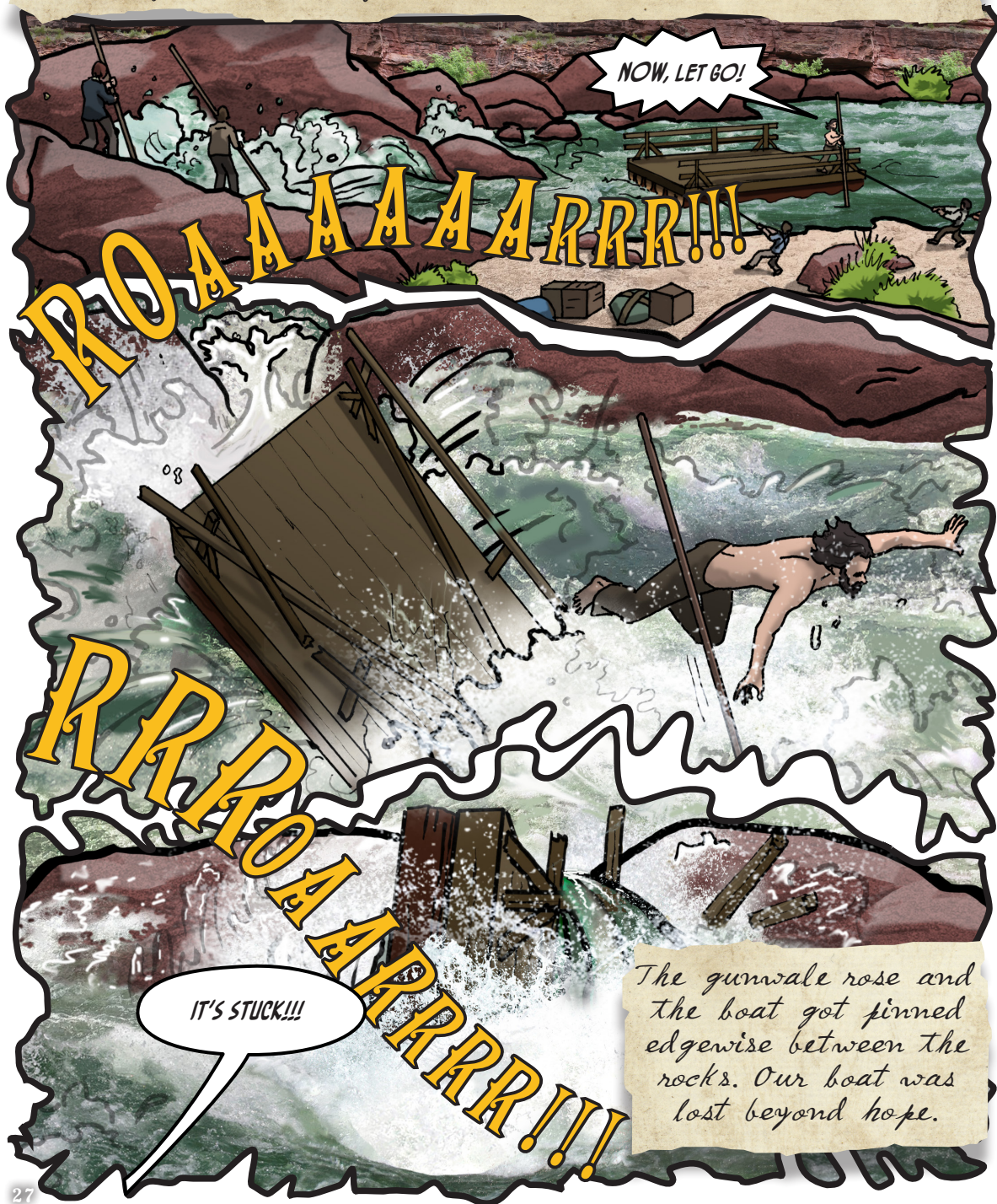




We did not know if we were in Mexico or the United States. We finally came to a place where huge rocks the size of cabins had fallen and blocked the channel.





The group of bachelors that left the Old Spanish Trail splintered. A few older men stayed with the families. Rogers and I stood by the Bennetts at all hazards.

Rogers took over driving the team, and I scouted the way ahead. I used Mr. Arcan's field glasses and climbed mountains miles away. Sometimes I was gone for days.



Water and grass became scarce. Game disappeared.



The lofty snowcapped peak we had tried so hard to reach
the past two months stood before me. It rose so high,
surely only a bird could make its summit.

