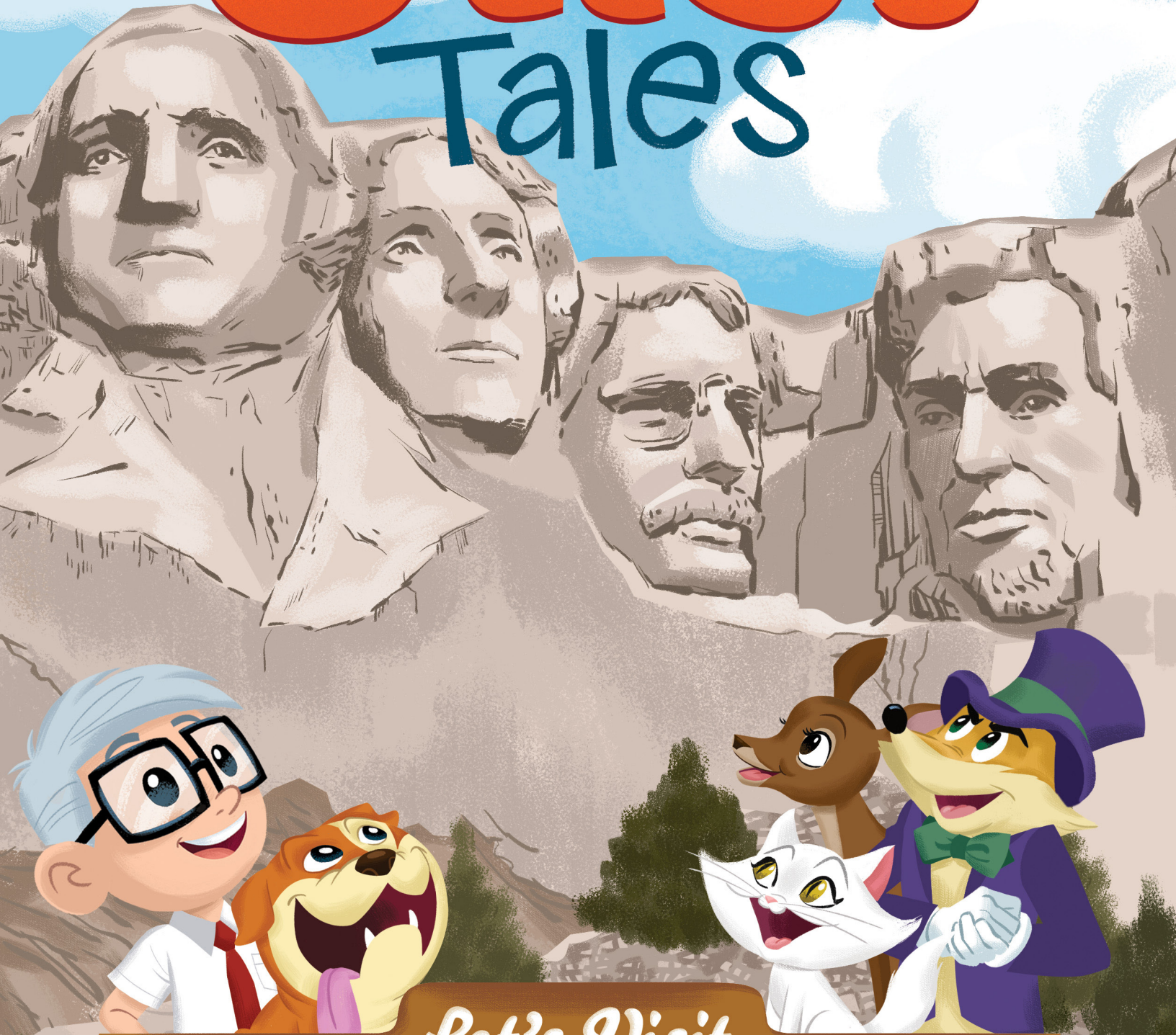


Otto's Tales



Let's Visit

MOUNT RUSHMORE

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Otto's Tales

Let's Visit

MOUNT RUSHMORE



A giant mound of clay sat on Dennis's desk, and Otto watched his best friend scrape away pieces with a set of sharp tools.



“Ruff Ruff!” Otto barked. “What are you making, Dennis?”

“I’m making a sculpture of an American monument for my art class,” Dennis explained. “I’m using this picture of **Mount Rushmore** as my inspiration.” Dennis pointed to a photo of four large heads carved into a hillside.

Otto squinted at the photo. “It’s kind of hard to see the details. We should go and visit in person,” Otto suggested.

