
Badger Hills Farm
Book 2
THE HIDDEN ROOM
JENNY PHILLIPS
THE GOOD AND THE BEAUTIFUL LIBRARY



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CHAPTER 1

LITTLE PUFFS OF PINK CLOUDS FLOATED in the morning sky outside Zoey's window. Although golden sunbeams poured into her room, the late December weather left the house a little chilly. Zoey finished the section she was reading in her Bible, laid it down on the window seat, picked up her journal and a pen, and snuggled into her big, comfy blanket to write.

Mom and Dad got home last night.

Just to be clear, when I write "Mom" and "Dad" now, I am not talking about my parents who passed away. I miss them so much, and they will always be part of me, but calling Uncle John "Dad" and Lily "Mom" is something I want to do.

I can't write very much this morning because, after we finish our chores,



we are telling Mom and Dad about the secret door. It leads to a tunnel and another door—a rusted metal door. Timothy and I couldn't get the metal door open, but we think Dad can. We are going to find out what is behind that door today!

After finishing her journal entry, Zoey turned on Christmas music and cleaned her room.

"O Christmas Tree! O Christmas Tree!" she belted out gleefully with the music. She heard her cousin Timothy—who was walking down the hallway outside her room—join in with a funny opera voice. Zoey laughed.

After Zoey's mom died, and Zoey came to live with Timothy, he had been pretty quiet and sometimes unsure. She had loved

watching him grow more confident and happy. *Now he can even get quite silly!* Zoey thought with a big smile, as she pictured him falling off his chair every now and then when he started laughing too hard.

Zoey and Timothy had a responsibility that they loved: making breakfast twice a week. This morning, they decided to make a healthy breakfast of fresh-squeezed orange juice and vegetable omelets for everyone.

As Timothy squeezed the oranges and Zoey chopped vegetables, Nanna Bell set up a table in front of the fireplace in the family room and then got a blazing fire going.

Finally, breakfast was cooked, and the table was set. Zoey and Timothy were excited to use the triangle meal bell they had found tucked

in the back of the pantry. Nanna Bell had hung the triangle on the back porch, where they took turns banging on it with a short metal rod. Lily and John were just around the corner, but it was so much fun to bang the triangle that the cousins couldn't pass up the opportunity.

Lily and John came bustling into the house, the tips of their noses red.

"Whew!" said John as he took his seat by the glowing fireplace. "This fire feels nice. We've been outside since six o'clock this morning."

"What are you working on?" Zoey asked.

"A chicken coop," John answered with his wide smile.

"Oh, that's right," Timothy commented. "Those huge boxes that were delivered last week hold a build-your-own chicken coop."

"When are we getting chicks? When are we building a barn for Misty Toes and her foal? When will we start building a campground and a greenhouse? What about the stone walls and trails? Will we fix those?"

Everyone laughed. Zoey had hardly taken a breath between sentences.

"Let's pray and then start eating," John said with a chuckle. "While we eat, we can have a family meeting and start planning."



And so they did. After the prayer, everyone dug into the omelets, which were sprinkled with sea salt and oozing with golden cheese.

"It was thirty-seven degrees outside this morning; that's very cold for this time of year," John announced.

"It needs to get down to thirty-two degrees to snow," Zoey stated. "I miss seeing snow. It snowed so much where I lived in Canada."

Lily shook her head. "While it doesn't



usually snow here, it can, and it has in the past. But it is pretty rare, and the snow doesn't stay long before it melts."

"Do you think it will snow for Christmas this year?" Zoey asked. "Oh, I hope it does!"

Nanna Bell chimed in. "I have to admit that I've been hoping for snow this year too—even just a little flurry of snow would be wonderful. I've been looking at the weather forecast, and, well, it does get pretty cold, but it doesn't show a chance of snow before Christmas."

The conversation then turned to their plans for the farm.

"As you all know," John started, "we have a lot of work to do around this farm. Supplies and equipment aren't free. We are so blessed to have the money that Mr. Roach left us from

the sale of his house and three acres to Mrs. Bastian."

"That means you don't have to work anymore!" cried Zoey. "I mean, at least not at Mr. Bevan's greenhouse."

"I loved my job at the greenhouse," John said. "But not having to work there means I will have time to work on fixing up this property."

"And you don't have to work at the library anymore either, Mom," Zoey stated, realizing that it felt good to call Lily "Mom," but it would take a little while for it to feel completely normal. "You loved your job there, though. Are you sad to leave it?"

"Oh, I did love working at the library," Lily replied with that wonderful sparkle in her eyes

that always seemed to be there. "But I will love taking care of my home and family even more. John and I had so much fun this morning starting to put together that chicken coop."

"So when are we getting chicks?" Zoey asked for the second time.

"As soon as the coop is ready," John replied.

"And then what's next?" Timothy questioned.

"Well, that's what we want to talk about," John said. "Lily, do you want to go over the options we discussed on our honeymoon?"

"Sure! We want to build a greenhouse. John doesn't want to compete with Mr. Bevan's greenhouse, since it is so close by. He grows flowers, shrubs, and vegetables. But he doesn't grow—"

"Venus flytraps!" Timothy cried out, and

then realized that he had interrupted. "Oh, sorry! I just think plants that eat insects are so cool."

John laughed. "They are pretty neat, Timothy. But no, we are not going to grow Venus flytraps. We thought we would grow a variety of houseplants."

"What a wonderful idea!" Nanna Bell exclaimed.

"But we might not start that right away," Lily explained. "We also want to build a campground down by the pond, and we don't have the money or time to work on a campground and a greenhouse at the same time."

"Are campgrounds really that expensive to create?" Timothy asked.

"More than you might think," John explained. "We have to create roads, trails, bathrooms, and a bridge for visitors to drive their cars over the stream."

"And picnic tables, fencing, a boat dock, and boats," added Lily.

"Boats!" cried Timothy. "Wahoo!"

"And I just thought of something else," Nanna Bell said, "a website."

"That's right," Lily said. "Most of our savings will be needed to build the campground. So we thought we would start with that, and then once we have money coming in from renting out the campground, we can start on all the other things that we want to do."

"Of course we'll get a barn built right away,"