

THE
DEAD SEA
SQUIRRELS

Tree-mendous
Trouble

From the co-creator of VeggieTales

Mike Nawrocki

Illustrated by Luke Séguin-Magee

The Dead Sea Squirrels Series

Squirreled Away

Boy Meets Squirrels

Nutty Study Buddies

Squirrelnapped!

Tree-mendous Trouble

Whirly Squirrelied

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 the largest word, in a very bold, bubbly font with a thick black shadow.

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SQUIRRELS

Tree-mendous Trouble

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Tree-mendous Trouble

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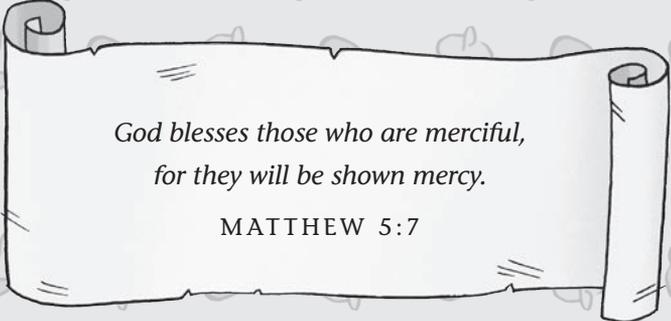
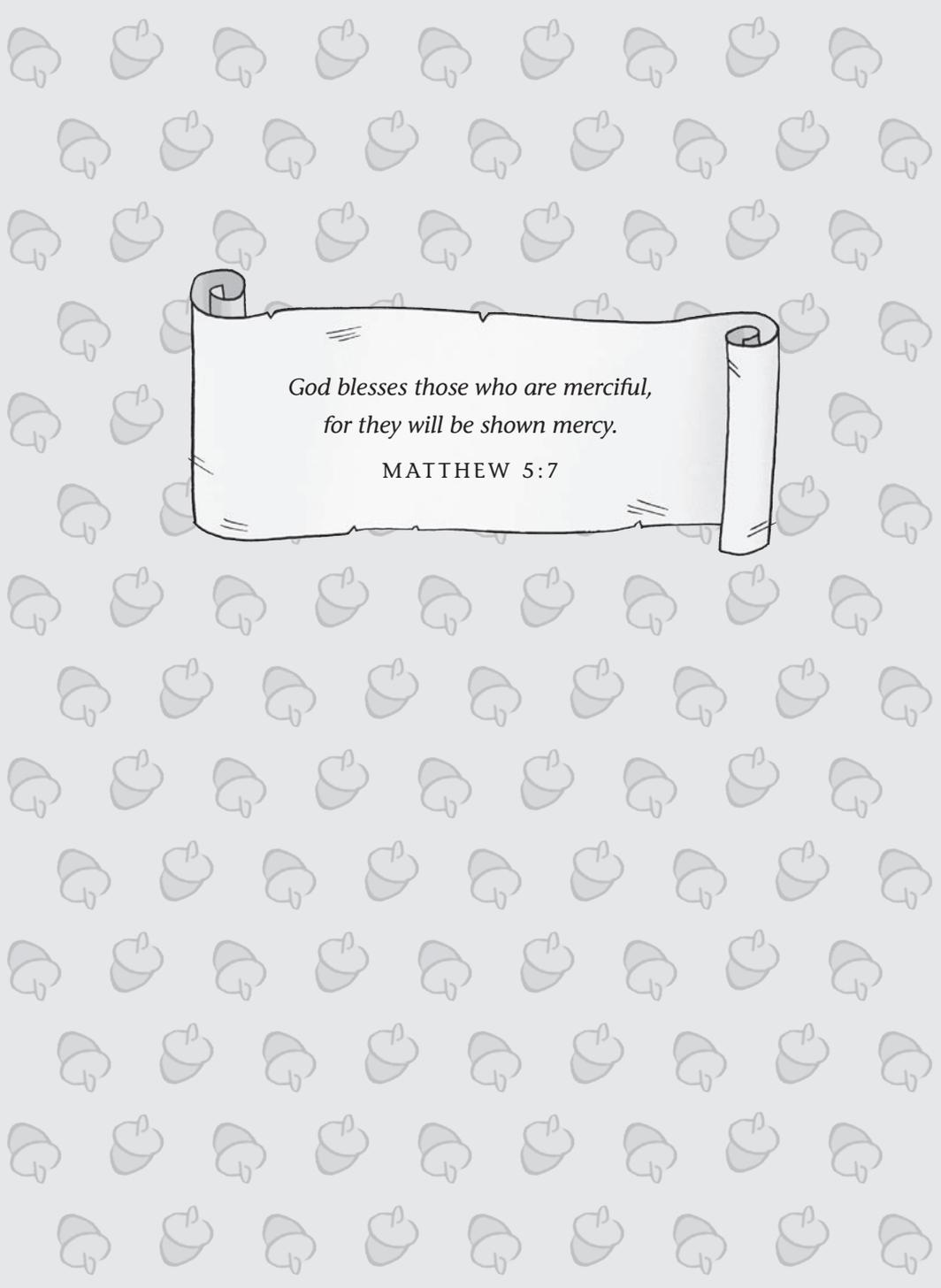
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To Dan—

