

The Black Stones

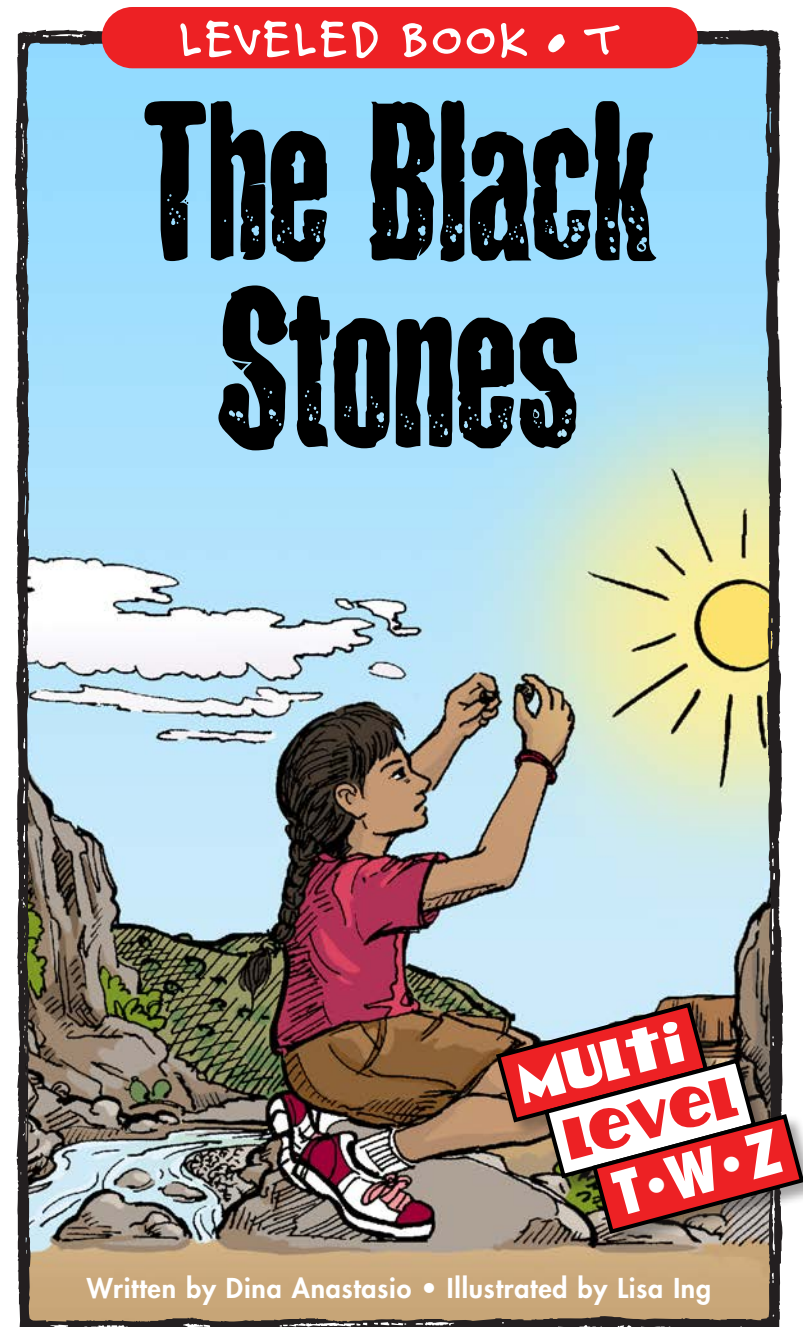
A Reading A-Z Level T Leveled Book

Word Count: 2,037



Reading A-Z

Visit www.readinga-z.com
for thousands of books and materials.



www.readinga-z.com

The Black Stones



Written by Dina Anastasio
Illustrated by Lisa Ing

www.readinga-z.com

The Black Stones
Level T Leveled Book
© Learning A-Z
Written by Dina Anastasio
Illustrated by Lisa Ing

All rights reserved.

www.readinga-z.com

Correlation

LEVEL T	
Fountas & Pinnell	P
Reading Recovery	38
DRA	38

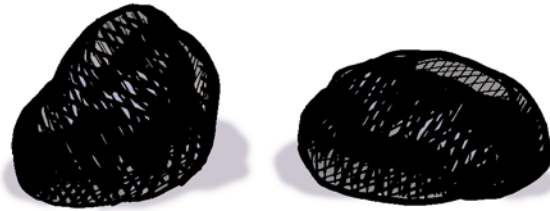


Table of Contents

The Stones	4
Volcanoes and Magic	8
The Experiment	12
Searching for Answers.....	16
Apache Teardrops	20
Glossary	24



The Stones

Tala glanced over her shoulder before she picked up the two small black stones near the river's edge at the base of **Apache** Leap Mountain. If her brother was watching, he'd want the stones for himself, and she didn't want to give them to him. She had found them, and they were hers.

