

In the Name of Discovery

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In the Name of Discovery



Written by Lori Polydoros
Illustrated by David Cockcroft

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Glossary

apprehension	the feeling or act of being held back by fear (p. 7)
apprehensive	fearful or worried that something bad might happen (p. 7)
armada	a large group of ships (p. 5)
delirious	excited enough to seem crazy (p. 13)
enchanted	magical, or put under a spell (p. 6)
mastodons	prehistoric elephants similar to mammoths with shaggy hair and tusks (p. 9)
perceived	understood in a certain way (p. 23)
prehistoric	a time before history could be written (p. 7)
privateer	a person who commands a private ship that fights for a country during war (p. 4)
ultimate	the best or greatest (p. 6)

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Note: The Great Gallardo’s Books is a continuing series written by Lori Polydoros. Travel with Miguel Ventura and his friends as they experience a classic adventure inspired by Jules Verne’s *Journey to the Center of the Earth*.

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Professor Von Hardwigg bear-hugged Miguel. “You were right, Harry,” Professor Von Hardwigg said. “Nothing is worth risking our lives, not even the most astonishing discovery. Let’s go home.”

Home sounded wonderful. Miguel handed the dagger to the professor. “Here is something you can take home with you.”

“Is that what I think it is?” the professor gasped. “Could it be the famous dagger of Arne Saknussem, the first explorer to reach the center of the Earth?” Hans looked at the dagger in awe at the mention of the fellow Iclander’s name.

As Miguel let go of the dagger, he closed his eyes. In seconds, a cool breeze met him back at the loft, safe and sound.

Miguel breathed a sigh of relief. Now he had witnessed first-hand how dangerous and overwhelming the power of discovery could be. Explorers were brave and smart, but often blinded by the **perceived** glory of their discovery. Miguel was glad he’d saved the professor, but for now, Miguel was content to discover each day of his *own* life—right here and right now, with, of course, a little help from the Great Gallardo’s books every now and then!

“You’ve done it!” the professor cheered.
“You’ve scared away the mighty beasts!”

Miguel rushed over to the professor. “You’re safe!” he cried.

“Thanks to you and Hans!” the professor said.
“Now untie my bonds, Harry, before that giant returns!”

Miguel glanced around in hopes of finding a stone tool or weapon when he remembered what he had in his pocket. He gently pulled out the dagger he’d found on the Great Gallardo’s chest and cut the palm twine that held the professor down. A lightbulb clicked on inside Miguel’s head. *It’s like the book knows what I’ll need to make things right!*



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An Explorer's Life

A Spanish fleet sailed across the page in Miguel's social studies book.

"Gold, power, glory," Miguel's friend, Trevon, exclaimed, "those explorers really had it all!"

"Sailing to unknown lands, seeing new things, adventure around every corner . . . boys!" Lily exclaimed.

"Yeah, we love an adventure!" said Trevon.

Miguel couldn't argue with the idea that exploring the world five hundred years ago could have been exciting. That's what he'd realized after studying some of the famous explorers such as Sir Francis Drake, "The Dragon," a feared **privateer**, navigator, and seaman. Drake was one of the first Englishmen to sail all the way around the world, and was best known for plundering the Spanish colonies in the New World in search of treasure.



" . . . WE WILL, WE WILL, ROCK YOU!"

Upon Miguel's last verse, trees and bushes bent and cracked in opposite directions as the mastodons took off—the giant running close behind them.

Hans picked up some heavy sticks to use as drumsticks against the two large shells. Miguel found a conch shell of his own and then strung together a line of smaller turtle shells with a vine. He tied the string of turtle shells around his waist, and then he and Hans headed back to find the grazing mastodons and, hopefully, the giant and the professor.

It wasn't long before they found the giant stooping over a campfire. Nearby, the professor was staked to the ground with vines. Miguel went into action, and Hans followed suit. Miguel flipped the turtle shells over, grabbed a stick and began to drum across the tops of the shells. Hans lifted his conch shell and began blowing as loud as he could.

Along with the horn and the drums, Miguel began to scream the first song that popped into his head. "WE WILL, WE WILL, ROCK YOU . . . "

The giant immediately stood erect. His eyes darted about the forest.

" . . . WE WILL, WE WILL, ROCK YOU!"
Bang, bang, honk, honk!

The mastodons roared and so did the giant.

"Keep it up, boy!" shouted the professor.

"I wonder what it was like?" Miguel asked.

"What do you mean?" Trevon said. "It must have been totally awesome!"

"What do YOU mean? It had to have been scary!" Lily added.

Miguel imagined himself at the helm of a huge ship, leading an **armada** across the open sea. Gold coins would burst from his pockets while men surrounded him, acting upon his every command. In his mind, Miguel stood taller than ever. It made his real life feel as boring as watching paint dry.

"Yeah, it must have been totally exciting," Miguel said dreamily as he stood up and walked to the window. "But you do know that most of what they did was totally dishonest and cruel, right? A lot of innocent people were killed. Entire villages were destroyed just so these explorers could go home wealthy."

