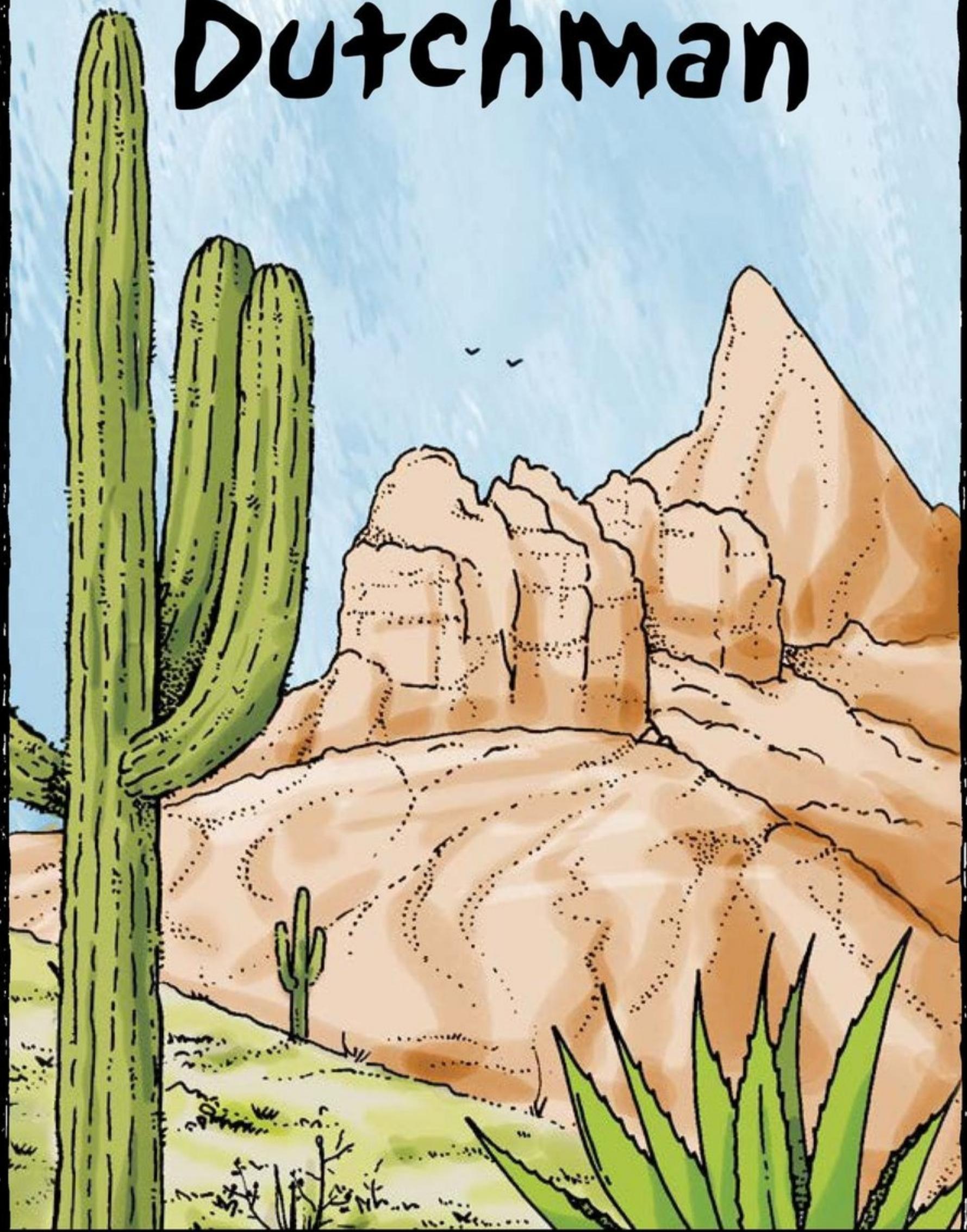


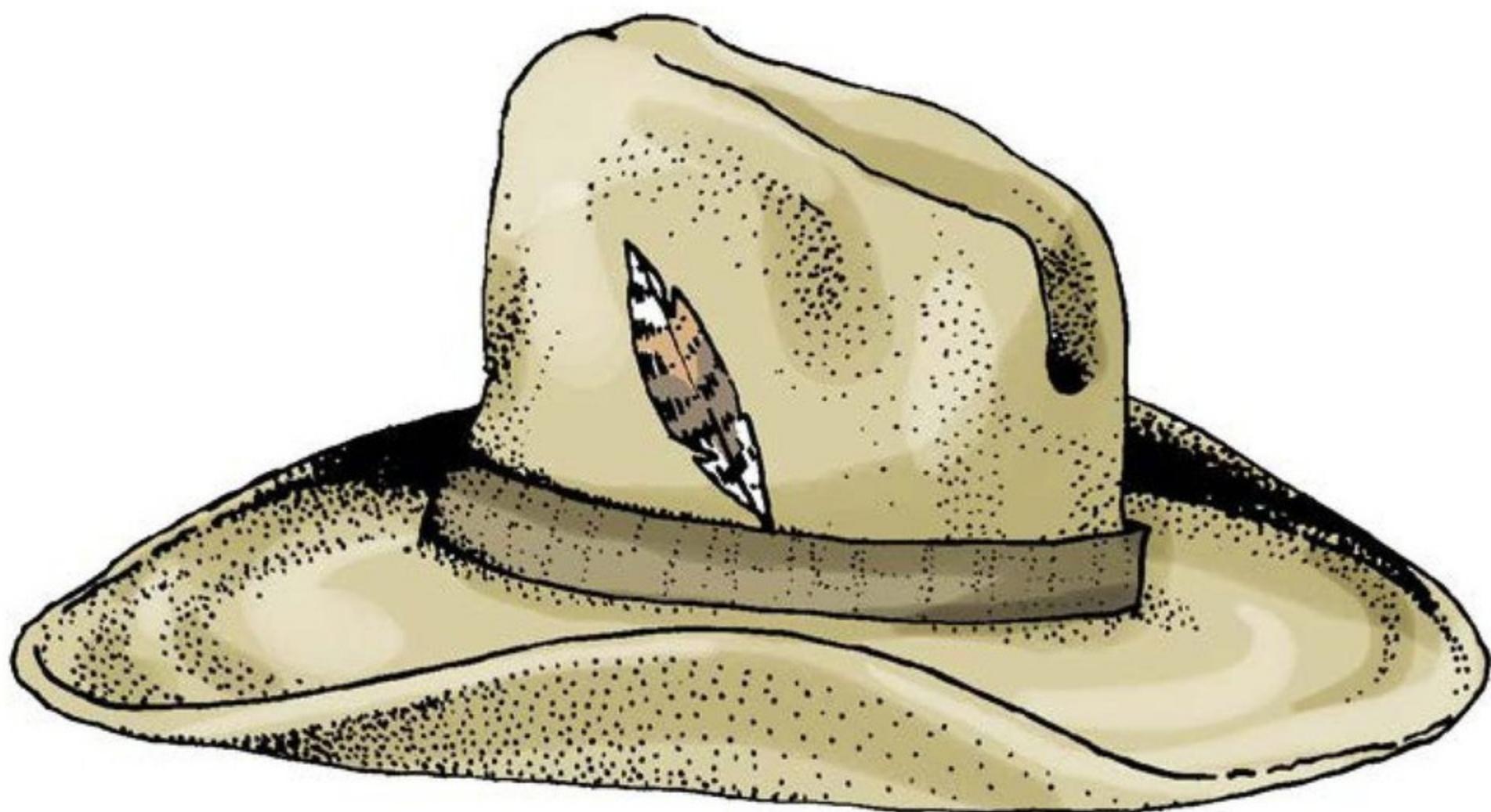
LEVELED BOOK • V

# The Lost Dutchman



Written by David Meissner  
