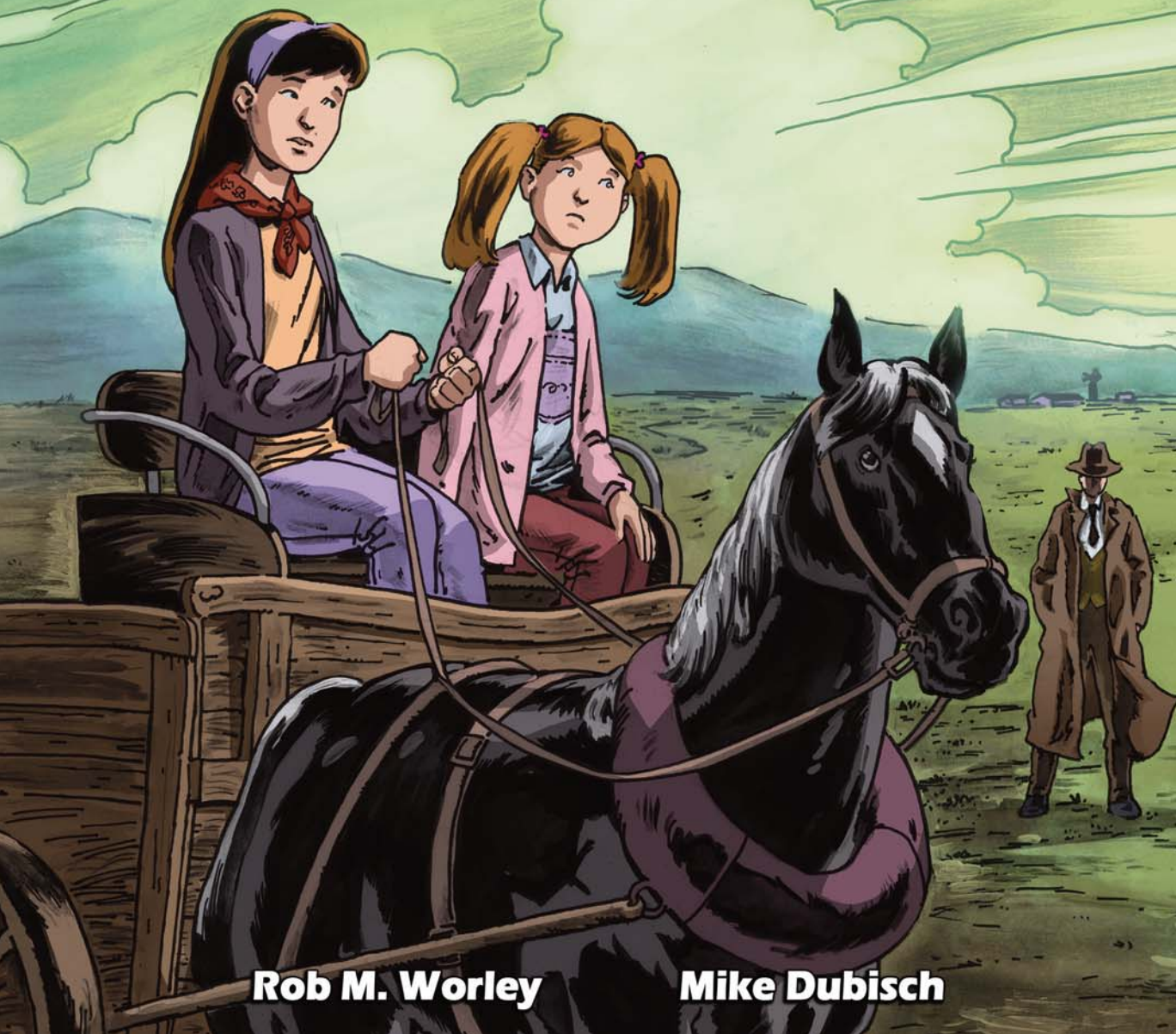


Gertrude Chandler Warner's

THE BOXCAR CHILDREN

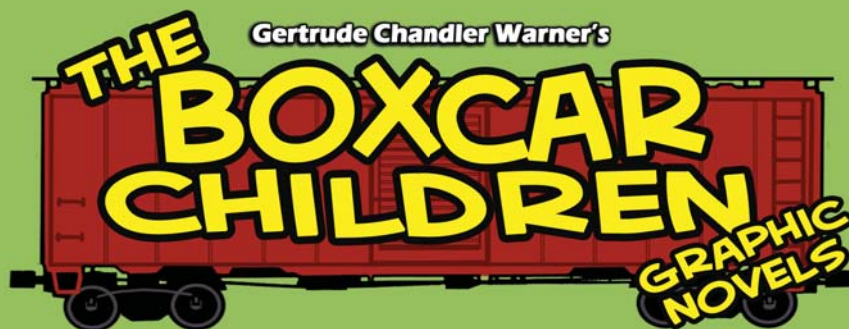
GRAPHIC NOVELS

MYSTERY RANCH



Rob M. Worley

Mike Dubisch



BOOK FOUR MYSTERY RANCH

Henry, Jessie, Violet, and Benny are spending the summer on their aunt's ranch out west. The ranch is a beautiful place, but Aunt Jane is an unhappy woman who hasn't spoken to their grandfather in years. Can the Boxcar Children help mend things between them? And will an amazing discovery about the ranch change everything?

THE BOXCAR CHILDREN

GRAPHIC NOVELS

1. THE BOXCAR CHILDREN
2. SURPRISE ISLAND
3. THE YELLOW HOUSE MYSTERY
4. MYSTERY RANCH
5. MIKE'S MYSTERY
6. BLUE BAY MYSTERY

