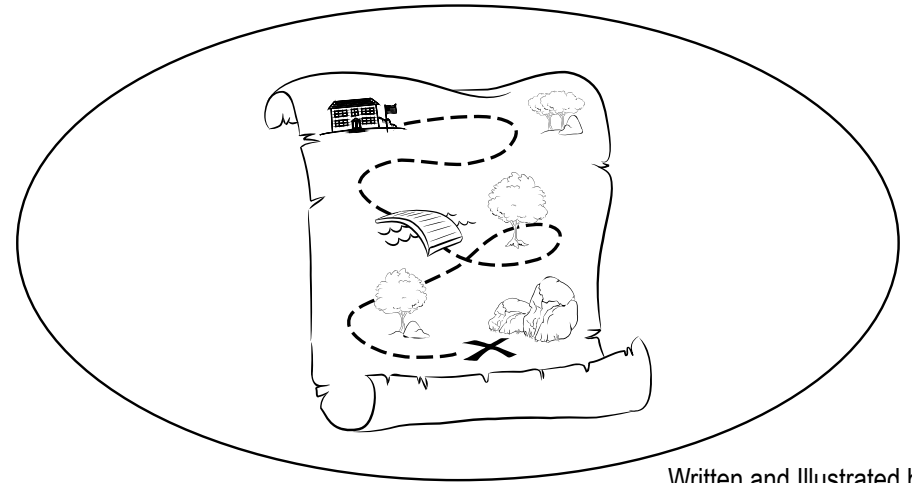


The Case of the Buried Treasure



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“We’re getting close,” said Carlos, looking at a large sheet of paper in his hands.

“Is that a real treasure map?” asked Brooke.

“Just look at it,” chimed in Sam. “There’s a big X at the end. Of course it’s a treasure map.”

“I know what it looks like,” Brooke replied impatiently. “But how do we know it’s real?”

“I don’t know,” Carlos replied, “but I think we should find out.”



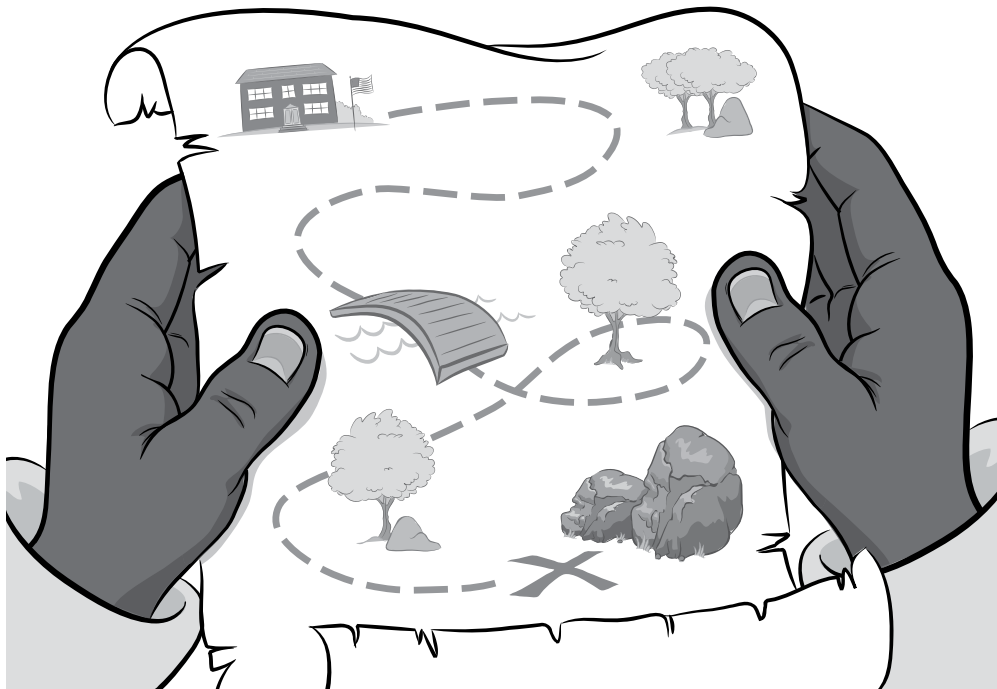
Carlos had found the map inside a book in the library last week. From that moment on, he had made it his mission to find the buried treasure. The map led through the rocky terrain behind the friends’ school.

“This way,” said Carlos. He pointed to a path. Carlos walked toward it, with Brooke and Sam following closely behind.

