

[PDF] Beyond A Doubt: A Rock Harbor Novel- Repackage (Rock Harbor Series)

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Description:

About the Author

USA Today best-selling author **Colleen Coble** has written several best-selling romantic suspense novels, including *Tidewater Inn*, *Rosemary Cottage*, and the Mercy Falls, Lonestar, and Rock Harbor series.

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Chapter One

The North Woods crowded in around her, cutting off all possibility of escape. The brambles tore at her skin and left trickles of blood where they touched. Davy was calling for her, crying out for her to find him. Perspiration matted her hair to her forehead, and she pressed on through the thorns. She had to find him. He was depending on her.

They said he was dead, but she knew it wasn't so. He was out here somewhere. Samson barked, an urgent sound that propelled her past the thicket. A cabin lay in the valley before her. He was down there. Her son was waiting for her. Samson barked again and rushed forward.

Bree Nicholls awoke with a start. She forced herself to take deep breaths. In and out, in and out. She and Samson had found Davy in a cabin very much like the one in her dream. He was just fine. But the terror of the nightmare didn't leave her. Had Samson really barked? Maybe something was wrong.

She slipped out of bed and tiptoed down the hallway to her son's bedroom. Moonlight filtered through the Superman curtains at his window. Her bare feet whispered across the smooth oak floor until she reached the bed. She touched a small hump in the covers, and her hand sank to the mattress. She gasped, and her hands roamed the tousled blankets and sheets.

She stepped to the wall and flicked on the light. "Davy?"

The doctor had said to make sure she didn't startle him when he was having one of his night terrors. She went to the closet and looked on the floor. Only a jumble of baseballs, his father's mitt, and some Playmobil pirates lay on the floor. She looked under the bed. Not there. Panic rose in her chest in a rush of cold dread.

She ran to the door and called for her dog as she rushed down the hallway. "Samson!" The dog could lead her to her boy. At the top of the stairs, she touched the light switch and a welcome brightness lit the way.

She reached the bottom of the steps. "Samson, come!"

She heard the click of his nails on the hardwood floor of the entry. He came through the door into the living room, his tail down, a sure sign of distress. He pressed his cold nose against her leg, bare below her knee-length nightgown.

Bree rubbed his ears. "Where's Davy, boy? Find Davy."

The dog whined and padded down the entry hall toward the back of the house. Four years old now, he had the stamina of a German shepherd mixed with the heart of the true mutt he was. She followed him. He pushed through the swinging door to the kitchen. A musty scent wafted up from the open basement door. Surely Davy wasn't down there. What if he'd fallen? Frantic now, Bree flipped on the basement light, grabbed the flashlight on a shelf at the top of the landing, and rushed past Samson down the stairs.

There was no sign of Davy at the foot of the stairs, and she felt the tension in her shoulders ease a bit. At least he hadn't fallen. "Davy?" she called, still careful to keep her voice soft and as unconcerned as she was able.

A whimper answered her, but in the cavernous shadows of the basement, she couldn't tell where it came from. Samson pushed past her and padded toward a shadowy recess. The dog lay on his paws and stared under a bulky table laden with Rob's tools. He looked back toward Bree as if to ask what was taking her so long.

She went to the table and dropped to her knees. "Davy, I'm here. It's okay. You're safe."

The flashlight's beam revealed her son's small form. Wedged under the table in a small hole where the concrete had broken away from the wall, Davy lay curled in a fetal position, his thumb in his mouth. His favorite book, *The Tale of Three Trees* by Angela Hunt, was clutched against his chest. Right now he looked even younger than his four years. Bree reached out and touched his face. "Hey, pumpkin, found you. You ready to quit playing hide-and-seek and get back to bed?" It was all she could do to keep her voice light.

Davy blinked slowly and pulled his hand away from his mouth. "Mommy," he said. "I'm thirsty."

"Well, come on out from there and I'll get you a drink of juice." She shoved the table out of the way then scooped him into her arms and held him tightly. She could feel his heart beating as rapidly as hers.

He buried his face against her neck. "I was trying to find you, Mommy. But she wouldn't let me go."

Davy never called the woman who found him after the plane crash by her real name, Rachel. It was always "her" or "she." Bree stroked his damp hair. "You're safe now, pumpkin."