Gertrude Chandler Warner's
THE BOXCAR CHILDREN
MYSTERY RANCH

Adapted by Christopher E. Long
Illustrated by Mike Dubisch



Henry Alden



Jessie Alden



Watch



Violet Alden



Benny Alden



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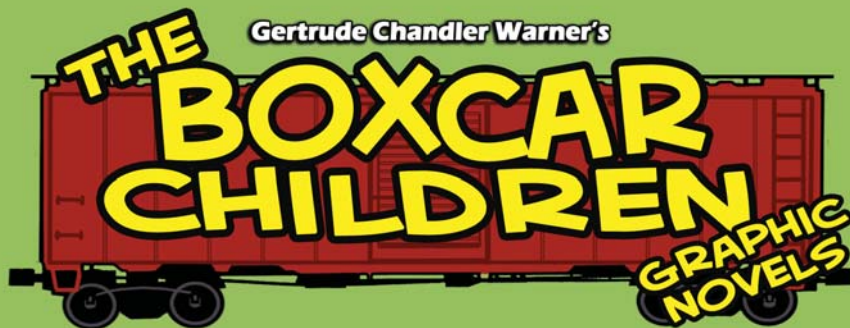
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Adapted by Christopher E. Long
Illustrated by Mike Dubisch
Colored by Wes Hartman
Lettered by Johnny Lowe
Edited by Stephanie Hedlund
Interior layout and design by Kristen Fitzner Denton
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BOOK FOUR
MYSTERY RANCH

Contents

The Door Bangs.....	6
The Letter	8
A Cool Welcome.....	10
Aunt Jane's First Meal.....	12
A Day at the Ranch.....	14
The Boys Come.....	16
The Yellow Stones.....	18
The Mystery Man.....	22
Fast Work.....	26
The Boss.....	28
The Party.....	30

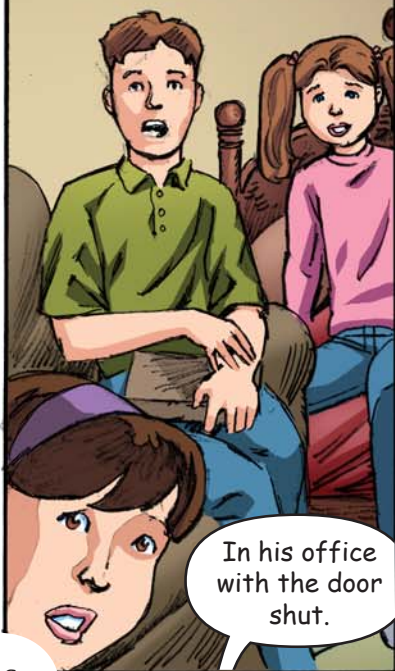
THE DOOR BANGS

An exciting summer adventure began for Henry, Jessie, Violet, and Benny Alden with the bang of a door.

Something terrible must have happened to Grandfather. He slammed the door and all he said was "Hello." He always says, "Well, hello, Benny, and how are you today?"



Where is Grandfather now?



In his office with the door shut.

We should go talk to him.



I wonder what's wrong.

**KNOCK
KNOCK**

Come in.



The children thought
Grandfather looked tired.

Don't be
afraid to
talk to us,
Grandfather!

That's right.
We always tell
you our troubles.
We're here to
help you.

I wish
you could. But I
don't know what
you can do.

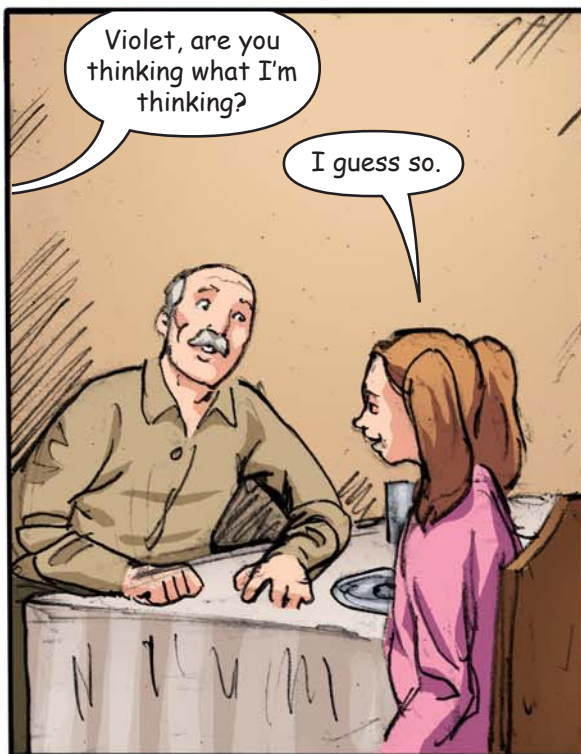
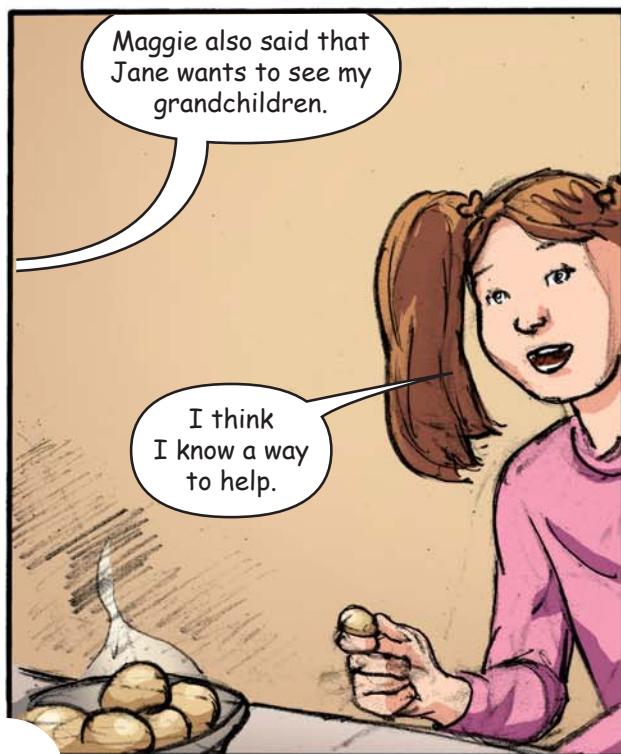
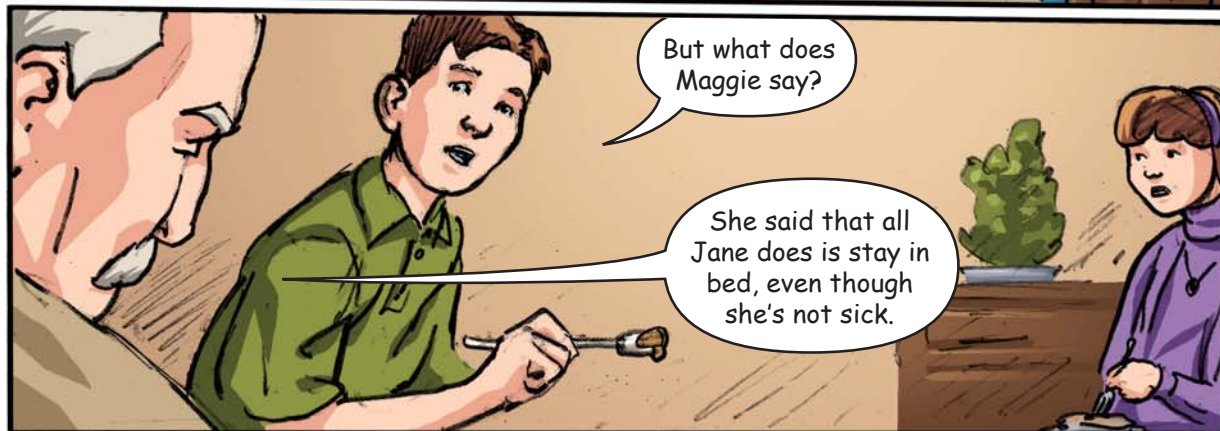
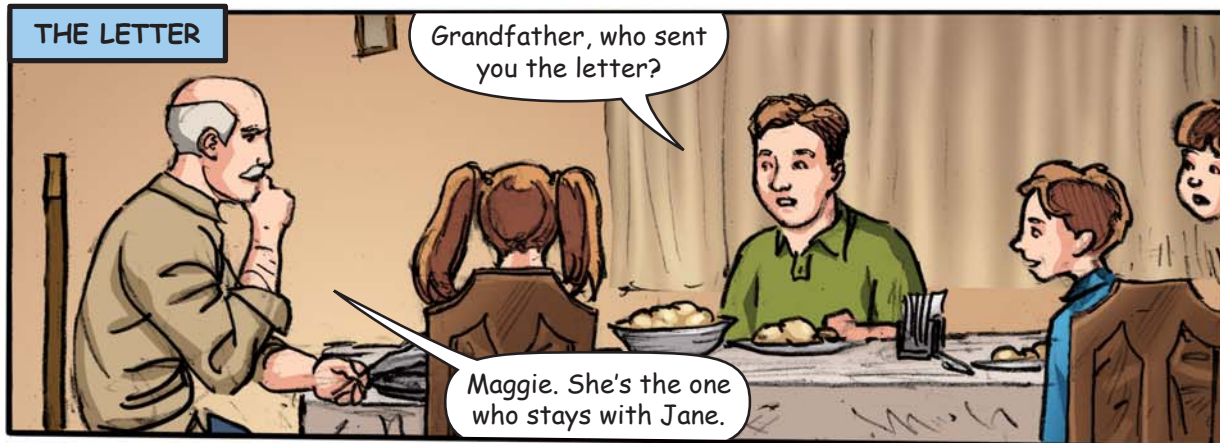
I got a letter about my sister. You
didn't know I had a sister, did you?

