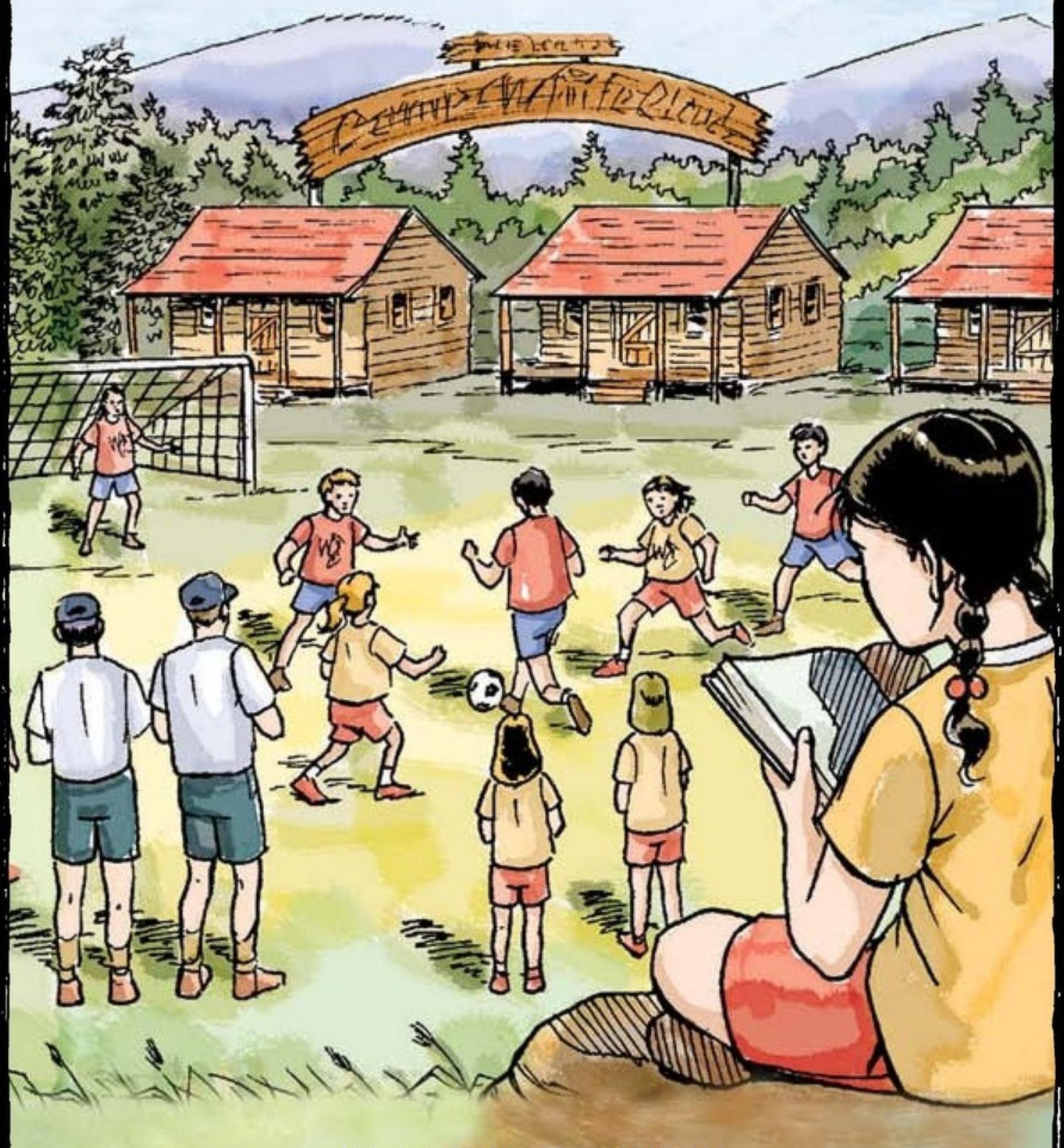


LEVELED BOOK • Q

Mystery at Camp White Cloud



Written by Troy Wolff
Illustrated by Tad Butler

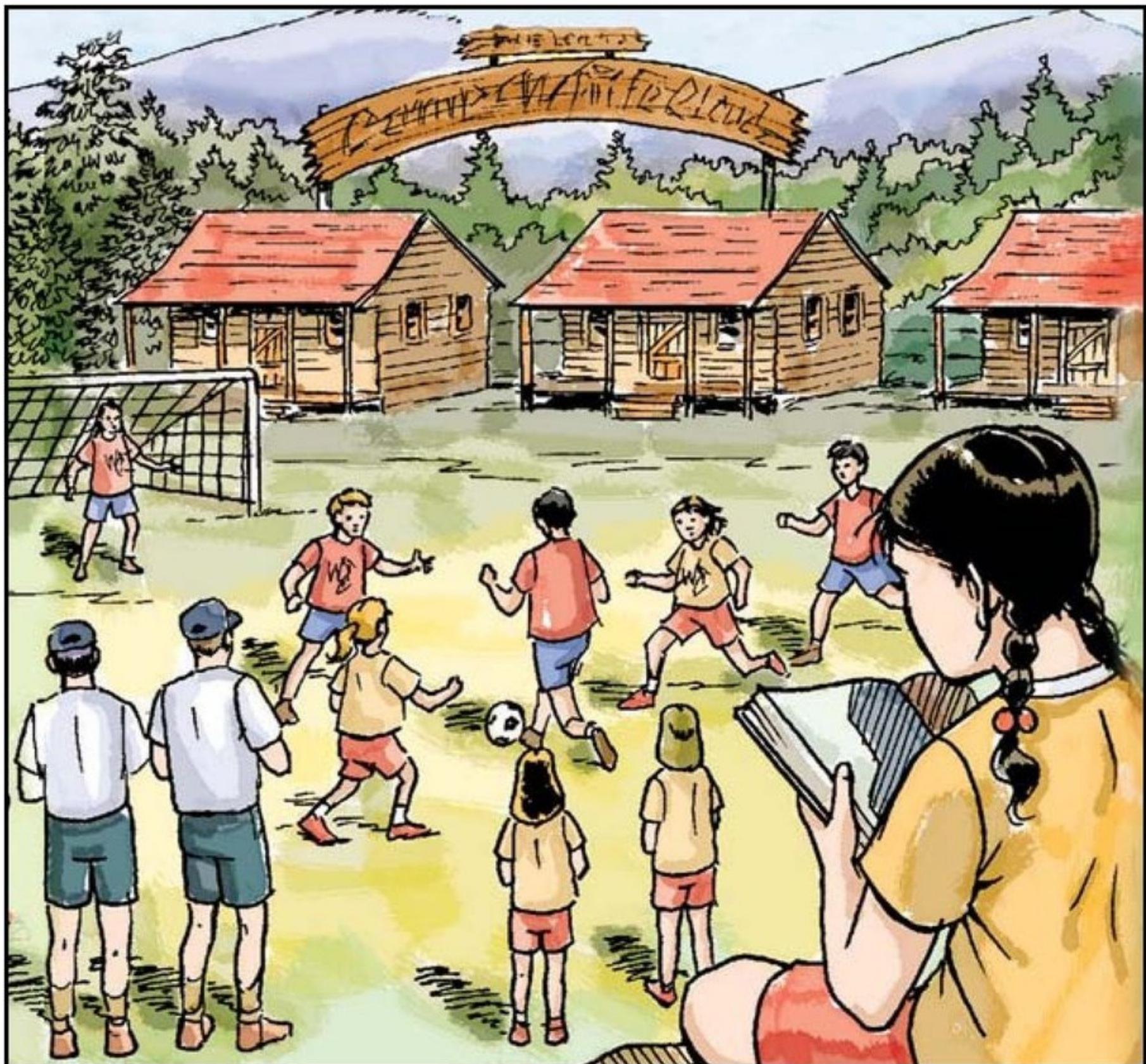
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Frankie, Gil, and Angela

Frankie looked over the book she was reading to see a group of children choosing teams on the soccer field. Behind them stood a brown wooden arch with the faded words “Welcome to Camp White Cloud.”

Frankie (short for Francis, which she disliked) had arrived yesterday, along with 199 other campers, to spend two weeks in the mountains of Colorado.

