

COPPER CANYON

Down the Stream

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CONTENTS

1	<i>Yes or No?</i>	1
2	<i>A Big Fight</i>	8
3	<i>Switchback</i>	15
4	<i>Miners Gulch</i>	20
5	<i>Testing the Water</i>	27
6	<i>A Sick Creek</i>	33
7	<i>A Big “No”</i>	40



A few words about horses...

A horse sleeps in a **stall**. A **stall** is like a room, but it's inside a barn, not a house.

Horses run in lots of ways. When they run fast, they **gallop**. When a horse **gallops**, hold on tight! “**Whoa!**” is what you tell a horse when you want it to stop. Don't forget this word!

You don't sit on a horse. You sit on a seat called a **saddle**. But first put the **saddle** on the horse.

You can tell a horse where to go. Grab the **reins**, which are like ropes. Pull the **reins** tight, and the horse will slow down. Pull them right or left to make the horse turn. Let the **reins** go, and the horse will do what it likes.

A horse does not have feet like people. It has four **hooves**. The word for just one is **hoof**.

Horses like to eat grass and **oats**. When they are in the barn, they eat **hay**. **Hay** is grass that people have cut down and dried for food.

How does a horse talk? Amber's horse says “hi” with a sound called a **nicker**. A horse **snorts** by blowing air out of its nose.



CHAPTER 1

Yes or No?

Mr. Carver talked to the class. “This week, we will talk about the Copper Canyon Mine,” he said. “I want you to make two teams. One team will tell why the copper mine should open again. The other team will say why it should not.”

Amber Moss joined the “No” team. “It’s easy to see why a copper mine is bad for people,” she thought. “I bet the ‘No’ team will have lots of kids on it!”

She was wrong. Most of the class joined the

“Yes” team. Amber was shocked. Twenty-nine kids sat on the “Yes” side of the room! The only other student on the “No” side of the room was Lissa James. Amber was glad to be on Lissa’s team. She thought Lissa was a really smart girl. She would be a big help on the team. But a team needed more than two kids!

Amber’s friend Sara was on the “Yes” team. Sara had been Amber’s first friend when she moved to the town of Copper Canyon. Now Sara was her best friend. So why didn’t Amber’s best friend want to be on her team?

“Now, kids,” Mr. Carver said. “We need to have about the same number of students on each team. I need some of you on the ‘Yes’ team to join

the ‘No’ team.”

A few kids walked to Amber and Lissa’s side of the classroom. Then a few more did. In the end, only nine students from the “Yes” team had joined the “No” team. Sara was not one of them. Amber felt bad about that.

“I would like the teams to be more even,” said Mr. Carver. “But I see you have some strong feelings about the mine. So we will leave the teams as they are now.”

Did Sara have strong feelings about the mine? Was that why she didn’t join Amber’s team? Amber was going to talk to her after class. But now it was time to get to work. The teams needed to make plans for their talk. The students on the “No”

team wrote their plan on a sheet of paper.

“There is one big reason the copper mine should not open again,” Amber said. She wrote the words “People Get Sick” at the top of the list. She drew three thick lines under the words.

“When people dig up copper, they dig up a lot of other stuff, too. They throw away the other stuff. Some of it is toxic—it can make us sick! Then it rains, and the toxic stuff gets into creeks and streams. It hurts the fish and the animals that drink the water. A lot of people fish and hunt, or they drink the water. Then the toxic stuff is inside the people. That’s how they get sick.”

Amber knew a lot about this. All of the people in town were talking about the old mine. Some

people wanted the mine to open again. Some people were trying to keep the mine closed. The people who wanted it closed were called “Clean Water Now.” Amber’s mom was helping the Clean Water Now people. She talked about the copper mine a lot.

“The toxic things that come from copper mines can be really bad for you,” Amber told the team. “It would be a bad plan to start mining copper here again.”

