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Chapter 1:
New Friends

One day, a baby dolphin named Sillie was swimming in the bay when she heard an animal crying. It was a very sad sound. Sillie wondered why the animal was so unhappy. She decided to find out.

Sillie swam to the shore. She saw a strange animal there. It had a body like a seal. Its skin was gray and wrinkly. Its tail was shaped like a paddle. Its eyes were tiny. There were long whiskers on its snout.

Between sniffles, the animal was nibbling on bay grass.

"Hello," Sillie said, "why are you crying?"

"Because I’m all alone," the animal answered sadly.

"I’ve never seen you before," Sillie said. "What kind of animal are you?"

"A manatee," the animal replied.

"A manatee!" Sillie cried. "I don’t know any manatees! My name is Sillie. What’s yours?"

"Mateo," the manatee said.

"Where do you come from, Mateo?" Sillie asked.

"Down there," Mateo replied, pointing south with his flipper.

"How did you get here?"

"I came with my mom," Mateo said.

"Where is your mom now?" Sillie asked.

"I don’t know," Mateo sighed. "I got lost."
“Don’t be sad, Mateo,” Sillie said. “I’ll be your friend.”
“You will? Thank you, Sillie,” Mateo said.
“We’ll have fun!” Sillie said. “I like to dive deep in the water and catch fish to eat. Do you?”
“No,” Mateo said. “I like to swim slowly along the shore and eat plants! Do you?”
“No,” said Sillie. “I like to leap high out of the water and flip over! Do you?”
“No,” said Mateo. “I like to use my flippers to walk along the bottom of the bay! Do you?”
“Um, no,” said Sillie.
Mateo looked sad again.
“It’s ok. We’ll find a way to have fun,” Sillie said.
She looked at Mateo’s tail.
“Gosh, your tail looks just like a paddle,” Sillie said.
That gave Sillie an idea.
“Let’s swim out to my pod,” she said to Mateo. “You can meet my mom!"
So off they went.
Chapter 2:
The Dolphin Games

Sillie and Mateo swam to Sillie’s pod. When they got there, they saw one of the dolphins tossing a sea sponge into the air. Another dolphin was getting ready to bat the sponge.

“They’re practicing for the Dolphin Games,” Sillie told Mateo.

Sillie explained that the Dolphin Games took place once a year. There were contests to find out who could swim the fastest, leap the highest, and dive the deepest. But the best contest of all was batting the sea sponge. Sillie’s pod really wanted to win that one.

“Try again. Use your head instead of your tail, Posey,” a dolphin named Dolly shouted. “Our tails are not the right shape for batting sponges.”

Dolly tossed the sea sponge high in the air. Posey leaped up and hit the sponge with her head. The sponge went a few feet before it landed in the water.

“I’m afraid there’s no hope for us,” Sillie’s mom said, shaking her head. “We need a better batter.”

“Mom,” Sillie said, “this is my new friend, Mateo. He’s a manatee!”

“I’m happy to meet you, Mateo,” Sillie’s mom said.

“Thank you,” Mateo replied shyly.

“Can Mateo try batting the sponge?” Sillie asked.

“Of course! Can you leap out of the water, Mateo?” Sillie’s mom asked.

“No,” Mateo said.

“It doesn’t matter, Mom,” Sillie said. “Look at his tail!”

Sillie’s mom looked at Mateo’s paddle-shaped tail. She clapped her flippers excitedly. She called the other dolphins over to see Mateo’s tail. They were excited too.

“Bat this sponge as far as you can, Mateo,” Dolly cried.

She tossed the sea sponge up in the air. Mateo swatted it with his tail. Woosh! The sponge flew out of the water and out of sight!
“Uh, oh,” Mateo said, “I think I lost your sponge.”

But the dolphins didn’t mind. They cheered for Mateo!

The Dolphin Games began on a sunny morning in July. Dolphin pods from all over the bay came to compete. A killer whale was the referee.

Batting the sponge was the last contest. Six pods entered teams. There were three dolphins on each team. One dolphin dove to the bottom of the bay to find a sea sponge. Another tossed the sponge high into the air. The third dolphin was the batter.

Mateo became so nervous while he waited for his turn to bat that his whiskers shook.

“What if I don’t hit the sponge? What if it doesn’t go very far?” Mateo asked Sillie.

“Just do your best,” Sillie said and crossed her flippers for luck.

Finally, Sillie’s pod took its turn. Posey dove deep into the bay and brought back a huge sea sponge. Dolly tossed the sponge high in the air.

Mateo lifted his tail and hit the sponge with all his might. Woosh! Every head turned as the sponge sailed out of the water and out of sight.

The dolphins in Sillie’s pod clapped their flippers and cheered! Many of the other pods cheered too. Mateo was very excited. He had helped his new friends win the contest!

Then a dolphin shouted, “Foul! Foul! He isn’t a dolphin. He doesn’t belong to a pod. He can’t compete with us!”

Sillie’s mom spoke to the killer whale, “He may not be a dolphin, but he does belong to a pod. Mateo is part of our family.”

“I am?” Mateo asked with a tear in his eye.

“You are!” cried Sillie, Posey, Dolly, and the other dolphins in the pod.

“Then the hit counts!” yelled the killer whale.

