



GRAN'PA ZEB, WE  
WANNA HEAR THE  
STORY OF  
**HOW THE VEST  
WAS WON!**

BILLY, YOU'VE  
HEARD IT A HUNDRED  
TIMES, MAYBE TWO  
HUNDRED BY NOW.



BUT IT'S OUR  
FAVORITE!  
**PLEEEEEEASE?**

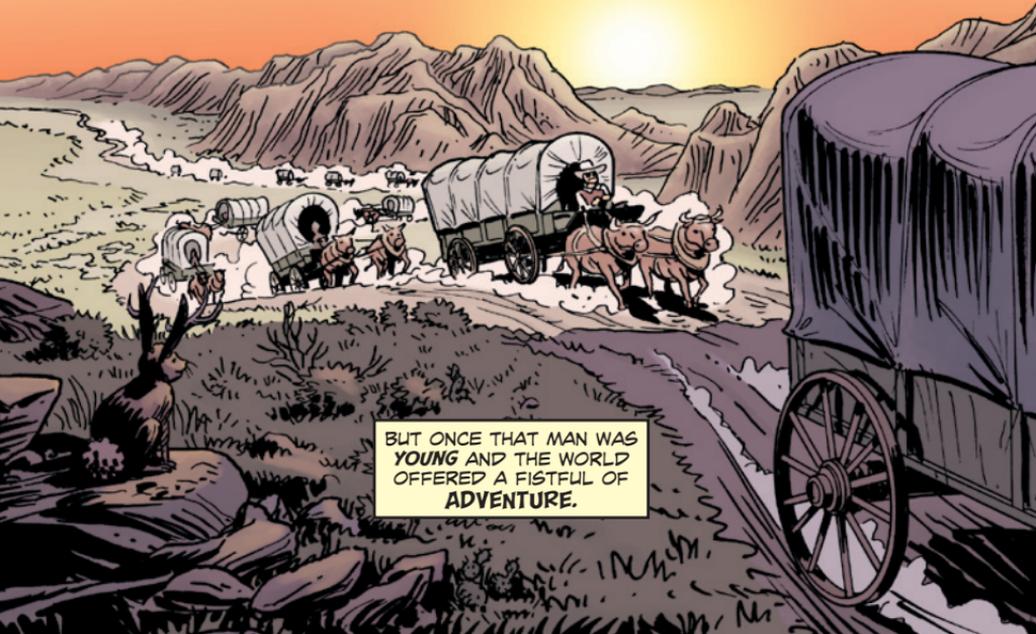


ALL RIGHT,  
YOU LITTLE  
POLLYWOGS,  
BUT THEN IT'S  
BEDTIME.

# How The Vest Was Won

## Part 1

THE OLD WEST. NOTHING LEFT OF IT NOW BUT  
A FEW DUSTY MEMENTOES, LIKE A TATTERED  
PATCH SEWN ON AN OLD MAN'S VEST.

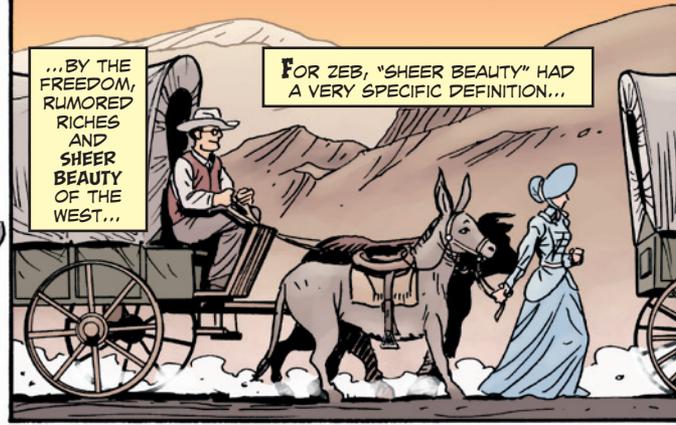


BUT ONCE THAT MAN WAS  
YOUNG AND THE WORLD  
OFFERED A FISTFUL OF  
ADVENTURE.

ZEBLON MCCANICK WAS ONE OF THOUSANDS LURED TO THE OREGON TRAIL...

...BY THE FREEDOM, RUMORED RICHES AND SHEER BEAUTY OF THE WEST...

FOR ZEB, "SHEER BEAUTY" HAD A VERY SPECIFIC DEFINITION...



NOW ZEB LOVED LIFE ON THE TRAIL, BUT HE DIDN'T LOVE THE DUBIOUS CHARACTERS AND ASSORTED VARMINTS AND CRITTERS THAT CAME WITH IT.

ESPECIALLY ONE VARMINT IN PARTICULAR.

