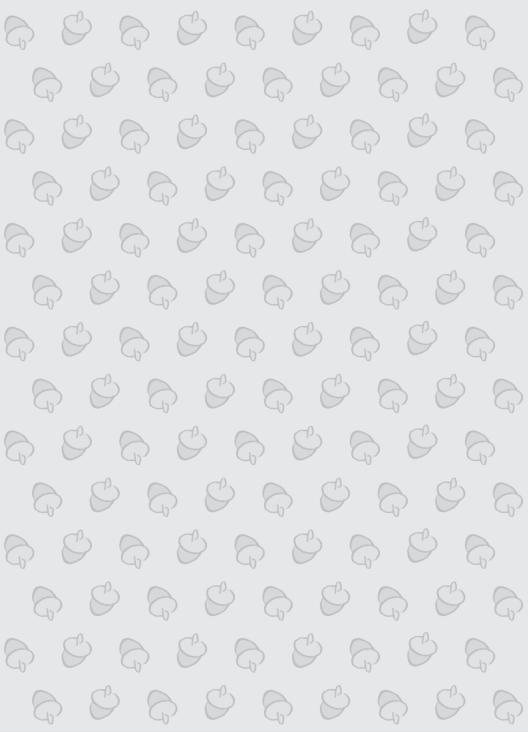


The Dead Sea Squirrels Series

Squirreled Away
Boy Meets Squirrels

Coming Soon:

Nutty Study Buddies Squirrelnapped!





Squirreled Away

Mike Nawrocki

Illustrated by Luke Séguin-Magee



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Squirreled Away

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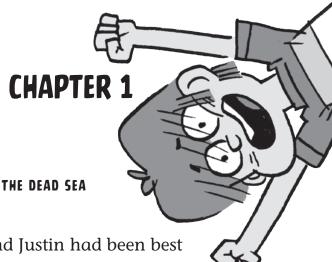
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ISRAEL, NEAR THE DEAD SEA PRESENT DAY

Michael and Justin had been best friends ever since kindergarten, and when our story begins, they were a few days away from being fifth graders at Walnut Creek Elementary School. On this exact day, however, they were exploring a cave in the Middle East. If you're wondering where the Middle East is, look for east on a map and go to the middle. If you

can't find east, just take a right at the Mediterranean Sea.

And if you're curious about *why* Michael and Justin were there . . . we'll get to that later.

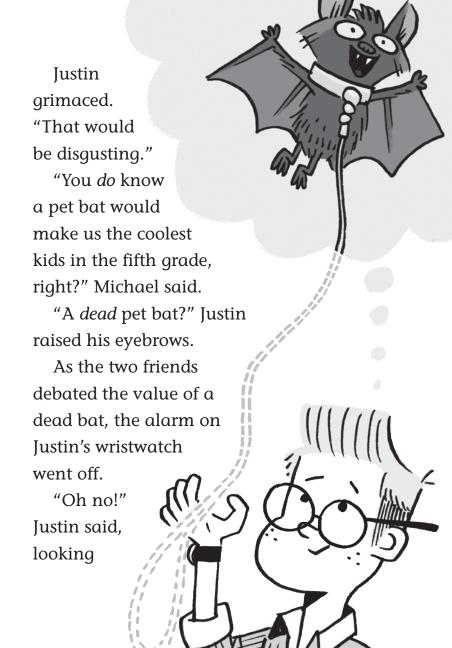
"What is that?" Michael questioned, pointing his flashlight at something on a small ledge popping out from the rock wall a few feet above Justin's head. "You think it's some kind of animal?"

"Whatever it is, it's not moving," Justin replied.

"Maybe it's a bat," Michael suggested.

"Bats hang upside down," Justin said.

"Maybe it's a dead bat? That would be cool." Michael grinned.



down at the rubbery band around his wrist. "We have to go!"

Michael stood on his tiptoes. "Give me a quick boost so I can see what's up there."

"We don't have time! If we're late for dinner again, your dad will kill us!"

"Relax. We're not going to be late," Michael assured his friend. "Just give me a boost."

Justin knew Michael well enough to realize that arguing with him would only waste more time, so he reluctantly assumed the boosting position. Michael placed his right shoe in Justin's cupped hands then stepped up and wedged his left shoe into a small crack in the cave wall. As Michael pushed himself up with his left leg toward the mystery ledge, his foot slipped out of the crack,