Illustrated by Maria Voris

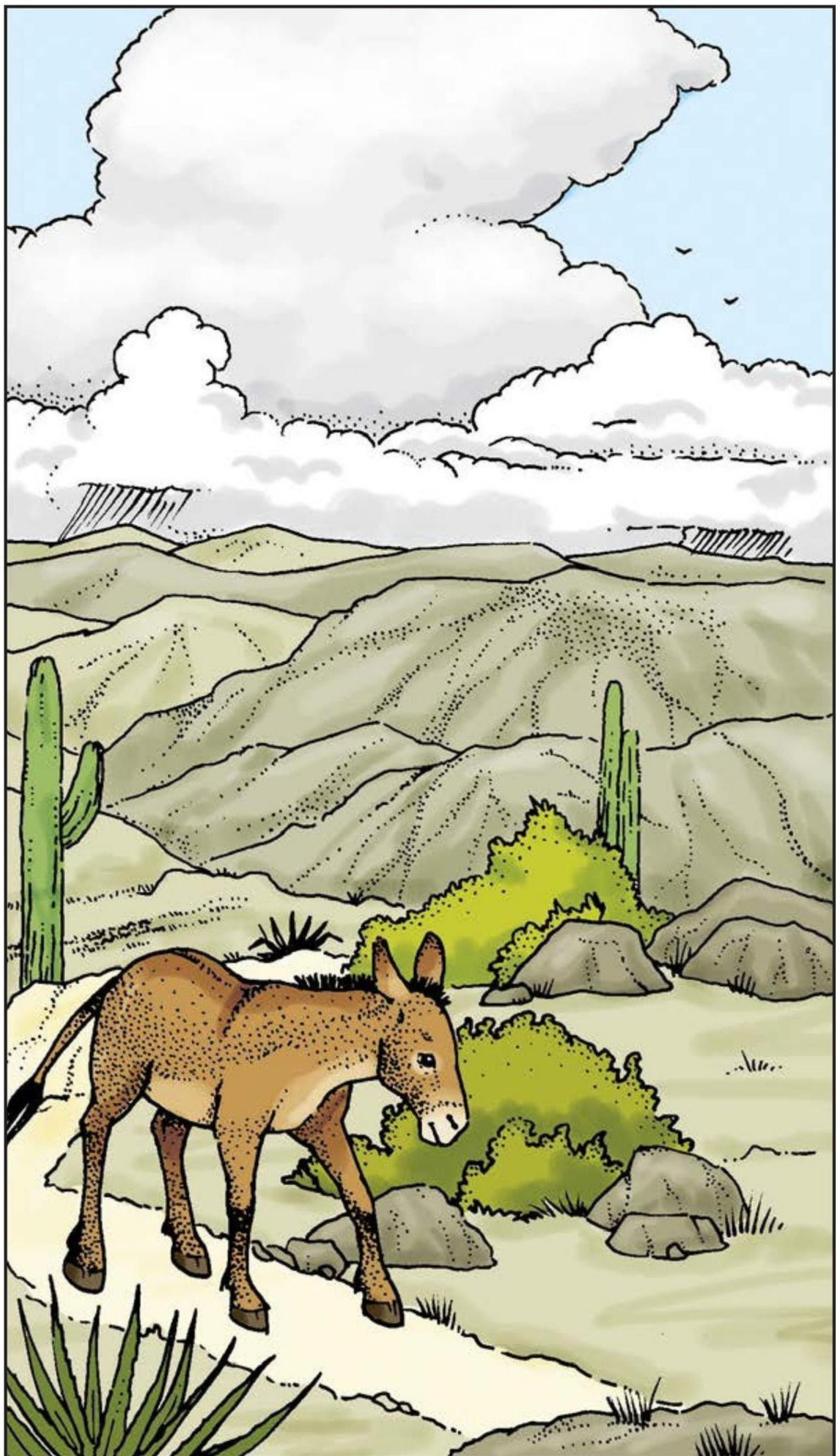
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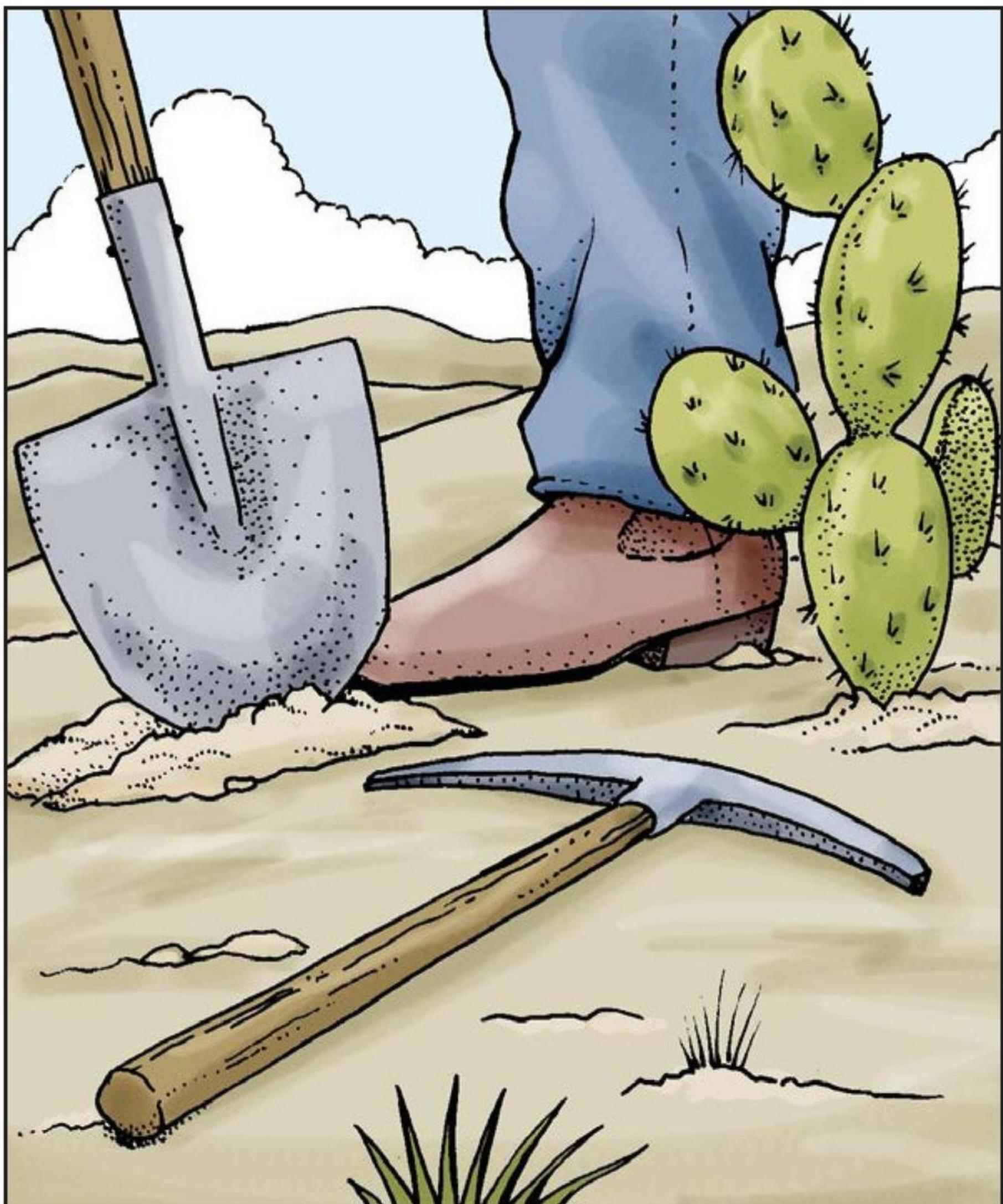


