

By the Great Horn

Spoon

By Sid Fleischman

Abridged Version



*Abridged by
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**Irvine Unified
School District**

Chapter 1: The Stowaways

A sailing ship left Boston harbor on a voyage to San Francisco. Inside of it, in the cargo hold, sat eighteen potato barrels. Inside of two of these were stowaways.

Gold had been discovered in California 12 months before. The ship, *The Lady Wilma*, was bound for the gold fields. Men everywhere were buying picks and shovels and heading to California as soon as possible.

On the second day at sea, a man with a black umbrella, white gloves, and a black hat, rose from a potato barrel. He tapped the barrel beside him.

“All clear, Master Jack.”

“Is that you Praiseworthy?” a young voice in the barrel asked.

“Your obedient servant,” the man replied. Praiseworthy was Jack’s family’s butler.

A twelve year old boy rose from the barrel. He had been sucking on a potato to keep him from being thirsty, and he felt like an icicle.

“We made it, Praiseworthy,” he said.

“We did indeed, Master Jack.”

Jack thought about his Aunt Arabella at home sitting in front of a fireplace. There was no turning back now. They were going to California.

“Shall we go to see the captain?” asked Praiseworthy.

“*He’ll put us in chains---or worse!*” Jack gathered his courage and followed Praiseworthy above deck. They asked a few people on the ship where the captain was. The crew called the captain the “Wild Bull of the Seas” and pointed to where he was.

Eventually, the two stowaways found the “Wild Bull of the Seas” in the captain’s cabin trying to thaw his icy whiskers over a candle. “Come in!” he roared. The captain was grumpy about the weather and the fact that another ship bound for California, *The Sea Raven*, was beating him. Jack was worried that the captain would throw them overboard.

“We wish to report a pair of stowaways, sir,” said the butler.

“Stowaways! I’ll skin them alive! Where are they?” roared the captain.

“Standing right here, sir.”

“*You!* I’ll make you walk the plank!”

“Let me explain,” Praiseworthy said. “Master Jack and I were in line to buy a ticket for the ship when a cut-purse (thief) stole our money. He must have used our money to buy a ticket and is probably on the ship right now.”

Jack stood there thinking of his sisters and Aunt. His parents had died from cholera, and he and his sisters went to live with his Aunt in her big house. The family had become poor and had to get rid of all their servants. The only staff she could keep was Praiseworthy. Jack had heard a banker tell Aunt Arabella that almost all of the family’s inheritance was gone and that she would need to sell the house. Jack had decided to help. He had heard about the gold in California, and decided to run away to the gold fields. Praiseworthy did not want him to go alone, so as a good and faithful butler, he had decided to set out for the world with the boy to try to make money to save Aunt Arabella’s house. Now that a thief had stolen their money, however, the word was as big as a potato barrel.

“Blast!” said the captain. “I need to beat the *Sea Raven!* If I win the race to California, I will win a new clipper ship and I will get to be the captain of the ship. What we need is more steam to make the ship go faster. You will work in the engine room down below to work off the cost of your trip!”

The captain told Jack that he would need to be the ship’s boy while Praiseworthy would work in the coal bunkers making steam, but he did not want to leave his butler. Praiseworthy had told Jack that they would stick together. The captain agreed.

“To the coal bunkers with both of you! Ask the cook to give you food because you can’t shovel coal on an empty stomach. Now, get out of my sight!”

“Praiseworthy, do you really think the thief is on the *Lady Wilma?*” asked Jack as they walked to the coal bunker.

“I do indeed. And we shall find the scoundrel!”

“How?” asked Jack.

“I don’t know yet, but we’ll think of something!”

Praiseworthy and Jack would be the only passengers on board that would be warm as they worked in the coal bunker making steam, while the rest of the passengers would be cold on the icy ship.

Chapter 2: How to Catch a Thief

Jack thought that shoveling coal would help him in the gold fields. However, the boiler room had gotten very hot! Jack did not mind the heat because he was in a hurry to reach California so that he could help his Aunt Arabella keep her house.

Praiseworthy wiped the sweat from his forehead and said, “We need to think of a plan to get out of here.” Neither the boy nor the butler had any idea of how to catch a thief.

Jack wanted to write a letter to Aunt Arabella. Praiseworthy told him not to mention that they were stowaways so that Aunt Arabella would not be worried. Jack began writing.

Dear Aunt Arabella, Constance, and Sarah,

By this time you know that Praiseworthy and I have joined the gold rush to California. Please do not worry. We are getting plenty of exercise. Our ship is racing The Sea Raven to San Francisco.

I am getting used to the food. We have salt beef and sea biscuits which are filling. You would be proud of me because I eat everything. The ship is crowded. Everyone wants to get to California before the gold is gone. We see other ships every day. I think it will be crowded on the gold fields.

I will tell you about the other passengers on the ship. There is a horse doctor with a wooden leg. There is a judge with a scar over his eye from fighting. There are soldiers who fought in Mexico. There are live animals like chickens, pigs, and sheep. I have made friends with a pig named who I have named Good Luck. Praiseworthy says pigs are smart. I am learning new things every day even though I am not at school.

The next day while the boy and the butler were washing coal off of themselves, Praiseworthy exclaimed, “Master Jack! You have it!”

“Have what?” Jack was covered with coal dust.

“Why--the answer! We’ll catch the thief at last! You have it!”

Jack wasn’t sure what he had, but began following Praiseworthy up to see the captain. The captain asked them why they were in his

pilothouse. Praiseworthy told Captain Swain that Jack had figured out a way to catch the thief.

Later that night, the passengers gathered in the main saloon. The captain entered and said, "Gentleman. I'll get to the point. There may be a thief among us. He already stole from Mr. Praiseworthy and his young partner. They have a plan to capture him."

Praiseworthy and Jack stepped forward with Good Luck and said, "Our plan is simple. Pigs are very smart. This pig here, for example, is able to tell if a man is dishonest. She can tell if someone is lying. If you do, she'll squeal. I promise you that if a thief touches this pig, she'll squeal. I want you to all line up and touch her with your right index finger. When she squeals, we will know that we have our thief!"

The lights went off and everyone agreed to the plan and lined up to touch Good Luck, the pig. After everyone had passed and touched the pig, the passengers noticed that she had never squealed. Captain Swain stepped forward to tell Praiseworthy and Jack that they must have been mistaken. There was no thief on the ship.

Praiseworthy responded, "It is true, it did not squeal. However, Master Jack and I powdered the pig's back with black coal dust. If you touched her, coal will be on your finger. We will know who the thief is if there is no coal dust on one man's finger. He will have exposed himself as a thief."

Every man turned up his hand and saw dust on their finger. Except for one... the judge!

The other passengers gathered around him and pinned his arms back. Praiseworthy looked at him with a fierce look in his eyes. Captain Swain already knew what to do with him and said, "Take him to the coal bunkers. He will be most miserable there."

Chapter 3: News of the Sea Raven

Praiseworthy and Jack moved their baggage into a cabin with six other passengers. They shared the cabin with a mountain man, Mountain Jim. Mr. Azariah Jones was a Yankee trader who said he had to hold his breath to get through the cabin door. One of the other cabin mates was Dr. Buckbee, the horse doctor. He was going to California to look for gold even though he had a wooden leg. He said he had a map to find the gold. He kept an alarm trumpet around his neck in case anyone tried to take the map from him. When everyone was asleep in the room, Jack had to sleep with his fingers in his ears because of all of the snoring.

Jack liked to walk around the ship. Good Luck followed him everywhere he went. Jack didn't want to get too close to Good Luck because he knew the pig was meant to be a Sunday dinner. Nonetheless, he couldn't help but let the porker cuddle next to him when he sat in the shade. He decided to write another letter to his family:

It is very hot by the equator. It is not like the winter I am used to. We have not seen The Sea Raven so we do not know how the race is going. I hope we will win.

I have already told you about our money getting stolen. Praiseworthy thought of an idea to catch the thief, Cut-Eye Higgins, but he will not take the credit for it. All I did was take Good Luck to the coal bunkers, where he got covered with coal. That is how Praiseworthy got his idea.

We thought we would never find our money. Captain Swain helped us to search the cabin and we found our money in Cut-Eye Higgins's homemade cigars. He had rolled up our money in them.

