

# The Case of the Vanishing Scroll

## The Letter

“Antonio?” Sam stood at the dark shaft, peering in. “Are you in there?” A clattering sound emerged from the blackness. “Antonio?”

Sam Dixon raised a penlight and crept forward among the stones. As the shadows swallowed him up, a chill washed over him. He reached for the wall of the cave, sinking his hand into a mop of slimy, wet moss. “Yuck!”

The penlight flickered. Had he found the den of a wild boar? His breathing quickened at the thought of a charge by that animal, with those tusks. Sam bent to pick up a rock for self-defense. “Antonio?”

The penlight faltered and went out. As Sam fumbled with it, he heard a scraping sound. When he stopped to listen, he could hear only the steady dripping of water. In the thick darkness, he couldn't even see the penlight in his hand. He would have to feel his way back.

Turning to go, Sam twisted his foot against a stone and stumbled to the ground, dropping the penlight and his weapon into the void. He froze when he heard a low moaning sound behind him. Something touched his shoulder.

“Get away!” Sam cried, raising his arms.

A screech came and Sam felt his legs being pinned to the ground.