

## Episode 15

### 43 / The Meeting of the Sunrise Society

In the basement room of an old church in Philadelphia, the Sunrise Society held their first meeting in decades. The walls of the room were lined with wooden shelves stacked with various books, papers, statuettes, and works of art. There was a large round table in the middle of the room which comfortably seated at least eight people. There was a desk on the far side of the room as well.

“Well, we’re all here — all eleven of us,” said Dr. Templeton proudly.

“Or, I should say, all eleven of you” He spread out his hands toward the nine people sitting in the chairs scattered about the room.

Nehemiah Dunn had stood at the doorway and took it all in. Ever since his father Eli had passed down the knowledge regarding the Correction to him and his sister, his greatest fear had been that it was all a wild goose chase — that there was never really a Sunrise Society or a document signed and kept secret by those who foresaw the day when America would need a second revolution. But, here he was, standing amidst the descendants of people who had done just that. The feeling was overwhelming. He walked in and pulled up a chair to the round table.

The man behind him, George Felleck, had found an empty chair and sat just outside the circle. He had sat silently through most of the meeting, his arms folded, listening intently. Nehemiah had assumed that he was just a quiet person by nature. Indeed there seemed to be a diverseness in the circle that had gathered there that day.

As each member of the Sunrise Society shared the knowledge about the Correction that had been passed down in their family line, a picture began to emerge. Nehemiah produced the old, ragged American flag with the missing star and spread it on the table. A small, elderly woman produced a list of numbers and names that she had kept tucked inside a copy of *A Tale of Two Cities* for many years. The numbers turned out to be a notation for each of the stars on the flag. It told which one was sewed on first and which of the colonies it was meant to represent. They quickly found out that the missing star on the flag was meant to represent the state of Pennsylvania.

Dr. Ronald Templeton took the notes that Ginny Boone had written in the book that Nehemiah had retrieved from the lighthouse near his family’s property in Massachusetts. He was able to discern that the keeper of the lesson book, Wolcott Ellsworth, had included questions primarily about the history and geography of Pennsylvania — specifically about the cave systems in the central part of the state.

Shortly before the Society reached the conclusion that the original Correction was hidden somewhere in the caves of central Pennsylvania, a loud bang interrupted their discussions.

Everyone turned to the door which had just slammed shut.

George Felleck’s seat was empty.

### 44 / Empty Suit

Everyone blinked at the empty seat with realization.

“I’m afraid Mr. Felleck, or whoever he really was, reached the conclusion a bit earlier than the rest of us,” said Dr. Templeton in dismay.

Nehemiah stood up. “Maybe not,” he said. “But he heard enough. We have to stop him.” He made his way to the door before turning back. “A little back up here would be nice,” he said, but his voice trailed off as he realized that he was probably the youngest of the group. Everyone else seemed to have some gray in their hair. If there was any running and chasing that needed to be done, it would be largely up to him.

Nehemiah turned and ran down the long hallway, up the steps, and onto the main floor of the church. The heavy, wooden front door was standing slightly ajar. Nehemiah thrust it open and looked both ways up and down the sidewalk. The sun was dipping toward the horizon, letting him know that he had been in the church for at least three hours. He gazed across into the parking lot where he had parked a couple hours before. He could see no sign of the man who had posed as George Felleck.

“Any idea where he went?” said a voice behind him.

Nehemiah turned and found Titus Sims looking over his shoulder. He was thin and wiry with a full head of gray hair, a sharp nose, and black eyes.

Nehemiah shook his head. “He’s just...gone.” Taking the rest of the steps down, Nehemiah gripped the iron railing. “Look, I’ll go this way,” he said indicating the walkway that extended past the church’s graveyard and turned out of sight at the corner. “You go that way. See if you find anything that might indicate where he went.”

A couple of the others had emerged from the church by now. Nehemiah looked up at them. “Stay here and keep an eye on people leaving the parking lot,” he said. “If you see him leaving, take note of the type of vehicle he’s driving and the license plate number.”

Without waiting for their response, Nehemiah turned and headed in the direction of the graveyard. Again, he took a shortcut through it instead of going around it. Looking from right to left as he hurried between the tombstones, he scrutinized the long shadows cast by the setting sun to see if anyone or anything might be hiding in them.

He was almost out of the graveyard and out of sight of the church when an unusual looking lump caught his attention. Nehemiah turned toward it. Tucked between one of the last tombstones and a wild shrub at the end of the graveyard was a pile of clothes — dress shirt, black slacks, and suspenders — the same ones the man posing as George Felleck had been wearing. No wonder they looked so big on him. Nehemiah thought as he stooped to retrieve the clothing.

### 45 / The Real Felleck

Nehemiah felt a bit disappointed when he checked the front pockets of the pants and the shirt and found nothing that would shed light on the real nature of the impostor. He gathered the clothes up and looked around that corner of the graveyard once again. Not noticing anything else that could be of use, he turned to go back toward the church.

“You found his clothes but not him?” said Titus as he half-stumbled up the steps of the church at the same time as Nehemiah. He was clearly out of breath and bent over taking in huge gulps of air.

“I’m pretty sure he’s just changed his outfit and he’s a good distance away from here by now,” said Nehemiah. “He arrived here all of us and probably parked out of sight somewhere near here. Dumped these, which probably belonged to the real Mr. Felleck, in the corner of the graveyard.” Nehemiah let the discarded clothing drape over the railing.

“Hmm,” said Titus coming over to examine the clothes. He checked the pockets but came up empty. The little lady with the gray hair who was still holding the Charles Dickens book watched him. “Let me see those,” she said. She took the pair of slacks and scrutinized the waist band. “Aha,” she muttered as she pulled a thin strip of pink paper and a staple from the waistband. “These were recently dry cleaned,” she said.

“I’m not sure how that helps us, Abby,” said Titus.

Abby turned the paper around so they could see the word on it. At the top of the strip, it read “Spruce Hill” in faded black ink.

“If we find the dry cleaner,” said Nehemiah slowly, “we could find out who these pants belong to.”

“I see,” said Titus pulling out his phone to look up the business name.

“But we better go inside. I’m sure I look odd standing out here examining a pair of empty pants.”

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A few minutes later, after talking with the dry cleaners under the pretense of needing to return a lost piece of clothing, Nehemiah was calling the real George Felleck.

“This is George,” said a gruff voice as the phone rang a few times.

“George Felleck?” said Nehemiah.

“The one and only,” said George.

“Well, I thought you’d like to know that there’s someone running around Philadelphia posing as you — he’s even wearing your clothes. You know anything about that?” said Nehemiah.

There was a beat of silence on the other end, and then George said with a hint of embarrassment, “Yes, I was robbed this morning. I was on my way to an important meeting, when someone took my ID, license, social security card, insurance papers — everything. Some clever thief he was. He threatened to steal my identity.”

“Well, I don’t think that’s all he was interested in,” Nehemiah said.

“Not even what he was mainly interested in.”

“What? How do you know?” said George. “Wait a minute, who are you anyway?”

“If you want a full explanation — and if you want your clothes back — we need to meet this evening as soon as possible,” Nehemiah said.

“We want to help you, Mr. Felleck, but more is at stake here than just your identity.”

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