I'll send this letter the next time I come to port. I must go now because I hear someone calling "ship ahoy!" Maybe it is the Sea Raven.

Jack saw the captain looking at a ship in the distance. "Blast!" He scowled. "That is not the *Sea Raven*. It is a becalmed square-rigger ship." The square-rigger was stuck at sea because there was no wind to keep her moving.

Captain Swain used his silver speaking tube to ask the square-rigger's captain if they had seen the *Sea Raven*. He said that they had seen the ship a day ago. He also asked if Captain Swain could tow their ship until they could catch a wind to make it to port. The square-rigger had been stuck at sea for two weeks and the passengers were getting sick with a fever.

Captain Swain knew that if he did tow the square-rigger it would slow the *Lady Wilma* down and they would be farther behind in the race. He still agreed to help and hooked the square-rigger up to his ship to tow it.

Later that night Jack and Praiseworthy talked as they watched the stars. Jack asked him if Praiseworthy had always been a butler. Praiseworthy replied, "Always." Jack wished he hadn't been because then maybe he could call Jack just Jack, not Master Jack. They would be more like partners, then.

On the fifth day of pulling the square-rigger, a wind finally came and filled the ship's sails. The crews shouted and the square rigger threw off the tow lines. They wished each other well and the *Lady Wilma* was able to move much faster. She was back in the race.

Chapter 4: The Pig Hunt

Jack worried about Sunday dinners because he knew that Good Luck may be on the menu one night. One Sunday, the cook came looking for the pig, but found that the pig had been taken out of the pen. The cook and other hungry passengers went on a search for the pig. They looked everywhere on the ship except for one place: the captain's stateroom.

Jack heard the captain coming so he and the pig quickly hid under the captain's bed, where there was hardly any room to breathe. Eventually, the captain went to bed and started snoring. Good Luck grunted loudly and almost woke the captain. Jack decided to take Good Luck and run back to his own cabin.

Dr. Buckbee was asleep in the cabin. Dr. Buckbee thought someone had come in to steal his map, so he blew on the trumpet that he carried around everywhere. Jack knew the whole ship would hear the trumpet, so he tried to stuff the pig through the window in the cabin. Good Luck was stuck and half of the pig's body was sticking out of the window and half was still inside the cabin.

Just then, Praiseworthy came in and told Jack that the cook was on his way in. Moments later, the cook came in and found Praiseworthy standing in front of the window with his umbrella blocking the view.

The cook asked, "Where's the pig?"

Praiseworthy answered, "Pig? What pig? Jack, the cook thinks you have a pig with you."

The other passengers laughed and told the cook it was time to leave because there was no pig in the room. The cook was about to leave when he asked Praiseworthy, "Do you always stand with an umbrella, even inside?"

Praiseworthy told the cook that the cabin leaked whenever there was rain so he always kept the umbrella with him. The cook shook his head and left. Praiseworthy took the umbrella down and saw that Good Luck was gone!

Jack ran out on deck and saw Mountain Jim playing the harmonica on top of a barrel. Jack asked him if he had seen the pig. Mountain Jim

smiled and told Jack that Good Luck was under the barrel that he was sitting on. Then he told Jack to sit with him and sing. The singing and harmonica blowing made it impossible for anyone to hear Good Luck snorting and grunting underneath.

Later that night when it was dark, Jack put the barrel with Good Luck on a small boat on the side of the ship. He covered the small boat with a piece of canvas cloth. Jack went to bed.

The next morning, Jack woke up as the ship was approaching the port of Rio de Janeiro. He had almost forgotten what land looked like. As he stood looking at the land, Praiseworthy asked Jack if he was homesick. He said no. Praiseworthy asked Jack if he was scared. Jack said no again but wondered if Praiseworthy did not want to be on the journey with him.

Jack asked Praiseworthy if he didn't want to be his partner anymore. Praiseworthy said, "Don't talk nonsense. I just had to be sure that you still wanted to be on the trip." Jack smiled.

At that same time, Captain Swain was looking for the *Sea Raven* at port. They passed the customs boat as they approached the port and Captain Swain asked, "Is the *Sea Raven* in port?"

A man on the ship replied, "No, she was here and left five days ago."

The captain decided they would stay at Rio de Janeiro for one night only to get the supplies they needed, and then they would leave. Praiseworthy spent the day walking around the city. When they came back, Jack decided to give Good Luck some scraps of food. He went to the small boat where he had hidden Good Luck and saw that the boat was gone... along with Good Luck!

Just then, Dr. Buckbee blew on his alarm trumpet. He came running down the deck yelling, "It's stolen! My brother's map to the gold is gone!"

"Cut-Eye Higgins!" said Mountain Jim.

The passengers knew that Cut-Eye Higgins must have left the ship on the small boat along with the gold map. Jack was happy because now Good Luck was safe and would not be served for dinner.

Chapter 5: Land of Fire

The *Lady Wilma* continued to make its way around toward the tip of South America. The weather started getting colder and there was a lot of fog. What really worried Jack, though, was that he had heard the captain might try to take a dangerous shortcut through the Strait of Magellan.

Captain Swain knew that there would be many storms ahead and that the storms would test how good of a captain he was.

Praiseworthy liked to walk around the ship, even when the weather was bad. He said he was looking for Cape Horn. Praiseworthy also told Jack to look for fires.

“Fires?” asked Jack.

“Yes. The captain tells me that the natives keep fires going day and night to keep themselves and their sheep from freezing. They call it Tierra del Fuego.”

“Land of fire? I’ll watch for it,” said Jack.

A few days later, a big storm came that made the ship rock back and forth. Jack saw his bowl of soup fly one way, and then the other. Praiseworthy told him that they must have gotten to the Horn. Passengers all over the ship were thrown in one direction and then another.

The terrible weather lasted for more than a week. As soon as one storm ended, another bad storm came. The *Lady Wilma* continued to fight for every foot of water. Jack could not sleep at night because his hammock swayed back and forth and sometimes other cabin mates flew off their beds.

Jack asked, “Do you think we’ll ever catch up to the *Sea Raven* in this weather?”

Praiseworthy replied, “We could go right next to her and not see her. I don’t think Captain Swain plans on losing.”

“I hope we win!” said Jack.

This weather lasted for thirty-seven days. Then, one Tuesday morning the sun came out and passengers began to leave their cabins.

“We’ve made it!” yelled Mountain Jim. “This here’s the Pacific Ocean.”

Captain Swain came out of the pilothouse and gave a wave to the passengers. He looked at the seas and roared, “By grabs! There she is—the *Sea Raven*! And she’s behind us!”

All of the passengers cheered. Jack thought that this might be the most exciting moment of his life. He wondered how it was possible for the *Sea Raven* to be behind them.

“I watched for the fires, but never saw them,” Jack said to Praiseworthy.

“You didn’t see the fires of Tierra del Fuego because they weren’t there to be seen.”

“But you said...”

“Jack, the fires were there, but we weren’t. The captain took the shortcut through the *deadly* Strait of Magellan. We did not go around Cape Horn.”

Praiseworthy looked at the captain, who smiled at him. The captain had taken a shortcut that cut *hundreds* of miles off the trip.

Captain Swain said, “You’ve found me out,” and pointed at the *Sea Raven*. “But now she is following us like a chick after a hen!”

Chapter 6: Spoiled Potatoes

Day after day the Sea Raven and the Lady Wilma raced along the coast of Chile. Jack, whose hair had grown long and messy, was getting a haircut from Praiseworthy.

“Praiseworthy,” said Jack. “Do you really think we’ll strike it rich?”

“No doubt about it. There will be enough for all,” he answered.

But Praiseworthy knew it would not be so easy. Still, he must see to it that Master Jack did indeed get rich. It would not do to return to Boston without enough money to help Aunt Arabella.

As Praiseworthy clipped Jack’s hair, the other passengers offered their advice. Suddenly, the Lady Wilma’s lookout spotted the Sea Raven. “She’s stopped making smoke Captain!”

“Her coal bunkers are empty,” the Captain said. The Sea Raven had run out of coal going around Cape Horn. “But we’re not in much better shape ourselves gentlemen. If this wind doesn’t turn around – we’ll be burning our last lump of coal soon enough!” warned the Captain. Soon the Lady Wilma was in the lead but Praiseworthy was not too excited. “It’s the end of the race that counts,” he said again.

