

# The Mystery of Pine Tree Mountain

A full-length play

by

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## CAST

Tim: At twelve

Tim: At thirty two.

June: Tim's mum.

David: Tim's granddad.

Adam Wilson: White hair. Stooped.

Inspector Edwards: Either male or female.

Tanya Michaels: Reporter. About thirty two

Ron: Press photographer.

Constables: Four or five, only one speaking.

Martin Wordsworth: Voice off.

Editor of newspaper: Voice off.

Scene: *Granddad's living room. Three piece suite, sideboard, small tables next to each chair and a coffee table centre in front of settee. Window to rear. Door stage right.*

### Act one.

Opens: *Granddad Dave sitting in a chair. Twelve year old Tim playing on the floor. Granddad looks to window then back at Tim.*

Dave: *(Beckoning Tim to him.)* Come up here young Tim and let me tell you about that mountain you can see out of the window there.

Tim: You mean Pine Tree Mountain granddad?

Dave: I do Tim! I'll tell you all about it just as my grandfather told it to me.

Tim: Gosh!

*(Enter June with a mug of tea.)*

Tim: That must have been a long time ago.

June: Don't you be cheeky young man. Where do you want your tea dad?

Dave: Down there'll be fine love. Do you remember me telling you about the mountain June?

June: Old Pine Tree dad? How could I forget it? I couldn't sleep for a week with the nightmares.

*(She puts the mug down on the table next to the chair.)*

Tim: Is it scary mum? I do hope that it's scary.

*(Tim goes to the chair and sits next to Dave, who puts his arm round the boy.)*

June: It was to me Tim. Now just you sit still and listen to your granddad.

*(She turns to leave the room.)*

Tim: Aren't you going to listen to it as well mum?

June: No I'm not! I've heard it once and that's enough. I don't need any more nightmares thank you. Mind you dad it was dark when you told me the story.

*(June exits.)*

Dave: Story! This is more than a story young lady. This actually happened. *(Under his breath.)* At least that's what my granddad told me.

Tim: You have to remember that mum's just a girl granddad. They're always scared of something. Not like us men, eh granddad?

Dave: You're right Tim.

*(Dave ruffles Tim's hair but stares at the closed door.)*

Tim: Are you all right granddad? *(Looking up at the old man.)*

Dave: What! Oh yes of course I am Tim. *(He settles back in the chair.)* Now I'm going to take you back to a time before televisions and radios.

Tim: What's a television granddad?

Dave: Eh! Oh it's a TV Tim.

Tim: This *is* going to be a story. We've had TV's like forever granddad.

Dave: You might have had Tim but when I was your age we didn't have a TV. In fact there was only one in the street.

Tim: Wow! How boring! What did you do granddad?

Dave: We read, or played games, or played out in the street.

Tim: I'm not allowed to do that. Because of that strange man who lives down the road from us.

Dave: Well this story involves that man and tells you why he's so strange. Or at least it involves his grandfather Tim.

Tim: You know him granddad?

Dave: I know his family, yes Tim. Have you seen the dark mark near the top of the mountain Tim?

Tim: Sure! Stands out a mile.

*(Stage lights start to dim.)*

Dave: Do you know what made that mark Tim?

Tim: Granddad, everybody knows that! It was made when a German bomber crashed into it and burst into flames.

Dave: Is that what you think? Is that what you've been told? Who told you that?

Tim: Everybody granddad. The kids at school, the teachers.

Dave: Your mother?

Tim: She won't talk about it. I asked her but she just said that I was too young to be asking questions like that.

Dave: But your mother knows the truth Tim. All the rest are just guessing. You see Tim, my grandfather and Mr Wilson's grandfather were best friends.

Tim: Who's Mr Wilson granddad?

Dave: The strange man Tim.

Tim: How do you know his name granddad?

Dave: As I said. His grandfather and mine were best friends. He was my best friend when we were at school. Then he went away to the army and when he came back he was changed Tim. Quiet, withdrawn, refused to speak to anyone, even me. He lives there without a friend or family.

Tim: Maybe you should go and see him granddad. Maybe he'd talk to you now after all this time.

Dave: You know Tim, maybe I should. Show him that he's not on his own and that he still has a friend.

Tim: That's the way to go granddad.

Dave: Now this story about the mountain.

Tim: And the bomber crashing into it.