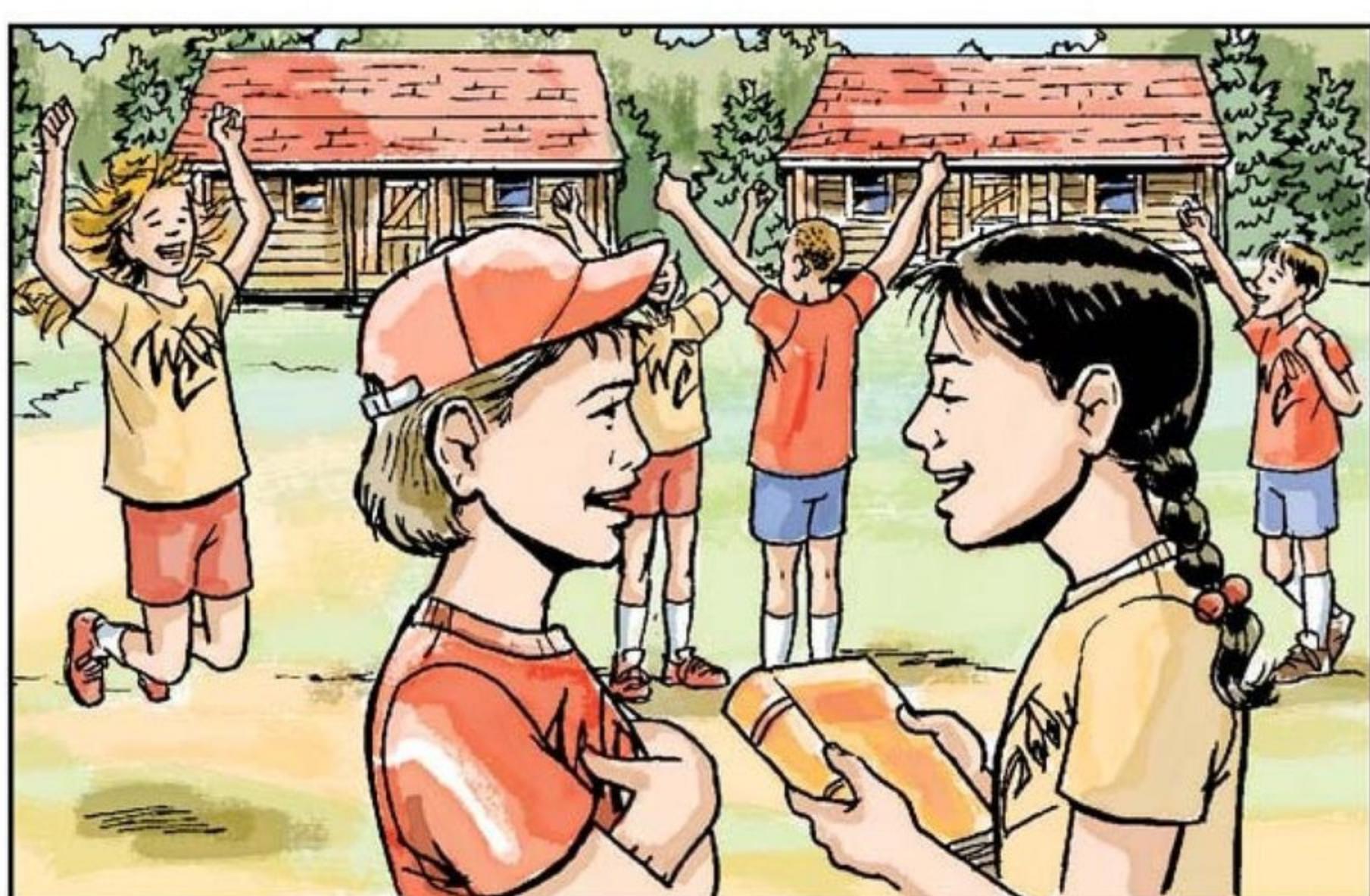
"Hey Frankie! How's it going?" came a voice from behind her.

"Oh, hi, Gil. I'm fine. How are you?" Gil was the first camper Frankie had met yesterday.

A loud cheer interrupted them. A tall girl wearing a Camp White Cloud T-shirt was jumping up and down, celebrating the goal she scored.

"Have you met Angela Hansen yet?" Gil asked.

"She's in my cabin. Everybody knows her," Frankie answered.



Gil thought for a moment. "You know, it must be great to be Angela. Her dad is Camp Director. She gets to play all summer."

"Yeah, but he's always busy running the camp. She probably doesn't see her dad much," Frankie said.

A bell suddenly chimed, and the soccer game stopped.

"Lunch, let's go eat—I'm starving!" Gil said as he jumped up from the rock.





Bump Goes the Night

That night, Frankie lay on her bunk after lights out. She thought of the story of Old Man Looper that Angela told earlier.

Looper was a miner who hoped to find a fortune in gold in the area's mountain streams. Unfortunately, he had little luck and started talking only to himself and his mule. One day, he mysteriously disappeared; Angela said he'd haunted the camp ever since.

Frankie didn't believe the story. *It was just meant to scare new campers,* she thought as she drifted off to sleep.



"WHAT WAS THAT?!" a voice called out.

Frankie shot up in her bunk.

"Shhh! Listen!" someone whispered from a lower bunk.

Hearing a twig snap, Frankie caught a glimpse of a shadow outside the cabin.

"Hey, Michiko! I think it's coming toward your window!" Frankie whispered urgently.

"I don't see anything," Michiko answered.

The girls in the cabin held their breath. Frankie could faintly see Angela's bunk; she couldn't believe Angela was sleeping through this.