DEATH VALLEY

December 26, 1849

The water was clear and the bottom uneven. It seemed the
valley floor was a bed of rock salt, a hundred miles long.



I arrived at the jayhawkers' camp. They talked in the
lowest kind of spirits.

WE'RE BETTER OFF ON FOOT. WE'RE
BURNIN' OUR WAGONS, KILLIN' THE WEAKEST
OXEN, AND SMOKIN' THE MEAT.

THEN WE'RE SPLITTIN'
UP PROVISIONS.

IT'S EVERY MAN FOR *HIMSELF*!

THAT'S *BAD NEWS* TO
TAKE BACK TO THE FAMILIES,
CAPTAIN DOTY.



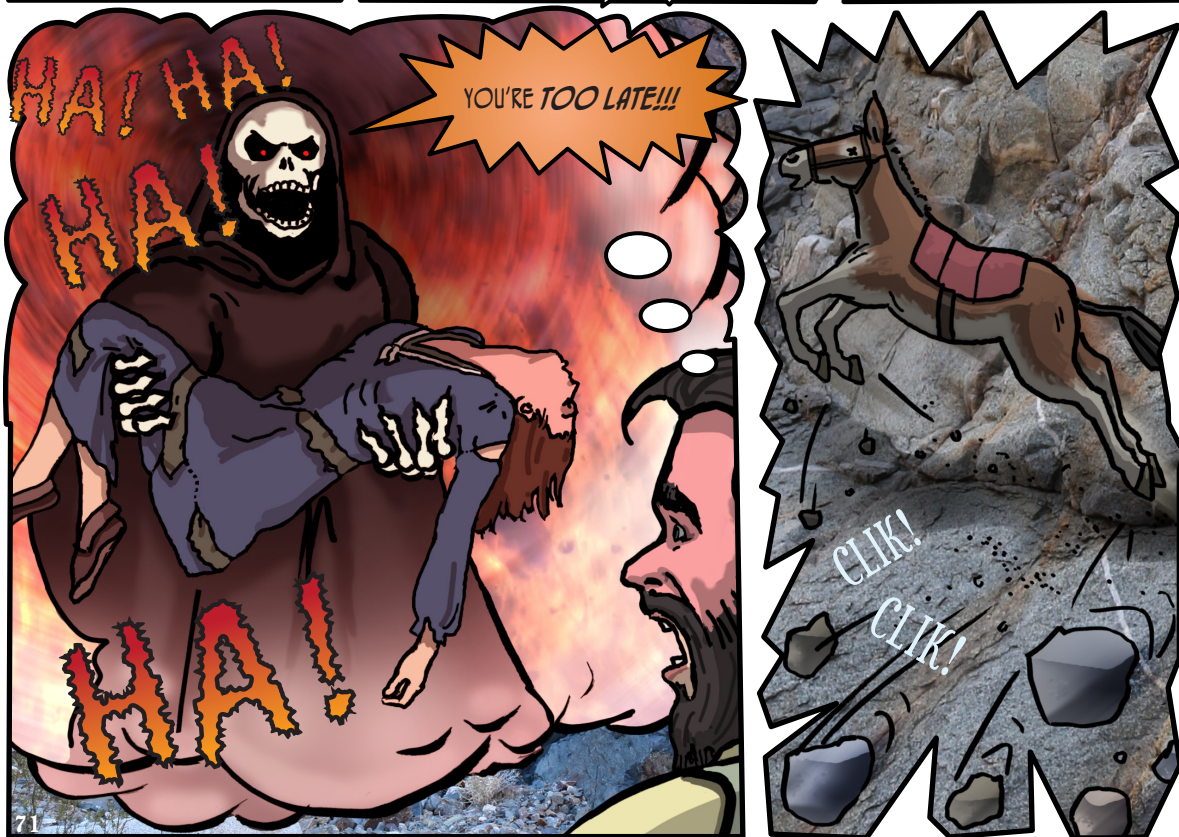
We had no time to spare, so we took the saddles off the horses and left them to their fate.



The pleading neigh of the horses left to die had a desperate, human-like appeal. The horses for the women and children were gone.



The canyon ended at a perpendicular dry fall. Our only way up was a tiny ledge, where our little mule could fall fifty feet to her death with one misstep.



