

Backpack Adventures Series

*The
Candlestick
Treasure*

by

Marguerite Swilling

*Produced through the Partnership for
Environmental Education and Rural Health,
Texas A&M University*



Marguerite Swilling, author of the Backpack Adventure Series, has loved reading, writing and science all her life. From writing and directing an original play in sixth grade, she advanced to essay competitions in high school and published poetry at Texas A & M where she majored in English and minored in Earth Science. Although she is a certified secondary teacher, Mrs. Swilling has spent the past twenty-three years in the business world and has written and presented training seminars on a variety of topics. Mrs. Swilling lives in Georgetown, Texas with her husband and two daughters.

Backpack Adventure Series

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An Introduction to Backpack Adventures:

Welcome to the coolest club in middle school! Of course, no one outside the club can know just what makes this group so different. The secret is in the backpack.

Roman Castillo, a young teenage technology whiz, developed a powerful mini-computer that can transport people through space and time. He controls the computer with a wireless keypad complete with a screen that displays the co-ordinates for the time and space travel destination. He shared his invention with his best friend, Travis, as well as four others.

Travis Allen, Roman's best friend since kindergarten, is the son of a veterinarian and loves animals, the outdoors and math. He wears western jeans and boots that highlight his long, lanky profile. He has a short temper except with his stepsister, Summer. He's very protective of Summer and doesn't like having her travel with the BPC as the group has nicknamed their awesome device.

Summer Martin, Travis' stepsister, is two years younger than Travis and Roman. Her bright blue eyes are as merry as her laugh and her blonde hair is cut short and sassy. She loves to read and has a great memory for history and geography. She uses a wheelchair due to a terrible, traffic accident when she was five. Travis and his aunt built a motorized chair for Summer, and she can participate in just about everything with her two best friends, Connie and K.T.

Connie Castillo, Roman's sister and Summer's best friend, has long, silky black hair and her dark brown eyes are framed by thick, black lashes. She loves her brother, but sometimes questions the use of the BPC. Quiet and reserved, she is a serious student. Science is her favorite subject and dance is

her favorite pastime. She and Summer have a mutual best friend named K.T.

K.T. Watson, is an only child who loves her best friends, Summer and Connie, like sisters. She wears her curly, jet-black hair in dozens of tiny, tight braids so she'll look more like her favorite athlete, Venus Williams. K.T. is full of energy and courageous. A natural leader, she often instigates the adventures with the BPC. She loves soccer and cheerleading. She helped form the Backpack Club and brought in its newest member: her neighbor, Jace.

Jace Long, classmate and neighbor to K.T., grew up in China and moved first to California and finally to Texas. He loves soccer like K.T., is a whiz at math like Travis, and is especially close to Summer. As the newest member to the Backpack Club, Jace is the most reluctant to use the BPC for travel, but he thinks it's a great tool for communicating between the members and is the first to try the device for help with homework.

1 Abuelito squinted at the inscription and flashed
2 Roman a bright smile. He slipped the necklace off
3 and quickly unlocked the gray box, his fingers
4 lightly brushing across the name inscribed on the
5 top. He gently placed the ring into the box. He
6 lifted the candlestick and handed it to Roman.

7 Now it was Roman's turn to smile. He gingerly
8 pulled the shallow candle socket cap from the
9 column and turned the stick upside-down. A brittle,
10 but intact scroll slid out of the tube into Abuelito's
11 hands. His knobby fingers gently opened the scroll
12 and they looked at the handwritten copy of the Bill
13 of Rights together. The ink had faded so that you
14 couldn't tell if it was handwritten or printed, but the
15 words were still legible, its message still clear.

"The Candlestick Treasure"

1 Roman stepped out of the beat-up pickup and
2 surveyed the South Texas brush country just north of
3 Lake Amistad. He drew a deep breath. The cold
4 front had whisked away the earthy, leftover summer
5 smells of dry grass and parched soil. Hardy
6 mesquite swayed in arroyos, dancing in the north
7 wind. Roman could hear birds chatting with each
8 other in the tall brush.

9 He was looking forward to dove hunting even if
10 Travis, his best friend, had not been able to come
11 this year. This year the September trip was not
12 about hunting. His great-grandfather's hundredth
13 birthday was the main reason for the long trip to the
14 ranch where generations of the Castillo family had
15 lived.

