Background on the book from http://thesecret.pbworks.com/w/page/22148559/FrontPage

“Many armchair treasure hunt books have been published over the years, most notably Masquerade (1979) by British artist Kit Williams. Masquerade promised a jewel-encrusted golden hare to the first person to unravel the riddle that Williams cleverly hid in his art. In 1982, while everyone in Britain was still madly digging up hedgerows and pastures in search of the golden hare, The Secret: A Treasure Hunt was published in America. The previous year, author and publisher Byron Preiss had traveled to 12 locations in the continental U.S. (and possibly Canada) to secretly bury a dozen ceramic casques. Each casque contained a small key that could be redeemed for one of 12 jewels Preiss kept in a safe deposit box in New York. The key to finding the casques was to match one of 12 paintings to one of 12 poetic verses, solve the resulting riddle, and start digging. Since 1982, only two of the 12 casques have been recovered. The first was located in Grant Park, Chicago, in 1984 by a group of students. The second was unearthed in 2004 in Cleveland by two members of the Quest4Treasure forum. Preiss was killed in an auto accident in the summer of 2005, but the hunt for his casques continues.

The Secret is long out of print, but copies can be obtained easily online (try abebooks.com or bookfinder.com; the book was jointly authored by Sean Kelly, John Pierard, Byron Preiss, Ben Asen, John Jude Palencar, Ted Mann, JoEllen Trilling, and Overton Loyd). Most of the book has no connection whatsoever to the treasure hunt. Of primary importance are the 12 paintings and the 12 verses, as well as some front-end material that provides a back story.”
Twelve boxes (or “casques” as they were called) were buried, but only two have been found. The first one was discovered by a group of students in 1984, in Grant Park in Chicago. This is how it worked.

Where M and B are set in stone  
And to Congress, R is known  
L sits and left  
Beyond his shoulder  
Is the Fair Folks’  
Treasure holder  
The end of ten by thirteen  
Is your clue  
Fence and fixture  
Central too  
For finding jewel casque  
Seek the sounds  
Of rumble  
Brush and music  
Hush.
The verse describes various landmarks in the area of Grant Park.

*Where M and B are set in stone*

1 - The names of Mozart and Beethoven appear on the front of Symphony Hall.

*And to Congress, R is known*

2 - Roosevelt University on Congress Parkway

*L sits and left*

3 - Statue of Lincoln

*Beyond his shoulder*

4 Shows the position of the casque

“The end of ten by thirteen” referred to two lines of trees. “Fence and fixture” referred to this fencepost and wall fixture. The casque was apparently found between them. (That tree wasn’t there at the time.)
Several landmarks around Grant Park appeared disguised within the image, including the statue “Spirit of the Great Lakes”…

“The Bowman”…

…and the fencepost…
This is the picture and verse which are thought to relate to New Orleans:
Some of these puzzles seem to be based around a particular location, while others involve a trail around a city from one point to another. I think this one involves a simple trail starting at Jackson Square and ending at Louis Armstrong Park.

*At stone wall's door*
*The air smells sweet*

This could be a reference to “Stonewall Jackson” and Jackson Square, near the Café du Monde. The signs at the entrance to Jackson have a flowers-and-crown motif which resembles the clockface…

*Not far away*
*High posts are three*
*Education and Justice*
*For all to see*
Perhaps this refers to the spires of St Louis Cathedral, with the adjoining Presbytere (once a courthouse) and Cabildo (once the Supreme Court), both now museums.

Running north, but first across
In jewel's direction
Is an object
Of Twain's attention

From here, St Peter St runs northwest past Preservation Hall, which is suggested in the image. (The doorway is opposite the sign.)

The “object of Twain’s attention” is St Peter’s (in Rome) which Twain wrote about in “The Innocents Abroad”.
Giant pole
Giant step
To the place
The casque is kept.

Continuing up St Peter’s you reach Congo Square and the “Mardi Gras” arch at the entrance to Louis Armstrong Park.
The mask (a Mardi Gras mask?) resembles the park’s statue of Louis Armstrong:

…and the arch appears disguised in Armstrong’s mouth…

There are also other arch representations…
Each image is associated with a country (France in this case) and a month, with its birthstone and birth flower. For this image, the 12 on the clock gives us December, with the Turquoise and Narcissus.

