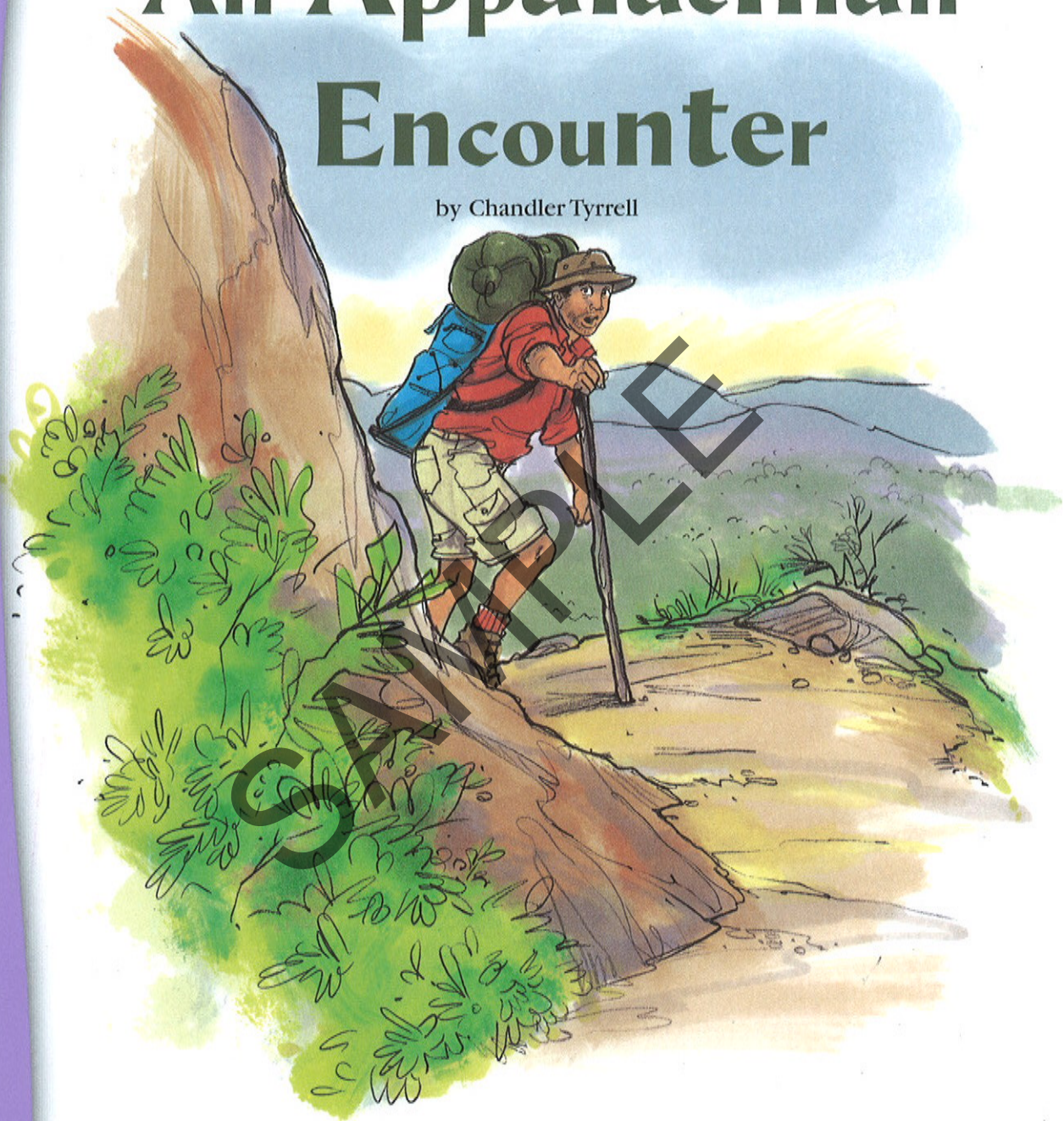


An Appalachian Encounter

by Chandler Tyrrell



1 As I came around the bend in the rocky trail, I heard it. It was twenty feet ahead, just out of sight behind a thick clump of bushes. Something huge was rustling around. This was exactly what I had been dreading most.

