

TREASURE
A JJ Gilbert Mystery

By
Linda M. Williams

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Visit lindamwilliams.net

About the Author

Linda M Williams got her love for mysteries from her parents who were avid readers. Her family watched mystery on television and tried to see who could figure out who did it first. Linda has also been fascinated with mediums and attended the shows of several prominent mediums. In a personal reading, she received multiple messages from her parents, including the suggestion that she write a book. Now she has combined her passion for mysteries and her fascination for mediums to create the character of JJ Gilbert.

JJ took her new plates out of the dishwasher and stacked them on her freshly lined shelves. She had decided college was not for her and moved home to build a photography business. Staying in Arizona was an option, but in the end she chose the familiarity of Riverside California. The place she was born and raised was where she had the strongest connections. It felt safe to her.

Quitting college was a decision that was not supported by her parents. Her father, now living in Florida, suggested she stay and study business. After all, she could do anything with that degree. Her mother, still living in her childhood home, encouraged her to use college as a way to find a good husband. Truthfully, JJ was only in college to compete in tennis. When injuries ended her dream to become a professional player, she lost interest in the academic world.

After starting another load in the dishwasher, she moved into the den and began unpacking boxes. She stacked books onto the shelves and then broke down the boxes and stuffed the newspaper wrappings into the trash bags. She was going to stay on top of the inevitable moving mess. The next box contained memorabilia. She pulled out a vase and put it on an open shelf. Then she removed the newspaper from around a picture frame that contained a photograph of JJ with her twin brother. Her eyes teared as she remembered the worst day of her life. The day she lost her brother and was transformed from Jordyn to JJ. It was the day that set her life on a new path.

JJ was born Jordyn and had a twin brother named Jackson. They were best friends, typical for twins, but very different. Jordyn was smart and athletic, but not popular at all. She was tall with long brown hair and piercing green eyes. Boys thought she was cute, but were afraid to ask her out. The few friends she had were from the tennis team. Jackson was the class clown and very popular, but not focused on his studies. His shaggy hair and big smile made him the flirting target of all the girls.

When they were fifteen, Jackson was killed in a school bus accident. Many of the children, including Jordyn, were hurt, but only Jackson died. Jordyn decided that day she wanted to be called JJ to honor the memory of her twin. As she placed the photo on the shelf, she remembered when Jackson's spirit visited her in the hospital. She always knew she could speak to the dead, but after his visit, her life as a medium became real. A strange ability she had as a child would become a gift she used as an adult to help people.

The knock on the door pulled JJ's attention back to the present. She wiped the tears from her eyes before answering.

"Hi Lexi, what a surprise. Please come in," JJ said before giving her friend a hug. Lexi Duncan was on the high school tennis team, but she was never ranked as high as JJ. She didn't care. She had no desire to play professionally or go to college. After high school, Lexi got her realtor license and began working with her mother, who was the top seller in the area.

"Nice place to rent. When you are ready to buy, I expect you to call me," Lexi joked.

JJ's apartment was built on top of someone's garage. It had a small bedroom and den. The kitchen was only large enough for a tiny refrigerator. JJ used the small dining area for her desk

and computer. It wasn't much, but it was her place. She would have the freedom to start this new chapter of her life without the watchful eyes of her mother.

"I suspect it will be awhile before I can afford to buy. How did you find out I was here?" JJ asked.

"Simple, your mom told my mom. They are still doing their weekly bible club meetings. I stopped by the other night and they were having wine and cheese and crackers. Personally, I imagine they do more gossiping than bible reading."

"Great, my mom is not exactly happy with me dropping out of college. My dad is probably right that a business degree would be helpful, but I just want to focus on photography."

"So I heard. Your mom was telling them that you were back living on your own and trying to make a living taking pictures. She gave me your address, and asked that I talk some sense into you," she said, laughing.

"Sounds like her. I've never been able to do anything right in her eyes. Is that why you came by to convince me to go back to college?"

