



Book Two

THE MYSTERY AT COMANCHE CANYON



The Misadventures Of Inspector Moustachio

by Wayne Madsen
illustrated by Lisa Falzon



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This book is dedicated to my wife Beth, my children Jake and Alexa and to all the children who have fallen in love with my mysterious universe.

The smiles that I have seen spread across your faces give me—every day—the conviction to follow a new dream.

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How The Misadventures Began...

On Jake Moustachio's eleventh birthday his Grandmother gave him a very special magical magnifying glass which had once belonged to his beloved Grandfather, the great Inspector Buck Moustachio. Being a would be detective himself, Jake, accompanied by his eight year old sister, Alexa, immediately took the magnifying glass and combed their house for clues in an attempt to solve their first mystery; the whereabouts of their missing cat Rex. When the two sleuths finally ended their search in the Moustachio's attic, they found their pesky pet and a whole lot more than they bargained for!

To their amazement they were unexpectedly contacted through the magnifying glass by Delbert, The Keeper of Time, and the children and their cat soon realized that their Grandpa's seemingly ordinary magnifying glass was the portal to a world of fantastic misadventures and mysteries to be solved.

Delbert, it seemed, was in desperate need of their help to solve a baffling case. A magical bell that controls all time had been stolen!

With a little help from their new friend, Jake and Alexa were able to figure out how to travel through the magnifying glass and were quickly transported to The Museum of Time, a strange and spooky castle once owned by the famous archaeologist Lord Grimthorpe.

To find out who snatched The Bell of Time, Jake, Alexa and their crazy cat Rex, were able to use their keen detective skills to gather clues, while encountering a collection of strange suspects and curious talking animals.

After successfully solving the case, Jake discovered that he is the descendant of a long line of famous detectives and that he is next in line to control the magnifying glass and all its mystical powers. But young Jake Moustachio must be very careful because he also learned that there is another magnifying glass in the universe just like his. Unfortunately, the evil Baron Von Snodgrass possesses it!

Jake is warned that the maniacal Snodgrass will stop at nothing to have both magnifying glasses. The one that is purest of heart and of thought who comes to possess both magnifying glasses will be able to unlock all the mysteries of the universe!

And that—Jake had been told—is him!

Inspector Moustachio is his name, and solving mysteries is his specialty!

And now get ready to read the next thrilling installment in The Misadventures of Inspector Moustachio: *The Mystery at Comanche Canyon!*

CHAPTER ONE

The Tallest Of Tales

“Lexy, hurry up!” called Jake from the bottom of the staircase. The Moustachios were having a barbecue and the house was in a buzz of anticipation of the soon to be arriving guests.

“I’m coming, Jake!” Alexa replied, approaching the stairs as she twisted a pink ribbon into her strawberry blond hair. “What’s your rush?”

“Grandma Moustachio’s in the kitchen with custard filled cream puffs, covered in powdered sugar,” explained Jake, licking his lips as he thought about the sweet treats.

“Oh boy!” exclaimed Alexa. “I love cream puffs almost as much as I love spareribs.”

“Well, today is your lucky day because I think we’re going to get to gobble them both up!” declared Jake.

Jake and Alexa ran as fast as they could to the kitchen to greet Grandma Moustachio who was busy cooking the most delicious food for the party.

“Wow!” she said, almost dropping a plate full of hot dogs as the children came running by. “What’s the hurry, you two?”

Alexa picked up a handful of hairpins that had fallen out of Grandma’s wild looking salt and pepper hair, and as she handed them back, she asked, “May we have some cream puffs? Please? Please?”

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“Yeah, Grandma,” pleaded Jake bouncing all around the kitchen. “Can we?”

“Well, I don’t know,” she thought. “It’s getting very close to lunch time.”

Jake and Alexa just stood there with big smiles on their faces like two little puppies waiting for a bone.

“O.K.” said Grandma, “but we’ll have to hurry. Your parents will be back from the supermarket any minute and I don’t want to get into any trouble!”

“Awesome!” yelled Jake, as he and Alexa sat down at the kitchen table.

Grandma Moustachio very precisely undid the wrapping from the tall mountain of cream puffs and very carefully slipped out two. As she was about to rewrap them, she felt a nudge by her foot. She looked down and saw Rex rolling around on the floor, licking his lips.

“*Meow*,” he begged.

“Not you too!” moaned Grandma annoyingly. “I won’t have anything left for your guests if you eat all the cream puffs now!”

Rex continued to roll shamelessly all over the floor begging for a cream puff.

“Oh, all right! You can have one too,” she said, as she grabbed another cream puff from the tray and placed it in his Critter Detective cat food dish. Rex feverishly gobbled up every bit of his cream puff. Custard filling covered his whiskers from ear to ear. Grandma carefully adjusted her mountain of cream puffs so no one would ever know she removed three and then rewrapped them using a hairpin to fasten the plastic wrap just so.

“I think you’re going to need some milk to wash those

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down with,” she suggested placing the cream puffs on the table.

“Chocolate, please,” said Jake.

“Make mine strawberry, Grandma,” exclaimed Alexa. “You know pink is my signature color. I love all things pink: pink ribbons, pink clothes, pink nails and especially strawberry milk from pink cows!”

Jake crinkled his nose and raised his left eyebrow in exasperation, “Strawberry milk doesn’t come from pink cows!” he explained.

“Says who?” snapped Alexa, crinkling her nose back at him.

“Says everybody,” snapped back Jake. “There’s no such thing as pink cows!”

“Yes there is—” answered Alexa. “Strawberry milk comes from pink cows, chocolate milk comes from brown cows and white milk comes from white cows.”

“That’s crazy!” he snickered. “Grandma, help me out here!”

