

Pablo Finds a Treasure

ANDRÉE POULIN

ISABELLE MALENFANT



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In Latin America, Asia, and Africa, hundreds of thousands of children work in garbage dumps to salvage recyclable waste. They cannot attend school because they need to contribute to their family's income. More than 150 million children all over the world work in mines, factories, and fields. Half of these children do work that is hazardous to their health. To learn more about child labor, visit <http://www.ilo.org/global/topics/child-labour/lang-en/index.htm>

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To my fellow author and friend, Mireille Messier.

—A.P.

To my uncle Jacques, for whom all books are treasures.

—I.M.



The sun's first light pierces the sky.
Vultures circle above the shantytown.
Sofia wakes her little brother up.
"Get up! Get up, lazy bones!"
"I'm tired," grumbles Pablo.
"We might find a treasure today," says Sofia.
"I'm tired," repeats Pablo.





Before leaving for the market, Mama reminds them, “Sofia, don’t forget the tortillas! Pablo, don’t forget your hook!”

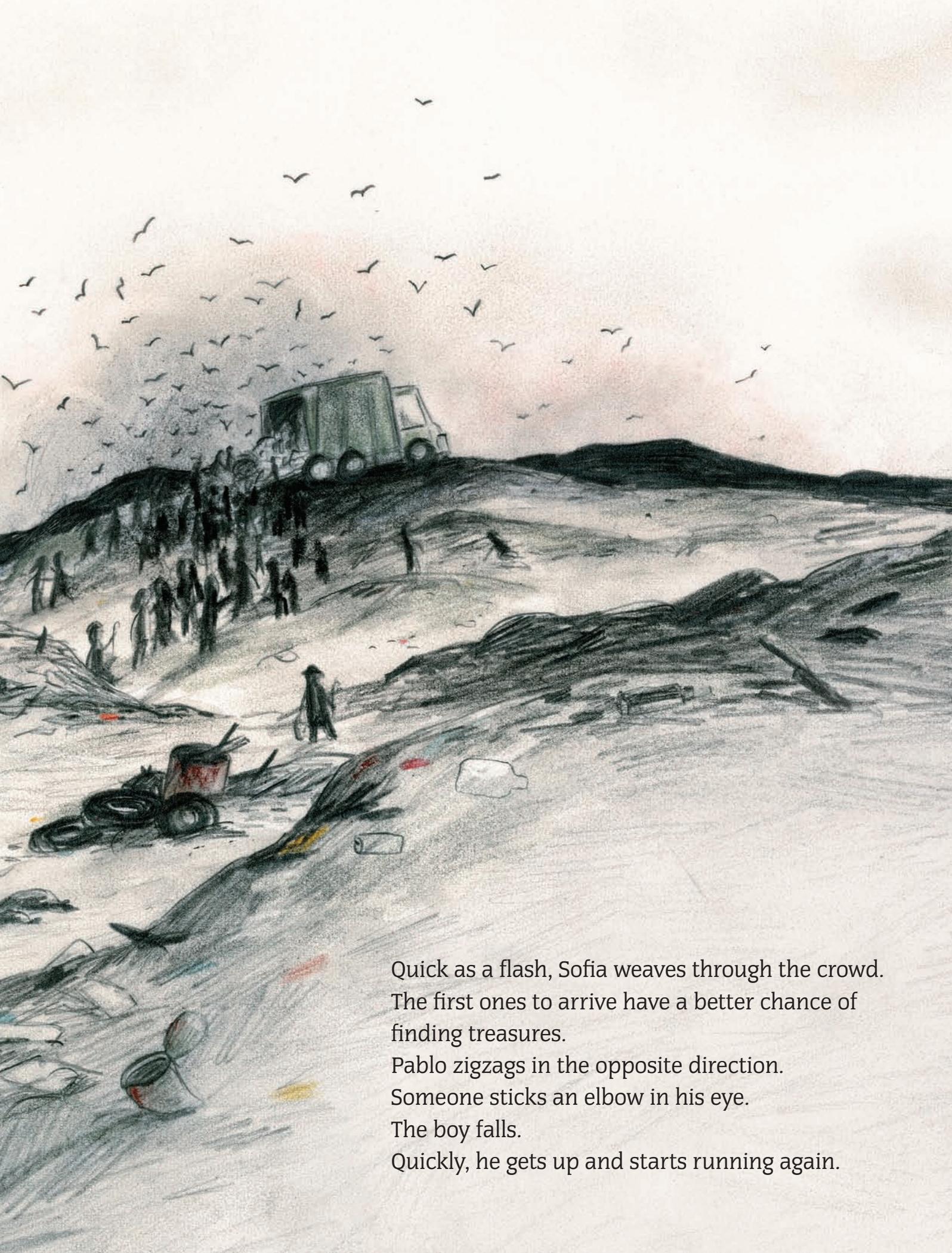
The children grab their bags and scurry off to the treasure mountain.

When Pablo and Sofia get to the mountain, lots of people are there already.
Pablo holds his nose, even though he knows that in a little while, he won't notice the stink anymore.

Pablo hears the rumble of the motor.
The truck is coming ...
Pablo's heart beats faster.
He feels like reaching for his sister's hand.
He doesn't.
He won't show his fear.

The truck arrives, raising billowing clouds of dust.
Everyone runs.
Some people push.
Some people pinch.
Some people yell.
Pablo hates this rush and crush.





Quick as a flash, Sofia weaves through the crowd.
The first ones to arrive have a better chance of
finding treasures.

Pablo zigzags in the opposite direction.
Someone sticks an elbow in his eye.

The boy falls.

Quickly, he gets up and starts running again.

The truck has emptied its load.

The dust settles.

People stop yelling.

The *pepenadores* dig madly through the latest heap of garbage.

Sofia runs up to her brother.

“Pablo! I found a boot! A blue boot! Your favorite color!”

“Your arm is bleeding,” says her brother.

Sofia shrugs. “No big deal. I found my first treasure of the day!”

“This boot is too big for me,” says Pablo.

“That’s good. You can wear it longer,” replies his sister.



