



Cowboy Star



Blake climbed on the large rock to get a better view. “You won’t believe this, Micah. There are about thirty people ... and vans ... and a great big trailer!”

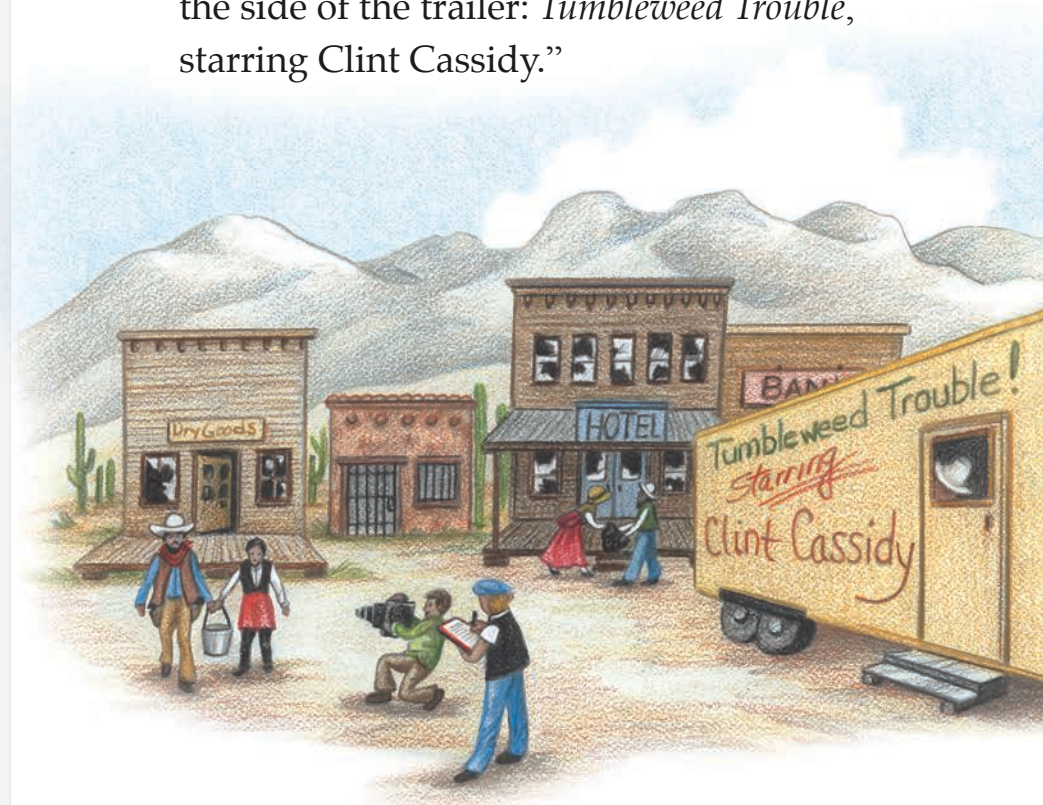
“Are people moving into Green Gulch?”
Micah was excited.



Green Gulch had once been a thriving gold-mining town, complete with a blacksmith shop, a store, a hotel, a church, and even a jail. But after the gold ran out, everyone moved away, leaving empty buildings in the desert.

Now Green Gulch was a dusty brown ghost town, home to roadrunners, lizards, and lots of cactus. It was a great place to explore, and Blake and Micah knew the old place inside and out.

Blake squinted. “There are some words on the side of the trailer: *Tumbleweed Trouble*, starring Clint Cassidy.”



“Clint Cassidy?” said Micah. “The cowboy star? They say he’s the bravest and toughest guy ever born.”

“They must be making a movie!” said Blake. “I’ve always wanted to see how films are made. Let’s go down there and get a better look.”

The boys sneaked down to the town and hid behind a huge cactus. From there they could see the director setting up a scene with Clint Cassidy.

“All right, Clint, we’re going to have you pose next to Blaze here.” The director brushed cookie crumbs off of Clint’s shirt and pointed to a big black horse.

Clint eyed the horse warily. “I need me a stunt double,” he said. “I’m not getting anywhere near that there beast!”