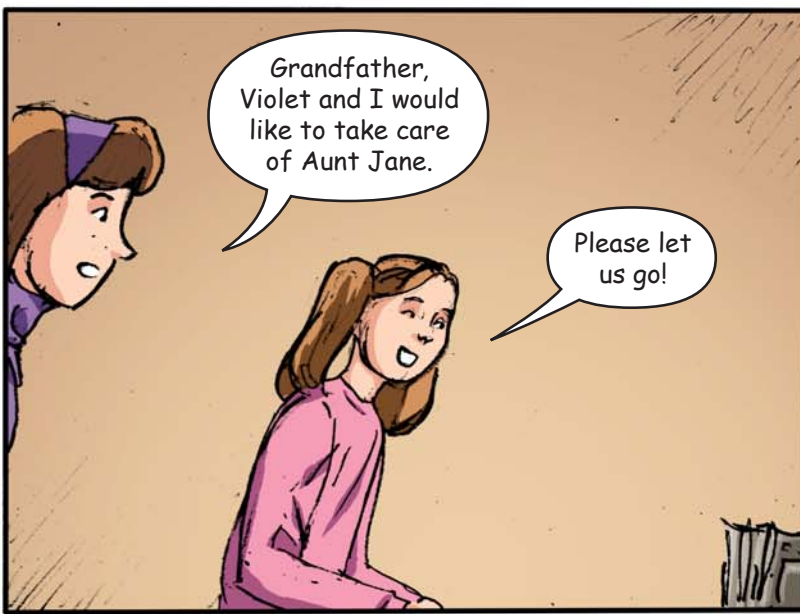
No, Grandfather.

Where
does she
live?

Out west on a ranch.
Jane is old and very cross.
The neighbor who stays
with her is going to leave
because she is so hard
to live with.

THE LETTER





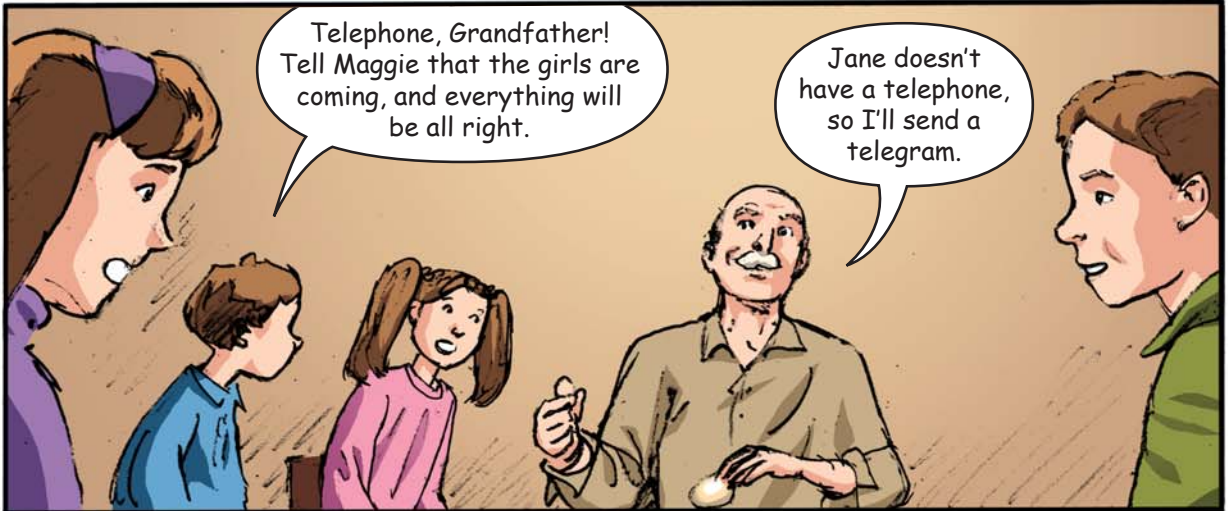
Grandfather,
Violet and I would
like to take care
of Aunt Jane.

