

PREHISTORIC BOBBY



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DRAGON MONKEY

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CARLY WON'T MIND IF I GO
WITHOUT HER, RIGHT?



Bobby burst through the back door after school and threw his backpack onto the kitchen table. He stood for a minute and evaluated his snack options. Cookies! He wanted cookies...big gooey chocolate chip cookies. He lifted the cookie jar down from the counter and peered inside. His face fell. Someone had eaten the last of the cookies, and all that was left were crumbs.

He peered around the kitchen. "I guess a banana is okay," he thought. He picked one from the bunch and plopped down at the kitchen table.

Bobby watched the door, expecting Carly to burst through at any moment. Ever since Carly had discovered the magic cave and they'd started going on adventures together, Bobby couldn't wait to visit another new and exciting place. His feet tapped impatiently as he waited for his sister to arrive home from school.

Bobby sat. Then he sat some more. He finished his banana, threw away the peel, and poured a glass of milk. He stared at the door harder.

Finally, Bobby finished his milk. As he rinsed out his glass and put it in the dishwasher, he spied the calendar on the wall.

"Today is Friday," he reminded himself. He ran his finger down the Friday column and saw writing in today's box.

"Carly Sleepover at Amy's house" it said.

"Sleepover?" Bobby said. "Sleepover?? Carly won't be home until tomorrow!"

Bobby kicked the cupboard. "Of all the rotten luck," he thought. "With Carly at

Amy's, I'm stuck home alone. Which means no cave, and no adventures."

He really wanted to go on an adventure. He'd been looking forward to it all day. He even had a list of places he wanted to go, and he'd figured Carly would want to go to at least one of them.

Bobby's mind turned, thinking of what he could do instead. He could go to Kevin's house. Kevin had a game room in his basement, with a pool table and a huge pinball machine. Last time he was there, Bobby almost beat Kevin's high score, and he wanted another shot. Bobby started for the door, then turned back around. He didn't want to go to Kevin's house. Pinball sounded boring when he could be watching the Boston Tea Party or following a spy in the French Revolution.

He could watch TV, or play a video game. Yes! A video game would be fun! Maybe they were only pretend, but they were still adventures. Bobby turned on the computer to choose a game. Bleh. None of

them sounded fun after all. Pretend adventures just weren't the same.

Then Bobby started thinking. "Carly went on adventures by herself at first," he thought. "Barnabus and the other bears helped her. I bet if I went on my own adventure they would help me, too!"

Somewhere in the back of his mind, Bobby knew Carly would be mad if he went on an adventure without her. She found the cave, and she figured out how the sketchbook took them to other times and places. It really wasn't fair of him to leave her out.

But she left him out, he reasoned with himself. She already had the chance to have her own adventures, her own way. Shouldn't he be able to do the same thing?

Still feeling a little bit guilty, Bobby hurried out the front door and climbed down the rocks to the beach. He paused at the cave entrance and looked back at the house one more time.

"I really, really want to do this," Bobby thought. "Carly will understand."

Bobby crawled into the cave. He lifted his eyes, expecting to see Carly's sketchbook resting on the big rock. But he didn't. Not only didn't he see the sketchbook, he didn't even see the big rock.

Bobby turned in a circle. A wooden table with a chair tucked under it stood in the place of Carly's big rock table. A small cot rested against one wall. Shelves stuck out of the other wall.

"It looks like a bunker," Bobby thought. Bobby had never actually been in a bunker, but it looked like the pictures of bunkers in his books.

He crawled back out. "Am I in the right place?" he asked himself.

He looked around. Okay, his house was over there. He retraced his steps in his mind. Cross the yard, climb down those rocks, walk toward the ocean, turn left for the cave. Yep, he was in the right place.

Bobby knelt back down and crawled into the cave. He didn't know how or when Carly could have moved all this stuff in here, but she must have. There was no

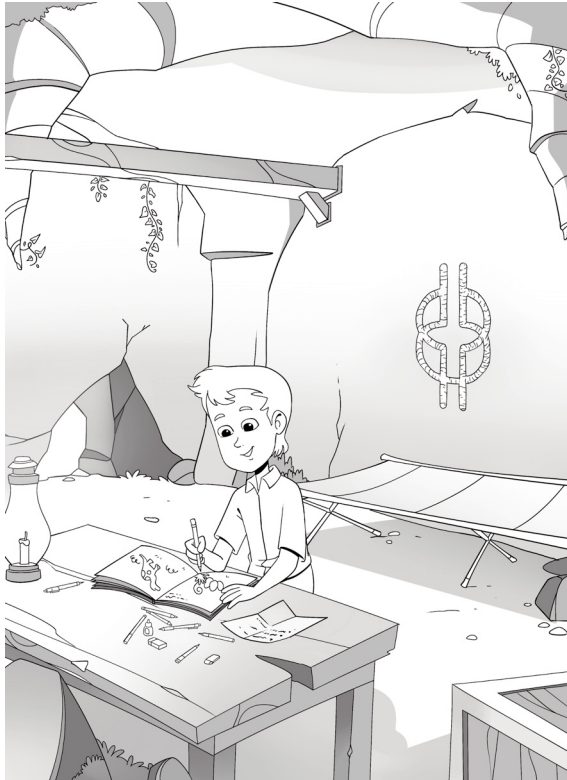
other explanation. He decided to ask Carly about it when she got home tomorrow.

He spied a sketchbook on one of the shelves and picked it up. He opened it, but it was blank inside. "I guess Carly changed sketchbooks, too," he said to himself. "I don't know why she'd do that. The other one had plenty of pages left."

