



ABOUT YOU

Answer the questions and compare your ideas.

- 1 Do you enjoy being in the countryside? Why? / Why not?
- 2 What dangers might you find in the countryside?
- 3 Can you think of examples of a good surprise and a bad surprise?
- 4 What do you think makes a friendship strong?

The book focuses on the adventures of the boys who followed 'The Trail of the Badger' down into Colorado, USA. The author shows how two healthy, enterprising young men were able to do their little part in the work of desert reclamation.

1 Read the text. As you read, think about the question.

What unexpected things happen to the narrator?

The Trail of the Badger

Sidford F. Hamp

"Frank, look out! Look out! Behind you! Jump quick, or he'll get you!"

It was a boy, a tall, thin, young fellow of 16, who shouted this warning, his voice rising almost to a scream at the end;

- 5 and it was another boy the warning was shouted at. The boy looked behind him, and for one brief moment his whole body stiffened with fear and his hair stood on end. I know exactly how he was feeling—for the boy was me!

- 10 I had good reason to be really scared because 30 feet below me, coming quickly and silently up the rocks, his little bright eyes fixed on me, was an angry old cinnamon bear. This was an animal which, though less dangerous than his big cousin, the grizzly bear, is quite dangerous when he wants to be.

- 15 If it hadn't been for my companion sounding the alarm, the bear would surely have caught me, and my story would have come to an end at the very beginning of the first chapter.

- 20 But I should go back a few steps in order to tell you not only how I came to be there, but also to tell you about the curious incident that first brought me into contact with my future friend, Dick Stanley.

It was in the last week of October, 1877, I was sitting one evening in my room in St. Louis, busily preparing my studies for the next day, when the door opened suddenly and in walked my Uncle Tom.

- 25 When I had been left an orphan at the age of seven, Uncle Tom had taken charge of me, and I had lived with him ever



- since. He and I, I am glad to say, were the best of friends for, although twenty years older than me, he seemed in some respects to be as young as myself. Also, our relationship was more like those of elder and younger brother than of uncle and nephew.

As Uncle Tom didn't let anyone disturb me during my studies, I naturally looked up from my books.

- 30 "Put them away," said he. "You won't need them for a month or more."

As it was the middle of the fall term this surprised me, and doubtless I showed as much in my face.

"I'm leaving tomorrow night for Colorado."

- 40 "Are you?" I cried, rather taken aback by this sudden announcement. "When did you decide upon that?"

"Today. I got a letter this afternoon from my friend, Sam Warren."

"So, you have decided to leave, have you?" I said.

- 45 "Yes," he replied. "I leave tomorrow evening—and you are coming with me."

GLOSSARY

fellow	man or boy (old-fashioned word)
stiffened	became less relaxed / stopped moving
grizzly bear	a very large, greyish-brown bear from North America
sound the alarm	make someone aware of danger
orphan	a child whose parents are dead
fall	autumn (US English)
doubtless	Without doubt / certain
taken aback	very surprised