“Oh no!” she answered, pouring them the last drop of milk, “I know when not to get into the middle of an argument with you two. Your Grandpa use to say, ‘*the most wonderful gift in life is the power to believe.*’ You two, believe in whatever you want to.”

“And I choose to believe in pink cows!” exclaimed Alexa.

“Oh brother!” frowned Jake.

Grandma had a very perplexed look on her face as she stuck her nose into the refrigerator.

“What’s wrong, Grandma?” Alexa questioned, poking her head inside to see what all the fuss was about.

“Why, we’re all out of milk!” she announced with a puzzled tone in her voice. “Now I know your Mom had two gallons in there yesterday. Well—at least I thought she did.”

“Maybe the milk bandit stole it!” exclaimed Alexa.

“Or maybe all the white, brown and pink cows are on vacation!” Jake said with a smirk as he gobbled up the last bit of his cream puff and finished the last drop of his milk. He then proceeded to wipe his face with his sleeve. Through her very thick glasses that always dangled from the tip of her nose Grandma glared at him in disapproval.

“Jake, use a napkin,” she scolded, handing him a pile from the kitchen counter.

As Jake wiped the rest of the custard filling off his face, he noticed some funny writing on the napkin.

“What’s that?” questioned Alexa.

Jake held the odd looking paper up close to his face so he could get a better look. “This isn’t a napkin,” he remarked, as it stuck to his custard covered nose.

Grandma wobbled over to the table and took a look at the funny napkin still dangling from the tip of Jake’s nose. “Oh dear,” she uttered, pulling it off. “Why—that’s a letter your great-great-grandmother Mary wrote to your great-great-aunt Fay about her barbeque sauce recipe. Well, at least half of it. I never did find out whatever happened to the other half of the letter. This part must have gotten stuck to the pile of napkins when I was going through my recipes for the cream puffs. I never quite got the hang of making her barbeque sauce without those missing ingredients. They must have been written down on the

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second lost sheet of paper from the letter.”

“She had pretty handwriting,” said Alexa as she gazed at the flowery dots over great-great-grandma’s ‘I’s’.”

“She was quite a character,” recalled Grandma. She was always telling tall tales about her father and the Wild Wild West. In the mid-1800’s, her father worked for The Butterfield Overland Mail Route which was the way the West got their mail back in the old days.”

“Old days?” asked Alexa.

“Old days,” explained Grandma. “Way before E-mail.”

“Her father was a western mailman, delivering the mail on a horse drawn wagon, right before the start of The Civil War. One day, according to your great-great-grandmother, her father was traveling along the Red River from Jacksboro when a herd of wild buffalo came stampeding by. His horses became so scared, they flipped over the mail wagon, dumping him into a dusty ditch. When he climbed out of the ditch, to his surprise, he stumbled upon an oddly dressed man wearing a colorful buckskin shirt. It was as if the stranger appeared out of nowhere. The man for some unknown reason offered to give great-great-grandma’s father some cattle that would lead him to a hidden treasure deep within the canyons.”

“That’s so cool!” yelled Jake.

“All of a sudden, the sunny skies became as dark as night and a horrific dust storm started to blow. The ferocious wind blew the mail all over the canyon spreading it for miles and miles. Being the honorable man he was, he ran around like a jackrabbit gathering up all the letters he could so he could finish his mail route. By the time he collected all the letters and got back to the spot where the

peculiar looking man was, he was nowhere to be found.”

“What happened to him?” questioned Alexa, as she ever so daintily wiped the custard filling from her pink lip glossed lips.

“He unexplainably disappeared,” she answered.

“Hoping to find him, her father drew a sketch on the back of one of his letters so he would remember where to look for the stranger after he finished delivering the rest of his mail.”

“Did he ever find him?” asked Jake.

“Nope!” answered Grandma. “The letter with the sketch was supposedly lost and the treasure long forgotten.”

“A long lost treasure!” exclaimed Alexa. “I just love a good mystery.”

“This looks like a job for Inspector Moustachio,” declared Jake.

“And Inspector Girl!” included Alexa with a proud smile.

“*MEOOOOOW!*” added Rex swatting her on the ankle.

“Yes, and you too, Critter Detective!” Alexa giggled, as she scooped him up and gave him a snuggly hug.

“Oh brother!” groaned Jake, rolling his eyes in annoyance at the spectacle.

“Well don’t get too excited, you three,” said Grandma. “That letter was lost a very very long time ago. I’m not even sure the Red River ever existed and that tall tale may be just that. Your great-great-grandma had an enormous imagination, but you can always use your own imagination and your power to believe.”

As Alexa wiped off the custard from the barbeque

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recipe, she asked, “Can I keep the recipe Grandma? I just love the way she wrote her letters. I want to trace them.”

“Sure, sweetie,” she answered. “I haven’t been able to make that barbeque sauce in all these years anyway. Someday, I hope to find the second missing sheet to the letter with the rest of the recipe on it. Oh well—go have fun! Though you’d better go wash the custard off your faces before your parents get home and you might want to clean up Rex too!”

They all looked down at Rex who was covered from head to toe in custard and powdered sugar.

“*Meooow!*” he burped with delightful satisfaction, rolling all over the kitchen floor, licking up every crumb and drop of custard filling he could find.

“Come on, you messy fur ball, up to the bathroom and I’ll wash you off,” scolded Jake.

“And Jake,” added Grandma, “you might want to pick up your coin collection from the playroom floor before you lose anything. Every time I see that coin collection it gets bigger and bigger. Your Grandpa and your father started that collection with just three coins—I can’t believe how it’s grown!”

That reminded Jake about the rare Indian head penny he found earlier that day while playing at the school playground. He stashed it in the front right pocket of his pants knowing it would be the perfect addition to his collection.

“I will, Grandma,” he shouted on his way upstairs, “right after I clean up Rex.”