

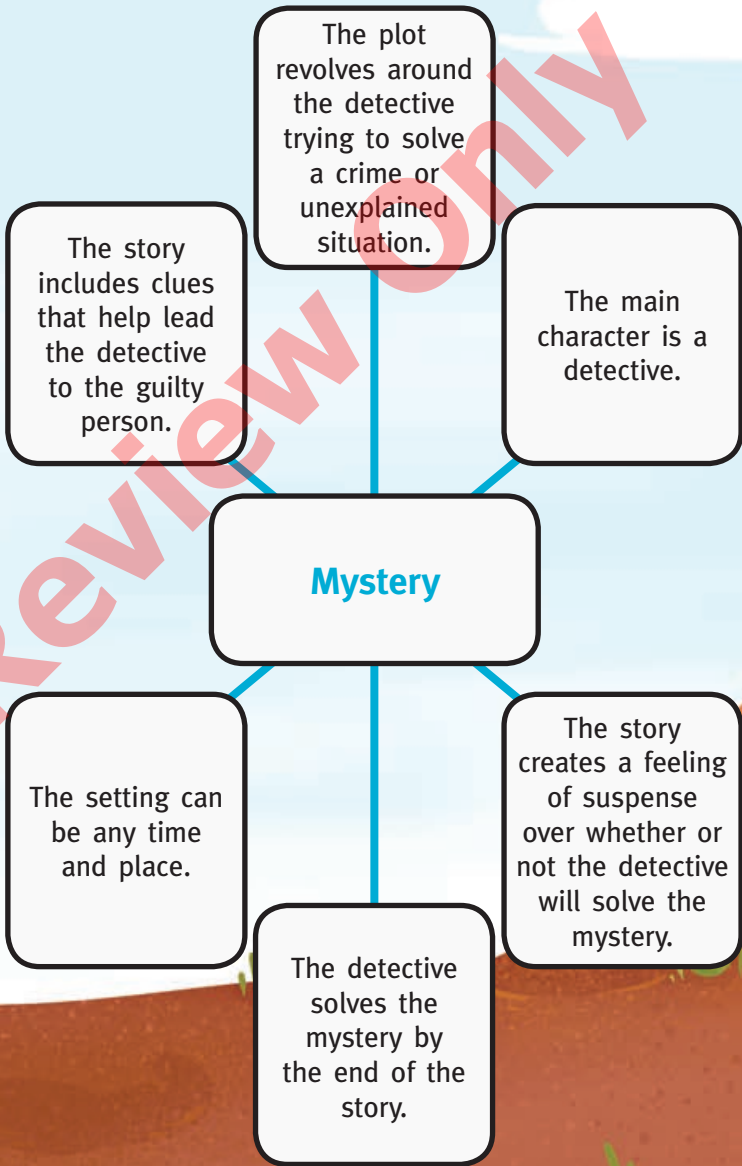
The Great Hoodoo Detectives

by Joanne Mattern • illustrated by Yoss Sánchez



Mystery

Look for the genre features noted below as you read this book. Use the features to help you understand the text.



© Benchmark Education Company, LLC. All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopy, recording, or any information storage or retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publisher. Printed in Guangzhou, China. XXXX-XX-XXXX

LEXILE® is a trademark of MetaMetrics, Inc., and is registered in the United States and abroad.

E-books and additional digital resources available at benchmarkuniverse.com.

ISBN: 978-1-5322-5964-7

Toll-Free 1-877-236-2465
www.benchmarkeducation.com
www.benchmarkuniverse.com

BENCHMARK EDUCATION COMPANY
145 Huguenot Street • New Rochelle, NY • 10801

A Rocky Mystery

Charlotte leaned her head against the car window. Her dad was driving her and her friend Travis along the winding roads of southern Utah. Charlotte and Travis became friends during a **geology** summer program a few years earlier.

Last month, they teamed up and won a local geology scavenger hunt. The prize was spending two days with geologists at Bryce Canyon National Park, exploring and learning about the canyon.



“Wow, look at that!” Travis exclaimed from the back seat. He was pointing at a strange-looking rock. It was thin on the bottom and bulky on the top, like a person wearing a big floppy hat. “I wonder how that big rock balances on top of the rock underneath?” Travis asked. “It looks like it could topple over at any moment.”

“I’m sure you’ll learn all about that,” Charlotte’s dad said as he drove past the strange rocks.

The car pulled up in front of the visitor center. “Here we are!” Charlotte’s dad said. They all got out of the car and stretched. Charlotte’s dad went inside. A few minutes later, two people came out of the lobby to meet them.



“I’m Dr. Hidalgo,” said a tall man. “This is Dr. Renner. We’re geologists who work here at Bryce Canyon National Park. We’ll be spending time together exploring the park.”

“Nice to meet you,” said Charlotte and Travis, shaking their hands.

“What are those?” Travis asked, pointing to the strangely shaped rocks.

“Those are called **hoodoos**,” Dr. Hidalgo explained.

“What an interesting name,” responded Travis.



“Don’t worry, they’re not as odd as the name sounds,” Dr. Renner said, laughing.

