

Part One

Vanessa had completely forgotten what Boston, Massachusetts looked like. The “Big Dig”, the largest public works project ever embarked upon in the United States, had changed so very much of the topography of the city. New buildings and new streets, new bridges and new tunnels and the loss of such things as overhead subway rails and electric buses made the city look so much different than she remembered.

Vanessa flew into Boston as part of an after graduation “fly around fling” visiting many of her college friends. It was the first time she had been back to Boston, Massachusetts since she rode away from the city seven and a half years before in the family car. Boston was her last stop on this “fly around fling.” While in Boston she planned to award three hefty Still Creek Mountain Trust college scholarships to three noteworthy high school students from the New England area. One student from Boston, one from Providence, Rhode Island, and lastly, but not least, from the little village of Stamfordville, Vermont, located almost on the Vermont - Massachusetts borders.

This was the only time Vanessa had manipulated (fixed) the results of her own scholarship granting. Actually, she had not fixed the outcome so much as she had added a scholarship grant to the groups The Still Creek Mountain Trust was awarding. To make matters even worse, and more mysterious, she did not know yet who would get that scholarship.

Time is the one thing Vanessa now understood she could not buy or control. She had come to realize that all things, all actions, every interaction takes time to face and/or accomplish. There was no way to do all the things she wanted to do as director of the Still Creek Mountain Trust right away. Here it was seven years from the time she had started the job and she was finally getting around to doing something good for someone from the place where she had been born, Boston, Massachusetts. She was finally going to do something good for another community, as well, Stamfordville, Vermont. Other than the scholarship grant, she was quite uncertain what that act would be. This would require thought and more pensive study.

Stamfordville, Vermont is the little town where Henry William Harris had been born. He had lived in that small community up until he was sixteen years old. Henry Harris, Russell Harris’ father and Gerald Harris’ grandfather, was the first person to carry the secrets revolving around the existence of the Malatorians and the valley hidden deep within the heart of Still Creek Mountain. The huge mountain and the secrets were located within the town limits of Gloverton, Colorado. To the best of Vanessa’s knowledge, Henry Harris had not returned to Stamfordville after leaving.

Vanessa rented a car at Logan International Airport and simply drove about Boston for a few hours. “Things do change,” but from the looks of the tangle of cars on the streets it was still as horrendously congested and confused as Vanessa remembered. “Well, some things don’t change, I guess,” she said out loud, chuckling, “traffic.”

Though the sun was bright and felt warm, there was still some early spring snow on the ground. Vanessa drove westward along Route Two headed for Williamstown, Massachusetts where she then turned north and entered Vermont, following the Internet map and directions she had printed out before leaving the hotel.

In a little over two hours she found Stamfordville easily enough and the old joke about some small towns, “don’t blink, you’ll miss it,” or “the road sign says entering Stamfordville on one side and leaving Stamfordville on the other” came to mind instantly as she stopped in the heart of the township. The downtown area, if it could truly be called that, was made up of four small stores; The Stamfordville Grocery, The Stamfordville Hardware, The Stamfordville Diner and The Stamfordville Video Loft and Ice Cream Parlor, each located on its own corner making up the town square. The Police Station, Fire