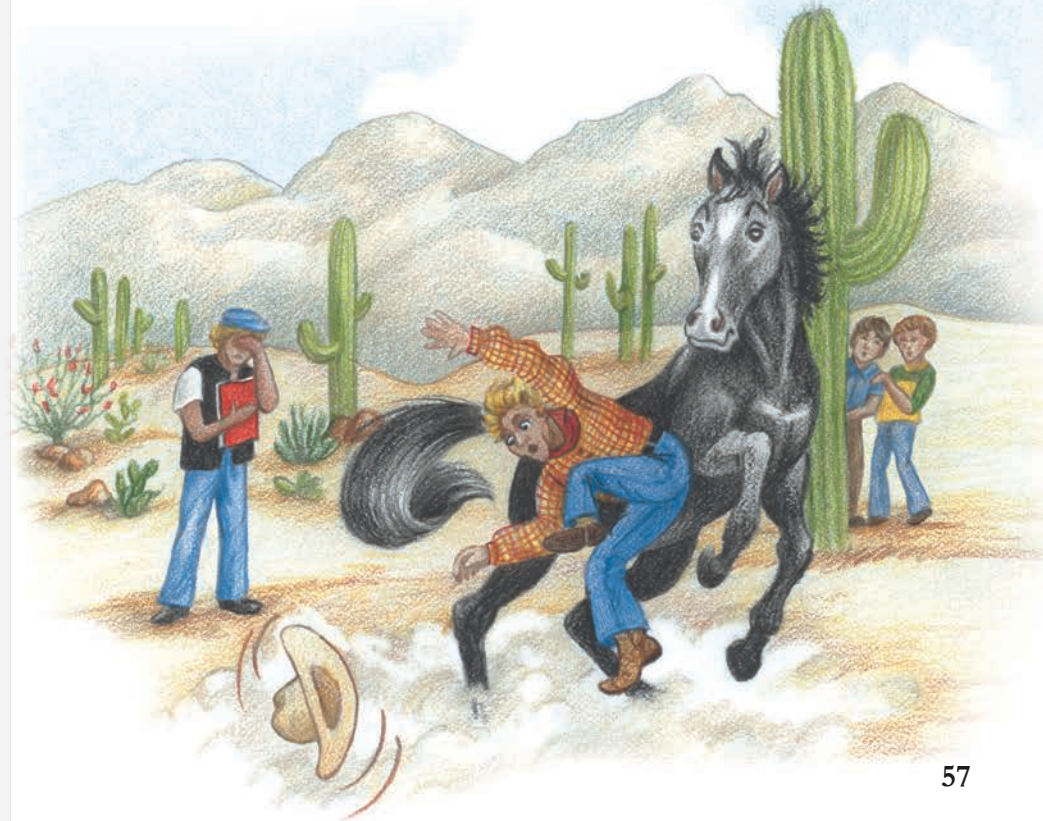
The director rolled his eyes. “You don’t have to do anything except stand there. This horse is as gentle as a lamb.”

“No way, pardner,” said Clint. “I’d be riskin’ life and limb.”

