

Knotty Pine Mysteries

Mr. Beaverton and
the Pistachio Fiasco



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Book preview

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Night Flight



MR. Beaverton rested comfortably in his bed of woodchips and held his favorite book between his paws. He looked up at the beams of moonlight shining through his lodge window. The river rippled against the sides of his home and swished soothingly underneath him.

He turned his head to gaze at a painting of his grandfather hanging on the wall in his feeding chamber. His grandfather had always walked with him along the banks of Cobble Creek and explained how the land was healthy because of their dams. Lit by the moonlight, the eyes of the painting stared at Mr. Beaverton through the shadows.

Suddenly, the lodge shook, knocking Mr. Beaver-



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ton out of his bed and onto the floor. “*What in the MOSSY GREEN RIVER CURRENT...*” he exclaimed as he scrambled to his feet.

“Mr. Beaverton! MR. BEAVERTON!”

Mr. Beaverton hobbled to the window. He squinted downstream at Sheriff Ovis, a big-horned sheep, who was crammed into a tiny boat. The sheriff threw one end of his rope around a nearby boulder and slowly pulled himself toward the lodge.

Mr. Beaverton poked his head out the window. “Sheriff! *What are you doing out there?*” The lodge rumbled as if in an earthquake.

Dark water sprayed the sheriff as it splashed against the sides of his boat. “I’m leaving Knotty Pine a few days early and heading to Derwood!”



“*At this hour?*” Mr. Beaverton sputtered, glancing up at the millions of stars in the sky. A wolf began howling in the nearby forest.

“Apparently the town is in a predicament.”

Mr. Beaverton scrunched his brow in confusion. “A predicament? What kind?” The sheriff usually spent a couple of weeks in each town of the Evergreen Valley and rarely left a post early, unless another town was having real trouble.

The boat rocked and hit the side of the lodge. “What was that, Mr. Beaverton?”

“WHAT IS HAPPENING IN DERWOOD?” Mr. Beaverton shouted as his heart thumped in his chest. He squinted at some sticks from his lodge floating in the water.

“OH! Just break-ins and such. Need to get there quickly, so traveling by river—” Sheriff Ovis took a firmer hold on the rope and secured the side of his boat to the boulder, “—there we go...”

Mr. Beaverton let out a sigh of relief. “*Sticks and bark*, Sheriff! I was beginning to worry you were going to take me and my lodge to Derwood with you.”

The extra rope dropped to the ground in a coil at Sheriff Ovis’s feet. “As adventurous as that sounds,



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Mr. Beaverton, I need you here. You're the detective of Knotty Pine, and I want you to be *especially* on guard while I make my rounds throughout the valley over the next few weeks."

"I can do that, Sheriff," Mr. Beaverton said as he took a deep breath and rested his paws on the branches lining his window. An evening breeze slowed the pace of his heart. He had kept the town safe many times before. He had even caught a band of squirrels stealing acorns from Knotty Pine's silo last fall and recovered the town's winter food supply as a result.

"Just be sure to report any suspicious activity while I'm away," Sheriff Ovis added. "I'll stay in Derwood for a couple of weeks and then continue on to Hickory. Just have Morse over at the post office send a telegraph."

"Yes, of course."

"Oh," Sheriff Ovis lowered his voice, "and keep an eye on Sir Sly Sepluv. Shady character."

Mr. Beaverton raised an eyebrow. "The red fox that moved to Knotty Pine a few months ago?"

"Yes, that's the one."

"Why? Not trustworthy?" Mr. Beaverton asked.



Sheriff Ovis sighed. “Hardly. Word is he’s been selling broken, rotten products around town.”

Mr. Beaverton nodded, remembering some animals complaining in front of the mercantile a few days ago. “Sure. I’ll be watchful of him.”

“Thanks, Mr. Beaverton. Oh, and here—” Sheriff Ovis reached for a burlap sack in the boat and tossed it to the window. Mr. Beaverton caught it right before it fell into the river and then reached inside and pulled out a bolt of fine silk. “Your payment for the quarter,” Sheriff Ovis explained.

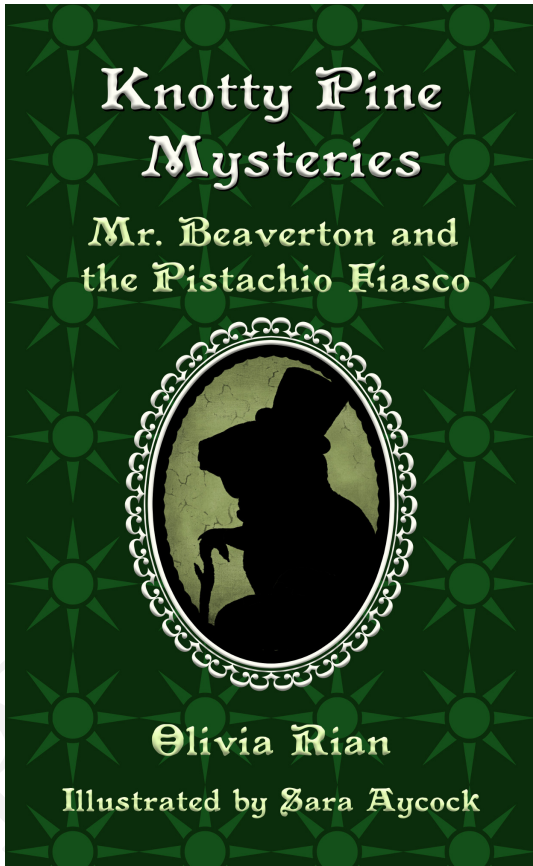
Mr. Beaverton tilted his head. “But this is a lot of silk... Do you anticipate more trouble than usual, Sheriff?”

“With break-ins in Derwood, it is possible that Knotty Pine will experience some as well. Just be alert for anything out of the ordinary.” Sheriff Ovis reached for the rope that was secured around the boulder.

“Sheriff...” Mr. Beaverton began.

“Good luck, Mr. Beaverton.” Sheriff Ovis untied the rope and began floating down the river into the night.

End of preview



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