Bobby shrugged and opened the new sketchbook. He dug the list he'd made out of his pocket and unfolded it. Where did he want to go first?

History was one of Bobby's favorite subjects in school, so most of the things on his list were times from the past he thought would be fun to visit.

"We already went to ancient Egypt," Bobby thought. "But I guess I could go back and see Meritites. No, I want to do something different. I could see the first airplane flight. Or the Boston tea party. Or..."



Bobby's thoughts trailed off. No, the time he really wanted to see more than anything else was before anyone started writing history. Before people could even write. Actually, before there were people at all. He wanted to see the dinosaurs.

Bobby turned to the first page and started sketching a prehistoric world. He

drew ferns and giant trees with their branches hanging down. He drew a large lake and a volcano.

Then he drew a Brontosaurus in the background, or maybe it was an Alamosaurus...it was a little hard to tell. It was some sort of Saurus. It had to be in the background, because he remembered how the snake he drew in the last picture ended up right in the same place as them, and he didn't want any huge dinosaurs stepping on him and mashing him flat.

He drew a Dracorex, because they were pretty small and ate plants. Plus, they kinda looked like dragons, which was the coolest thing ever.

He thought about drawing a Tyrannosaurus Rex, but decided that was a bad idea. As much as he wanted to see a T-Rex, he knew better than to draw a dinosaur that could gobble him up in one bite.

When he couldn't possibly fit one more thing on the paper, Bobby set the pencil next to the sketchbook. Almost at once, the sketchbook began to spin. It rose

up off the table and spun faster and faster, finally disappearing in a flash of light.

Bobby blinked and blinked, trying to clear the spots out of his eyes. When he could see again, he noticed a small bottle resting on the table. The bottle contained a miniature prehistoric world, complete with a Brontosaurus (or whatever kind of Saurus it was) munching on trees in the distance.

Bobby picked up the bottle. It threw off golden sparks, glowing brighter and brighter. The floor gave a lurch, and suddenly Bobby knew he wasn't in a cave anymore.

UMM...SPOT? WHERE IS
EVERYBODY?



Bobby felt the heat first. It was the kind of heat where it felt difficult to breathe. That happened at his house sometimes in the summer. His parents called it humidity, and said it felt that way because there was so much water in the air.

The breeze felt nice, though. It blew against his arms and legs, cooling them down. Maybe cooling them down too much. Bobby looked at himself and noticed that nothing was covering them.

"Gah!" he screeched.

He wore a covering made from some

kind of animal skin around his waist. It wrapped around his body and tied at the front, with a strip across one shoulder. He wore more strips of animal skin around his feet, but the rest of him was open to the surrounding air.

"Great," he thought. "I think this is worse than the last skirt I ended up wearing. And I'm going to be outside the whole time, because there is no inside. So yeah...just what I needed. A prehistoric sunburn."

A fern brushed his face as he turned around. "Man, that's a really big fern," he said to himself. "It's a monster fern. It's Fernzilla!"

His gaze landed on the tree next to him, then traveled up and up trying to see the top. "Everything is huge!" he added. "Did I shrink?"

"I agree, the vegetation in this time period is rather large. It makes me feel smaller than usual, and that's difficult to do." The voice from behind his left shoulder made Bobby jump.

"Spot!" he gasped as he flipped around.
"You scared me!"

"You weren't expecting me?" Spot replied.

"Well, yes," Bobby stammered. "But I saw this fern that looks like it's big enough to eat me, then I noticed how big everything else is, too, and I sorta forgot I wasn't alone."

Bobby gazed past Spot's shoulder. Then he swung his head to the right, and to the left. He turned in a circle, peering behind the trees and ferns.

"Spot...." he started. "Where's everyone else?"

"Who 'else' are you referring to?" Spot asked.

"Barnabus!" Bobby yelped. "Tuffy! Buttercup! You know, the group of bears that is always with us!"

"Well, that's an interesting question," Spot replied. He also turned in a circle while examining the vegetation. "They don't seem to be here. Do you have any idea why?"

"How should I know?" Bobby replied.

"Because you have a brain, and you normally seem to be pretty good at using it," Spot countered.

That stopped Bobby short. On the other adventures, no one had expected him to come up with any answers. He kinda liked being the one to figure things out, he just didn't want to get anything wrong. But since Spot thought he could, he'd give it a try.

"The first time we went to the jungle," he started. Bobby closed his eyes and pictured the clearing where they landed. "Barnabus was there. So were Tuffy and Buttercup." Bobby turned in a circle as he remembered where everyone was standing. "Mr. Cuddlesworth and Fuzzy Wumpkins were over there," he continued. "And you. And me. And of course, Carly."

"Then we went to Egypt," Bobby continued. "We were standing in the middle of the marketplace. I was on the left, then there were Tuffy and Buttercup and you and Mr. Cuddlesworth and Fuzzy

Wumpkins. And Carly was holding Barnabus off the ground." Bobby smiled a little at the memory of Barnabus kicking his furry legs and asking to be put down.

"Our last adventure was in the haunted house," Bobby said. "And all of us were standing on the front lawn. Well, we were standing on the dead grass in front of the house, anyway."

"That's all of us," Bobby said, bewildered. "We were all there. All three adventures, we were all standing in a group at the beginning. So why this time is it just you and me?"

Suddenly, Bobby got it. "Carly!" he said, his eyes going wide. "Carly isn't here!"

"And since the bears belong to Carly..." Spot began,

"Then they're not here, either," Bobby finished.

"But since I belong to you, here I am. Apparently standing in a prehistoric forest," Spot replied.



"Did you not want to be in a prehistoric forest?" Bobby asked, his head tilted to the side as he examined Spot. Usually the animals didn't seem to care where they were.

