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Matthew was worried. The night before the trip he told his mother, "I don't know if I really want to go on this skiing trip." "Why don't you want to go?" "The weather's cold and I haven't skied at all this year. What if I get hurt?" "Come on, Matthew! This'll just be a fun day. Mark'll ski with his friends. You and Dad will have a great time together."

Did Matthew have a sixth sense? Could he see the future? Because something would go wrong on the trip but it would be worse than he thought – much, much worse.

Ten-year-old Matthew lived in Ankara, Turkey with his parents, Mike and Mary Couillard. He had an older brother, Mark, aged 13, and a younger sister, Marissa, aged 8. His father was a lieutenant-colonel in the US Air Force, working at the Defence Corporation Office in Ankara.

The whole family had often been skiing together. So when Colonel Couillard heard that the Australian Embassy was organizing a Sunday day trip to the ski slopes at Kartalkaya ('Eagle Rock'), near Bolu, he thought this would be a great day out for the family. However, his wife had other plans for that Sunday so she and Marissa decided to stay in Ankara. Only the Colonel and his sons would go on the trip.

On Sunday morning, 15 January 1995, Colonel Couillard, Mark and Matthew got up very early to catch the bus. They did not have time for breakfast, as the bus left Ankara at 6 am. After three hours' journey they were at the Dorukkaya Hotel on the Kartalkaya ski fields. Mark went straight off to the ski slopes with his friends. The Colonel needed to hire skis for Matthew, so he and Matthew went first to the hotel's ski-hire room.

Colonel Couillard tried to pay for the ski hire with his credit card but the machine was not working so he had to pay cash. This left him with very little money. The bus fare had been double what he had expected. He borrowed a little money from a friend but he would still have to be very careful. They would not have much money for lunch. This was going to be very important later.

It was a perfect day for skiing. As they stepped out of the hotel, they saw the ski slopes of the 2,400-metre-high Kartalkaya mountain shining in the sun. They had never skied on the Dorukkaya Hotel runs before so they studied the ski lift system carefully. They decided to try the easy runs first. The Colonel and Matthew soon started to enjoy themselves, skiing in the clean, crisp air and the bright sunshine.