*A great agent and an even better
friend. Thank you for your vision,
humility, and encouragement.*



*God blesses those who are merciful,
for they will be shown mercy.*

MATTHEW 5:7

**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!



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.

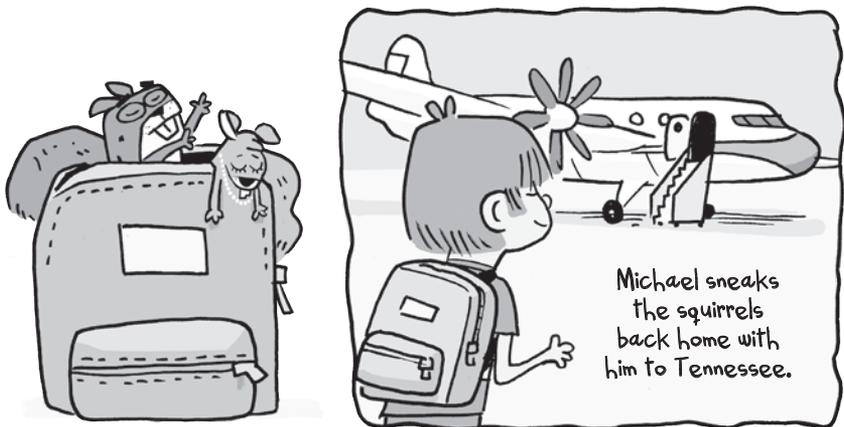


1,950
YEARS LATER

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

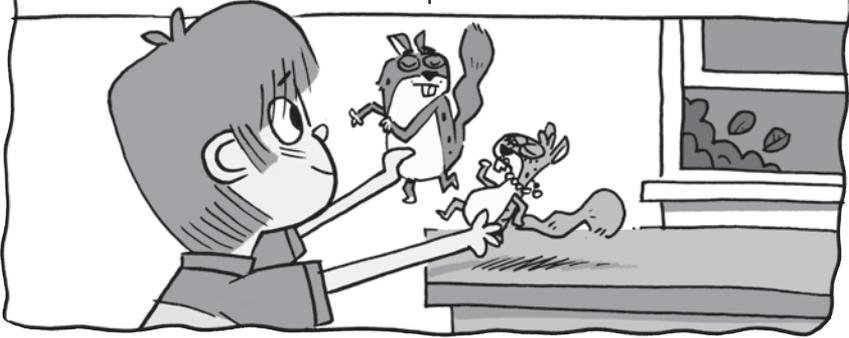


While exploring a cave (without his dad's permission), Michael discovers two dried-out, salt-covered critters and stashes them in his backpack.