Please let
us go!



I just wonder if Jane
will be nice to you.

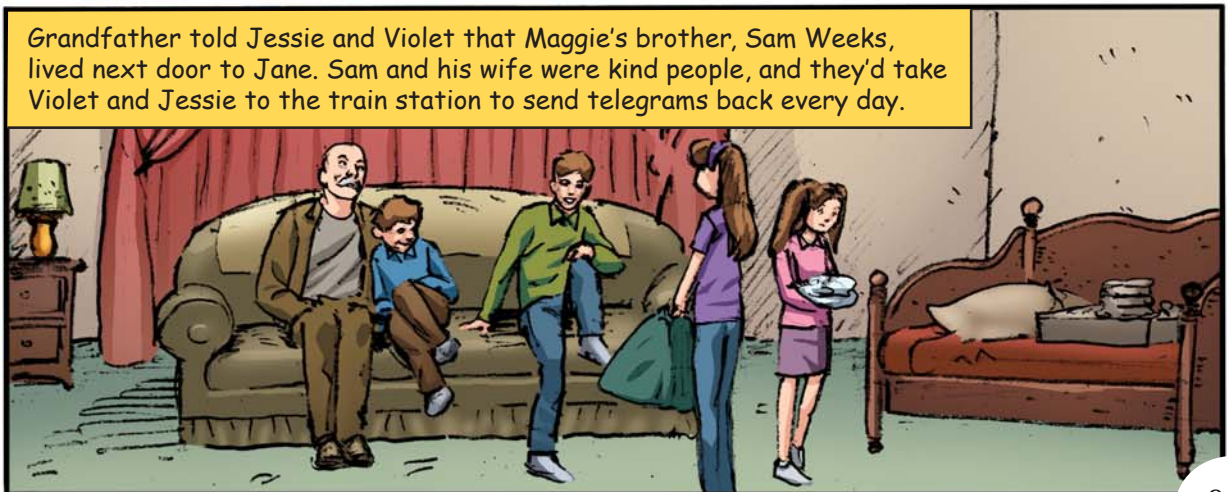
We're not worried about
that. Jessie and I would be
company for each other.



Telephone, Grandfather!
Tell Maggie that the girls are
coming, and everything will
be all right.

Jane doesn't
have a telephone,
so I'll send a
telegram.

Grandfather told Jessie and Violet that Maggie's brother, Sam Weeks, lived next door to Jane. Sam and his wife were kind people, and they'd take Violet and Jessie to the train station to send telegrams back every day.



A COOL WELCOME

Jessie and Violet were excited to be heading to Aunt Jane's ranch.



The hours passed quickly for the two girls, because everything was new.



At their stop at Centerville early the next morning, the only other passenger got off the train as well.

I'm getting off here, too. May I help you with your bags?

Why yes, thank you.

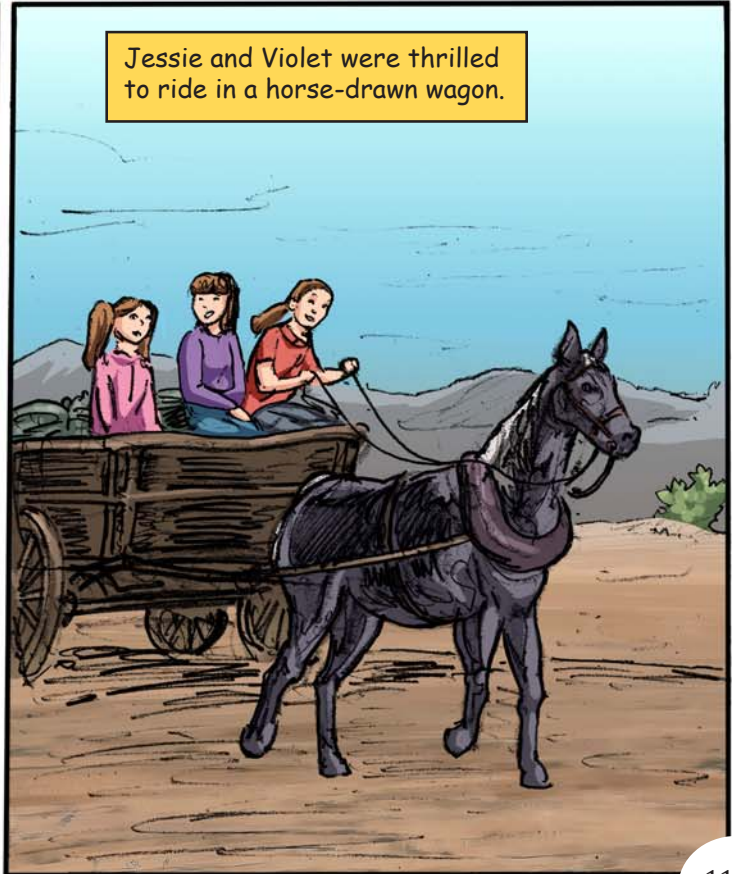
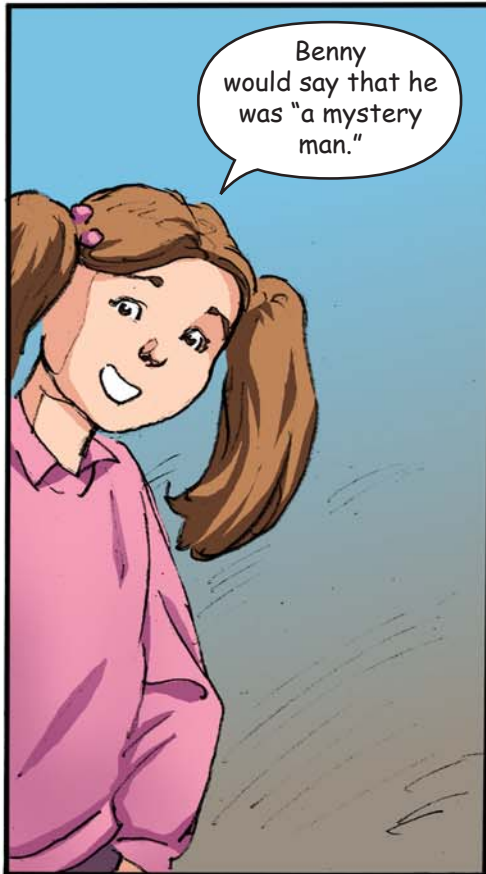


Thank you for carrying the bags. It was very kind of you.