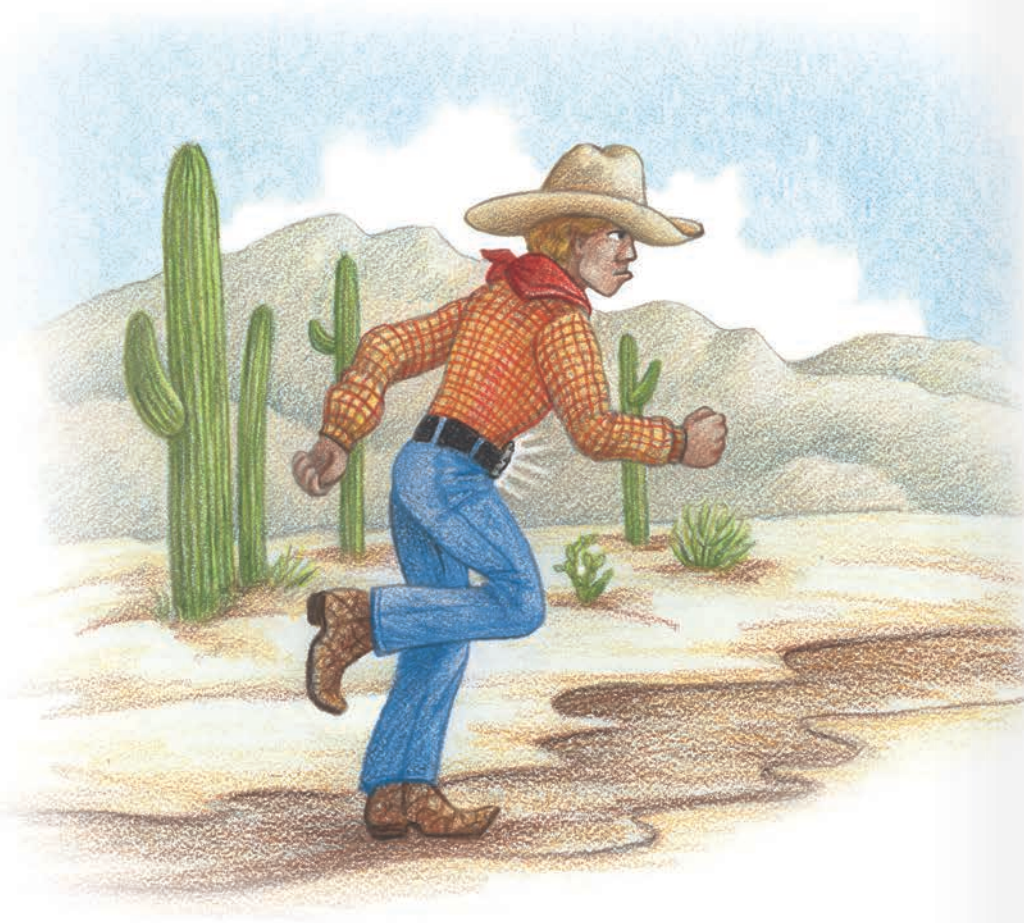
Micah and Blake looked at each other. Maybe Clint wasn’t as tough as he seemed in the movies.

The director insisted that Clint stand next to Blaze. “Action!” he yelled, and the cameras rolled.

But just as Clint began to deliver his first line, the horse whinnied. “Twirl my spurs!” yelped Clint as he jumped away. “I knew this horse was trouble!”



Clint huffed and adjusted his hat. “That’s it! You go find me a stunt double *right now!* I’m going to find me some peace and re-lax-a-tion.” He stomped off to the jail, slamming the cell door behind him. The clang of the bars rebounded through the hills.



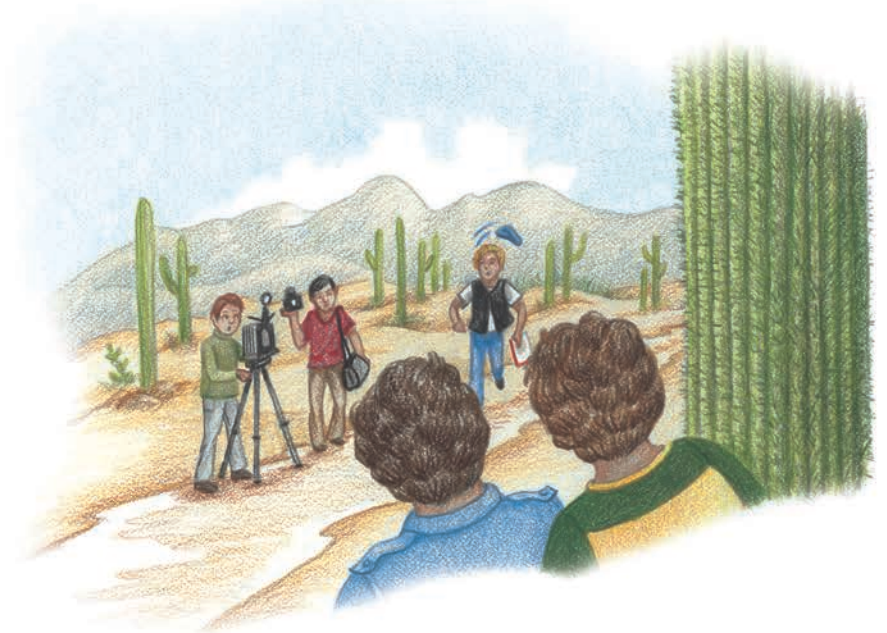
There was a moment’s pause, and then the yelling started. “Lemme out! Lemme out!”

