

Lost in Time



Donna Shelton

Chapter 1

Give Me a Break

Being a responsible teenager has its pluses. Your parents trust you. They do things like buy you a car. Any teen would be happy about that. What you don't know is how long they've waited for this moment. Now you can drive your little sister places. That's what happened to me.

Today is Saturday. It's noon. But I'm still in my pj's. I settle in for a long session of texting. My best friend, Liv, broke up with her boyfriend. I've heard it all before. They've broken up three times.

She just sent me a long message. It's mostly about how mean Mark is. He controls everything Liv does. It makes me sad for her. I hope she leaves him for good this time.

I start to text when there's a knock on my door. I'm sure it's my sister, Teera.

“Go away! I’m busy!”

“Tansy?”

Oops. It’s Mom.

“Can I come in?”

“Sure,” I call out.

The door opens. Teera is there too. I know what this means. She wants to go somewhere.

“Your sister needs to go to the library.”

I don’t want to do it. But those were the rules when I got the car.

“Fine,” I say.

“Don’t be too long,” Mom says. “Were having barbe-cue. Dad’s making ribs.”

Yum. I’m already hungry. Mom leaves the room. Teera stays behind.

“Will you help me with my book report?”

“What’s it about?”

Teera looks at her notebook. “Wyatt Earp and the Cowboys,” she reads.

“From the Old West? I saw a movie once. Wyatt Earp was a sheriff. And there was a gang of outlaws. They were called the Cowboys. That’s all I know.”

“Then just give me one of your old reports. I can copy it,” she says.

“That’s cheating. Besides, they’re all on the Middle Ages. And sorcery. It’s too scary for you.”

“Ooh. You mean witches? Cool.”

“You’re not using my reports. Now get out, please. I need to get dressed.”

My phone is going off again. I didn’t answer Liv’s text yet. And now she thinks I’m ignoring her.

“I’ll meet you in the car!” I tell Teera.

Chapter 2

Bad Brakes

At the library, Teera wanders off down an aisle. I head for the young adult section. It's an awesome space. Big windows let in lots of light. And there are comfy sofas.

I find a spot and settle in. I start reading Liv's text. It starts out, "Boyfriend from hell." Liv was talking to a guy. Mark got jealous. He started a big fight. Then he told Liv that he was going to—.

"Tansy! Look what I found."

"Oh, good. You got a book. Let's go."

"I don't mean that." Teera shoves something in my face. It looks like a gemstone.

"Turn it in at the front desk. And check out that book if you're getting it."

Teera holds the stone up to the window. It catches the sunlight and glimmers. "It's so pretty. Can I keep it?"

“Whatever. Check out the book. And hurry. I’m hungry.”

“Okay. But I’m keeping the stone.”

A librarian comes up to us. She’s dressed in black. Her hair is black too. “Be quiet!” she says. “Or you’ll have to leave!” She walks away.

“Great,” I say to Teera. “You nearly got us kicked out.”

“She’s an old witch.”

“Teera! That is not nice.”



I’m pulling out of the parking lot. “Teera!” I call out. “I can hear your music! Turn it down!”

Teera takes off her earphones. “What?” The music stops.

Now she’s saying something about the stone. Then I hear a buzz. It’s Liv again. She’s been blowing up my phone.

It’s hard to focus on the road. I nearly run a red light. Mom and Dad cannot know about this.

Teera holds the stone up to the windshield. It catches the sun. Light bounces and blinds me for a second. I reach out and grab air. Finally I’m holding the stone.

Jeez. There goes my phone again. Then there is a loud noise. Someone is laying on their car horn.

Tires screech. There’s a loud boom. Teera grabs my arm. Then there is only bright light. It surrounds us like a blanket.

Chapter 3

Lighten Up

What just happened?

Pain jolts through my body. Every part of me hurts. Even if I wanted to move, I can't. It's nearly impossible to see or breathe. Panic is starting to set in.