As they traveled north, the wind died away completely and the weather became warm. The Lady Wilma was able to keep going by burning coal for steam but about a week later she ran out of coal to burn and sat becalmed, or stranded, on the sea. Day after day she sat at sea with no wind to help her move. Two weeks passed and water was running so low that the Captain said it was only for drinking.

One day, as Praiseworthy and Jack watched for whales to pass time, Jack asked, “Is Aunt Arabella an Old Maid?”

“Your Aunt Arabella is a young and beautiful woman,” Praiseworthy replied.

“I mean, if she didn’t have my sisters and me to bring up maybe she would have gotten married a long time ago.”

“Stuff and nonsense.” Praiseworthy pushed aside the thought. “I have no doubt that your Aunt Arabella is merely waiting for the right gentleman to come along...”

Another week passed and Mr. Azariah Jones’s eighteen barrels of potatoes began to spoil. “I’m ruined!” he wailed, pacing the hot decks.

“Then you must sell them,” remarked Praiseworthy, who was out for a walk.

“Sell spoiled potatoes? Who do you think will buy them?”

The next day the French immigrant, Monsieur Gaunt declared, “I’m ruined!” while pacing on deck. “My grape cuttings are drying up and the Captain will not give me a drop of fresh water to keep them alive!” All that day Praiseworthy thought about how to help both his friends, but it was Jack who came up with a great idea and explained it to Praiseworthy. Jack and Praiseworthy suggested that Monsieur Gaunt buy the spoiled potatoes from Mr. Azariah Jones. “Potatoes!” exclaimed the Frenchman. “Don’t make jokes!”

“Spoiled the potatoes may be – but juicy they are, sir. Monsieur Gaunt, you need only poke each of your grape cuttings into a plump potato. I daresay they will stay alive all the way to Callao,” Praiseworthy explained.

“I’m saved,” both Jones and Gaunt said, and the deal was made. Mr. Azariah Jones and Monsieur Gaunt were so thankful that they both promised to buy Jack and Praiseworthy all the digging tools they would need in the gold fields.

The next day a wind from the south came up and the Lady Wilma began to move through the sea again. The weather turned hotter and a growing excitement took over the gold seeking passengers. The port of Callao was only 10 days ahead when the *Sea Raven* was seen coming behind. “She’s gaining on us!” shouted Mountain Jim.

By noon the Sea Raven had caught up and was being carried along like a feather by the sea. “Blast!” roared Captain Swain. “And me half-sunk in the water with building bricks. Bricks!” By dusk the *Sea Raven* was gone, far ahead.

Chapter 7: End of the Race

When the *Lady Wilma* entered the Bay of Callao, the passengers learned that the *Sea Raven* had already been there, had loaded up with coal and fresh water, and had left for California.

After many months at sea, the gold-seekers, including Jack and Praiseworthy, were very excited to be going ashore. It was land, dry land. While in the small town, Mr. Azariah Jones and Monsieur Gaunt bought picks and shovels for Jack and Praiseworthy. The passengers enjoyed a day in the tiny town and then were called by the ship's bell to return to the *Lady Wilma* to continue their journey. There was a wild rush, but when Jack turned Praiseworthy was gone. "Praiseworthy!" Jack screamed. He didn't know which way to run. He couldn't leave Praiseworthy behind.

And then, from a doorway of a nearby shop, Praiseworthy appeared. He was carrying a strange package wrapped in newspaper. Jack had never been so happy to see anyone in his life.

"Hurry!" he cried desperately. "We'll get left behind!" Together they hurried toward the ship with a long trail of stray cats following the smell of Praiseworthy's package. When they got on the ship, at least a dozen of the cats got on as well, but nobody noticed them.

Back on the ship, Captain Swain was angry because the *Sea Raven* had taken all the coal and there had been none for the *Lady Wilma* to buy in the whole town. "Blast the *Sea Raven*!" he yelled. "She's made sure there wasn't a cinder left for us!"

Once at sea the *Lady Wilma* picked up a breeze and continued on her way. Hoping for a supply of coal, Captain Swain stopped in the Galapagos Islands but there was none to buy so they pushed on.

Weeks later, off the coast of Mexico, they spotted the *Sea Raven*, loaded down with coal and moving very slowly. "Billy-be-hanged!" shouted Mountain Jim. "We're going to pass her up!" As the *Lady Wilma* pulled ahead, Captain Swain was very happy. "I guess if there's anything heavier than a ton of bricks – it's a ton of coal!"

As they neared their arrival in California, the *Lady Wilma* was in the lead. The Peruvian cats that got on the boat in Callao had had many kittens. The gold-seekers got ready by trimming their beards and packing their chests while they sang,

I'm going to California

With my washbowl on my knee.

Jack thought of what the goldfields would be like and suggested to Praiseworthy that they buy a gun to protect themselves. "Stuff and nonsense," said the butler. But Jack noticed that many of the other passengers had weapons and he wished he had a gun.

One bright morning, with San Francisco only a day away, the winds carrying them forward suddenly died away. By afternoon clouds gathered and opposite winds drove the *Lady Wilma* back. With plenty of coal for steam, the *Sea Raven* came steadily behind them. By evening she had caught up to the *Lady Wilma*, passing it with a blast of her whistle. "Boys, it looks like we're done for," said Mountain Jim. "Not a bit," said Praiseworthy. "The voyage isn't finished, sir. Not by a long shot." Praiseworthy told Captain Swain to burn some of the lumber on board as fuel. The *Lady Wilma* caught up with the *Sea Raven* and the two ships raced to win. The *Sea Raven* was slowed by its mountains of coal and the *Lady Wilma* pulled ahead. It entered into San Francisco Bay and dropped anchor as the passengers cheered and threw their hats in the air. "Gentlemen," said Praiseworthy, "I believe we've won the race." After a 15,000-mile voyage and five months at sea, the gold-seekers had arrived.

Chapter 8: Saved by a Whisker

Jack felt very excited as they stepped off the boat onto the San Francisco wharf. He was the first out and he was amazed at how many people were there to see the ships arrive. It was crowded with men, women, children, dogs, mules, chickens, and more. There were hundreds of people selling things and Jack was *dazzled* by what he saw. There were tattooed islanders and East India sailors, Chinese with pigtails, Mexicans with silver spurs on their boots, and many others. Buildings were going up everywhere and interesting sounds and smells were everywhere. Suddenly, Mountain Jim stopped, recognizing the smell of bear meat. "Makes your mouth water, don't it?" he said.

"Not exactly," said Jack, trying not to breathe.

Following the scent, Mountain Jim walked into a restaurant while Praiseworthy and Jack continued on.

"A fine room, if you please," Praiseworthy said to the clerk at the United States Hotel. "And I think a tub bath would be in order."

"That'll be ten dollars extra-each." said the clerk.

"We'll wait," said Praiseworthy. In this part of the world, he thought, a man had to strike it rich just to keep his neck clean. As Praiseworthy signed the hotel register, Jack noticed a bearded miner in a floppy hat with chestnut hair tumbling out on all sides.

"Ruination!" the miner began to mutter. "Ruination!"

Praiseworthy asked about getting to the diggings and was told that it would cost twenty-five dollars each for boat fare to Sacramento. Though Jack worried because they did not have the money, Praiseworthy didn't seem worried, "We'll be taking the boat tomorrow," he told the clerk. Praiseworthy figured that it had taken them five months to get to San Francisco and it would take five months to get home, so they had two months left to find gold if they were to keep Aunt Arabella from being sold out.

"Ruination!" Jack said. "We've come all this way and now we're no closer."

"Nonsense," said Praiseworthy "We'll be on tomorrow's riverboat, I promise you."

Jack and Praiseworthy washed and changed their clothes and set off to try to find a way to earn money for their trip. In the lobby they

saw the shaggy miner again, muttering in his dusty beard. They set out and noticed that the miner was following them.

“Sir, are you following us?” Praiseworthy asked. The miner introduced himself as Quartz Jackson and explained that his fiancée was due in on the stage coach any minute and they had never met.

“We’re supposed to be getting married. But ruination-- when she takes one look at me, she’s goin’ to think I’m part grizzly bear,” cried the miner.

