



IN THE MOUNTAINS

***ACCOMPANYING
ILLUSTRATIONS***

***WRITTEN BY ART COLLINS
ILLUSTRATED BY KC COLLINS***

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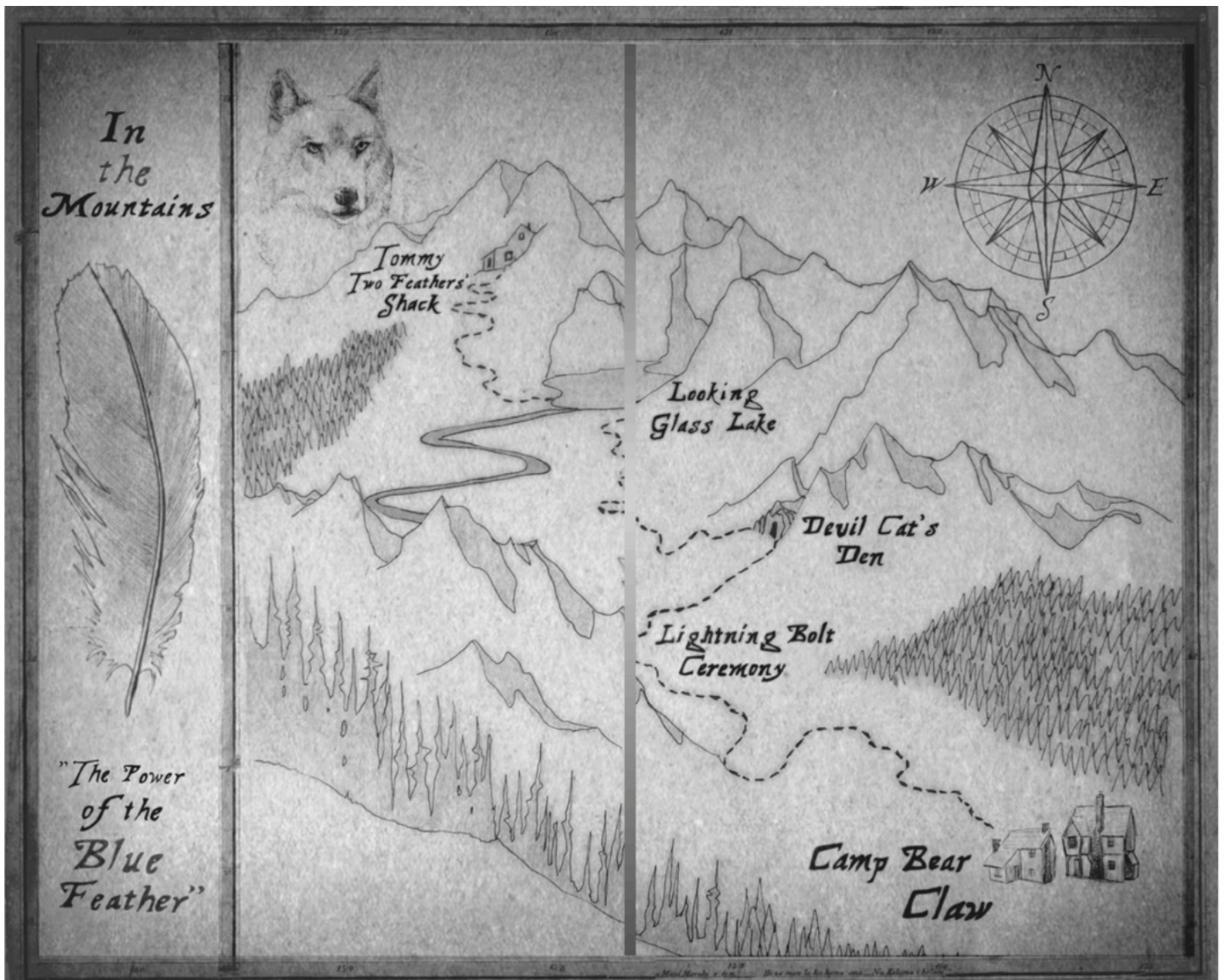
SPOILER NOTE