*(Tim jumps up and runs around the room with his arms out wide like an aeroplane.)*

Tim: Waaah! Crash! Boom!

*(He falls down to the floor in a heap.)*

Dave: Come sit here and I'll tell you what that mark really is Tim, and it's not a crashed German bomber.

*(Tim gets up and sits in the chair by Dave.)*

Dave: Now then! You're not going to leap up again are you Tim?

Tim: No granddad. It's getting dark do you want the light switching on?

*(Lightning flashes through window.)*

Dave: I think that we'd better Tim my lad. I think your mother will be in here shortly, I know that she's frightened of thunderstorms.

Tim: She's not is she granddad? That's a girl for you.

*(Tim gets up, moves to door to switch light on. June opens door and puts her head round it.)*

June: Are you two all right?

Tim: We're all right mum, but are you?

*(Tim switches the lights on. Lights back up.)*

June: Of course I am! Why shouldn't I be?

Tim: Granddad says that you're frightened of thunder.

June: I don't like it, but I'm not frightened of it.

*(Another flash of lightning and the sound of thunder very close.)*

June: *(Glancing up)* Your granddad likes to make up stories that frighten people. Don't let your tea go cold dad.

Tim: You're not staying mum?

June: No dear! I'll let granddad tell you on his own. Just don't scare him too much dad.

Dave: I'll try not to love. You just hide from the thunder under the kitchen table.

*(June puts her tongue out at Dave as she exits. More thunder and lightning. Then a door bell, and more thunder.)*

June: *(Off)* I'll get that dad.

Dave: Now who can that be? Calling on me on a night like this?

Tim: I don't know granddad, but we'll see in a minute.

June: *(Off)* You'd better come in. My father's in here with Tim.

*(June enters with Adam Wilson who has white hair and is wearing a dripping rain coat.)*

June: Dad its Mr Wilson to see you.

Tim: That's the weirdo.

Adam: Hello Dave. I hope you don't mind my calling in like this. You're the only one I know that I can tell.

Dave: *(Getting up and going to Adam)* Of course I don't Adam, it's good to see you. *(They shake hands.)* Come on in, take that wet coat off. June, you remember my daughter June don't you Adam? Take his coat to dry love. Would you like a drink?

Sit! Sit yourself down; something's weighing heavy on your mind Adam I can tell.

*(Adam removes his wet coat and hands it to June.)*

June: Come along Tim and give me a hand.

Adam: *(Pointing at Tim.)* We was his age Dave. We was his age.

Dave: Tim will be all right June. You will have a drink won't you Adam?

Adam: Aye! If it's not any trouble. I remember you when you was in pigtails and ran to that school down Newton Street. By 'eck you was a fast runner. I don't know why you didn't keep it up. You almost knocked me over one morning. Bet you don't remember though do you?

June: You were in your army uniform and carrying a large bag.

Adam: What a memory. That's right girl. I didn't know who you was then but I soon found out. That was just before they sent me to fight in the war.

June: How do you like your tea Mr Wilson?

Adam: It's Adam young lady. Just as it comes but with two sugars and milk.

Dave: Sit down Adam, take the weight off.

Adam: I'm the weirdo am I?

Dave: He didn't mean anything by it Adam.

Adam: That's how they think of me Dave. 'Cause I lives on me own in that big house on the corner. I had a wife and kids once.

Dave: I didn't know that Adam.

Adam: Yeah! It was when I was in the army. I lost 'em. Lost the lot, the wife, my little girl and my boy. All gone.

June: Look Mr Wilson....Adam you know what children are like.

Adam: Used to be one me self.

*(He sits as June exits.)*

Adam: I been up there Dave. I been up to....! Well you know where.

Dave: Blimey Adam! When did you do that?

*(Dave sits back in his chair with Tim.)*

Adam: When I come out of the army. I inherited that house. I was going through me granddad's papers and come across this notebook. He put everything in there Dave. Where the path is, how to get in, everything. So I went. They weren't lying you know? What yours and my granddad told us is all true. I seen it with me own eyes Dave. Just like me granddad I went up there with hair as black as it comes, but when I seen what was in there it turned like this. It's starting again Dave. Every fifty years it comes.

Dave: That's just an old wives tale Adam.

*(Adam gets up and moves to window.)*

Adam: No it isn't Dave. Look at it Dave! Look at that storm going round Pine Tree Mountain.