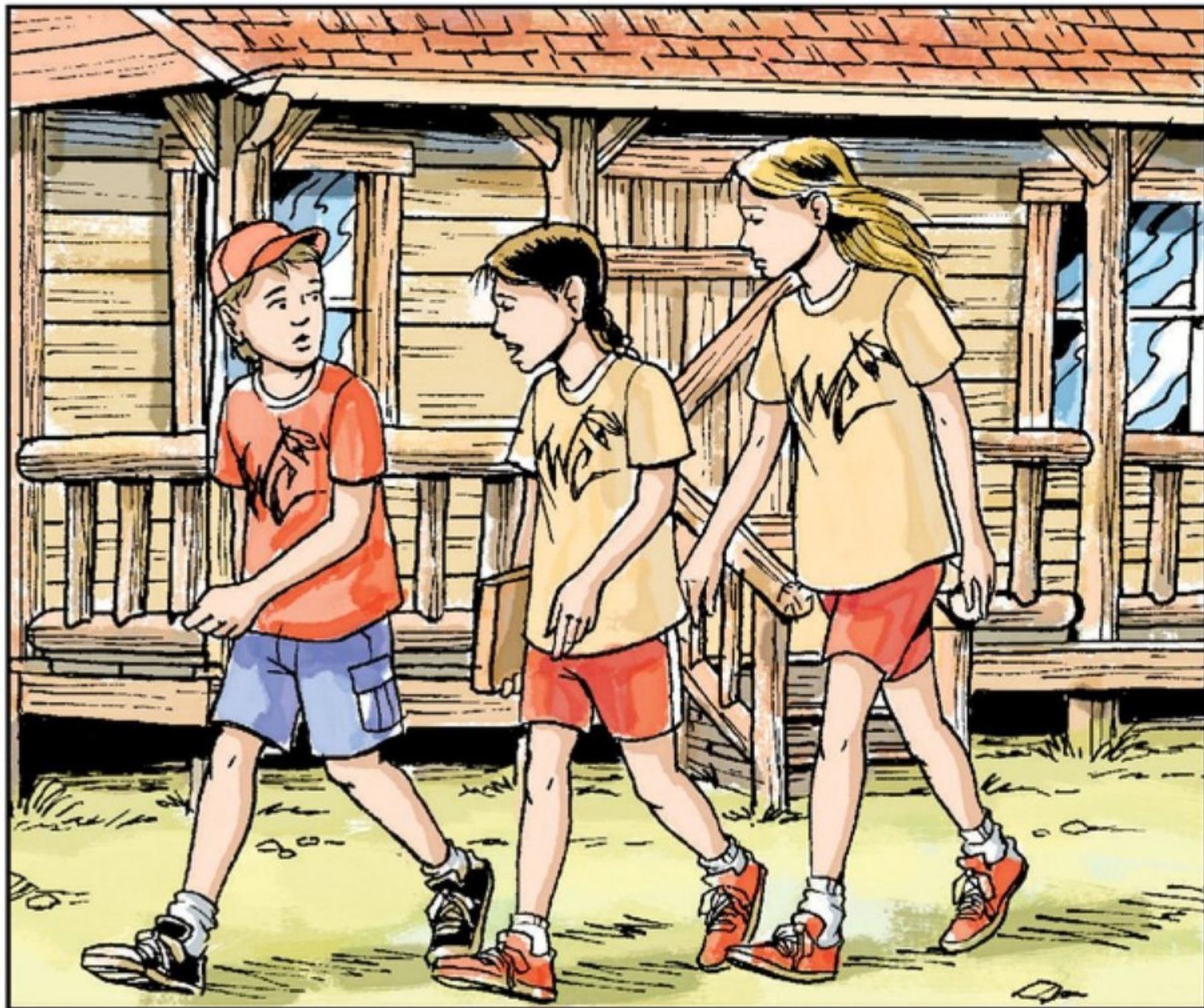
"Where is it now?" Frankie asked.

"I think it's moving away from us," Michiko said.

"Toward the boys' cabin?" Frankie asked.

"I think so," Michiko said.

After a few more questions, everyone quieted down. The image lurking outside the cabin frightened Frankie, but it also raised questions—the big one being: Why would someone, or something, be outside their cabin at this hour?



First Warning

"Hey, Gil, did you boys see anything last night?" Frankie asked after breakfast.

"Yes! It was crazy. We all saw something sneaking around our cabin, scratching and moving around," Gil answered.

"So, what do you think it was?" Frankie continued.

"I really don't know," he said. "What do you think, Angela?"

"I was asleep, but it had to be Old Man Looper," Angela said. "He shows up every summer."

Still, Frankie refused to believe it was Looper.

A bell signaled morning activity time. Angela and Gil went to woodworking class, and Frankie went to kayaking class.





Walking back to the cabin after kayaking,
Frankie heard loud voices ahead of her.

"Come over here, you guys! Look at this!"

Carved roughly into the wooden planks
were the words: "THIS IS NOT YOUR HOME!
LEAVE NOW!"

"Okay, now I'm really starting to worry,"
Michiko admitted.

"Me, too," Frankie said quietly.

Last Chance

The next morning during cabin clean-up time, Frankie heard excited voices coming from the dining hall.

When Frankie arrived at the building, she let out a gasp. Inside the dining hall was a mess, and one wall was carved with “LAST WARNING! LEAVE NOW!”



Frankie was surrounded by excited voices and questions.

“Who did this?”

“Do you think it’s Looper?”

“Why would he want us gone?”

The voices quickly faded as Director Hansen entered the dining hall.

“Okay, okay, campers, back to your cabins. I know you’re all concerned, but I’ll figure out what’s going on.”





Camp Calamity

Later, as Frankie's cabin-mates ate dinner, Michiko asked, "Has anyone seen Frankie or Gil?"

No one had seen them since they were ordered back to their cabins. Suddenly, the loudspeakers crackled to life. The campers yelped in surprise; it was already creepy being in the dining hall after what had happened to it.