Sillie’s pod was so happy! They’d won! But Mateo was even happier. Mateo knew that he wasn’t alone any more.
Mateo is lost and far from home. But his sadness turns to joy when a new friend discovers that Mateo has a special talent.
Sillie to the Rescue

by J. F. Ryan

Illustrations by Rebecca Slavin
Chapter 1: That’s Sillie

On a warm, sunny morning in May, a pod of dolphins swam into the Chesapeake Bay. There were seven dolphins in the pod. Six of them were older females. One was a baby. She was just three months old. Her name was Sillie.

One day, as Sillie swam near the shore, she spotted something swimming nearby.

“What is that?” Sillie wondered. “It’s too big to be a fish. So it must be another dolphin! I’ll say hello!”

Sillie whistled as dolphins do when they say hello. But the creature didn’t answer her. It just kept on swimming.

“Well, that’s funny,” Sillie thought. “Dolphins always say hello. Maybe it didn’t hear me.”

Sillie whistled again. But the creature still didn’t say hello.

“It’s not paying a bit of attention to me,” Sillie thought. “I think I’ll swim closer to it!”
Sillie swam right up to the creature. It looked very surprised to see her! It stopped swimming and stood straight up in the water.

“My, you’re a funny-looking dolphin!” Sillie said.
“I’m not a dolphin!” the creature cried.
“But you’re not a fish either,” Sillie said. “So what are you?”
“I’m a boy!”
“Oh, a boy,” Sillie said, but she had no idea what that meant. “What’s your name?” she asked.
“Henry,” the boy said. “What’s yours?”
“It’s Sillie,” she answered.
“Don’t worry, I won’t laugh. What’s your name?” Henry asked again.
“Sillie!” the little dolphin answered.
“Oh, you mean ‘Silly’ is your name!” Henry said.
“How do you spell it?”
Sillie didn’t know what Henry meant by spell. She thought for a moment. Then Sillie remembered the way her mother whistled when she called Sillie. Sillie whistled.
“Like that,” she said.
“That must be dolphin language!” Henry thought. “Can you teach me how to talk the way you do?” he asked Sillie.
“Sure!” Sillie said. “We can be friends!”

For several days afterward, Sillie taught Henry the whistles dolphins use when they speak to one another.

At home, Henry would stand in front of a mirror and practice whistling. His parents thought that Henry was making some very strange noises. They just figured that he would grow out of it.

Henry thought that he was lucky to have a dolphin for a friend. But Henry didn’t know just how lucky he was.
Chapter 2: Sillie’s New Trick

Every day Henry would go to the beach. He would wade into the water and call Sillie. No matter how far away she was, Sillie could always hear Henry’s call. She would swim to him. Then they would talk and play for hours.

One day, Sillie was already waiting near the shore when Henry got there.

“Guess what, Henry?” Sillie called. “My mom taught me a trick! Want to see it?”

“Sure!” Henry said.

Sillie swam towards the deep water. Suddenly, she leaped high in the air and flipped over. Then she dove head first into the bay.

Henry whistled, “Sillie, that was amazing! Do it again!”

Sillie leaped and flipped several more times.

“Would you teach me that trick?” Henry asked.

“Of course!” Sillie said. She would do anything for her friend Henry.

But teaching Henry the trick was harder than Sillie thought. Henry tried and tried, but he couldn’t leap out of the water like Sillie. Then Sillie had an idea.
“I’ll swim under you and push you out of the water!” she said.

Sillie swam past Henry, turned around, and swam back as fast as she could. When she got under Henry, she pushed him out of the water with all her might.

Waving his arms and legs wildly, Henry flew a couple of feet in the air. He landed, splat, in the water.

“I’ll never learn that trick,” he said sadly.

“Sure you will,” Sillie said. “Swim out where it’s deeper. That way I can swim faster and push you even higher.”

So Henry swam farther out into the bay.

“I’m ready, Sillie,” he called.

Sillie raised her head out of the water. “Sorry, Henry,” she said. “My mom whistled for me. I have to go home. But I’ll be back.”

“OK,” Henry said, “I’ll wait here.”

Henry swam around and waited for Sillie to return. He was a good swimmer, but he was getting tired. The beach looked far away. Henry wondered if he could swim all the way back.

“Hello! Could someone help me?” Henry shouted to the people on the beach.
But it was getting late in the day. People were busy packing up their beach umbrellas and sand buckets for the trip home. No one heard Henry.

What was he going to do?

Henry had an idea. He whistled, “Sillie, help! Sillie, help!”

Then, Henry floated on his back and waited.

One minute went by…and another. Sillie didn’t come. Henry was getting more tired and more scared.

Then he heard a click. Then he heard lots of clicks. He looked out at the bay and saw Sillie and the whole pod of dolphins swimming toward him!

“I’m so glad to see you!” Henry said to them. “Can you help me get back to the beach?”

“Of course we can!” Sillie said.

Two of the dolphins swam under Henry to keep him afloat.

“Grab their fins and hang on tight,” Sillie said to Henry.
Henry took hold of the dolphins’ fins. Then, with Sillie and the others leading the way, the dolphins brought Henry back to the beach.

Henry was so happy that he forgot to use dolphin language when he thanked them! But they seemed to understand anyway.

“See you tomorrow, Henry,” Sillie said. “We’ll have fun like friends do!”

“We will,” Henry said to the little dolphin. “I’m lucky to have a friend like you!”
When a pod of dolphins swims into the Chesapeake Bay, one of the dolphins forms an unusual friendship with a boy.
Stu was a lively little squirrel. He loved to play and run and have a good
time. So when Stu heard about a party at the end of the winding path, Stu
couldn’t wait to attend.