The director shook his head and called out to the movie crew. “Go unlock the cell door.”

“We don’t have a key!” came the answer.

The boys looked at each other and then stepped out from their hiding spot behind the cactus.

Camera operators stared at the boys as the director ran down the dirt road toward them. “What are you doing here? This is no place for kids.”



“We can help,” said Blake.

“What can a couple of kids do?” asked the director.

“That’s easy,” Micah grinned. “We know where the key is hidden.”

“Somebody help me!” They could hear Clint Cassidy whining from the cell. “Get me outta here—now! I’ve had all I can stand and I can’t stand no more!”



The director sighed. “Go for it, boys.”

Blake and Micah rushed to the jail cell where Clint Cassidy was stomping his leather boots in frustration.

“I want out! I have half a mind to call my agent! I reckon this ain’t in my contract!”

“Look,” Micah said calmly. “The key is right there in the cell with you. See that loose rock in the floor? The key is underneath it.”

“Rock? What rock? Oh, *that* rock.” Clint grabbed it. “Ouch!” he yelped. “Call the doc! I think I sprained my thumb!”



Micah and Blake could see that Clint wouldn't be much help. "Fine, forget the key. Come over here by the window," said Blake.

"There's a loose bar and you can squeeze out through the opening." Blake pulled out the bar. "Now just climb through."

Clint Cassidy tried to slide through the window, but his cowboy hat was too large to fit.

"I'm too big! I'll never get out! I'm doomed!"

"Just take off your hat," said Micah. "You'll fit."

Clint narrowed his eyes at Micah. "I reckon you think you're pretty smart, eh? But I'm Clint Cassidy, cowboy star. I don't climb out of nothin'."

"All right, I'll just get the key for you," Blake said, and he crawled through the gap.



“My back is sore from being in the slammer so long,” Clint yelled through the bars. “Somebody arrange a backrub for me. Oh, wait, I’m still stuck in this dumb cell! Get. Me. Out. NOW!”

Micah stifled a laugh as Blake retrieved the key and unlocked the cell door.



“I’m free!” Clint pushed his way past Blake, but then he remembered his manners. He turned back and tipped his hat at the boy.

“Pardon me, pardner. That was a mighty nice thing you did there. I reckon I’m in your debt forever.” He reached into his pocket and took out a pen and a photo. “Boys, here’s a signed photo of me, Clint Cassidy, cowboy star.”



“Wow, thank you, Mr. Cassidy!” said Blake. Micah added, “I can’t wait to see you in your next movie!”

The director stepped in. “Clint, your next scene is in an hour. Go comb your hair and freshen up.” One word about messy hair was all it took for Clint to make a beeline for the make-up trailer.



“You two really know this area, don’t you?” the director said to the boys. “I know our movie is called *Tumbleweed Trouble*, but we really don’t need any more trouble on the set. Our next scene takes place in the old gold mine. If you boys can keep Clint out of trouble, I’d like to have you stick around while we shoot the film. The job wouldn’t pay much, but—”

The boys didn’t wait to hear the rest. “We’d get *paid* to work on the movie set? To be honest, we’d do it for free!”



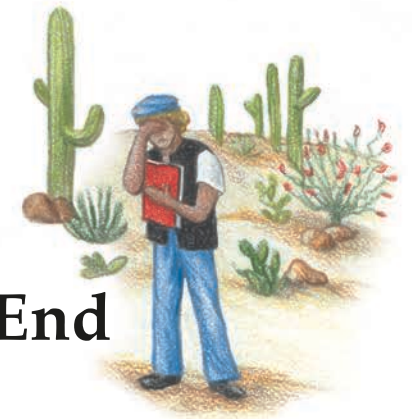
Clint's voice rang out across the ghost town.
"Help! I'm being attacked by a lizard!"



"Trust me," the director sighed. "You'll want to get paid."

"We reckon so," the boys laughed as they raced to the rescue.

The End





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