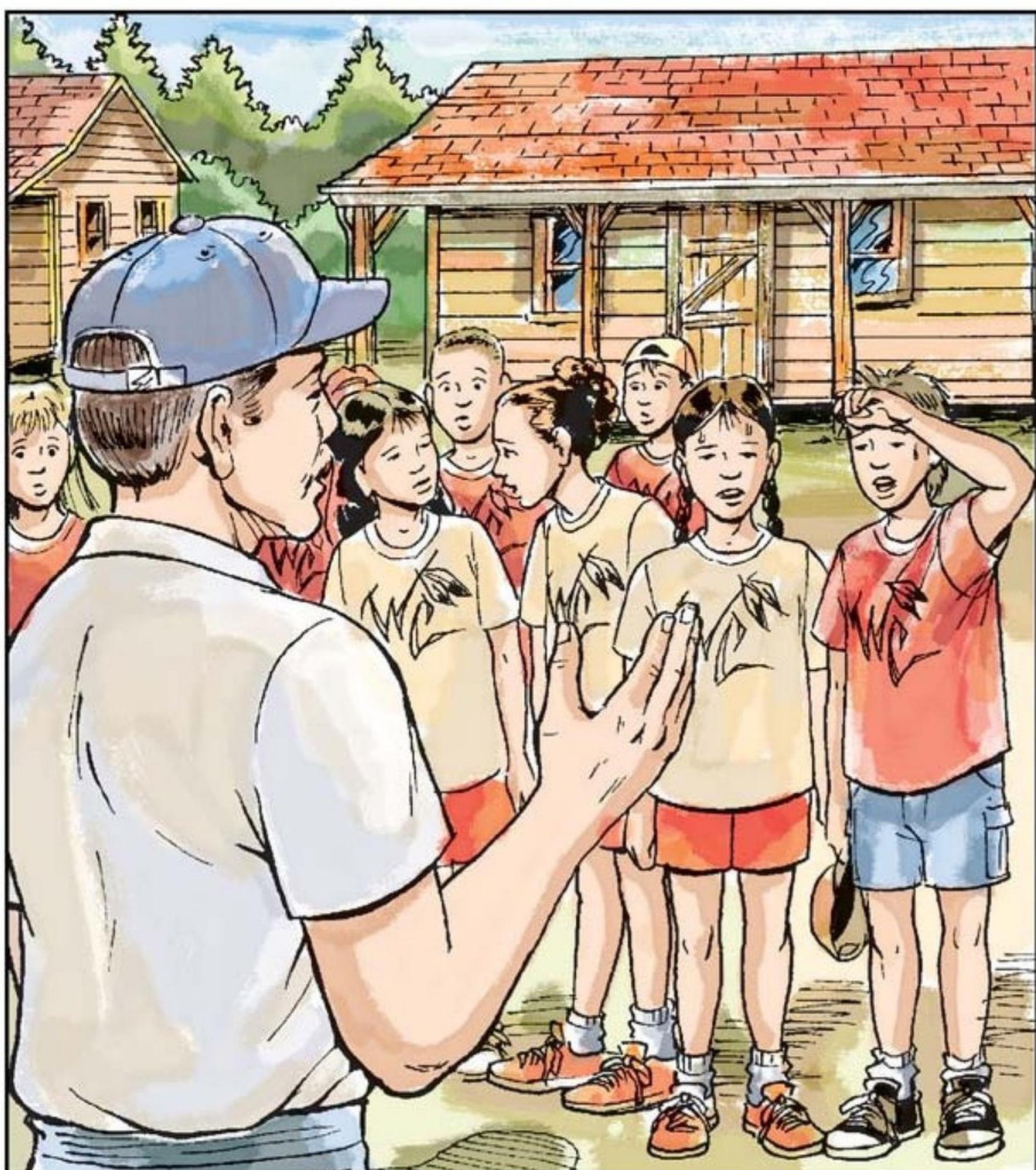
"Attention, campers, there will be a mandatory all-camp meeting in ten minutes."

