

THE GOLD MINE MYSTERY

High Noon Books

The Gold Mine Mystery
is a book in the
“Tom and Ricky” series
published by
High Noon Books.

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CHAPTER 1 Gold at the Creek

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

Ricky was sitting on the front steps. Patches was with him. Patches wagged his tail.

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Tom sat down on the steps. He said, “What do you want to do today? It's going to be warm.”

“We could go fishing in the creek,” Ricky said.

Tom smiled. “That's a good plan.”

Patches barked. He wanted to go, too.

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Ricky's mom came out. She said, “Mr. Bell called. He can't walk very well. He needs some work done. He will pay you.”

“Does he have much work to do?” Ricky asked.

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

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

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

"OK," Tom said.

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Mr. Bell was in his front yard. He lived near Ricky. He was old. Yard work was hard for him. He liked the boys and they liked him.

Ricky called out, "Hi, Mr. Bell. What work do you need us to do?"

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Mr. Bell smiled. "I'm glad to see you boys. Could you help me with some work in my yard?"

Ricky said, "Sure, we will be glad to help you this morning. We want to go fishing later."

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

"Yes. There is a good place there. Some big rocks form a nice place to fish," Tom answered.

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“I fished there when I was a little boy. My grandfather worked in the old gold mine near the creek,” Mr. Bell said.

“Really? Is it still there?” Ricky asked.

Mr. Bell laughed. “Gold mines do not go away. But the gold is not there.”

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

Mr. Bell said, “In this kind of mine the miners dig into a hill. They dig to break up the rocks. After that, the rocks are taken to a mill.”

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“I know about that. Gold is taken out of the rocks at the mill,” Ricky said.

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

“Yes, that is another way to do it,” Mr. Bell said.

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

“What if we found gold in the creek? Do you think we might?” Tom asked.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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CHAPTER 2

Flashlights

The boys were happy. They could make some money. Then they would still have time to go fishing.

Tom and Ricky worked hard. They wanted to do a good job for Mr. Bell.

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Mr. Bell was happy with their work. He said, “You did good work. Here is your pay.”

“Thank you, Mr. Bell.” Tom said.

Then Ricky said, “My flashlight does not work. Now I can buy a new one.”

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

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Tom and Ricky rode their bikes down to King's Market. They picked out the flashlights.

Then they rode their bikes back to Ricky's house. Patches was glad to see them.

Ricky said, "We'll take Patches with us."

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Ricky's mother saw them come in the house. "What's going on?" she asked.

"Mr. Bell told us about an old gold mine. It's near the creek. We're going to go fishing. Then we're going to look at the old mine," Ricky said.

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"Be careful. Don't go into it. It's old. It could fall down on you," she said.

Soon the three left. The boys put their things in their packs. They rode their bikes on the old road. The road went out of town.

At last they reached the fishing place.

"I hope we get some fish," Tom said.

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"So do I," Ricky said.

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

"Let's fish here," Tom said.

The boys put bait on their fishing lines. The bait would help them catch fish.

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Tom said, "Eddie knows we are here. He and Dave will come here later. Eddie has a computer class today."

"Where do you think the gold mine is?" Ricky asked. "I have no idea," Tom said.

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"Do you think gold is still there?" Ricky asked.

"I don't know," Tom said.

"OK, OK, no more talk about the mine. Let's fish!" Ricky said.

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CHAPTER 3

A Tunnel in a Cave

Tom and Ricky got three fish. They took the fish back to their bikes. Then Tom said, "Let's walk to the end of the road."

"I don't think it is very far," Ricky said.

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

They walked down the road a long way.

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

Ricky yelled, "It's a rabbit! Look at Patches run!"

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Tom said, "Look at that rabbit run!"

The rabbit and dog ran into the trees at the base of a hill. The boys ran after them.

They couldn't see Patches.

Ricky called Patches. Tom called him, too.

"Where did he go?" Ricky asked.

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"He must be here somewhere," Tom said.

They heard a bark come from some bushes.

"There he is. He's in those bushes," Ricky said.

The boys went through the bushes.

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There was a hole in the hill.

"Look at that," Tom said.

"It looks like a cave," Ricky said.

"We never saw that before," Tom said.

"The bushes were in the way," Ricky said.

"Let's go in the cave," Tom said.

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

"That tunnel goes into the hill," Tom said. "And it goes way back."

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

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

Ricky said, “It is too dark back there.”

Tom said, “We have to stop.”

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

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Tom laughed. “They are by the fishing hole.”

“That’s no good,” Ricky said.

“Let’s go back where we can see better,” Tom said.

“OK,” Ricky said.

Patches barked.

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

Tom said, “Come on. Let’s go get our flashlights.”

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

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“We always come over to the creek. But we never saw this cave before,” Tom said.

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

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

They walked out of the cave. Then they ran back for their flashlights.

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CHAPTER 4

A Pickup Truck

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

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

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Tom said, “Let’s go fishing. We can wait for them while we fish.”

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

“The cave that Patches found,” Tom said. Then they heard something.

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“Look, there are two men in a pickup truck. Do you see them? There are boxes on the truck,” Ricky said.

