



Molly's "Beaufort Town"

*A ten-chapter story in celebration of the
300th Anniversary of Beaufort, NC*

Chapter Nine - "Mystery Solved!"

Molly rapped on Mrs. Nelson's front door. Her mother and father were standing close behind. They were all anxious to find out if Mrs. Nelson knew anything about the pendant Molly had found. It seemed like an eternity before the door finally opened.

Mrs. Nelson looked surprised to see Molly and her parents standing there. "Did you forget something?" she asked.

Molly held out the pendant to Mrs. Nelson. "I found this after the storm last week," Molly explained. "Is it yours?"

Mother smiled and stepped closer. "The engraving is worn, Mrs. Nelson, but it has two names on it. We now know that the captain's name is Josiah... are you by any chance the Dorothea that is mentioned here?"

Mrs. Nelson's right hand went straight to her heart as she held out her left. Tears came to her eyes as she examined the names on the pendant, then flipped it over to read the other side.

"Why I haven't seen this in years," Mrs. Nelson said softly. She paused for a moment to compose herself. Molly shifted from side to side as she waited, looking expectantly at Mrs. Nelson's face.

Finally, Mrs. Nelson cleared her throat and wiped her eyes. "It is mine," she answered. "And yes, my first name is Dorothea. Josiah gave this to me the day we were married. Dec. 12, 1742, two weeks before Christmas. I thought it had been lost, but you have brought it back to me."

Mrs. Nelson looked gratefully at Molly and her parents "Please, come inside," she said. "I must tell Josiah."

As they entered the Nelson home, Molly noticed all the nautical objects that were on display. There was a sextant - a navigational tool for ship's captains that helped them follow the stars. And shelf after shelf held compasses, hourglasses and other nautical items, alongside several ship models. Maps and framed charts lined the walls of the hallway leading to the room where the Captain was recovering. "Why didn't I notice all this before?" Molly wondered.

When they got to Captain Nelson's bedside, Mrs. Nelson tenderly took her husband's arm and helped him sit up. "Josiah, look what Molly has brought to us!"

The captain looked dazed for a moment, but when Mrs. Nelson placed the pendant in the Captain's hand, he, too, became misty-eyed.

"Well look at that!" the Captain muttered. "Wherever did you get it?"

Molly explained the whole story... from beginning to end. She told about how she and Lydia had been on the docks watching the cargo come off the ships, how they had evaded Mrs. Ramsey so they wouldn't get into trouble, how they had enjoyed their lemon drops, even though they had not been able to share them with William, how they had picked out fabric for the dresses their mothers had promised to make for them...

"Ahem!" Mother cleared her throat beside Molly to remind her to get to the point.

"Oh," said Molly. "I'm sorry. The pendant! Well, we

found it at the edge of the water near the docks. It must have been washed up by the storm. The sun was shining and the light was reflecting off of it, like it was signaling for me to pick it up or something. And I did, and now you have it!"

"Yes we do!" exclaimed Mrs. Nelson. "Molly, do you know what a miracle this is? It has been lost for so many years. I never took it off - not for an instant - but one day while Josiah and I were strolling by the side of the creek, where you like to swim, the chain broke and the necklace fell into the water. The tide must have carried it out to sea. I have looked all over for it, but have never been able to find it. And now you have returned it to me, after all this time."

Mrs. Nelson paused. "In one day," she said added softly, "I have had two wonderful surprises - my husband has come home to me after a long journey, and my most prized possession, my wedding pendant, has been returned as well. What a wonderful day!"

"But what about the back of the pendant?" Molly asked. "What does it say?"

Mrs. Nelson pointed out each word as she read it aloud...

"You and me,
Forever by the sea.
I'll always come home to you,
So be waiting for me...
In beautiful Beaufort-town."

Molly looked at Mother, who was smiling down at her. And as the captain gave her the second heartfelt salute of the day, Molly lit up like the fireflies she liked to catch.

"Thank you, young lady," the captain said. "You continue to be in our debt. However can we repay you?"

Molly thought for a moment, then looked to her father for approval. "I would love to travel to England to see my grandparents. Would you take me the next time you sail, Captain Nelson?"

Mother and Father looked at Molly in amazement. "You want to sail across the ocean?" Mother asked. "Do you know how long a journey it will be?"

"Of course," Molly replied. "But I'll have you all here waiting for me when I return, in beautiful Beaufort-town!"

Next week, chapter ten - "Off To Sea!"

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Newspaper Activity:

When she was asked how she found the pendant, Molly explained the whole story. Read a news story and tell or write what happened, from beginning to end. Make a timeline to help you with the details!

Learn more about historic Beaufort!

When was the town of Beaufort founded?

The town of Beaufort was first settled in 1709, but streets were not drawn out until 1713. The plan centered around a 12-block area that is now on the Register of Historic Places. Street names are a hint of the times and include Ann Street, named for Queen Anne of England; Craven Street, named for the Earl of Craven, Pollock Street, named for the governor at the time; and Orange Street, named for William, Prince of Orange, who later became William III of England. Front Street runs along the Beaufort waterfront, parallel to Taylor's Creek, and looks out over Beaufort Harbor. The name of the town, "Beaufort," came from Henry Somerset, Duke of Beaufort, whose ancestor was one of the first Lord Proprietors who owned and governed all the Carolinas. (Map courtesy of the Beaufort Historic Association, Beaufort, NC)

