

Prologue

Chamberlain Research

Eleanor Chamberlain frantically deleted all the computer files and tossed any important research notes and documents into the garbage can, soaking them with chemicals from the lab and setting them alight. The fire spread quickly. She prayed that the smoke wouldn't trigger any alarms and regretfully watched as all her research turned into ashes.

All that remained was the camera itself.

As she studied the device, Eleanor marvelled that something so unassuming could possess such extraordinary power. The camera was an

incredible discovery, but Eleanor knew that it was far too dangerous to fall into the wrong hands. She knew what she had to do.

All the designs and blueprints had been burned beyond recognition, and Eleanor prepared to drop the camera itself into the fire.

“What do you think you’re doing?”

Eleanor spun around to see her research partner, Magnus Sinclair, standing in the doorway less than twenty feet away.

“I already told you, Magnus,” Eleanor replied, maintaining a firm grip on the camera, “this project is too dangerous.”

“What are you talking about?” he asked, edging toward her.

“You know what I mean, Magnus,” she said sternly. “You said as much yourself.”

“But think of the possibilities, Eleanor! We could both be rich beyond our wildest dreams. You know as well as I do, this isn’t about the past. It’s about the future. About the technology and all the inventions still to be discovered. It could all belong to us.”

“It’s still theft, no matter how you look at it.”

“But no one would ever know,” Magnus retorted. “How could they?”

“I can’t allow it,” insisted Eleanor, shaking her head. “I’ve already burned all the research notes and deleted all the computer files. We need to end this—right now.”

She turned to drop the camera into the flames still burning in the garbage can, but Magnus lunged at her. In the struggle, Eleanor’s elbow knocked over the chemicals by the computer, spilling them onto the fire, which erupted in a tower of flame.

In the confusion, Magnus grabbed the camera, seconds before an explosion ripped through the lab. When the smoke cleared, he could see Eleanor trapped under a heavy steel filing cabinet.

“Magnus!” she cried. “Magnus, help me, I can’t move my legs!”

But he put the camera into his pocket and backed away toward the door.

“Magnus!” she screamed. “Don’t leave me!”

Suddenly there was a second, larger explosion.

Magnus was thrown through the laboratory doorway and landed in the hallway. He struggled to his feet, stumbled into the shattered lobby and rushed outside to safety.

In the ambulance, a young paramedic dressed a wound on Magnus' left cheek. He had been cut close to his ear by a shard of flying glass. He instinctively moved his hand toward his face, but the paramedic stopped him.

"Don't touch that," she told him. "What happened in there?"

"I'm not sure," Magnus said. "There was an explosion. My colleague is trapped in there!"

The paramedic patted his shoulder. "They're doing all they can, but I'm afraid it doesn't look good. The firefighters told us not to expect anyone else coming out alive. I'm sorry about your friend."

"I tried to save her," Magnus said.

"You're lucky to be alive," the paramedic said. "You seem to be fine. You should be able to go home."

"Thanks," he said.

Magnus Sinclair stepped down from the ambulance and walked onto the lawn in front of the now hardly recognizable building. He watched the blaze as it continued to destroy what was left of Chamberlain Research.

Magnus felt the weight of the camera in his pocket. He smiled to himself. No one could survive an explosion like that. Not only was Eleanor sure to be dead, but all evidence that the camera had ever existed, along with all the other research into what they had called time photography, was now gone. There would be no trail for anyone to follow once he put his plans into action.

Chapter One

Eleanor's Legacy

Jake rang the doorbell at his friend Lydia's house. Her dad, Greg, opened the door.

"Hey, Jake," Greg said. "You just caught me. I've got to pick up a few things for lunch from the store. Lydia's uncle is coming over. She's upstairs."

Jake stepped through the entrance into the hallway.

"Lydia, Jake's here!" Greg yelled.

"Be right down!"

"Okay, Jake, got to run," said Greg. "Make yourself at home. See you later."

Jake wandered into the sitting room. While he waited for Lydia, he looked at the Chamberlain

family photos on the mantelpiece. They showed Lydia and Greg on vacation in Disneyland, London, Hawaii and the Rockies. There was also an older photo of Lydia with her mom. Lydia's mother was a tall elegant woman with a long slender neck, blue eyes, a radiant smile and short wavy brown hair. Eleanor Chamberlain had died two years before in a fire at the research laboratory where she'd worked. There was also a picture of her taken at the laboratory, standing beside a man with thick black hair and pale grey eyes. Between them they held a brass plaque inscribed with the words CHAMBERLAIN RESEARCH.

