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CHAPTER 1

Gold at the Creek

It was a summer morning. It was a sunny day. Tom rode his bike to Ricky's house.

Ricky was sitting on the steps at his house. Patches was with him. Patches saw Tom. He wagged his tail.

Tom sat down on the steps. He said, "What do you want to do? It's going to be a hot day."

"We could go fishing in the creek," Ricky said.

Tom smiled. "That's a good plan."

Patches barked.

"Patches, do you want to go?" Ricky said.

Ricky's mom came out of the house. She said, "Mr. Bell called. He can't walk very well. He has some cleaning for you to do. He will pay you some money."

"Cleaning? Is it going to take a lot of time?" Ricky asked.

Tom said, "We want to go out to the creek. We want to have time to fish."

Ricky's mom said, "Why don't you go and ask Mr. Bell?"

Ricky said, "That is a good plan. Let's go."

"OK," Tom said.

Mr. Bell was in his yard. His house was near Ricky's house.

Mr. Bell was old. Yard work was hard for him.

Ricky said, “Hi, Mr. Bell. What work do you need us to do?”

Mr. Bell smiled. He liked the boys and they liked him. “I’m glad to see you boys. Could you help me with some work in my yard?”

Ricky said, “OK, we will be glad to help you this morning. We want to go fishing.”

“Are you going to fish in the creek?” Mr. Bell asked.

“Yes. We know a good fishing hole there. There are some big rocks to sit on. It is a nice place to fish,” Tom said.

“I think I know that place. I fished there when I was a little boy. My granddad worked in the old gold mine near there,” Mr. Bell said.

“Is the gold mine still there?” Ricky asked.

Mr. Bell smiled. “Gold mines do not go away.

But the gold is not there.”

“How do you find the gold?” Ricky asked.

Mr. Bell said, “The miners dig into a hill.

Then they dig up lots of rocks. They take the rocks to a mill.”

“I know all about that. They get gold out of the rocks at the mill,” Ricky said.

“Some people find gold in a creek,” Tom said.

“Yes, if they are lucky,” Mr. Bell said.

“Maybe we will find gold in the creek,” Ricky said.

“What if we did? Do you think we might?” Tom asked.

“If you find gold, people would come from all over the world to find more gold,” Ricky said.

“That’s right. That’s what would happen. It’s called a ‘gold rush,’” Mr. Bell said.

“I don’t think we want that to happen,” Ricky said.

“I don’t think it will happen. No one has found any gold in that creek. If they did, we would know about it,” Mr. Bell said.

“Oh, well. It was nice to think about,” Tom said.

“Come on. Let’s start the work. We need to make some money,” Ricky said.

CHAPTER 2

Flashlights

The boys were happy. Mr. Bell was going to pay them. Then they would still have time to go fishing.

Tom and Ricky worked hard. They did a good job for Mr. Bell.

Mr. Bell was happy with the Tom and Ricky's work. He said, "You did good work. Here is your money."

"Thank you, Mr. Bell." Tom said.

Then Ricky said, "My flashlight is broken. Now I can get a new one."

“You know what? I need a flashlight, too. Let’s go get new flashlights now,” Tom said.

Tom and Ricky rode their bikes down to King’s Market. They picked out the flashlights. Then they rode their bikes back to Ricky’s house. Patches was happy to see them.

Ricky said, “We’ll take Patches with us. Let’s ask Eddie and Dave to come too.”

Tom phoned Eddie. “Dave and I will come after three,” Eddie said.

Ricky’s mother saw them come in the house. “What’s going on?” she asked.

“Mr. Bell said there is an old gold mine. It’s near the creek. We’re going fishing. Then we’re going to look at the old mine,” Ricky said.

“Be careful. Don’t go into it. It’s old. You could get hurt in there,” she said.

The boys put their things on their bike racks.

“I hope we get some fish,” Tom said.

“So do I,” Ricky said.

They rode their bikes on the old road. The road went out of town. They rode for a long time.

“There is the fishing place,” Tom said.

Tom and Ricky ran down to the creek. Patches was in back of them.

“Let’s fish here,” Tom said.

Tom picked up the box of fish bait. He let Ricky pick one.

“This one looks like a big bug,” Ricky said. He put the bait on his fishing line.

Tom picked a small one that had fur on it.
He put it on his fishing line.

“I hope this bait helps us catch a lot of fish,”
Ricky said.

Tom said, “Eddie has more fish bait. He and
Dave will come after three.”

“Let’s go see the gold mine before Eddie and
Dave get here,” Ricky said.

“I don’t know where it is,” Tom said.