Amber was the only student on her team who had things to say about the mine. The other students just sat there. At last the bell rang. The rest of the “No” team rushed out of the classroom.

Amber grabbed her backpack and looked for Sara. She had left the room. Why was Sara acting

like this? The two girls always walked to their next class side by side. Why didn't Sara want to talk to her?

Amber walked slowly to her next class. Then Lissa James caught up with her. "Hi, Lissa," Amber said.

"Hi, Amber. So, you know why kids in class didn't join our team, right?" said Lissa.

"Uh, not really," said Amber. She had not talked to Lissa much because Lissa was sick a lot. She missed a lot of school. Amber saw that Lissa was thin and pale.

"It's because this town needs the jobs," Lissa said. "The kids in our class know this. A lot of their dads and some moms worked in the mine before it

closed. If they open the Copper Canyon Mine, it could bring more than 500 jobs.”

Amber thought about Lissa’s family. Maybe they needed money. Maybe they would like to have the copper mine open, so they could get work. Then why did Lissa want the mine to stay closed?

CHAPTER 2

A Big Fight

“Do you know what I saw at the bank today?” Mrs. Moss asked Amber.

“What?” Amber asked. She and her mom were outside their house. They were chopping logs for the fireplace.

“The Parker twins had a fight about the Copper Canyon Mine. I was shocked! Those two always see things the same way. But now Grace wants the mine to stay closed, to keep the water clean. Lucy wants it to open again, so people can

get jobs at the mine.”

Mrs. Moss sounded happy. She thought it was good when people got upset. “That means they are thinking,” she always said.

Amber let her mom talk. She did not say a word. She was sick of hearing about the Copper Canyon Mine. She had spent all her time in class that day talking to her “No” team. She told them again about the problems the mine could bring. But it was always the same. The kids on the team just stared at her. They didn’t seem to like what she was saying.

Amber knew she was right about the problems the mine caused. Why didn’t the other students think the same way?

But that wasn't the bad part. Amber had hardly seen Sara all week. They did go riding one day, but it was with a lot of other people. Amber and Sara didn't have time to talk to each other. Later, Amber asked Sara if she was OK. Sara gave her a fake smile and said, "I'm fine." Amber knew that was a lie. But what could she do?

"Amber? That's all the logs we need," her mom said.

Amber looked at the big pile of logs next to her. She had just kept chopping and chopping. "Oops. Sorry, Mom," she said.

"Are things OK at school, Amber?" Mrs. Moss asked. "You seem a little upset."

"Things are fine," Amber said. "I'm just



*Amber looked at the big pile of logs next to her.
She had just kept chopping and chopping.*

thinking about some work I have to do.”

“Is it the copper mine talk?” asked Mrs. Moss. “You will do fine, Amber. You are very good at saying what you think.”

That was not the problem. The problem was her friends. She might not have any friends by the time this was all over!

Amber didn't want to tell her mom what was wrong. It had taken a long time for Amber to like Copper Canyon. Mrs. Moss was happy when Amber made friends with Sara. Amber had been happy, too. Now she might lose her best friend. She didn't know what to think.

The next day, Amber got up at seven to go to the library. There were some things she had to

know. If the other kids on her team would not help, she would do it herself.

When she got to the library, Amber saw Lissa sitting at the main desk.

“Hi, Lissa,” Amber said. “Do you work here?”

“I work part-time before class,” Lissa said with a smile. “I also work on weekends when I can.”

“Wow,” said Amber. “How do you have time to get such good grades?”

“The library is a great place to study,” Lissa said. “It’s a lot better than my house.”

Amber knew that Lissa’s house was in Miners Gulch. The house was down the hill from the mine. Lissa’s dad had been out of work for a

long time. Lissa had five little brothers and sisters. It seemed like she was always taking care of some small kid.

Amber told Lissa her plan.

“That’s a great plan, Amber. I know just where to look,” Lissa said. “I can show you.”