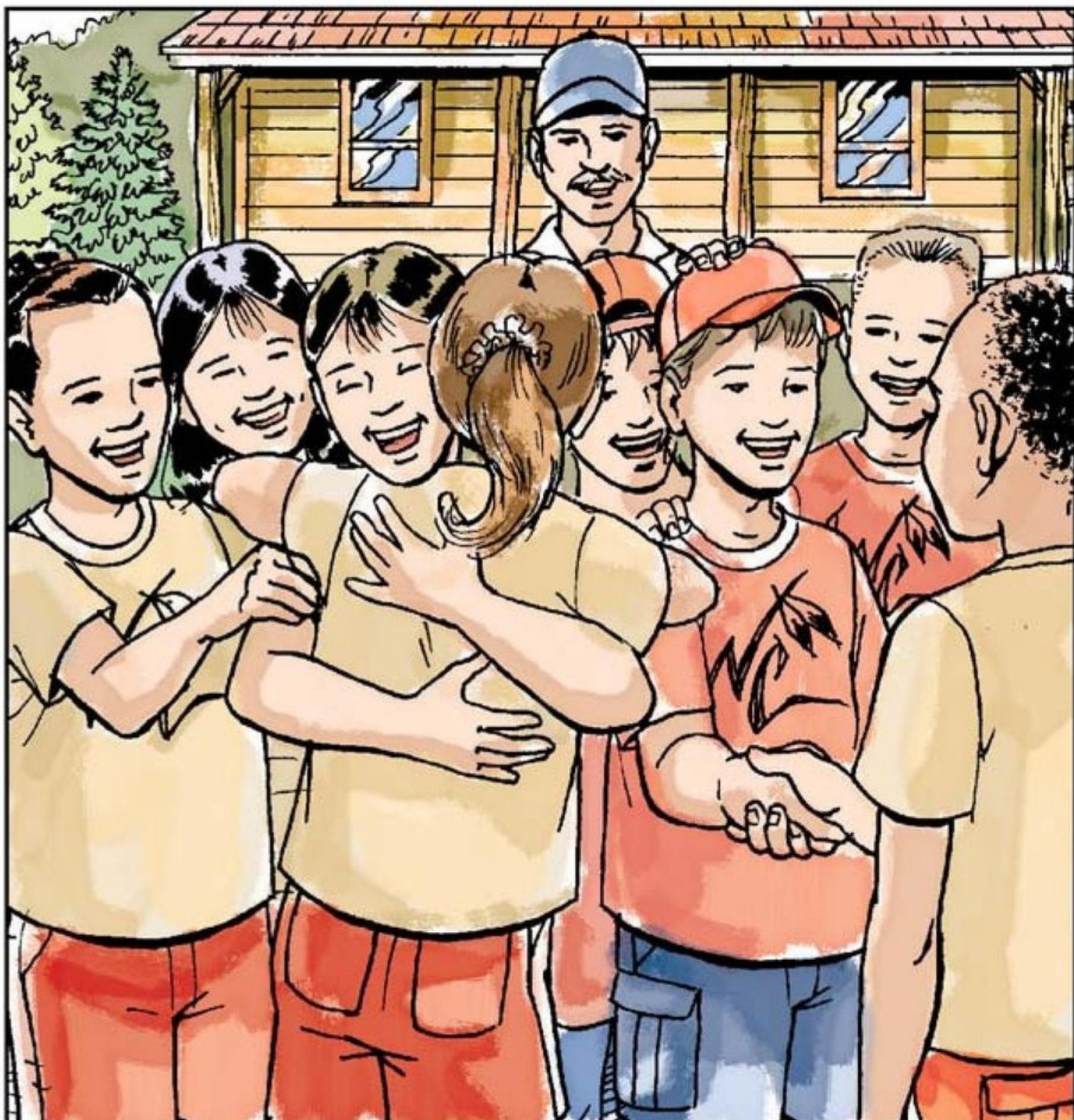
Word spread quickly that Frankie and Gil were missing.

Ten minutes later, Director Hansen spoke gravely. "For the first time in its 40-year history, Camp White Cloud will be closing early."

"WAIT, DIRECTOR HANSEN!"

All heads turned to see Frankie and Gil sprinting toward them.