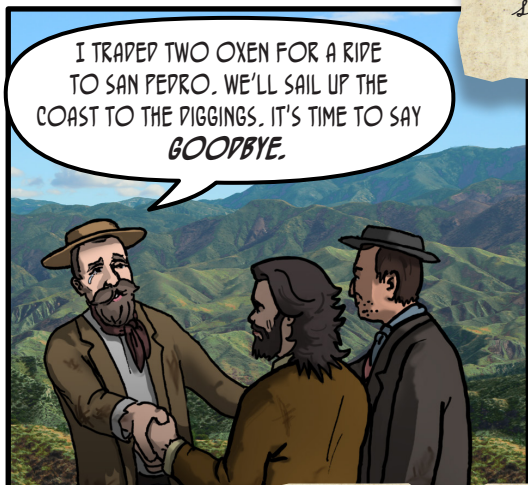


¡Muchachos buenos!

*Good boys!



The families stayed in the rancho and were given a good supper. The children cried all night, their stomachs not used to food after starvation.



I TRADED TWO OXEN FOR A RIDE TO SAN PEDRO. WE'LL SAIL UP THE COAST TO THE DIGGINGS. IT'S TIME TO SAY **GOODBYE.**



WE OWE YOU **SO MUCH MORE...** OUR **LIVES!** GOD BLESS, DEAR FRIENDS!

Tears were in Arcan's eyes. He gave Rogers a silver watch. The gold ring he gave me was worth a dollar fifty. I also got our faithful, one-eyed mule.



GOODBYE, SARAH! GOD BLESS YOU!

I WILL NEVER FORGET YOU, DEAR ABIGAIL!



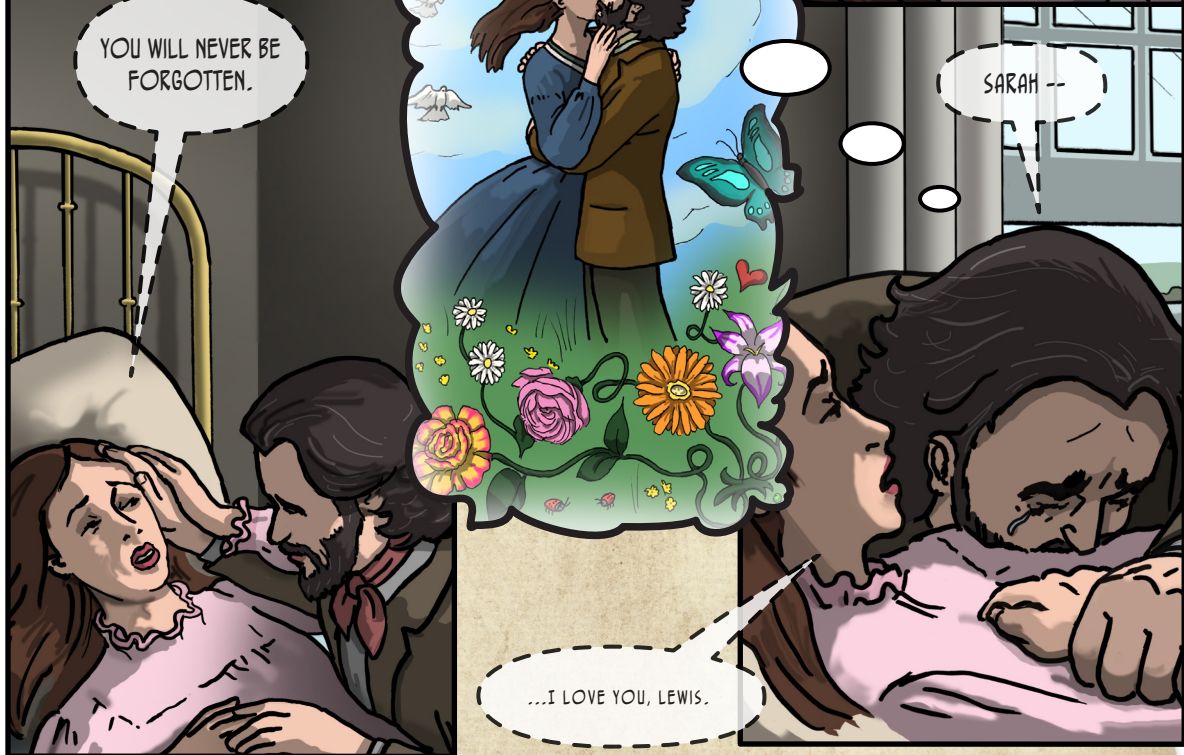
¡Adios, amigos! ¡Que Dios les bendiga!*

THANK YOU, MA'AM!

THANK YOU! -- **GRACIAS!**

*Goodbye, friends! God bless!

Three Years Earlier, San Jose, 1857



She thanked me for being a dear friend and wished me a long, happy life.