The doctor said it was very important not to let him know how his night wanderings upset her. They more than upset her. They took her back to the terrible year she and Samson had spent searching for the plane wreckage and his body.

Instead, a wonderful miracle had awaited her, but the trauma of separation had scarred them both. She clutched her son more tightly until he stirred restlessly. "Let's get you upstairs," she said with a cheeriness she didn't feel.

She snapped her fingers at Samson, but the dog was busy scratching at the hole Davy had burrowed into. "Come on, Samson. It's late."

She started toward the steps, but still the dog didn't follow. Frowning, she watched Samson. As one of the best search-and-rescue dogs in the country, he could find a flea in a haystack. Right now he was acting as if he was on a mission. He whined and scratched at the wall again.

Bree flicked on the flashlight and shone it on the open hole. The beam revealed a bigger space than she had originally perceived. What was back there that had Samson so upset? He growled and dug tenaciously.

The flashlight's beam flickered, and she turned it off. "Come on, Samson. We'll see what's back there tomorrow." Still holding Davy in one arm, she reached down and tugged at the dog's collar. He ceased digging reluctantly, then followed her up the stairs. She made a mental note to call Kade tomorrow and have him help her take a look.

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Julia Child's gravelly voice was enough to compete with fingernails on a chalkboard, but Bree didn't notice, so intent was she on the woman's instructions. His night terror of just hours before forgotten, Davy sat on the bar stool, his thin legs swinging and his gaze on his mother as she watched Julia on a small kitchen tele-vision mounted under the cabinets. Floury hand prints marked Bree's jeans, but she would change into a clean pair of slacks before dinner.

Samson lay on the floor in a patch of sunshine streaming through the kitchen window. The Snow King had tightened his grip on Michigan's Upper Peninsula. Outside the Nichollses' lighthouse home, thick floes of ice floated in Lake Superior like great white whales stretching in the morning sun. Spring's gentle touch would wrest the U.P. from winter's clutches in a few more weeks.

Bree kept stealing glances outside as she worked. She loved Rock Harbor, Michigan. Small but quaint, it perched along Lake Superior with the water to its west and massive stretches of North Woods surrounding the rest of the small town. Good people lived here, many from Finnish stock, hardy and sometimes painfully honest. She couldn't imagine living anywhere else now.

Her tongue poking the side of her mouth, Bree measured the cinnamon and dumped it in the bowl with the apples. She would turn out a great pie if it killed her. Her mother-in-law, Anu, had told her not to bother, that she could make the pies for Easter. But with the store's twentieth anniversary bash going on, Bree didn't want Anu to have to do it all. Besides, now that Davy was home, Bree needed to learn to cook better. It was fine for her to live on peanut-butter sandwiches and canned soup, but it wasn't good enough for her son. She'd been working on her culinary skills for several months now, but cooking wasn't something that came naturally.

She took a moment to glance at her son. He'd only been home a little over three months, and she still didn't get enough of looking at him. His heart-shaped face was a miniature version of Bree's own, though his nose was his father's, as were his ears. The best of them both, Rob had always said. The thought of her late husband was both a pain and a pleasure. But slowly she was getting on with her life. At least that's what she told herself.

"Can I have some 'stachios?" Davy asked.

He coughed, a hacking sound that brought a frown to her face. "You doing okay?" she asked, wiping her hands on her jeans again.

He sneezed. "My tummy feels funny."

Was he getting sick? Last night's excursion to the basement might have given him more than bleary morning eyes. She put down the wooden spoon and went to him, putting her hand on his forehead. It was cool and dry. He sneezed again. "Are you getting a cold?" she asked anxiously.

"I want to eat."

Surely that meant he was fine. But she wouldn't take any chances. She reached for the phone and dialed Dr. Parker. He promised to come by, and she hung up feeling guilty. She hated to take advantage of an old family friend, but Davy was still weak from his ordeal, and she wanted to make sure he got well as quickly as possible.

She pulled the bag of pistachios to her and dug out a handful for him. "You want me to help you open them?"

"I can do it." He worked his mouth as he struggled with the nut then smiled in triumph as he succeeded in cracking it.

She turned back to her pie. Maybe she could get it in the oven before the doctor got here. Julia was droning on about aluminum foil on the edges of the crust, but Bree didn't have any foil. She listened with half an ear and finished the pie, then flipped the channel to the Cartoon Network for Davy.

The doorbell rang just as she slid th...

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