

Thousands of people are looking for treasure worth \$2 million. It was buried in the Rocky Mountains by a rich art expert called Forrest Fenn.

It's not only pirates in stories who go hunting for buried treasure. Every year, thousands of people search in the Rocky Mountains in the US for hidden treasure worth \$2 million. And the clues to where it is are written in a poem.

The treasure was buried by an art expert, Forrest Fenn, in 2010. He was 80 when he made the trip into the Rocky Mountains by car and then on foot. So that's one clue: it is somewhere an old man could walk to with a heavy box. But the nine main clues in the poem (available to read on his website) are much more difficult to understand. Treasure hunters look at the meaning of every word in the poem and they look for extra clues in Forrest's two books about his life.

Here is one part to get you started:

*Begin it where warm waters stop
And take it in the canyon down,
Not far, but too far to walk.
Put in below the home of Brown.*

There are many possible meanings. You can probably start with 'warm waters' and 'the home of Brown'. Some people look for a place where warm and cold water meet, perhaps two rivers. Others look for a more poetic meaning, for example a person's tears could be warm water. Brown might be a person because names usually start with a capital letter. So maybe you have to look for people called Brown who live in the Rocky Mountains. Unfortunately, Brown is a very common surname!

These places must be near a canyon, but what does the third line mean? How far is 'too far to walk'? Also, 'put in' is a strange way to say 'go', so maybe Forrest chose those words for a reason. You can see why people spend a long time finding clues, can't you?

The only way to test your ideas is to follow the clues to try and find the treasure. Forrest advises people to wait until spring to avoid dangerous winter weather and he says people shouldn't go alone. But not everyone has listened to his advice. Three people have gone missing while looking for the treasure. Police who work in the area want Forrest to take back the treasure and put a photo of himself with the box on the internet. They think the treasure hunters will stop looking and no more will die.

But Forrest refuses. He thinks people spend too much time inside their houses and offices on their computers and phones. He remembers his own childhood adventures in the Rocky Mountains and he wants families to learn about nature and have adventures together.

His plan is working. Joe's dad took him camping in the woods and he says, 'I enjoyed the adventure of it. We saw some bears but our dog scared them away before I had to shoot them with my gun. But we had to sleep on the ground in the freezing cold and everything got wet. We couldn't even light the fire.'

Some treasure hunters have been out looking for the box too many times to count. Marti and her daughter Libbi travel from their home in Georgia to search in Montana. Libbi says: 'The thought of bears around every corner was a horrible fear for the first two years, but you slowly lose the fear of animals. I love the scenery of Montana – seeing so many animals up close, camping in the mountains and crossing rivers and streams. It's all so exciting, even if we never find the treasure.'

But there are people who think the whole thing is a trick. Some say maybe Forrest had a box of treasure, but they don't believe he hid it in the mountains. Others say he took it back years ago. They say maybe he

just likes the attention. But even the people who complain it's a trick often still go to the Rocky Mountains to test their ideas. Of course, one possibility is that someone has already found the treasure and not told anyone. But that won't stop hundreds more people going treasure hunting this spring. Where would you start looking?

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