

Mudslide

T H E H E I G H T S



Chapter 1



“Hey, guys!” Rafael said. “Let’s go to Iron Mountain next weekend. We can camp out for two nights. What do you think?”

“Sounds good, Dad!” Lilia said.

“I want to go camping,” said Antonio. “I’m in!”

“What about you, Franco?” asked Rafael. “Anything going on at college next weekend?”

“No, I’m free,” Franco replied.
“I could use a break from studying
for midterms. Where is Iron
Mountain?”

“It’s in the middle of the state,”
Rafael answered. “It’s a three-
hour drive from the Heights. The
mountain is five thousand feet high.
It’s a pretty good hike to the top.”

“We’re not rock climbing, right?”
Ana asked.

“No, honey,” Rafael told his wife.
“There are great hiking trails all the
way up. But we could rock climb if
we wanted to. Maybe the kids and I
could take some detours.”

“No, no detours,” said Ana. “Your
trips tend to end badly. I’d rather we

all stayed close. That way I can keep you out of trouble!”

“I’m not sure what you’re talking about,” Rafael said.

“I knew you’d say that,” Ana replied. “But I’m going to keep an eye on you anyway.”

“Okay. We’ll leave here next Friday morning. We’ll get to the mountain by noon. Then we’ll have a few hours to hike,” Rafael said.

By noon the next Friday, they were on Iron Mountain.

Chapter 2



Everyone carried a backpack and sleeping bag. They hiked for four hours. Every hour they stopped for a rest. They were in no hurry, so they walked slowly. At four thirty Rafael saw a place for a campsite. It was near a stream.

They set up their gear. They built a campfire. They ate dinner. At eight o'clock a light rain started falling.

“We’d better get the tarp up,” Rafael said. “We don’t want to get wet.”

Soon, the light rain turned into a heavy storm. As the rain came down, Ana got worried.

“This is so weird. I checked the weather report. This was not supposed to happen. I’ve never seen it rain so hard,” Ana said.

“Neither have I,” Rafael replied. “I’m glad we have this tarp.”

“Good thing we’re ready for anything,” said Franco.

“Yeah,” agreed Antonio.

The tarp kept the Silvas dry. Early the next morning the storm was over. By nine, the Silvas were on their way up the mountain.

It was a beautiful day. Birds were singing. Animals were playing in the sunshine. And the sky was bright blue.

Later that morning Franco saw a cave.

“That’s an entrance to an old mine,” Rafael said.

“What kind of mine?” asked Lilia.

“An iron mine,” Rafael answered.

“That’s why this is called Iron Mountain.”

“Can we check it out?” asked Antonio.

“Sure. But don’t go too far inside. It’s a very old mine,” said Rafael. “We don’t know how safe it is. It may not be stable.”

“I think I’ll stay here with you two,” Lilia said.

Franco and Antonio walked toward the opening. The boys found some old mining tools. There were some shovels, axes, and pulleys. They saw an old tram car. It ran on tracks. Miners used it to remove ore. There was also some old rope.

“Look at all the stuff they left behind!” Antonio exclaimed. “I bet they left in a hurry.”

“Maybe,” Franco answered. “I guess we’ll never know why.”

“Hey, guys,” Ana called out. “We came here to climb a mountain, not explore a mine. Let’s go!”

For another hour, the Silvas hiked up the mountain. Then it was time for a rest.

Franco, Antonio, and Lilia took their backpacks off and sat on the ground.

“Come on, Ana,” Rafael said. “Let the wimps rest. We can check out what’s ahead.”

Rafael and Ana smiled at their kids as they walked off. A few minutes later, there was a loud roar. Then a *whoosh!* It was louder than the thunder from the night before.

“What was that?” Antonio asked.

“I have no clue,” said Franco.

“Let’s go find out,” Lilia said. “It came from up there. Right where Mom and Dad went!”

About two hundred feet up the mountain, they found the answer.

There was a mudslide! Part of the mountain had slid down into a deep ditch. Franco, Antonio, and Lilia stared at the scene in horror.

“Mom! Dad! Where are you?” Lilia yelled.

But there was no reply.