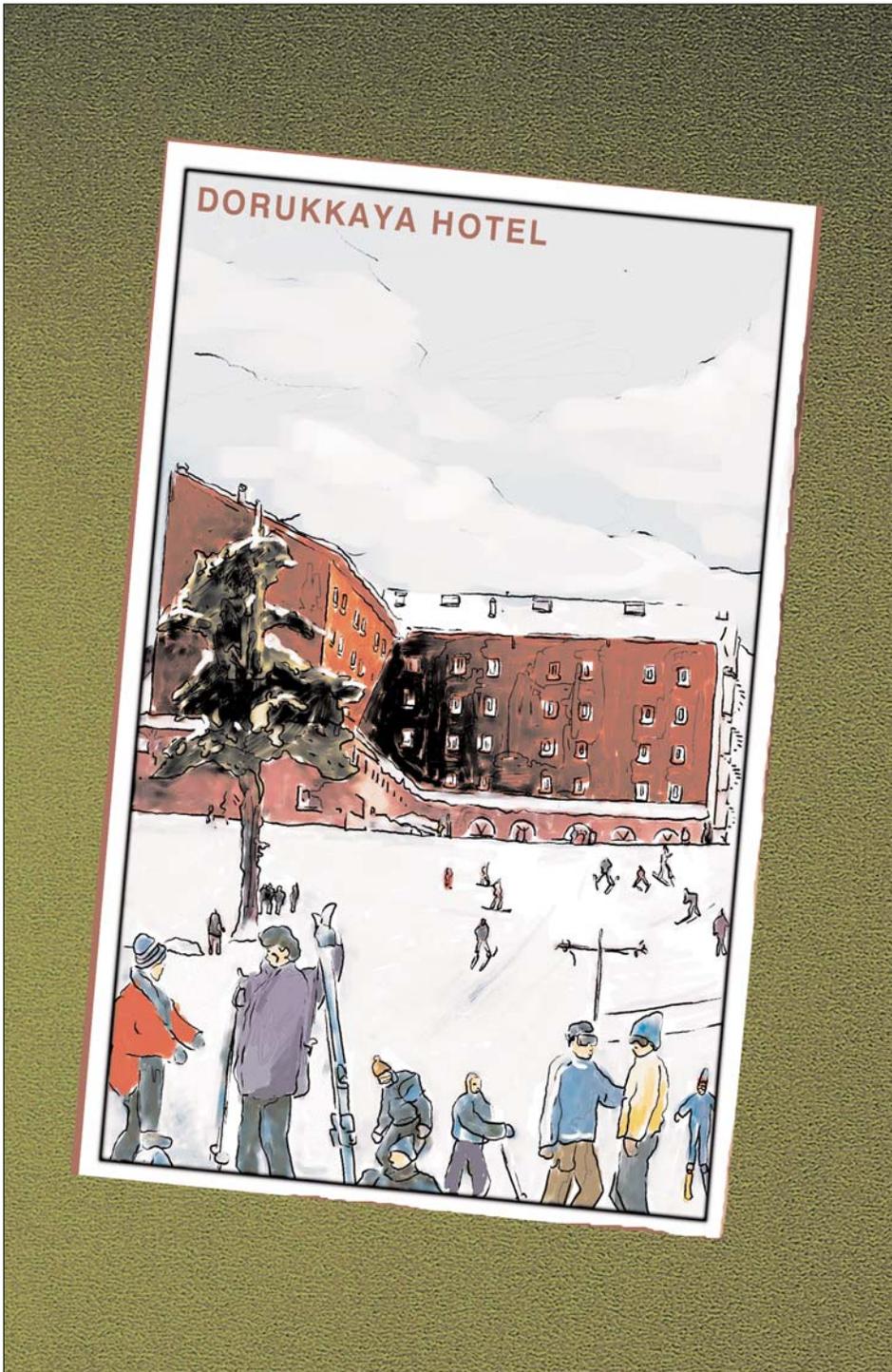
Before long they were both very hungry and went to join Mark for lunch. Unfortunately, they could only afford a sandwich and tea.

"Do you think we'll be able to get something to eat before we go home?" asked Matthew.

"Sure we will," replied his father. "I've kept enough money for something sweet."

After lunch the Colonel and Matthew decided to take the T-bar lifts right up to the top of the mountain. Halfway up the first lift they noticed that the weather was changing. It was getting colder and windier. But the sun was still bright and the view was breathtaking. Snow-covered mountains and forests stretched for many kilometres in every direction.

While they were still on their way up, it began to snow. They arrived at the top of the mountain at about half past two. The Colonel thought that they would still be able to enjoy two more hours of skiing before the bus left at half past four.



Colonel Couillard looked for the way down from the top of the mountain. He knew that there were two routes. The route on the left-hand side of the mountain was called the 'easy run'; the one on the right was called the 'difficult run'. But he couldn't see where the two runs began: the paths were not clear because of the snow. He pointed to one path and in his broken Turkish, he asked the lift attendant if it was the way to the difficult run. The man pointed to the right-hand side of the mountain and said: "This side is closed."

This didn't answer the Colonel's question. He was still confused. It was difficult to see through the falling snow, so he decided that it would be safer to follow the ski lift down. They started skiing through the pine forest. Snowflakes beat against their faces and covered their ski goggles.

"This snow's getting deeper and I keep falling down," complained Matthew.