***THESE PICTURES SHOW SCENES FROM IN THE MOUNTAINS—SO DON'T
PEEK AHEAD!***

***FOLLOW ALONG WITH EACH ILLUSTRATION AS YOU GET TO THAT PART
OF THE STORY.***

PROLOGUE

"NOW THAT THE SCHOOL YEAR HAD JUST ENDED, THE BOYS WERE LOOKING FORWARD TO SUMMER VACATION AND THE CHANCE TO SPEND TIME AT A REMOTE CAMP TUCKED AWAY IN A DISTANT MOUNTAIN RANGE. AS THEIR THOUGHTS SHIFTED FROM MATH AND GEOGRAPHY TO HIKING AND CLIMBING, THEY HAD NO IDEA THAT ANOTHER ADVENTURE WAS ABOUT TO BEGIN..."



PROLOGUE

"IT SEEMED AS THOUGH A LONG TIME HAD PASSED SINCE ARCHIBALD AND JOCKABEB HAD SAID GOODBYE TO HAKTU, THE YOUNG INDIAN BRAVE, AND HIS PONY, UNO.

ALTHOUGH SEVERAL SEASONS HAD COME AND GONE, THE TWO BROTHERS REMEMBERED CLEARLY ALL THE STRANGE EVENTS THAT HAD TAKEN PLACE THAT COLD, DARK NIGHT IN THE MYSTERIOUS FOREST JUST BEYOND THEIR BACKYARD THE NIGHT THEY FOUND THE SECRET CAVE AND BROKE THE EVIL SPELL THAT HAD TRAPPED HAKTU IN THE BODY OF AN UNDERWATER DRAGON."



Haktu and Uno

CHAPTER 1

THE RIDE TO CAMP

"HE HAD A RED-PAISLEY KERCHIEF TIED LOOSELY AROUND HIS NECK, AND HE CRACKED THE SLIGHTEST HINT OF A SMILE WHEN HE SPOTTED THEM.



'YOU MUST BE THE CITY FELLAS, ARCHIBALD AND JOCKABEB,' HE SAID IN A GRAVELLY VOICE THROUGH TOBACCO-STAINED TEETH.

'GLAD TO KNOW YA,' HE SAID, EXTENDING A CALLOUSED HAND. 'I'M BENJAMIN, BUT FOLKS IN THESE PARTS JUST CALL ME BEN.'

LET'S GET YOUR GEAR AND HIT THE ROAD. THERE'S A LONG RIDE AHEAD OF US, AND IT SMELLS LIKE A STORM MIGHT BE BREWIN' ALONG THE WAY.'

CHAPTER 1

THE RIDE TO CAMP

"WHEN ARCHIBALD JUMPED INTO THE FRONT SEAT NEXT TO BEN, JOCKABEB THOUGHT HE'D BE ALONE IN THE BACK UNTIL HE OPENED THE REAR DOOR AND WAS STARTLED TO FIND A LARGE YELLOW DOG CURLED UP ASLEEP ON THE SEAT.

GLANCING BACK, BEN NODDED AS HE TURNED THE KEY IN THE IGNITION. 'HIS NAME'S CHAMP. HE'S A GOOD OLD DOG, EVEN IF HE SLEEPS A LOT AND DON'T HEAR SO GOOD OUTTA HIS LEFT EAR.

CHAMP'S FRIENDLY ENOUGH, AND YOU CAN INTRODUCE YOURSELVES WHEN HE WAKES UP."



Champ

CHAPTER 1

THE FIRST NIGHT

"IN THE CORNER, A SMALL GRAY-HAIRED LADY WAS STIRRING A STEAMING POT ON A WROUGHT-IRON STOVE THAT HAD OBVIOUSLY BEEN WELL USED OVER THE YEARS.



Gran

WHATEVER SHE WAS COOKING SMELLED DELICIOUS TO THE TWO FAMISHED BOYS.