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## CHAPTER 1: *THE LEGEND*

The class began just like any other. Mr. Martinez collected homework from his fourth grade students. He asked them questions about their assigned readings. Then he talked about the next topic in Arizona history: the gold rush of the 1800s. **Prospectors** came to the desert hoping to find gold and silver in the mountains.

"One legend in particular has captured the imaginations of Arizonans, even to this day," Mr. Martinez said. "This is the story of the Lost Dutchman's Gold Mine. You see, in 1868, a farmer moved to Phoenix. He had dreams of striking it rich. One day, he decided to trade in his farming tools for picks and shovels. He and his **burro** used to disappear for days at a time into the Superstition Mountains. These mountains are still just outside of our city."

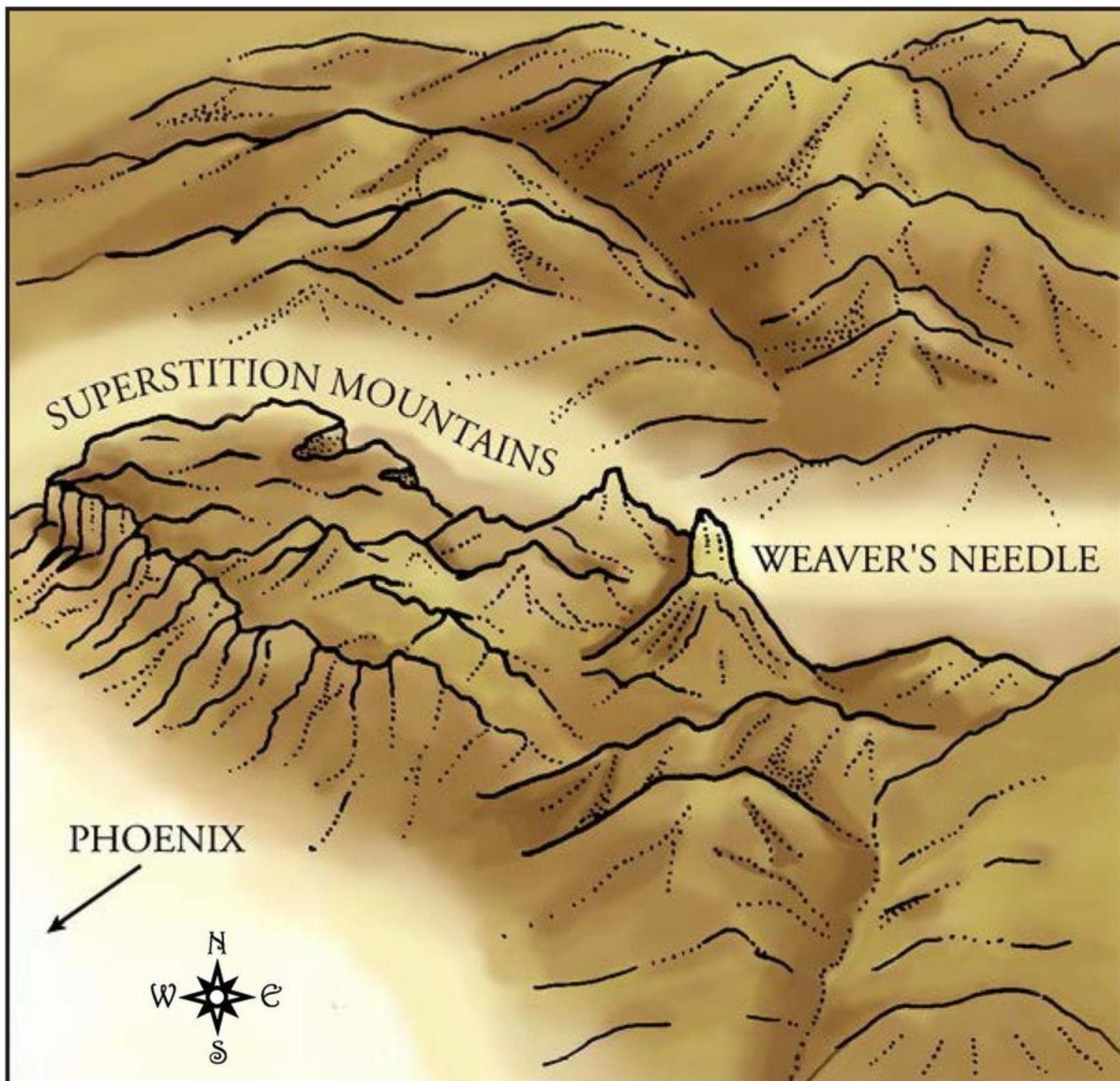
Mr. Martinez pointed to the map on the wall. "Here in these canyons, this man was rumored to have found gold. Every so often, he **emerged** from the mountains with big chunks of solid gold. People tried to follow him, but he always gave them the slip. His name was Jacob Waltz."