"Nope. I came by to offer you some work. We use different people to photograph our properties. My mom and I discussed it when she got home and we would like to add you to our list. Frankly, it would be helpful to have someone that has the time to do the jobs on our schedule."

"Lexi, are you serious?"

"Yes, and we have a job we need done immediately that is right up your alley."

"Okay, I'm almost afraid to ask what that means."

"We have a beautiful large listing in Parker Estates. Mrs. Brooks is in her thirties and has a nine-year-old daughter. Her husband died about six months ago in a car accident. I doubt he left her in a very good financial situation," Lexi explained.

"How is that in my wheel house?" JJ asked.

"Well, there have been some strange things going on in the house. Noises, things moved, doors open she knows she shut, TV coming on by itself. I'm wondering if Mr. Brooks is still hanging around. I was hoping you might take the photographs we need and clear out any lingering spirit."

JJ tried not to react, but she felt her face flush and her pulse race. She had never discussed her ability to communicate with the dead with Lexi. After a moment of awkward silence, she faced the question. "Okay, so when did you realize I can speak to people who have passed on?"

"Come on JJ, everyone knew in high school. I heard it first from Jackson, our freshman year. Honestly, I assumed he was joking around, making fun of his smart twin sister."

"Jackson made jokes about me being a medium?" JJ asked, clearly blindsided.

"Your brother was a jokester. He probably would have been a comedian or an author. JJ, it's no big deal. We were kids," Lexi said, sensing JJ was upset.

"I know. I just didn't realize he told people or made fun of me. Is your mother okay with this plan?"

“I didn’t exactly tell her about the ghost part. She is just doing her bible club friend a favor by hiring her college dropout daughter,” she said laughing. “I recognize taking pictures of houses is not exactly your dream job, but it’s a start,” she continued.

“Lexi, it’s perfect. I really appreciate the opportunity. So yes, give me the address and I will take the photos and see if I get any sensation of a spirit being present.”

“Great—I’ll tell Mrs. Brooks you will contact her to set up a time in the next few days. We would like to get a flyer done before all the agents see it next Thursday.”

“You got it. Thanks again.” JJ hugged Lexi before walking her out. She closed the door and leaned back, considering the strange opportunity. *Well spirit. I’ll be by in a few days. Let me know what I can do to help you move on.*

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JJ parked across the street from the large grey house. The front yard was raised above the street, requiring visitors to walk up at least twenty steps to get to the front door. The hillside was covered with ivy and when you got to the top, you were greeted with a plush grass landing and flowerbeds in full bloom. JJ took a series of photographs of the outside of the house before ringing the bell. Mrs. Brooks answered the door immediately, obviously aware of JJ’s presence in her front yard.

“Hi, JJ, please come in.”

“Thank you, Mrs. Brooks. Your home is beautiful,” JJ said, setting her bag on the tile floor in the entryway. Mrs. Brooks was a gorgeous Asian woman about six inches shorter than JJ, with dark eyes and long black hair that was pulled back into a ponytail. She was wearing a pair of white slacks, a bright green satin mandarin style shirt and a pair of sandals. When she extended her hand, JJ noticed her nails were cut short with dark, almost black nail polish.

“Please, call me Kim. Would you like me to show you around?”

“That would be great,” JJ said, pulling her camera out of the bag. They started in the living room. JJ suggested that the personal photographs be removed, as well as any valuable artwork. Kim tucked a few frames into a drawer and then stepped back into the hallway while JJ took a variety of shots using a wide-angled lens. She turned back to Kim, who was standing in the hallway looking uneasy. JJ was stunned to see a strange light next to her. She sensed a powerful presence that seemed to move toward her. 3 24 10 33 was a message JJ didn’t understand. Not knowing what was going on, she ignored the spirit and continued working.