TURNING AROUND, MRS. McCLUSKY ARCHED HER WRINKLED BROW AND SMILED AS SHE WELCOMED HER TWO NEWEST VISITORS TO WHAT WOULD BE THEIR HOME AWAY FROM HOME FOR THE NEXT THREE WEEKS.

HER FACE WAS KIND, AND HER VOICE SOFT, BUT SURPRISINGLY STRONG."

CHAPTER 1

MOUNTAIN HIKE

"AS ARCHIBALD AND JOCKABEB UNPACKED THEIR PEANUT BUTTER-AND-JELLY SANDWICHES AND BEGAN TO EAT, BEN SAID HE HAD SOMETHING IMPORTANT HE NEEDED TO TELL THEM.

WHEN I FIRST ARRIVED IN THESE PARTS AND STARTED WORKIN' FOR MR. McCLUSKY, HE TOLD ME ABOUT A LEGEND HE HEARD FROM TOMMY TWO FEATHERS, AN OLD INDIAN WHO'S LIVED UP IN THESE MOUNTAINS FOR MOST OF HIS LIFE.

WELL, I HEAR TELL THE LOCALS IN THESE PARTS HAVE PASSED DOWN THIS LEGEND FROM GENERATION TO GENERATION. IT'S ABOUT AN INDIAN TRIBE THAT MIGRATED WEST AND SETTLED HERE A LONG, LONG TIME AGO.

APPARENTLY, THE TRIBE'S CHIEF HAD LOST ONE OF HIS TWIN BOYS IN SOME CAVE BACK EAST."



A young Haktu

CHAPTER 1 MOUNTAIN HIKE

"TOMMY TWO FEATHERS TOLD MR. McCLUSKY THAT ONE OF THE EVIL WARRIORS IS STILL ALIVE AFTER ALL THESE YEARS."



Walter McClusky

BEN CONTINUED, 'AND THAT WARRIOR NOW ROAMS THESE MOUNTAINS IN THE BODY OF A GIANT BLACK CAT.'

WELL, ONE NIGHT AWHILE BACK, I THINK I SAW THIS SO-CALLED DEVIL CAT WHEN I WAS CAMPIN' ABOUT A MILE FROM HERE.

AND LAST NIGHT WHEN LIGHTNIN' STRUCK NEAR THE JEEP, I THINK I MIGHT HAVE CAUGHT A GLIMPSE OF IT AGAIN.'"

CHAPTER 1

ENTERING THE CAVE

"BEN WHISPERED, 'YOU CAN TELL THIS IS A MEAT-EATIN' WILD ANIMAL'S DEN FROM THAT HUGE PILE OF BONES OVER THERE.

SOME OF THOSE BONES LOOK LIKE THEY'VE BEEN THERE FOR A WHILE, BUT OTHERS ARE FROM FRESH KILLS. LOOK, YOU CAN STILL SEE SOME FLESH ATTACHED. BUT THE MAIN THING I WANTED TO SHOW YOU IS THAT HAT.'

SQUINTING IN THE SEMI-DARKNESS, ARCHIBALD SAW AN OLD LEATHER HAT SITTING AT THE TOP OF THE PILE OF BONES.

AS HE TOOK A FEW STEPS CLOSER, HE COULD SEE THAT THE HAT WAS SPLATTERED WITH DRIED BLOODSTAINS AND COVERED WITH BITE MARKS!"



CHAPTER 1

WHAT REALLY HAPPENED

"NOW LAYING FLAT ON HIS BACK, JOCKABEB WIPED HIS BROW AND SLOWLY OPENED HIS EYES.



Poison-yellow eyes

HE WAS LIGHT-HEADED WITH BLURRY VISION WHEN HE GASPED AT THE SIGHT OF A LARGE, DARK SHAPE SITTING ON A MAMMOTH BOULDER DIRECTLY IN FRONT OF HIM.

THROUGH A SEMICONSCIOUS HAZE, HE STARED UP AT THE GROTESQUE BLACK HEAD AND STRAIGHT INTO A PAIR OF POISON-YELLOW EYES.