Just as Stu was about to dash out the door, his mother called out, “Stu! You can’t go alone. Please wait for Grandpa to walk with you!”

Stu stopped in his tracks. “Oh no. Not Grandpa,” thought Stu. He loved
Grandpa dearly, but Grandpa was a slow, unhurried walker. Even if they
left right away, the party would surely be over by the time they reached
the end of the winding path.

“Can you go with me Mom? How about Dad?” Stu asked anxiously.

“Sorry, Stu. We’re both very busy right now. Grandpa can take you.”

Stu heard a slow and steady shuffle. Grandpa appeared in the doorway.
“So ready, sport?” Grandpa asked with a big smile.

Stu smiled sheepishly. “Sure Grandpa,” Stu said in a quiet voice.

As the two set out on the winding path, Stu’s tailed twitched. He wanted
to dash off, but Grandpa shuffled along. Just when Stu thought they were
making some progress, Grandpa needed to stop and take a break. While
Stu sat with Grandpa, he imagined that the party was in full swing. He
just knew he was missing a great time.

“I’m not as fast as I used to be, Stu,” Grandpa explained. “But when I was
a young squirrel like you….” Grandpa went on to tell Stu about all of his
adventures as a young squirrel. Stu was shocked to learn that Grandpa
used to be a mischievous squirrel who loved excitement. Grandpa
especially loved solving mysteries.

“Once there was a huge nut that landed right in the middle of our grove. No one knew where in the world it came from,” Grandpa began with a
new story.
By the time the two squirrels reached the end of the winding path, Stu was tingling with anticipation. “Tell me another story, Grandpa!” he said excitedly.

“Don’t you want to go into the party?” Grandpa asked.

“The party can wait. I want to hear more stories!” Stu said. Grandpa beamed.
Comprehension Questions

Preview *Frank Flies South for the Winter,* and answer question 1. Then read *Frank Flies South for the Winter,* and answer the remaining questions. The total score for comprehension questions equals 100 points.

**Frank Flies South for the Winter**

Frank frolicked in the park. He flew high, and then he flew low. He twirled and spun and truly enjoyed the beautiful day. It was so warm and sunny that Frank was surprised to see a flock of birds beginning a V formation. Frank knew that this meant the birds were flying south for the winter. “What’s the rush?” Frank asked the leader of the flock. “The weather is great!”

“Don’t be fooled by the weather, Frank. It might be a nice day today, but cold weather is coming. It’s coming soon. You might want to join a flock and get going,” the bird cautioned.

“No way. I’m having too much fun,” Frank laughed and continued swooping and whirling through the air. He couldn’t imagine that the weather would turn cold quickly. All day long he watched as flocks of birds gathered together and prepared to fly south. By the end of the day, Frank was the only bird left in the park.

“This is really strange,” Frank thought. “Every last bird is gone.” As nighttime moved in, Frank hunkered down in a tree branch. The wind turned colder, so Frank raised his wings to cover his head. He yearned for the warmth he had felt earlier in the day. Cold, fat raindrops began to fall. Frank could see people walking through the park with hats, gloves, and scarves. It was as if winter had settled in overnight.
By morning, Frank felt like he was nearly frozen stiff. He unwrapped his cold wings and tried to warm up by scouting for worms, but the hard ground made it almost impossible. Before long, Frank was cold, hungry, and very tired. He thought of all the birds that had left the previous day. He wondered how far south they had traveled. Surely they had stopped to rest. Then Frank had a great idea. Maybe if he flew as fast as he possibly could, he could catch up.

Frank took flight and headed south. He was already starting to feel warmer and happier with every flap of his wings.
The Razorbacks

Story by Sam R. McColl
Illustration by James Bravo
When I was a boy, I lived in Hope, Arkansas.
(That’s pronounced “Ar-kan-saw,” if you don’t know.)
I was a happy kid. Maria Suarez, Frank Chen, and I were best friends. We played in the hills and in the swamps all day long. You couldn’t have asked for a better place to be a kid. The weather was nice and hot in the summer. It wasn’t too cold in the winter either. But the best was the spring.

Spring was beautiful. Mockingbirds sang in the apple blossom bushes. The tall saw grass swayed in the hills. You could smell the magnolia trees in the backyards. It seemed like everyone had a magnolia tree. We used to pick the large, white flowers. Maria would wear them in her hair and pretend she was dancing at a luau. Of course, back then I didn’t know what a luau was. I thought it was something Maria had made up. Sometimes Frank and I would ask Momma to pin magnolia flowers to our shirts. We’d pretend we were all dressed up, going to meet President Carter in the Rose Garden. It was a fine time. That’s for sure.
Often when we were up in the hills we’d see little squirrels running to and fro. They chattered as they dashed about. Or we’d watch a possum family burrowing in the saw grass. Most of the animals we saw were timid. They avoided us whenever we were near. Maria would make a clucking sound, “chk-chk-chk,” calling to the squirrels. Sometimes they would stand up. They’d stick their noses in the air. But then they would catch our scent and run away.
I remember one afternoon. Frank, Maria and I had gone swimming in Sycamore Creek. Later we stopped to rest in the tall grass. The spring sun was shining. It was a beautiful afternoon. Frank was quietly whistling a song. Maria leaned against a magnolia tree, and I lay on the ground watching the clouds. All of a sudden Maria whispered, “Hey, look over there! Across the creek!” She held a finger to her lips and pointed to the far bank. Frank and I sat up.