“I wish!” Dennis exclaimed, “But I’ve still got other homework to finish besides this sculpture...”



"I know!" Otto barked excitedly. "I can go and do some research for you. Every great sculptor needs an assistant, right?"



"And every assistant needs a snack guide," chimed in a fluffy, tiny cat from the doorway.

"Smidge!" Otto and Dennis greeted.

"You want inspiration? A fudge sundae is my **muse**! You should carve that," Smidge encouraged.



"I've already started, Smidge, and I'm on a deadline," Dennis explained.

"Then we'd better get going to Mount Rushmore to start your research, Dennis," Otto said. "How do we get there?"

"I just got a new bike. We could ride it together," Smidge said with pride.

"Mount Rushmore is in **South Dakota**. You can't ride your bike there. It's way too far!" Dennis laughed.

"Then we'll have to fly," Otto decided. "Smidge, let's take your bike to the airport."

"Have fun!" Dennis waved goodbye. "And don't get lost!"



At the airport, Smidge stocked up on snacks, while Otto bought maps, a camera, and a set of binoculars. When they landed in South Dakota, they were ready for a sightseeing adventure!



Outside the airport, a fox wearing a top hat held up a sign that read: "*Mt. Rushmore Tourists This Way!*"

"Now, if I could just figure out which way to hold this..." Otto muttered, turning the map over and over.

Smidge tapped Otto. "That fox looks like he knows where to go. Let's ask him."

"Terrific tours, right this way!" The fox announced.

"Hi, I'm Otto and this is Smidge," Otto said to the fox. "We'd like a tour of Mount Rushmore."



The fox's eyes glittered like gems. "Of course. Welcome! My name is Mr. Louis Sebastian Charlemagne Swindler the Third."

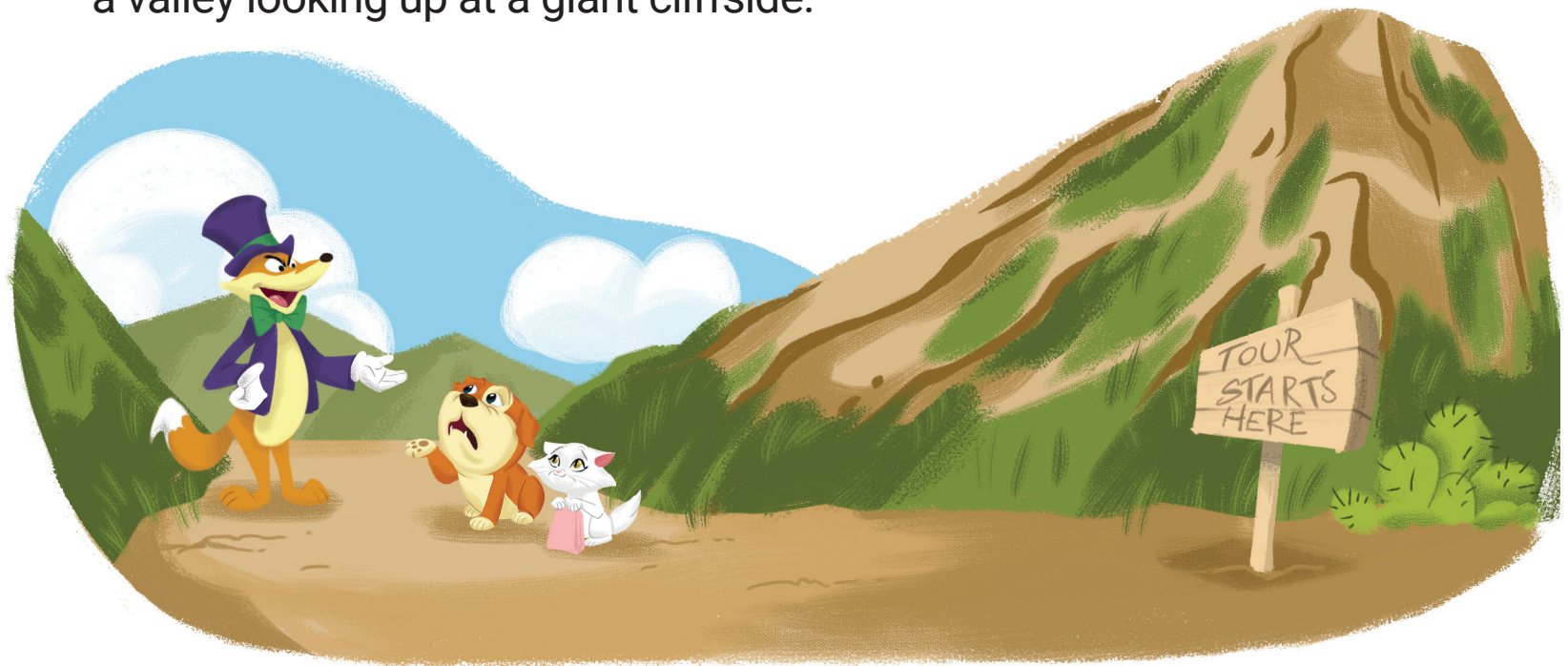
"That's a mouthful!" Smidge said, stuffing her own mouth with cheesy chips. "Can we call you Mr. Swindler?"