*(Dave goes to stand near the window. Tim getting up to stand between the two men.)*

Tim: What's happening again granddad?

Dave: I'm not sure Tim. I'm not sure.

Adam: The boy should leave the room while we talk Dave.

Dave: Nay Adam! I was just about to tell him about yon mountain when you arrived. You can stay as long as you keep quiet and not interrupt.

Tim: All right granddad. I'll be like a little mouse.

*(June enters with a mug of tea and places it on a small table next to the chair.)*

June: Your tea Adam. Come along Tim. Let your granddad and Mr..... Adam talk alone.

Dave: He'll be all right June. Let him be.

Adam: Aye! Let him stay. You might want to hear this too. That's if your dad's told you about yon mountain.

June: He has thank you. I don't want any more nightmares about that, thank you.

Dave: He's been up there love. To see for himself.

Adam: I have, and it's all true. And now it's happening again Dave.

June: If you want me I'll be in the kitchen.

**(She exits. They sit down.)**

Dave: So you keep saying Adam, but what.....? How do you know?

Adam: In the book me granddad wrote he said the tales! Said that it happened every fifty years. Do you remember what happened fifty years ago?

Dave: Now you're asking.

Tim: Granddad can't remember what happened fifty minutes ago let alone fifty years.

Dave: That family in Stanley Lane! That family in Stanley Lane went missing. Every single one of them. They found the back wall ripped out of the house.

Adam: And they never found the family Dave. But I found 'em.

Dave: *(Pointing to the window.)* Not?

Adam: Aye! I found all of 'em. At least their bones Dave.

Dave: How could they have got up there? No one knows the way!

Tim: Mr Wilson does granddad. He's said.

Adam: The lad's right Dave. But they didn't get up there the same way I did. (*Leaning forward.*) They was carried up there Dave.

Dave: What could have carried a whole family Adam?

Adam: You've heard the tales. Your granddad told you about him and me granddad going up there. You know what's up there Dave as well as I do.

Dave: But surely not after all this time Adam?

Adam: I seen it Dave. With these eyes I seen it lying there sleeping like some gigantic boulder. (*Sitting back*) Aye! I went into its cavern Dave. I could smell it; could have touched it I were so close. Now its woken up and wants a feed. Where's it going to strike Dave? Which poor family is it going to take now?

Dave: Just a minute Adam. You say that your granddad put everything down in a notebook. Which you found. And you followed his instructions on how to get up there. Went into its cavern while it was sleeping?

Adam: That's right Dave. It sounds as if you don't believe what I'm telling you.

Dave: Oh I believe you all right Adam. But it does take some understanding.

Tim: Is there a path Mr Wilson?

Adam: There is young man. Do you remember when we went over there Dave? We can't have been much older than Tim here. About fourteen or fifteen, and we found that big rock half sunk into the ground.

Dave: I do! Yes! That was the time the farmer chased us off his land. He threatened to shoot us if he saw us there again.

Adam: That's the start of the path. It's mostly covered over with pine needles but you can still make it out. Just as it says in me granddad's book. It zigzags for a bit before it starts to wind

round through the trees and rocks. It's easy going at first but it soon gets harder. Good job I were still fit from the army or I wouldn't have managed the climb Dave. Once you leave the trees behind you it's a hard climb. I wonder at how me granddad managed it. 'Cause he wasn't a small lad like Tim there. He carried some weight all his life. It took me half a day just to get up there Dave. I had the old man's book with me so I didn't go wrong once I got to the mark.

Tim: What mark granddad?

Adam: The mark you can see on the mountain top Tim.

Dave: The one all your mates at school think is a crashed German bomber Tim.

Adam: Is that what they think? Well it's a good excuse that's for sure. Once you get to the mark you have to be careful.

*(Enter June.)*

June: More tea anyone?

Tim: Mum! We were just getting to the exciting bit.

Dave: I wouldn't say no love, what about you Adam?

Adam: Please June.

*(She picks the two mugs up.)*

June: You haven't touched this one yet! Would you like a drink Tim?

Tim: Can I?

June: We won't be going home until this storm blows over. Will that be all right dad?

Dave: Of course it will love. You're welcome to stay as long as you want. You know that.

*(June walks across and kisses Dave.)*

June: Thanks dad. Tea coming up. (*She moves to door as the room is lit up by lightning.*) We could lose the power in this. Have you still some candles dad? We might need them.