"Oh, a prehistoric forest is fine, I guess," Spot replied. "But, as you pointed out, that fern looks big enough to eat you."

And since I'm much smaller than you, there are many things around here that are big enough to eat me."

Bobby fell silent. Spot was right. There were lots of things in this forest that might like to chew on Spot. In fact, there were lots of things in the forest that might like to chew on him!

Bobby had thought Barnabus would tell him what to do, like the previous times. He figured Spot would be more fun to be around than Barnabus, but he wasn't a leader. And if Spot wasn't the leader, and Barnabus wasn't here, the only person left to lead was Bobby. Bobby didn't feel ready to be the leader.

At home, Bobby loved to be the leader. Bobby's friends said his games were the most fun, so they usually did what Bobby wanted to do. But this was different. This wasn't a game. He'd brought them to a dangerous, wild place.

Bobby squared his shoulders. He'd come here for an adventure, and there was no way he was turning back now! He'd

figure out how to be the leader, and he and Spot would have the best adventure ever.

Bobby smiled at Spot. He was about to tell Spot how much fun they were going to have, when suddenly the ground shook and he heard a loud rumbling coming from behind him.

"What was that?" Bobby asked, swinging around to peer through the trees.

"Well, a large plume of smoke has appeared above the trees. The ground is shaking, and it's suddenly very noisy. My guess would be that our volcano has erupted," Spot replied.

APPARENTLY BABY
DINOSAURS LIKE "TWINKLE,
TWINKLE, LITTLE STAR"



Bobby crashed through the ferns, following a narrow path that seemed to lead in the direction of the volcano. Spot ran behind him, though he had an easier time running because he could duck under most of the shrubs.

"Bobby," Spot said as they ran, "you may want to slow down a bit and keep an eye out for dinosaurs. After all, this is their path we're running on."

Bobby decided Spot had a point. He slowed down to a fast walk and shifted his eyes left and right, looking for dinosaurs.

The path widened as Bobby and Spot emerged into a clearing. Directly in front of them stood a massive volcano. Its top was spewing lava and ash.

Bobby watched the bright red lava run down the mountain, like a drippy ice cream cone. It was actually interesting, in a scary 'I don't want to be anywhere next to it so I'll stand far, far away' sort of way.

Spot cleared his throat. "Bobby," he began, "I don't think this will be the safest place to stand in the near future."

Bobby tore his eyes away from the hypnotic lava and looked straight ahead.

"That looks like an avalanche," Bobby said, narrowing his eyes. "But it can't be an avalanche. This is a volcano, and there's no snow up there."

"That's what's called a pyroclastic flow," Spot said. "Basically, it's lots of rocks and lava coming down the mountain very, very quickly."

"Why does it look like an avalanche?" Bobby asked.

"There's ash from the eruption on top of it," Spot said.

Just then, Bobby and Spot saw flames shoot up into the air.

"It looks like the flow ran over some trees," Spot said. "It's so hot that it sets them on fire."

"I think you're right," Bobby said uneasily. "I don't think this is a great place to be standing right now."

Just as Bobby turned to go back the way they came, he heard a noise from the ferns. He stopped to listen.

"Do you hear that?" he asked Spot.

"I do hear that," Spot replied. "It sounds like an animal to me."

Bobby carefully picked his way through the ferns, absently swatting the bugs that gathered on his bare skin. He didn't want to move too quickly, since animals in this place might not be friendly to a boy and a stuffed dog.

He heard the cry again, closer this time. As he rounded a large fern, he spied

a small dinosaur lying on the ground. Its foot seemed to be stuck under a rock.



The dinosaur looked at them in fear, then started to move frantically, trying to get its foot unstuck so it could run away.

Bobby squinted at the dinosaur. "Aren't most dinosaurs bigger than this?"

Like, much, much bigger? Maybe it's a baby."

Spot approached the dinosaur, careful not to get too close. He turned his head to the side so he could still see the erupting volcano.

"He's in the path of the lava flow," Spot said. "He needs help. He'll die if he stays here."

Bobby wanted to help the little dinosaur, he really did. But that lava was coming fast and even though he was pretty sure this dinosaur ate plants, those teeth looked like they could also take a chunk out of his arm. Bobby hesitated.

"It's your choice, Bobby," Spot said. "But you need to decide quickly."

Bobby stood in place. He couldn't decide. One part of him wanted to help the trapped baby animal. The other part wondered what would happen if he himself got hurt over here. Would he be able to get back home?

Watching the baby struggle, suddenly he decided. He would just have to help the

dinosaur and not get hurt. That was the only answer.

Bobby circled the dinosaur. "Stand in front of him and distract him while I get the rock off his foot," Bobby said.

Spot stood in front of the scared animal and began to talk to him.

"Hey, little guy," he crooned. "We're going to help you."

The dinosaur thrashed harder.

"Talking to him doesn't seem to be working," Spot told Bobby. "Do you have any other ideas?"

"I don't know!" Bobby replied. "Do a dance, sing a song, act like a mime. Whatever gets his attention!"

Spot bent down. He didn't dare get too close to those teeth, but he got as close as he could. He began to sing Twinkle Twinkle Little Star.

To both Bobby and Spot's surprise, the dinosaur calmed down. Bobby snuck up behind it and carefully lifted the rock. He had to lift slowly, and the rock was pretty

heavy, but finally it tumbled away and the dinosaur was free.

Spot had moved on to Row, Row, Row Your Boat. He gradually stopped singing as he moved back, putting more distance between himself and those teeth and claws.

"You're free, little guy," Bobby said as he, too, put some distance between himself and the dinosaur.

