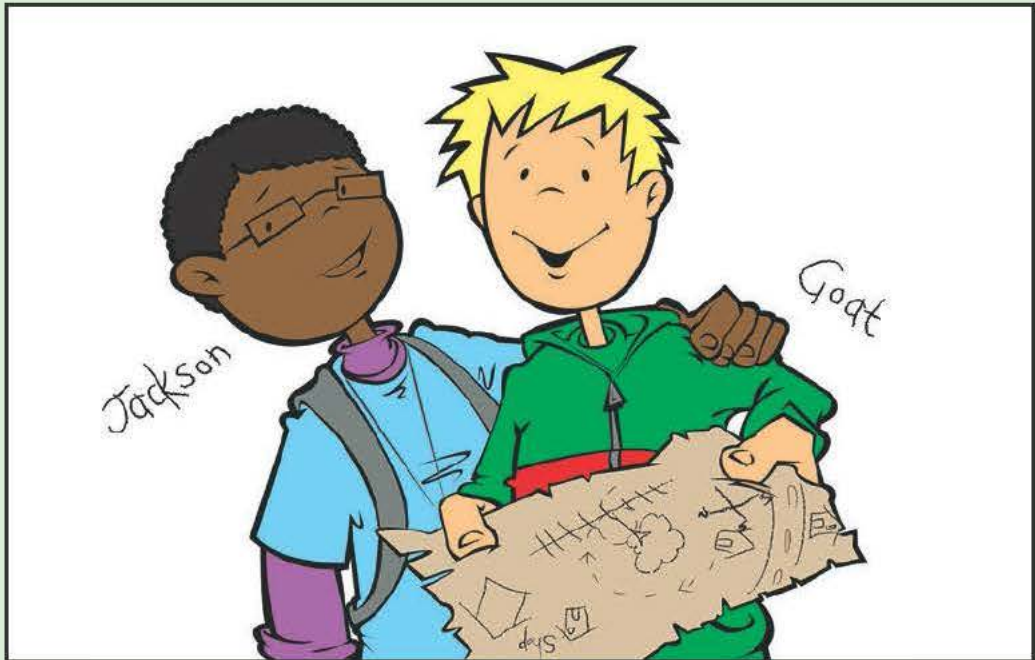


The Hunt for the Secret Treasure





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My name is Jackson, and my best friend is called Goat.

Last Saturday Goat and I hid treasures for each other to find. My treasure was 10p, a sticker and a balloon, all stuffed in a little metal box. I buried it in a pot of flowers on my front porch.

Then I made a very tricky map. It would lead Goat all over the neighbourhood. Not only was it tricky, it looked like a real pirate map. I had drawn it on brown paper and torn the edges. I was proud of that map.



After I finished, I went to meet Goat. He had been busy hiding some treasure for me and making a map. He looked very pleased.

“Here you go, Goat my pal,” I said. I handed him my map. He handed me a dirty scrap of paper.

“What’s this?” I asked.

“Clues.”

“Clues? You were supposed to draw a map.” I looked at the piece of paper. It was so little, it was hard to read. Finally, I made it out:

**4 to the right. 6 to the left. 7 across.
1 forward. 2 sideways. Look up.**

“What’s this, Goat?” I asked again, but Goat was already running down the pavement. It looked to me as if he were heading straight for my house, straight for the pot of flowers.

4 to the right. Quickly I took four steps to the right.
6 to the left. I did that. **7 across. 1 forward. 2 sideways.** I looked up. All I could see were some clouds in the sky.
“Goat!” I ran after him.



When I got to my house, Goat was standing on the porch. He was pulling my mum's pansies out of the pot, spilling the dirt all over. He reached in and came up with the metal box. "Ta-daaaa!" he said.



"Goat, you didn't even use the map. I spent all morning on that map!" I said.

"I didn't need it," Goat said. "I saw a petal from the pansies on your watch – look, right there. Then I knew – you hid it in the old pansy pot."



I felt cheated. “That’s not fair,” I said. “You were supposed to use the map!”

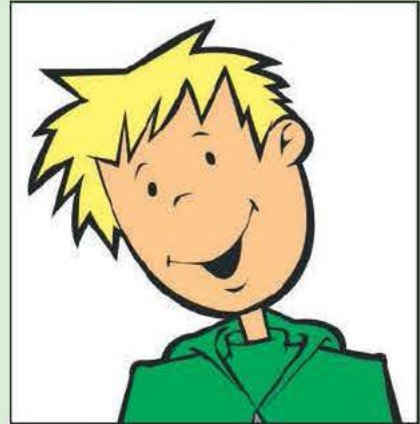
“I would have if I had needed it. Have you found your treasure yet?” Goat asked.

He knew I hadn’t.

“No,” I said.

“Too tricky, huh, Jackson?”

“I haven’t even had a chance to read the clues yet.”



I glanced down at the piece of paper, pretending I was looking at it for the first time. “It’s not so tricky.”

“It’s trickier than yours,” Goat said. He opened the metal box and shook out the treasure.

Goat said, “Money – I can use that.” He put it in his pocket. “A sticker that came from a cereal box – I know because I eat the same kind. And a balloon that says ‘I was a good patient’. I know where you got that, from our dentist. He stopped giving them to me because I bit him. Well, go ahead. Find your treasure.”



I stared back at him. All week I had been looking forward to hiding treasures. Now he had ruined it. I opened my front door. "I'm bored with this," I said.

"So, Jackson, it's too tough for you, huh? Go ahead and quit."

"I'm not quitting."

"Then find the treasure. I want to see if you can do it."

"All right!" I stamped down the steps, down the pavement.

Goat followed. "You have to start at the corner," he said.

"I know where to start."

"Just being helpful," he said.



We walked to the corner without saying anything. I kept looking at the scrap of paper. I had held it so long that the writing was smudged.



4 to the right.

Four what? I knew it wasn't four steps. I had already tried that. Maybe it was giant steps. Maybe it was minutes. Walk four minutes to the right? With Goat it could be anything.

When we got to the corner, I was still looking at the scrap of paper.

"So what do you think it is?" Goat asked.

"Houses maybe? Four houses?" I looked down the street.

"How could it be houses?" Goat said. "You can go four houses to the right, but how can you go six houses to the left? There aren't any houses there."

"No, nothing but trees," I said.

Goat stuck his hands in his pockets. It was a quick movement, but it gave him away just as the flower had given me away. I felt better.

"Let me see," I said. I started down the pavement. "Could it be four trees? One – two – three – four trees?"

Goat followed slowly.



“Six trees to the left. Now, what’s the next clue?
7 across. Why yes, there are seven trees,” I said.

Goat was following even more slowly now. “You didn’t really figure it out,” he said. “I gave it away.”

“Well, so did I. You didn’t even have to look at my map – just the old flower on the watch. Here we go.
1 forward. 2 sideways. Look up. Aha!”

There was a small paper bag hanging from the branch overhead. I took it down and opened it. Inside was half a packet of mints, a Matchbox car with one wheel missing, and two bird feathers.

“How do you like your treasure?” Goat asked finally.

“Everything I always wanted, Goat my pal.”



Acknowledgements: 'The Hunt for the Secret Treasure', adapted from
The Seven Treasure Hunts by Betsy Byars, Red Fox (1999).

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