"You mean like me?" asked Jacob. The class laughed. Billy looked at his friend and shook his head.

"Kind of like you, Jacob," smiled Mr. Martinez. "Except that he was a farmer, rancher, and miner who could survive for days in the rough desert."

"I could survive in the rough desert, too," Jacob challenged.

Billy started giggling so hard that his stomach hurt. He took off his big, round glasses to wipe the tears from his eyes. But when he put his glasses back on, things changed from funny to really strange.



"As I was saying, Waltz was born in 1810," Mr. Martinez continued. "He died in 1891. Nobody has ever found the **legendary** mine. It is probably real, though. I mean, it must be real. It *is* real. Some people have even been very close to, uh, it."

Mr. Martinez stopped and loosened the top button of his yellow shirt. He scratched his head a few times. Then he looked around at the class with big wild eyes. Billy had never seen Mr. M. like that before.

"There are still big chunks of gold waiting in those mountains," Mr. Martinez said as he pointed

to the map again. He stared at the map for a long time without saying a word. Finally he turned to the class and said, “Excuse me, but I would like to meet with Jacob and Billy outside, please.”

Billy pointed to himself and raised his eyebrows. “Yes, you, Billy Smith,” repeated Mr. Martinez. “Oh, and Heather, I’d like you to join us as well. Sit tight, class. We’ll be back in no time.”

Once the four of them were outside of the portable classroom, Mr. Martinez looked a little nervous. His eyes darted from side to side and sweat dripped from his forehead. “Heather,” he began in a low voice, “I would like you to watch the class for the next few hours.”

“But, Mr. Martinez, I’m not a teacher!”

“Heather, all you have to do is make sure they don’t break anything. You can play heads-up seven-up, hangman, or whatever else you want.”

“Could I even organize a spelling bee?”

“That would be a great idea. Now get going and we’ll be back in a while.”

Once Heather closed the door, Mr. Martinez turned to Jacob and Billy. “Let’s get a move-on, boys! I’ve got three backpacks in my truck and the afternoon is getting late. Let’s hurry before anyone sees us!”



## CHAPTER 2: Mountain Ghosts?

Before Billy realized what was happening, they were at the outskirts of the city and climbing into the foothills. He sat in the middle of the truck cab with his arms folded, wondering if he should say anything. Mr. Martinez gripped the steering wheel with two hands and gazed straight ahead. Jacob turned his baseball cap backwards and stared out the window.

Finally Jacob turned and asked, "So Mr. M., are we really looking for the gold?" Mr. Martinez grinned and nodded. Then he pressed down even harder on the gas pedal.

"Holy geezgrubbers!" Billy blurted out. "But, but, it's just a legend, an old story—and they're going to look for us." He looked down at his watch. "It's already three o'clock. My mom is waiting for me in front of the principal's office right now!"

"They say that Waltz entered these mountains through Boulder Canyon," Mr. Martinez said as he pointed off to the right. "That's where we'll start. Are you in, Jacob?"

Jacob nodded. “Yep, and so is our friend here,” he said as he slapped Billy on the back.

“Good,” said Mr. Martinez, “because there’s a rumor that a few people have spotted Waltz up here in the past few weeks. With things heating up again, this should be an **ideal** time to go.” Their truck **veered** off onto a bumpy, dirt road. Mr. Martinez sped up, leaving a dust cloud streaming behind them.

“Are you talking ghosts?” Billy needed to know. “Because Jacob Waltz would be over 200 years old!”

“Call it what you wish, my friend, but the ghost will help us find the gold.”

“Oh gosh,” Billy sighed as he slapped his forehead in disbelief. “They’ve gone mad, absolutely bonkers! I’ll bet it’s gold fever. We should be at school right now—they’ll start looking for us!

“Wait, maybe we should go to the doctor first. I’ve read about gold fever on the Internet. They say people start acting funny when they think they’re close to finding gold. Their eyes get big and yellow, and they start scratching their heads a lot. They can even laugh for over ten seconds at nothing at all.”

Billy stopped talking because he could tell they were not listening. Mr. Martinez carefully pulled the truck off the right-hand side of the road and parked it behind two mesquite trees. “There, that should hide us,” he said. “Could you guys grab the packs out of the back?”

Jacob and Billy opened up the tailgate and saw three different colored backpacks. “The green one is for you Jacob,” Mr. Martinez called. “Hand the blue pack to Billy, and I’ll take the big one.”

Billy looked inside his blue backpack. He found a flashlight, two cans of beans, a full **canteen**, a musty pillow, and an old Mexican blanket. At the bottom he saw a long steel hunting knife. “So, Mr. Martinez,” Billy called as he held up the knife, “is this so I can kill a ghost?”

Mr. Martinez looked at Jacob and then at Billy. “All right Billy, here’s the deal: you can either come along **willingly**—”

“Willingly? But you dragged me out here!”

“You can either come along willingly,” repeated Mr. Martinez, “or you can stay here and guard the truck. This is an important trip, and Jacob and I would like you to come along—but only if you are not going to complain.”

Billy looked around at the Sonoran Desert. There were no stores, no people, and no paved roads in sight. There were just sharp cacti, loose rocks, steep mountains, and a scorching sun. He knew that rattlesnakes, scorpions, coyotes, and **Gila monsters** roamed this desert. There might even be mountain lions nearby.

Billy swung the pack over his shoulder. "I'll come," he said.

"Good," responded Mr. Martinez, without breaking a smile. "The knife is not to stab anybody. Knives can be used for cooking, **whittling** wood, or hunting."

Mr. Martinez locked the doors of his truck and looked around to see if anybody was watching. Then he lowered his hat and looked up in the direction of the sun. "We've got a few good hours to get past the first **ridge**," he said, pointing high up into the mountains.

Billy looked back at the distant city and pointed to the storm clouds on the horizon. "Do you think that's a monsoon storm coming this way?" Billy wondered out loud.

"We're going, Billy!" Jacob called from the trailhead. "Storm or no storm, we are going to find the lost gold mine." Jacob turned and started up the trail. Mr. Martinez followed him without saying a word.