“I couldn’t help staring at the lad here. I figured you must have flushed out a barber and maybe you’d do Quartz Jackson the favor of leadin’ me to him.”

Jack liked the man. “No sir,” he said. “I haven’t been to a barber. Unless you mean Praiseworthy.” The miner’s face, what could be seen of it, broke into a sunny smile.

“I’d be much obliged if you’d barber me up, Mr. Praiseworthy. Name your price. I’ll even let you keep my hair when you are done.”

“I’ll be glad to help you in your hour of need, sir.” Praiseworthy said. Jack caught every last cut off hair in the miner’s gold pan, as he was told to do. But what did he expect them to do with all the hair cuttings? Stuff a mattress?

When the haircut was over, Quartz Jackson turned out to be a nice looking fellow and he was very thankful.

“Much obliged, Praiseworthy. You saved me from certain ruination. The least I can do is learn you how to work a gold pan,” he said. Quartz Jackson taught Jack and Praiseworthy how to pan for gold from the gold pan that was piled high with hair cuttings from Quartz Jackson’s beard and hair. Gold Dust!

“Why, look there!” the miner roared. “The boy’s panned himself some color. Since I gave you the whiskers and all--- the gold is yours!” Jack had never known a more exciting moment in his life.

Half an hour later, Jack and Praiseworthy put up a sign that said, “Free Haircuts-Miners Only” and were taking advantage of the opportunity to find some more gold to pay for their tickets on the riverboat.

Chapter 9: The Man in the Jipijapa Hat

It was about a week before Praiseworthy and Jack reached the gold diggings. Dr. Buckbee had stayed behind in San Francisco waiting to see if Cut-Eye Higgins showed up. Praiseworthy and Jack had made enough money to pay their expenses nicely and Praiseworthy poured the left over gold dust into the fingers of his left white glove for safe-keeping.

After considering several mining towns with scary names like Whiskey Flat, Cut Throat, and Hangtown, they decided to go to Hangtown. "One place sounds as bloodthirsty as the next."

On the way to Hangtown, Jack saw Indians for the first time in his life. They came to the banks of the river as they went by on the riverboat. Jack felt a little uneasy. What if the savages came aboard when the passengers were asleep- and helped themselves to a few scalps?

"Stuff and nonsense," Praiseworthy said.

When they reached Sacramento City, they had to sell one of their picks and a shovel to pay for their ticket on the stagecoach to get to Hangtown. The gold digging tools were so scarce that they sold them for \$100 each! Then Praiseworthy poured what was left of their gold dust into all five fingers of his left white glove and forced the gloves on. His left hand felt very heavy.

"We ought to carry a gun, Praiseworthy. A four shooter," said Jack.

"There's no time for that now, Master Jack," said Praiseworthy. Once on the stagecoach, they met an undertaker named Jonas T. Fletcher who was very friendly. Sitting across from Jack also sat a man in a dusty linen suit with his hat pulled over his face.

"Don't see how a man can sleep on this bumpy road," Jonas T. Fletcher laughed. The man in the jipijapa hat slept on. With the jostling of the stagecoach the man's coat fell open and Jack could see the butt of a dueling pistol tucked inside his belt. When he awoke, his hand rested on his gun and he tipped the hat back off his face and looked straight into Jack's eyes. Jack very nearly jumped. It was Mr. Cut-Eye Higgins.

Chapter 10: The Rogue Out-Rogued

Praiseworthy remained calm.

“Small world, ain’t it?” said Cut-Eye Higgins. His hand remained at rest, in silent warning, on the butt of his pistol.

“I hadn’t noticed until today.” said Praiseworthy. “If I didn’t know better I’d think you were still in Rio.”

The villain’s scarred eye was set at a squint. “Rio was too hot for me. So I went to Panama. Crossed the Isthmus by boat and muleback. A whole parade of people are going to the Pacific that way. And it looks like I beat you to California.”

“I dare say you had a good map to guide you.”

Cut-Eye Higgins asked, “A map? A map? Why, what map is that?”

Praiseworthy replied, “I bring you regards from the good Doctor Buckbee.”

Jack’s hand fell to the horn spoon in his belt.

But Praiseworthy didn’t seem in the least concerned about the lack of firearms. He introduced Cut-Eye to another passenger, Mr. Fletcher. Mr. Fletcher was an undertaker. Praiseworthy told Cut-Eye someone in his line of work never knows when they will need an undertaker’s services.

During the afternoon the coach took a refreshing rest, and replaced the four horses with six horses for the strenuous trail ahead.

Jack whispered to Praiseworthy, “Do you think he’s got Dr. Buckbee’s map with him?”

Praiseworthy said, “No doubt about it. We have no weapon, so we will have to get the map back by using our wits. I have no intention of allowing Dr. Buckbee to be cheated of his map.”

They got back inside the coach. The trail became very steep. The passengers had to get out to help push. Suddenly Jack heard gun shots. A dozen horsemen, road agents, were surrounding the passengers and had their guns drawn. The gang leader told the passengers to drop their guns and reach for the sky. Jack was scared, but Praiseworthy didn’t seem scared at all. Some of the road agents looked for valuables in the suitcases. Other road agents went through the passengers’ pockets. They tried to take Cut-Eye’s ruby ring. He said he couldn’t get it off because he had worn the ring since he was a boy.

The leader laughed and said, "In that case we'll just have to cut off the finger."

Cut-Eye Higgins removed the ring in an instant, and the highwaymen roared.

The leader told Praiseworthy to remove his gloves. Jack was afraid the lump of gold they were saving would be discovered, but Praiseworthy took off his gloves without the men seeing his gold.

But another big fellow was emptying Praiseworthy's carpetbag in the dirt. "Why look here," the ruffian chuckled. "A picture. A regular beauty ain't she?"

Jack recognized the picture. It was Aunt Arabella! Praiseworthy noticed the ruffian with the picture, and he became white with anger. He asked for the picture back.

"Why, I'll be proud to own a picture like this." said the road agent. "I guess I will just take it along."

The rest happened so fast that Jack missed half of it. Praiseworthy struck like a bolt of lightning. He grabbed the ruffian to his feet, and slammed his left fist into the man's face.

"Why, look at that," said the undertaker in awe. "Knocked that big fella fifteen feet up hill!" The leader grinned and said, "Boys, lift our friend across his saddle and we'll be going."

Praiseworthy discovered his fist had become as heavy as lead because of the gold that was wrapped around his fingers. This was why his punch had sent the man flying.

Jack felt strangely closer to Praiseworthy since he found he had brought the photo of Aunt Arabella.

The gang leader made all the passengers drop their jackets onto the ground, and then he collected them. After the gang left, Praiseworthy asked Cut-Eye Higgins to hand over Dr. Buckbee's map.

But Cut-Eye Higgins replied, "You're a little late."

"Late?" asked Praiseworthy.

"The map was sewn up in the lining of my coat."

Chapter 11: Jamoka Jack

After a long ride on the stagecoach, the passengers finally arrived at the diggings. The driver called out, "Hangtown, boys! It looks calm around here today and no one is getting hung from a tree."

They got out and as Jack looked around he noticed that everyone was wearing boots and colored shirts. Also, there were no women in the city. The buildings looked like they had been put up in a hurry.

Praiseworthy asked, "What's the best hotel in town?"

"The Empire Hotel," said the driver.

"What's the worst?" asked Cut-Eye Higgins.

"The Empire Hotel," said the driver. There was only one hotel in town. Praiseworthy and Jack went to the hotel and Praiseworthy wrote a letter to Dr. Buckbee telling him that Cut-Eye Higgins was in Hangtown and that the gold map had been stolen by highwaymen.

Praiseworthy wanted to eat before they went to the diggings even though Jack wanted to go right away. There was almost nothing on the menu at the hotel restaurant. The only choices were bear steak or sowbelly-and-beans. They decided to order bear steak and Jack could barely eat it because it was greasy and stringy.

Finally, they set out for the diggings. They carried a hornspoon, washbasins, picks, and shovels. When they got to the river, it seemed like everywhere along the river was claimed by someone already. There was nowhere to dig! Suddenly, they heard a shot and realized that Praiseworthy's washbasin had been shot.

A man with a thick, tangled beard walked over and said, "You stole my washpan! We don't take kindly to thieves around here, and if you steal, we'll cut off your ears!"