Tom said, “What are they doing out here? There isn’t anything to do out here.”

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Ricky said, "And the road isn't very good. And then it ends. It does not go anywhere."

Tom said, "It does go to our fishing hole. A lot of people don't even know about our fishing hole."

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"The truck might turn around soon," Ricky said.

"Then we will see them come back," Tom added.

They waited. The truck did not come back.

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"What should we do?" Tom asked.

Ricky looked down at the road.

"Look at the tire tracks in the dirt. Let's see where they go," Ricky said.

They walked next to the tire tracks.

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

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"I wish I knew," Tom said. "I have not seen those men before. They don't live around here," Ricky said. "

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

"What were they doing?" Ricky asked.

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

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

Tom said, “I wish we could call them. I can’t make a call out here.”

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

Tom said, “Let’s take our flashlights this time. We can look in the cave.”

The three of them started to walk down the old dirt road.

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All of a sudden Ricky stopped. “Did you hear that? Was that the truck?”

“It didn’t sound like it,” Tom said.

“Come on. Let’s find out what’s going on!” Ricky said.

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CHAPTER 5

Gun Shots

The boys and Patches ran down the road. Then they heard another loud sound.

“What was that?” Tom yelled.

“I think it was a gun,” Ricky said.

“What could they be doing?” Tom asked.

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Just then there was another shot.
“That’s three shots,” Tom said.
There was another bang.
Ricky said, “That makes four shots.”
After that they heard two more gun
shots.
“What are they shooting?” Tom asked.

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Ricky said, “Let’s hide in the bushes.”
Tom said, “I wish Officer Collins was
here.”
“Or anybody,” Ricky added.
Tom said, “Well, not just anybody. We
don’t want to see more men like them.”
Ricky laughed, “That’s for sure.”

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“Let’s stay right here. This is a good
place to hide. They can’t see us from the
road,” Tom said.
“That’s a good plan,” Ricky said.
Tom said, “I hope Patches doesn’t bark.”

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Then they saw the truck with the two
men go down the road. They waited. Then
they walked up the road again.
“Look. There is the cave Patches ran
into,” Tom said.
“The tire tracks keep going past here,”
Ricky said.

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“Let’s come back to the cave later. I want to see where the tire tracks go,” Tom said.

Soon the tire tracks turned and went off the road. Tom and Ricky turned off the road, too.

“It looks like the tracks go all the way up to the hill,” Tom said.

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“They stop in back of the trees,” Ricky said.

“Look! There’s another cave. It has a wood gate in front,” Tom said.

“Wow! It must be the way in to the old gold mine!” Ricky said.

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Tom said, “I bet you are right. We found the old gold mine!”

Ricky went to the opening. “Look. This wood is old. We can push this open.”

Tom said, “Come on. Let’s push.”

The wood was old. It didn’t take much to push the gate.

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“It’s dark in there. It’s a good thing we have the flashlights,” Ricky said.

“It might not be safe. Are we sure we want to go in there?” Tom asked.

“Let’s go in just for a second,” Ricky said.

The mine was dark. They walked in. They turned on their flashlights.

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There were railroad tracks in the floor.
Ricky said, "The tracks were for moving the rocks that had the gold."
They walked slowly down a long tunnel.
Ricky was in front. He said, "Look, here is another tunnel."

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Patches led the way into the new tunnel.
Tom said, "It's as big as a room here."
They shined their flashlights around.
Ricky said, "Look at these boxes. We saw those boxes on the truck!"

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Some of the boxes were open. The boys looked in them. Ricky said, "There is a gun in one of these boxes!"
"What did they shoot? Come on. Let's get out of here," Tom said.
Ricky put his hand on the gun. "It's warm," he said.

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"What if they shot something, or someone! We better tell Officer Collins about this," Tom said.
"OK, very soon. Here is another tunnel. Let's look in it. We might find out something about the place," Ricky said.

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They came to another room. Ricky shined his flashlight around. Then he saw it. "Gold! It's gold! I see it on the walls. All the rocks in here are gold!"

Tom said, "That does look like gold. There sure is a lot of it in here!"

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Just then Patches barked.
Ricky said, "I hear the truck coming back!"

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CHAPTER 6 Trapped!

"See! I said we should leave!" Tom said.
Patches barked.

"We can't go out. We will have to hide. Which way can we go?" Ricky asked.

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Tom said, "Look, here is another tunnel. Let's go in it. We have to get away from these rooms."

The boys came into another room. Ricky said, "Look at all the old mine cars in here. We can hide in back of the mine cars. I'll hold Patches."

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“I think I hear those men,” Ricky said.

Tom said, “Me, too. They are in the mine.”

Ricky said, “Now they are closer. I can hear them talking.”

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Tom, Ricky, and Patches didn't move. The boys wanted to hear what the men said. The men talked for a few minutes.

“Did you hear that? One man said something about digging in the mine,” Ricky said to Tom.

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“What did he say?” Tom asked.

“They want someone to pay money to dig for gold in this mine,” Ricky answered.

“Why do they want to do that? They found more gold. They could dig it without help,” Tom said.

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Ricky said, “We saw the gold. We know it is here. They must be planning something.”

