

**COUNTDOWN TO
DANGER**
CHOOSE YOUR OWN ENDING!



***For Danielle, Ruby and Léo . . .
always my first choice in the adventure of life!***

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JEFF SZPIRGLAS

COUNTDOWN TO DANGER

CHOOSE YOUR OWN ENDING!



CANADIAN SABOTAGE

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Your eyes snap open and you look around. This can't be. You're bobbing in the rough, frigid waters of the Atlantic Ocean. Alone.

You spin around, trying to get your bearings. How did you get here?

Your mind is cloudy. You dig deeper, and flashes of memory punch through your mental haze. Something happened with your parents. Your dad, a cartographer with the university, took you on this trip to the Maritimes. He'd brought that weird old map with him. Took you and your mom on a fishing tour. Captain somebody, you vaguely remember. Then he told you the boat driver wasn't safe.

Everything goes foggy again. And not just your thoughts. A bank of fog is rolling in. You stare through the billowing whiteness and notice something else. There's a rocky outcrop with a lighthouse on it. Maybe you could swim to that.

And now you see two boats not too far away. You're pretty sure one of them is an anchored dive boat. The other is a speedboat cutting through the water towards you.

You search your pockets for your cellphone,



although it's soaked and useless. That's when you feel something beneath your shirt. You pull out a parcel wrapped in plastic, then realize what you're holding.

"The map," you whisper.

It's what your parents had been so worried about.

Follow the map, you recall your dad telling you. He'd been insistent. *Find the treasure! That will be the key to finding us.*

But where did your parents go? You search the ocean around you. "Mom? Dad?!" you call out. Nothing.

You close your eyes, straining to filter through your memories. There's a flash of the boat driver. Another flash—your mom slipping you the map, telling you to trust no one and not to worry about her and your dad. *"Just get to the treasure first, kiddo."*

Something clunking you on the head.

You're pretty sure your parents are safe, because whoever was after them wanted this map—and the treasure. And your mom and dad seemed to know what they were doing. At least you hope so.

For the moment you tread water, weighing your options.

If you head to the lighthouse, turn to page 24.

If you'd rather wait for the speedboat, turn to page 69.

If you try the boat just up ahead, turn to page 106.





Erin is consumed with the treasure chest—so consumed that you can probably get to her boat with the pilot. Whoever’s got control of the boat will have control of the situation, which is quickly burning out of control.

You quickly agree to the pilot’s proposition and continue to lead the way to the boat. You catch a glimpse of Erin fiddling with the chest, and then the waves take you back down and she disappears from view.

Bob.

Now she’s hammering the lock with a heavy rock.

Bob.

Then she’s throwing the lock away.

Bob.

But you’re at the boat now!

Holding out your free hand, you wait for the waves to push you up the side of the boat. You grab it with one hand and try to hold on as best you can. The wave pulls back, and you’re in a tug-of-war between the boat and the pilot. As you’re trying to decide which to let go of, a wave pushes the pilot up. In one smooth move, you pull with all your might. He manages to grab hold of the ledge, and you both spill onto the deck.

“Erin!” you shout.



But Erin isn't looking at or listening to you. She's heaving on the lid of the chest.

Erin yanks the lid off the chest, and—
A luminous green glow pours out of it.
“What the—?”

Suddenly, the light is so bright, so intense, that you're forced to turn away. You drop to the deck of the boat, where the pilot is resting. You cover your eyes, blinking hard. Even then, it's impossible to fully escape the burning, blinding light.

And then, as soon as it began, the light fades.

When you feel confident enough, you blink your eyes open. The pilot is sitting beside you, looking confused.

The pair of you slowly stand up. You look over to the rocks. The chest is open. No green light can be seen. And no Erin.

You turn to the pilot. “You know . . . maybe we should try a *different* treasure,” you say. “Erin can have this one.”

00:00

You survived! There are eleven other ways to escape the danger—try to find them all!