The dinosaur realized the rock was gone and tried to stand up, but it couldn't. Every time it tried to stand on the foot that had been under the rock, it fell back over.

"He's hurt," Spot said. He looked at the lava coming closer and closer. "He's going to need some more help."

WELL, WE REALLY CAN'T
NAME HIM SNOUT



Bobby stared at the small dinosaur, who had now given up trying to walk and was lying on the ground. Ever since he was little, Bobby had loved tiny animals, like kittens or puppies. He felt especially protective if they were hurt, like this little guy. Bobby really did feel bad for him.

He started toward the dinosaur, then stopped. He didn't know what to do. Should he pick up the baby and risk having his fingers chomped on? Or should he leave with Spot and hope the dinosaur got out of the way of the lava in time?

Bobby didn't like either option. He paced back and forth, trying to decide.

"I don't know!" he finally burst out. "Spot, you choose!"

"It's not my decision," Spot replied. "It's your adventure, remember?"

Bobby glared at Spot. "Well, you're no help," he mumbled. "I bet Barnabus would tell me what to do."

"You're probably right," Spot replied. "Barnabus would tell you what to do. But is that what you really want? To be told what to do?"

Bobby started to say 'Yes!', then he stopped himself. The truth was, he didn't really want someone to tell him what to do.

"Barnabus helps Carly decide what's best because she's younger than you," Spot continued. "He's helping her to become more independent. Did you notice that Barnabus provided more direction to Carly in the jungle than he did in the haunted house?"

Bobby hadn't noticed that. "So you're

saying that Barnabus is teaching Carly," he began, "But I don't need as much teaching because I'm older and have already learned more?"

"That's exactly what I'm saying," Spot replied. "When Carly goes on an adventure, she still needs a leader. You don't. You just need a friend to go along with you."

"But what if I make the wrong choice?" Bobby said in a small voice.

"Making choices is how people learn," Spot said. "You've been making choices all along. You chose to follow the path to the volcano. You chose to leave the safety of the path and find out what the noise was. You chose to take the rock off this baby's leg. Adventure isn't about making one big right choice. It's about making lots of little choices, the best that you can."

Bobby thought about that for a minute as he swatted a fly off his arm. He still didn't feel ready to be the leader and make all the choices, but he was willing to try.

"Will you still help me sometimes?" he asked Spot.

"Of course I will," Spot replied. "That's what friends are for."

Bobby turned to Spot. "Let's get this little guy away from danger," he said.

Both Bobby and Spot looked at the dinosaur. He appeared to be asleep.

"Huh. Who knew Row, Row, Row Your Boat puts dinosaurs to sleep," Bobby said to Spot.

Spot rolled his eyes.

"Okay, here goes," Bobby said. He circled behind the dinosaur and picked him up. He was heavy, but not any heavier than the backpack Bobby took to school every day.

Spot pointed to their left. "It looks like we'll be clear of the lava if we walk that way," he said.

Bobby and Spot made their way down the narrow trail. The ferns on either side kept hitting Bobby in the face with their damp leaves. Soon Bobby had water dripping down both his arms and his legs. Spot moved the leaves out of the way and

stayed mostly dry, but Bobby needed both hands to carry the dinosaur.



"You know, we've saved this guy from death twice," Bobby said. "We should give him a name or something."

"Good idea," Spot said. "He should

have a name that describes him. I'm named for the spot over my eye."

"I know that," Bobby said. "I was the one who named you."

"Yes, you did," Spot replied. "And I've always thought you showed great judgment, even though you were only three at the time."

"He's got kind of a long nose," Bobby stated.

"He kind of does," Spot said, "But I think calling him something like 'Snout' would be rude," Spot said.

"Probably," Bobby snickered. It would be rude, but it would also be pretty funny.

"What about these stripes down his back?" Bobby asked.

"You want to name him Stripe?" Spot asked, wrinkling his nose.

"No, that would be dumb," Bobby replied. "But there's a boy in my class at school who speaks Spanish, and he told me the Spanish word for stripe is raya. Raya sounds like a great dinosaur name!"

"I like it," Spot replied. He looked at the

still sleeping dinosaur. "Hello, Raya. Nice to meet you!"

Bobby and Spot walked along the path for what felt like forever. Bobby's arms got more and more tired. Pretty soon, Raya felt heavier than a boulder.

"I can't carry him forever," Bobby said. "And where am I carrying him, anyway? I can't stay here and take care of him. I really don't think I can take him home with me."

"You're looking at the situation from your point of view," Spot said. "Let's look at things from the dinosaur's point of view."

"You mean, look where he's looking?" Bobby asked. He bent his head to peer at Raya. "That's kinda weird, especially right now when his eyes are closed."

"No," Spot said, "That's not what I meant. Try to think about what the dinosaur is feeling. Put yourself in his shoes."

"Still kinda weird," Bobby said, but he tried to think like a dinosaur. "I'm small, and I'm lost. I'm hurt. I'm tired."

"So what do you think a small, lost, tired and hurt dinosaur would want?"

"I'd want my mom," Bobby said.

"I think you're exactly right," Spot said. "I would guess he wants his mother. So the next part of our adventure will be finding Raya's mother!"

LEAVES FOR YOU, PEANUT
BUTTER AND JELLY FOR ME



"*T*hat's a great goal," Bobby said. "The problem is, I don't know how to do that."

"You just try to find other dinosaurs who look like Raya," Spot replied.

"Yeah, but I can't see anything through all these trees!" Bobby exclaimed. "So unless Raya's mom pops out of the forest and stands in front of me, I'm never going to find her!"