“We actually have a hoodoo mystery here at the park,” Dr. Hidalgo said. “Part of a hoodoo has recently collapsed in the park for unknown reasons. Hoodoos do collapse naturally from **weathering** and **erosion**. However, the one that fell didn’t show evidence of enough weathering to cause it to topple.”

“Maybe you can help us solve the mystery?” Dr. Renner asked. She and Dr. Hidalgo exchanged glances as if they were both up to something. But Travis and Charlotte didn’t notice.

“That would be fun!” said Travis.

“Great! So do you know the difference between weathering and erosion?”

“Yes,” said Charlotte. “Weathering is when rain, snow, ice, or wind wears away the rock, sand, and soil.”

“Erosion is when water or wind carries weathered particles away,” added Travis.

“Wow, you two do know your stuff. I’m impressed! You might just solve the mystery after all,” responded Dr. Hidalgo. “First, let’s check out the visitor center. Right this way.”

Charlotte’s dad told her he would meet up with them later. The scientists led Charlotte and Travis towards the visitor’s center. After spending an hour looking at the rock and animal displays, the group headed back outside.

“How about we explore Bryce’s main attraction—the hoodoos!” Dr. Renner said proudly. Charlotte and Travis nodded in agreement.

As they walked, they observed the different rock formations. Some were tall, thin **spires**. Others were **narrow** at the bottom with larger rocks balanced on top.



“Wow, look at that hoodoo,” Travis said. He began to walk off the path, but Dr. Renner motioned for him to stop.

“Sorry, it’s important we stay on the path. Even though hoodoos are made of rock, they are actually **fragile**,” she explained. “Weathering and erosion have already weakened the stone. But people can weaken hoodoos, too, by touching them or walking around them.”

Travis looked through the binoculars Dr. Renner gave him to get a better view.

“What are those stripes and layers in the rock?” asked Charlotte.

“Hoodoos are made of different kinds of **sedimentary rock**,” Dr. Hidalgo explained. “The different minerals in the rocks give hoodoos varying colors. They are most vibrant after a rainfall.”

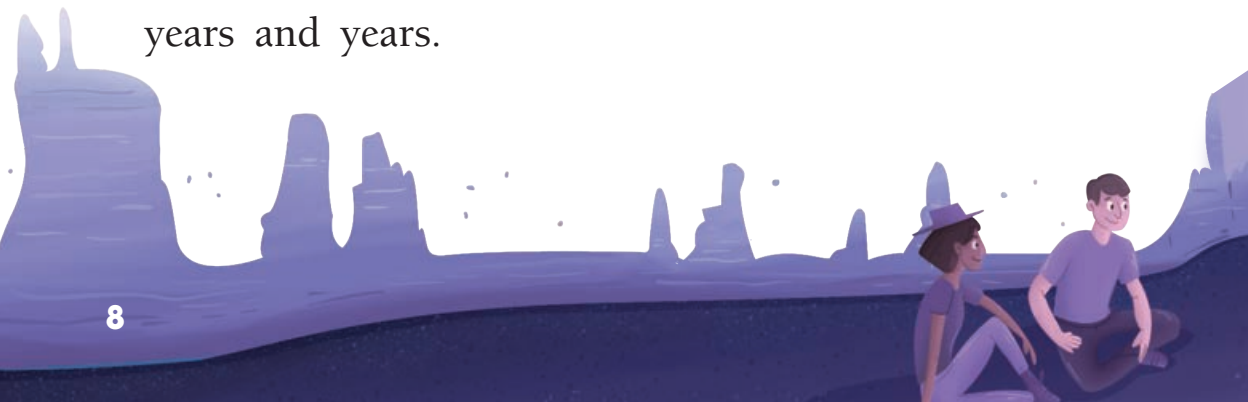
Travis and Charlotte enjoyed walking around the canyon and looking at the strange rock formations. All too soon, it was time for dinner.

Later that night at one of the campsites, two park rangers built a campfire. Charlotte's dad, Travis, and Charlotte joined some other campers to toast marshmallows and listen to stories. "Do you have any stories about hoodoos?" Travis asked.

"I do," Dr. Hidalgo said. He cleared his throat and began. "Long ago, a Native American group called the **Paiute** lived in this area. They still reside in Utah. They have a great story about hoodoos."

Charlotte took a seat next to Dr. Hidalgo on a large log as he told the story.

"Long, long ago, the Legend People lived here. They were animals who looked like people. They were not good caretakers of the land. The Legend People drank all the water in the streams and ate all the pine nuts. The other animals had no water to drink and no food to eat. This went on for years and years.



“The animals were hungry and thirsty and angry. Finally, they complained to Coyote. Coyote was known as a trickster. When Coyote found out what was happening, he got very angry. So he invited the Legend People to a huge feast.

“The Legend People were very excited. But as soon as they sat down, Coyote cast a spell on them. He turned them all to stone for being greedy. The Legend People stand here to this day.

“You see, the hoodoos we see today used to be shaped like the Legend People. But weathering and erosion has turned them into thin columns of rock,” explained Dr. Hidalgo.

Charlotte looked thoughtfully toward the hoodoos in the distance, hidden under the cover of night. The legend made the hoodoos even more interesting. Charlotte decided she wanted to figure out the collapsed hoodoo mystery.

