

Somewhere was the clue to finding the will.

Everyone stood around the giant Christmas tree, brightly decorated for the festive holiday. Eighteen year-old Nancy Drew and her best friends, Bess Marvin and George Fayne, wrapped their coats tighter around them in an effort to warm themselves from the fierce wind that chilled them to the bone. It was one of River Heights' coldest winters.

George Fayne, tall and slender, leaned over to her friend. "I don't know how you are ever going to manage to find the will, Nancy. It could be anywhere!"

Nancy brushed several loose strands of reddish-blond hair from out of her eyes and smiled. Her friend was right, but she was determined not to give up. Millionaire Everette Brandwaithe had died last week, and since he always provided River Heights' town square with the largest and most beautifully decorated Christmas tree each year, he had left specific instructions that his will be read the night of Christmas Eve after the lighting of the tree. Everyone had been excited at the prospect, but no one had expected the will to turn up missing!

"This is crazy!" exclaimed Bess Marvin, shivering in spite of her coat, mittens, and matching hat and scarf. "Surely someone must know where the inheritance is?"

Nancy motioned for her friends to become silent so she could listen as her father, famed attorney Carson Drew, began to question some of Mr. Brandwaithe's family and staff.

"I'm not really sure," the Brandwaithe's butler was saying. "Mr. Brandwaithe has three safes in the house, as well as two safe deposit boxes. I've never actually seen inside any of them, since he kept his personal matters to himself, so I don't know."

"I have," interrupted Marcus Brandwaithe, the elder son. He gave the butler a sneer and took Carson Drew by the arm to lead him away. "My father was one for extreme secrecy when it came to his will, as he was always afraid someone would try and take advantage of him if they knew they were receiving an inheritance! He always trusted me, so I had access to his safes, and there was no will in any of them, I can guarantee that."

Nancy shook her head. Instead of grieving for his deceased father, the man seemed more wrapped up in proving how trusted he was to his father. Could he have removed the will knowing that he was not getting as much as he wanted?

"Mr. Brandwaithe always said he would take care of us," a middle aged woman who Nancy recognized as the Brandwaithe's cook, was saying. "He surely had plenty of

money to leave to all of us with plenty left over for his family, so I don't understand why anyone would want to prevent his will from being read. I'm sure it would break his heart to think that his last wish to have his will read at the lighting of the Christmas tree has been ruined."

Nancy considered what the cook said. Everette Brandwaithe definitely had more than enough money to make his staff comfortable and leave his two sons enough money that they would never have to work a day in their lives. So who would take the will? Who had something to gain by hiding the will?

"Neither safe deposit box had a will," reported Philip Anderson. "Until it is found, we cannot do anything with his accounts."

Nancy sighed as her father moved on to interview the next person. It seemed this could very well be the one case that even she couldn't crack!

"Don't know and don't care," sighed Randall Brandwaithe, the younger son with a shrug of his shoulders. "I've got my trust fund, as does Marcus, so what do we care if anyone else gets any money."

Nancy heard Bess give an involuntary gasp at the younger son's comments. It was a shame that some children born into wealthy families gave no consideration to anyone but themselves. Nancy had certainly met others like that while solving mysteries through the years. If there was one thing Nancy had learned, however, it was that money made people do grievous things.

"Well, Nancy," Carson Drew said as he came up to his daughter. "I'm not sure what to do at this point. Marcus and Randall have combed the house and found no evidence of a will, and without a will, there can be no reading tonight. Mr. Brandwaithe's money will have to remain in the bank for now, and we will have to put a hold on things until the will is found." He smiled at Nancy. "Do you have any ideas?"

"Actually, Dad, I believe I do!"

DO YOU KNOW WHERE THE WILL CAN BE FOUND? DO YOU KNOW WHO IS BEHIND THE MISSING WILL? HOW DID NANCY FIGURE IT OUT?