There’s a verse in the introduction to the book which lists the countries and their associated gems:

*Turquoise the Fays of France keep: stone*  
*Rare as a blue midsummer day*

Here we see the turquoise under the arch, and “Pres”, French for “near”, at one end of the arch.

It’s thought that the boy on the clockface represents the child climbing the McDonough statue in Lafayette Square:
This has led some people to think that the casque is in Lafayette Square. However, I think this is actually an obscure hint for one of the McDonough schools, McDonough 18, aka the Rabassa / De Pouilly House in Louis Armstrong Park.

This could explain the boy’s arc…

The clock has three numbers on it; 19 and 29 along the top, and 90 at the bottom. 29 and 90 give the latitude and longitude of New Orleans. 1929 might be a reference to the date of the park’s Municipal Auditorium. It’s also been pointed out that McDonough #19 is the Armstrong school.

The “Giant Step” could be an allusion to Armstrong’s “Small step / giant leap”, explaining the moon and stars in the image. (This could also be a reference to Moon Landrieu, the mayor who initiated the Louis Armstrong Park project.) The “Giant pole” might be the large N or S on the sign.

I was wondering if it might be buried here, beside the arch…

“Not far away high posts are three”…?
This is what was buried, up to 3ft deep in a plastic container.

![Image of a buried container](image)

Although there’s no prize anymore, anyone finding one of these would have the box as a souvenir, and they’d be regarded as a hero by the people at the “Quest4Treasure” website…;-)

Only one has been recovered intact, the Cleveland one having been reduced to fragments.

If anyone ever finds it…please let us know!

Ben Glover
B_J_Glover@yahoo.co.uk

Discussion forum at:

www.quest4treasure.co.uk
Here’s an article about the first casque that was found, though its explanation of the clues isn’t accurate.

By Eric Zorn

When Byron Preiss wrote his book "The Secret" last year, he was counting on there being a few more people like Bob Wrobel, Eric Gasiorowski and David James in this world; people who would throw themselves wholeheartedly into a wildly difficult, nationwide hunt for buried treasure.

Preiss buried 12 ceramic casks in the far reaches of the 48 states and planted a host of clues to their whereabouts in a Bantam paperback published last fall. He expected the first treasure to be found within 30 days. The months rolled by, and no one cracked any of the puzzles. Some 700 people wrote to Preiss at his New York office claiming to have located the treasure. None had.

Then, early in the evening of one of Chicago’s hottest summer days, Wrobel, Gasiorowski and James took a shovel, the book, a map and a few friends to an obscure corner of Grant Park and completed a six-month search by digging up the first of the ceramic casks.

In return for their travail, the suburban teenagers get to keep the cask, valued at more than $500, and will receive an emerald worth approximately $1,000. The remainder of the jewels will continue to gather dust in a New York City vault until the casks that go along with them are unearthed.

The Chicago treasure would still be in the ground had not a feature story about "The Secret" appeared in The Tribune late last year and inspired Wrobel, 19, to buy the book as a birthday present for James, now 18. The two knew each other from Walkler Lutheran High School in Melrose Park and were part of a small circle of friends that played "Dungeons and Dragons," an elaborate fantasy game favored by those with high intelligence and a somewhat obsessive, escapist nature.

The Hunt Began for the young men in February when Gasiorowski, 16, the third member of the plucky trio, bought his own copy of the book. They were confronted with a confounding set of clues that at first seemed to make no sense whatsoever.

"The Secret" was an attempt by the author to duplicate the success of "Masquerade," a 1979 British book that combined a fairy tale with a
Tough ‘Secret’ clues lead Chicago trio

Continued from first Tempo page

real treasure hunt and captured the international imagi-
ration. In the American Version, Preiss planted hints in
paintings and poems that helped comprise an elaborate,
humoristic folktale about “The Fair People,” immigrant
elves and gnomes.

The book has not been such a huge success as its
European counterpart. One reason is the chilly reception
accorded “The Secret” by critics. Another may be that
there are so many different treasures to look for, no one
of them is as tempting as the single $50,000 bonanza of
“Masquerade.” A third reason may be that the puzzles
themselves are very hard.