Billy looked down at his dusty new shoes. Everything seemed dusty out here. Billy took off his big glasses and wiped them with his shirt. When he put them back on, Jacob and Mr. Martinez were already out of sight. Billy took one final look back at the city, tightened up his pack, and ran after them up the desert trail.

## CHAPTER 3: Camp Coyote

The hiking trail was only wide enough for one person at a time. It wound back and forth through the foothills and over dry **washes**. Next to the trail, old saguaro cacti stood like the gatekeepers of these desert mountains. The three gold-seekers traveled in silence over the first ridge, dipped down into Boulder Canyon, and lost sight of the city behind them. Except for two quick pee breaks, they kept a steady pace.

"This looks like a good place to spend the night," Mr. Martinez said at last. He pointed up at a tall, narrow peak. "That's Weaver's Needle, where there have been reports of . . ." He stopped in mid-sentence. "That is where we will find the gold mine tomorrow. Let's set up camp."

Billy wondered what camp there was to set up. He had no sleeping bag in his pack, and nobody seemed to have a tent. He pulled out the pillow and blanket, and laid them down near Jacob's blanket. Jacob was busy **rearranging** some stones into a circle.

"Was that somebody's campfire?" Billy asked him.

"Must have been," Jacob replied without looking up. "Probably somebody else looking for the gold a long time ago." Jacob stopped piling rocks and held his hand up. "Ahh, that breeze feels *mmm mmm* good." He took off his sweaty Phoenix Suns T-shirt and hung it on a tree branch.

"Mr. M., do you think a monsoon storm is coming?" Billy worried.

Mr. Martinez looked up from his blanket. "Yeah, could be. The air is starting to swirl. But don't worry, Billy. See that rocky ledge up there? If the rain starts coming down hard, we'll be up there in two minutes."

By the time it got dark, Mr. Martinez had started a fire. The dried branches quickly burned and became bright orange coals inside the stone circle. Mr. Martinez rested an old pot across two of the stones. He poured in three cans of beans and blew on the coals. Soon yellow flames danced around the pot. The three stared silently into the **mesmerizing** fire.

"Mr. Martinez," Jacob began, "you never finished telling our class about the end of the legend. What happened to the Lost Dutchman?"

"Where did I leave off?" Mr. Martinez wanted to know.

Billy looked up. "You said that he used to disappear into the mountains—*these* mountains. And he would come back into the city with gold a few days later. So people tried to follow him, but he always gave them the slip. That's where you stopped."

Mr. Martinez was still staring into the flames. "He died in his house with a box of gold under his

bed. His friends asked him where the gold mine was, but he never really told them. They tried to find it for years, but never could.”

“So, Mr. M.” Billy said delicately, “if Jacob Waltz died over 100 years ago, how have people seen him up here in the past few weeks?”

Mr. Martinez had that strange look in his eye again. Jacob sat up on his blanket. He and Billy waited for an answer. Mr. Martinez studied their faces, as if wondering how much he should tell them.

“Okay,” he said at last, “I’ll tell you what I know. For over 100 years, people have come to these mountains in search of this mine. Everybody has their **theories**. Some believe Waltz hid the entrance with rocks. Others believe an earthquake covered it up. **Skeptics** claim that it is just a myth. Other people believe it only opens at certain times of the year.”

“How so?” inquired Jacob.

“Funny things happen with these monsoon storms,” Mr. Martinez said as he looked up at the clouds overhead. “It’s like there’s electricity in the air. Monsoons are so powerful that they can scramble things—like time.”

“Scramble time?” blurted Billy in disbelief.  
“What exactly does that mean?”

Mr. Martinez poked a stick into the coals. “During the stormy season, **portals** open up to different time periods. They are like doorways to the past and the future. During this scrambled time, our paths could cross with somebody from the past.”

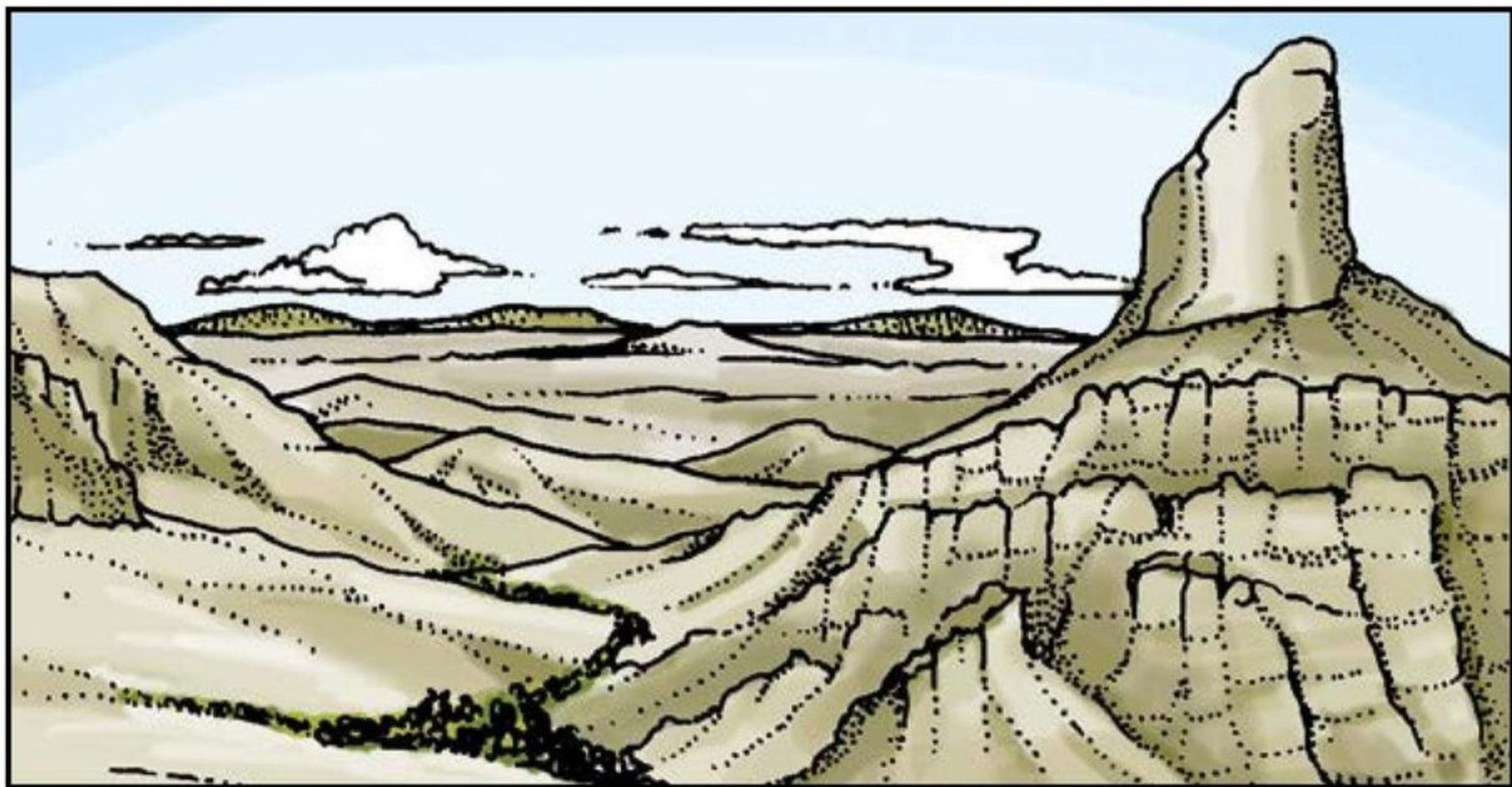
“And that is how you think people have seen Jacob Waltz recently?” Jacob added.