"That was hundreds of years ago," Trevon said.

"It was still wrong," Lily said.

"Just imagine how greed and glory made these guys do crazy things, things they probably wouldn't do under normal circumstances, all in the name of discovery," replied Miguel.

On the walk home, Miguel wondered what he might be willing to give up in the name of adventure and discovery. Would he hurt or steal? He thought no, but he wasn't sure what risks he would take. How far would he go to find the **ultimate** discovery?

That evening, after doing his homework, Miguel wandered up the old red ladder to his favorite place—the loft. Thoughts of gold-searching explorers drifted through his mind. He reached out to open the Great Gallardo's chest when something slipped and clanked to the ground. It was a rusty, metal dagger with a jagged, worn blade. Miguel wondered what other secrets the mysterious and **enchanted** trunk held.

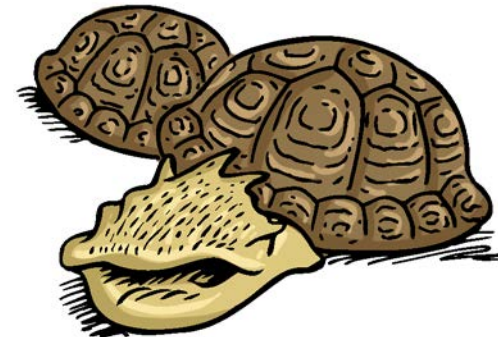


Gears shifted in Miguel's brain as the professor kept repeating the message. "That's it!" Miguel jumped up. He flashed back to school and what he had learned about Sir Francis Drake. Drake had become an expert at toppling Spanish colonies and stealing anything of value that he could find. He did this by playing a trick on the colonists. He would have his crew make lots of noise to make the colonists think there were more members to his crew than there actually were.

"We need to make lots of noise so the giant thinks we are an enormous group of warriors," screamed Miguel, forgetting that Hans couldn't understand him. He then motioned to Hans that they needed to get back to the beach.

Back at the beach, Miguel had Hans stack and carry two large turtle shells. Hans picked up a conch shell the size of a turkey and blew into it, producing a sound like a bass tuba.

"Great idea!" Miguel said. "We'll be a two-man band and rock-and-roll this giant until he's scared to death!"



Hans picked up on Miguel's anxiety and crept silently through the ferns, now keeping Miguel behind him. Though he didn't speak English, he seemed to understand what was happening from Miguel's body language. A loud trumpeting sound blasted through the air. Miguel and Hans froze. The mastodons! Miguel reasoned that the professor had to be near! Hopefully he was still alive.

Hans and Miguel followed the sound of the animals until it grew quiet. Then Miguel's ears picked up on something he had not heard before—a quiet tapping. He listened closely. It was Morse code! *Dash-dash-dot. Dot-dot. Dot-dash.* Miguel had learned Morse code at summer camp. "The professor must be sending a message!" he said. Miguel closed his eyes and decoded the taps.

G-I-A-N-T A-F-R-A-I-D L-O-U-D N-O-I-S-E-S
H-E-L-P



Miguel pulled from the chest a black leather-bound book titled *Journey to the Center of the Earth* by Jules Verne. Miguel's dad had read the story to him last year when he had been sick at home with the mumps. "I remember this dagger," he said, "or at least one just like it. It belonged to an explorer from Iceland, Arne Saknussem." According to the book, Arne was the first man to travel to the center of Earth." Then Miguel also remembered his favorite character, Hans. He admired Hans's adventurous spirit and bravery.

Miguel's heart pounded. He knew if he opened the book, he would be taking a journey, and there was no telling what might be in store for him. Miguel opened the book and started to read . . . *"My uncle ventured beneath the gigantic groves. I followed him, though not without a certain apprehension . . ."*

Deep in the center of the Earth, the main character, Harry, and his uncle, Professor Von Hardwigg, had just discovered a mummy. The mummy looked to be between thirty and one hundred thousand years old. The bones of **prehistoric** saber-toothed tigers and other creatures lay all around it. Harry was **apprehensive** about finding living prehistoric people and mammals. He feared that he and the professor might be in danger.

Miguel read more, but the words jittered on the page . . . *“eyes saw really thought did see with immense animals no, under I moving I my gigantic I mighty own about trees . . . my own.”*

The words began to jumble and made little sense to Miguel as he tried to read on. He closed his eyes.



A Two-Man Band

Miguel's feet moved forward, down great walls of speckled and crystallized rock. Once down the slopes, he raced across a white beach made of thousands of shells—the shells crunching and sliding under his feet. “I can hear the ocean!” he said aloud, almost colliding with an empty turtle shell the size of the beanbag chair in his bedroom.

Suddenly a large body of water appeared before him, spreading out as far as he could see. Huge, gray swells, louder than a fleet of jet engines, erupted a few hundred yards offshore. In the distance, Miguel spotted a man working around what looked like a battered raft.

Hans barely looked up from his repair work when Miguel approached him. Out of breath, Miguel panted, “The professor's in trouble! He's been captured!”