They moved into the kitchen where JJ tried to focus on the photographs, despite a spirit that was trying to get her attention. She could sense it standing next to her. When she moved, it followed right behind her. JJ’s heart raced as she became panicked by the stalking spirit. She raised her camera to her eye and took a few shots of the island. When she turned and focused on the built-in refrigerator, she felt someone tap on her shoulder. She turned around quickly, but no one was there.

“Are you okay?” Kim asked, seeing a familiar expression of panic on JJ’s face. It was a look that she had seen on her own face many times over the past few weeks.

“I’m fine. Let’s get a few shots of the dining area,” she said, taking a deep breath to regain her composure. JJ was not there to just take photos. Lexi had asked her to clear the house of spirits. The problem was, JJ had no idea how to bring up such a difficult subject with this woman who recently lost her husband.

When Kim moved over to the kitchen table to get a folder out of the way, it suddenly opened, and the papers flew across the table. At first, Kim stood frozen, staring at the mess. JJ could see that she was attempting to hide how freaked out she was; she was physically shaking.

“Excuse me,” Kim said, abruptly leaving the room.

JJ closed her eyes and took a few deep breaths. The spirit was still there. 3 24 10 33 it showed her again. *What is that? I don’t understand*, she thought, hoping the spirit would give her more information. JJ saw the image of a treasure chest like one you would see on the Pirates of the Caribbean ride at Disneyland. A wave of anger crossed the room, and the papers were blown to the ground. “I want to help you, but you are going to have to give me more,” she said to the spirit.

JJ put her camera down and picked up all the papers from the ground. It was an accounting for a trust, but not Kim’s husband’s. *This looks like it was from her parent’s trust*, she told herself. There was an accounting of various bank amounts and a sizable amount of money that was split between Kim and her older sister. The document also listed several pieces of jewelry appraised for tens of thousands of dollars. She tucked the papers back into the folder and moved it to the counter so that she could take a picture of the breakfast area.

“Stop!” Kim yelled after several boxes fell off the shelf in the closet. JJ put down her camera and darted up the stairs.

“Kim, are you all right?” JJ walked slowly into the master bedroom, where Kim sat on the edge of the bed, staring at the floor. The expression on her face was a mixture of fear and exhaustion. JJ sat in the chair next to the bed. “Kim, I’m not sure what Lexi told you about me, but I’m a medium.”

Kim glanced at JJ, confused by what she was hearing. The dam broke, and the tears in her eyes flooded down her face. Her hands were shaking and she struggled to speak.

“Kim, I’ve been sensing a spirit in the house ever since I arrived. I assume it is your late husband. I tried to talk to him downstairs, but he left,” JJ explained, trying to ease her fear.

“Why is he doing this to us?” she asked, getting up and pacing around the room. “My daughter Lynn is staying at a friend’s because she is too scared to come in the house. Is he mad I am selling?”

“I’m not sure what he is trying to tell you at this point. Do the numbers 3 24 10 33 mean anything to you?”

“No, why?”

“That’s the message I received from the spirit. Kim, I can connect with the spirit and help, but it will be on his timetable. I want you to call me whenever these strange things happen and I’ll come over.”

“JJ, please understand. Since my husband died, I cannot afford to stay in this house. Really, it has always been too big. I never wanted to buy it in the first place.”

“Honestly, I’m not certain what your husband is trying to tell you. It may have nothing to do with you selling the house. It may take some time to figure out what he is trying to say.”

“I don’t know if I can take it anymore. Please tell him to stop!” Kim screamed.

JJ got up and moved toward her and took her arm. “Please sit down for a minute,” she said. “I’ve been getting messages from spirits my whole life. I realize this is scary, but you don’t need to be afraid. My advice is to just talk to him when he is here—and call me,” JJ repeated.

“I don’t understand any of this, but I’ll try. It’s not like I have a choice,” she said.

“Good. I’m going to go back downstairs and continue taking the photographs Lexi needs. You still want to sell the house, right?”

“Yes, it would be best for us,” she said, beginning to cry again.

“Okay, let’s keep moving toward that goal,” JJ said before heading downstairs.