Mr. Martinez nodded. “There has been pretty amazing proof lately. My brother-in-law and a friend were hiking here two weeks ago. Through their **binoculars**, they saw a man walking high up near Weaver’s Needle. There was a burro walking behind him.”

Mr. Martinez looked at the two boys. The yellowish color of the fire reflected in his eyes. “And on the next day, they found a nugget of gold on the trail,” he whispered. “It was the size of a baseball.”

Jacob whistled. Billy pulled the blanket farther over his shoulders.

“Tomorrow morning, we will forget the trail and follow that wash. It heads up the canyon to the base of Weaver’s Needle.” Mr. Martinez stopped to listen. One howl turned into a chorus of yapping and howling. “Yes, Billy, there are coyotes out here. But they don’t go after people. They’ve probably just killed a deer—that’s all.”

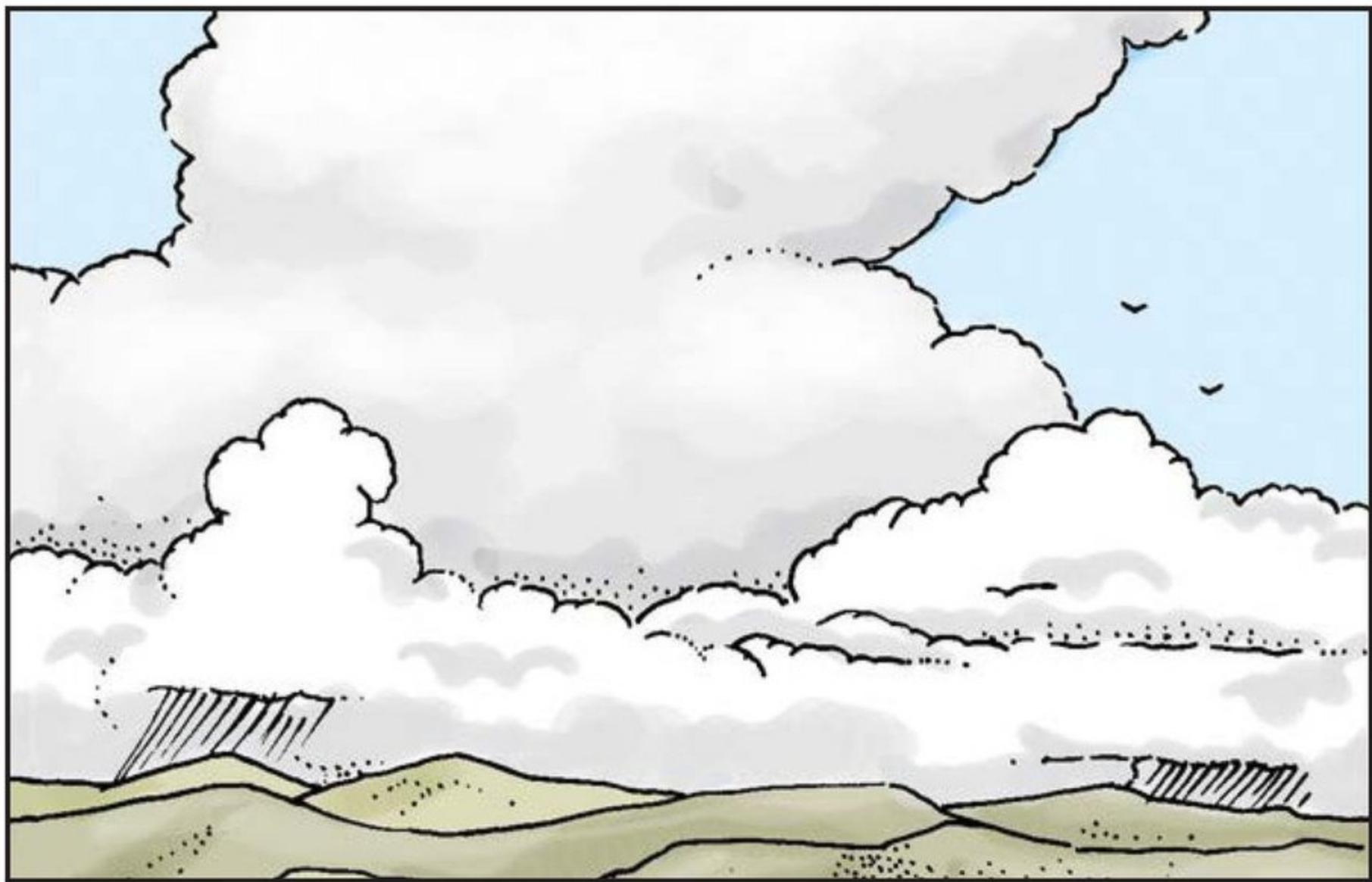


## CHAPTER 4: *The Next Day*

Billy heard some rustling noises. For a moment his whole body froze. He slowly opened his eyes. Mr. Martinez was breaking sticks and putting them into the fire.

Billy quietly rolled his eyes up toward the desert sky. The sun was not up yet, but the dawn's light was turning the sky from black to light blue. Billy's body ached from sleeping on the ground. His body and blanket smelled like dirt. He could even taste it on his lips.

The three gold seekers ate a quick bowl of oatmeal and packed up camp. They headed up the wash before the sun's rays could peek over the steep canyon walls. Mr. Martinez walked quickly and didn't speak much. Billy was worried because he had that crazy look in his eyes—even scarier than the day before.



By noon, they were hot and sweaty. The temperature was well over 100 degrees F. Billy's feet ached. When they finally stopped for lunch, Mr. Martinez passed the canteen around. "Keep yourselves **hydrated**, boys," he said, "because there's no telling how fast we might have to run down this hill!"