"Yes, the trees are a problem," Spot said calmly. "But as I always say, problems are meant to be solved."

"I've never heard you say that," Bobby grumbled under his breath.

Still, Spot did have a point. Bobby gazed around at the forest. All he needed to do was get higher, above the ferns, then he would be able to see.

"I could climb a tree," Bobby thought. He took a good look at the tree next to him. Nope. Even the lowest branches rose high above his head. He couldn't even start climbing a tree.

"I could climb a mountain, or a hill," was Bobby's next thought. Which also wasn't going to work, he admitted to himself. The only mountain around was belching lava and ash down every side.

Bobby turned and spied a pile of rocks in the distance. He turned to Spot. "What about those rocks over there?" he asked. "I bet if I climb up there, I'll be high enough to see over the ferns. Then hopefully I can find Raya's mom!"

Bobby turned quickly toward the rocks. The sudden movement woke Raya, and he began to move and cry.

Bobby gasped and plopped Raya on the ground in front of him. "I can't hold on when he's squirming like that," he told Spot.

Raya sat on the ground and continued to whimper. "I wonder what's wrong," Bobby said. "Maybe he's hungry."

"Probably," Spot replied.

"I'm hungry too," Bobby stated. "I'd like a peanut butter and jelly sandwich, but I'm guessing dinosaurs don't like peanut butter and jelly."

"They might, if they ever had a chance to eat one," Spot said.

Bobby laughed. "I don't see any sandwiches," he said. He looked around. "All I see are leaves. And me."

"I've been looking at Raya's teeth, from a safe distance, of course," Spot said. "See how they're broad and flat, not sharp and pointed? I believe Raya would rather munch on leaves than munch on you."

Bobby reached out an arm and broke off a piece of the bush next to him. "Here goes," he muttered to himself as he held

out the leaf to Raya. He carefully kept his hand far away from Raya's mouth.

Raya stopped whimpering and sniffed at the leaves. He then opened his mouth wide and crunched down, chewing contentedly. Bobby gathered a pile of leaves and set it in front of Raya, then plopped down on the ground to rest while Raya finished his lunch.

Bobby's mind drifted while Raya ate. He thought about what he would eat if he had lunch set in front of him. He'd start with a peanut butter and jelly sandwich. No, make that two peanut butter and jelly sandwiches. Then maybe an apple, and a glass of milk. And finally, one of those big, gooey chocolate chip cookies he'd been craving after school.

Suddenly, Spot gasped and jumped to his feet. "We need to move," he shouted.

Bobby sprang up and snatched Raya off the ground. Spot backed into the trees and crouched down a few feet off the path. Bobby crouched with him, setting Raya down at his feet.

Bobby heard a strange rustling. Then he felt the ground shake, just a little bit. Then a little bit more. After the shake he heard a low boom. Then it all happened again, and again, in a pattern. "It sounds like footsteps," he whispered to Spot. "Really heavy footsteps, like an elephant."

"Or a dinosaur?" Spot whispered back, nodding in the direction of the path.

Bobby turned his head and saw a two large legs, attached to an equally large body. It walked on two feet, swinging its large tail behind it. Its head was strangely shaped, like a large egg ringed by sharp spikes.

The dinosaur looked a little different than the pictures in his books at home. Still, he recognized it as a pachycephalosaur. Bobby searched his memory. He thought the pachycephalosaur ate plants, but he couldn't remember for sure.

The dinosaur stopped moving and sniffed. He turned around quickly, sending his tail whipping by Bobby's nose.

The pachycephalosaurus reared back and stood completely upright, sending out a loud cry.

An answering roar echoed through the trees. Bobby's eyes looked up, then up some more, and finally focused on a very large face with very, very large, sharp teeth.



"A Tyrannosaurus Rex!" Bobby whispered. His mouth went dry and his legs started to shake.

"Quiet!" hissed Spot.

The pachycephalosaur gave another cry, then did something unexpected. He put his head down and ran toward the T-rex. Before the T-rex could bend down and snap at the smaller dinosaur, it rammed its strangely shaped head into the T-rex's stomach.

The great dinosaur roared in pain and stepped back. The pachycephalosaur rammed him one more time, then turned and sped off through the trees.

The monstrous T-rex shook his head and gave another loud roar. He then took two steps forward, starting to chase the smaller dinosaur through the trees.

But two steps were all he took. The T-rex stopped, swiveling his head back and forth, as if he were looking for something. He gave a great big sniff. Then he lowered his head closer to the ground and stared straight at Bobby.

NO, YOU CAN'T COME IN,
MR. TYRANNOSAURUS REX



"Don't move," Spot whispered. Bobby and Spot stood motionless, trying to not even blink. After what seemed like forever, the T-Rex raised his head and shook it.

Bobby let out a long, slow breath and bent down to pick up Raya. Unfortunately, Raya chose that moment to let out a high, shrill cry. The T-Rex swung his head back around.

"Run!" Spot cried.

Bobby twirled in place and took two quick steps. His mind had shut down, and his body had taken over. Nothing seemed

to matter except putting as much distance between himself and those gigantic teeth as he could.

He could hear Spot shouting something, but it took a couple of seconds for the voice to get through his panic. Spot was yelling something about Raya.

"Raya!" Bobby exclaimed. He spun back around. Behind him, Spot was desperately trying to pull Raya to safety, but the baby dinosaur was just too heavy.

Bobby's body told him to forget about everything else and run, but his mind peeked through just enough to remind him he couldn't abandon his friends.

Bobby jumped back to Spot and Raya. "Hop on my back," he yelled to Spot. He scooped Raya up in his arms and began to sprint toward the group of rocks.

