

THE MEDICI CODE

By Craig Sodaro

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STORY OF PLAY

Lucy Lyons, a classical scholar and cryptologist, finds her hands full when she's forced to baby-sit her nieces and nephew, Emmy, Jess, and Ben, while their parents are doing research. Things go fairly well until they visit the London Zoo where a strange old lady leaves them tickets for Medici Castle, a historical resort hotel on an island southeast of England.

Once at the hotel as part of a very strange tour group led by the always terrified Mr. Tweedle, strange things begin to happen. Hal Bumper, who bought an old parchment in Italy, suddenly disappears. His wife, Lois, seems more interested in getting the parchment back than her husband. Lucy then finds a newspaper article revealing that an antique dealer in Italy, who found that parchment and sold it to Bumper, was murdered.

Q, a mysterious old woman who slipped Lucy the tickets, appears and tells Lucy she needs to crack the Medici Code before anyone else does - just so the code can be destroyed. With her background in cryptology, Lucy sets to work. When she sees Hal and Lois hiding a dead body, Lucy is ready to give up the whole search.

But then Emmy and Jess are kidnapped and Lucy is told the only way she'll see her nieces again is if she cracks the code. With the help of Ben working on her laptop, she finds out that the tourists on the trip are not tourists at all. They each work for a specific corporation with an interest in time.

When she discovers a clue in the room that can lead to cracking the code, Lucy forces the killer's hand and brings all the hidden identities into the open. Unraveling the mystery of the code leads to a monumental scientific discovery which sees justice done and the secret safely in the proper hands.

(Note: Medici is pronounced Mah-Dee-See.)

CAST OF CHARACTERS

(6 m, 11 f)

LUCY LYONS: 30s, a scholar and cryptologist.
BEN: 13, her nephew.
EMMY: 12, her niece.
JESS: 11, another niece.
Q: 60s, a female spy.
BRIDGET KELLY: 30s, owner of Medici Castle.
PADDY KELLY: 50s, her father.
TIMOTHY TWEEDLE: 20s, tour leader.
CARRIE CALLOWAY: 60s, a tourist.
DAISY CALLOWAY: 60s, her sister.
LOIS BUMPER: 40s, tourist.
HAL BUMPER: 40s, her husband.
HARRIET SALISBURY: 40s, a tourist (doubles as Baba Medici.).
NATHAN KURTZ: 20s, a tourist with an imaginary friend.
TAMMY SUE: 20s, a tourist in love with Nathan.
JAKE JONES: 20s, a newlywed tourist.
BUNNY JONES: 20s, his wife.

SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

ACT I

Scene 1: London Zoo, a July afternoon.
Scene 2: Medici Castle, two days later.
Scene 3: The same, several hours later.
Scene 4: The same, a short time later.

ACT II

Scene 1: The same, a few minutes later.
Scene 2: The same, an hour later.
Scene 3: The same, almost midnight.

SETTING

The first scene of the play takes place at the London Zoo. Only a bench, CS, is needed.

The rest of the play is set in the Great Room of Medici Castle, located on an island off the southeast coast of England. Wing entrances down SL and SR. Right leads to outside and the main entrance hall. Left leads to dining room, kitchen, and other areas of the house. Entrance CS leads to hall and other rooms in the house. Decorator screen USR. Fireplace against left wall with a wood closet next to it. The wood closet looks like a regular closet with a door, except that it can be shorter because its purpose is simply to hold wood. This one, however, leads to secret passages in the house.

On the mantel of the fireplace we see a design that looks like it incorporates a fancy number "21." This really is the symbol for the planet Jupiter, but is easily mistaken for a number. A pair of chairs flank the fireplace. At right is a game table set with several chairs. In the USR corner near the screen is a pedestal on which stands a statue of a Roman god. On the border around the top of the room are written into a fancy design the Greek names Adrastus, Amphiaraus, Capaneus, Hippomedon, Parthenopaeus, Polynices, and Tydeus.

A small hotel registry desk stands up left by the CS entrance. Behind and above it hangs a portrait of Baba Medici, a bearded, be-hatted old man holding an hourglass. A number of clocks, hourglasses and timepieces decorate the rest of the room.

ACT I
Scene 1

(AT RISE: The London Zoo, a summer afternoon, played before curtain. One small bench CS. We hear zoo sounds: a lion roaring in the distance, children laughing, and so on. LUCY ENTERS left, followed by BEN, EMMY, and JESS. The three kids are crowded around a cell phone.)

BEN: *(Into phone, exasperated.)* Dad, I always gotta do everything they want!

EMMY: But the London Zoo is so beautiful!

JESS: We saw penguins!

BEN: *(To EMMY and JESS.)* Big deal! Mom and Dad see penguins all the time. They're in Antarctica.

EMMY: Shut up, nerdo! No, I didn't mean you, Dad.

JESS: Ben wants to go to the London Dungeon, but we thought that sounds yucky!

BEN: This is yucky!

EMMY: Well, bye, Mom! Bye, Dad!

JESS: We miss you!

BEN: Yeah, she's here. All right. But it's all their fault! *(HE hands phone to LUCY.)* The connection's fading.

LUCY: Debra? How are you? Good! It's snowing? Hard to imagine. It's seventy-two here. I said it's seventy-two here! Oh, they're just fine. The usual ... well, yes, and you two take care, too! Debra? Debra? *(SHE clicks off phone.)* Snowstorm.

EMMY: *(Sighing.)* I wish I was there with them.

BEN: So do I!

LUCY: Ben, stop it.

JESS: I wouldn't like all that snow! And Mom said it's 80 below!

EMMY: I don't see what they can study in that kind of weather.

LUCY: Ice cores. They drill down thousands and thousands of feet into the ice and pull up core samples and they learn what life was like way, way, way back.

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BEN: Sometimes I wish Mom and Dad paid attention to what's happening now. Like two nerdy sisters who bore me to death!

LUCY: Look, Ben, I'm sorry you're not having a good time, but I'm new at this parenting thing. I know you were supposed to stay with the Kramers, but Mr. Kramer broke his leg and your folks thought it would be better if you came here to London to stay with me for a bit. I'm sorry it's so boring. If I could make your life more exciting, I would.

EMMY: I think you're doing very well, Aunt Lucy.

JESS: You don't even make us eat our vegetables.

BEN: *(With a sheepish smile.)* Yeah ... you're okay.

LUCY: I tell you what I'll do. How about when we get home, I let you use my laptop. I'm sure you can find some games and things.

BEN: Really?

LUCY: Sure. Just be careful.

EMMY: I wouldn't let him touch anything more expensive than a can opener.

JESS: Oh, look! Capuchin monkeys! And orangutans.

(JESS races OFF SR.)

BEN: Emmy, why don't you go visit some of your relatives, too!

EMMY: Why you!

(EMMY chases BEN OFF SR.)

LUCY: Kids! Be careful! Ben!

(Q, a little old lady in a dress, shawl, wig, and glasses, races ON SL. She carries a purse.)

Q: *(Looking behind HER, nervously.)* Oh, my goodness! Oh, my goodness!

LUCY: What's wrong? Are you all right?

(Q flops on bench, setting purse under it.)

End of Freeview

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