Mr. Martinez looked over at them and laughed for at least ten seconds. Then he scratched his head and laughed some more. Billy looked over at Jacob and saw that he was laughing, too. Jacob also seemed to have that funny look in his eyes.

Suddenly Jacob began to sing, "We're going to get rich today, la-da-dee-dee-da-da! And no more bills to pay, la-dee-dee-dee-da!" He stopped for just a moment. "Hey Billy, I'll buy you a new bike tomorrow! Do you want a mountain bike or

a motorcycle?" Mr. Martinez laughed, and Jacob shrieked again. Then Jacob started to scratch his head, too.

By mid-afternoon they were getting so close they could feel it. Jacob had stopped singing and Mr. Martinez scanned the mountainside for clues. Billy watched his feet carefully and tried not to step on any twigs.

As the hour went on, the air began to swirl. Small clouds from the horizon were now big, black, and rumbling overhead. There was almost a sweet smell to the air. Suddenly Jacob stopped and shouted, "I saw it, I saw it, I saw him!"

Mr. Martinez quickly put his hand over Jacob's mouth. "*Shhh, shhhhh . . .* that's better," he said. Mr. M.'s golden eyes looked into Jacob's golden eyes. "This should be about the right time. Now tell me, Jacob, where did you see him?"

Jacob pointed up to a pile of fallen rocks at the eastern base of Weaver's Needle. Mr. Martinez looked through his binoculars and smiled from ear to ear. "Well, I'll be! There's Wickety, the old man's burro." Billy looked up at Mr. M.'s big smile underneath the binoculars. His teacher was missing two teeth on the right side.

When a few big drops of rain fell, Mr. Martinez put the binoculars down. "Okay, guys, let's huddle up," he said. "This is a dream that is over 100 years

old. This legend is real, and we will become its final chapter. We are going into the mine to stuff as much gold as will fit into our backpacks. If we get split up, we'll meet back at the truck."

"But which way is the truck?" Billy asked.

"That way," Mr. Martinez pointed. "Just follow the wash—and if you don't see the truck, just keep going downhill. From there, you can hitch a ride into town." He paused and leaned down close to Billy's face.

"But don't tell anybody about the gold."

"What will we do inside the mine?" Jacob needed to know. "What if he's in there?"

Mr. Martinez glanced down at the knife strapped to his belt. "We'll be fine," he answered. "There are three of us. Now empty out your packs. Let's **stash** everything behind these trees."

More big raindrops started to fall. Billy tucked his musty pillow and Mexican blanket under some rocks. "The food and water, too, Billy," Mr. Martinez instructed him.

"But Mr. Martinez, what if we get hungry or dehydrated?"

"Billy, we need room for the gold," Jacob explained.

"Do bring the flashlights though," whispered Mr. Martinez. "It'll be dark inside."

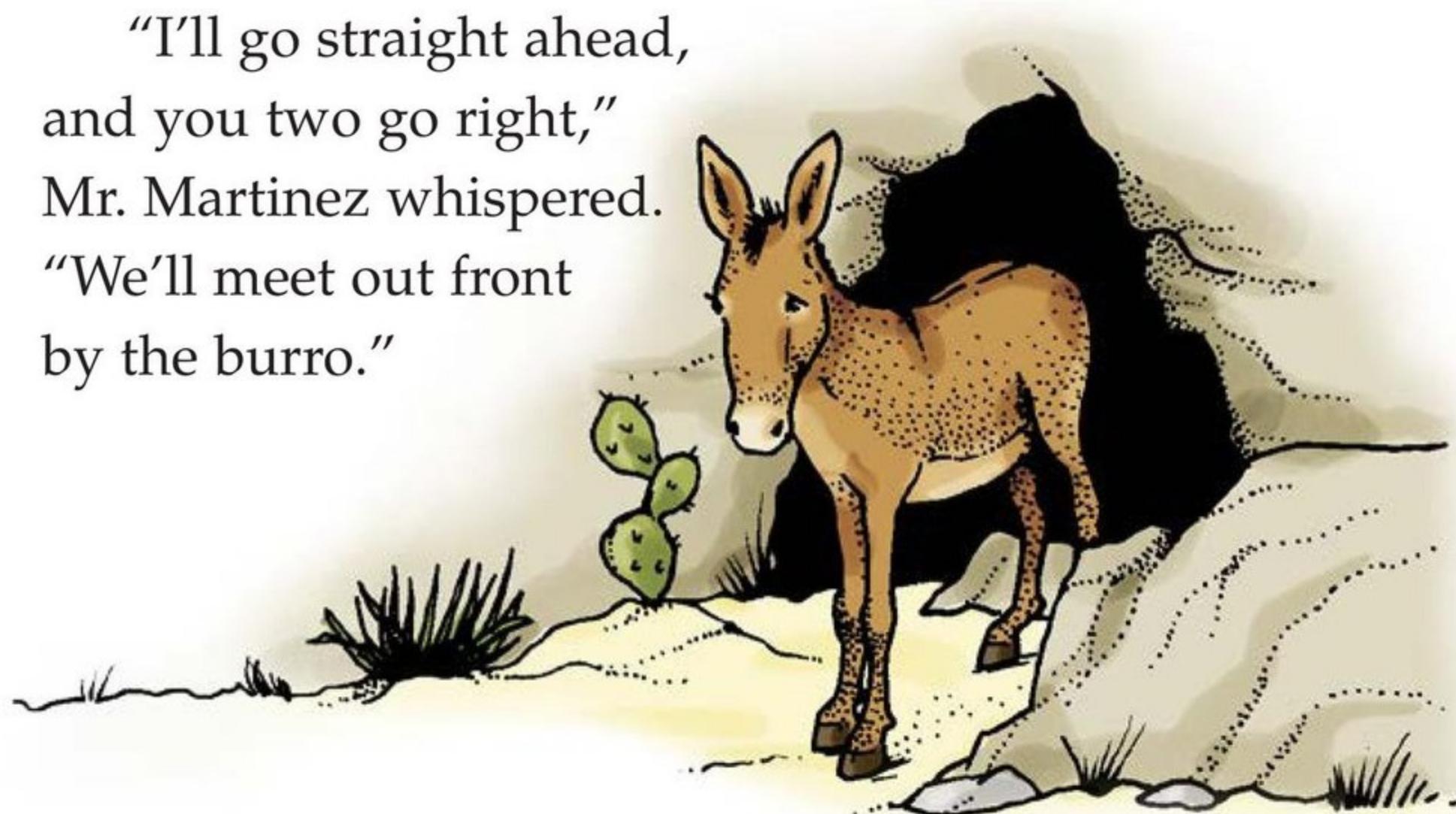
## CHAPTER 5: The Gold Mine

At the mine's entrance, the old burro was tied to a rock. The **tattered** rope was fastened around her neck by just one loose knot. The burro's grayish coat looked as if it had spent many days in the desert sun. Her **ancient** face turned to watch the three approaching gold seekers. She stomped her hoof into the dirt.