2 For the first few weeks, my journey on the Appalachian Trail had been uneventful. It was hard work and very beautiful. But mostly, it was just walking. Like nearly twenty-five hundred other hikers each year, I set out from Springer Mountain in

northern Georgia. My plan was to follow the Appalachian Trail all the way to Maine. I wanted to be one of only a few hundred people who actually finish the two-thousand-mile hike.

3 Leaving in early April, I thought the weather would be perfect. It would be cool enough for comfort as I climbed the steep hills and mountains but warm enough to miss the last bad weather of winter. Well, I was wrong about that! During the first week I had to walk through snow and freezing rain as I made my way into the Smoky Mountains. Luckily, I was prepared. I had brought special clothing designed to keep me dry and warm. Unlike thick wool or cotton, these fabrics were thin and dried quickly.

4 It was also nice to know that I was not trudging through these nasty conditions alone. Most people who want to hike the whole trail start in Georgia in the early spring just like I did. During the first couple of weeks, I met people from around the country. Some were even from other parts of the world.

5 Using a nickname is a tradition for hikers on the trail. For instance, Crunchy and Spiffer were a couple of hikers I met from Vermont. When Crunchy found out that I didn't have a trail name, he and Spiffer helped me come up with one. They asked me many questions. They wanted to know where I was from and what I did for a living. We chose the name *Schoolie* because I'm a schoolteacher.

6 Sometimes the crowds would frustrate me. When it was time to unroll my pack at night and get some rest, the shelters were crowded. This made it hard for me to sleep. I was also looking forward to a quiet walk alone in the woods. It was hard to enjoy nature when I ended up hiking for hours with Cosmo. He was a cook from Japan who just wouldn't stop talking!

7 As I walked north, however, the hikers spread out because everybody walked at his or her own pace. Soon I was walking for hours and not seeing anyone. During the third week, the weather improved. The trees became fuller and greener. It even rained a little less.

8 I also began seeing more animals. A couple of times I came upon snakes warming themselves in patches of sunshine. I often woke to chirping and singing. This signaled that warm weather was returning. Walking through meadows and fields, I kept my eyes open for deer. Sometimes I got lucky. Once I spotted almost a dozen deer searching the ground. They were looking for the delicious green buds and sprouts of spring.

9 But the animal I was most excited—and worried—about seeing was a bear. I knew that bears were not uncommon along the trail, but they mostly avoided humans. The books I read to prepare for the hike said it is best to avoid bears. If you see a bear, their advice is to stand still until it has walked away. If the bear doesn't leave, you should back away slowly and leave the area. Either way, it was time for me to make a decision about that noise in the woods.

10 I was frozen, waiting to see just how big this bear was. Which way was it headed? The books said not to run because the bear might chase you. But standing still made me feel like bear bait!

11 Just then the rustling became more intense. I almost screamed. The bear was about to enter the trail just a few feet from where I stood. I could hardly stand it.

12 At that moment a burst of tan came shooting out of the greenery. It was a deer—a big one for sure, but it was a deer. It ran up the trail a bit. Then it ran back into the woods.

13 I took a big breath and let my heart slow down. *It sure would be nice to have a hiking buddy right about now!* I thought to myself.

COMPREHENSION

- 1 Compared with clothing made from cotton and wool, special hiking clothes
 - a dry faster.
 - b are thinner.
 - c Both a and b
- 2 One thing that Crunchy and Spiffer have in common is
 - a both are from Japan.
 - b both have nicknames.
 - c both are cooks.
- 3 Schoolie stands frozen on the trail because he
 - a is trying to listen for birds.
 - b thinks he hears a bear.
 - c is waiting for other hikers.
- 4 Schoolie's hike might have been less crowded at the beginning if he had
 - a started hiking from someplace other than Georgia.
 - b left earlier in the season.
 - c talked less.
- 5 Which event happened first?
 - a Schoolie thought he heard a bear.
 - b Schoolie read about what to do if he saw a bear.
 - c Schoolie received his nickname.
- 6 The first thing to do if you see a bear is to
 - a run away.
 - b climb a tree.
 - c stand still.
- 7 The author writes *I often woke to chirping and singing* to show that
 - a it is morning.
 - b noise from the woods can be frustrating.
 - c Schoolie is outside.