JJ took a wide range of photographs, inside and out, capturing the impressive kitchen and master bedroom that included a balcony with a view of the mountains. She took extra shots of the large backyard, that included a pool and a built-in barbeque. When JJ came in from the backyard, she found Kim sitting on the living room couch.

“I love your backyard. I’m guessing Lexi will highlight it on the flyers,” JJ said.

“My husband designed it. We spent a lot of time out there last summer. I don’t really enjoy swimming, but Lynn loves to have all her school friends over. Adam would barbeque hamburgers for everyone. It was really fun. We had such a glorious life,” she said, tears streaming down her face.

“I’m really sorry for your loss. I know how difficult it can be, especially when it is so sudden. My twin brother died in an accident when we were fifteen. I was sad for a long time. Eventually, you will overcome the grief and you will have a new life. You and your daughter will always miss him, but eventually it won’t be so painful to remember him.”

“Thank you, JJ. I’m lucky that Lexi hired you to do the pictures,” she said, recognizing JJ as far more than a photographer.

“You’re welcome. I’m going to get to work on these. Call me if you need anything,” JJ said as Kim walked her to the door.

JJ made her way down the stairs and across the street to her SUV. *Well Adam, I hope you give me more than numbers. Your wife really needs to move, so I’d appreciate it if you could lay off when potential buyers are around,* she said in her mind as she pulled away from the curb.

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JJ put on a nice dress and a pair of sandals in an effort to make her mother happy. Her weekly Sunday night dinner this week should be a special celebration. After all, JJ was turning twenty-

one. For the past six years, her birthday had more grief from the loss of her twin brother than the celebration.

JJ arrived about ten minutes late with a nice bottle of Merlot her best friend Luke had given her. “Hi mom,” she said, finding her mother in the kitchen working on dinner.

“You look very nice, Jordyn. Happy birthday,” she said, giving JJ a hug. “Oh, I see you brought wine. You turn twenty-one and go for the wine day one!”

“I don’t want to shock you, mother, but I have had wine before. This is a bottle Luke introduced me to. I think you will like it,” she said.

“I guess Luke has access to all kinds of wine at his dad’s Italian restaurant,” she said with a bit of a sarcastic tone.

JJ ignored her mother’s negativity toward Luke. She always assumed the attitude came from the fact that Jackson’s best friend was still alive. He was at home sick and not even on the bus the day of the accident. JJ poured two glasses of wine and made her way into the living room where her mother sat.

“Mom, I wanted to thank you for telling Lexi’s mom about me moving back,” JJ said as she handed her mother a glass of wine. “Lexi and her mom hired me to take some photographs of one of their listings.”

“That’s nice, Jordyn, but can you really make a living taking pictures of houses?”

“It’s a start.” *A simple you’re welcome would have been just fine*, she said in her mind.

“You can still move in here to save money,” her mother offered for the tenth time.

“I appreciate it, but I like my little place.”

JJ’s mom took a sip of wine, clearly not pleased with the direction of her daughter’s life. JJ waited to see how she liked the wine and noticed the deep sadness in her eyes. She understood why it was such a hard day for her mother, but wished she could celebrate JJ’s birthday without all the grief. “How do you like the wine?”

“It’s quite good. Let’s eat,” she said, getting up and going into the kitchen.

JJ took another sip of wine before joining her mother. She was surprised to see that her mother had cooked Mexican. JJ put a chicken enchilada on her plate and added a scoop of rice and a scoop of beans. Her mother had already set a bowl of chips and guacamole on the dining room table. “This all looks great, mom,” JJ said, sitting across from her mother.

“When do you start this new job?”

“I went by yesterday and took the photographs and will finish working on them in the morning. It is a big, beautiful house. The owner’s husband died recently in a car accident.” JJ immediately regretted sharing that detail.

“That’s terrible. Why would they give you a job like that?” her mother asked, not really wanting an explanation.

“To be honest, there have been some strange things going on in the house. Lexi guessed it might be a spirit, so I was the perfect photographer for the job.”