Jack and Praiseworthy knew that they hadn't stolen the miner's washpan. Just then, Jack noticed a flash of tin in a pile of wet rocks.

"Is this your pan?" asked Jack.

"It is!" the miner laughed. "I'd forget my boots if I didn't have them on." The miner did not seem to care that he had just shot at them.

"How about a cup of jamoka?" the miner asked.

"Jamoka?" asked Praiseworthy.

“Coffee. I am boiling a pot on the fire. Where are you from? My name is Pitch-pine Billy. Shucks, it looks like I shot a hole through your washpan. I’m good at shootin’ though, right?”

“Perfect shooting, sir,” said Praiseworthy as he put his finger through the hole in the washpan. Now they couldn’t use it to mine for gold.

“No hard feelins,” said Pitch-pine Billy. “I can show you lots of other ways to mine for gold. Now let’s have some coffee.”

They went to Pitch-Pine Billy’s tent and saw the coffee pot boiling. The coffee was pure black. Jack looked at Praiseworthy to see if it was okay for him to have a cup. Praiseworthy nodded yes. He took a sip. It stung and burned and tasted terrible. Pitch-Pine Billy asked if he liked it. Jack told him yes.

“Every miner needs a nickname. Let’s call you Jamoka Jack!” Pitch-Pine Billy poured him another cup of coffee. Praiseworthy knew Jack didn’t like it and gave him a caring look.

Pitch-Pine Billy showed Praiseworthy and Jack a way to mine for gold without a washpan. First, he showed them how to scrape dirt from rocks with the hornspoon. Then, he put the dirt into his hand and blew gently on it. The gold settled in his hands and the dirt blew away. Pitch-pine Billy gave Jack two little specks of gold. Jack was very excited!

Then, he showed them the correct way to use a washpan. He dipped it into the water and swirled the water and mud around in a circle. A few minutes later there was gold left at the bottom of the pan!

Jack decided to try it himself. He got in the water and it was freezing! After five minutes, he could not feel his feet.

Pitch-pine Billy said, “You need to buy some boots! That, and a mule or burro.” He looked at Praiseworthy, “Hey, what’s that umbrella for? It don’t rain here! Well, I don’t see any reason why it won’t work just as well as a washpan for findin’ gold. Let me show you.”

He took the umbrella and Praiseworthy knew that his umbrella would be ruined. Pitch-pine Billy dunked the umbrella into the water and twirled it. After a while, he returned the umbrella to Praiseworthy with a layer of bright gold in it. It was the best washpan out there!

Chapter 12: Bullwhip

Jack's feet ached from hours of standing in the ice cold mountain stream. His face was dirty and his clothes were even dirtier. He was too excited about finding gold that he didn't even care.

As Praiseworthy and Jack walked back into town, Jack asked Praiseworthy if they could get a tent so that they wouldn't have to walk back and forth from their claim to the hotel. Praiseworthy said they needed a mule and boots, as well. Jack was beginning to feel like Praiseworthy was like a father to him, and Jack liked the idea. Even though they were not really related, having Praiseworthy as a partner was just as good. Jack also wondered about the picture that he had found of Aunt Arabella in Praiseworthy's carpet bag. "Does Aunt Arabella know you've got her picture along?" he asked.

"Yes, yes, the picture," he said quietly. "I'd been meaning to give it to you. I have no right to have it."

Jack said, "It's just a picture, you can keep it. Why doesn't Aunt Arabella have a husband?"

Praiseworthy seemed embarrassed. "You see here, Master Jack..."

"*Jamoka* Jack. Constance says Aunt Arabella was in love once, but he died and she never got over it. She's going to be an old maid."

"Miss Constance should be spanked for saying that," said Praiseworthy.

"I'll bet Aunt Arabella would marry you if you asked," said Jack.

Praiseworthy began to laugh, "That's nonsense. She needs to marry a gentleman, not a butler! Your Aunt Arabella would be laughed out of Boston if she married me. It's just not done."

They continued walking and Jack continued thinking about the picture. He knew Praiseworthy would never have taken the picture so Aunt Arabella must have *given* it to him.

As they got close to Hangtown, Jack noticed that everyone was staring at them. He wondered what was wrong.

And then a voice said, "There he is." Another said, "That's him, alright."

Praiseworthy and Jack kept walking. A cold feeling crept up Jack's neck. As they reached the Empire hotel, people gazed at them with a kind of awe. A mutter of voices came up.

"Knocked that outlaw seventeen feet."

"*Up* hill."

"Nineteen feet is what I heard."

Praiseworthy stopped at the door and looked at all of the people talking.

Another miner said, "Stranger, you must have a fightin' arm like the end of a bullwhip. Pleased to have you in town."

"Pleased to be here," said Praiseworthy. "But let me explain..."

"Hey Bullwhip, where are you and the young'un from?"

"Boston, sir. But someone must have over exaggerated about what happened on the trip here. You see..." said Praiseworthy.

"Hold on. You calling him a liar?"

"No, but..."

"Well, did you knock that thief *up* hill or not?"

"Yes, but..."

The miners began giggling. They had taken an immediate liking to the nickname Bullwhip.

"How long you stayin', Bullwhip?"

Praiseworthy was frustrated. He had been trying to explain but it seemed like everyone in the diggings wanted to believe whatever he wanted to. If they preferred the tall tale to facts, let them have it.

"Bullwhip, exactly how far was it?"

Praiseworthy winked at Jack, "Gents," he said, "from where I was standing—it looked at least *twenty-three feet*."

A miner swallowed and said, "O be joyful!"

Praiseworthy told Jack to come along into the hotel.

Jack smiled and said, "Yes sir—Bullwhip."

Chapter 13: A Bushel of Neckties

That night, Cut-Eye Higgins left Hangtown for an unknown place. In the days that followed, Praiseworthy's name was spread though the diggings. Everyone had heard about the punch up hill.

Praiseworthy and Jack began to look very different. They both wore red miner's shirts, boots, and cowboy hats. Praiseworthy stopped shaving. Within a few days he began to look fierce.

Jack collected four tin cans to stake their claim. They bought a tent and pitched it beside Pitch-pine Billy's tent. They shoveled dirt and panned mud all day. Pitch-pine Billy told them to buy candles so that they could get rid of the fleas. Everything seemed very expensive at the diggings. Candles were \$1 each, onions were \$1.50 a pound, and gold at the diggings was worth only \$4 an ounce instead of \$16 like it was in San Francisco. Jack and Praiseworthy slowly collected more and more supplies. Jack also found a nugget of gold in the grass and was excited because he thought it may buy him a burro.

On the same night that Jack found the gold nugget, Jack and Praiseworthy went to town for dinner. There was a letter waiting for them from Dr. Buckbee. It told them that Dr. Buckbee was sick and could not leave the bed. He asked them to take care of finding the map. He also promised that if they found his map and it led to gold, he would give them half of what was found. Praiseworthy and Jack knew it was time to get a burro and go look for Cut Eye Higgins. What Jack really wanted, though, was a four shooter gun to catch the thief.

After dinner, Praiseworthy stayed at the hotel to reply to Dr. Buckbee's letter. Jack and Pitch-pine Billy went to wander around the town. They heard an auction bell ring and decided to go to the auction.

They waited through the sale of sugar, a wheel barrow, and other items, but there was no gun. The auctioneer announced that he did have a bushel of neckties sent to him by mistake. At that same time, Jimmie-from-Town said that he was hungry and wanted to go get something to eat. Jack said, "We've done that."

Jimmie-from-Town asked, "Done what?"

Jack replied, "Ate."

The auctioneer heard Jack say "ate" while the auction for the ties was happening and said, "Sold for eight dollars."

Jack stood as if struck by lightning. The miners laughed, but told him he had to pay up even if he didn't mean to buy the neckties. They all knew there was no need for neckties in Hangtown. Jack put his gold nugget on the scale and had to cut off two ounces of his nugget. He was mad because that could have gone for supplies or a gun.

When he came back to the hotel, he showed Praiseworthy the bushel of neckties he had bought by mistake. Praiseworthy told him it was a brilliant purchase. He also said they would buy their mountain canary, or mule, with the neckties. Jack didn't know how that would happen, but trusted Praiseworthy.