DEFENSELESS, JOCKABEB RECOILED AS THE BLACK BEAST'S MOUTH OPENED WIDE AND A SLIMY PURPLE TONGUE BEGAN TO LICK SHARP, WHITE FANGS THAT HE KNEW HAD RIPPED HUMAN FLESH MANY TIME BEFORE."

CHAPTER 2

TOMMY TWO FEATHERS

"WELL, LET'S BEGIN WITH HIS NAME. IT'S TOMMY TWO FEATHERS, AND I'M NOT SURE HOW HE GOT IT, BUT HE WEARS TWO BLUE FEATHERS IN HIS HAT.

IN ALL THESE YEARS, I'VE ONLY MET HIM TWICE. SINCE HE DIDN'T SAY MUCH EITHER TIME, WHAT I'M TELLIN' YOU NOW IS BASED ON WHAT I HEARD FROM MR. McCLUSKY OVER THE YEARS. TOMMY TWO FEATHERS AND WALT WERE FRIENDS, AND THEY TRUSTED AND RESPECTED ONE ANOTHER.

I THINK IT WAS PARTLY BECAUSE THEY BOTH LIVED IN THESE MOUNTAINS FOR A LONG TIME, BUT THERE WERE OTHER REASONS TOO."



Tommy Two Feathers

CHAPTER 2

TOMMY TWO FEATHERS' SHACK

THE SUN WAS JUST DROPPING BELOW THE MOUNTAINS WHEN THE FIRST SNOWFLAKES STARTED TO FALL.



Tommy Two Feathers' cabin

SEEING THE CONCERNED LOOK ON JOCKABEB'S FACE, BEN TOLD THE BOYS NOT TO FRET SINCE THEY'D BE AT TOMMY TWO FEATHERS' CABIN BEFORE NIGHT SET IN. BEN WAS RIGHT, AND WITHIN A FEW MINUTES AN OLD WOODEN STRUCTURE CAME INTO VIEW THROUGH THE SNOW.

THE OLD LOG CABIN WAS BUILT INTO THE SIDE OF THE MOUNTAIN, AND SMOKE WAS RISING FROM A METAL PIPE THAT JUTTED UP FROM A DENTED TIN ROOF. THEY COULD SEE A WARM, YELLOW GLOW THROUGH A SMALL WINDOW, AND FROM ALL APPEARANCES, SOMEONE WAS HOME."

CHAPTER 2 A LONG NIGHT

"IT WASN'T LONG BEFORE EVERYONE SETTLED BACK DOWN, AND SOON THEY WERE FAST ASLEEP.

*THAT'S WHEN
JOCKABEB'S
NIGHTMARES BEGAN. IT
HAD BEEN NEARLY A
YEAR SINCE HE HAD
DREAMED OF THE
WOLF-CROWS.
HOWEVER, IT WAS FAR
WORSE BECAUSE THE
FLYING BLACK
CREATURES THAT
JOCKABEB FEARED SO
MUCH WERE THIS TIME
JOINED BY A GIANT
BLACK CAT.*

*SOMEWHERE IN THE
DARK RECESSES OF
JOCKABEB'S MIND,
THOSE HIDEOUS
CREATURES WERE
PLOTING THEIR NEXT
MOVE, WAITING
PATIENTLY TO
INTRODUCE HIM TO
THEIR OWN SPECIAL
BRAND OF TERROR."*



Nightmarish visions

CHAPTER 3

THE FIRST WARNING

"A CLAW-STREAKED SMEAR OF BLOOD RAN DOWN THE FACE OF THE BOULDER TO A SPOT ON THE GROUND BELOW WHERE SEVERAL PIECES OF TORN FLESH WERE PILED NEATLY IN A STACK

WHAT WAS SITTING AT THE BASE OF THE BOULDER TOOK JOCKABEB'S BREATH AWAY.

THE GLOVE HE'D LOST OUTSIDE THE CABIN TWO NIGHTS AGO WAS LYING THERE, SOAKED IN BLOOD AND TORN AS IF CHEWED BY RAZOR-SHARP TEETH."