Paco was busy tossing pebbles into the river, so Tala bent down and picked up the dark black stones.

When she held them up to the sun, the light made them glow softly.

“Hey, let me see!” her brother called.

Tala groaned and closed her fist tightly over the stones. If she were quick enough, she might be able to hide them from her twin.

Tala hugged her knees and listened to her brother’s footsteps as he ran over to her. When he was behind her, she rose and started to walk away.

“Come on!” Paco said. “Show me what’s in your hand.”

Tala knew that if she showed him the stones, her brother would beg her to give them to him. She knew that he would keep on begging until she blew up or gave in.

Tala swung around to face him. “These stones are mine!” she shouted. “I found them, and I’m keeping them, no matter what you say.”

“Just show them to me!” Paco shouted back as he grabbed her fist and tried to pry it open.

“Mom!” Tala cried. “Mom! Paco’s bothering me again.”

Mrs. Yates stood up from the rock where she had been sitting quietly for the last half hour. She had been thinking about how difficult her life had become. The death of her husband three years ago had left her very sad. Somehow her children had taken the anger they felt over their father’s death and turned it against each other. *If only they could learn to get along*, she thought as she made her way down to the river. *If only they could be friends.*

Mrs. Yates dragged her twins apart and sat them down on either side of her. She waited to see if either of them would apologize, but neither of them said a word.





"I was the one who found the stones," Tala said. "Paco tried to take them away from me. It's his fault. I didn't do anything."

"Yes, you did!" Paco yelled. "You wouldn't even let me see what they looked like. I saw you holding them up to the light. I just wanted to look at them."

"They're mine!" Tala shouted.

Mrs. Yates closed her eyes. Their fighting was making her tired.

Volcanoes and Magic

"Your arguments make me very unhappy," Mrs. Yates said softly. "You are brother and sister—twins, even! You could be best friends for your entire lives if you would only try a little harder to get along. Will you try?"

Tala and Paco stared silently at the river. Mrs. Yates could tell that they did not plan to get along, now or ever.

She sighed and held out her hand. "Give me the stones, Tala," she said.

"But that's not fair," Tala whined. "I found them, not Paco. They're mine."

Mrs. Yates waited. Tala was filled with anger, but she dropped the shiny black stones onto her mother's palm.



“It’s okay to be angry,” her mother said.
“Sometimes life seems very unfair. Sometimes the things we love get taken away from us, and there’s nothing we can do about it. That is why we must be thankful for our friends and family. They are more important than the objects we find in the world.”

Tala was **furious**. She’d found the stones, hadn’t she? Her brother could find his own treasures. Why did he need to take hers?

Mrs. Yates told them both to hold out a hand and dropped one stone onto each child’s palm.

Then she led them both up the trail and home for dinner.



Tala and Paco were twins, but they were very different. Tala looked at the world as a scientist. She wanted to know why the sky turned orange at sunset and how a seashell made a sound when she held it to her ear. Paco, on the other hand, saw the world as a magical place filled with poems waiting to be written. Paco admired the beauty of an orange sunset and the mystery of a seashell’s echo.

Paco wondered if his stone could take him into magical worlds. Maybe if he rubbed it three times, a genie would appear. Or perhaps it was a good-luck charm that would protect him all his life.



When Tala looked at her glassy stone, her mind filled with questions. *How long had the stone been there? How old was it? Had it been formed by a volcano?*

The twins argued about what it was and what it wasn't, and who was right and who was wrong, and—

"Stop it!" Mrs. Yates shouted when she just couldn't bear to listen to them for one more minute.

"But it is a **volcanic** glass rock," Tala said. "I know it came from inside the earth."

"You're wrong!" Paco yelled. "I know it's a magical good-luck stone."

Mrs. Yates groaned and led the twins to the computer. She sat down between them and turned it on.



The Experiment

As the computer started up, the twins started to argue about what **website** they would look at first, but their mother quickly stopped them.

"May I ask the two of you for a favor?" she said quietly.

The twins waited.

"I would like you to do an experiment," she continued, "as a gift to me. I would like you both to **research** your stones without arguing, just this once. I'll work with you to find the answers, but no fighting. I want you to understand that life is much more peaceful if you work together to solve your problems. Okay?"

Tala and Paco looked at each other for several seconds, and then they shrugged. "Okay," they agreed.

"What do you think we should search for first?" Mrs. Yates asked.

"I know what we should do!" Paco said.
"We should . . ."

The sad look on his mother's face made him stop. Maybe there was a better way to go about this project.

"You can decide," he said to his sister.

"Maybe we should search for the name of our stones," Tala suggested. "Let's type the words *volcanic glass* into the **search engine** and see what comes up."