The next day, Jack and Praiseworthy worked at the diggings looking for gold but no one came looking to buy neckties. Jack decided that he felt bad about what he had done and wouldn't say anything about it.

The morning after that, three people came to Pitch-pine Billy's claim. Jack recognized Jonas T. Fletcher, the undertaker, and two merchants with him. They were looking for Praiseworthy. They told him that it was Praiseworthy's job to "uphold the fair name of Hangtown." The men told him about a man from another town challenging Praiseworthy to a fight. This same man said that he could whip Praiseworthy in a fight. Although this man could barely write his name, he was very big and strong. His nickname was Mountain Ox.

Praiseworthy said, "It doesn't seem like a fair fight."

The undertaker said, "He is bigger, and taller, and meaner."

Praiseworthy said, "That's not what I mean. It isn't a fair fight for him."

Everyone was surprised by what he said. The Mountain Ox sounded enormous. Praiseworthy wouldn't have a chance.

Praiseworthy explained that since the Mountain Ox couldn't read and write, he was at a disadvantage. Praiseworthy agreed to the fight, but said they needed to keep looking for gold and would fight in the middle of August. After the men left, Pitch-pine Billy said Praiseworthy was going to die if he fought the next month.

They went back to diggings, when all of a sudden the miners started shouting about their old friend Quartz Jackson being back. He had brought his new wife! All of the men were very excited that there was a lady in town. They hadn't seen a lady in a very long time!

Within five minutes, all of the miners were in the stream washing up and planning to go into town to see the lady. They washed their clothes and shaved their beards.

Praiseworthy and Jack took their time and then came out from their tent with green neckties. All of the miners started swarming around the basket of neckties and offering to give pinches of gold for a tie. Within twenty minutes, all of the neckties were sold and Jack's pouch was full of gold. They knew that the gold would buy them a burro and maybe even a gun. The miners made their way to town from the diggings.

Once they got to town, they saw Quartz Jackson and a beautiful woman. They told Praiseworthy and Jack that they were going to build a cabin and could stop by for tea anytime. They also looked and saw that everyone in town was staring at them and wearing neckties.

Chapter 14: The Prospectors

When Jack woke up the next morning he ran outside to see if the burro that they bought was still there. They had tied the burro, who they had named Stubb, to a stake outside of the tent.

The man who they had bought Stubb from said that Stubb was a proud animal but sometimes thought he was a mule. Jack told him they would be friends.

Jack untied the burro and at that moment, Stubb kicked out his back legs which caused Jack to fly onto the ground. Jack was so surprised that he just sat there. Pitch-pine Billy laughed and reminded Jack that Stubb thought he was a mule.

Jack brushed himself off. "All I wanted to do was ride him."

Pitch-pine Billy said, "The mules around here are half wild. They don't want to be ridden. You have to blindfold them first and then they'll stand still." He pulled out a red bandana and tied it around Stubb's face.

Jack walked over to the burro, threw a leg over his back, and held on. Pitch-pine Billy pulled off the bandana. Stubb stood still, trying to decide if he should act like a mule or a burro.

"Good boy, Stubb," said Jack.

Stubb gave a little kick, but then decided to behave himself. Jack walked him back and forth a few times and then slipped to the ground. "We have ourselves a good burro," he told Praiseworthy.

Stubb gave a kick to show he was mad.

"Mule, I mean," Jack said.

After breakfast, they packed up their supplies and put them on Stubb while he was blindfolded. They were ready to leave Hangtown. All of the miners came to say goodbye.

"We'll be looking for you when you come back next month to fight Mountain Ox," said Buffalo John.

Praiseworthy said, "I'll be here," and took the blindfold off Stubbs. "Let's get going, partner."

They took the squirrel gun, which was not as exciting as a four shooter, and headed off. They led Stubbs with a rope. Jack knew he could use the squirrel gun to hunt for a little bit of food and scare an outlaw or two.

They walked off and heard their friends from town shouting goodbyes to them. It was hard to leave them, but would be even harder to come back when it was time for the fight.

“Are you really going to fight him?” asked Jack.

“I gave my word that I would,” said Praiseworthy. He didn’t seem worried at all about fighting.

Jack imagined his partner lying in the dust on the street after a fight with Mountain Ox. He was worried that Praiseworthy would lose.

“I intend to beat him,” said Praiseworthy.

“With reading and writing?” asked Jack.

“Exactly. Miss Arabella gave me a book called *The Gentleman’s Book of Boxing*. I read it and studied it. I could tell you everything it said in it. I know Mountain Ox hasn’t read the book. All he does is fight so I know I can outwit and outbox him. I’m actually beginning to look forward to my fight with him.”

Jack put Mountain Ox out of his mind. He took the squirrel gun and kept an eye out for rabbits, squirrels, savages, and outlaws. Now all they needed to do was find gold.

Chapter 15: The Man Who Couldn't Sit Down

Day after day, Praiseworthy and Jack moved their camp while they searched for gold. Sometimes they were successful, and sometimes they weren't. At night time the fleas were really bad. Jack kept a candle by the gold pans and would count who caught more dead fleas. Jack announced that he was ahead and Praiseworthy said he had flea bites to prove that what Jack said was true.

Praiseworthy loved the mountain air and loved being in California. They wondered if they would ever find gold or "pay dirt."

One night Praiseworthy and Jack were sitting around the campfire when a miner walked by them. They asked him to stop and sit with them, but the miner said he couldn't because he had a terrible toothache. The miner was going to Shirt-tail camp because he had heard they had a dentist there. Praiseworthy and Jack suspected that Cut-Eye Higgins was the dentist. The miner told them that the dentist's name was Doc Higgins.

Days passed and Jack and Praiseworthy continued looking for gold. One day they saw Digger Indians. The women wore bright calico dresses and would mine for gold with baskets. A prospector told them the Digger Indians were looking for gold so that they could trade it for dresses, serapes, and red sashes.

Jack and Praiseworthy slowly added gold dust to their pouches, but had never come close to striking it rich. Every place that they found had been passed through by other miners. They saw Chinese sifting through the camps trying to find little bits of gold left behind. Jack noticed the rockers made of all sorts of different materials. To use a rocker, the miners would shovel dirt into the top and rock it back and forth so gold would catch at the bottom.

One afternoon in late July, Jack decided to take his squirrel gun and look for a jackrabbit to eat for dinner. He walked around, thinking of how surprised Aunt Arabella and his sisters would be if they saw him hunting. All of a sudden, a bear appeared. Jack was very scared and felt like he couldn't move. All he had to protect himself was a squirrel gun! The bear stood on its hind legs and showed his teeth. Jack began to back up. As he backed up, he fell into a coyote hole that had been

dug by miners looking for gold. The bear looked everywhere for him and eventually left because he couldn't see inside the hole.

Jack was scraped and bruised but had broken no bones. He tried to climb out of the hole but couldn't. Every time he got halfway up, he would slide back down. He began to call for help. He knew that he was too far away from camp for Praiseworthy to hear, but he shouted anyway. Finally, he took the squirrel gun and shot up at the sky.

He saw a face up above him. "Help, sir!" Jack said.

"What are you doin' down there?"

"Trying to get out, sir!"

"I heard you callin'. You almost shot my hat off."

"Sorry, sir."

The man threw a rope down the hole for Jack. He held on tightly and the stranger pulled him out. Jack stood up and looked at the stranger. He was wearing Cut-Eye Higgin's white coat! Jack backed away, almost falling back into the coyote hole again.

"What's the matter, boy? You look like you seen a ghost."

Jack's heart was pounding. "I know who you are—a road agent!"

"Now, that's a fact," the man laughed. "But I've retired from the road agent profession. That's a fact too. All of my friends were shot or hung and I got away but was shot on the seat of my pants. I haven't been able to sit in a month. Me and my horse just walk and hunt for grizzly bears. I'm not a road agent anymore. You haven't seen a big bear around here, have you? I've been hunting him for two days."

Jack calmed down but kept his distance. "I'll bet you're still looking for Dr. Buckbee's mine."

"Mine? What mine is that, boy?"

Jack realized that the stranger didn't know about the map in the lining of Cut-Eye Higgin's coat. He pointed the squirrel gun at the man.

"You pointin' that thing at me?" the reformed road agent laughed.