At the opposite bank, a female deer and her fawn were drinking from the creek. The young fawn stood close to its mother. It watched as she lapped up the cool water. Now and then, the mother deer looked up and sniffed the wind. Then she drank again. The young fawn followed her lead.

It was such a peaceful scene! I could have watched for hours. But Frank—that’s another story. He just couldn’t sit still. As he shifted his weight, the grass around us rustled. Startled, the two deer looked up.
The mother deer’s tail twitched. She looked to her left and right, but she couldn’t see us. We were deep in the saw grass. Just then Maria hissed, “Be quiet, Frank!” That was enough: The mother deer bolted into the magnolia trees. The fawn followed close behind. They were gone.

Like I said, you couldn’t have asked for a better place to be a kid. But I remember one day when I wished I were somewhere—anywhere—else. That was the day we met The Beast.

Most of the animals we saw during those beautiful spring days were harmless, but not all of them. There was one day, a day I’ll surely never forget. I have to tell you all about it.

The sun was shining. It was spring, and the mockingbirds were chirping in the trees. Momma always called these “the golden days.” I never knew exactly what she meant. But it sure was a glorious day. There was no hint of the trouble to come.

Dad said that the trout were biting. So I grabbed my fishing pole and ran to get Maria. Together, we trotted over to Frank’s house and picked him up. Then, with our fishing poles slung over our shoulders, the three of us headed to the creek. My dad had once shown me his favorite fishing spot. It was near
a bend in the creek. A big rock split the creek in two. Trout would gather downstream of the rock. If you sat on the high side of the rock, you could toss your line in below, and the fish couldn’t see you.

Frank’s father had given him chunks of raw bacon. We baited our hooks with it and cast our lines into the deep water. Every few minutes, we gave them a tug. No luck. After a time, we pulled up the lines and put on new bait. Still nothing. The fish weren't biting. But that’s okay. Dad always said, “It’s called fishin’, not catchin’.” It was just nice to be outside in the sun. We were having a great time.

Then, in an instant, everything changed.

We heard a dreadful sound. Years later, I can still remember it. A rumbling in the saw grass near our fishing spot. A rumbling roar. A crashing. The sound of saw grass being crushed and undergrowth being smashed. It was deafening.

Maria and Frank looked at me. Their eyes were wide open. “What’s that?” Frank asked, his voice shaking.

“I don’t know,” Maria said.

“But it’s getting closer,” I said. Indeed, something was coming. Coming right at us.
The crashing, rumbling, smashing sounds were coming straight toward us. Twigs crackled and snapped under the weight of whatever was making that terrible noise.

“We’ve got to get out of here!” I shouted. I started reeling in my fishing line. But the sound was getting closer by the second. It looked like we wouldn’t reel in our lines in time. The sound, or whatever was causing it, was going to get us! I was almost petrified with fear. Then, through the panic, I had an idea. “Forget the lines!” I yelled. “We’ve got to move now!” I pointed at a nearby magnolia tree. “Run!”

“Let’s climb that tree!” I shouted. “We’ve got to get away from that noise!” I wasn’t sure if the others could hear me above the rumbling roar. But I saw Maria nod her head. We bolted toward the tree. Luckily for us, there was a low branch that we could all grab on to. We reached the tree. Hand over hand, we grabbed the lowest branch and pulled ourselves up. We clambered up the tree as fast as our arms and legs would take us. But the noise only got worse. When at last we stopped to catch our breath, Frank had tears on his cheeks.
“It’s okay,” I said, trying to calm him. “Whatever it is probably can’t get us from here.” But I wasn’t so sure. From our perch, we looked back at the bend in Sycamore Creek. That’s when we saw The Beast.

How can I describe it? It had dark red skin, almost black. A thick ridge of black hair ran down its spine. It moved on four strong, cloven hooves. It had a long snout that seemed to breathe smoke and fire. It stood about three feet off the ground and was at least five feet long. Worse than that, it had tusks! Two razor-sharp, gleaming tusks protruded from its lower jaw.

Maria whispered, “What is that?” I could hear the fear in her voice.

“I don’t know,” I whispered back, “but it sure looks mean.”
From our place in the tree, we watched The Beast rummaging through the saw grass. It found the raw bacon that Frank had dropped in his hurry to flee. Grunting and growling, the Beast devoured it in seconds flat. Then it rooted around for more food. We feared we’d be its next meal. But somehow it never noticed us in the tree. After what seemed like forever, it wandered off.

All was quiet. The coast was clear. For now. But what would happen when we left the safety of the tree? It was anyone’s guess.
Frank, Maria, and I shinnied down the tree. I went last, keeping an eye out. The Beast seemed to have disappeared. We crept quickly back to the bend in the creek and retrieved our fishing gear. Then we sprinted all the way to my house. We ran as fast as we could. We did not want to meet up with The Beast.

Dad was working in the yard when we got back. Panting, I ran over to him. I tried to catch my breath. I tried to tell him everything, but I couldn’t get the words out.

Dad saw the anxious look on my face. He saw the same fear in Frank’s and Maria’s eyes. “Kids, kids. Calm down,” he said. “Take deep breaths. Tommy, tell me exactly what’s going on.”

I breathed in and out slowly. Frank and Maria sat down on the porch steps. Frank was still shaking. Maria wiped her brow with her handkerchief.

I told Dad the entire story. I told him about fishing by the bend in Sycamore Creek. I told him about the awful crashing and roaring sounds. I told him about The Beast. Dad listened as I described its black and red skin. Its demon eyes. Its razor-sharp tusks. The way it breathed fire. The way it roared as it tore through the saw grass.
The memory of The Beast was almost as bad as The Beast itself. I felt tears welling up in my eyes.