16 Roman had not minded leaving at three in the
17 morning with his grandfather so they could hunt
18 before the rest of the family arrived. Roman was
19 very close to his energetic eighty-year-old
20 grandfather, but he had always been scared of
21 Papaw's father, Abuelito, who spoke only seldom
22 and always in Spanish. Abuelito had been a tough
23 gaucho who could train the wildest horses. He had
24 raised thirteen children and outlived two wives.
25 Now he was a leather-skinned, bowlegged wraith
26 who stood a foot shorter than Roman. Roman never
27 knew what to say to him. Abuelito had insisted on
28 riding with them out to the cabin instead of waiting
29 at the nursing home for the rest of the family.

1 Papaw didn't seem bothered by his father's silence.
2 Roman couldn't wait to get out of the truck.

3 Roman unloaded the heavy ammo box and the
4 guns from the truck. He carried his backpack into
5 the cabin. The backpack traveled everywhere with
6 him. It contained his Backpack Computer, or BPC,
7 as he and his friends in the Backpack Club called it.
8 The computer could transport Roman through space
9 and time, and he and his friends had been on many
10 adventures. He had recently made modifications to
11 the computer's wireless keypad/scanner and he
12 wanted to try it out at the cabin after the morning
13 hunt. The remote location would be great for testing
14 the scanner/Internet enhancement and the GPS
15 capabilities.

16 *I'm so glad my dad didn't become a rancher*
17 *like Papaw and Abuelito, Roman thought. I get the*
18 *best of all worlds that way. Love of the land from*
19 *Abuelito, hunting skills from Papaw, and state-of-*
20 *the-art technology from Dad. Someday, I'll have to*
21 *tell Dad about the changes to his original time*
22 *machine and how I linked it to the computer.*

23 He carried Abuelito's cowhide stool from
24 inside the cabin to the dirt-floor front porch so the
25 old man could sit and enjoy the bright, crisp
26 morning. Roman and his grandfather were trying to
27 make everything comfortable for Abuelito so they
28 could get out into the brush to stir up some birds.

29 As Roman opened the windows of the old lodge
30 and let the cool air filter into the two musty rooms,
31 he could hear Papaw and Abuelito talking outside.

1 *****

2

3 Roman's eyes were wide open when he finally
4 came to a stop, standing upright with his backpack
5 clutched in his left hand and the signet ring in the
6 right. His great-grandfather was staring at him and
7 holding the keypad, his finger on the button marked
8 "Return." He gave Roman a little nod, set the
9 keypad device back on the table, and returned to his
10 stool on the porch.

11 Roman let out a big sigh and nearly crumpled
12 from relief at being back in one piece. He deposited
13 the backpack on the table and scooped the box into
14 his arms. He carried the box to the front porch and
15 set it down in front of Abuelito.

16 "I—you—," he stuttered. Where should he
17 begin? "You can understand English, can't you?"

18 "Sí, mijo."

19 "Well, I can speak a little Spanish, too. What
20 you saw in the cabin was, well, it was—"

21 "No problema," Abuelito interrupted. "*Tengo*
22 *cien años. No creo nada. Creo todo.*"¹

23 Roman smiled as his great-grandfather, the
24 tough cowboy, shrugged off the vision of his great-
25 grandson returning in a cloud of light.

26 Roman placed the signet ring in the time-worn
27 hands of the old man. "Feliz cumpleaños."²

28

29

30 ¹ "No problem. I am one hundred years old. I believe nothing.
31 I believe everything."

32 ² "Happy Birthday."

1 "I'll let myself out as you go to meet her," the
2 diplomat said.

3 "Good journeys, then." Elias gripped the young
4 man's hand.

5 "*Muchas gracias*," he replied.

6 Roman watched as Elias left the room and the
7 foreigner slipped the signet ring off his finger and
8 placed it on the table.

9 "Let it not be said that Eduardo Maria Castillo
10 de San Juan did not repay a kindness," he said to no
11 one. He quietly slipped out of the room.

