

## DAD'S SECRET

by Cornelia Kidd

Prequel to DEATH AND A POT OF CHOWDER:

“What did you say?” I leaned forward toward the mahogany desk stacked with folders of papers. It was the first time I’d been in a lawyer’s office, and this one was as intimidating as the ones I’d seen on TV. Maybe I hadn’t heard him right.

Mr. Bergman cleared his throat. “Your father left everything – his house, stocks, savings, insurance – to be divided between you and your sister.”

“WHAT sister?” I blurted. “I’m an only child!”

He fingered his tie, and picked up his black coffee mug engraved, “World’s Best Dad.”

“This is very awkward, Izzie. He told me he was going to tell you,” Bergman said, taking a sip of coffee that must by now be cold. He didn’t look me in the eye. “I thought you knew.”

“I know nothing,” I declared. “I grew up without any brothers or sisters, and, now that Dad’s gotten himself killed in a car accident, now I find out I have a mysterious sister somewhere in the world?”

“As it is, yes. That’s about it,” he agreed.

“Where is she? Who is she?” I demanded. “Does she know about me?”

“I only know her name and address. I’ll write to her, of course, to tell her what I’m telling you today.”

My chest felt tight. Mom died nine years ago, when I was fourteen. Now in one week I’d also lost my father, but somehow gained a sister. “Dad traveled a lot on business. Did he have two families? Two wives?” I might as well hear the whole story.

“I believe your mother was his second wife,” Bergman explained. His bald head was sweating. “Your sister is probably older than you are. You’re sure he never mentioned another marriage?”

“Positive,” I declared. “You think I’d forget something like that?” I slumped back in the uncomfortable leather chair. “Why didn’t he tell me?”

“I don’t know, Izzie. You can see this puts me in an awkward position, having to tell you myself.”

“Puts YOU in an awkward position? How do you think it makes ME feel?”

We sat and stared at each other. It was a standoff.

“Can you tell me who she is?”

He looked down at the papers on his desk. “Her name is Anna Winslow. She lives in – or maybe on – Quarry Island, Maine.”

“Maine! I don’t remember Dad ever mentioning Maine.”

“Well, assuming he knows who his daughters are, at one time he must have lived there, or Anna’s mother lived somewhere else,” he pointed out.

“Her last name isn’t Jordan, like his and mine.”

“She may have married,” he suggested. “If she’s older than you, that’s possible.”

“Write down her name and address for me,” I asked. “I want to meet her.” If I really had a sister, then I had a family. I wasn’t alone.

He nodded, and wrote Anna’s name and address on the back of his business card and handed it to me.

“Can you wait to contact her until after I have?” I asked. Hearing from a lawyer about your father’s death was a horrible way to find out. Maybe I could protect her a little.

“I can wait a week or two, Izzie,” he agreed. “I don’t see that would make any difference. But keep in touch with me. And tell your sister she can call with any questions she has.”

My sister.

I’d always wanted a sister.

But who knew what this Anna from some island in Maine would be like? Did she know about me? Did she know our dad had died?

“I’m going to write to her today,” I told Mr. Bergman. “Then I’m going to Maine. If this Anna is my sister, we have a lot to talk about.”

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