Dad pulled his bandana from his back pocket and handed it to me. I wiped my eyes. Then he said, “Okay, kids. I think I might know what you saw. But I need to investigate for myself, to be sure. For right now, I want the three of you to stay near the house.” He looked at Frank. “Is your father home?”

Frank wiped his eyes on his sleeve and said, “Yes, Mr. Miller. My daddy’s at home. He’s working in his garage.”

Dad said, “I’m going to get Mr. Chen. He and I will go to Sycamore Creek and check things out. Stay here, all of you, and you’ll be okay.” He looked at me. “Tommy, I think your mother just made some lemonade. Go on inside with the others and have some.”

As Maria, Frank, and I walked through our kitchen door, I saw my father grab his rifle from the garage. I watched him climb into his truck and drive away.
We waited and waited for my dad to return. We tried to take our minds off what had happened by having some lemonade and cookies, but it was no use. We couldn’t help talking about what we had seen.

“I bet it was a dragon,” Frank said. “I’ve been reading a book about dragons.”

“Don’t be silly,” Maria scoffed. “Dragons aren’t black and red. They’re green and scaly, with forked tongues.”

“There’s no such thing as dragons,” I said. “Maybe it was a rabid dog.” I had recently finished reading Old Yeller by Fred Gipson. In that book, a young boy’s dog gets rabies and becomes really sick. I’d never seen a rabid dog in real life, but I thought maybe they looked mean and nasty like The Beast.

“It was no dog,” said Maria. “Maybe it was an alien!”

About the only thing we agreed on was this: We certainly didn’t want to see it again. Ever.

After an hour or so, my father and Frank’s dad came driving up the dusty lane in the old pickup. They got out of the truck and walked toward the house. I ran out to meet them.

“Did you see it?” I asked. I desperately wanted to know if they had seen The Beast.

“Let’s go back into the house and talk about it,” Dad said.
In the kitchen, he poured himself a tall glass of lemonade and one for Frank’s father. They sat down at the kitchen table, and we crowded around. Only then did Dad start talking.

“What you kids saw was a wild razorback hog,” he said. “We found a family of them near the bend in Sycamore Creek.”

Frank’s father said, “I haven’t seen a wild razorback in years.” He explained that when he was growing up, he used to see them all around Arkansas. But as people had begun to build more and more houses, and bigger and bigger neighborhoods, most of the wild razorbacks had been hunted down or rounded up and sent to zoos.

“They’re beautiful creatures, the razorbacks,” Dad said. “But they’re really dangerous. With those tusks, they can hurt a stray cow in minutes.” He looked sternly at us. “Listen closely. I don’t want you kids playing near Sycamore Creek until Mr. Chen and I figure out what should be done.”

He didn’t have to worry. We had no desire to come face to face with The Beast again.

Frank’s father said to Dad, “Bill, I think you’d better call the Fish and Game Department and sort this out.”

“That’s just what I’m going to do,” Dad said.
Dad walked into the next room, where the telephone was, and closed the door. Frank’s father said, “I ought to be getting back. Frank, you ready to head home?”

Frank nodded. Maria said she should go home, too. Momma offered to take everyone in the truck, since my dad was on the phone. After the four of them left, I sat at the kitchen table, trying to hear Dad through the door. I could only catch a few muffled words. Minutes later, Dad came back into the kitchen.

“Did you talk to the Fish and Game Department?” I asked.

“I did,” Dad said. “I reported that there’s a family of wild razorbacks living near Sycamore Creek. They were very interested.”

“So, what’ll the Fish and Game Department do?”

“Well, they’ll probably send a ranger out to take care of them.”

I didn’t know what “take care of them” meant, but it didn’t sound good. “What do you mean, Dad?” I asked.

Dad sat down at the table. He spoke softly but sternly. “Well, Tommy, wild razorbacks are very dangerous. The Fish and Game Department may have to kill them. Too many families live around here. Too many kids play near Sycamore Creek.”
At first I was relieved. The Beast had scared us badly.
I wanted it to be gone forever. But then I thought some more.
“Dad, did you say there was a family of razorbacks?” I asked.

“Yes. When Mr. Chen I were out there, we saw a sow, a boar, and their baby razorback.” He explained that the sow was the mother hog and the boar was the daddy. “The razorback that came running after you kids was probably the mother. Mother hogs often get angry when people come near their babies. She was probably just protecting her family.”

A thought popped into my mind. “So a mother hog was just protecting her family, and now the Fish and Game Department’s going to kill them?” I cried. “That doesn’t make any sense. It’s not fair!” I felt guilty. It was all our fault. If we hadn’t been fishing near Sycamore Creek, the hogs would have been left alone. “Can’t you do something, Dad? It isn’t right!”

Dad looked at me. He thought for a moment. Then he said, “Tommy, I’ll call my friend at Fish and Game and see what he thinks. Okay? But I’m not making any promises.”

For the second time that day, I felt tears welling up.
This time, it was for a completely different reason. “Wait a minute,” I said. “Let me make the call.”
Dad looked at me. He didn’t seem to understand. “Listen,” I said, “I know I told you that the razorback was a terrible beast. And I know I said that it scared the dickens out of Frank, Maria, and me. But I didn’t know that the sow was just protecting her baby. It doesn’t seem fair that they should kill the razorbacks just because we were bothering them.”