The three friends followed the map carefully. After several turns and a shaky wooden bridge, they finally reached the spot marked with an X on the map.

“Is this it?” asked Sam. There was nothing around.

“Let me see that map, Carlos,” said Brooke. She studied the map. “On the map, the X is near two rocks.” Brooke, Carlos, and Sam looked around.



“What about these rocks?” asked Carlos, pointing to two rocks.

“Yes, I bet that’s where the treasure is,” said Brooke. She walked over to inspect the rocks. “Look here,” she said. “This spot looks like it’s been dug up.”

Brooke pulled out a small shovel from her backpack and began to dig up the dirt. Before long, she had dug out all the loose dirt, and a bright smile appeared on her face. “I think we have our treasure, boys,” she said.

Carlos and Sam rushed over to the hole. Inside, there was a wooden box. Brooke lifted it out of the hole and carefully pried it open.

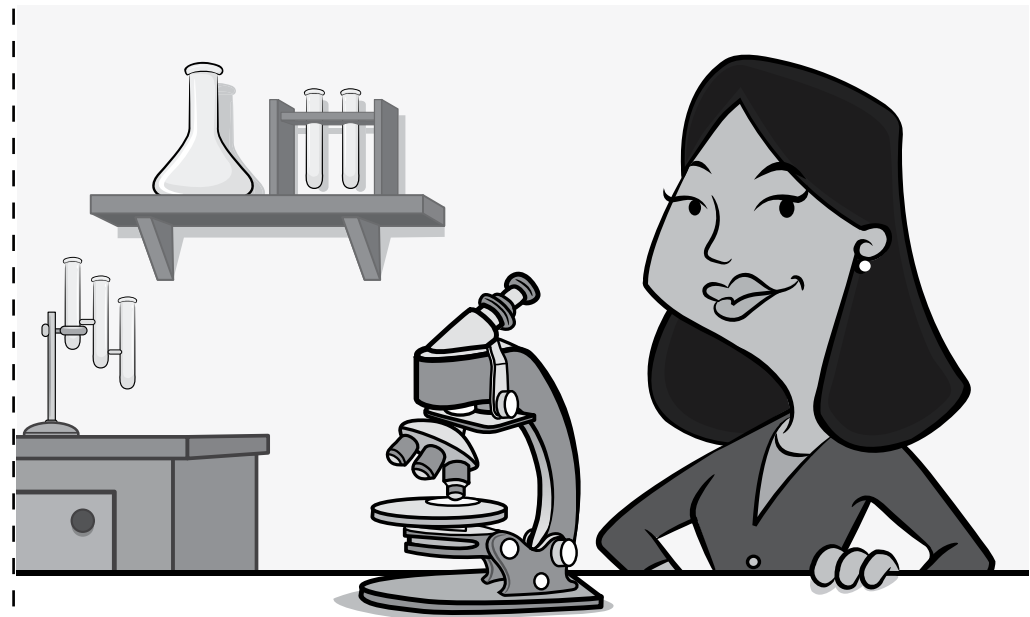
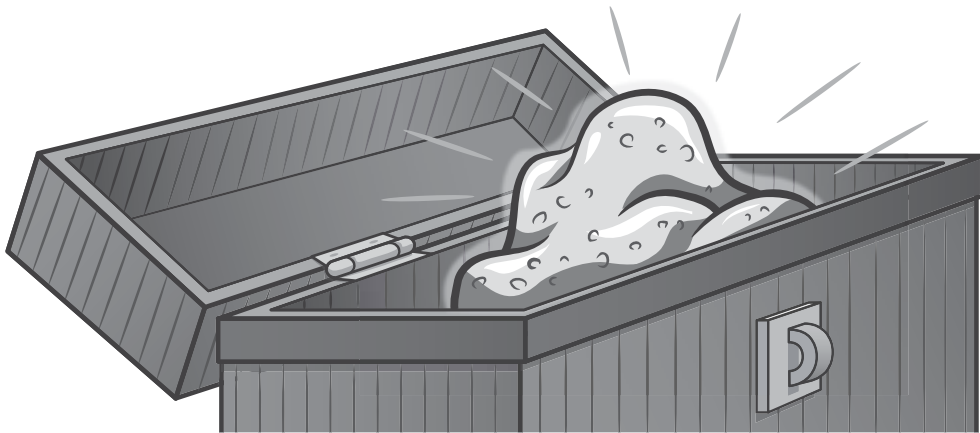
“Gold!” shouted Sam. The three sleuths stared into the box. A small, brassy yellow rock lay at the bottom, with a note.