12 Roman's heart was pounding. He had to find
13 the keypad and return, but he had just heard this
14 stranger call himself by the very name he had seen
15 on the gray metal box. *Who is this person? Am I*
16 *related to him? Is that a family heirloom that he just*
17 *gave to Elias?* Roman had to have a closer look.
18 He peered around the storage room door and saw
19 that the door leading from the room to the rest of the
20 building was shut. He crept to the table and picked
21 up the gold ring. A large, curling "C" covered the
22 flat face of the ring. Inside, in tiny script, was the
23 name "Eduardo Maria."

24 As he read the inscription, a strange sensation
25 came over him and he froze in place. The fire in the
26 hearth flickered gold and orange, but the room was
27 filling with sparkling diamonds of brilliant light.
28 *This is not a November sunrise*, thought Roman as
29 he was bathed in the radiance until he totally
30 disappeared.

31

1 Papaw sounded annoyed, but finally gave in. He
2 rarely won an argument with his father.

3 "Roman, I've got to go back into town and get
4 Papa's medicine. He says he can't wait for the
5 others to bring it out to him. I'll be back as soon as I
6 can. He says one of the prescriptions has to be
7 refilled."

8 It sounded funny to Roman for one so old to
9 call someone "Papa" that at first he didn't realize
10 what was happening. As he watched Papaw climb
11 back into the rusty, old hunting truck and drive
12 away, the reality of a good hour or two by himself
13 with Abuelito sank in. Not to mention lost bird-
14 hunting time.

15 "*Vaya aquí*," Roman's great-grandfather
16 commanded. Roman walked over to where Abuelito
17 stood with a shovel. The old man thrust the shovel
18 at Roman, turned on one heel, and walked toward a
19 *sendero*, a path that led through the brush and away
20 from the cabin.

21 "What do you . . ." Roman began to ask, but
22 then realized the old man was moving quickly and
23 he ran to catch up.

24 For ten minutes, Roman walked in silence
25 behind his great-grandfather. *Whatever medication*
26 *he missed this morning, it wasn't for his heart*,
27 Roman thought, as the centenarian kept up a brisk
28 pace. Abuelito stopped in front of a rock
29 outcropping covered in prickly pear cactus. The
30 large pads bore long, lethal-looking spines.

31

1 *I sure hope he doesn't want me to dig up those*
2 *cacti*, Roman thought. He loved the *nopales*, the
3 tasty dishes his grandmother made from the scraped
4 pads of the cactus, but had never tried to handle the
5 pads himself.

6 Abuelito turned from the cactus and peered
7 down the sendero. Roman looked around and all he
8 could see was huisache and mesquite, cholla and
9 prickly pear. Dried grass rustled all around, waist-
10 high and filling in any space between the sticker
11 bushes. He suddenly felt totally isolated. But then
12 he remembered the animals: the javelina, the feral
13 hogs, the coyote and the rattlers. No, he was not as
14 alone as he might think. He should have brought his
15 gun.

16 Abuelito stood silently, an inscrutable look
17 masking whatever was going through his mind.
18 Then he walked toward a large boulder, pacing off
19 steps as he counted quietly in Spanish. "...*siete,*
20 *ocho, nueve,*" he said.

21 "*Aquí,*" Abuelito said, pointing to the ground in
22 front of him. Roman carried the shovel and pressed
23 the tip into the cracked soil. He looked down at
24 Abuelito, who just smiled up at him and nodded.

25 Roman stepped on the back of the shovel and
26 pushed hard, expecting resistance from the rocky
27 soil.

28 The shovel sank into the earth and Roman
29 easily picked up the first shovelful and tossed it
30 aside. The dry topsoil was rocky, but it crumbled
31 beneath the assault of Roman's strong arms, and he

1 town, village, and hamlet. Still, it may not be safe
2 just now for a representative of New Spain to be
3 seen carrying this document back home. Would
4 thou accept a candlestick from a frustrated
5 pewtersmith? See, it is worthless, as I have built the
6 candle socket much too shallow." He set a small
7 cap into the top of the column, perfectly hiding the
8 contents inside.

9 Roman felt the top of the candlestick he held.
10 His whole thumb could fit into the candle socket. He
11 set it on the floor. This was not the candlestick from
12 the box! That candlestick was being passed this
13 very moment from Elias to a diplomat from New
14 Spain.

15 "My five-year-old son, Abel, would delight in
16 such a gift! The worth of the gift is not always
17 measured in its usefulness. A very wise man named
18 Ben once said, '. . . observe with Concern how long
19 a useful Truth may be known, and exist, before it is
20 generally receiv'd and practis'd on.' Thank you for
21 sharing a useful truth, even if it might take us a little
22 while longer to practice it."