Dad scratched his thick beard and looked off into the distance. After a while, he spoke. “Okay, son. You’ve convinced me. Let’s see if we can protect that razorback family somehow.”

I tried to smile, but my mind was going a mile a minute. I was confused. Just a few hours ago, I had wanted someone to get rid of The Beast. But now here I was trying to protect the razorback and her family. It was very strange.

Dad reached for a piece of paper and wrote down a telephone number. “This is how to reach Joe Louis at the Fish and Game Department,” he said. “Give him a call. Tell him you’re my son. Tell him everything that you just told me, and see what he has to say. But, I must warn you. Joe will listen to you, but he will also be concerned about the safety of the people in town. He may say that we can’t have wild razorbacks running around and causing trouble.”
“They’re not causing trouble!” I protested. “They’re just keeping to themselves by Sycamore Creek!”

“I know, I know,” said Dad. “But you’ve got to learn that people see things differently sometimes. Joe has to keep the safety of the townspeople in mind. I just don’t want you to get disappointed, okay?”

“Okay, Dad,” I said, “I understand. But I still have to see what I can do.”

All of a sudden I was nervous. I had never called an official government agency before.

And now here I was trying to convince the Fish and Game Department not to kill the razorbacks. I certainly didn’t know what would happen. Would they listen to me, a little kid? I walked into the other room and picked up the phone. I at least had to try.

I dialed the number Dad had given me. It rang a few times. Then someone picked up the line. “Joe Louis, Fish and Game,” the voice said.

I cleared my throat. “Mr. Louis? My name is Tommy Miller. I’m Bill Miller’s son,” I said.
Mr. Louis said, “Oh, the razorback hunter!” I thought I heard him chuckle on the other end of the line. “Thanks for letting us know about the razorbacks you found, Tommy. They can be dangerous, especially around people. We’re going to take care of them right away.”

I knew that I had to act quickly. Although I was nervous, I tried to sound brave. “Mr. Louis, that’s what I want to talk to you about. My dad told me that you might hurt the razorbacks. Is that true?”

Mr. Louis paused for a moment. Then he said, “We might. You see, we have to keep in mind the safety of the people who live around here. Especially the kids. My son fishes down at Sycamore Creek sometimes.”

I cleared my throat again. “Mr. Louis, I don’t think that’s fair. The razorbacks aren’t hurting anyone. In fact, my dad says that the mother razorback charged us only because she was protecting her family. I’d feel terrible if something happened to the razorbacks just because my friends and I got too close to their baby today.”
There was silence on the other end of the line. I only hoped that Mr. Louis was considering what I had said. I kept talking. “When I first saw the razorback, I thought it was the most terrible beast I had ever seen. It frightened my friends and me half to death. But since then, I’ve had a change of heart. Please, please, don’t hurt the razorbacks, Mr. Louis. There must be some other way to solve this problem. Isn’t there anything else you can do?”

Mr. Louis listened to what I’d said. “Well,” he said, clearing his throat, “I’ll tell you what, Tommy. I’ll discuss this with the rest of Fish and Game. We’ll think about it, and we’ll see what we can come up with. Your argument was very convincing. We’ll give it some thought.”

It sounded like a fair judgment. I thanked Mr. Louis politely for his time and hung up the phone. Now I could only wait.
Days passed without any news from Mr. Louis. One afternoon, we decided to go back to Sycamore Creek to check on the razorbacks—from a distance. Frank and his dad, Maria, my father, and I all piled into the pickup. We drove to the bend in the creek. But we couldn’t quite get there. The Fish and Game Department had built a fence around the area near the bend. On the fence was a sign: “Arkansas Wildlife Safety Zone.” Underneath was a picture of a razorback hog family.

The Fish and Game Department had decided to protect the razorback family after all. But they had also tried to protect the people around town. They had figured out a way to do both. The fence kept people from the area where the razorbacks lived. It also kept the razorbacks from hurting people.
It was kind of like having our own zoo. Through the fence, we could watch the razorback family. The baby hog played in the saw grass as her family grazed around her. The sow dug under the magnolia trees, and the boar hunted for food. We stood and watched these creatures. They didn’t seem so terrible any more.

I turned to Dad. “They’re actually kind of beautiful, aren’t they, Dad?” I said.

Dad tousled my hair and watched the animals. “They certainly are, Tommy. They certainly are.”

Now, many years later, the razorback family is gone. Razorbacks don’t live forever. Fish and Game tore the fence down a few years ago. But they kept the sign. They nailed it to a magnolia tree. Sometimes I walk by that sign and remember the lessons I learned that long ago spring—lessons about people and wildlife and about what kids can do when they put their minds to it.
Andante grazioso. ($\text{♩} = 120$)
**INTRODUCTION**

*Many Instruments Working Together*

You sit up in your seat as the lights dim slightly. The conductor clears his throat and raises his baton into the air. There is brief silence. Then, the conductor swoops his baton through the air.

The rumble of the timpani, or kettledrums, echoes through the symphony hall. Next, you hear the majestic blast of the trumpets, followed by the strings and woodwinds. There is nothing like a well-rehearsed orchestra. So many pieces work together to make wonderful music. You can hear each instrument separately, but you can also hear the sounds they make together.

What instruments make up an orchestra? An orchestra has four basic sections. One section is the strings. Another is the woodwinds. Remember the brass instruments, and don’t forget the percussion! Let’s explore each one and the most popular instruments in those sections.