Dave: I think there are some in the cupboard under the sink love.

(*June exits.*)

Tim: Why do you have to be careful Mr Wilson? When you get to the mark.

Adam: Because the rocks are slimy, very slimy. One slip and you could be stuck up there with a broken leg or worse.

Tim: And no one would know where you were?

Dave: Tim! You said that you'd be quiet.

Tim: Sorry granddad. Sorry Mr Wilson.

Adam: Don't be hard on the lad Dave. He just wants to know that's all.

Dave: So do I Adam. So do I.

Adam: When you get to the bottom of the mark, not only is the rock slimy but it's not far off being vertical and smooth. Even after all this time Dave, they're smooth. Very few handholds. You can see where its tail has swept back and forth across the face of the mountain Dave, sort of polished it was. I should have turned back then but something was driving me on. Whether it was me granddad up there with me or the thought that he'd done it. All I knew was that I had to go on. To find out for me self, to see if it were all true. It's not far Dave. Only about two hundred yards but it took me about an hour and a half to get to the opening Dave. I stood in that opening and I could feel a warm breeze coming out of that cavern. Me knees started shaking but I forced me self on. I had to find out Dave, you know what I mean? So I went in, I had a torch with me and when it started crunching underfoot, I switched the torch on and shone it on the floor. It were covered in bones Dave. I shivered, I couldn't help it. I stood there shivering. Then in

one corner I saw that family from Stanley Lane. It had put all the clothes and bones together in a heap. I recognised some of the kid's clothes, poor devils. I had to go on though Dave. I'll admit it I were scared. I'd been to war and fought and killed, seen mates killed so I thought that I'd seen everything and wouldn't be a frightened of anything. But stood there in that cavern I were scared. I'd defy anybody not to be, seeing all that. I forced me self to go on.

*(Enter June carrying a tray with three mugs on.)*

June: Tea everybody.

*(They all look at her.)*

June: Have I interrupted you again?

Dave: Not really love, no.

*(Lightning lights up the room quickly followed by thunder.)*

June: We're not walking home in this so we'll take you up on your offer dad and stay over.

*(She puts the mugs on the two tables.)*

Dave: Of course you're not going home in his June. You can have your old bedroom and young Tim here can have the spare room. I think the bed's made up in there.

June: Well if we have a power cut dad I think I'll go to bed. So will you young man.

Tim: Aw Mum!

Dave: I'll see him to bed love, don't you worry.

June: Thanks dad. I'll leave you men alone.

*(She exits taking tray with her. Adam rises and moves to window.)*

Adam: Look at that Dave. It's getting worse. *(He turns to face Dave)* We've got to do something Dave.

Dave: What do you mean we've got to do something Adam? What can we do about it?

Adam: We can go up there and stop it before it slaughters another family.

Dave: Adam! We're both in our sixties, what can we do at our age. Do you really think we could climb up that mark?

Adam: That's the thing Dave. We don't have to climb the mark. I told you that I could smell it, could almost touch it. That's because I walked into its cavern. You see when you get up there you've this sort of outer cavern where the floor is covered in bones and things. Then you have the inner cavern, that's its lair Dave. That's where it sleeps. The only thing on the floor in there is it, Dave. I walked right past it. I came out a different way, an easier way. We don't have to do any climbing. I won't say that it's an easy walk but we could do it.

Tim: I could help you granddad.

Dave: The only place you're going, my boy, is to bed. This is crazy Adam.

Adam: We weren't much older than Tim is now when we went up to that mountain. Our grandfather's weren't much older than him when they went up there.

Dave: I know, but!

Adam: He might be of use Dave. Look at it this way, how would you feel if you read in the paper either tomorrow or the day after that a family had gone missing and you could have done something to stop that happening.

*(A flash of lightning and a crash of thunder. Stage lights out. June screams off.)*

Adam: What if it were your June and young Tim here? How would you feel then?

June: *(Off)* I'm going to bed dad. Don't you be long Tim?

Tim: No mum!

Dave: You really think we could do it Adam?

Adam: I do Dave! Yes!

Dave: Even at our ages? What do we use to stop it though?

Adam: On my way out there were weapons Dave. All right they were old but they were there, we could use some of those. We have to go now Dave. The time for talk is over. Now is the time for action.

Dave: All right! I'll come with you, if you think you can remember the way in.

