TREASURE HUNTERS
QUEST FOR THE CITY OF GOLD

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Chapter 1



Okay, to start, I have to admit that I'm seriously impressed by my twin sis Beck's ability to draw that picture, because at the time, we were maybe ten seconds away from being chomped on by a family of hammerhead sharks.

(Beck says she drew that illustration later on, from memory, not while we were in the water. I'm doing the same thing with the storytelling. It's hard to write or draw while you're swimming for your life. The ink gets all runny and splotchy.)

Where were we?

Oh, right. In the ocean. Off the coast of Costa Rica. Being chased by hammerhead sharks as we swam our way to Cocos Island, a Costa Rican national park also known as "the Island of Sharks."

(Yes, Beck, that *should* have been a hint as to what might be lurking beneath the waves.)

We furiously paddled our arms and kicked our legs and tried to outrun the swarm of hungry sea monsters. Good thing hammerheads have eyeballs where their ears should be. Maybe they couldn't see us—*swimming right in front of them*.

Why weren't we in a rowboat or a motorized raft?

Because Mom, Dad, and our big brother, Tommy, had taken all available landing craft when they decided to do a little treasure hunting on Cocos Island without me, Beck, or our big sister, Storm.

"You three need to stay with the ship," Dad

had said when they loaded up the boats. "There are secrets belowdecks in the Room you need to guard."

Yes, whenever Dad talks about the Room, it sounds like he's capitalizing it, because the Room is this super-secret high-security walk-in vault on our ship, the *Lost*. The Room is off-limits to all of us. It's where Mom and Dad keep their rare and valuable treasure-hunting maps locked up behind the Door. The Door gets the capital-letter treatment, too, because it's made out of three-inch-thick solid steel. It's so heavy I sometimes wonder how the *Lost* can stay afloat with that much deadweight in its hull.

I was pretty sure Beck and I had remembered to double-check the lock on the Door to the Room before we jumped into the ocean. Pretty sure. We were kind of in a rush.

"How dare they go looking for the Treasure of Lima without us!" Beck had said as we prepared to dive in.

"Yeah," I'd said. "How dare they!"

Yes, we sometimes think and say exactly the same stuff. It's a twin thing.

So we jumped overboard and started swimming. Don't forget, we Kidd kids have lived on the ocean most of our lives. We're excellent swimmers and scuba divers. Except Storm. She doesn't do water sports. Maybe because she has a photographic memory, which means that she never forgets that the ocean is full of scary creatures like, oh, hammerhead sharks!

But Beck and I were determined to join Mom, Dad, and Tommy on the island. Hey, we Kidd kids did pretty well treasure hunting on our own, without Mom or Dad. In fact, they were two of the treasures we'd recovered in our kids-only quests.

Now they were searching for buried treasure in the jungles of Cocos Island with just Tommy? Since when did the Kidd Family Treasure Hunters Inc. become a three-person operation instead of a six-person one?

Actually, it was dangerously close to becoming a four-person crew. Because the hungry

hammerheads were much faster swimmers than me and Beck.

They were close and moving closer.

With a couple swift chomps of their jaws, they could definitely subtract two from six—permanently!



Chapter 2



I heard a rush of water behind me!

The hammerheads breathing down our butts had just thrown open their jaws. I could smell their stinky fish breath. I believe they had recently enjoyed the all-you-can-gobble shrimp buffet at the nearest coral-reef diner.

"So long, Beck!" I shouted, thrashing against the waves. "You're the best twin I ever had!"

"I'm the only twin you ever had!" she shouted back.

"This is no time to get all technical, Rebecca. We're both about to die!" As the storyteller of the family, I decided to wax poetic with my dying words. "I guess it's only fitting that since we

came into this world together, we should leave it together, too!"

"Oh, no, you're not!" cried the heroic voice of our (you won't believe this) big sister, Storm!

She zoomed between us and the hammerheads on a Jet Ski!



"Where'd you find a Jet Ski?" I hollered.

"Tommy had it stowed in a secret compartment

in the bow of our ship!" Storm shouted back. "He might've forgotten that he told me about it, but I never did!"

The thing to remember about our big sister, Storm, is that she remembers everything. She's also the smartest Kidd kid. So why was she doing something as dumb as attempting to herd sharks on a Jet Ski? Because that's what we Kidds do. We look out for one another—even if we look ridiculous doing it.

"Whatever you do, Bick," Storm shouted, "don't pee! Sharks can smell human urine in the ocean."

Great, I thought. *Now she tells me.*

Storm circled the sharks, churning up a white, foamy wake to fence them in. More or less.

"Swim to shore, you two," she told us. "I'll keep these bad boys busy. I brought along one of Dad's golf clubs!"

As I frantically swam for the beach, I chanced a glance over my shoulder to see what Storm was doing with Dad's driver, the biggest club from his bag.

She jabbed at all of the sharks who dared snap at her as she zipped around and around them in dizzying circles. That's Shark-Attack Defense 101: Poke 'em in their gills.

Or their eyes!

"What are you looking at, M. C. Hammerhead?" Storm yelled at the lead shark.

One-handing the Jet Ski throttle, she used her free arm to line up the golf club's head with the shark's big, bulging eyeball as if it were sitting on a tee!



Storm faked like she was going to rear back with the driver. The alpha shark, who seemed dead set on eating us a moment earlier, turned tail and headed out to sea. Guess he didn't want to see one of his eyeballs ending up on the seventeenth green. It would make for a messy putt. The other sharks took off with him.

A couple minutes later, Beck and I dragged ourselves ashore. We were exhausted but alive, barely able to catch our breath.

Yay, Storm!

When she landed her Jet Ski on the beach and hauled it up on the sand, Beck and I raced down to give her a huge hug. We were both sooooo lucky to be part of the most incredibly awesome family in the world!

"Thank you, Storm!" said Beck.

"You're the best big sister we could ever have!" I added.

Storm didn't seem to be quite as happy as Beck and me.

I could see her eyes darken as she narrowed them at us.

Yep. That's why we call her Storm.

Like a thundercloud billowing up in the tropics, she can get very, very angry very, very quickly.