

THE DEAD SEA SQUIRRELS

Boy Meets
Squirrels

From the co-creator of VeggieTales

Mike Nawrocki

Illustrated by Luke Séguin-Magee

The Dead Sea Squirrels Series

Squirreled Away
Boy Meets Squirrels

Coming Soon:
Nutty Study Buddies
Squirrelnapped!

The title is presented on a grey scroll with white text. 'THE' is in a small, simple font. 'DEAD SEA' is in a bold, blocky font with a slight shadow. 'SQUIRRELS' is in a very large, bold, blocky font with a thick black outline and a drop shadow, making it the most prominent part of the title.

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SQUIRRELS

Boy Meets Squirrels

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Boy Meets Squirrels

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**BUT
WAIT!**

BEFORE WE START...

Who are the
Dead Sea Squirrels?

**ISRAEL,
AD 70**

Merle and Pearl cruise
down the Jordan River ...



The squirrels end up at the
Dead Sea, where ...

You can't sink!
I've always
wanted
to not sink!



Couldn't you have
just worn your
floaties in the lake
back home?

Soon the two salty squirrels are
hot, thirsty, and desperate for
shade. Then they spot a cave.



Merle's sense of adventure lures him
into the cave, despite Pearl's protests.

If God wanted you to
go into a cave, he
would have made
you a bat.

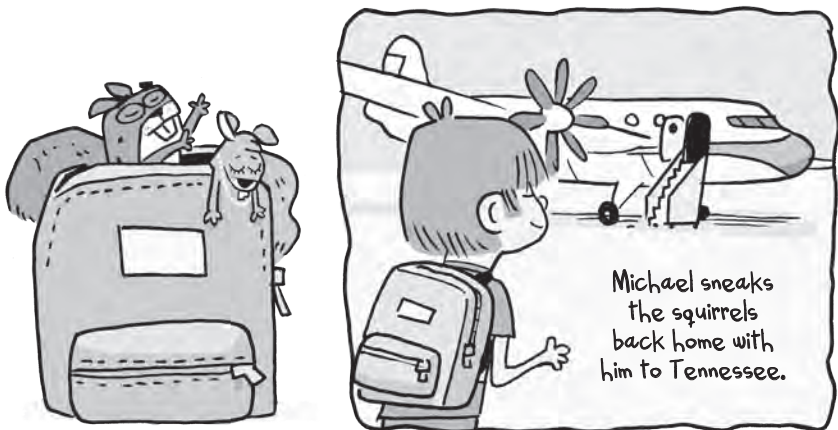


1,950
YEARS LATER

Ten-year-old Michael Gomez is spending the summer at the Dead Sea with his professor dad and his best friend, Justin.

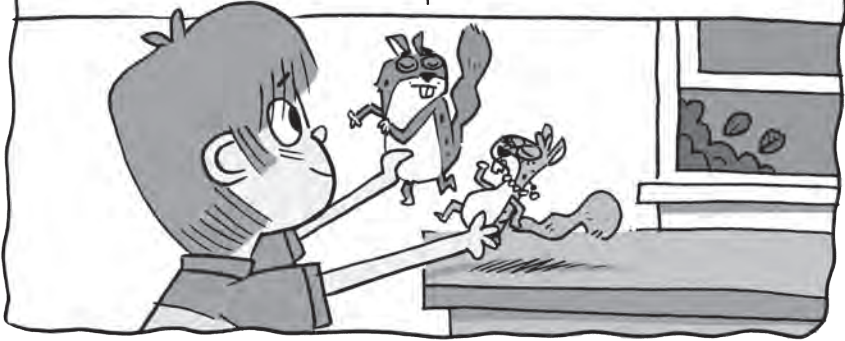


While exploring a cave (without his dad's permission), Michael discovers two dried-out, salt-covered critters and stashes them in his backpack.



Michael sneaks
the squirrels
back home with
him to Tennessee.

He sets them up likeposable action figures on his dresser—
under an open window.



While Michael is sleeping,
a thunderstorm rolls in,
and it begins to rain ...



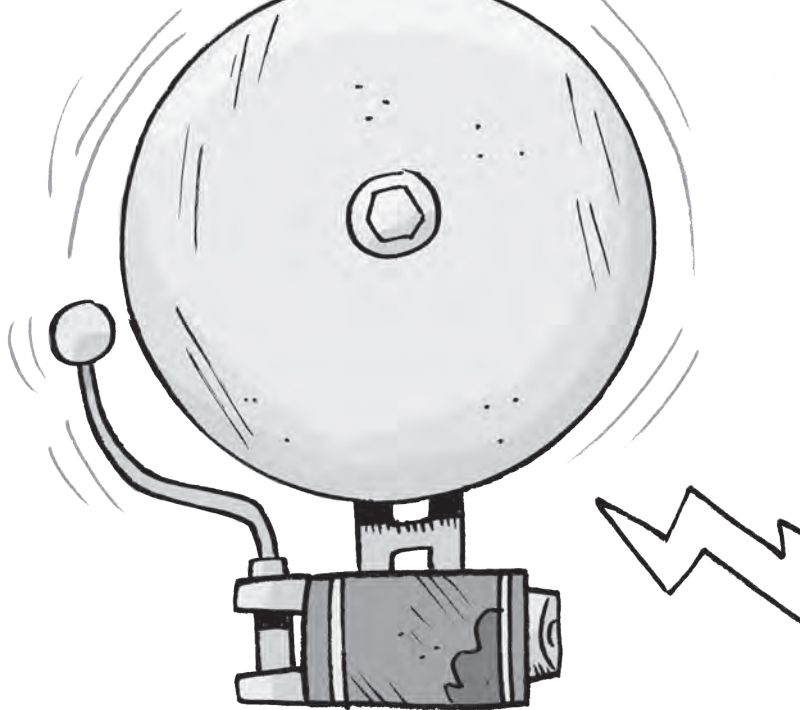
... rehydrating the squirrels!