“I just hope they don't find us. I hope they don't come this way,” Tom said.

Then they heard something above them. They shined their flashlights up.

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Tom said, "Bats! There are bats up there."

"They sleep in the day and go out at night," Ricky said.

Just then they heard something else. "Those men must have dropped something," Tom said.

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Patches barked.

"Oh, no," Tom said.

A man yelled, "Someone is in here. It's those kids. Those kids with the dog. We saw them down by the fishing hole."

"We have to get them," the other man said.

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"I think they saw the gold. We don't want people to know about it yet."

Tom and Ricky ran fast. They could hear the men running, too. They ran down a long tunnel. Then they ran down another tunnel.

"It's like a maze," said Tom.

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"This way," Ricky said. They went down another tunnel.

At last they stopped.

Ricky said, "I don't hear the men coming after us any more."

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Then they heard a loud voice. It was one of the men. "We know that you boys and your dog are in there. You will have to come out sooner or later. We will wait for you."

"What do we do?" Tom asked.

"Keep going," Ricky said.

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Tom and Ricky started to run again. They went into a new tunnel. "Look at this place," Tom said.

"It's full of rocks," Ricky said.

Some small rocks fell down.

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Tom said, "Oh, no! This place is not safe. Let's get away from here. Come on, Patches!"

Some large rocks fell down. There was lots of dust in the air.

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"Now we are lost. We don't know how to get out of the mine," Ricky said.

Tom said, "We must keep running. We must get away from these rocks."

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CHAPTER 7

How to Get Away

The boys stopped. They sat down next to a wall. Patches sat down next to them.

“We better turn off our flashlights. The men might see them,” Ricky said.

“You’re right,” Tom said.

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“It’s dark in here,” Tom said.

They sat. They didn’t talk. They waited to see if the men would come this way.

Then Tom said, “I don’t hear those men any more.”

Ricky said, “Then let’s try to get out of here.”

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“We might see those men,” Tom said.

“Let’s keep one flashlight turned on,” Ricky said.

“That’s a good idea. We need to save the power. We may be here a long time,” Tom said.

Then they heard something above them.

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Tom said, “It’s the bats! Look at them flying around. Why are they flying around now?”

Ricky said, “I know. It must be dark outside. They wake up and then they fly.”

Tom said, “How do they fly in the dark?”

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"I'm not sure. They can fly without hitting things. Let's see where they go," Ricky said.

Tom said, "These tunnels are not the same. We came in through other tunnels."

Ricky said, "Look, there is a little light down there. I hope it is a way out."

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Tom said, "It is! It is! It's the moon."

Soon they went out of the mine through another cave. Ricky said, "That is the cave that Patches found when he chased the rabbit."

Tom said, "This cave is a secret way into the mine. And a way out."

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They ran fast until they got to the fishing hole. They could see lights and cars there.

Ricky said, "That's my dad's car."

Tom said, "I see Eddie and Dave and Officer Collins standing there."

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Ricky's dad called, "Are we glad to see you!"

Tom and Ricky told them about the mine and the gold they saw.

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Officer Collins said, “We wanted to catch those men. They put gold inside old mines.”

“They put gold in the mine? I don’t get it,” Tom said.

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Officer Collins said, “They put gold dust in a gun. Then they shoot the gun at the rocks in the mine. It looks like the rocks have gold.”

“But why?” Tom asked.

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“I think I know. I bet those men just go where there are old gold mines. Then they make it look like the rocks still have lots of gold in them. Is that right, Officer Collins?” Ricky asked.

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“That’s right, Ricky,” the officer answered.

“Why would they do that? What’s this all about?” Tom asked.

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“Then they bring people to the mine. They tell them that the mine has lots of gold. They show them the gold all over the walls of the mine. Then they get the people to pay them a lot of money. The people think there is lots and lots of gold,” Ricky said.

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“I think I get it. When they get the money, they leave town,” Tom said.

“That’s right,” Officer Collins said.

“How did you know where we were?” Ricky asked

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Eddie said, “Dave and I were late. We saw your bikes by the creek. We looked all over for you. Then we saw the truck by the hill. We knew we’d better call Officer Collins.”

“We are glad you did that,” Ricky said.

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“Well, I’m going to call for more police. Those men have to come out of that mine one way or the other. We’ll catch them this time,” Officer Collins said.

All of a sudden Patches barked.

Ricky shined his flashlight on Patches.

“Look! Patches is all yellow,” Eddie said.

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"It's gold! Patches sat on the gold. He's got gold dust from the cave. Patches! Don't move!" Ricky said.

Patches barked again. Then he ran to the creek and jumped in it.

"Oh, no!" Ricky yelled.

"He's washing the gold off," Tom said.

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"Come on, boys. Get your bikes. We'll all go back home," Ricky's dad said.

Patches ran out of the water. He shook the water off.

"We're going, too," Dave said.

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"Come over tomorrow. We'll tell you all about the tunnels," Ricky called out to Dave and Eddie.

"Tunnels?" Eddie called back.

"That's right," Ricky yelled.

"I don't want to know about tunnels. I want to know about gold!" Eddie yelled.

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