Bobby dodged between the ferns and trees, hoping the T-Rex would be too big to follow him. He felt the broad leaves slap and scratch his face and arms. Sweat began to drip down his body.

Having Spot on his back didn't add

any weight at all, but Raya was getting heavier and heavier. Bobby began to pant and gasp. His arms were so tired he could barely hold them up.

Bobby heard the T-Rex give a loud roar, then felt the ground shake as the T-Rex lumbered after him. Bobby suddenly found more energy and his legs moved faster.

Bobby and the animals inched closer and closer to the rocks. It felt like one of those dreams where you run as fast as you can, but everything still moves in slow motion. Bobby could hear the T-Rex crashing through the bushes behind them, but he didn't dare take the time to see how close it was.

Bobby scanned the rocks ahead. Down near the bottom, he saw a darker patch. He turned toward the patch. Yes! Just like he thought, it was the opening to a cave.

Bobby ran toward the opening as fast as he could, then slid just like he would slide into home plate when he played baseball back home.



The three of them disappeared into the cave. Bobby heard the sound of huge jaws snapping behind them. He wiggled and squirmed to the back of the cave, clutching a frightened Raya. Spot had already jumped from his back and was helping drag Bobby and Raya away from the entrance.

The three of them huddled against the back wall, listening to the frustrated roars and snapping of the T-Rex. He clearly didn't like being shut outside when his lunch was inside.

Bobby could see the T-Rex's huge teeth through the cave entrance. All his dinosaur books talked about the size of a T-Rex tooth, but it was much different seeing one up close. Each tooth was bigger than the banana he ate after school!

Bobby shivered. He couldn't quite get his breath back from running so hard. Raya had gone silent with fear. He could feel the baby's rapid breathing as he clutched him against his chest.

The T-Rex's teeth disappeared from the cave entrance. They were replaced by one big eye. Bobby stopped moving and tried to act like a rock.

After a few moments, the eye disappeared. The rocks rattled as the T-Rex butted his giant head against them. Finally, Bobby heard the T-Rex give a mighty sniff. He roared loudly one more

time, then turned and ran in the opposite direction. Bobby could feel the vibrations from his footsteps get weaker and weaker.

Bobby could finally breathe again. He sat Raya down on the ground in front of him.

"I think he's gone," Bobby said to Spot.

"I think so, too," Spot replied. "We're lucky there's an abundance of prey in this area."

"What does that mean?" Bobby asked.

"It means we're not the only things to eat around here," Spot said. "The T-Rex decided to go after something easier to catch."

Bobby crawled to the cave opening. He put his hand to the ground and felt for vibrations. He turned his head and stuck his ear outside. The only thing he could hear was the rustling of the wind through the trees. He couldn't hear any loud thumps or breathing through giant nostrils.

"I think the coast is clear," he said. Bobby squirmed out of the opening and

stood up. As he turned to look around, he nearly fell into one of the footprints the T-Rex had left behind.

"That is one gigantic dinosaur," Bobby thought. Just for fun he compared his foot to the giant print on the ground. His foot looked like a baby's foot next to a basketball player's.

Spot emerged from the cave and blinked in the light. "Can I get some help, here? I can't bring Raya out alone," he said.

"Oh, yeah, sorry," Bobby said. He crawled back inside, picked up the baby dinosaur, and scooted both of them out of the cave.

Bobby's knew he had planned to do something , but being chased by a giant dinosaur who wanted to eat him made his memory not work as well as he wanted it to. He looked blankly at Spot and said, "Now what?"

Spot smiled. "Well, before we were so rudely interrupted, I believe we were trying to find Raya's family."

JUST WHAT I ALWAYS
WANTED TO BE: A RAFT



"Oh, right!" Bobby replied.
"Raya's family!"

Bobby turned and examined the group of rocks in front of him. The grouping was large and tall, but it was uneven. It sort of reminded him of the rocks on the beach at home.

"I do this all the time," Bobby reminded himself. "Maybe the rocks at home aren't quite so tall, but I know how to climb them." He searched for cracks in the rock that would give him a good foothold.

Carefully, Bobby climbed up the side

of the rocks. Higher and higher he climbed, until he could see the tops of the trees. He could see Spot and Raya on the ground below. Spot craned his neck to look up at him, while Raya munched contentedly on the pile of leaves in front of him.

"I might be as tall as the T-Rex now," Bobby thought as he stood up and gazed around at the primeval forest. Of course, the thought of looking directly into those teeth scared him a little bit, so he quickly put that thought out of his mind.

Bobby heard the leaves on the trees rustle. He gazed into the distance and saw a big head on a very long neck raise out of the trees. The trees shook as the large, flat teeth grasped some leaves and pulled them off the tree. The dinosaur chewed contentedly.

"Looks like a brontosaurus," Bobby thought. "Or a brachiosaurus. Maybe an Alamosaurus. I really should figure out how to tell the difference one of these days. Anyway, it's not Raya's family."

Bobby's eyes swept the skyline. He could see the blue sky and the huge trees. He could see lots of movement below. Small critters darted through the underbrush, some of them chased by slightly larger critters. In the distance, a herd of large dinosaurs lumbered across a clearing. Sadly, none of the dinosaurs he could see looked like Raya.

Bobby turned and gazed at the still erupting volcano. Lava flowed down the side, trailing red down the mountainside. Ash clouded the air, merging with the smoke from the fires started by the pyroclastic flow.

From this high up, Bobby could see a large lake near the base of the volcano. Steam billowed up from the lake where the lava hit the water.

Bobby stared at the water, fascinated by the way the lava turned dark as it entered the water. "Spot," he called out, "Why would the lava turn black when it hits water?"