Jockabeb's glove

CHAPTER 3

LOOKING GLASS LAKE

"SITTING RIGHT BELOW THE FOUR OF THEM WAS ONE OF THE MOST TRANQUIL, PRISTINE LITTLE LAKES THEY'D EVER SEEN.

THE SURFACE OF THE LAKE WAS FLAT AS GLASS, AND THE STILL WATER REFLECTED SUNLIGHT AS IF IT WERE A MIRROR. LOOKING AROUND, THEY COULD SEE THAT THE LAKE WAS PERFECTLY CENTERED IN THE MIDDLE OF A SMALL BOX CANYON, ENCIRCLED BY SOARING, SNOW-CAPPED CLIFFS. AWED BY THE STUNNING VISTA BEFORE HIM, JOCKABEB TURNED TO THE OLD INDIAN WHO WAS NOW GRINNING FROM EAR TO EAR. "MR. TWO FEATHERS, THANK YOU SO MUCH FOR BRINGING US HERE. I FEEL LIKE I'M IN AN OUTDOOR CATHEDRAL. IT'S ONE OF THE MOST BEAUTIFUL PLACES I'VE EVER BEEN!"



Looking Glass Lake

CHAPTER 3 THE FINAL WARNING

"CHAMP AND GHOST RIDER HAD TAKEN THEIR POSITIONS OUT IN FRONT OF THE GROUP.



DASHING BACK AND FORTH ALONG THE ROCKY TRAIL, THE FOUR-LEGGED ADVANCE SCOUTS SEEMED TO KNOW THAT SOME IMPENDING DANGER WAS NEARBY, AND BEFORE LONG, A HOWL FROM GHOST RIDER HALTED THE HIKERS' ADVANCE.

THIS TIME IT WAS TOMMY TWO FEATHERS WHO WALKED AHEAD TO SEE WHAT THE WOLF HAD FOUND. AS HE STARTED FORWARD, THE OLD INDIAN PULLED THE RIFLE OFF HIS BACK AND SLIPPED SEVERAL BULLETS INTO THE FIRING CHAMBER."

CHAPTER 3

PREPARATIONS BEGIN

"BEN TOLD THE BOYS TO GATHER UP THE BONES AND MR. McCLUSKY'S HAT.

ARCHIBALD GRABBED THE HAT AND THEN PRIED THE THREE LARGE BONES OUT OF THE ROCK, WRAPPED THEM IN ONE OF HIS SHIRTS, AND THEN STUFFED THEM IN HIS BACKPACK.

AS THE GROUP STARTED DOWN THE TRAIL AGAIN, JOCKABEB SUDDENLY YELLED, "STOP!" THE OTHERS CAME TO A HALT AND LOOKED AT HIM IN SURPRISE."



A final warning

CHAPTER X XXX

"WATCHING FROM THEIR HIDING SPOT, THE BOYS WERE STUNNED TO HEAR THE SAME MAGICAL WORDS FIRST SPOKEN BY HAKTU THAT NIGHT AT THE SECRET CAVE:

'NITO, VITO, SAMU!'

INSTANTLY, THE SKY TURNED PITCH-BLACK, THE WIND BEGAN TO GUST, AND A LOUD CLAP OF THUNDER BOOMED DIRECTLY OVERHEAD.

JOCKABEB WAS THE FIRST TO SEE THE DEVIL CAT AS IT BOUNDED DOWN THE RIDGE WITH ASTONISHING SPEED, ONLY MOMENTS AWAY FROM THE FIRE PIT AND THE PREY IT HAD PATIENTLY STALKED FOR SO LONG.

WITH THE HIDEOUS BLACK MONSTER ALMOST UPON THEM, BEN SHOULDERED HIS RIFLE, TOOK AIM, AND FIRED OFF TWO SHOTS IN QUICK SUCCESSION."



Nito, Vito, Samu!

**THE ADVENTURES OF ARCHIBALD AND JOCKABEB
CONTINUE WITH BOOK 2:**

IN THE AMAZON