Hans stared up blankly. “He needs our help!” continued Miguel. “Come on!”

Then Miguel remembered that Hans didn't speak English, so he motioned for the man to follow him. Once in the woods, Miguel listened for the mastodons, but all he heard was silence. A lump grew in his throat. What if he was too late?

What would the giant do to the professor? Was he a prisoner or, like the spider's prey, the giant's next meal? There was no time to find out. "Think, Miguel, think!"

"I know! Hans!" Miguel shouted. "I have to remember where Hans is at this point in the book. I have to find him and get help. Think, Miguel!" Then Miguel heard his dad reading the story from last year as if it were happening right then and he knew—Hans would be at the beach with the raft.

Miguel ran past the clearing, jumping over rushing brooks. Even though the hollow eyes of the mummy sent chills down Miguel's neck, he ran past it, through the cemetery of scattered bones. No time to stop and think about being scared. He just had to push on and get help.



A Giant Discovery

Miguel found upon opening his eyes that the air he was breathing felt thick in his lungs. He knew that from where he had been in the story, in combination with the heavy air, that he had been transported to the center of the Earth. Creeping plants twisted among huge palms and pine trees. Mosses and giant ferns blanketed the ground. It was beautiful, except for the fact that everything that should have been green had a faded, brown tint. Even the flowers that should have been all colors of the rainbow were an ugly beige.

A voice boomed from behind Miguel, "Of course, Harry! Now come along."

Miguel jumped and turned to see a tall, skinny man hurry past him. *That must be the professor,* thought Miguel. *And I must be Harry, the main character from the book.*

Miguel rushed after the professor, finally catching him as they reached a clearing where an entire herd of **mastodons** stood grazing under gigantic palm trees. *Now this is excitement!* thought Miguel, remembering his conversation with Trevon and Lily.



Professor Von Hardwigg had been captured just like a fly in a spider's web. Miguel's thoughts blurred. There must be a way to save him! Miguel took off running toward the giant even though his body was trembling with fear. Here he was, stuck in another world, in the center of the Earth, with no way out.

Captured!

A loud grunt came from across the clearing as the giant pulled himself to his full height, pointing his staff in their direction.

“He looks as if he’s warning us to stay away,” said Miguel.

“Not to worry,” the professor said, rounding his shoulders forward and lowering his gaze. “I am no threat to him.”

The mastodons stomped and trumpeted. “Turn back,” Miguel shouted. Professor Von Hardwigg waved him away as he moved toward the giant.

The giant stepped forward, too, thrashing his staff in the air. The professor crouched lower as if to hide, but the giant advanced quickly toward him.

“Watch out, professor!” Miguel shouted.

In an instant, the giant scooped up the professor and tossed him over his shoulder like a sack of potatoes. The giant raised his staff and howled with victory. He pivoted back toward the mastodon herd and retreated into the woods.

“The greatest adventure yet!” the professor yelled before disappearing into the trees.

The mastodons appeared to Miguel as hairy, oversized elephants with enormous trunks and tusks. Entire trees littered the ground, branches cracked under the mastodons’ heavy feet, and leaves rustled as these giants seemed to devour nearly everything in sight. Miguel couldn’t believe it. He was experiencing an entire prehistoric world right in the center of the Earth. He wondered if the feelings he was experiencing were the same feelings Drake had felt.

“Let’s get closer,” said the professor. Miguel hesitated, but the professor pulled him forward.

“We aren’t strong enough to battle those prehistoric beasts!” Miguel said. He noticed the wild look in the professor’s eyes. It seemed as if the professor was in a trance. Professor Von Hardwigg seemed to have lost all reason in his excitement to see, and to be able to get close to, the mastodons.

The professor continued to inch forward. “Look, Harry! There’s a human being!”

Miguel saw a giant man who looked twice as tall and as broad as the professor. He was leaning against a mammoth tree. Miguel almost lost his breath.



“Astounding, my boy, isn’t it?” the professor said. “Can you believe it Harry? A living prehistoric man!”

The professor then spoke slowly. “He seems . . . to be . . . to be watching the . . . mastodons.” Then Professor Von Hardwigg roared with excitement, “He’s a mastodon herder! How about that, Harry! We must move closer!”

Miguel’s shoulders tensed. The giant human being had some of the features of a man, but his head was the size of a buffalo’s. His hair was long like a buffalo’s and matted. He held a huge tree branch like a staff.

The professor carefully crept closer.

“Wait,” Miguel whispered. The seriousness of what they had found had hit him. “You can’t defend yourself against a giant!”

“I shall chance it,” Professor Von Hardwigg said, his eyes wildly scanning the creature, “as any true explorer would—this is more incredible than I ever imagined.”

“But it isn’t worth risking your life,” Miguel said to the professor.

“Discovery is worth much more,” the professor said, **delirious** with the fever of discovery. “And if I succeed, the entire world will remember that I discovered this ancient man!” As Professor Von Hardwigg stepped forward, a branch broke under his foot.

The giant was startled and looked up at them.

Miguel scrunched his eyes as if closing them would hide both explorers from the giant’s sight.