Not at all.

Are you Miss Alden?





**AUNT JANE'S
FIRST MEAL**



So you're James Alden's grandchildren.

He is very worried about you, Aunt Jane.

The little woman smiled slightly when she heard the young lady call her "Aunt Jane."

Worried? Pooh! What's the matter with the other girl? Can't she talk?



I shall talk so much you'll be tired of hearing me.

I'll never be tired of hearing that soft voice.

I'll put them in the big bedroom. Is that all right?

Put them anywhere. Now leave me. I'm tired.



Maggie told the children that Aunt Jane rarely ate and that's why she spent all day in bed. But Jessie and Violet were hungry, so they decided to make a wonderful breakfast.

My, that smells good!

Aunt Jane, this is delicious. Violet and I made it for you.

Drink it slowly. As Benny would say, "Don't rush it."

Who's Benny?

Benny is the funniest boy you ever saw, Aunt Jane. He's a great little brother.

And Henry, our older brother, is very clever, kind, and thoughtful.

If your brothers are like you, I'd like to meet them. Now take the glass away. I'm tired.

Jessie and Violet slept well that night. The next morning they were woken by voices. They went downstairs to see who had arrived.

I'm Sam Weeks, your Aunt Jane's neighbor. Nice to meet you. Are you planning to stay here all summer?

We don't really know how long Aunt Jane will want us.

A DAY AT THE RANCH

I'm worried about the two of you. I'm afraid you won't get enough food. Maggie had to eat at our house when she got too hungry.

Well, we can buy food. Grandfather gave us some money.

Maggie and I can take you to the store.

A stranger got off the train last night. I noticed him because not very many people get off that train.

Yes, we know! We call him our mystery man.

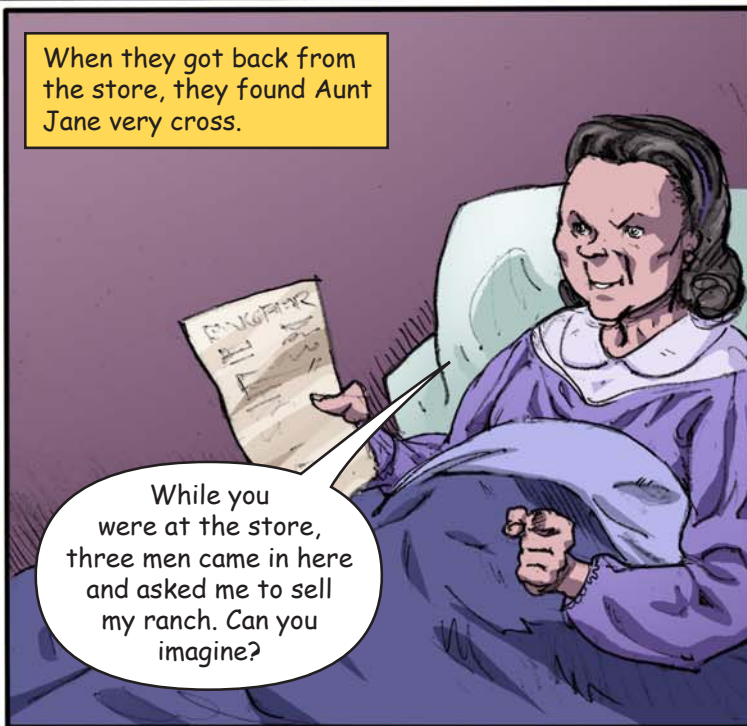
During the ride to town, Jessie and Violet made up a telegram to send to Grandfather. They had the station agent send it as soon as they arrived.



Jessie and Violet bought enough food to last a week. Then they returned to the ranch.



When they got back from the store, they found Aunt Jane very cross.



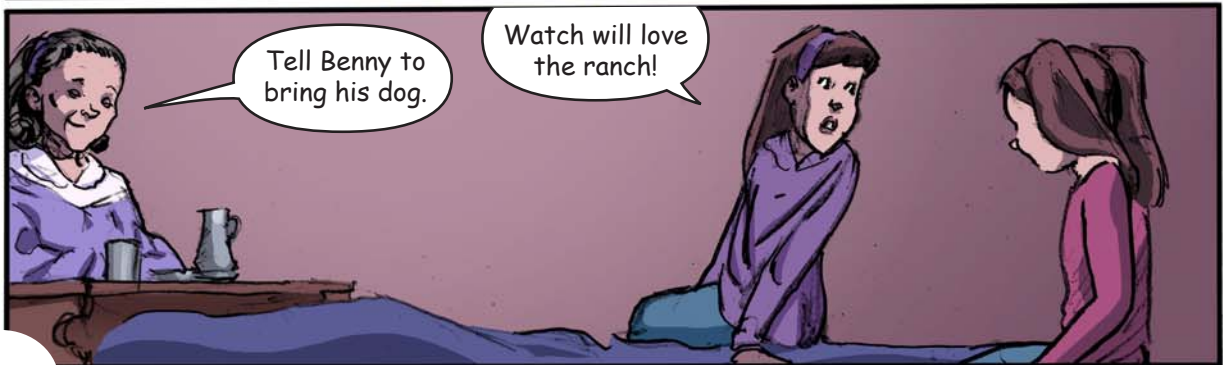
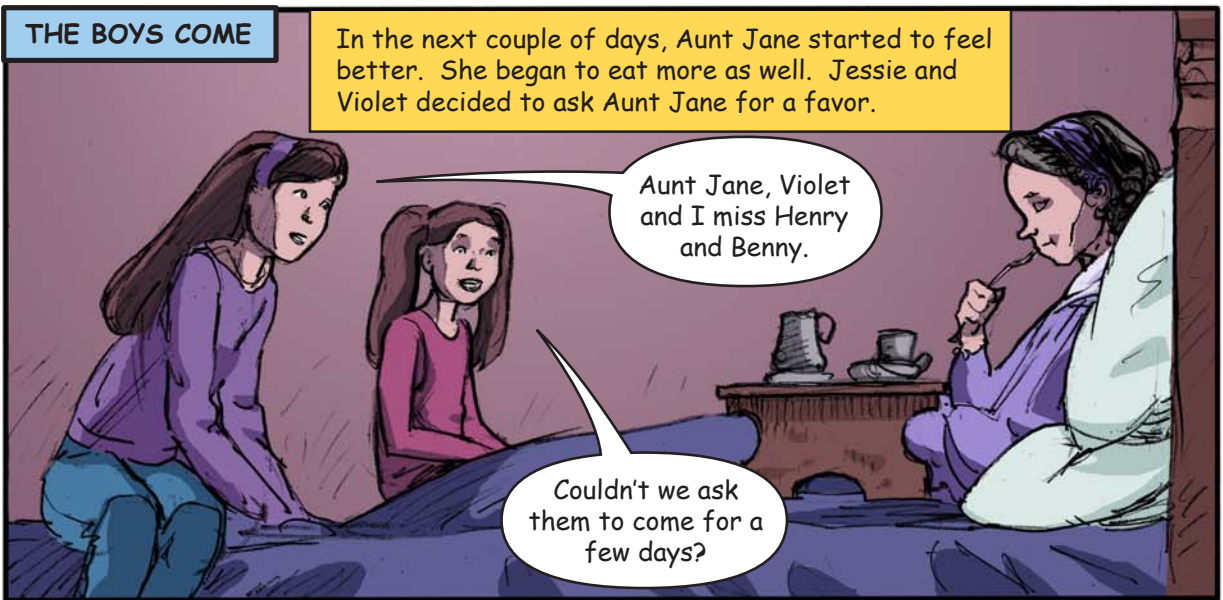
While you were at the store, three men came in here and asked me to sell my ranch. Can you imagine?

