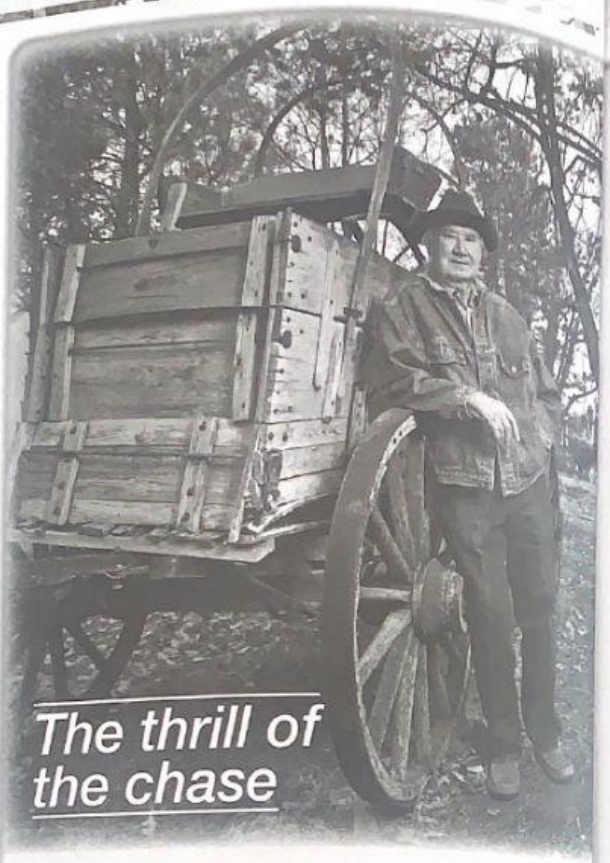


The thrill of the chase

Imagine finding a treasure chest straight from ancient times, with piles of rare gold coins, antique jewellery, gold nuggets and a sprinkling of gold dust. Just a dream? Not at all! One day someone will find this treasure chest, hidden by eighty-two-year-old eccentric millionaire Forrest Fenn, in a secret location somewhere in the wild American countryside.

Estimated to be worth at least one million dollars, Fenn's treasure was amassed over a lifetime of collecting. Included in the chest are some of his most prized possessions, such as an ancient Indian necklace covered in jewels. And, at the bottom of the chest, in a small glass jar, is his autobiography, so that even if the chest is opened thousands of years from now, the finder will know who the hoard belonged to.

All you have to do to find these unimaginable riches is to decipher nine clues contained in a mysterious poem, which can be found in Fenn's autobiography, *The thrill of the chase*. The autobiography is well worth a read for its own sake: a fascinating story of a boy from a poor family who grew up to be a fabulously wealthy art dealer. Fenn didn't even go to college; instead, he spent nearly twenty years in the Air Force, accumulating quite a collection of medals for bravery. Later, he returned to Texas and started a business as an art dealer, making his fortune from trading art and antiquities. His customers included many famous Hollywood actors and political leaders.

Many of the treasure hunters believe that, as well as the poem, there may be more clues in Fenn's life story; that the treasure is probably buried somewhere that he knows well. Fenn has said that the treasure is more than 1,500 m above sea level, causing many people to start digging in the mountains near his Santa Fe home. Others have concentrated their efforts on Yellowstone National Park, where Fenn spent most of his childhood holidays learning to find his way round the winding trails.

The number of inexperienced city dwellers descending on these wild areas has raised some safety concerns. Only a few weeks ago, a woman from Texas got lost in the huge mountainous area near Los Alamos and had to spend the night outside before being rescued the next day. Officials have warned people to make sure they are properly prepared for the great outdoors.

According to Fenn, he is the only person who knows the location of the treasure chest. Even his wife and daughters have no idea. Asked if his children mind his hiding quite a significant part of their inheritance for a stranger to find, Fenn replied, 'They've been saying for years that I'm crazy.' He doesn't think his daughters would have any interest in it, though perhaps his grandchildren might.

Fenn is also finding himself at the centre of a lot of unwanted attention. He has already received over 9,000 emails and even has people ringing his doorbell, or trying to follow him whenever he leaves the house. He has also found a lot of old friends contacting him out of the blue. The reason for their sudden interest isn't exactly a mystery!

Of course, no one can be absolutely sure that Fenn has actually hidden the treasure at all. While the treasure certainly exists and many people have seen it, the whole idea of the treasure hunt might just be an elaborate joke. Some people have even suggested that it was simply a way to sell thousands of copies of his autobiography.

Given, however, that Fenn does indeed have a considerable personal fortune, it seems unlikely that it is just about selling books. His friends also claim that he is absolutely serious. It seems that, after a lifetime of treasure hunting, Fenn simply wants to give others the opportunity to experience the thrill of the chase for themselves. So the treasure is out there somewhere, and, one day, someone will find it. Could it be you?

LIVEWORKSHEETS

Reading The thrill of the chase

1 Read *The thrill of the chase* and answer the questions.

1 What kind of text is this?
- a an autobiography
- b a narrative
- c an article
- d a news report

2 What is the writer's main aim in writing the article?
- a To create a sense of excitement about the treasure hunt.
- b To warn people to take care when treasure hunting.
- c To explain Forrest Fenn's reasons for hiding the treasure.
- d To give his or her opinions about the treasure hunt.

2 Read the article again. Choose the correct answers.

1 Fenn has placed his autobiography in the treasure chest so
- a anyone who finds the treasure will know it was his.
- b he will become famous when the treasure is found.
- c he can sell more copies of his book.
- d as to encourage people to look for the treasure.

2 The author's view of Fenn's autobiography is that it is
- a somewhat unbelievable.
- b rather long and boring.
- c compelling reading.
- d very well written.

3 The authorities are worried about people
- a digging up national parkland.
- b fighting each other for the treasure.
- c being attacked by wild animals.
- d getting lost or hurting themselves.

4 According to Fenn, his family are
- a very upset about losing the wealth.
- b mostly uninterested in the treasure.
- c very worried about his mental health.
- d definitely planning to look for it themselves.

5 The writer implies that Fenn's old friends are
- a only contacting him because they want the treasure.
- b pleased to have the opportunity to get back in touch.
- c following him every time he leaves home.
- d sending him thousands of emails every day.

6 The author believes Fenn's treasure hunt isn't just about selling books, because he
- a has done this kind of thing before.
- b has shown the treasure to other people.
- c doesn't need to make any more money.
- d is a very serious man.

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