"I don't care about volcanoes," Paco said.
"Let's type in *good-luck stones*."

"*Volcanic glass*!"

"*Good-luck stones*!"

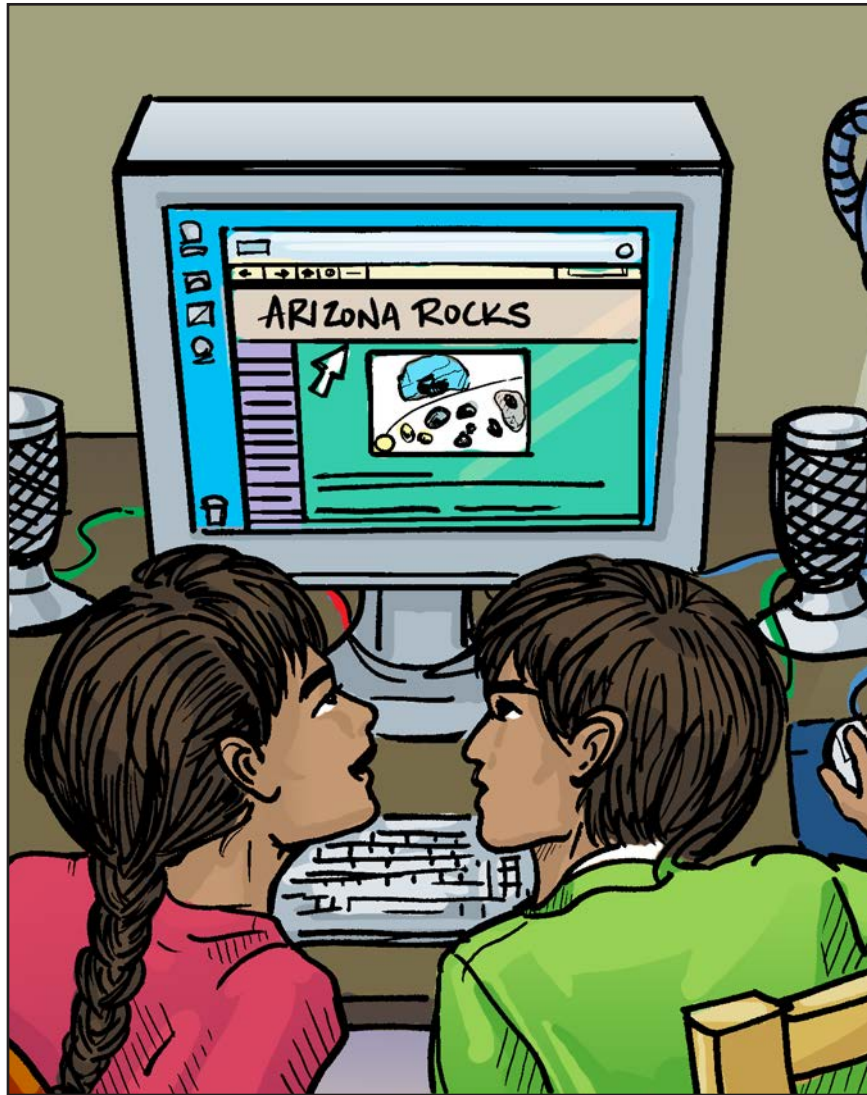
Mrs. Yates put a gentle hand on each of their shoulders. When they were quiet, she made a suggestion.

"How about both?" she said. "And how about we add where you found the stones as well?" She typed the words *volcanic glass good-luck stones Apache Leap Mountain* into the search engine and waited to see what would happen.

When their search results appeared, Paco and Tala looked at them together. One of the short website descriptions used nearly all of the words they had used to search.

"Let's go to that one," the twins said at the same time. Paco and Tala looked at each other in surprise. For once, they had agreed on something.

While the website loaded, the phone rang. Mrs. Yates went to answer it, leaving Tala and Paco alone. They both wondered if they could get along without her.



Searching for Answers

The website showed a picture of rocks that looked like the stones Tala had found. Paco and Tala compared their stones to the ones on the page in front of them and grinned.

“That’s our stone!” they said at exactly the same time.

“I told you!” Tala shouted, poking her brother. “Our stones came from inside the earth. They are **obsidian** and were made by a volcano. So I’m right!”

Paco was too busy reading a different part of the page to listen to his sister. When he finished, he said, “I’m right! I told you these stones were good-luck stones!”

“See that?” Tala said as she pointed to the part of the page she was reading. Paco followed her finger to the words *volcanic glass* and read that part of the page. Then he pointed to the words *good-luck stones* and watched as she read.

“We were both right,” Paco said.



"Yes, we were both right," Tala agreed.