23 Suddenly, Lydia's voice could be heard calling
24 for Elias. Her calls grew louder as she drew nearer.

25 "Please forgive me if I do not see thee to the
26 door," Elias apologized.

27 "I understand," responded the diplomat.

28 "It would be unfortunate if my young friend
29 saw us together, as she has an insatiable curiosity
30 and tendencies toward the sin of eavesdropping."

31

1 cannot help but come in contact. It is good that we
2 all know what is important to each of our nations.
3 Unfortunately, I must leave this morning with the
4 emissary's entourage. They are waiting for me
5 now."

6 He unrolled the paper and looked closely at the
7 words.

8 "There is only one problem, Señor. This is not
9 a copy. I cannot take the handwritten original."

10 Roman's jaw dropped and he nearly fell out
11 into the room. It was a good thing both Elias and
12 the Spanish emissary's liaison were engrossed in
13 looking at the paper. Roman watched as Elias's
14 frown turned into a look of steely resolve.

15 "Thou must take this back to New Spain. I
16 have promised people, important people, that New
17 Spain will have the Bill of Rights even before they
18 are fully ratified. There are only two states left to
19 sign the ratification. North Carolina will sign this
20 month. People will feel betrayed if this document is
21 not brought to New Spain and copies made for all to
22 read." Elias took the paper and rolled it into a tight
23 scroll. He reached for the tall candlestick on the
24 table and Roman watched in disbelief as he inserted
25 the famous document into the candlestick.

26 "But this piece of paper is precious to your
27 nation."

28 "Whether this is one of the original fourteen
29 handwritten drafts or just a handwritten copy from
30 an original does not matter. We have printed
31 thousands of broadsides and papered every city,

1 soon dug a hole one-foot wide and two-feet deep.
2 All the while, Abuelito leaned over the hole, his
3 eyes darting back and forth, searching the earth.

4 Despite the cold front, Roman was sweating,
5 and he stopped to take off his jacket. Abuelito bent
6 into the hole and began scraping away with his
7 fingers.

8 Abuelito picked up the shovel and gently
9 tapped at what Roman thought was the tip of a
10 smooth, gray rock. A soft, tinny sound echoed in
11 the shallow hole. Abuelito deftly edged the shovel
12 beside the object and pried up a gray metal shoebox-
13 sized container.

14 "What's that?" Roman asked as he watched his
15 great-grandfather slowly lift the small box from the
16 hole.

17 "Ayúdame," whispered Abuelito as he struggled
18 to lift the box from the hole.

19 Roman jumped to help him and was amazed at
20 how heavy it was. As he lifted it, he wondered who
21 had buried it there and how long ago. Abuelito
22 could not have buried it by himself, but he certainly
23 knew just where to find it.

24 Roman cradled the load in his arms. Abuelito
25 picked up the shovel and began walking back toward
26 the cabin. As Roman followed, the heavy box
27 seemed to bounce with every step, in rhythm with
28 his heartbeat. He blew the dust and grit off the top
29 of the box and tried to read a faint inscription:

30
31

Eduardo M Castillo.

1 Back at the cabin, Abuelito sat on the little
2 cowhide stool in the shade of the porch's tin roof.
3 Roman placed the container on the ground in front
4 of the old man.

5 Abuelito pulled a braided leather necklace from
6 under his shirt. A small key hung on the necklace
7 and he looked at it for a minute before lifting the
8 necklace over his head.

9 Roman was curious to see the contents of the
10 heavy box. What could make it so heavy? Gold?
11 Guns? *It feels as heavy as Papaw's ammo box,*
12 Roman thought ruefully. *It's probably just*
13 *Abuelito's shotgun shells.*

14 He watched anxiously as Abuelito slowly fitted
15 the key into the tiny hole in the box's side. His
16 gnarled fingers gave a quick turn and Roman could
17 actually hear the tumblers in the old lock falling
18 open.

19 "Mira."

20 Roman looked into the box and saw only a few
21 common objects. The box itself was interestingly
22 made, with the same dull gray metal lining the inside
23 of a wooden frame. It was as if the wooden box had
24 been covered inside and out with gray metal.