The key to the Chicago treasure, for example, was
recognizing lesser-known or disguised area landmarks
sprinkled through one of 12 thoroughly bizarre paintings
and matching those clues with the following poem in a
series of poems:

Where M and B are set in stone
And to Congress, R is known
L into and left
Beyond his shoulder
Is the Fair Folks’
Treasure hunter
The end of ten by thirteen
Is your clue
Fence and fixture

Chicago Tribune, 8/9/83, Sec. 2, pg. 3(1)

OKAY. IT’S obvious to you in retrospect: “M and B”
stand for “man and beast,” and “set in stone” means a
statue, a reference to the two 1923 Ivan Mestrovic
sculptures of American Indians on horses that flank
Congress Drive in Grant Park at South Michigan Avenue
(even though the statues are not set in stone but, in fact,
bronze), “Congress” refers to the drive or the hotel and
R stands for “railroad.” “L” is for the statue of Lincoln
in Grant Park. “Ten by thirteen” are rows of trees
behind him, “Central” is the Illinois Central railroad,
“brush and music” mean the Art Institute and the
bandsale. Find a “fence and fixture” in the vicinity and
start digging.

Actually, Wrobel & Co. figured most of this out pretty
quickly. They made a few wrong guesses at first,
figuring that “L” stood for the lions in front of the Art
Institute and wasting a few hours crawling around on
them. But they wasted little time searching the
area bordered by Jackson Drive, Columbus Drive, Congress Drive and the Illinois Central
tracks.

They got out the shovels. In February they took the

To a treasure buried in Grant Park

long ride in from the western suburbs and dug five holes
in the frozen tundra. No luck. They were sure they had
the spot, so they sent off a letter to Preiss to ask if they
were close or if, perchance, it already had been found.

Months passed. The letter never reached Preiss, and
in waiting around for a response the boys practically
forgot about their search. Finally, in early July they
called Preiss’ office long distance. His secretary said
there was no treasure buried in Chicago. But the boys
were sure.

They called back the next day and asked to speak with
him personally. They explained their reasoning in solv-
ing his riddles and told him where they were digging.
“You have the answer,” he told them. “I don’t see why
you can’t find the right spot.”

SOMETIMES DURING the winter of 1881-82, Preiss,
dressed in a modest, blue-collar disguise, had crept into
Grant Park and planted the ceramic cask, protected by a
plastic box, in a woodsly, secluded area a few feet from
a cement retaining wall that runs next to Jackson Drive
and close to a link fence that keeps the bumps off the
railroad tracks. The area now is pitted with reminders of
the many holes that Wrobel, Gasiorowski and James
chewed into the sod in July.

They were never once stopped by the police, though
Gasiorowski says he once had to hide inside a hole he
was digging to avoid the gendarmes, and all three
attracted frequent attention from curious passers-by who
wondered just what these guys thought they were doing
playing gopher on public property.

All they found on their digs were underground pipes.
They called Preiss again to beg for the last little clue,
which he finally sent them in the form of a snapshot
taken at the burial site. The placement of the scarred
earth in that picture was the last piece to the puzzle.

So, filled with a sense of celebration and anticipation,
Wrobel, Gasiorowski, his mother and sister, some
neighbors, a photographer and a lookout [James, alas,
was visiting his grandparents in Indiana] trooped down
town one last time to claim their reward. Once again
they pierced the crumbly Chicago soil with their shovel.
Once again they dug deep: One foot. Two feet. Three
feet. Once again they found nothing.

DANNY ROSENTHAL, a friend and bit player in the
drama, was standing in the hole wondering what could
have gone wrong when he stepped back and knocked
some dirt off the crater wall. Suddenly, on the southern
face of the hole, there it was—the secret exposed.

“We went nuts,” says Wrobel.

They’re not quite sure what they’re going to do with
the money. Maybe they’ll invest it until James finishes
his upcoming hitch in the Army. Maybe they’ll split it
two ways and be done with the whole affair.

But maybe they’ll use it to finance another treasure
hunt. “We’ve almost got another one figured out,” says
Gasiorowski coolly. “It’s in Colorado. We’ve narrowed it
down to a four-block area.”