

X MARKS THE SPOT

Harry was sure his late father's missing manuscript was in the cottage. Now that the cottage has been sold, it was time for a frantic one last search. Sitting in the last winged-back chair in his father's study clutching a cup of coffee, Harry's thoughts shifted to his father's character. Like his music, his father William was man of surprises – he liked crosswords and frequently employed crossword strategies to get his audience to decipher music meaning.

Speaking out loud to his father's ghost that Harry felt remained in the study, Harry said, "Ok William Sage, where is your manuscript hiding? It's here somewhere!"

There was a knock that seemed to come from one of the wooden wall panels to the left of the fireplace. Then a second knock from the same panel. Harry got up to investigate the panel closely. He could see there was a slight opening. Prizing the panel open, inside there lay a written clue. Harry read the clue, "Five letters, placing of notes on lines."

"Staves! Right Dad, six panels to the right. Hey! Another open panel. There's a new clue. What is the title of Beethoven's third symphony?"

There was a knock six panels going down from the E of Staves.

"*Eroica* is the title of Beethoven's third. Too easy Dad. You taught me all I needed to know about the maestro by the time I went to prep school."

Harry counted another six panels down where he met the junction of fireplace hearth and skirting, so he realised the next clue would have to take him left. Another clue was found.

"Prokofiev's piece that was not intended for Christmas. Greg Lake may know the answer..."

Harry scratched his head. "Greg Lake wrote *I Believe In Father Christmas* but what was the link with Prokofiev? Wait! Of course! Prokofiev's *Troika*!"

There was another knock that Harry confirmed was his father agreeing with the answer. Counting to the left, Harry met the corner of the panelled wall with doorframe. He knew another clue must be lurking in the corner panel. Sure enough, the panel appeared to be slightly ajar. Harry reached in and grabbed the clue.

"Ok, listen carefully Dad. The clue says, Mozart Act 3 *Figaro* wedding where x marks the spot."

Harry returned to his chair. This clue required a good think as he had not been such a good student after all. He reached for his mobile phone but strangely had no signal so google was not an option. What was special about the actual wedding in Mozart's *Figaro*?

As if a conductor was bringing an orchestra to attention, Harry heard six clear knocks. He heard them a second time.

"Sextet! It's Sextet!"

Harry counted six panels up where the S of sextet met the S of Staves.

"The manuscript must be here. It's got to be here!"

One knock was heard which Harry took to being confirmation. His father had lived in this seaside cottage overlooking a smugglers cove for nearly forty years...