JJ’s mom looked startled and her face turned red. “Jordyn, you understand I don’t like to hear about those things.”

“I know, I was only there for a half hour,” JJ said as she scooped up some guacamole with a chip. Her mother had never accepted her gift as a medium and preferred to be kept in the dark.

They finished their dinner in almost total silence. After clearing the table, her mother presented her with a cupcake that had a single lit candle and an envelope.

“Thank you, Mom,” JJ said after opening her birthday card and finding an Amazon gift card.

“You are welcome. Now finish your coffee. You have a lot of work to do for Lexi tomorrow,” she said before returning to the kitchen to finish cleaning.

Well, happy birthday to me, JJ thought as she finished her cupcake alone.

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JJ started the day on her computer working on the photographs of the Brooks’ house. She cropped the photos of the front of the house and adjusted the exposure and tone. She selected four different views and made sure they each looked perfect. It was the first job, so she wanted to take advantage of the opportunity and impress her new bosses. Lexi’s mother was the top realtor in the area and could provide her with great referrals. JJ picked two of the photographs of the living room and made the necessary adjustments.

Next, she focused on the kitchen. She knew Lexi would want to highlight the professional level appliances. *This is strange,* she thought. Most of the photographs had a weird bright spot. In some, the spot was in the middle of the shot and in other photos, it appeared on the side. There was no way the defects were caused by any natural light source. She brought up each one and zoomed in to see what the spot was, but there was simply nothing there. She considered the possibility that there was a problem with her camera until she checked the images from the rest of the house. They were perfectly fine. “The kitchen is where the spirit was,” she said. “Crap, I’m going to have to call Kim and go back over to redo these.”

JJ salvaged a few of the kitchen photographs and then finished the rest of the house. She spent extra time on the backyard images. One picture that captured part of the pool and the built-in barbeque, with a view of the mountains in the background, was very impressive. JJ uploaded all the files to Lexi’s server and then sent her an email to let her know she would re-shoot the kitchen tomorrow. “Just my luck to have some crazed spirit mess up my first job,” she said.

JJ looked at her watch and smiled from ear-to-ear. It was time to get ready for dinner at Luke’s family restaurant for her birthday. She had been looking forward to it all week.

Luke’s grandfather opened Gradiado’s Italian restaurant almost thirty years ago. Luke’s dad, Marco, took over when his father passed away. It was a place JJ loved. She spent so much time there she felt like a member of their family. When she walked through the large brown door, she was hit with the familiar smell of garlic. About half the tables had customers enjoying their meals. A table next to the bar had several balloons attached to a chair.

“There’s the birthday girl,” Marco said before giving JJ a hug.

Marco sang happy birthday and everyone, including the customers, joined in. JJ's face turned bright red with embarrassment. Still, she always felt loved when she hung out with Luke's family.

"Wow, look at all this. You shouldn't have gone to so much trouble," JJ said, looking at the table decorated for her.

"Nonsense, it isn't every day you turn twenty-one," Luke's mom replied, pulling a chair out so that JJ could take her seat.

"Happy birthday," Luke said. He set a plate of bruschetta in the center of the table and joined JJ and his parents.

"Do you want me to ask to see your ID before I serve the wine?" Marco asked.

"Why? You never asked before!" JJ's reply got a laugh out of them all.

"Luke tells us you had your first photography assignment," Luke's mother said.

"It didn't go as smoothly as I hoped. The woman that owns the house just lost her husband in a car accident. Apparently, he is not too happy about her selling."

Everyone stopped eating and stared at JJ, confused. "Don't tell me. Her husband's spirit told you," Luke asked.

"Not exactly. The spirit has been making noises, turning on the TV, slamming doors for weeks," she explained.

"What? A spirit can do things like that?" Marco asked.

"Yes, in fact, when I was there taking pictures, the spirit caused some papers to fly into the air. That was after it tapped me on the shoulder."

