

The Library

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ASIN:

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Books by A. Nation

Domino Series:

Similar But Not the Same

Saga One - 2422

Deflection A Race Against Time

Saga Two - 2407 A.D.

CrossRoads A Moment of Decision

Saga Three - 2424 A.D.

Found-The Lost Ones

Saga Four - 2426 A.D.

Return There's No Easy Way

Saga Five - 2429

Desert Shock - Secrets Never Stay Hidden

Saga Six

Fatal Error – Death by Innocence

Saga Seven

Secrets Series

The Eye of the Matrix – The Stone Map

Secrets One

Urban Series:

Where Did They Go?

Urban Fantasy 1

The Pottery Sale - What Lies Beneath

Urban Fantasy 2

The Cruise – Lost At Sea

Urban Fantasy 3

Watch for ebooks on Smashwords.

For more insights how this story progressed, see my
blog at: [My Blog](#).

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My Quest

My two cousins and I had just settled our great aunt in at the assisted living home. She's eighty-four young but needs a walker to get around. While my cousins went back to the car to bring in her suitcases, she motioned for me to stay with her.

"What is it, Aunt Patty?" I asked, sitting beside her.

"Marcy, I have something to tell you and you alone."

"Yes?" I replied, knowing my cousins could enter at any time.

"There is something that belongs to you. It's in my library. You need to get it before my house sells," she said.

"I'll try."

"I've always considered you to be the most gifted child I ever saw. Here, you take this," she urged and pulled out the gold necklace hidden by her blouse around her neck. Too weak to unclasp it, she jerked it off her neck and placed it in my hand. On the chain was a small brass key. "Please hurry. You need to bring me the cameo," she pressed, "and bring it here to me."

"What is--?" I began to ask but she shushed me by pressing her bony finger to her dry lips. "Don't tell them," was the last thing she whispered.

At that moment, my cousins entered with my aunt's belongings and I could tell Aunt Patty was tired as she

relaxed into her chair. I slipped the tiny key into my pants pocket.

"Say, I have some errands to do, but I'll be back to help our aunt unpack," I announced.

"Marci, just like you to take off when you're needed," complained Joan, my older cousin.

"Yeah, like we have all the time in the world to wait on you," accused Lennard. Lenny, as I call him, lives out of town and just arrived yesterday. He looked fatigued as well.

"Sorry, but this won't take long," I said, noticing the apprehensive look on my aunt's face. "I'll be back as soon as I can."

Aunt Patty relaxed when I didn't mention the key. I bent down to kiss my aunt's smooth forehead crowded with white curly locks.

"You better," called Joan as I left the small apartment. "Now what were you two conspiring about?"

I drove down the street and turned into the older well-kept neighborhood of flowering bushes and fir trees. There in the center of the block was my aunt's home. The realtor hadn't posted their For Sale sign yet in the yard. The grass needed mowing, but I'll leave that to the boy next door I had hired.

Many of the resident vehicles parked too close in front of Aunt Patty's house. Since I'm not a parallel parker, I have to have room to drive into a street-parking slot. I left my car a block away. The sun warmed me as a gentle breeze brushed my cheek. I didn't mind

walking. With my faux leather purse slung over my shoulder, I headed for my aunt's home.

The two-story house, built in the early nineteen hundreds, had white wooden siding. Much of it needed a fresh coat of paint. I remember staying overnight several times in the upstairs bedroom with my cousin Joan and Ginger, the cocker spaniel. We had lots of fun up there pretending we were queens of two different empires we created from the blankets and pillows on our beds.

I drew out my door key and inserted it into the lock. Many times I would come over to visit my aunt and clean her house as much as she would let me, and make her dinners to freeze so she wouldn't have to cook. Then we would play a board game or a hand of cards. She would beat me most of the time.