I told those three men that my ranch isn't for sale. I've got other plans for it.



THE BOYS COME

In the next couple of days, Aunt Jane started to feel better. She began to eat more as well. Jessie and Violet decided to ask Aunt Jane for a favor.



Henry and Benny arrived a few days later. Everyone was excited.



Hello, Aunt Jane, I'm Benny.

And you must be Henry.



Yes, Aunt Jane.

Shake hands with him, Aunt Jane. You don't want to hurt his feelings!



The children thought Aunt Jane would be angry. But, she sat up and shook hands with the dog.

I'm glad the dog likes me. You can go now and eat. I'm very tired from all the excitement.



THE YELLOW STONES

Now that the children were together, they were very happy. Aunt Jane seemed to be getting more cheerful every day.

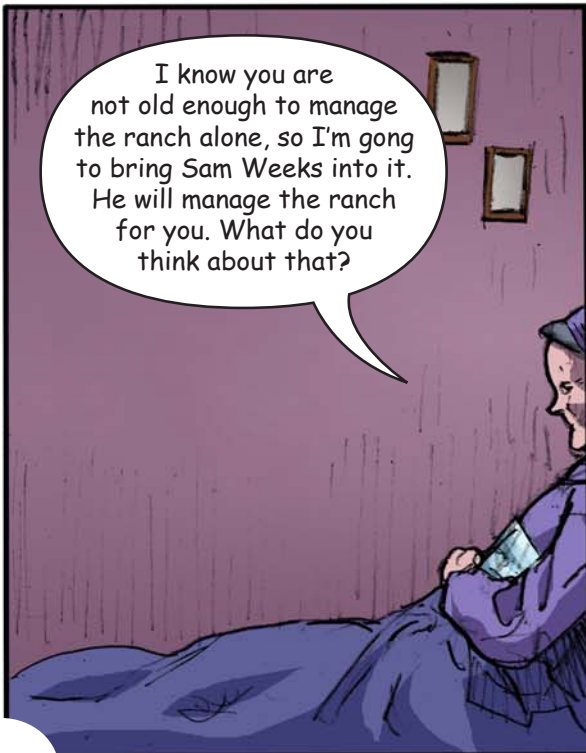


One morning, Aunt Jane called all the children to her. She had an important announcement.

I'm going to give you children this ranch. You are the only relatives I have. You seem to be good children, and you have been kind to me.



I know you are not old enough to manage the ranch alone, so I'm going to bring Sam Weeks into it. He will manage the ranch for you. What do you think about that?

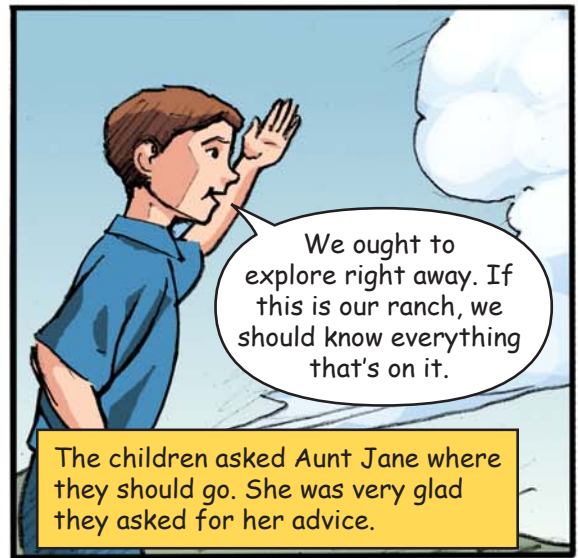
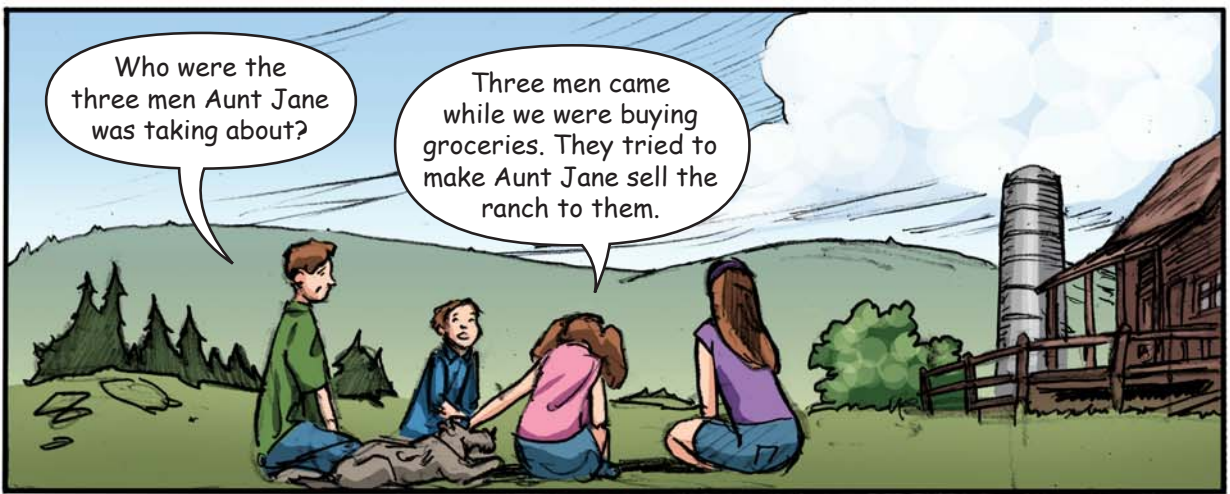