“Do you think gold is still there?” Ricky asked.

“I don’t know,” Tom said.

“OK, OK, no more talking about the mine.
Let’s fish!” Ricky said.

CHAPTER 3

A Tunnel in a Cave

Tom and Ricky got three fish. They put the fish in an ice chest.

Tom put the ice chest on his bike rack. Then Tom said, “Let’s walk to the end of the road.”

“I don’t think it is very far,” Ricky said.

“Maybe Eddie and Dave will get here soon,” Tom said.

The road was dusty. Tom and Ricky walked for a long time.

Patches ran with them. All of a sudden he ran away from the road.

Ricky yelled, “It’s a rabbit! Look at Patches run!”

Tom said, “Look at that rabbit run!” The rabbit and the dog ran into the trees near a hill. The boys ran after them. They didn’t see Patches.

“Where did he go?” Ricky asked.

“Did he hide?” Tom said.

They heard a dog bark next to the trees. “There he is. He’s by those trees,” Ricky said.

The boys went through the trees.

“Look at that,” Tom said.

There was a hole in the hill.

“I think it’s a cave,” Ricky said.

“I didn’t know there was a cave here,” Tom said.



*“Look at that,” Tom said.
There was a hole in the hill.*

“The trees were in the way,” Ricky said.

“Let’s go in the cave,” Tom said.

There was a tunnel inside the cave. Patches was waiting for them in the tunnel.

“That tunnel goes under the hill,” Ricky said. “And it goes way back.”

“It goes into the hill. But where does it go from there?” Ricky asked.

“Let’s find out,” Tom said. The tunnel was dark. It got darker as they went down the tunnel.

Ricky said, “It is too dark here.”

Tom said, “We have to stop.”

“We got new flashlights. Now we need them. And where are they?” Ricky said.

“We left them by the fishing hole,” Tom said.

“That’s not good. We can’t see much without them,” Ricky said.

Tom said, “Come on. Let’s go back to the creek. We need to get our flashlights.”

“Right. Then we can find out where the tunnel goes,” Ricky said.

Patches barked.

Ricky picked up Patches. “No running in the tunnel, Patches. You may get lost.”

Tom and Ricky went to the start of the tunnel.

They got out of the cave. Ricky put Patches down. They started to go back to the creek.

“We go to the creek a lot. But I didn’t know this cave was here,” Tom said.

“Do you think we’ll find anything in the cave?” Ricky asked.

“I don’t know. Maybe we will see some bats,” Tom said.

They walked out of the cave. Then they ran to the fishing hole for their flashlights.

CHAPTER 4

A Pickup Truck

Tom and Ricky ran to the fishing hole. Patches ran with them.

Ricky said, “Eddie and Dave should be here soon.”

Tom said, “Let’s catch some more fish. We can fish while we wait for them.”

Ricky said, “Then we can show them the cave.”

“We can tell them Patches found it,” Tom said.

Then there was a loud sound.

“Look, there are two men in a pickup truck. And there are boxes on the truck,” Ricky said.

Tom and Ricky went up to the road. The pickup truck was going away from them.

Tom said, “Why did they drive here? There isn’t much to do here. The road does go to our fishing hole. But not many people know about our fishing hole.”

Ricky said, “That’s right. And the road isn’t very good. And then it ends. It does not go past this hill. I think the truck will turn around soon.”

“Then we will see them come back,” Tom said.

Tom and Ricky waited. The truck did not come back.

“What should we do?” Tom asked.

Ricky pointed down at the road. “Look at the tire tracks in the dirt. Let’s see where they go,”

Ricky said. They started to walk next to the tire tracks.

“What do you think is in those boxes on the truck?” Ricky asked.

“I wish I knew,” Tom said.

“Have you seen those men before? They don’t live around here,” Ricky said.

“I think I saw them in town this week,” Tom said.

“What did they do?” Ricky asked.

“The men went into King’s Market,” Tom said as they walked on the path.

“Let’s go. We don’t need to wait for Eddie and Dave. They will see our bikes and then they will look for us,” Ricky said.



*Tom and Ricky went up to the road.
The pickup truck was going away from them.*

Tom said, "I wish we could call them. I can't make a call out here."

Ricky said, "This time I'll hold Patches. We don't want him to run after another rabbit."

Tom said, "Let's take our flashlights this time. We can look in the cave."

The three of them walked down the old dirt road.

Then Ricky stopped. "Did you hear that? Was that the truck?"

"It didn't sound like a truck. It sounded like a gunshot," Tom said.

"Come on. Let's find out what's going on!" Ricky said.