*orchestra (n):*
A group of musicians who perform instrumental music.
The stringed instruments, or strings, are the backbone of most orchestras. In fact, the earliest orchestras had only stringed instruments! Imagine an orchestra without trumpets and trombones! That’s not the case any more. But still, an orchestra usually has more strings than any other type of instrument.

You may know of cellos, violins, violas, basses, and harps. These are all stringed instruments. Each has its own special sound. Each plays a different role in the orchestra. But how do stringed instruments work?

All stringed instruments work the same way. Strings stretch across the instrument’s wooden body. With many stringed instruments, the musician slides a bow across the strings. The bow makes the strings vibrate. The vibration moves into the wooden part of the instrument and makes the sound.

Did you know?
The bows used with stringed instruments are usually made of soft fibers, such as silk or horse hair.
The bigger the instrument, the deeper and lower the sound is. A string player uses his or her fingers to alter the length of the strings. The shorter the string is, the higher the sound it makes. Making the string longer makes a lower sound. Let’s look at a few of the stringed instruments in an orchestra.
**Violin**

In a typical orchestra, there are as many violins as there are all other stringed instruments combined. The violinists sit to the left of the conductor, who faces the orchestra. The violins often carry the melody, or tune, of the song that the orchestra plays. So when they do, it is easy to identify them. A violinist holds the instrument between the chin and shoulder with one hand. The fingers on that hand alter the lengths of the strings to play different notes. The other hand moves the bow across the strings to make the violin’s sound.

**Viola**

The viola section is on the other side of the conductor. Violas are played and held the same way as the violins. The only difference is the sound. Violas are larger than violins, so the sounds they make are deeper.

**Cello**

Near the viola is the cello (CHELL-o) section. Cellos are very similar to violins and violas. Violin and viola players play their instruments on their shoulders. The cello is much larger than the violin, so the cellist holds it between his or her legs. Because the cello is bigger than the violin and viola, it makes a lower sound.
Bass

The bass section sits behind the viola section. The bass is the largest of all the stringed instruments. It looks like a giant cello. It is played the same way as the cello, except the bassist must sit on a stool to reach the strings.

Harp

The harp is the final stringed instrument in a typical orchestra. Most orchestras have only one harpist. The harp is different from all the other stringed instruments. It doesn’t have the same shape. It has an open frame with strings that go from one side to the other, or that span it. The harpist does not use a bow, as the other stringed instrument players do. The harpist plucks or strokes the strings of the harp with his or her fingers. The harp makes both high and low sounds.

Note this!

The harp is thought to be the oldest stringed instrument. Images of harps have been found on walls and columns from ancient Egypt.
Woodwinds are the second largest of the four major sections of the orchestra. Unlike string instruments, woodwinds are played by blowing air into them. In fact, the word woodwind gives a couple of clues about how these instruments work.

Saxophones, clarinets, oboes, and bassoons are all woodwinds. These instruments have mouthpieces into which the musicians blow. The mouthpieces of these instruments have wooden reeds, or small pieces of wood. These pieces of wood vibrate as the air, or wind, blows across them. The vibrations move through the instruments, creating sounds.
Each instrument makes a different sound, depending on its size and shape. Notes are played when the musician opens and closes holes on the instrument to change the sound. The musician does this by pressing buttons with pads, called keys. Just like the strings, the woodwinds often play the melody of the song. Strings and woodwinds are also alike because they both come in a variety of sizes and shapes. Some woodwinds are small and make very high sounds. Other larger woodwind instruments make very low sounds. Each one has an important role to play.

Most orchestras have violins, violas, cellos, and basses. But not all orchestras have the same woodwinds. However, most have flutes, clarinets, oboes, and bassoons. These are the most popular woodwinds. So let’s find out a little more about each one.
Flute

The flute is an interesting woodwind. It doesn’t have a reed. Rather, the flautist blows across a small opening. Although the flute has keys like the other woodwinds, it is made of metal. Most clarinets, oboes, and bassoons are made of wood. Also, musicians hold the other woodwind instruments in front of their bodies. The flautist holds the flute off to the side. Flautists sit in front of the clarinets, behind the violinists.

Clarinet

The clarinet looks similar to the flute but it is held in front of the body and ends with a flare opening. However, unlike the flute, the clarinet has a reed. The single reed vibrates against the wooden or plastic mouthpiece and sends vibrations through the instrument. Like the flute, the clarinet also has keys for playing notes.

Note this!

Flutes are one of the world’s oldest wind instruments. They were first made by hollowing out pieces of wood and drilling holes in them. Nearly every culture has a type of flute.
**Oboe**

The sound of the oboe is deeper than the clarinet. Oboe players sit next to the flautists. The oboe is slightly larger than the clarinet, but it is played the same way. It has a double reed. That means it has two reeds as its mouthpiece. When the oboeist blows into the reeds, they vibrate. This vibration moves through the instrument. Many consider the oboe to be the most useful woodwind because it has a broad range of tones. The oboe players sit behind the violas.

**Bassoon**

Like the bass, the bassoon is an instrument that makes a very low sound. The bassoon makes the lowest sounds in the woodwind section. The bassoon is also a double-reed woodwind. A bassoon has about eight feet of tubing that is bent to make it about three feet long. The bassoon has a cousin called the contra bassoon, which plays even deeper notes and is twice as long.
The brass section is usually the loudest section in the orchestra. Like the woodwinds and the strings, the brass section sometimes plays the melody for the orchestra. Brass instruments have other roles too, such as helping to maintain the tempo, or speed, of the song.