"Yes, sir. You stole the coat you're wearing, didn't you?"

"I guess I did. Did it belong to a friend of yours? I feel bad wearing it even though I like it. I'd appreciate it if you could give it back to your friend. It was too tight on me anyways."

He peeled the coat off and threw it at Jack. It landed on the ground. Then the man took his horse's halter and began to walk away.

Jack told him the bear had just left. Then the man turned and began to laugh. He told Jack next time he pointed the squirrel gun at someone, he had better make sure it was loaded.

Jack's face reddened. He was sorry he hadn't been more polite to someone who had helped him. "Thank you, sir!" he called.

Jack ran back to camp with the coat. "Look what I've got!" he said to Praiseworthy. "It's Cut-Eye Higgin's coat!"

Jack told Praiseworthy about the meeting with the grizzly bear and the reformed road agent. Praiseworthy took a knife and ripped open the lining of the coat. They looked in the coat and Jack's excitement died away. There was no map. There never had been a map in the coat!

Praiseworthy said, "The scoundrel fooled us. He never lost the map to the highwaymen. This means that he used the map to go to Shirt-tail Camp. He may not have even found the mine yet. If he had, he wouldn't be pulling teeth. Let's eat beans for dinner, partner. First thing tomorrow morning we'll go to Shirt-tail Camp to look for Cut-Eye Higgins and the map."

Chapter 16: The Gravediggers

It took Jack and Praiseworthy two days to get to Shirt-tail Camp. On their way, they passed Old Cap Sutter's Sawmill. Old Cap had hired Jim Marshall to build a mill. One January morning in 1848, Jim Marshall saw gold. He thought it was fool's gold, but beat it with a rock and saw that it was real because it flattened out. If it was fool's gold, it would have split apart. Marshall went to Sacramento where Old Cap had built a fort. They locked the door to the fort and tried other tests. They used a scale and weighed it under water. They saw the gold was heavier than silver. Then they tested the gold with acid to see if it would rust. It didn't. There was no question. Marshall had found gold. By the time Jack and Praiseworthy got there, there were squatters all along the river.

Praiseworthy found a miner standing in the river and asked if they were going the right way to Shirt-tail Camp. The miner said, "Just follow the river. If you hurry you might get there in time for the hangin'. A lot of boys have taken the day off to watch it. It's that dentist fella. They caught him trying to steal a horse."

Praiseworthy and Jack looked at each other. They needed to get there fast before Cut-Eye Higgins was hung. Only he knew where Dr. Buckbee's gold would be.

They hurried to Shirt-tail Camp and got there in an hour. They saw Cut-Eye Higgins sitting on a horse with a rope around his neck that was tied to a tree. A crowd was circled around him.

They knew they were just in time. Praiseworthy told Jack to pretend he had a toothache. He said to moan really loudly.

The Justice of the Peace was talking to Cut-Eye Higgins. "I'll make sure you get a good buryin'. We never minded that you took gold every time you took out a tooth. We never minded that you stole pocket watches. You're a dentist so we tried to let you get away with some things. But stealin' a horse is the worst crime and you got to pay the penalty. Since you said your dyin' words two times this morning, it's time to get on with it. Boys, move the horse!"

"Hold on!" demanded Praiseworthy. "This boy has a toothache."

The Justice of the Peace threw down his hat. “Doggone! That’s the third one today! We’ll never hang him!”

Praiseworthy said it would just take a moment. Jack moaned and held on to his check. He was scared that his tooth would be pulled.

They took Cut-Eye Higgins down from the tree and Cut-Eye Higgins recognized Jack and Praiseworthy. “Open your mouth, son, and stop squirming.”

Jack refused to open his mouth. Cut-Eye Higgins whispered that he would just pretend to look around in his mouth and not pull a tooth.

Praiseworthy whispered, “We came for the map.”

“I figured. Get me out of this and the map is yours.”

Praiseworthy nodded and said, “It’s a deal. I’ll try, but I want to see the map first.”

Cut-Eye Higgins took off his jipijapa hat. He took a folded piece of brown paper out of the sweatband of the hat. He handed the map to Praiseworthy. He put the hat back on and it was too big, now. “That’s my part of the deal. Now you keep yours. Open up your mouth, boy.”

Praiseworthy looked at the map. The X-marked Shirt-tail Camp. He told Cut-Eye Higgins that the map was no good.

Cut-Eye Higgins said, “I never said it was good. But it’s the map Dr. Buckbee’s brother gave him. By the time I got to the spot there were a hundred of miners on the spot.” Cut-Eye Higgins had led them on a wild goose chase.

“Get me out of this noose,” said Cut-Eye Higgins. “It was our bargain.”

Praiseworthy knew he had given his word and had to stand by it. He talked to the men and said, “You’re about to string up the only dentist in these diggings. Think of the pain and suffering. Tomorrow you may need a dentist. The doc can’t pull teeth if he is dead.” The men yelled in approval. “I say you put him in jail until another dentist comes to town. *Then* you can hang him.”

The Justice of the Peace agreed and said he would be put in jail and people could visit until another dentist came. After that, Cut-Eye Higgins would be hung. Then he told Jack and Praiseworthy that since it was their idea, it would be their job to dig the grave six feet deep.

Chapter 17: The Fifteenth of August

Jack jumped! “By the Great Horn Spoon!” he yelled.

“Look! I see it!” Praiseworthy said.

“Pay dirt! As yellow as can be,” Praiseworthy responded. The gold looked like tiny pieces of sunlight wrapped in the dirt. The two partners threw their hats in the air. In excitement they joined arms and danced in circles inside the pit that they had dug.

“We’ve done it, Jack, we’ve done it!” Praiseworthy screamed. “We have struck it rich!” A small amount of time went by before Jack realized that Praiseworthy had called him *Jack* instead of Master Jack. He had always wanted Praiseworthy to call him just *Jack* and now he had! Jack could not stop jumping up and down with happiness.

Jack then pulled out a piece of gold and hit it flat with a stone. It looked as flat as a button. “Put up some stakes quickly Jack.” instructed Praiseworthy. Together Jack and Praiseworthy measured off enough space to dig for more gold. Using Praiseworthy’s umbrella and a pine tree limb for stakes, they hung tin cans from corner to corner so that their claim would be legal. Praiseworthy joked, “Cut-Eye Higgins has done us a favor after all.”

The next day Praiseworthy went to Coloma to buy a Long Tom while Jack stayed behind with a squirrel gun to watch their stake. Within twenty-four hours of Jack and Praiseworthy finding gold, miners had staked claims everywhere. They now called this area *Gravedigger’s Hill*. All day long Jack and Praiseworthy worked digging and mining for gold.

One night after dinner Jack said, “Won’t Aunt Arabella be surprised when we walk in?” Praiseworthy looked into the coffee fire and touched Aunt Arabella’s picture that was in his shirt pocket. He began to think about her and wonder what she was doing now. However, he quickly reminded himself that he must not forget that he was a butler! He knew that once they arrived back in Boston he would continue his duties as a butler, just as his father and grandfather had. He knew that Aunt Arabella needed him.

The next morning a miner came rushing up the hill from Shirt-tail Camp yelling, “Doc Higgins has escaped!” The miner continued on to

explain that Doc Higgins had used his dentist tools to break out of the jail house that had been built for him.

After almost two weeks of digging in their claim, the gold became less and less. Other miners began to pull the stakes from their claims to follow the rumors that they had heard of gold being found in other places. On the morning of August fifteenth, Jack and Praiseworthy set up their tent. It was the same day that Praiseworthy was scheduled to fight Mountain Ox. Jack felt as though Praiseworthy was not in a hurry to keep his appointment in Hangtown and he began to wonder if Praiseworthy had changed his mind about fighting Mountain Ox.

Praiseworthy exclaimed, "Not on your life, Jack. We'll make it."

They quickly blindfolded Stubb and packed their belongings. At this point they had eleven pouches of gold dust, which would be a fortune in San Francisco. Before they left both of them stood and gazed at their claim one last time. Both of them felt like they were leaving an old friend. As they began to walk away, two Chinese miners moved in to work their claim.

After arriving in Coloma, they traded in their mining tools and boarded a stagecoach. Jack felt invincible as he rubbed his hand along the bottom of his gun. He took one last look at Stubb, who had been sold to the Justice of the Peace.