"Weren't you scared?" Luke's mom asked.

"Honestly, I was, but Mrs. Brooks was so terrified I had to hide my feelings."

"And you are sure it is her late husband?" Luke asked.

JJ was confused by the question. "I assumed it was him, but now that you ask, I really have no idea." JJ took a sip of wine as she thought about the possibility the spirit might be someone other than Mr. Brooks.

Luke grabbed the empty plates and disappeared into the kitchen.

"I take it he is in charge of the menu tonight?" JJ asked.

"Yes. Brace yourself. He will be serving one of his strange recipes," Marco said, shaking his head back and forth.

"Don't you usually get messages from spirits?" Luke asked when he returned to the table and served everyone a chicken pasta dish and salad.

"Yes, but this one hasn't had too much to say. I just keep seeing four numbers over and over."

"Numbers like a phone number or bank account number?" Luke asked.

"No, not enough digits for that. 3 24 10 33. I see them as four numbers, but I guess a single number is possible," JJ explained.

"It's a safe combination," Marco stated confidently. "Luke, this pasta is wonderful," he added.

“Thanks Dad. JJ, did you see a safe in the house?”

“No, but I have to go back tomorrow, so I’ll check with the owner. Thanks Marco, that was really helpful.”

After dinner, Luke served everyone coffee and cheesecake. Marco went into the kitchen and returned with a large wrapped box.

“What is this? I told you dinner and spending time with you is gift enough for me,” JJ said, overwhelmed and embarrassed by all the attention.

“JJ, you are like a daughter to us. We put a lot of thought into this gift,” Luke’s mom said with emotion in her voice.

“Don’t look at me. I do not know what it is. I was in charge of dinner,” Luke said.

JJ opened the package to find a large leather camera bag with her name engraved on a silver tag. “Wow, this is beautiful and the perfect gift.” Her eyes teared as she got up and hugged both of Luke’s parents.

“Nice job. You made her speechless. I’ve never seen anyone do that before,” Luke said, laughing.

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JJ arrived at the Brooks’ house just before noon. She had to wait several minutes before Kim answered the door.

“Hi JJ, please come in,” she said. Kim looked tired. Her eyes were red from crying and the dark circles were larger than yesterday.

“You look tired. I take it your spirit has been making his presence known,” JJ said. She followed Kim into the den, where she sat on the couch.

“Last night I was sound asleep, and the TV came on with the sound turned way up. My heart was pounding for an hour. I don’t understand. Why is he doing this to me?”

“Actually, I’ve been assuming the spirit is your husband, but I’m not sure about that. I noticed the papers that fell on the floor were from your parent’s trust. Is it possible that one of them is attempting to contact you?”

“My parents died in a boating accident twelve years ago. I can’t imagine them doing these things. It must be Adam. He doesn’t want me to sell the house, but I don’t have a choice. It is his fault I can’t afford to stay,” she said with anger. She stood up and moved to a bookshelf, and stared at her wedding photo.

“What do you mean, it is his fault?” JJ asked.

“Nothing, really.”

“Kim, is there a safe in the house?”

“No, we don’t have a safe.”

“Are you sure? This spirit showed me four numbers over and over. Someone pointed out to me that a safe typically has a four number combination. Is there any chance your husband had a safe somewhere, but never told you about it?”

“I don’t think so. The jewelry and much of the money I inherited from my parents is gone,” Kim said, beginning to cry. “I assumed it was all in our safe deposit box, but when I opened the box, all I found was his will,” she continued.

“Is there any place where he went alone?”

“Not that I recall,” she said, flustered by JJ’s questions.

Kim was getting more and more upset, so JJ stopped pushing.

Just then, the TV came on. The Golf Channel was blasting. Kim jumped to her feet and began screaming. “Stop, please stop.”

“Kim, please take a deep breath and sit down. I sense your husband is here. If we stay calm, maybe we can figure out what he is trying to tell you,” JJ said, rushing over and turning off the TV. JJ closed her eyes and took several deep breaths. “Why is he showing me the ‘It’s a Small World’ ride at Disneyland?”