"Water cools it down," Spot called back. "So it turns from liquid rock to, well, actual rock."

As Bobby stared at the cooling lava, a gust of wind blew across the forest. Bobby braced his feet to keep his balance as wind rattled the treetops.

The breeze also cleared the steam

from the banks of the lake. Bobby stared. On the opposite shore of the lake, Bobby could see a dinosaur that did look an awful lot like Raya.

Bobby followed the dinosaur with his eyes. The dino walked across a ridge and joined a whole group of dinosaurs. The babies looked exactly like Raya. Now that he could see what Raya would look like all grown up, he realized he'd seen this kind of dinosaur in his books.

Bobby glanced down at Spot. "Raya is a Miasaurus!" he shouted excitedly. Spot looked at him strangely. "Just thought you'd want to know," Bobby continued. "Oh, and I can see his family!"

As Bobby bent down to start climbing down the rocks, his mind pictured the scene. Suddenly, he realized something and stood back up. His excitement deflated like a leaky balloon.

"We have a problem," he said to Spot. "We're stuck on this side of the lava flow, and Raya's family is stuck on the other side."

"Is there a way around the lava?" Spot asked.

Bobby searched the lava flow. It ran from the top of the volcano straight to the lake. "Not really," he answered back. "Not unless you know how to build a raft."

"I might be able to construct a raft," Spot said, confused. "But I can't see what benefit a raft would give us. You know we can't sail over the lava, right?"

Bobby wrinkled his forehead. "Of course I know that. The raft is to get us across the lake," he said.

"I wasn't aware of the existence of a lake," Spot replied.

Bobby's face cleared. "Oh, right!" he exclaimed. "I forgot you can't see it. The lava is running down the mountain and going into a lake."

"I doubt we have either the material or the time to build a raft," Spot said. "But I do remember you saying you can swim."

"You want me to swim? Across the lake?"

Bobby gazed out at the lake again. It

was shaped like a circle that had been stepped on. Although it would take a long time to swim from one end to the other, the distance across wasn't all that far.

"I can probably swim across it," he said. "But what about you and Raya? I can't carry Raya cause I need to use my arms. Wait, can dinosaurs swim?"

"I doubt it," Spot replied. "And I don't think this is a good time to find out."

Bobby looked at the distance again. "What if I put Raya on my back?"

"So you want to become the raft?" Spot asked.

Bobby laughed. "I guess so, sort of."

Spot shrugged his shoulders. "It's worth a try," he said.

Bobby slithered down the rocks. Using himself as a raft made him a little nervous, but if it meant reuniting Raya with his family, he was willing to try.

"Let's get started," he said. He gathered Raya up into his arms and headed off through the trees with Spot following close behind.

CROCODILES AND CARLY...
THE SCARIEST THINGS IN
ANY TIME



After several wrong turns, Bobby, Spot and Raya reached the edge of the lake.

The edge was marshy and it kept trying to suck the skins that Bobby was using for shoes off his feet. Neither Bobby nor Spot could see exactly where the lava hit the water because there was so much steam in the air.

The steam made the air even more hot and muggy. Bobby felt like he was breathing water instead of air. He wondered if it would help if he had gills like a fish.

Bobby stood on a log at the edge of the lake and peered out as far as he could see, which wasn't far at all. From here it looked like the lake stretched on forever.

He took a deep breath and shook his head. He knew the lake wasn't that big. He'd already seen it from the top of the rocks.

Bobby stepped into the water and sank down. He felt something slither past his ankle and shivered. He decided not to think about what was swimming around his legs.

Bobby and Spot tried to coax Raya onto Bobby's back, but he didn't understand and he didn't want to get in the water.

"Do you have any ideas?" Bobby finally asked Spot.

"Well, let's put ourselves in Raya's shoes," Spot said.

"Raya doesn't have shoes." Bobby crossed his eyes and stuck his tongue out of the corner of his mouth.

Spot gave Bobby a disgusted look.

"You're hilarious. Let's look at things the way Raya would look at them," he clarified. "Raya doesn't want to get on your back and into the water, right?"

"Right," Bobby replied.

"But if we could find something that Raya does want, he might get on your back to get that thing," Spot stated.

"True," Bobby said. "But what does Raya want?"

Bobby and Spot looked at each other.

"Food!" they exclaimed, at the same time.

Spot climbed up the bank of the lake and picked a huge armful of fern leaves. Spot then climbed on Bobby's head and faced backward, holding out the leaves to Raya.

"I feel ridiculous," Bobby said.

Raya looked at the leaves Spot was holding out to him. He then looked at the water, then back at Spot. Finally, he climbed onto Bobby's back, reaching out for the leaf.

"Can you make sure he hangs on?" Bobby asked Spot.

Spot checked Raya's grip on Bobby's animal skin tunic.

"He seems to be fine," Spot replied. "You, on the other hand, might want to watch out for his claws."

"This just gets better and better," Bobby said under his breath.

Bobby moved down the edge of the lake, as far as he could get from the hot lava flow. He pushed off the bottom of the lake with his feet and started swimming. The water was really warm, warmer than his bathtub at home. He tried to ignore the weight of Spot on his head and the munching sounds from Raya in his ear.