THIS VARMINT.



SAHEM? JENNY?



MISS WILSON, I MEAN. WOULD YOU CARE TO RIDE INSTEAD OF WALK? I'VE PLENTY OF EXTRA ROOM.



RAZZIN' FRAZZIN'



NO, THANK YOU, MISTER MCCANICK. I LIKE TO TAKE A LITTLE DAILY EXERCISE IN THE FRESH AIR.



FRESH AIR? HA! I'M GETTIN' DUSTY LUNG OUT HERE.



COUGH COUGH WHY, THAT NO GOOD—



-WAIT! THAT'S LEX DOILEY.

LEX OILY, YOU MEAN.



NO NEED TO BE SNIDE. GOLLY, LEX HAS THE PRETTIEST WAGON THIS SIDE OF SAN FRANCISCO.



IT WON'T STAY THAT WAY LONG.



I HAVEN'T SEEN HIM CHECK THOSE FLASHY RED WHEELS **ONCE** SINCE WE LEFT INDEPENDENCE.



HIS RATTLIN' HUBS SOUND MIGHTY LOOSE TO ME.



THEN SOMEONE SHOULD WARN LEX.



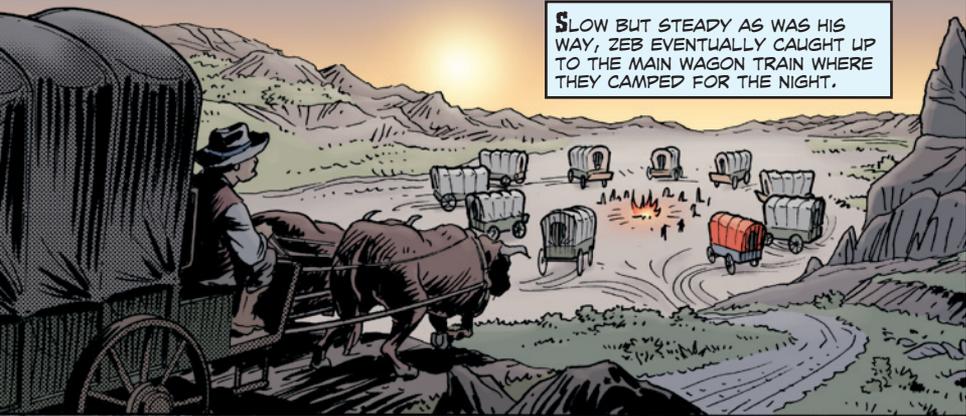
I'LL DO IT! GIDDYUP, GIRL!



SIGH...

CLIP  
CLOP  
CLIP

**S**LOW BUT STEADY AS WAS HIS WAY, ZEB EVENTUALLY CAUGHT UP TO THE MAIN WAGON TRAIN WHERE THEY CAMPED FOR THE NIGHT.



WELL, LOOKIE WHAT THE SUN-SET DRUG IN.

THOUGHT I'D LEFT YOU IN THE DUST AT RATTLER CREEK, ZEB.

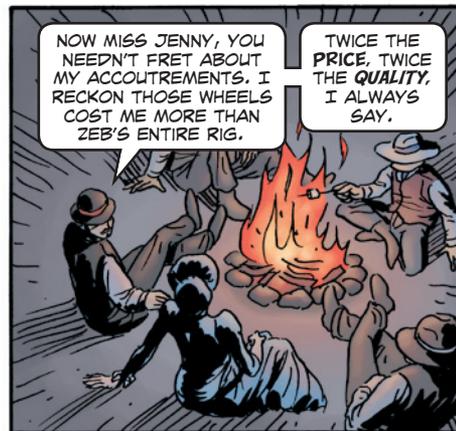


HARDLY. JUST STOPPED TO GREASE THE AXLES ON MY WAGON.



MEANIL LABOR IS **SO** OVERRATED.

OH, LEX, I MEANT TO REMIND YOU EARLIER TO CHECK YOUR WHEELS, TOO.



NOW MISS JENNY, YOU NEEDN'T FRET ABOUT MY ACCOUTREMENTS. I RECKON THOSE WHEELS COST ME MORE THAN ZEB'S ENTIRE RIG.

TWICE THE PRICE, TWICE THE QUALITY, I ALWAYS SAY.



NOT WORTH A LICK OF LIZARD SPIT IF THEY AREN'T MAINTAINED.



WHAT'S THAT, ZEB? DIDN'T QUITE CATCH THAT.



BUT I S'PECT YOU STILL GOT A TOUCH OF DUSTY THROAT FROM THE TRAIL.



I SAVED YOU SOME BEANS AND BISCUITS, MISTER MCCANICK.

