie jar.

Jean and Jared had grown up on Warm Springs Island. It was off the coast of Florida. The only way to get on and off the island was by ferry. On the west side was a harbor where the boats docked. A small business district

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was close to the harbor. Warm Springs was small. There was one main street and a handful of stores. A small hotel stood at one end of town. A supermarket was at the other.

During the summer, tourists came to the island to fish, camp, and swim. Some of the visitors had summer homes there. Most of the people who lived on Warm Springs all year long were fishermen and farmers. Jean and Jared's parents taught at the local high school.

When they were little, the twins had explored the whole island. They knew every inch of it. The beach had been their favorite playground. Climbing the old oak trees that grew there had brought them hours of fun. Even the limestone caves in the middle of the island had been a great place to explore.

After graduating from high school, the twins had moved to Miami. In college, they majored in science. Jared's field of interest was insects. Even as a small boy he had been fascinated by crawly things.

Jean shuddered. She remembered all the times her brother had played tricks on her with bugs. Jared had been the one who put bugs in her socks. What a shock it was when she opened her sock drawer!

“How’s the game?”

Jean looked up. Her mother came into the kitchen. “Baseball’s not my thing,” Jean said. “And bugs aren’t either. I was just thinking about tomorrow. I’m not looking forward to going out insect hunting.”

“I thought school was out for the summer,” her mom said. “Why do you have to go out looking for bugs?”

“Oh, it’s just a favor I’m doing for one of my friends,” Jean said. “She needs samples of different kinds of bugs from the island.” She grinned. “Don’t worry, I’m not going ‘buggy’ like Jared. Genetics is my real interest, Mom. You know I’ve always been curious about why people inherit certain traits. Like why we have brown hair and

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gray eyes. And why we're both so interested in science."

"Or why some people are musical and others are not?" her mother asked.

Jean nodded and bit into a cookie. "Of course, there's more to genetics than that. Like the fact that some families get certain diseases and other families don't. Knowledge of genetics is becoming more important to our health. And there are new discoveries every day." Then she smiled. "Collecting these bugs is just a good deed for a friend. She's taking a summer class."

Mrs. Wilson nodded and smiled. "You and Jared seem to have inherited a lot of curiosity, for sure."

Jean laughed. "Curiosity is a good trait for a scientist. And speaking of curiosity, what's going on with ..." Jean's voice trailed off. She stared at a huge, dark shadow crawling across the wall behind her mother. Oh my God! "Aahh!" she screamed.