Brass instruments are actually made of brass. Trumpets, trombones, tubas, and French horns are all brass instruments. One long brass tube is coiled around and around in brass instruments. Each of these instruments is also a wind instrument. That means the musicians make sounds by blowing into them, just like the woodwinds. But a typical brass instrument is much, much louder than a woodwind instrument.

**Did you know?**

Most of the brass instruments have keys that change how the instruments sound.
Brass instruments differ from woodwinds in other ways too. We learned that most woodwinds have reeds and that these reeds vibrate. Brass instruments do not have reeds. When musicians play brass instruments, their lips vibrate as they blow into the mouthpieces. Their lips act as reeds. The more slowly the lips move, the lower the sound is. The more quickly the lips move, the higher the sound is. The size of the mouthpiece also affects the sound. The smaller mouthpiece of the trumpet helps the player make high-pitched sounds. The larger mouthpiece of the tuba helps the player make lower sounds.

Most orchestra’s brass sections are composed of trumpets, tubas, trombones, and French horns. Some orchestras have other brass instruments such as flugelhorns (FLEW-gull-horns) and coronets. But let’s learn about the more common brass instruments.
Trumpet

The trumpet makes the highest and loudest sounds in the brass section. The trumpet is one long tube coiled around four times until it is about a foot and a half long. It has three keys at the top to play different notes. To play the trumpet, you must hold your lips together very tightly. As you blow into it, your lips vibrate very quickly. Some people say that the trumpet is the hardest brass instrument to play. Many think it’s the most useful. Some brass instruments have a range of only one or two octaves. An octave is range of eight notes. The trumpet has a range of more than three. Because of this feature, there are more trumpets than any other instrument in the brass section.

French Horn

The French horn is one of the most unusual instruments in the orchestra. The French horn, like the trumpet, is a long, coiled brass tube. However, the French horn coils in such a way that the mouthpiece and the bell (the end the sound comes from) point in the same direction! When you play the French horn, the sound doesn’t go forward; it actually goes backward!
**Trombone**

The trombone is another interesting brass instrument. It is very long. Instead of having keys, the trombone has a slide. The trombone player uses the slide to make the trombone’s brass tube longer or shorter as he or she plays it. Changing the length of the brass tube changes the sound. How tightly the trombone player holds his or her lips also changes the sound. Trombones have a large range. That means they can play some very high notes and some very low ones. Some trombones have what is called a *trigger*. The trigger helps the player reach even lower notes. This makes the trombone a useful instrument in any orchestra.

**Tuba**

The tuba doesn’t usually play the melody of the song. The tuba plays the lowest notes of all the brass instruments. It helps set the speed of the song. Tuba players often play with the beat of the drums in the percussion section. The tuba is so large that tuba players have to hold their instruments in their laps.
Percussionists sit or stand behind the rest of the orchestra. Percussion instruments all have one thing in common—they make sounds when the musicians playing them hit one part against another. Drums are percussion instruments, as are triangles and cymbals. One important role of the percussion section is to keep the beat, or tempo, of the song. As the other instruments make the melody and other parts of the music, the percussion instruments keep the beat.

Most orchestras have the same four percussion instruments. They have a snare drum, a bass drum, the timpani, and the cymbals. Some orchestras also have xylophones (ZI-luh-fones) and triangles.

**percussion (n):**
The tapping or striking of one thing against another or the instruments played in such a way.
Snare Drum and Cymbals

The snare drums and cymbals add a crash and rattle to songs played by the orchestra. Snare drums make a variety of sounds. When the player hits the drum, coiled metal wires vibrate on the bottom of the drum, adding a rattling noise. Players can also soften the snare’s sound by playing it with metal brushes instead of sticks.

Timpani and Bass Drums

The timpani and bass drums are the lowest-sounding drums in the percussion section. The percussionist strikes a soft or hard padded stick against a tight piece of leather. The echo from striking the instrument vibrates through the body of the drum. The body of the drum is the called the kettle. During a song, the timpani player uses a pedal to make the sound higher or lower. There are no keys or slides. Each drum offers a low, thumping sound that helps the other musicians keep the beat.

Note this!

Percussion instruments are thought to be the second-oldest instruments in the world. Early humans figured out that clapping, stamping their feet, or hitting sticks together created noise and rhythm.
The strings, woodwinds, brass, and percussion all have a part to play in an orchestra performance. Within each section, each instrument makes its own sound, but it also works with the other instruments to make music.

What keeps everything working smoothly? How does each musician know when to start and when to rest? That’s the conductor’s job. The conductor holds everything together. He or she stands in front of the orchestra, facing them. The conductor is the leader of the group and is usually called by the Italian word for master, maestro (MY-stro). The conductor waves a baton to let the musicians know when to play and when to rest. The conductor also uses the baton to keep everyone at the right tempo. The conductor points to the musicians in each section when it is their turn to play.

**Note this!**

The conductor’s baton wasn’t always a small wand. Conductors used to use big heavy staffs that they banged on the floor to help the orchestra keep the right rhythm.
The evening of music is over. The maestro turns to face the audience. He bows. The audience claps. Some people in the audience shout “Bravo! Bravo!” Others throw roses at the stage. The musicians stand and bow as well. The cheers from the audience echo through the hall. The lights slowly come up. You get ready to leave. You’re amazed at how so many musicians with such different instruments can work so well together.

\{ Bravo, maestro! Bravo! \}