25 Abuelito reached into the box and handed
26 Roman a postage stamp. It was from 1973 and was
27 a tribute to the Colonial pamphleteers who were the
28 printers and newspapermen during the American
29 Revolution.

30 "Su padre," was Abuelito's cryptic remark.
31 Roman wanted to ask him what the stamp had to do

1 Elias hurriedly opened the shop door and
2 welcomed a young man who looked vaguely
3 familiar to Roman. He was short and wiry and
4 dressed in fine clothes. He had coal black hair and
5 steel blue eyes and looked to be in his mid-thirties.
6 He glanced quickly around the room and for a
7 moment, and Roman was afraid he had been seen.
8 He could hear the newcomer asking a question in
9 soft, lilting, heavily-accented English.

10 "That is only my storage room," Elias
11 answered. "I assure thee we are quite alone. Look
12 here, I have just obtained a broadside of the Bill of
13 Rights for thee to carry back to New Spain. The
14 Spanish colonists will be happy to know their new
15 neighbor nation values personal freedom. New
16 Spain's friendship during our Revolutionary War
17 will be remembered always. And, of course, we
18 have the American Philosophical Society through
19 which we can share important discoveries."

20 "Thank you, Señor Wortham. I have personally
21 enjoyed the debates and the sharing of knowledge by
22 Señor Franklin's fine society. Much has changed
23 since the death of Don Bernardo de Gálvez. Miro,
24 as governor, seeks alliances that benefit both New
25 Spain and your young republic. The French are now
26 embroiled in their own Revolution." He paused to
27 take a sip of the tea Elias offered him. Roman could
28 see the gentleman wore a gold signet ring on his
29 right hand.

30 The foreigner continued talking. "Trade along
31 the Mississippi is growing and we three nations

1 admiration of Austin. My affinity for foreign
2 diplomats has already brought some suspicion my
3 way. That is why I asked thee to bring the document
4 from the City Print Shop as soon as possible. My
5 liaison from the Spanish emissary will be here in a
6 moment. Would thou like to meet him?"

7 Watt pulled a small watch from his vest pocket.
8 "No, it's nearly five. I need to get back to the shop
9 before I'm missed. We've got another order of
10 broadsides to print. Here's your Bill of Rights
11 broadside."

12 Watt handed Elias a small, rolled-up piece of
13 cream-colored paper.

14 "You will be missed at the City Print Shop even
15 if you do not miss the shop. I shall never have as
16 loyal a friend so near to government documents
17 again."

18 The two friends shook hands, and Watt bade
19 Elias farewell. Roman strained to see the document
20 lying on the table. His head was feeling better now.
21 He knew it was nearly five in the morning and that
22 he was in a pewtersmith's shop in Philadelphia.
23 Now he just needed to find the keypad and return
24 home. Still, he was curious about the paper. He
25 wondered if Elias would leave the room and let him
26 have a closer look.

27 Elias poured a cup of tea into a pewter mug and
28 took a sip of the steaming brew. No sooner had he
29 touched his lips to the cup than there sounded a
30 sharp rap on the door.

31

1 with his father, but he couldn't remember how to ask
2 in Spanish. *I'll ask Dad later*, he thought.

3 "Su abuelo," Abuelito gave as explanation for
4 the 1948 Benjamin Franklin half-dollar he handed to
5 Roman next.

6 "Me," the old man said as he handed Roman
7 faded train tickets to Washington, D.C. and
8 Philadelphia from July, 1920.

9 "You traveled to Washington, D.C. and
10 Philadelphia when you were my age?" Roman asked
11 incredulously, not expecting a reply.

12 "Sí," answered Abuelito with a nod and a gruff
13 laugh. He then lifted the largest object from the box.
14 He held a pewter candlestick about ten inches tall
15 with a flat, round base and a simple column. The
16 socket at the top seemed too shallow for a candle to
17 sit in without falling out.

18 Abuelito handed the candlestick to Roman who
19 was amazed by how light it felt. *I guess the box
20 itself is heavy because none of these objects weigh
21 much*, thought Roman. He inspected the bottom of
22 the pewter piece and he could make out a faint
23 inscription:

24

25 *E. W. Phil. 1789*

26

27 Roman could feel Abuelito watching him. It
28 made him nervous. He quickly handed the antique
29 back to his great-grandfather. Abuelito's smile
30 faded and he placed everything back in the box,
31 closed the lid, and locked it. He slipped the leather

1 necklace over his head. Then he pulled his stool to
2 the rough cedar plank wall of the cabin, folded his
3 arms across his chest, and leaned back with his eyes
4 closed.