Brooke took out the note and read it aloud:

“Take this rock, but don’t be a fool. Study it carefully back at your school.”

“Of course we’ll take it!” Carlos shouted, jumping up and down. “We can sell it and buy a skateboard or a basketball or a...”

“Wait,” said Brooke. “The note says, ‘Don’t be a fool.’ It also says to study the rock carefully. Let’s take this rock to Miss Zenda, the science teacher.”



Brooke tucked everything inside her backpack. Then she and the boys walked back to the school. They found Miss Zenda in her usual spot—the science lab. “Hello, my friends,” Miss Zenda said cheerfully. “What can I do for you?”

“We found gold!” said Sam. “Can you tell us how much it’s worth?”

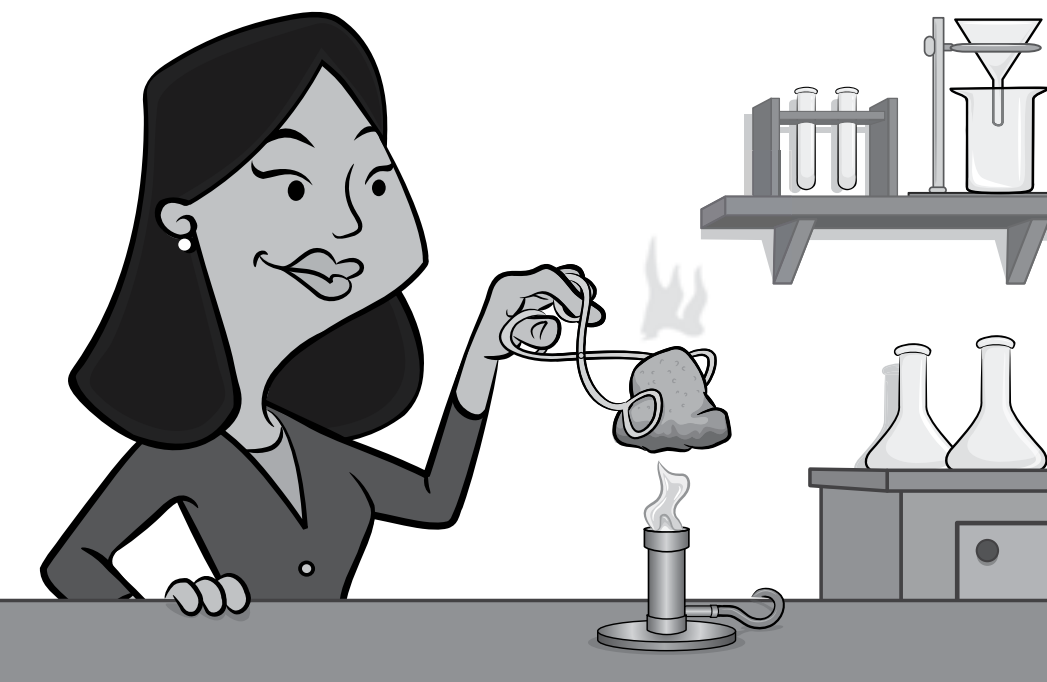
“Well, we don’t know if it’s gold,” Brooke said. She took out the box. “Look at this note.”

Miss Zenda read the note carefully and studied the rock. “We can easily find out if this is real gold,” said Miss Zenda.

Miss Zenda took out a Bunsen burner from a cabinet, along with a pair of tongs. She turned on the burner and held the rock over the flame with the tongs. Within seconds, the rock started to burn, and an odd odor filled the room.

“Aw, yuck!” said Sam. “It smells like rotten eggs!”

“Now we know what this is,” said Miss Zenda. She waved away the smell and placed the rock on the table.



“Friends, I’m afraid what you have is fool’s gold,” said Miss Zenda.

“What’s that?” asked Carlos.

Brooke piped up. “That’s the kind of rock that looks like real gold, but it’s a different kind of mineral.”

“Right, Brooke. The rock you found is actually pyrite,” Miss Zenda explained. “Pyrite looks like gold, but it contains sulfur, which is what made that awful smell. Plus, it burns. Real gold will melt, but it won’t burn.”

“Well, who buried the box?” Sam wondered.

Miss Zenda laughed and replied, “That, my friends, is a mystery for another day!”