I walked into the main living room that used to be the front porch until Uncle Burt remodeled the house. The linoleum on the floor had several chips needing repair. Straight ahead I could see the kitchen leading to a small porch where the trap door led down to the shallow cellar. To my far left was the stairway we used to the second floor. The third step from the bottom of the landing always had a loud squeak my aunt would hear if we got up in the middle of the night. Their bedroom wall was next to the stairway. On the outside of the stairway wall, Uncle Burt used to have his metal and wood desk. After he died, Aunt Patty gave it away to one of her relatives.

Half way to the kitchen on my right, Uncle Burt had built shelving from the floor to the ceiling. Aunt Patty had distributed most of his magazines, travel books,

and war memorabilia after he died. Just before I walked into the kitchen, on my left stood a smaller bookshelf against the wall near the back of the stairway. That dark area underneath used to hold her Christmas decorations. Now, just a drab brown curtain hung over the opening.

Looking over the small bookcase, I wondered if this could be the library she was talking about. I started at the top and tipped each book. She loved westerns, romance, and of course, there's our children stories lined up on the second shelf.

I thumbed a few more on the third shelf down when I spied the Alice in Wonderland book, my favorite. That's when I heard a hissing sound to my left. Where the ragged drapes had been covering the small closet, or what my aunt called a spandrel, now had turned into a brown wooden door.

I reached out to turn the brass knob and it wouldn't give. Then I remembered the key my aunt gave me. Inserting the metal fob into the keyhole, it turned. The door opened scraping the floor.

Feeling the walls on either side for a light switch, I found none. I turned on my phone flashlight and before me, I could see old cement stairs covered by planks of pine boards.

As soon as I took a few steps down, the door behind me slammed shut. I tried the doorknob but then I heard voices enter the home. Joan and Lenny had stopped by. Rather than alert them, I crept down the stairs with my phone light guiding my way. On the landing below, an archway opened to my left. The ceiling wasn't too low to walk underneath.

Ages ago, the heating in this house used coal until Uncle Burt had the house rewired for electricity. The coal shoot came into an area under the kitchen, and the old septic tank used to lie in the lot next to the house. So I knew I wouldn't encounter those structures.

With each step, I thought about alerting my cousins but my aunt was insistent. Joan, Aunt Patty's daughter got most of the attention, but she hadn't visited her mother for some time. Lenny, on the other hand, was Aunt Patty's sister's son. They lived farther away from Aunt Patty and after he married, he still wasn't close enough for regular visits. When I asked one of them to help me out, they always gave the excuse they were too busy.

My hand felt a string dangling from the low ceiling. I pulled on it and an old iridescent light bulb lit up the room with its yellowish glow.

Books. Books lined the walls. *"Why were these here?"* I asked myself.

A table and chair sat in the center of the floor. A step stool was propped up against the bookcase to my right. As I felt a slight breeze brush my shoulders, I could also hear my cousins talking. I looked up at the ceiling and saw an old metal vent.

"Well, we better decide what to put in the yard sale and what to take home," I heard Joan say.

"Most of this is just worn out furniture. I don't have room for anything in my house," Lenny said.

"I wonder where Marcy headed off to? It's not like her to skip out on work that has to be done," she said.

Leonard signed. "The heck with her, we'll just take what we want and she can have the rest."

"Gee, thanks a lot cuz," I thought.

"Oh, look, some of the children's books are still here," Joan said. I could hear her steps creak on the floor above me.

"Would she find the secret lever?" I hope not. Then I heard Lenny speak.

"Nevermind those, let's see what condition the second floor is in."

"Oh, all right," Joan said.

I could hear them walking away from my ceiling vent and open the old wooden door to the stairwell. After a few seconds, their voices drifted away.

I pulled out the stepstool and looked across the top row of aged books layered in dust. Maybe this is what Aunt Patty wanted me to have. Some of these titles could be worth something. But as I continued looking between each volume, a clean square dustless spot remained on the shelf.

My cousins didn't take long upstairs as I heard footsteps above me again.

"Okay, nothing up there," Joan said. "Maybe I'll take home the puzzles for the kids."