5 Roman wondered why an elderly cowboy
6 would have this weird collection: *Why did he bury*
7 *it? Why did he have me dig up this box today? All I*
8 *wanted to do was go hunting and empty some shots*
9 *at a few delicious little whitewings.*

10 Roman was feeling annoyed at the old man who
11 now snored softly. He wanted to look at the things
12 in the box again, but there was no way he would get
13 the key without waking the old cowboy.

14 Roman carefully carried the box into the cabin
15 and set it on the worn top of the mesquite-plank
16 table. He shut the front door and the only light now
17 was from four small windows. He pushed aside the
18 fishing tackle box they had used when they fished
19 Devil's River last summer. Three small, split-shot
20 weights rolled to the floor and Roman was sure the
21 clunk and rattle against the wooden floorboards
22 sounded like a bass drum. He stood to peer out the
23 front window and could see the grizzled, gray hairs
24 on the old man's head lightly wafting in the north
25 breeze. *He must be sleeping pretty soundly*, thought
26 Roman, as he sat again on the crude, mesquite bench
27 that served as a dining chair.

28 Roman opened his backpack and took out the
29 keypad device that powered the BPC. He turned on
30 the keypad, then powered up the BPC itself using
31 the keypad's buttons. The green, luminescent screen

1 printing press when I move to Virginia, I'll be
2 happy! Now why would I wish that kind of life on
3 Miss Lydia?"

4 Watt turned to Lydia who stood with her hands
5 on her hips. "Miss Jane has her father to thank for
6 her successes and you, my dear child, are too
7 ambitious for your own good," he said.

8 "Why, Watt, I thought you said ambition was a
9 good thing," Lydia retorted. "I heard you telling
10 Elias you were heading to Virginia to work for
11 Moses Austin since he won the contract to roof the
12 new Virginia capitol. You said he was the most
13 ambitious entrepreneur you had ever known and that
14 Philadelphia would not hold him for long."

15 Elias and Watt both glared at Lydia.

16 "Eavesdropping is a sin, Lydia," scolded Elias.
17 Roman winced.

18 "Still, you might just make a fine newspaper
19 editor instead of a printer," Watt said jokingly.
20 "Any more gossip you might divulge to others?" He
21 stole a quick glance at Elias, whose eyes were fixed
22 on Lydia. Roman leaned forward slightly, trying to
23 see Lydia's face.

24 "You have nothing to fear from me, kind sirs,
25 for I am but a lowly child. *A lowly, female child.* I
26 have other duties to attend this morning. Good
27 day!" She flounced out of the room.

28 "She has spirit, I'll warrant," Watt said with a
29 laugh after she had left.

30 "Aye, but will she truly hold her tongue if
31 pressed for information? Not all share thy

1 and typesetting. Now she even teaches young male
2 apprentices how to use the moveable type.”

3 “Working the print shop is really no better than
4 the type foundry, Lydia,” admonished Elias. “All
5 work has a certain amount of drudgery, and each
6 worker deserves respect no matter what his position
7 in life.”

8 The way they could argue so forcefully and still
9 be friends reminded him of his friends in the
10 Backpack Club.

11 “Well said, my friend, but you still speak from
12 the vantage point of journeyman pewtersmith,” Watt
13 mused. “Will you be so generous to the lowly grunt
14 when you earn your master title? Methinks not. It’s
15 not the work I detest, but the companionship. The
16 whole print shop staff is sluggish and dull and
17 colicky. The tea that we drink from the fine pewter
18 mugs you gave us is the only thing that keeps them
19 awake.”

20 Elias gave him a stern look. “Watt, there’s
21 difficult folks in every trade, even mine,” he said.

22 “Not just difficult! Delirious, is the truth of it,
23 Elias,” Watt continued. “Half the apprentices have
24 the dangles – hands just hanging limp at their sides.
25 The master complains continually of nausea and
26 severe abdominal pain. Even though I know we’re
27 not supposed to heat the type on these cold
28 mornings, my fingers get stiff from cold if I don’t.
29 I’m losing my appetite working those presses, and
30 look here,” he said as he pointed to his upper lip, “I
31 swear I’ve got blue gums. If I never see another

1 showed a full battery and the time to be 9:30 a.m.
2 Roman figured he had about a half-hour until Papaw
3 returned. While Abuelito slept, he could test the
4 scanner and the Internet search he had added to the
5 BPC.