Kim’s eyes widened with shock. “Years ago we went and our daughter loved that ride. She sang the song for weeks. It drove us crazy,” she said, smiling at the memory.

“Did you go to New York and watch the ball drop on New Year’s Eve?”

“Yes, we were married in New York on New Year’s Eve,” she said excitedly.

JJ realized the angry spirit was not angry at all. He was desperate to help his wife before it was too late and she sold the house.

“He is showing me a jewel. It is red and looks like it is sitting in a gold setting. It might be a ring,” JJ said.

Kim jumped to her feet. “Yes, that was my grandmother’s ring. When it wasn’t in the safe deposit box, I assumed he sold it. Ask him where it is?”

JJ closed her eyes again, hoping that Adam’s spirit would answer his wife’s question. The sudden sound of the Golf Channel again caused her to jump. She turned off the TV again. “Kim, did your husband play golf?”

“Yes.”

“Where are his clubs?”

Kim got up and rushed down the hallway, with JJ close behind. They hurried through a door to the garage. Kim and JJ worked together to move the stack of boxes out of the way to get to the golf clubs. JJ moved them to see if there might be a floor safe, but there was nothing.

“Is this where they were when your husband died?” JJ asked.

“Yes, I haven’t moved them.”

JJ and Kim moved around the garage looking under boxes and behind anything that was hanging on the wall, but they found nothing.

They moved back into the house and JJ sat at the kitchen table.

“Is he still here?” Kim asked as she poured JJ a glass of iced tea.

“Thank you. I don’t sense him right now. Sometimes it is hard to figure out what a spirit is trying to say. The golf channel always being on is a message. We just need to figure out what it is,” JJ explained.

“JJ, thank you so much for your help. I don’t know what I would do if you weren’t here,” Kim said, joining her at the table.

“Don’t thank me until we figure this out.” A large noise from upstairs that sounded like something crashing caught their attention. “Is someone upstairs?”

“No,” Kim said, appearing scared again.

“Let’s go see what he is telling us now,” JJ said, reaching over and taking Kim’s hand. She smiled, hoping to ease her fear.

They walked upstairs and checked each room, but found nothing out of place.

“Wait a minute,” Kim said, going back into the room that had been her husband’s office. “He sometimes practiced putting in here,” she said.

JJ opened the closet and sure enough, there was a putter, a bag of balls, and a ball returner. “What is in this? It looks like the carpet is loose in the corner.” JJ asked.

“I don’t know. Let’s see,” Kim said, pulling up the carpet and finding a floor safe. She turned and looked at JJ. “I can’t believe he never told me about this.”

“Try 3 24 10 33,” JJ said.

Kim entered the numbers and opened the door. The safe contained envelopes of cash as well as all the jewelry that Kim had assumed her husband had sold. “I’m sorry,” she said, standing up. Tears were flowing from her eyes. She was ashamed of all the bad thoughts she had about her husband. “Adam, please forgive me,” she said. Suddenly, she felt a chill that startled her. She turned toward JJ with a look of shock on her face.

“He just kissed you on the cheek,” JJ said.

“Wow, that was amazing. I’ve never felt anything like that before.”

“He is showing me a house. It is one story and has an enormous tree in the front yard. He wants me to point out that it is yellow for some reason.”

“That is the house that my daughter and I looked at last weekend. It is small, but we both loved it so much. My daughter joked that dad would never let us get a yellow house,” she explained the message.

“Well, he loves the house for you—even if it is yellow.”

“So, he is okay with us moving?”

“Yes, now that you have found his stash,” JJ joked. “He’s gone now. I guess he delivered the message he needed to.”

“JJ, how am I ever going to repay you?”

“Let’s start with another glass of tea while I finish the photographs of the kitchen. We need to get this place sold so you can purchase your little yellow house.” *Well done Adam.*

The End