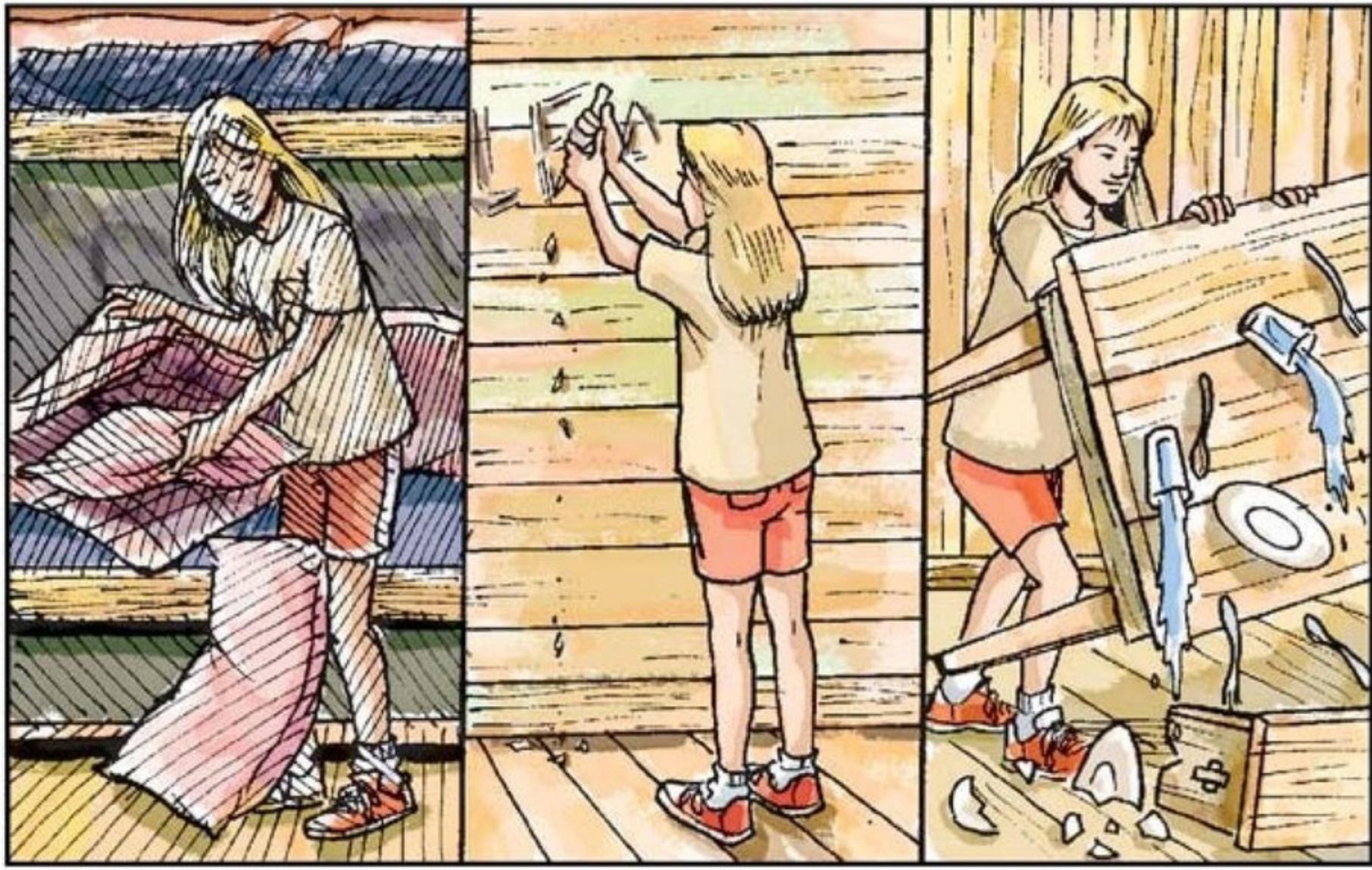




"Frankie! Gil! Where have you been?" asked Director Hansen.

Frankie walked up to Director Hansen and whispered in his ear. After a few moments, Director Hansen straightened up.

"White Cloud Campers," he began, "I have some great news! Thanks to Frankie and Gil, Camp White Cloud stays open!"



Epilogue