Tim: And I'll come with you granddad.

Dave: No you won't Tim.

Adam: Dave! You always said that I had a sort of sixth sense about things, remember?

Dave: I remember you seemed to know enough to get us out of a lot of scrapes.

Adam: Well trust me on this. Let the lad come. I have a feeling about it.

Dave: I'm not having him go with us Adam. It might well be dangerous.

Adam: Look Dave when we were his age we got up to all sorts of things.

Tim: Go on granddad; let me come with you, please.

Dave: Him and his mother are all I have left Adam.

Adam: You're lucky to have them Dave. I told you I had a feeling.

Tim: Please granddad!

Adam: You used to trust my feelings Dave.

Dave: That was when we were kids Adam.

Adam: Do you think that I would lead you both into something we couldn't get out of Dave.

Tim: (*Tugging at Dave's sleeve.*) Please take me with you granddad.

Dave: (*Puts his hands on Tim's shoulders.*) The first sign of danger and you run like mad for home. Do you understand Tim?

Tim: Yes granddad.

Dave: You do exactly what Adam or I tell you to do. Is that clear Tim?

Tim: Yes granddad.

Adam: I knew you'd see it my way Dave.

Dave: I want my head examining. If your mother finds out she'll have my guts for garters. Have you got a raincoat with you Tim?

Tim: (*Throwing his arms round Dave.*) Thanks granddad. It's in the kitchen.

Dave: Go and fetch it. Fetch Adams' coat too, your mother will have put it near the boiler to dry.

Tim: Great!

Dave: And keep your voice down or your mother will stop all of us from going.

(*Tim exits.*)

Adam: That's the Dave I remember from our youth.

Dave: At over sixty years old, I need my head examining, and so do you Adam. If we come through this you owe me a pint. I'm still not happy about taking Tim you know Adam?

Adam: I know Dave. Look when we come through this I'll buy you a barrel.

Dave: Adam Wilson! I'll hold you to that.

*(Enter Tim with his and Adams' raincoats.)*

Adam: We'll need torches Dave. I have one in my coat pocket, do you have any?

Dave: Have a look under the stairs Tim will you, there should be a couple under there. I'll just get my coat.

*(Tim exits.)*

Adam: Just like old time eh Dave?

*(Adam puts his coat on as Dave is exiting.)*

Dave: Aye! But we were a damn sight younger Adam.

*(Dave exits. Tim enters.)*

Tim: Got them Mr Wilson and they both work, look.

*(Tim switches the lamps on and off a couple of times.)*

Adam: All right Tim don't waste the batteries.

*(Dave enters.)*

Dave: I have spare batteries in my pocket Adam so we should be all right. Everybody ready?

Tim: Granddad! What exactly are we going to do?

Adam: We'll explain on the way Tim, if that's all right with you. Time is getting on and we might be too late if we delay any longer. Don't worry son, me and your granddad will take good care of you. Come on.

Dave: Who'll take care of us though Adam? Quietly now we don't want your mother to come down and stop us do we Tim?

Tim: No we don't granddad. Quiet as mice.

*(They exit. This next part should be done with movable black screens, only the lightning flashes which should be almost continuous, along with the rumble of thunder, and torch light*

*should be used as lighting. The main stage lights either off or very dim. They enter with the torches lit.)*

Adam: I parked the car round the corner so your daughter wouldn't hear us drive off Dave.

Dave: You were so sure that I'd agree to come Adam? I must be mad.

Adam: I knew you couldn't say no to a bit of adventure Dave, especially if it involved a little bit of danger and spice.

Dave: I could have said no you know?

Adam: I know that but we practically grew up together, I think that I know you as well as you know yourself. Here we are. You get in the back Tim. What a night.

*(Sound of old car being unlocked, doors opening and closing. Torches off. There could be three chairs set behind the black screens. Sound of a car being started and driving. Stage should just be lit by lightning flashing.)*

Dave: It's only half past six Adam! Mind you it's as black as night.

Tim: Granddad it's a quarter past nine. It's about time you bought yourself a real watch and stopped using that old wind up thing you wear.

Dave: This was my fathers' watch young man, it's older than me. I just forget to wind it from time to time. Your seats are going to get wet Adam.

Adam: That doesn't matter Dave. I'll get as close to the mountain as I can, then we won't have to walk too far.

*(Black out.)*