

 BLUE DELTA BOOKS™



SCARLET BLOOM

NEILA FORSSBERG

CHAPTER 1

DANBURY HOUSE

The historic Danbury House took Tuck's breath away. No matter how many times he walked through the doors, its beauty never got old.

Geo rounded the corner. "There you are!"

Tuck grinned at his friend. "Hi. Sorry I'm late. My dad wouldn't let me borrow the car. He dropped me off on his way to work."

His dad was the new police chief. Tuck's family had only been in town a few months.

"Come on." Geo guided Tuck to the kitchen.

“Bina has muffins for the tour groups. I picked out the blueberry ones. Those are the best.”

Bina was Geo’s sister. Tuck had met them while taking a pottery class after he first moved to town. The teens had bonded over their love of art.

The scent of pastries filled the kitchen.

Tuck smiled. “Hi, Bina.”

She held up a platter. “Hungry?”

“Thanks.” Tuck snagged a muffin.

Bina grinned. “Today’s the day. Are you excited? You finally get to see the Scarlet Bloom.”

His heart beat faster. “I can’t wait.”

The Danbury House was famous for its rare art. Tuck couldn’t imagine living here like his friends did. Today, he was taking the official tour. Finally, Tuck was going to lay eyes on the Scarlet Bloom necklace. It was the star of the show.

Geo grabbed a blueberry muffin. “We’re going on the tour with you.”

“That’s great!” Tuck took a bite of his muffin. “But haven’t you both seen the necklace like a million times?”

Geo shook his head. “Nope. Mom keeps it under lock and key. I’ll take any chance I can to see it up close. Besides, I’ve listened to her when she does the tours. She leaves out key facts.”

Bina rolled her eyes. “Don’t interrupt her with your dumb facts. She’ll kick you out of the tour again. You know she can’t give *all* the details. There’s not enough time.”

“My facts aren’t dumb!” Their bickering continued.

Tuck peeked into the garden room. It was his favorite. All the art was centered around nature. That was how the room had gotten its name.

A guard sat in the corner. He was focused on an elaborately carved oak door. It was shut tight.

Soon, Tuck would finally get to see what was behind it.

CHAPTER 2

RIGHT THIS WAY

Mrs. Rey led the tour group into the garden room. “Danbury House is proud to have a large collection of art created by women. These works are from the 19th and 20th centuries.”

Geo interrupted his mother. “Here’s a fun fact. People love Georgia O’Keeffe’s floral paintings. But did you know she also painted skyscrapers?”

One woman raised her eyebrows. “Really? I didn’t know that.”

Geo beamed. He loved sharing information.

Mrs. Rey glared at her son.

Tuck held in a giggle. Geo had interrupted his mother four times so far during the tour.

She cleared her throat. “That’s correct. We don’t have any of her skyscrapers. But we do have one of her floral pieces. It’s here on the north wall.”

People spread out to study the paintings. Mrs. Rey asked Geo to join her in another room.

Bina shook her head. “I told him to cool it with his ‘fun facts.’” She made air quotes with her fingers.

Tuck laughed. “He’s going to make a great art teacher one day.”

A smile tugged at Bina’s lips even as she rolled her eyes.

Tuck watched the guard. Mr. Ford sat on his chair. His eyes stayed on the locked door.

“Does he ever move?” Tuck asked Bina.

“Mr. Ford? Sure. He takes breaks. I mean, talk about the easiest job ever.” Bina walked over to the locked door. “It’s not like anyone could break into this fortress.” She grabbed the knob and tried to turn it. But it didn’t budge. Then she shook the door. It didn’t rattle. “See? It’s secure.”

Mrs. Rey walked back in. “Bina, what are you doing?”

“Nothing.” Bina backed away from the door. “I was just showing Tuck how sturdy the door is.”

Others on the tour began to gather around.

Mrs. Rey smiled at them and took a key from her pocket. “It seems you’re all ready for our final stop on the tour. I know this is what you’ve been waiting for.”

With a flourish, she held up an ornate brass key. Then she slid it into the lock. Tuck realized

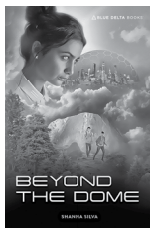
he was holding his breath. He exhaled when he heard the lock click.

Mrs. Rey twisted the doorknob. This time, the door opened.

Everyone gasped at the sight before them.

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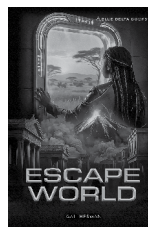
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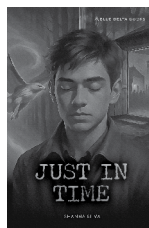
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MYSTERY

SCARLET BLOOM

Tuck can't wait to tour Danbury House, a historic mansion filled with treasures and secrets. At the top of his must-see list is the Scarlet Bloom. This breathtaking ruby and diamond necklace is worth a staggering ten million dollars. But when it goes missing from a locked, heavily guarded room, Tuck and his friends find themselves in the middle of a baffling mystery. Can they unravel the clues, or is the Scarlet Bloom lost forever?



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