In his office, Director Hansen asked Frankie how she and Gil figured out that it was Angela who frightened everyone.

“I remembered Angela didn’t wake up when the prowler came,” Frankie said. “She must have stuffed her sleeping bag with pillows.”

“And Angela left woodworking early; she said she was feeling sick,” Gil said.

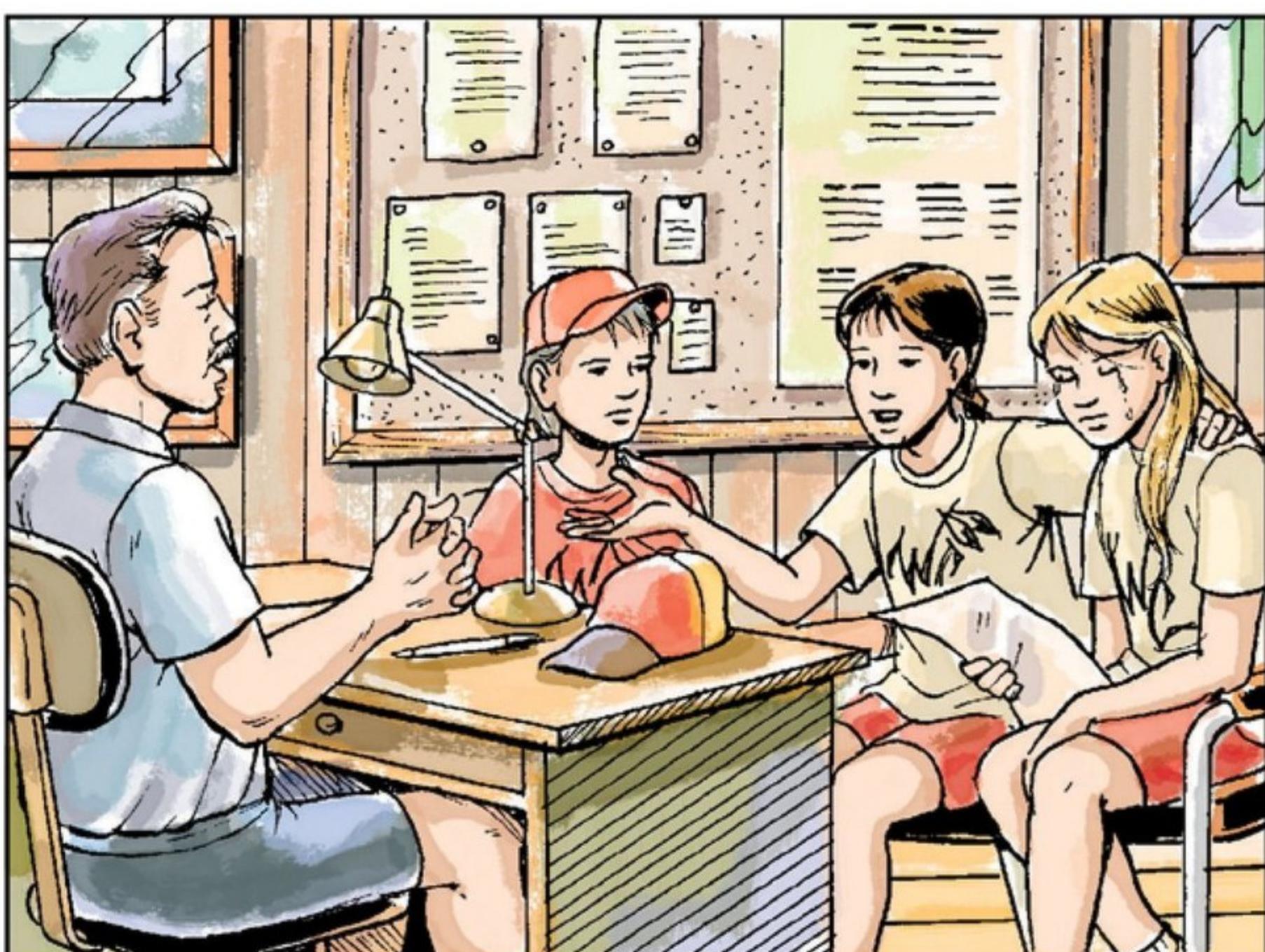
“The dining hall—she must have done that by sneaking out while everyone was sleeping,” Frankie said.

