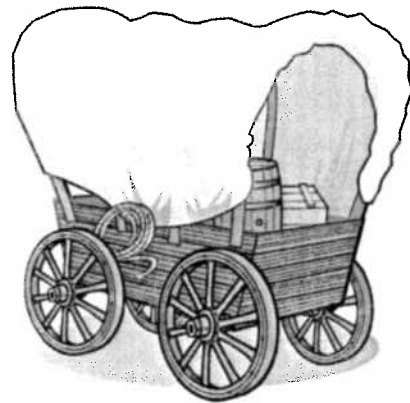


Gold Fever, 1849

Papa caught a fever, but it wasn't the kind that burns your skin and turns your stomach inside out. It was the kind that makes your feet itch and your mind race. Ever since he read the newspaper accounts of gold being found in California, it was all he could think about. He and Mama got into quiet, whispery arguments at night when they thought I was sleeping. Papa would say, "Imagine, Gracie—we could have everything we've ever desired." Mama would sweep at our hard dirt floor and snap back, "Or we could lose everything we've ever had!" But Papa was patient, and he knew how to get through Mama's tough skin to her soft heart. He'd talk after supper about people who had struck it rich, and how they wore elegant clothes and lived in fine mansions with dozens of servants scurrying to do their bidding. Mama would lick her hungry lips, and soon enough, the fever infected her, too.

Papa sold our farm, and Mama packed all she could into trunks. The day before we headed out, we went to Granny's place. All the relatives were there to see us off. Some of them scolded Papa and Mama for their foolishness, but others looked envious. Granny pushed a ring over my finger. "Whether or not you find gold in California," she said, "you'll always have this." Then she held me at arm's length, committing my features to memory. "Never doubt that I love you," she whispered as she hugged me.

I clambered into the back of our wagon and waved good-bye as we rumbled down the dusty road. I swiped at the tears rolling down my cheeks. The tears betrayed how much I would miss all that we were leaving behind, but my smile revealed my excitement. It seems that gold fever had finally infected me, too.



MONDAY

Write each word next to its definition.

betrayed

clambered

elegant

mansions

scurrying

swiped

1. _____ climbed awkwardly
2. _____ large, impressive houses
3. _____ wiped with a sweeping motion
4. _____ revealed
5. _____ moving quickly
5. _____ graceful and attractive

TUESDAY

Is the family in this story wealthy? Provide details to support your answer.

WEDNESDAY

Choose the correct answer.

1. What genre of fiction is this story?
Ⓐ myth or legend
Ⓑ mystery
Ⓒ historical fiction
Ⓓ fable
2. How does the narrator in this story feel about what is happening?
Ⓐ frightened and angry
Ⓑ lonely but happy
Ⓒ depressed and anxious
Ⓓ sad but excited
3. What were the symptoms of gold fever?
Ⓐ a desire to go to California in search of gold
Ⓑ itchy hands and a stomachache
Ⓒ a desire to spend money foolishly
Ⓓ dry lips and a whispery voice

THURSDAY

Write the names of the characters next to their descriptions.

Papa

Mama

Granny

narrator

- _____ This character gives the narrator a hug and a ring.
- _____ This person is the first to catch gold fever.
- _____ This character has a soft heart under tough skin.
- _____ This person cries but also smiles when the family begins their journey.

FRIDAY

Do you think the family was wise or foolish? Explain your answer.