We're too surprised to say much, Aunt Jane! It's wonderful.

I want my ranch to belong to people who love it. That's why I wouldn't sell it to those three men.



The children said "thank you" as they left Aunt Jane to rest.



Aunt Jane had told the children not to get lost. The ranch was very big, so they had to be careful going out on their own.



The children found a quiet and cool place to eat their lunch.



Look! There's a little hut.



There was nothing in the hut except a fire pit made of stones.



Someone built a fire here, and not too long ago. The stones are still warm. Let's go.



There's no grass here. This field isn't very good.

But it's pretty. See the yellow and black lines in those rocks.



They seem to be made of yellow sand. How strange!



THE MYSTERY MAN

The next day, Aunt Jane had Mr. Pond, who handled her business, come to the house. She wanted to sign the paperwork giving the children her ranch.



It didn't take long to fill out the paperwork. Aunt Jane wrote her name, and so did Jessie, Henry, and Violet.



Isn't it funny what you can do by just writing your name?

It just gave you children 1,280 acres of land and a big ranch house.

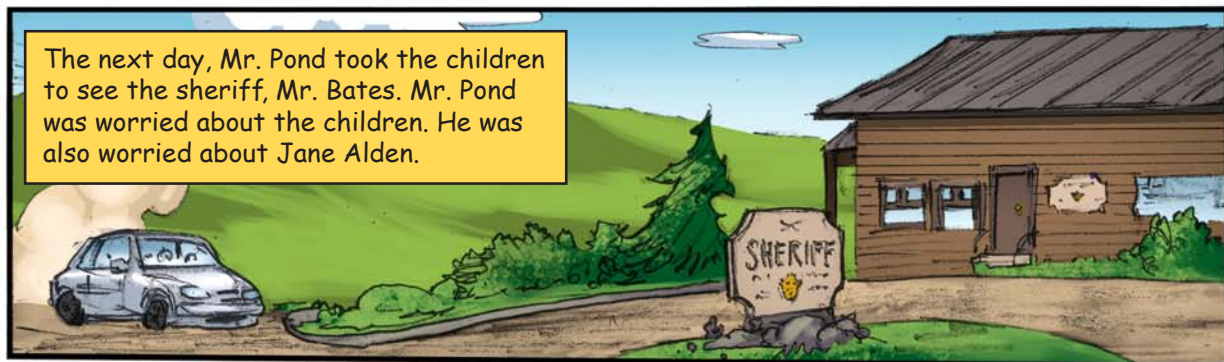


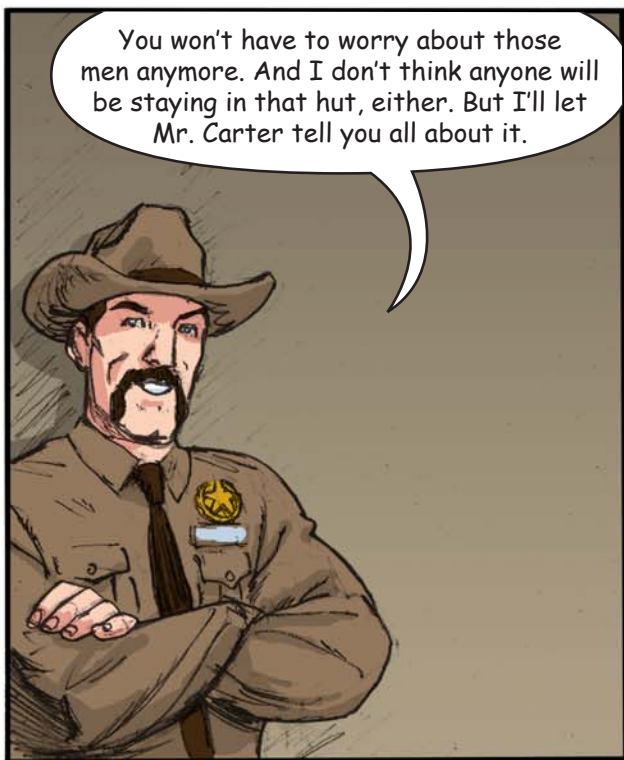
And a hut, too, where someone has been staying.