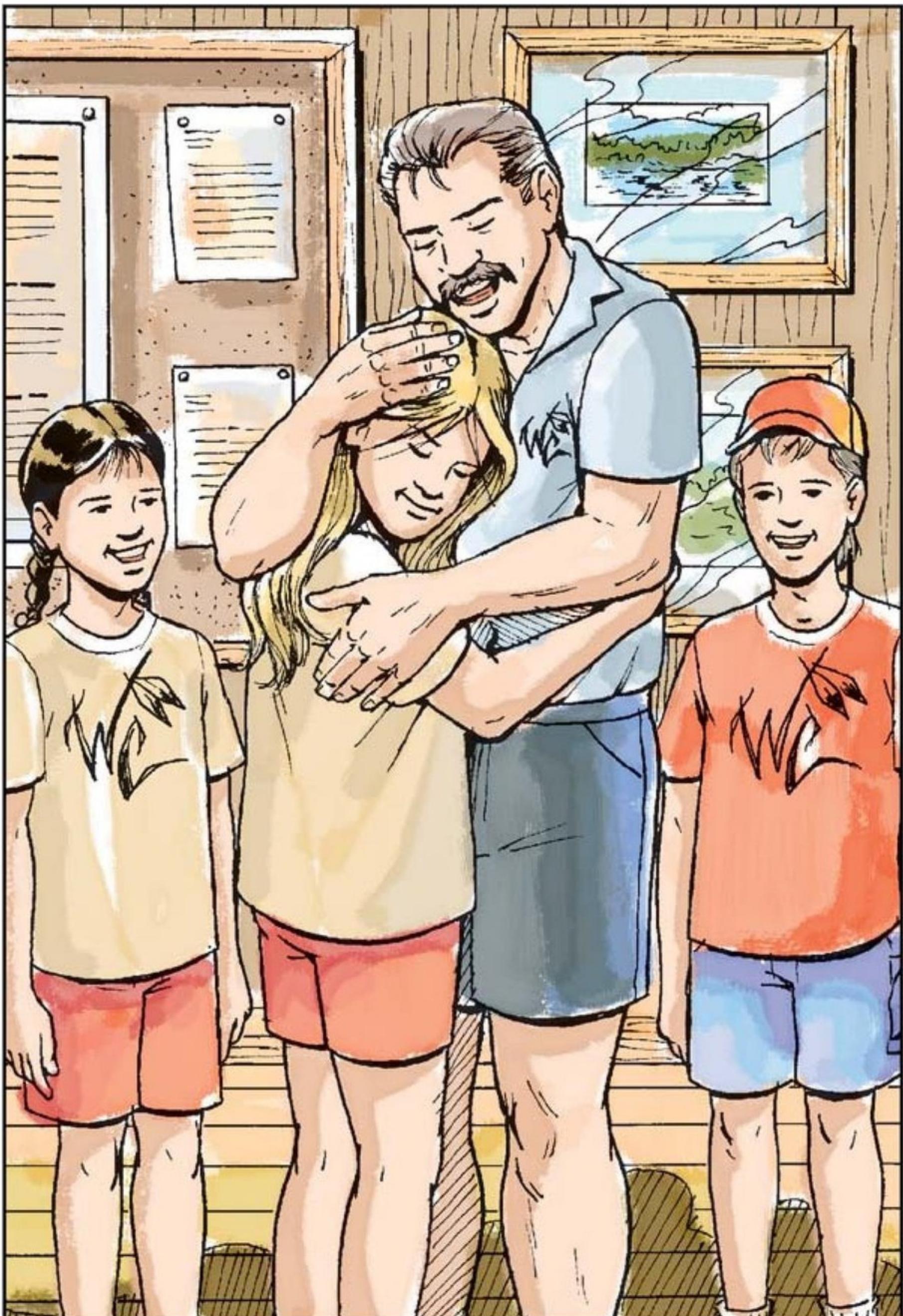
“Then we went looking for clues and found a letter addressed to you, Sir, in her woodworking box,” Frankie said. “That’s when we really realized how upset she was.”

Angela looked up at her father. “Daddy, I’m so sorry. I know it was wrong.”

“Oh, Angela, I’m sorry, too,” Director Hansen said.

Angela continued with tears in her eyes, “I know how important you are to all of these campers, but I just couldn’t stand not getting time with you any more.”





"It's okay—it's a good thing we had detectives like Frankie and Gil to solve the case."

Mystery at Camp White Cloud
Level Q Leveled Book
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