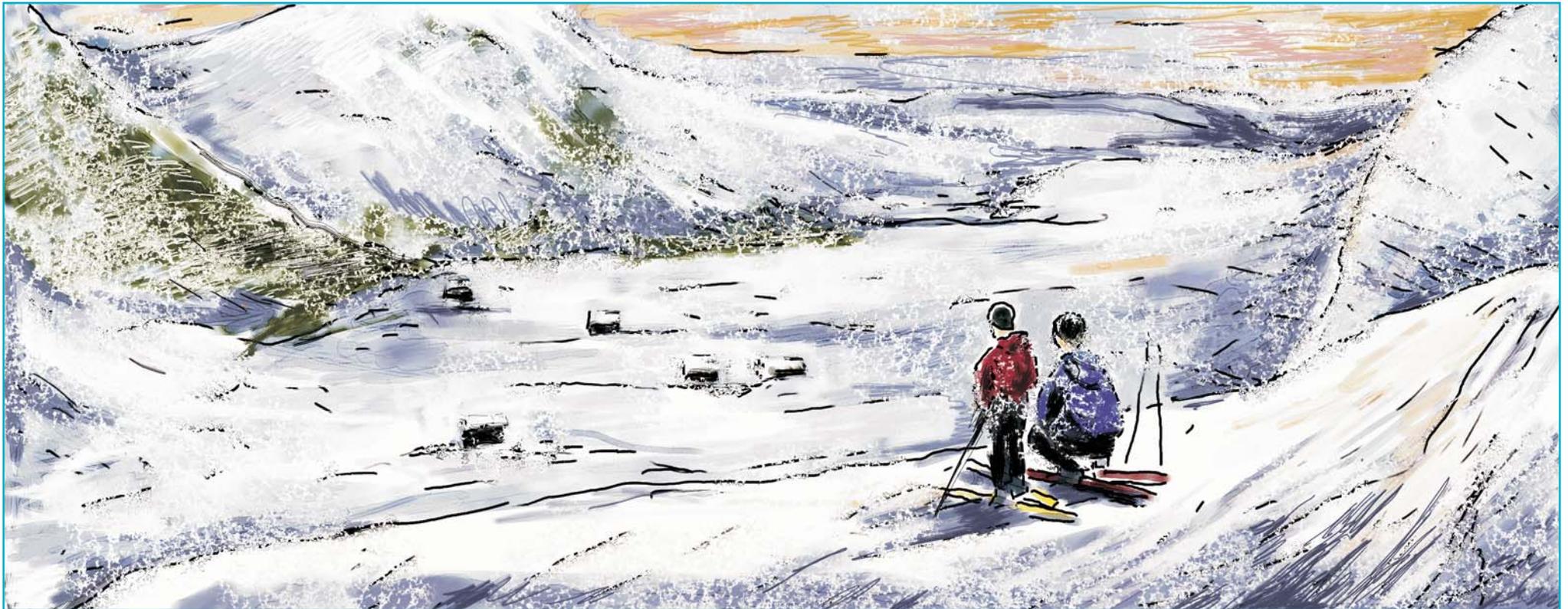
"There's a special way of skiing in soft snow," his father explained. "Press your heels down. The ends of your skis will come up. Then you'll be able to ski without falling."

The snow fell faster and faster and it became more and more difficult to follow the lift. Finally they lost the lift completely and had to stop to check their position. They were looking down on a wide, snowy, open area about a kilometre away. They could see a few simple huts there.

"How about going to those huts?" suggested Matthew.

"Maybe we could get help."

"Look, there are no tracks there. There's no one there," said his father.



They decided to go back the way they had come but it was very difficult. They fell many times in the thick snow. They climbed several hills but there was always another hill on the other side.

The time for the bus came and went. The weather got worse. The Colonel fell heavily and injured his leg but he forced himself to continue skiing.

Finally Matthew said, "I'm cold. And I'm tired. Can we stop, please?"

"No," said his father. "We have to go on. The bus will wait for us. They'll count the people and they'll notice that we're not there. They'll look around for us."

Matthew had understood that they were lost, but his father did not want to accept this: he still thought that they could get to the bus.



