

*Dear Reader,*

As you may know, there are many people who find solace in exploring the great outdoors, but not in being stranded. I regret to inform you that this exploration into the wilderness is about being stranded, and the grim chances that come with finding a way out.

This clue is neither a burbling brook nor a twilit grove. In fact, I know of no one who would find these surroundings even remotely tolerable, due to chilly campfire tales, biting insects, an enemy lurking in the vale, and a plunge into the icy unknown.

I am obligated to document these woes that they may be found and known to the world, but you don't have to follow in my footsteps. In fact it may be best to strand yourself right where you are, and not set foot in these hills.

*With all due respect,*

*Lemony Snicket*

Lemony Snicket

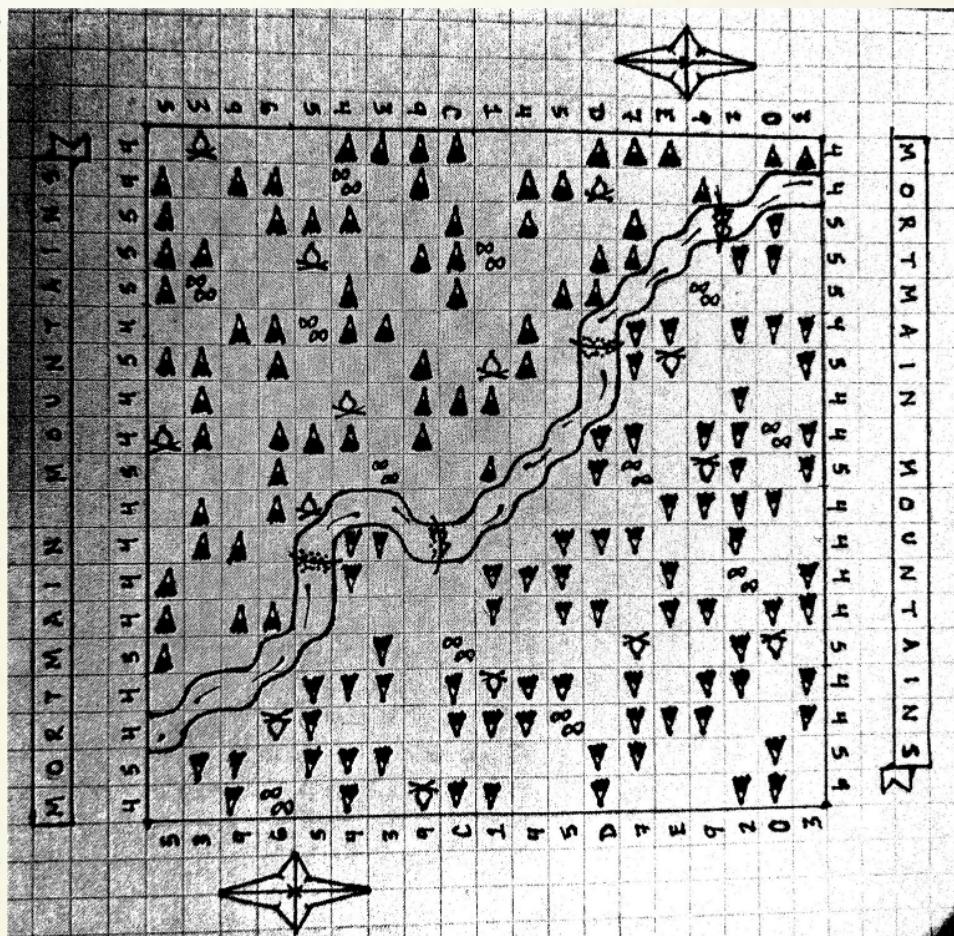


[It has been a very trying day. In following a lead to a V.F.D. safehouse, I have become hopelessly lost in the Montmain Mountains. Though I have tracked the hideout to the southernmost end of the Stricken Stream, the towering plateaued peaks of the mountains obscure all view of the stream. In fact, the mountains seem to be not only blocking my view, but also much of my path. It will surely be impossible to navigate directly through the mountains. I suspect my path will be forged in the valleys between the mountains.

My weathered map of the Montmain Mountains, from the Twenty Snowcave Handbook, marks the mountain as well as the other treacherous, a word here which means "danger".

I must pass. Snow Scout camps dot the mountainside, including one I can see directly south of me. I can pass around the camps, but I must keep from directly walking through them lest my rival, Carmelita Spath, Snow scout and profoundly nasty person, is lurking in the camp.

Snow Grats have hampered my journey out of these passes. These incredibly well-organized and malicious insects are best avoided, as they sting with a particularly painful venom. I will work to avoid them next, but I hear one buzzing in the opposite direction of the setting sun. Looking once more at the insect is an ominous reminder that I must leave the Northmain Mountains, as my time and supplies are running short.



Night begins to fall around me. Backtracking or retracing my steps means a bitter cold night on the slopes of Mount Fraught. The fastest way to travel to the safe house is to take a raft down the Stricken Stream, as it cuts corners to move more swiftly than I can myself on foot.

According to my map and bearings, I may need to leave the river to avoid being towed down the treacherous waterfalls, but by my reckoning, which here means 'best guess', using the stream whenever possible will be fastest.

In the dawn, it has dawned on me that you, dear reader, will need to retrace my steps if you are to make it to the V.F.D. safehouse. I have marked my copy of the map with many useful landmarks to help guide me to the safehouse, but I was unable to verify the labels on the compass before darkness fell upon me. In order to complete this journey, you will need to deduce my starting position on the map and make your way to the safehouse. On the way, you will need to puzzle out the piece of equipment you will need in order to gain entrance into the safehouse. I've hidden this information for you to discover. As ever in these mountains, time and daylight run short, you will need to move quickly to escape before nightfall.

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