Michael sneaks
the squirrels
back home with
him to Tennessee.

He sets them up like posable 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!





CHAPTER 1

“It feels like the side of a boat,” Pearl Squirrel commented as she stroked the wall of one of the rooms in the elaborate hamster home Mrs. Gomez had put together for Pearl and her husband, Merle. In her other paw, Pearl held a tiny teacup Mrs. Gomez had borrowed from one of her daughter, Jane’s, dolls. Jane had also come up with a squirrel-sized fluffy pink robe and a tiny pair of bunny slippers. Pearl was getting some much-needed pampering after being kidnapped by and then rescued from the man in the suit and sunglasses, a mysterious



agent working for a collector of ancient artifacts.

“It’s called shiplap,” Mrs. Gomez replied proudly as she and Jane sipped from their human-sized tea-cups. “Do you like it?”

“I love it!” Pearl gushed. “Feels so homey. Wooden walls are my favorite—just like a tree!”

“I’m so happy you like it!” Mrs. Gomez loved to decorate and was very excited for the chance to put a home

together for the two ancient squirrels her son, Michael, had accidentally adopted.

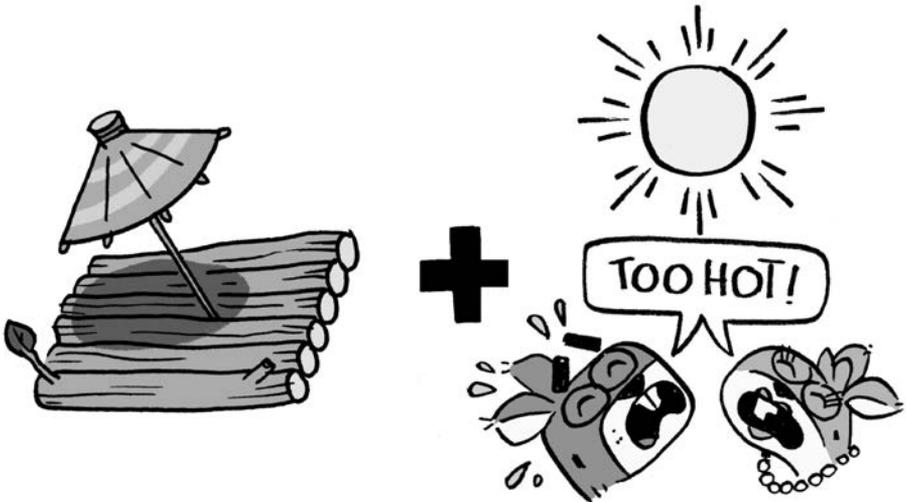
“Did you hear that, Merle?” Pearl called across the room to her husband, who was sitting with Dr. Gomez and Michael. “We’ve got shiplap!”

Merle had no idea what shiplap was but assumed it was a good thing and gave his wife a thumbs-up before returning to his conversation with Dr. Gomez and Michael. “Ever since I was a little pup, I’d wanted to see the Dead Sea,” he said. “You can’t sink!”

Dr. Gomez and Michael nodded, both having swum in the Dead Sea the previous summer. Dead Sea water is nearly 10 times saltier than the ocean. All that salt makes it impossible to sink.

“But how did you get there?” Dr. Gomez asked. As an anthropologist who had studied the area for years, he knew the Dead Sea was no place for tree squirrels. “And how did you get *here*? If we’re going to keep you safe from the man in the suit and sunglasses, I need the full story.”

Merle and Michael looked at each other. “Maybe you’d better sit down,” Michael suggested, remembering how



his dad had fainted when he'd first heard Merle speak in his research lab at the university.

Dr. Gomez raised an eyebrow at his son but took a seat on the edge of Michael's bed. Then Merle and Michael told the story of how the squirrels had gotten to the Dead Sea in the 1st century and then to Walnut Creek, Tennessee, in the 21st. "It all started with the raft . . .," Merle began.