Up and kicking again after almost
2,000 years, Merle and Pearl
Squirrel have great stories
and advice to share
with the modern world.

They are the
Dead Sea
Squirrels!





180

**75 UNTIL
SUMMER**

CHAPTER 1



RIIIING!

The bell sounded, and so ended the first day of fifth grade.

“One down, 179 to go!” Michael Gomez said as he closed his history textbook and packed it into his home-room desk.

“Don’t rush it!” Michael’s best friend, Justin, said, standing up from

his desk and slinging on his backpack.
“We’re fifth graders for a whole year.
Elementary school royalty! Enjoy it!”

“Yeah, I guess you’re right,”
Michael replied as they headed into



the hallway. “Next year, we’ll be back down at the bottom of the pile again in middle school.”

Justin stopped an unsuspecting second grader in the hall. “You there, young one. Would you like some wise advice from an older and much, much wiser fifth grader?”

“Um . . . I gotta go.” The kid hurried away.

“He’s obviously intimidated by our greatness,” Michael said. “Have you seen Sadie today? I want to tell her about the squirrels.”

“Nope. Haven’t seen her.”

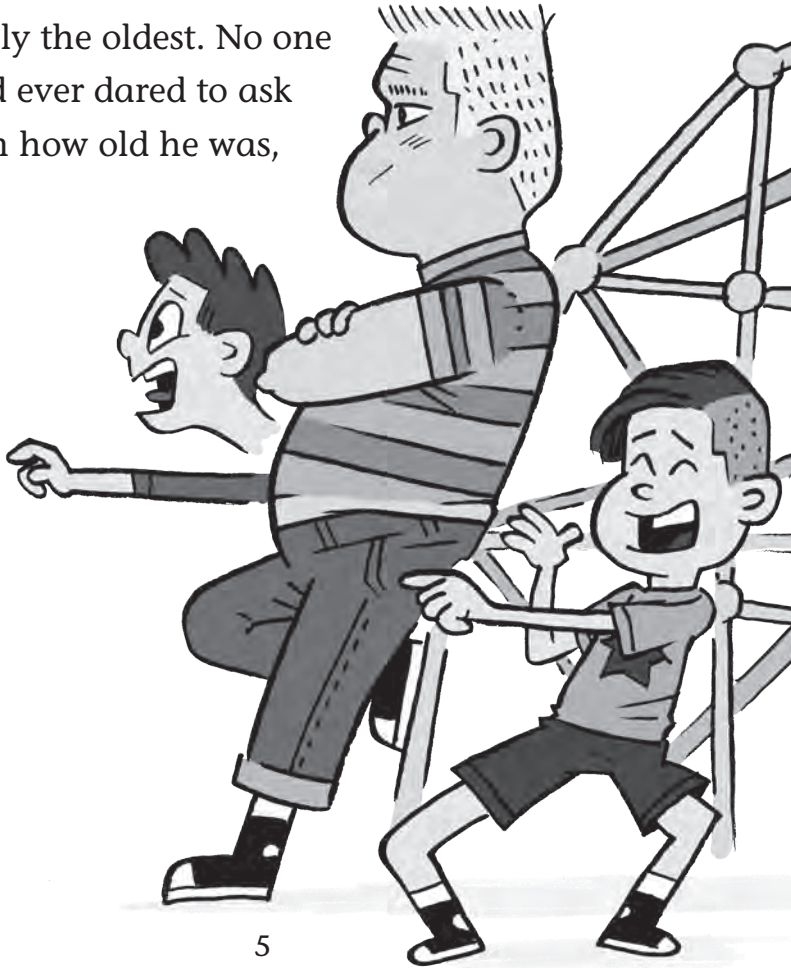
“You gotta come check them out. I set them up in cool poses on my dresser. They look like crusty action figures.”




“Gross,” Justin replied. He was not a fan of the two petrified squirrels Michael had brought home from their summer trip. The friends had spent the whole summer in a tent near the Dead Sea in the Middle East with Michael’s dad, who was a professor of ancient civilizations. On the last day of their trip, Michael nearly got lost forever when he disappeared into a cave, all by himself, to retrieve the disgusting little creatures.

“*Gross* is just the word that came to mind when I saw you coming!” a voice called out as Michael and Justin exited the school to cut through the playground on their walk home. Edgar, by far the biggest kid at school, leaned against the jungle gym with two smaller fourth-grade friends who seemed to think Edgar’s comment was hilarious.

“Hey, Edgar,” Justin answered nervously. One of the reasons Edgar was the biggest kid in school was that he was most likely the oldest. No one had ever dared to ask him how old he was,





but Michael and Justin were pretty sure he had to be at least 12. Even though he was only in fourth grade, everyone knew rule number one at Walnut Creek Elementary School was Don't Mess with Edgar.

But now Michael was elementary school royalty. He stuck out his chest. "Don't mess with us, Edgar. We're fifth graders!"

Terrified, Justin whispered to Michael, "What did you say?"

Not terrified in the least, Edgar stepped forward and yelled, "WHAT DID YOU SAY?!"