"You do that. Maybe you should give Marcy a call. She should be here," Leonard said.

I gulped and hurried to turn my phone off.

"She's a big girl and besides she's meeting us back at mom's place," Joan replied.

I exhaled.

The footsteps faded away until I heard the front door shut.

Now I wondered if I was wasting my time with an old woman's fantasy. But here was this library, locked

away from the house, and she seemed so insistent about me looking here. I climbed off the stepstool and continued my search on the next shelf down. I pulled out each book and leafed through them. As I was about to return the novel to its resting spot, I saw a break in the backing of the shelf. It was just large enough to poke in my finger. A slat of wood moved.

Removing a book, then another exposed a brass hinge a foot away from the finger hole. I pulled the three-inch panel toward me and turned on my flashlight from my phone to look inside. I saw a corner of a box and grabbed it with both hands.

At first, the container stuck to the cement ledge but released after I gave it a good jerk. The metal case had a hinged lid on top. It looked like the safety deposit boxes the banks keep for people valuables. As soon as I set it on the table I noticed the latch had a small padlock. There was nothing I could see to pry this box open. Then I remembered the little key. *"Could it be that simple?"* I asked myself.

I grasped the key from the depths of my pants pocket and inserted it into the lock. It worked.

Expecting only memorabilia that was only worth something to my aunt, I opened the lid and gasped.

A stream of smoke and sparkles floated into the air. I had jumped back, afraid something would blow up. When nothing else happened, I moved closer and peered over the edge. Inside was a layered odd shaped piece of balsa wood. It was a toy where you spread it apart and a stand-up village would appear. My fingers pulled at one end and laid the toy flat. The pop-up was a small house in the center and a tiny bearded man

with a book open in his hands. Then he grew and grew until he sat upon the table.

"Who so ever opens my home has the gift," he said. "Who are you?"

"I-I'm Marcy," I stuttered unable to believe what I was witnessing.

"Has Patty past away?" He asked.

"Uh, no, but she has to live elsewhere. She told me to come here.

"Then you have her gift," he said and began to shrink down to his original size.

"But, wait, what gift? Who are you?" I asked as the woodcarving closed over the small house.

Unsure of what I just saw, I looked around in the metal box and found a cameo locket. Removing the amulet, I closed the case and replaced it back into the wall's hiding spot. I slipped the locket into my inside purse pocket. I thought about opening it but I wanted Aunt Patty to do that honor in case she had something personal inside.

I turned off the ceiling light and made my way upstairs. At the wooden door, I listened and couldn't hear anyone. I inserted the small key, and the wooden frame swung outward. No one was in the living room when I stepped out on the linoleum floor. That's when I heard the magical door behind me shut and fade away into the drab curtain.

I checked the front door to make sure my cousins had left. I couldn't see their car so I locked the door bolt from the inside and headed out the back kitchen door.

The old screen door on the outside was still the same with green peeling paint and a worn hole in the

mesh. I stepped out onto the pitted cement steps and exited through the picketed gate. Once I was back into my car, I set my purse down at my side and looked in the zippered enclosure.

I guess I feared I had been dreaming. No, there was the cameo locket resting on the bottom. I tried to pull it open but the catch was old and didn't budge. I'd better check with Aunt Patty to see if I can have this or if she wants it for herself.

I drove back to the assisted living apartments and noticed my cousin's car was in the parking lot. Hesitant at first because I knew I wouldn't be alone with my aunt, I marched on through the open glass doors.

I knocked and Joan opened the apartment door.

"Well, it's about time you showed up. We have been waiting on you for a half an hour," she snapped.

"Sorry, but—"

"She went on an errand for me. Now all of you sit down over here," I heard my aunt say.

Joan and Lenny sat on the small sofa and I took the chair beside Aunt Patty. My aunt had a TV tray placed in front of her.

"Did you find it?" she asked.

"Uh, yes I did."

"Well, let me see."

I opened my purse, pulled out the locket, and passed it over to my aunt's weathered hands.