LEARN ABOUT WORDS

- A** Often you can tell the meaning of a word by reading the words around it.

Find the word in the paragraph that means

- 1 ordinary (2)
- 2 having a sharp slope (3)
- 3 season of the year (4)
- 4 scattered (7)
- 5 became better (7)
- 6 counsel (9)
- 7 lure (10)
- 8 great; strong (11)

- B** A word might have more than one meaning. Its meaning depends on the way it is used.

Read the three meanings for each word. Look back to the paragraph to see how the words are used in the story. Then choose the correct meaning, and write the letter.

- 9 **patches** (8)
 - a pieces of cloth
 - b small areas
 - c joins together
- 10 **ground** (8)
 - a electrical connection between conductor and earth
 - b to provide a foundation
 - c solid surface of soil

WORD STUDY

C Chris **ran** to the car.

The word *ran* is a verb. It tells what Chris did. Words that tell what someone or something did are generally verbs. Look at the group of words below. Then read the sentences. Write the verb that best completes each sentence.

dashed	stopping	boil
tastes	wearing	nail
fell	pulling	

- 11 That car is ____ at the red light.
- 12 Tommy is ____ his cart behind him.
- 13 A lot of snow ____ last night.
- 14 That cake ____ delicious.
- 15 They ____ past us as they raced home.
- 16 She is ____ a brown shirt.
- 17 I will ____ water for tea.
- 18 Please ____ this board over the window.

D Maggie **seems** angry.

That book **is** mine.

Tyrell **became** president.

The verbs in the sentences above are called linking verbs. Linking verbs do not express actions; they express states of being. They link the subject of a sentence with a noun, pronoun, or adjective that describes or identifies that subject.

Some common linking verbs are *to be*, *to become*, *to look*, *to seem*, *to sound*, and *to taste*. Read the sentences below.

If a sentence contains a linking verb, write that verb. If it does not, write *No*.

- 19 This tea tastes weak.
- 20 My sister became a singer.
- 21 Throw the ball to me.
- 22 The phone rang three times.

- 23 My brother is young.
- 24 Michele seems happy today.
- 25 This soda tastes like cherries.
- 26 I worked late today.

E Present tense I **walk** I **buy** Past tense I **walked** I **bought**

To form the past tense of many verbs, simply add the ending *-ed*. *Walk* becomes *walked*. But some verbs have an irregular past tense. For example, the past tense of *buy* is *bought*. Each sentence below has two verbs in the past tense in **bold type**. Write the one that is irregular.

- 27 Ming **heard** you when you **called**.
- 28 The balloon **burst** when Danielle **pricked** it.
- 29 Geoffrey **thought** you **liked** ice cream.
- 30 Marley **ran** to the ocean and **waded** into the water.
- 31 I **forgot** what we **learned** yesterday.
- 32 Celine **wrote** a letter and **mailed** it.
- 33 Jackson **played** the CDs he **kept** on the shelf.

Comprehension

- | | |
|------------|------------|
| 1 c | 5 b |
| 2 b | 6 c |
| 3 b | 7 a |
| 4 b | |

Learn about Words

- | | | |
|----------|---------------------|-------------------|
| A | 1 uneventful | 5 improved |
| | 2 steep | 6 advice |
| | 3 spring | 7 bait |
| | 4 spread | 8 intense |
| B | 9 b | 10 c |

Word Study

- | | | |
|----------|--------------------|-------------------|
| C | 11 stopping | 15 dashed |
| | 12 pulling | 16 wearing |
| | 13 fell | 17 boil |
| | 14 tastes | 18 nail |
| D | 19 tastes | 23 is |
| | 20 became | 24 seems |
| | 21 No | 25 tastes |
| | 22 No | 26 No |
| E | 27 heard | 31 forgot |
| | 28 burst | 32 wrote |
| | 29 thought | 33 kept |
| | 30 ran | |