

WILD RESCUE

4



TYNDALE HOUSE PUBLISHERS, INC., WHEATON, ILLINOIS



RED ROCK MYSTERIES

#1 BEST-SELLING AUTHORS

JERRY B. JENKINS · CHRIS FABRY

Thanks to the Tasty Kreme Donut Shoppe
for its help in the outcome of this story.
Ashley and Bryce Timberline

Visit Tyndale's exciting Web site for kids at cool2read.com
Also see the Web site for adults at tyndale.com

TYNDALE is a registered trademark of Tyndale House Publishers, Inc.

Tyndale's quill logo is a trademark of Tyndale House Publishers, Inc.

Copyright © 2005 by Jerry B. Jenkins. All rights reserved.

Cover and interior photographs copyright © 2004 by Brian MacDonald. All rights reserved.

Authors' photograph © 2004 by Brian MacDonald. All rights reserved.

Designed by Jacqueline L. Noe

Edited by Lorie Popp

Published in association with the literary agency of Alive Communications, Inc., 7680 Goddard Street, Suite 200, Colorado Springs, CO 80920.

Scripture quotations are taken from the *Holy Bible*, New Living Translation, copyright © 1996, 2004. Used by permission of Tyndale House Publishers, Inc., Wheaton, Illinois 60189. All rights reserved.

This novel is a work of fiction. Names, characters, places, and incidents either are the product of the authors' imagination or are used fictitiously. Any resemblance to actual events, locales, organizations, or persons, living or dead, is entirely coincidental and beyond the intent of either the authors or publisher.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Jenkins, Jerry B.

Wild rescue / Jerry B. Jenkins ; Chris Fabry.

p. cm. — (Red Rock mysteries)

Summary: When twins Ashley and Bryce Timberline investigate the burglary of a neighbor's house, they become involved with some alpacas and a guard dog as well.

ISBN-10: 1-4143-0143-X (sc)

ISBN-13: 978-1-4143-0143-3 (sc)

[1. Robbers and outlaws—Fiction. 2. Animals—Fiction. 3. Christian life—Fiction. 4. Twins—Fiction. 5. Mystery and detective stories.] I. Fabry, Chris, 1961– II. Title.

PZ7.J4138Wil 2005

[Fic]—dc22

2005000415

Printed in the United States of America

09 08 07 06 05

9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1



CHAPTER 1

❧ Ashley ❧

I wasn't trying to save anyone's life or catch thieves that lazy Sunday afternoon. I wasn't even thinking about the stuff Bryce and I would do after the last day of school. I was just trying to read a book and not doing a very good job because I kept nodding off. Do you ever do that? Try to read in bed, then drop the book and scare yourself and have to hunt for the page you were on?

I finally gave up and went to sleep. The phone woke me, and I tried to put on my best nongroggy voice. No idea why I do that either, as if there's something wrong with someone catching me asleep.

"Kathryn?" an older woman said. She sounded out of breath.

“No, she’s not here right now. Can I take—?”

“Ashley, it’s me. . . .”

“Mrs. Watson?”

Peanuts, her dog, barked in the background. He’s a Chihuahua, so his bark sounds like someone breaking glass in your ear—shrill squared.

“Is your father home?” Mrs. Watson said.

Interesting question. Not a good one when your mind is filled with Sunday-nap cobwebs. My real dad had been dead for years. But she knew that. Sam’s my stepfather.

“No, he took Mom and Dylan out to the cheapo theater to see some—”

“I just got back from my trip,” she said. “Will you have him call me?”

Trip? Mrs. Watson hadn’t told us about any trip. “What’s up?” I said.

She tried to quiet Peanuts, but the dog was yipping his head off. “Something’s wrong,” she said. “Something’s terribly wrong.”

“You want Bryce and me to come over?” I heard the *thud, thud, thud* of his basketball behind our house.

“Would you?” She sounded like me on my first night of algebra homework.



CHAPTER 2

☺ Bryce ☺

I had to go top speed to keep up with Ashley on the way to Mrs. Watson's. I couldn't imagine what the problem was. She's a good friend. She lets us park our ATVs in her barn during school, and she always offers us snacks and stuff.

Fashion is not really my thing, but I couldn't help but notice Mrs. Watson's bright yellow pantsuit that made her look like the sun on its way to a picnic. She calls it her driving uniform. Ashley gave me her no-smart-remarks look.

Peanuts was barking, so I tried to pick him up, but he scampered away when we walked inside. He'd left specks of yellow on the linoleum, so I knew he was scared.

"I'm so glad you're here," Mrs. Watson said, wringing her hands. "Someone's been in the house." Then she started talking a thousand miles an hour, and all Ashley and I could do was stand there with our mouths hanging open. "I drove to my brother's in Wyoming Friday. He lives in Laramie. . . ." She told us about her brother, what they ate, what kind of house he has, how the grass looked.

I wanted to scream, *Get on with it already!*

Finally she said, "Anyway, when I got home, Peanuts sniffed and barked as soon as we got in the house. I couldn't get him to stop."

"He wasn't just happy to be home?" Ashley said. That's what I'd been thinking too.

"No, he usually comes in, I get him a bowl of food, and he curls up on his chair. The first thing I noticed was that stain on the stairs."

I knelt by the first stair, and sure enough, there was a smudge on the white carpet. Mrs. Watson is always neat and tidy, but this was hardly real evidence of a prowler. It could have been made by Peanuts—or Mrs. Watson for that matter.

I inspected the front and back doors. Neither looked like anyone had pried it open, and the windows on the first floor were all locked tight.

"Anything missing?" I said.

She looked around. "TV's still here and my video player. I haven't looked through the whole house yet."

"Did you call the police?"

She shook her head. "I thought your father would help. Besides, what would I tell them? They'd think I had a screw loose in my head."

Can't argue with that.

"Let's check the whole house," Ashley said.

I started downstairs and planned to work my way up, looking for

any sign of missing stuff. I wasn't down there three minutes when I heard a scream from upstairs. Peanuts had calmed down, but now he started barking again.

I ran up and found Mrs. Watson sitting on her bed, cradling an old wooden jewelry box, Ashley standing beside her.

"My mother's brooch," Mrs. Watson whispered. "She gave it to me when I was young, just before she died." She looked up with little-girl eyes. "Why would anyone want to steal that?"

"Any way you could have misplaced it?" I said.

"I've kept it in here for years."

"Is anything else missing?" Ashley said, putting a hand on her arm.

The old woman nodded. "The diamond necklace my late husband gave me on our 25th anniversary." She put a hand to her mouth. "His ring! Oh, they've taken Carl's wedding ring!" She broke down, and Ashley tried to comfort her.

Any fingerprints on the box were gone now because Mrs. Watson had handled it.

I looked around the room and spotted a black smudge on the bedroom door. "What could have made this?"

Mrs. Watson's eyes were vacant. She just shook her head.

"Guess we have something to tell the police now," I said, reaching for the phone.