Jake and his family had moved into the neighbourhood only about a year before, so he had never met Lydia's mother.

"Hey, Jake."

He turned around to see Lydia, who bore a strong resemblance to her mother. She was carrying something under her arm.

"Is that a new laptop?" asked Jake.

"New to me," Lydia replied. "It was my mom's. She used it for work. Dad just gave it to me. He

found it at the back of one of the upstairs closets. The battery's dead, though, and the charger is in the basement office. I was just about to go down there."

Jake followed Lydia down to the basement. In the office there were a couple of computers, a desk and three filing cabinets. Lydia set her mother's old laptop down on the nearest filing cabinet. A layer of dust covered just about everything; the room had scarcely been touched since Eleanor had died.

"She used to call this her sanctuary, where she could get away and work when she was at home. In the last couple of months before the accident, Dad and I hardly saw her . . ." She trailed off.

"Are you okay?" Jake asked as he sat down in the chair and opened one of the desk drawers.

"Yeah," said Lydia, "I'm okay. Do you see the charger anywhere?"

"No," Jake replied. "Maybe she left it at the lab."

He closed the drawer, pushed the chair away from the desk and stood up. Turning, he tripped

on the edge of a rug. He was about to smooth it out when something on the floor caught his eye.

"There's something down here," he said.

He stooped by the desk and pulled back the rug to reveal a wooden rectangle in the concrete floor, about the same size as a heating vent. Jake gently lifted the plank and saw that underneath was a recessed compartment. Inside, there was an object covered with a piece of cloth. Jake reached in and pulled it out, laid it next to the keyboard, then sat back down at the desk and removed the cloth.

"It's a camera," Lydia said.

"It's not a type I'm familiar with," Jake said.

Like any digital camera, it had a screen on the back, but there were more buttons than usual. The controls were unfamiliar to Jake. "I can't even tell which of these buttons is supposed to turn it on."

But as Jake tried pressing different buttons, the screen suddenly activated. "Okay," he said, "let's see if it works."

Lydia stood in front of the desk. Jake aimed the camera at her and took a picture. However, when

he pressed what looked like the display button, a different image appeared on the screen. It was not Lydia. Eleanor was standing where Lydia should have been, working at her desk.

"That's weird," he murmured.

"What's up?" asked Lydia.

"It's a picture of your mom. It must have been stored in here. I wonder why I can't see the one I took of you? Hang on, I'll try again."

Jake took two more pictures. Again, when he accessed the photo review, the pictures showed Eleanor. But they were different pictures this time.

"Well, it's old," said Lydia, taking the camera and studying her mother's photo. "It probably hasn't been used in years."

"I guess. I thought I took your picture, but it probably didn't save." He paused. "I wonder if it takes videos."

Lydia tried out a few of the buttons and managed to find the video function.

"Yeah," she said as she pointed the camera at Jake. "Stand over by the desk, and I'll try it out."

"Should I say anything?"

"Whatever," Lydia said as she began filming.

When Lydia played back the video, the screen once again showed Eleanor, this time where Jake had been standing. She was holding a camera and appeared to be taking a picture of a coffee mug that sat on top of the desk. There was a flash and then, to Lydia's astonishment, the mug vanished.

She gasped.

"What is it?" asked Jake.

"Quiet," Lydia said, "she's saying something."

On the screen, Eleanor was speaking into a tape recorder.

"It looks like the experiment was a success. The mug travelled in time, just like all the other objects. Now it's time for the live animal trials, but not here. I need to continue the tests at the lab and should be able to work in peace tomorrow evening. Then, if all goes well, I'll do the human trial . . ."

The video stopped abruptly and the screen went blank.

"What happened?" Lydia asked, pressing all the camera's buttons in a vain attempt to get it working again. "Is it the battery?"

"Let me take a look."

Lydia handed him the camera and Jake found a compartment that held a small battery.

"Do you have any of this type here?" he asked.

"Maybe. I can check upstairs."

"Don't worry. I probably have something back at home that will fit this."

They both heard the front door open as Greg returned. Jake placed the camera on the desk and followed Lydia up the basement steps.

"Hey, Dad," said Lydia as she walked into the kitchen. "You'll never guess what we found in Mom's old office."

"Not right now, Lydia," Greg said as he hurriedly emptied grocery bags, putting some things into the fridge and grabbing some plates from the kitchen cabinets. "Your Uncle Magnus called me just now from his cell. He'll be here in

a few minutes. I assume you're staying for lunch, Jake?"

"Sure," Jake replied. "Thanks."

"Good," said Greg. "So can you two help me set the patio table?"

Lydia and Jake nodded.

"Thanks."