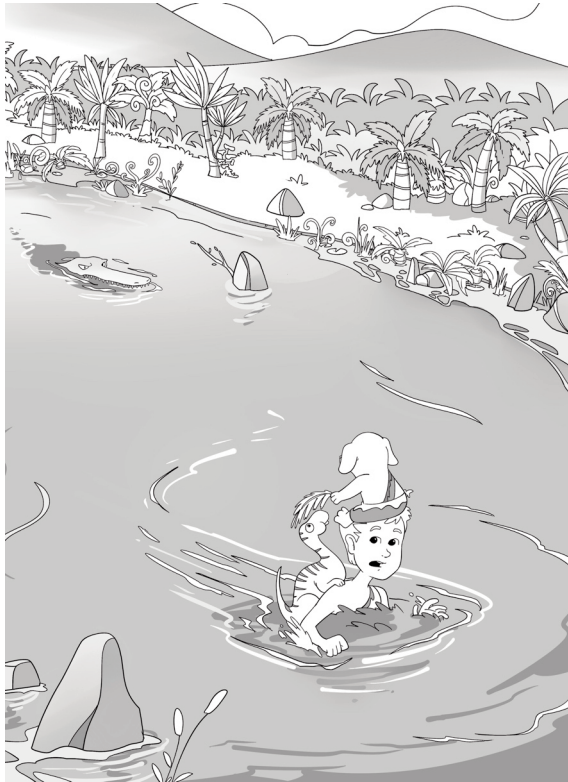
Bobby kicked his legs and arms, keeping his head above water so he could see. For a while, all he could see was steam. It felt kind of like a dream, just water and gray mist all around him.

As they passed the lava, the steam started to clear, and Bobby spotted their destination.

"Umm, Bobby?" Spot said from his place on Bobby's head.

"What?" Bobby panted.

"You might not want to look now, but there's something very large at the far end of the lake. And it looks like it's swimming this way."



Of course, Bobby had to look. He peered across the water. Just then, a huge face rose out of the lake, then dove back down. It looked like it might be a Pliosaur, or maybe even a Mosasaur. Bobby could see the ripples spreading out.

Bobby suddenly found a lot of new energy. "Hang on!" he shouted as he nearly doubled his speed.

The water dinosaur swam much faster than Bobby, but he was all the way at the other end of the lake and Bobby was nearly to the shore. It was a race to see who would get to the edge of the lake first.

Bobby felt his toes touch the bottom of the lake. He scrambled through the marshy shallows, lifting Raya off his back and tucking him against his body like a football as he ran.

Bobby didn't dare look back. He could hear the splashing of the water dinosaur, and feel the waves its body caused rippling against his legs.

Bobby didn't stop running until he reached solid ground. Finally he paused,

gasping and sweating. He turned around in time to see two huge eyes sink out of sight below the water of the lake.

Bobby had a sudden flashback to their time in the jungle, when Carly nearly became a crocodile's lunch. The snout and the eyes sinking back down into the lake looked just like the snout and eyes of the crocodile as they pulled Carly to safety. Except bigger. Much bigger.

Bobby bent over at the waist, trying to get his breath back.

"Spot," he finally gasped. "Were there crocodiles in the time of the dinosaurs?"

"Oh, yes," Spot replied. "Crocodiles have been around for millions and millions of years. I believe the crocodiles who lived with the dinosaurs were much bigger than the ones we have in our time, though. Why do you ask?"

"I think we just met one," Bobby said grimly.

"Speaking of meeting new people," Spot said. "Or animals. We have company."

Bobby raised his head and saw a large

Maisaurus gazing at them. Raya let out a bleat of surprise, then wiggled in Bobby's arms.

Bobby edged forward two steps and set Raya on the ground. He patted him on the head and gave him one last leaf to munch on.

"I'm going to miss you, little guy," he said.

Bobby and Spot backed away quietly. Raya's mother lumbered forward and picked up her baby, carrying him off toward the rest of his family.

Bobby sank down on a fallen log. Spot hopped up beside him.

"Well, we returned Raya to his family. What do you want to do next?" Spot asked.

Bobby just looked at Spot.

"I want to go home and sleep for two days," he said. "And I really want to put on normal clothes."

Bobby set his hand down on the log and felt something smooth, like a book. He glanced over and found the sketch-

book with a pen lodged in the rungs of the spine.

Bobby picked up the sketchbook and drew his house as quickly as he could. He drew himself in his bedroom, lying across his bed.

Finally he was ready. Before he set the sketchbook down, he turned to Spot.

"Thanks, Spot," he said. "You really came through for me."

"Anytime," Spot answered.

"Wish me luck," Bobby said. "Now I have to go do the hardest thing of all."

"Harder than escaping a T-Rex?" Spot asked.

"Yep," Bobby replied. "Even harder than that. I have to go tell Carly I used her cave without her."

At that, Bobby set the sketchbook down on the log and watched the prehistoric world whirl out of sight.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

How do I rely on thee? Let me count the ways...

To Dave, who not only gives my books a face and a voice (several voices, in fact), but who also showers me with support and encouragement. Thank you!

To Nate, who keeps me on track and isn't afraid to say the difficult things, like "I think this book should be a separate series. How about you change your entire trajectory?" He was right, btw. Thank you for bracing me up and giving me the courage to press on.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

From Kathi Walker...

From the time I learned to read at age 4, I've devoured books like they're candy. Much of my childhood was spent with my nose in a book, including at school recess or family parties.

As a homeschool mom, I received many many chances to read to my children. When they reached their teens and I was still browsing through *Junie B. Jones* and *The Chronicles of Narnia* simply because I loved them, I decided it was time to let my imagination loose and write down some of the ideas that had been swimming through my head.

Besides reading, I love watching movies (anything from *The Avengers* to supremely cheesy romantic comedies) and

spending time with my family. I also love to vacation and explore new places, especially if they include either water or a roller coaster.

I love the sun, and still can't quite figure out how I ended up living in Utah, where we don't see much of it for six months out of the year. My dream is to move to Florida and spend all my time writing in the sun by the pool.