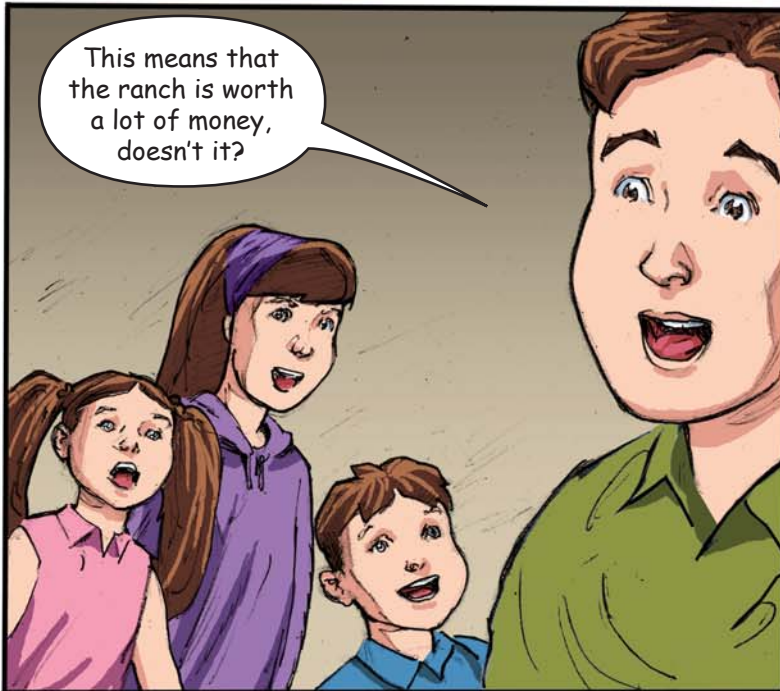
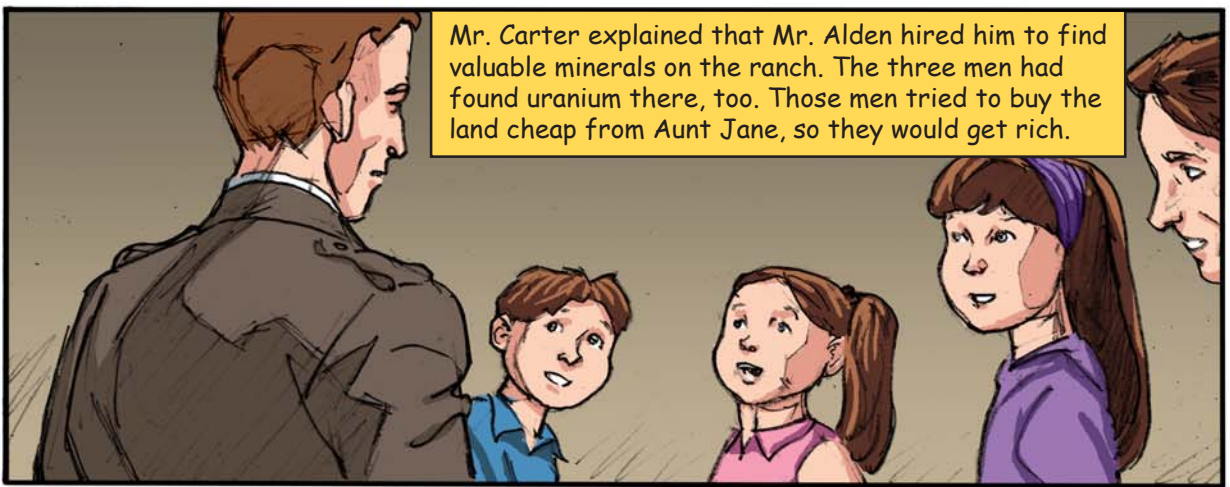


What? What's that? I didn't know there was a hut on my land.

Sam and I want to see this hut in the woods. Will you take us there?



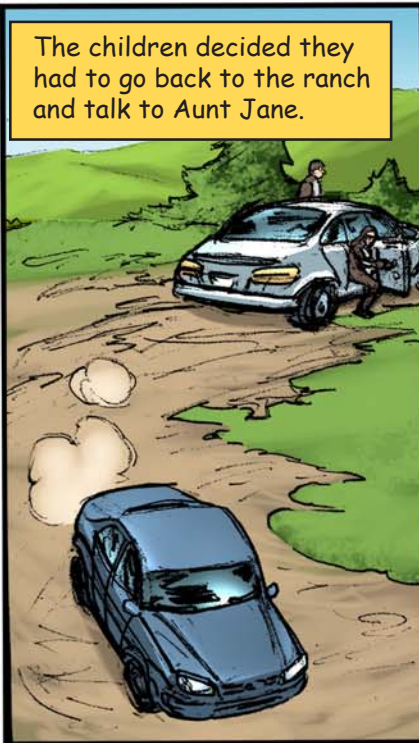




**FAST
WORK**

Everyone agreed that the only one who could manage the ranch was Grandfather.

I think your grandfather will be glad to help. I can go tell him the whole story.



The children told her everything. They told her about Mr. Carter, and how he and the Sheriff caught the three bad men. And they told her that the land was rich with minerals.

Mr. Carter says we must have help from some man who can do things in a big way and who has money to build a mine.



But I wonder if he would after the way I've treated him. I could never manage the hundreds of people running all over my ranch-- I mean your ranch.

I'm sure Grandfather would help.

I know one man who can do it. My brother, James Alden--your grandfather.

Aunt Jane decided to write a letter and ask her brother for his help. Everyone was so excited that they could hardly contain themselves.



**THE
BOSS**

Things moved quickly. Grandfather made sure everything ran smoothly. A mine was dug. Big machines worked day and night. Houses for workmen were built.



To make sure Aunt Jane wasn't disturbed by the miners, a fence was built around the ranch's property.

Aunt Jane, why didn't you let your own brother help you when you needed money?

When my father and mother went East, your Grandfather wanted to sell the ranch. But I decided to stay here. I wouldn't give in and admit I needed help. I was stubborn.



Aunt Jane decided to throw a party. Everyone helped out to make sure it was the best party ever.



THE PARTY

After dinner, Aunt Jane opened her presents.

I love every one of my presents.

Grandfather has a present, too.

Her name is Lady. To take the place of Watch when the children go home.

The rest of the summer was spent together as a happy family. Everyone thought it was the best summer any of them could remember.



ABOUT THE CREATOR

Gertrude Chandler Warner was born on April 16, 1890, in Putnam, Connecticut. In 1918, Warner began teaching at Israel Putnam School. As a teacher, she discovered that many readers who liked an exciting story could not find books that were both easy and fun to read. She decided to try to meet this need. In 1942, *The Boxcar Children* was published for these readers.

Warner drew on her own experience to write *The Boxcar Children*. As a child she spent hours watching trains go by on the tracks near her family home. She often dreamed about what it would be like to live in a caboose or freight car—just as the Alden children do.

When readers asked for more Alden adventures, Warner began additional stories. While the mystery element is central to each of the books, she never thought of them as strictly juvenile mysteries. She liked to stress the Aldens' independence. Henry, Jessie, Violet, and Benny go about most of their adventures with as little adult supervision as possible—something that delights young readers.

During her lifetime, Warner received hundreds of letters from fans as she continued the Aldens' adventures, writing nineteen Boxcar Children books in all. After her death in 1979, her publisher, Albert Whitman and Company, carried on Warner's vision. Today, the Boxcar Children series has more than 100 books.