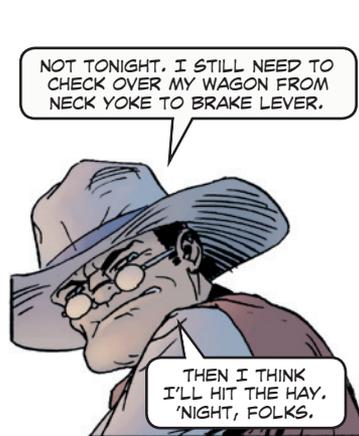


MUCH OBLIGED, MISS WILSON.



TAKING RISKS IS ONE THING, COMMON SENSE IS ANOTHER.

NOW, BOYS, PLAY NICE. HOW 'BOUT A ROUND OF CARDS?



NOT TONIGHT. I STILL NEED TO CHECK OVER MY WAGON FROM NECK YOKE TO BRAKE LEVER.

THEN I THINK I'LL HIT THE HAY. 'NIGHT, FOLKS.



WHATCHA DOIN' THERE, ZEB?

OH, JUST SECURING THIS HARNESS PIECE BEFORE IT SNAPS ON THE TRAIL.



GOOD-NIGHT, MISTER MCCANICK.

SWEET DREAMS, MISTER GREASY!



RAZZIN' FRAZZIN' RAZZIN'...



AFORE? WHY MAKE EXTRY WORK FER YERSELF, ZEB?

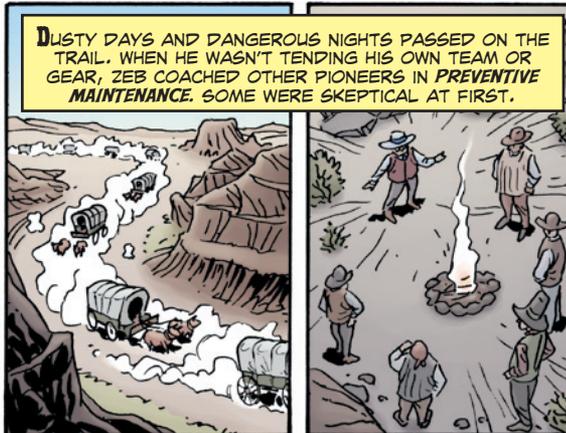
IF IT BREAKS, WORRY 'BOUT IT THEN.



I MIGHT LOSE MY TEAM. NO, SAM, I CAN'T TAKE THAT CHANCE.



SOME MEN JEST AIN'T RISK-TAKERS.



DUSTY DAYS AND DANGEROUS NIGHTS PASSED ON THE TRAIL. WHEN HE WASN'T TENDING HIS OWN TEAM OR GEAR, ZEB COACHED OTHER PIONEERS IN PREVENTIVE MAINTENANCE. SOME WERE SKEPTICAL AT FIRST.



BUT OVER THE WEEKS, MANY A TRAVELER WHO FOLLOWED HIS ADVICE WAS SAVED FROM MISFORTUNE.

STORIES ABOUT ZEB'S PM SKILLS SPREAD UP AND DOWN THE TRAIL.



EVEN THE CRUSTY OLD WAGON MASTER, SAM, WAS WON OVER WHEN ZEB SHOWED HIM HOW TO CAULK HIS WAGON BED BEFORE FORDING A RIVER.



MEN WHO DIDN'T BOTHER WERE LEFT WITH SOAKED SUPPLIES AND DOWNRIGHT CRANKY WIVES.



NEVER ASKED YOU A'FORE, SON, BUT WHERE'D YOU LEARN ALL THESE NIFTY TRICKS?



WHEN I WAS IN THE ARMY, I WAS STATIONED ON THE FRONTIER, SAM.



LUCKILY, THAT KNOWLEDGE WASN'T TURNED IN WITH MY WEAPONS WHEN I MUSTERED OUT, SO IT CAME ALONG WITH ME.

CAVALRY LIFE TAUGHT ME HOW TO CARE FOR MY MOUNT, MY WEAPONS AND MY GEAR.



LUCKY FOR US, TOO!



SAY, DID YOU KNOW THERE ARE RUMORS OF OTHER FOLKS LIKE YOU?

FOLKS WHO CHECK AND FIX UP THE GEAR AND WAGONS RIGHT PLUMB NICE. SOME SAY THEY SET UP SHOP IN FORT HALL.



HMMM. MEBBE I'LL POKE AROUND A BIT WHEN WE GET THERE.



WHAT WILL ZEB FIND AT FT HALL— HELPFUL FOLKS OR HEART-BREAK? FIND OUT NEXT MONTH IN PART 2!

PS