6 Roman had modified the keypad device to have
7 a scanner that could be held over text or an object
8 and could connect to a search engine on the Internet.
9 The display showed a weak, but adequate, Internet
10 signal. *My satellite link is working*, thought Roman,
11 *so the GPS should work, too*.

12 He held the scanner over the box and an image
13 of the candlestick appeared in the display. Roman
14 squinted in the darkness. Something else was
15 showing up – something long and cylindrical *inside*
16 the candlestick. *What’s that?* Roman wondered.

17 Roman trained the scanner on the candlestick
18 and its strange, hidden contents and scanned it to do
19 an Internet search. Just as he pushed the “Search”
20 button, a familiar, twinkling light exploded in the
21 room. Roman dropped the keypad but instinctively
22 grabbed his backpack, and in an instant he had
23 disappeared in a flood of crystalline sparkles. A
24 gust of wind charged into the cabin and escaped
25 through the back window. The only sounds were
26 those of a hundred-year-old gaucho snoring
27 peacefully, and two doves whispering in the brush.

28
29 *****
30
31

1 Darkness and the taste of blood were Roman's
2 first sensations as he regained consciousness. He
3 feebly edged his hand along his face and felt his
4 swollen upper lip and the gash across his cheek. He
5 struggled to lift himself from the gritty floor where
6 he lay face down. *Why is it so dark*, he wondered,
7 *and where's my grandfather?*

8 Roman felt his way along the splintery wooden
9 boards of the floor. His lip hurt and his head was
10 still pounding, but his mind was clearing.

11 *I must have fallen and been knocked out for*
12 *hours*, he thought. *Here's my backpack, but where's*
13 *the keypad?* His hand touched a long, cylindrical,
14 metal object and the memories again flooded his
15 brain. The candlestick! Why had the scan of the
16 candlestick knocked him down?

17 Suddenly Roman remembered the sparkling
18 light and realized what had happened.

19 So, if he didn't start an Internet search, but
20 instead initiated the travel program, where was he
21 now?

22 As if in answer to the question in his mind, a
23 young man's voice called out from beyond what
24 Roman thought was the door.

25 "Hullo, Elias? Anyone up yet?"

26 "Aye, Watt, come on in and I'll share a cup of
27 tea with thee," answered another male voice. "This
28 November wind has a bit of a bite to it, all right, so
29 shut the door quickly."

30 Roman crept slowly toward the sliver of light,
31 feeling along the floor with his feet so as not to trip.

1 His left hand held his backpack and his right
2 clutched the candlestick. He reached what he had
3 correctly guessed to be a door and softly pushed it
4 open, just enough to see into the room. He glanced
5 back over his shoulder as more light filled the tiny,
6 dark room. He was in some type of storage closet
7 with shelves lining the walls. The closet was filled
8 with candlesticks!

9 "Good morn', Elias. Hullo, Watt. I've brought
10 more coals for the fire and a fresh pot of water for
11 the tea," a young girl called out merrily as she
12 emptied coals in a bucket on the hearth and set a
13 pewter teapot down on a long, wooden table.
14 Roman thought she looked about ten years old, and
15 the two young men probably his own age or a little
16 older.

17 "Thank thee, Lydia," replied Elias.

18 "You'll have your chance to take my apprentice
19 spot at the print shop sooner than you think, Lydia.
20 That is, if you're still dreaming of becoming a
21 printer one day," teased Watt.

22 "Just you wait and see, Watt Taylor! I do plan,
23 not dream, to be a printer. I'll be the first woman
24 city printer for Philadelphia. I'll be as famous as
25 Master Franklin."

26 "No one's ever going to be as famous as ol'
27 Ben. And why would you want to be a printer
28 anyhow? Making type slugs at a hot metal forge is
29 no work for a woman."

30 "Who says I'm going to be stuck in a drudge's
31 job?" Lydia shot back. "Miss Jane learned hot type