Name _____ Date _____

Grandpa's Old Map

Short story · 4th–5th grade

The map was folded into a square no bigger than a cracker, tucked inside an old baseball glove in Grandpa's attic. Jordan smoothed it out on the floor while his cousin Tess held a flashlight. Faded pencil lines showed streets, a river and a big X next to the words TREASURE, 1962.

"Grandpa drew this when he was our age," Tess whispered. In the corner, in wobbly letters, it said: Map by Walter, age 11. The cousins looked at each other. They were staying with Grandpa for a week, and they had just found their plan.

The first clue was easy: Start at the bandstand. The park still had one, newly painted white. From there, the map showed a dotted line along Mill Street to a building marked Sweet Shop. Now the building was a phone store, but above the door, faint painted letters still read: SWEETS.

The dotted line turned at the river. The map showed a bridge made of logs, but the cousins found a wide concrete bridge with cars rushing across. They walked along the bank, counting steps the way the map said, 40 big steps from the bridge, until they reached an enormous oak tree.

"The X is right here," said Jordan. At the bottom of the tree, between two thick roots, the ground was soft. They dug with their hands and a garden trowel until Tess's fingers hit something hard: a rusty metal lunchbox.

Inside, wrapped in plastic, were three marbles, a baseball card, a photo of four grinning boys on bikes and a note: To whoever finds this, these were the best things I owned in 1962. Take care of them. Walter.

That evening, they put the lunchbox on the kitchen table. Grandpa stared at it for a long time. Then he picked up the photo and laughed until he had to wipe his eyes. "That's me, and that's Eddie, and Frank and Benny. We rode those bikes everywhere."

He told them stories until long after dark: about the log bridge that washed away in a flood, and the Sweet Shop where a candy bar cost a nickel. Jordan realized that the real treasure wasn't in the box. It was the stories. Before they went home, the cousins buried the lunchbox again, with a new note and a new map,

Questions

1. Where did the cousins find the map?

2. Who drew the map?

3. What clue showed the phone store used to be the Sweet Shop?

4. How had the town changed since 1962?

5. What did Jordan decide the real treasure was?

6. What would you put in a time capsule for a kid in 60 years to find?

7. Ask a grandparent or older friend what your town was like when they were young.

The lesson in my own words

Answer Key

1. Inside an old baseball glove in the attic.
2. Grandpa, when he was 11.
3. Faint painted letters that said SWEETS.
4. The log bridge was now a concrete bridge, and shops had changed.
5. Grandpa's stories.
6. Answers will vary.
7. Answers will vary.

Lesson: Family stories are treasures worth keeping.