I try to focus. How is Teera? I'm aware of her hand on my arm. But I can't tell if she's okay.

My hand is clasped around something sharp. Then I remember. It's the gemstone. It digs into my skin. I'm too frightened to care.

Moments pass. The loud noises start to fade. So does the light. Now everything is dark. I call out to Teera. "Are you okay?"

"Great," she sobs.

I should say something to comfort her. But my mind is blank. All I know is that we're trapped. And whatever

happened? It's my fault. How could I have been so reckless?

There is a second of silence. Suddenly Teera lets go of me. "I can't see anything!" she cries. In a fit of anger, she punches my arm. "This is all your fault!"

"Hey!" I know she's scared. So am I. But I'm not going to sit here and let her hit me. "Don't put all the blame on me."

"You're so stupid! I can't believe that I'm related to you!"

Teera always tries to get in the last word.

"Just be quiet," I say. "You're wasting oxygen."

"What's the difference? We're going to die anyway. Unless we magically get out of here."

"We are not going to die," I tell her. "And we will get out of here." How? I don't know.

Chapter 4

Ready to Ride

Teera is quiet except for a few sighs. I let out a deep breath. My hand relaxes. The stone is still there. But instead of pain, I feel warmth.

I close my eyes for a moment. When I open them again, I see a faint white glow. It's coming from the stone.

"Look, Teera."

"I see it," she says.

The glow gets brighter. Soon it fills our small prison with light. There is enough to see each other's faces. In just seconds, the stone heats up in my hand. It burns me. But I can't let go.

I look at Teera. Her eyes are on the white-hot stone. Suddenly there's a flash of light. A gust of wind blows through. Its force sends us flying. We land with a thud.

“Whoa!” I hear Teera say. “That was weird.”

I stand up and look around. Now where are we? And where is my phone?

Teera scrambles to her feet. “What is this place?”

“I’m not sure,” I say. But it looks familiar to me. It seems to be a ranch. I think I’ve been here before. If I’m right, there are riding trails. I’ve taken lessons. My favorite horse is a red mare.

“There should be an office,” I tell Teera. “We can call Mom and Dad.”

We walk for about a mile. “Something isn’t right,” I finally say. There is no office. No riding trails. Not even one horse. Instead, there is desert. It stretches to the mountains.

Up ahead is a sign. As we get closer, I see what it says. Tombstone. It makes me think of the Old West.

Soon we come to the town. The streets are dry and dusty, which is made worse by the wind.

We pass tents where men are mining. Ahead is a main street lined with buildings. Along the way, we see horses. This is a good sign. Except these horses are tied to hitching posts.

A stagecoach flies by. Dust rises up and covers us. When it settles, we see all the people. Maybe they can help us. But then I see their clothes.

Men wear wool pants, long coats, and vests. Others

have on brightly colored shirts and boots with spurs. A few men wear aprons. They greet customers and sweep their porches. These must be shop owners.

It seems odd that no one wears denim. Not even the miners. Or were jeans invented later?

The women wear Victorian clothes. Even in this heat they are covered up. Long sleeves. Gloves. Hat *and* parasol.

A few women are in ruffled skirts that are knee-length. I know this is short for the times. Their petticoats show. They remind me of saloon girls.

As we walk along, I notice the businesses. Ice house. Opera house. Jail. Dry goods. Several saloons. I get it! This is a movie set.

Outside one saloon is a group of cowhands. One of them tips his hat at me. I give a little smile.

Where are the lights and the movie cameras?

Lost in Time

Tansy is comfy in her pj's. She's not going to do anything but text. Only two words could ruin this day—*little sister*. Then Teera needs to go to the library. Tansy has to drive her. Ugh. But she's a good big sister, so she does it. On the way home, she's forced to take a detour. It wouldn't be bad, but Tansy doesn't know the roads. They're only leading the girls farther from home. When and where will the nightmare end?



MONARCH JUNGLE