They arrived in Hangtown in the late afternoon. The main street was decorated as though it were the Fourth of July. There were miners, horses, burros and mules everywhere. As soon as Praiseworthy stepped out of the stagecoach he heard a shout.

"There he is! It's Bullwhip himself!"

Pitch-pine Billy ran over and greeted them. In another moment Jimmie-from-Town, Buffalo John and Quartz Jackson had crowded around.

"Let's get on with it," yelled Pitch-pine Billy. "Where's the Mountain Ox?"

The miners formed a large circle in the center of the street. Others climbed on the store roofs for a better view. When Mountain Ox appeared, Jack's heart dropped. The Mountain Ox smiled. His neck looked like the stump of a tree and his chest looked as big around as a flour barrel.

“He is a large man at that,” said Praiseworthy as he looked at his opponent.

“I wish we’d never come back here,” Jack mumbled.

“You want me to back out?” asked Praiseworthy.

Jack took a breath and answered, “You gave your word. You have got to stick by it.

Jonas T. Fletcher, the undertaker, asked, “Are you two men ready?”

The undertaker moved out of the way and Praiseworthy moved forward, ready to fight. Jack’s heart was pounding in his ears. The Mountain Ox took the first swing and everyone was amazed to see Praiseworthy still standing. Praiseworthy took the next swing which didn’t hurt the Mountain Ox, but did surprise him.

“Come on, Ox-finish him off!”

“Don’t be scared of him, Bullwhip!”

Five long minutes passed. Praiseworthy decided his plan of attack. He decided to hit Mountain Ox in the nose repeatedly. Praiseworthy continued to duck and miss all of Mountain Ox’s punches. After one final hit to the nose by Praiseworthy, the Mountain Ox fell over onto the dirt. The miners all cheered and Pitch-pine Billy said, “The winner! The fair name of Hangtown has been saved! Let’s celebrate!”

As the walked away, Jack’s face glowed with pride. There wasn’t another partner that he’d rather have.

Chapter 18: Arrival at the Long Wharf

The next morning Praiseworthy and Jack left on a stagecoach for Sacramento City. They had struck it rich and needed to hurry back to Boston before Aunt Arabella sold their family house. Praiseworthy however, was thinking less about Boston and more about Aunt Arabella. He felt that she would like California and that she needed to find herself a husband. Praiseworthy wanted to marry her. However, he knew that he was a butler and that it would be unthinkable so he quickly thought of something else.

As they traveled out of the mountains and arrived in Sacramento, Jack was disappointed that they had not seen any road agents. He had been prepared to use his four-shooter if they had run into trouble. In the river there was a steamboat waiting for them. They bought tickets and boarded the boat with their pockets full of gold dust. As they sailed away they thought about the fact that in fourteen hours they would be in San Francisco.

The steamboat went charging down the river, blowing its whistle at anything that got in its way, even floating logs. Praiseworthy and Jack were weighed down by their gold. They carried their treasure pouches tied to their belts. "Fine-looking country," Praiseworthy would say every once in a while. "Fine-looking country," Jack would agree. Jack knew that Praiseworthy would miss California. He knew that things would change when they arrived in Boston. No one would refer to Praiseworthy as *Bullwhip* and Jack would not be allowed to drink coffee but they knew that they belonged in Boston.

They were not the only miners aboard the ship heading for home. They met many miners who had left the diggings, as poor as when they had arrived. Jack and Praiseworthy slept in everything but their boots. When they awoke the next morning and went out on the deck the ship was entering the San Francisco Bay. The masts of hundreds of ships could be seen around the port.

All of the sudden the ship's boiler exploded loudly and the smokestack shot in the air. The pilothouse followed, with the captain still inside shouting orders. Passengers were thrown over the side of the ship, among which were Jack and Praiseworthy. The next thing that Jack knew he was underwater and the gold pouches were pulling him

down. He fought to come up, but the weights kept dragging him below. Then, fighting for his life, he unbuckled his belt. The buckskin pouches and four-shooter fell to the bottom of the ocean. Moments later, Jack came to the surface of the water, spit out water and looked around. The riverboat was gone and so was Praiseworthy. However, a second later Praiseworthy appeared.

“Hang on partner,” said Praiseworthy. “Are you alright?”

“Ruination!” yelled Jack. “I unbuckled my belt.”

“Think nothing of it Jack. I had to do the same thing.”

Praiseworthy replied.

Within several minutes there were several large boats pulling people out of the water. Jack landed on the Long Wharf, poor and soaking wet. They had struck it rich but now their fortune was somewhere at the bottom of the bay.

“Gone forever,” Jack mumbled.

“It was only gold Jack. We still have our good health!”

Praiseworthy replied.

They wouldn’t be returning back to Boston but they still needed to return. They began to climb up the stairs to the wharf when they noticed the *Lady Wilma*.

“Strange, Captain Swain had planned to sail home as soon as he could,” stated Praiseworthy.

Jack and Praiseworthy decided to borrow a small boat and row out to the *Lady Wilma*. They climbed aboard and quickly realized that the crew was gone and the ship was empty. The only thing that they saw was cats.

“Those cats from Peru,” Jack said.

“And they appear to have multiplied,” Praiseworthy responded.

As they looked around the ship they also noticed that rats had gnawed through barrels of food. As Jack and Praiseworthy looked around the empty ship they wondered how they would ever get back to Aunt Arabella, Sarah and Constance.

The two partners returned to the wharf. Jack had taken one of the kittens with him. They walked into town and tried to find Captain Swain. Instead however, they found Mr. Azariah Jones. He had become an auctioneer. Mr. Azariah Jones offered them some pickles that he was auctioning off and they began to talk.

“What happened to Captain Swain and the *Lady Wilma*?” asked Praiseworthy.

“His crew ran off to the diggings so he decided to give up and find a passage home,” replied Mr. Jones.

“Is Dr. Buckbee still in San Francisco?” asked Praiseworthy.

“No, he got over the fever and gave up on that gold map of his.”

Mr. Azariah Jones began to explain to Jack and Praiseworthy how he was concerned about the rat problem in San Francisco.

“Rats?” said Praiseworthy.

“Did you say rats?” asked Jack.

“Yes. I auctioned off a cat yesterday for fifteen dollars,” replied Mr. Jones.

Jack pulled a cat from his shirt as he looked at Praiseworthy. At that moment they both thought of all the cats aboard the *Lady Wilma*. They went back and brought back several bags of cats to auction off.

The cat auction drew a huge crowd. By the end of the afternoon Jack and Praiseworthy had earned almost four hundred dollars. The two partners walked towards the Long Wharf to look into buying a passage home. A ship had recently dropped anchor in the harbor and passengers were coming ashore. Suddenly, Jack noticed two girls who looked like Sarah and Constance and a woman in a straw hat that looked exactly like Aunt Arabella. It was Aunt Arabella! Praiseworthy stopped in his tracks as the woman and two girls walked right past them.

“Sarah! Constance!” Jack hollered.

“Miss Arabella!” said Praiseworthy.

Aunt Arabella turned and saw that it was Jack and Praiseworthy. She hardly recognized them in their mining gear.

“You’re so changed. Both of you!” cried Aunt Arabella.

“I am delighted to see you Miss Arabella,” replied Praiseworthy. The girls and Aunt Arabella told them that they had sold the old house and decided to come to California to follow Jack and Praiseworthy. Jack and Praiseworthy shared their stories of finding gold, being called *Jamoka Jack* and *Bullwhip* and how they became miners.

“Will you be returning to Boston?” Praiseworthy asked.

“Certainly not,” Aunt Arabella replied.

Knowing that Miss Arabella would not be returning to Boston, Praiseworthy began to gather up the courage to ask her to marry him.

“Women are scarce out here, Miss Arabella. Maybe this isn’t the time or the place, Miss Arabella, but when a man strikes gold he doesn’t waste time staking a claim”.

Praiseworthy quickly took off his hat and said, “Miss Arabella, will you do me the honor of becoming my wife?”

“Marry you? Why of course. I thought that you would never ask!” replied Aunt Arabella.

“By the Great Horn Spoon!” shouted Praiseworthy.

Everyone was excited as they all walked up from the Long Wharf. They looked very much like a family. They felt like a family. They were a family.