All afternoon Mark skied happily with his friends. But he was a little worried that he hadn't seen his father and Matthew since lunchtime. He remembered how his father had got lost one time at 'Disney World'. Towards four o'clock, he began to get really worried. The bus would soon be leaving but there was no sign of his father and brother.

Mark thought they might meet him at the bus stop, so he collected his skiing things and went to the car park. The bus was getting ready to leave; the engine was warming up. Mark climbed onto the bus, but his father was not there.

"Have you seen my father?" he asked one of the skiers.

"No, I haven't seen him all day," she replied.

Mark got off the bus and searched the car park. Soon he started to cry. A man asked him what the problem was. When Mark explained, the man said: "Come on, let's check the hotel." They went to the ski-hire room but his father's driving licence was still there. His father had not given back his skis.

VOCABULARY

page

- 3** *sixth sense*: a special ability to know what is going to happen because of the way you feel inside
- 4** *lieutenant-colonel*: an officer in the army who has a rank between major and colonel
embassy: a group of people who officially represent their country in another country
ski slope: a long piece of land on the side of a hill or mountain that people use for skiing
ski lift: a machine that takes skiers to the top of a ski slope
run: a ski slope
- 5** *T-bar lift*: (see picture on this page)
breathhtaking: so beautiful that it takes your breath away
- 8** *lift attendant*: a person who controls a lift
pine: a tall, thin tree with thin leaves like needles
snowflake: a soft piece of snow that falls from the sky
ski goggles: special large glasses that skiers use to protect their eyes when skiing
- 9** *heel*: the back part of your foot
hut: a small, simple building, usually made of wood
track: the marks that sthg makes when it moves (for example: ski tracks); a narrow path or road
- 10** *accept this*: believe that this was true and couldn't be changed
- 11** *there was no sign of ...* : he couldn't find ... anywhere
warming up: (for a machine) switched on and getting ready
- 12** *snowdrift*: a big pile of soft snow made by the wind
shivering: shaking because he was so cold
shelter (n): a place that protects people from danger or bad weather
- 13** *shelter (v)*: stay in a shelter to protect yourself
ski patrol: a group of people who protect a skiing area and go around it to check for danger or trouble
- 14** *hugged each other*: put their arms tightly around each other
on purpose: because I wanted to do it; not by accident
in danger of frostbite: in danger because they might get frostbite
frostbite: an illness in which parts of your body (especially your fingers and toes) freeze because of the cold

QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

Chapter 1

Before reading

- 1 The story is called '*Incident at Eagle Rock*'. What is an *incident*? Look quickly through the pictures in the book. What do you think the story is about?
- 2 What do you usually do at weekends in winter?
- 3 The story begins in a ski resort. Do you know any ski resorts in Turkey? What do people do there?.

After reading

- 1 Did Matthew want to go on the skiing trip? Why? / Why not?
- 2 What nationality is the Couillard family?
- 3 Why were they living in Ankara?
- 4 Which members of the Couillard family went on the ski trip?
- 5 Why didn't the Colonel have much money to buy lunch?
- 6 Mark these statements true (T) or false (F).
 - a The weather was warm and sunny in the afternoon. ____
 - b The Colonel and Matthew stayed close to the ski lift. ____
 - c The Colonel agreed that he and Matthew were lost. ____
- 7 Do you believe that some people have a *sixth sense*, like Matthew? Try to use your sixth sense to guess what happens next in the story. Express your ideas like this: *I think the Colonel and Matthew will Mark might If the Colonel doesn't arrive, the people on the bus might (etc.)*

Chapter 2

Before reading

- 1 What dangers are there on a winter night in the mountains?
- 2 What should you do if you get lost in the mountains?

After reading

- 1 Why did Matthew and his father stop skiing?
- 2 Where did Matthew and his father stay on the first night?
- 3 What did they eat and drink?
- 4 Complete these sentences.
 - a They couldn't light a fire because ...
 - b They hugged each other because ...
 - c It was important to keep their feet, hands and noses warm because ...
 - d The Colonel was angry because they hadn't ...