"Let's read more about the **legend** of the Apache Tears," Paco said. "It doesn't explain much on this page."

The twins went back to the search page, typed in *Apache Tears*, and waited as several results came up. One website mentioned the Pinal Apache, which was a name once given to a band of Apache in Arizona, where Tala and Paco lived.

"Let's try that one," Paco said, and his sister agreed. Paco began to see that he was tired of fighting about every little thing.

The webpage showed an illustration of an Apache warrior. Tala and Paco read the poem on the webpage slowly and carefully.





Paco noticed that his sister was rubbing her stone between her fingers as she read, and he wondered if she was making a wish. Tala didn't usually like legends; she enjoyed reading about science.

But Paco could tell that his sister was really interested in this story.

Paco decided that he would read more about volcanoes and try to understand how the river made rough rocks into smooth stones. Maybe he would finally understand why these things interested his sister so much.

For now, Paco and Tala decided to write down the legend so that they would have it to remember.

Apache Teardrops



The Legend of the Apache Tears

Long, long ago, before the white men came, the Apaches roamed free. But a time came when the white men began to move west in search of new land. Hoping to protect their lands, Apache warriors came out to meet them, but the white men killed many Apache warriors. Some were driven to the edge of a cliff. Rather than be captured, the Apache warriors jumped from the cliff to their deaths.

The Apache women heard of their warriors' deaths, and they were filled with great pain. Their despair was so deep that the Great Father embedded their tears into the black stones that rested in the river.

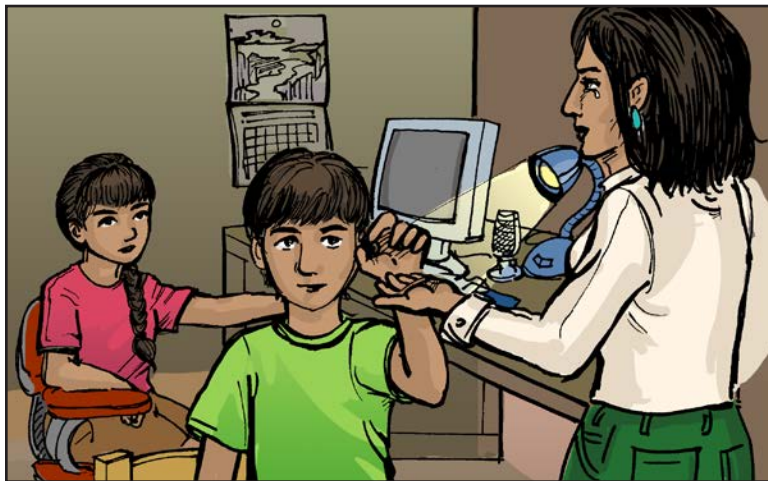
Whoever carries these stones will have good luck always. And whoever keeps these stones close will never again cry tears, for the Apache women have cried tears in their place.

Paco and Tala sat back and studied their stones in silence. They raised them to the light and looked into their centers. They thought about the women who had cried for their men, and they felt sad. Then they shut down the computer and held their stones tight.

When their mother returned, they told her the legend of the Apache Tears. They took turns speaking, without talking over each other.

Mrs. Yates was touched to see how the story had affected her children.

"Can you see the tear of an Apache woman?" Paco asked her, as he held his stone up to the light.



Mrs. Yates took the stone and held it up to the light. "I think I do see it," she said. "It's a tear for the man she lost, and it's a tear for the sad children he left behind."

She gave the stone back to Paco, closed his fingers over it, and squeezed his hand lightly. "It's a tear that says 'I wish my children were happy.'"

Paco and Tala gave each other a long look. They understood that their father was not coming back and that they needed to find a way to live peacefully as a family again.





That night, after talking it over, Paco and Tala gave their stones to their mother. At first, Mrs. Yates wouldn't take them because the stones seemed to have made her children friends again. In time, Paco and Tala convinced her that they wanted her to have the Apache Tears.

Mrs. Yates slept with the stones under her pillow that night. The next day, she went to a jeweler and had the stones made into a necklace. When the necklace was ready, she slipped it on and never took it off again. Apache Tears really had brought them all good luck!

Glossary

Apache (*n.*)

a member of a group of Native Americans in the Southwest; the language of these people (p. 4)

furious (*adj.*)

very angry (p. 9)

legend (*n.*)

an old story that is believed to be true but cannot be proved (p. 18)

obsidian (*n.*)

a smooth, glassy rock formed when volcanic lava cools rapidly (p. 16)

research (*v.*)

to study or investigate (p. 12)

search engine (*n.*)

computer software that allows users to search data on the World Wide Web (p. 13)

volcanic (*adj.*)

of or relating to a volcano (p. 11)

website (*n.*)

a collection of webpages on the World Wide Web (p. 12)