

Hannah glanced over at her small pile of gifts that included an adorable pair of red cowboy boots, a cookie cookbook, an apron, and a necklace with an emerald pendant (her birthstone).

“Please,” she begged. Hoping for some luck, Hannah fingered the charm bracelet hanging on her wrist, which she’d received from her camp friend Libby last week. “What do I have to do to get you to give it to me? I know there’s one more. I just know it.”

Grandpa chuckled from his place on the loveseat, next to Grandma. They lived on the same property as Hannah and her family, in the original old farmhouse, right next door. Because of their close proximity, she saw them every day, and she was thankful for that. They were two of her most favorite people in the world.

Now, Hannah eyed the two of them suspiciously. Neither of her grandparents had said a single word the past few minutes. And that wasn’t like them. At all.

She made her way over to the loveseat and, while on her hands and knees, clasped her hands together out in front of her. “Grandpa, do you like seeing me crawl around here like a beggar? What do I have to do? Tell me. Please?”

He smiled as he pointed at the tree. “Say, what is that,

stuck between a couple of branches? I can't quite tell from here."

Hannah shrieked as she stood up and dashed over to the tree, stumbling over Grandpa's box of new slippers. "Where?" she cried, her hands batting at the tree branches, the scent of pine circling around her.

"Careful," her mother, Mrs. Crawford, said. "Some of those ornaments have been in my family a long time. I'd be sad to see one of them fall to the floor and break."

Something white caught Hannah's eye, tucked on a branch near the trunk, way up high. "I don't know if I can reach it," she said as she stood on her tippy-toes, stretching herself inward and upward, needles poking her cheek as she did.

And then, she had it. She grabbed whatever it was and pulled it toward her until she could see exactly what it was: an envelope.

She jumped up and down, hugging the envelope to her chest. "I knew it, I knew it!"

"What is it?" Adam asked as he brushed his long, blond bangs out of his gray-blue eyes.

"It better not be money," Eric said. "Unless there are two more envelopes just like that one stuck in there somewhere."

Adam looked at Eric. "Maybe we should look."

"It's not money," Hannah said as she tore open the envelope.

"How do you know?" Adam asked.

"I'm curious about that as well," her father mumbled.

"I just have a feeling, okay?" Hannah pulled out a purple piece of paper. "Aw, my favorite color." She unfolded the paper and read the words out loud.

*There's one last gift  
that's not under the tree,  
so head out to the barn  
where you'll squeal with glee.*

Hannah dropped the purple note, grabbed her new cowboy boots, and slipped them on over her pajama bottoms. "Who's going out with me?"

"I reckon I'll go," Grandpa said as he stood up. He reached for Grandma's hand. "And I know your grandma doesn't want to miss this either."

"We'll go too," Mr. Crawford said as both he and Mrs. Crawford stood up.

Hannah clapped her hands. "You folks are slower than

maple syrup, you know that? Come on, hurry up.” She looked at her brothers. “Don’t you want to see what it is?”

“Not right now,” Eric said.

“Yeah, maybe later,” Adam said. “Mama, I’m hungry. Can we have one of Grandma’s cinnamon rolls now?”

“I suppose,” Mrs. Crawford replied.

“Just save some for the rest of us,” Grandpa said.

“Who can eat at a time like this?” Hannah cried, grabbing her gray wool coat from the hall closet. “Let’s go!”

She’d dreamed of this moment forever, it seemed.

And her dream was finally, *finally* coming true.