She studied it for a second and the catch gave way to her bony fingers.

Joan jumped up. "What is that you're holding? Where did you get this, Marcy?" she asked.

"None of your concern just sit down," Aunt Patty ordered.

Once the cameo had opened, my aunt began.

"Joan, Leonard, and Marcy, this holds a picture of Marcy's parents. Several times when you were growing up, Joan, I asked you to find this. You couldn't. I asked Leonard once and he couldn't. But today I asked Marcy and she found this cameo.

"Where was it?" Joan asked.

"Doesn't matter. Now as to who gets my—"

"May I Aunt Patty?" Lenny asked, holding out his hand.

"You may," my aunt said and closed the amulet.

As hard as Lenny tried, he couldn't open it. Joan took it out of his hands and attempted herself.

"Here, Marcy. It's too old to work," she said.

"Thanks, Joan." I retrieved the cameo and all of a sudden it popped open in my hands.

"Marcy, I have signed my home over to you," my aunt continued.

"Mom!" Joan protested and jumped off the sofa.

"Sit down, girl. I'm not finished. I called Gladys Reynolds from the real estate office while all of you were gone, and she came over to see me. It's a done deal.

Leonard narrowed his eyebrows and Joan looked shocked. I was surprised all of this was falling into my lap.

"Mother," Joan whined.

"Now, I'll leave it up to Marcy whether she sells the house or remodels it. My house would have never

amounted to much in the condition it's in now," Aunt Patty explained.

"I can't believe you did this for me," I gasped.

"And why shouldn't I? You have always been there for me, taking me to the doctor or bringing home my groceries." Then she turned to look at Joan and Lenny. "As for you, Joan, I have left you my car, and Lenny, I have left you all of Burt's tools. I made the arrangements with my lawyer yesterday."

"I don't know what to say, mother," Joan said.

"How about you say you'll come see me more often?"

"Yes, I can do that."

"And how about you Leonard? Will I see you more often?"

"Yes, Aunt Patty. In fact, I was waiting for a time that I could tell you, my family is moving back here. I thank you for Uncle's tools. He has some good ones. I have lots of good memories of his woodworking," he said, extending his hand out toward her.

"That's great, Leonard. I hope to see you and the kids more often," Aunt Patty said, taking his hand in hers.

"Maybe I should go," I suggested, standing up.

"Leonard, why don't you go with Marcy to her car," she said to him. "I need to talk to Joan."

"Oh, thank you so much, Aunt Patty," I said leaning down to kiss her on her cheek and give her a good hug.

Joan bent her head down with her arms hanging at her side.

Lenny and I walked out of the apartment and outside toward my car.

"You don't have to escort me, Lenny," I said.

"Probably not, but I felt you deserved more than that old house."

"I have always loved that home. It has so many secrets and memories for me. Are you really going to move back here?"

"Yes, my wife has already found a part-time job and I want to sell fishing and hunting supplies. People always buy stuff like that."

"What do you suppose Joan and Aunt Patty will talk about?"

"Not my concern but I do hope this brings them closer."

I nodded and climbed into my car. After I waved him goodbye, I watched as he strode over to his vehicle.

"Mom, I'm sorry. I never realized you would give Marcy the house," Joan said, kneeling down to her mother.

"Now, will I see more of you and the children?"

"The kids. I have to pick them up from school," Joan said, standing and turning toward the door. "I'll bring them right over here."

As Joan was about to leave, she returned and placed a kiss on her mother's forehead.

After Joan left, Aunt Patty felt a tear crawl down her lined cheek. Slapping the moisture away, she picked up one of her favorite books to read, *Deflection, A Race Against Time*.

The End

About the Author

A. Nation travels the west with her husband. I decided to write in a futuristic fashion creating interesting adventure stories that have a moral realization. Whether from prejudice, political crime, retribution, or enslavement, the sagas shall continue.



For more insights how this story progressed, see my blog at: [My Blog](#).

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