"Easy there, Wickety," whispered Mr. Martinez, placing a hand on her head. He pulled some oats out of his front pocket. Wickety ate them from his hand. Mr. Martinez gave her a final pat and motioned the boys toward the entrance.

Inside the mine, it was dark. Mr. Martinez, Jacob, and Billy stood in the entrance room, waiting for their eyes to adjust. Slowly they could make out two tunnels: one straight ahead and one to the right. An old shovel and pick leaned against one wall.

"I'll go straight ahead,  
and you two go right,"  
Mr. Martinez whispered.  
"We'll meet out front  
by the burro."



"I'm not going," said Billy. "I'm afraid of the dark!"

"Then you don't get any gold," Jacob threatened.

Billy looked at Jacob and then at Mr. Martinez. Their eyes glowed a soft yellow in the dark cave. "I'm not going," he repeated.

Mr. Martinez shook his head. "Okay Jacob, let's both try the center tunnel then."

Before Billy knew it, his teacher and friend had disappeared into the darkness. After a moment, he could no longer hear their footsteps. Billy's throat sank down to the bottom of his stomach. He gulped and leapt out into the light.

It was raining hard now. Billy could see lightning strike the desert floor miles away. In the far distance, he could see the lights of Phoenix slowly turning on for the evening. Billy thought of his mom and wondered if his school photo was already on milk cartons.

Wickety was getting soaked. Billy thought she seemed sad, so he walked over to her. "Sweetie, are you for real?" he asked before patting her head. "Are you really from the nineteenth century? Would you like to run free into the desert?" Billy started to loosen the rope around her neck.

But just then he heard a shout from the mine. Billy ran into the entrance room and waited for

his eyes to adjust. He heard Mr. M.'s voice, and it sounded happy. "Gold, gold, gold!" echoed throughout the mine.

Billy cringed. "Be quiet, you guys!" he screamed down the tunnel. "He could hear you!"

And then Billy turned toward the footsteps. They were coming from the tunnel to the right. He looked down and only saw the shovel leaning against the wall. He picked it up.

From the dark shadows, a face emerged. The face looked like old leather. Deep lines circled two eyes that seemed a century old. Its mouth opened into a big, scary smile and a gold tooth reflected the day's final light behind Billy. Billy gulped. "Jacob?" he said in a weak voice as he dropped the shovel. "Jacob, is that you?"

"Shhhh," came a voice.

"Jacob, I didn't do it!" he shouted. "I don't care about the gold—I just want to go home to my mommy!"

And the class laughed. Everybody was looking at him.

"Billy, are you okay?" Mr. Martinez asked. Billy looked up and nodded. "Good, because you can talk to Jacob about gold after class. Right now, we are talking about Arizona in the early 1900s. Let's see, where were we?"

"You just said that, in 1912, Arizona became the forty-eighth state," Jacob said. "Before that, you talked about gold seekers in the desert mountains."

"Thank you, Jacob," said Mr. Martinez. "If you keep that up, you may get an A in this class after all."

Jacob smiled and then looked over at Billy. "Are you crazy, amigo?" he whispered.

Billy looked down, embarrassed. This wasn't the first time he had daydreamed in class. "I don't know," he answered.

Heather yawned in the seat in front of him. From her stretching arms, a note landed on Billy's desk: "If you strike it rich, let us know. Love, Heather."

She started laughing. Billy saw that Jacob was laughing, too. But when Jacob turned around, he seemed to have that strange look in his eyes again. Billy looked down at Jacob's sneakers and stopped. They were unusually dusty. And there were cactus thorns in the soles.

"Jacob! Billy! Heather!" Mr. Martinez said in an **exasperated** tone. "I'm trying to teach class here. What should I do with you three?" He scratched his head without saying anything. Then he scratched his head some more.

"I'd like to see you three outside," he said at last. "The rest of you sit tight. We'll be back in no time."

## Glossary

<b>ancient</b> ( <i>adj.</i> )	very old (p. 21)
<b>binoculars</b> ( <i>n.</i> )	instruments used to see objects that are far away (p. 16)
<b>burro</b> ( <i>n.</i> )	a small donkey trained to carry things (p. 6)
<b>canteen</b> ( <i>n.</i> )	a small water container usually made of metal (p. 11)
<b>cringed</b> ( <i>v.</i> )	felt an inner shiver of embarrassment or disgust (p. 23)
<b>emerged</b> ( <i>v.</i> )	came into view (p. 6)
<b>exasperated</b> ( <i>adj.</i> )	irritated; angry (p. 24)
<b>Gila monsters</b> ( <i>n.</i> )	venomous lizards that live in the Sonoran Desert (p. 11)
<b>hydrated</b> ( <i>adj.</i> )	having enough water in one's body (p. 18)
<b>ideal</b> ( <i>adj.</i> )	perfect; couldn't be better (p. 10)
<b>legendary</b> ( <i>adj.</i> )	very well known; based on a legend (p. 7)
<b>mesmerizing</b> ( <i>adj.</i> )	holding one's attention; hypnotic (p. 14)
<b>portals</b> ( <i>n.</i> )	doorways or entrances (p. 16)
<b>prospectors</b> ( <i>n.</i> )	people who search for minerals such as gold (p. 5)

<b>rearranging</b> ( <i>v.</i> )	moving something into a different position (p. 13)
<b>ridge</b> ( <i>n.</i> )	a long and narrow hilltop, usually bordered by steep slopes (p. 12)
<b>skeptics</b> ( <i>n.</i> )	people who often doubt or question things (p. 15)
<b>stash</b> ( <i>v.</i> )	to hide something away for later (p. 20)
<b>tattered</b> ( <i>adj.</i> )	torn, old, and in poor condition (p. 21)
<b>theories</b> ( <i>n.</i> )	possible explanations that have not been proven true (p. 15)
<b>veered</b> ( <i>v.</i> )	suddenly turned or changed direction (p. 10)
<b>washes</b> ( <i>n.</i> )	dry streambeds that flow only during part of the year (p. 13)
<b>whittling</b> ( <i>v.</i> )	using a knife to carve wood into an object (p. 12)
<b>willingly</b> ( <i>adv.</i> )	done out of free choice and without complaint (p. 11)

The Lost Dutchman  
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