"Fine," Mr. Swindler sighed. "Follow me."





He brought them to his motorcycle, and the three **ZOOMED** away down a winding road. After quite some time, they stopped in a valley looking up at a giant cliffside.



“The tour begins here, and of course, payment is required up front,” Mr. Swindler held out his paw.

“But we don’t have any more money! We spent it all on plane tickets...and Smidge’s snacks,” Otto groaned.

"I accept payment in snacks," Mr. Swindler said, with a toothy grin.

Smidge held tight to her pack of snacks. "No way!"



"Well, then, I guess you'll have to do the self-guided tour," Mr. Swindler said. "Follow the trail starting by the thorn bushes, and no matter how narrow the trail gets, just keep going. It's fine. I promise."



Otto and Smidge looked at the trail with concern, then back at Mr. Swindler...but the fox was gone!





"Where did he go?" Smidge cried out.

"I don't know," Otto barked, "but this doesn't look right." He studied the hillside. "We're supposed to see faces carved up there, 60 feet tall...like George Washington and Abraham Lincoln."



"If you squint, the rocks kind of look like giant fingers... mmm fish fingers," Smidge licked her lips and dug through her snack bag.

"According to the maps I got, we should see faces, not fingers. I don't think we're in the right place," Otto said with disappointment.



"This isn't as cool as I thought it'd be. Or maybe we went to the wrong Dakota! We should just go home," Smidge pouted. "This is a lousy tour."

Otto walked over to the trail and looked through his binoculars. Through them, he saw a doe right in front of him—blending in with the scenery!

“Hello dears, need some help?” the doe asked.

“Oh, hello! I’m Otto, and this is Smidge,” Otto said, “We were—”

“Ditched by a deceptive fox?” she asked.

“Yeah!!” Smidge and Otto exclaimed.



"Oh, that sneaky fox! He does that to all the tourists. I'm Miss Jane Dee. I'd be delighted to take you to the real Mount Rushmore," Miss Jane said.

"Thank you!" Otto said gratefully.

"We're on the back side of the hills. Mr. Swindler is selfish and leaves visitors here so he can enjoy the view all to himself," Miss Jane explained. "But this monument is too dazzling not to share with others. Follow me!"

Otto and Smidge followed Miss Jane up the hillside.





“Look! A giant nose! Lips! Eyes!” Otto shouted.

“And those chiseled chins!” Smidge chimed in.

“Those noses are 20 feet tall,” Miss Jane said. “They’re made of granite, which means they’re durable. It will take a *long* time for them to wear away.”

“I see George Washington and Abraham Lincoln,” Otto noted. “Who are the other two?”



“Thomas Jefferson and Theodore Roosevelt. These Presidents were chosen because they represent key periods in our American history—our birth, growth, **preservation**, and development.”

“What a special way to honor these great men!” Otto barked. “There’s so much detail in the carvings. How long did it take to carve them into the mountain?”



“Construction started in 1927 and ended in 1941, so a total of 14 years! Over 400 people were involved in the carving,” Miss Jane said with pride.

“That’s some impressive teamwork!” Smidge remarked.



Otto took in the view with his binoculars. “Hey! I see Mr. Swindler! He’s sitting on top of Thomas Jefferson’s head, and he’s eating some of Smidge’s snacks.”

Smidge huffed. “How dare he steal my snacks?! I knew my bag felt lighter.”

“Oh dear. But don’t worry,” Miss Jane assured them. “This monument was made for tourists to enjoy, and there is one place Mr. Swindler doesn’t know about. I’ll take you there.”



“Where are we going?” Smidge asked, as they climbed up behind Abraham Lincoln’s massive head.

“There’s a secret room here behind Lincoln’s head,” Miss Jane revealed. “It’s called the **Hall of Records.**”



They made their way into a rectangular opening in the granite rock.

“It feels like we’re going on a treasure hunt,” Otto remarked. “Who made this?”

“The idea came from the monument’s designer, **Gutzon Borglum**. He had a grand vision to make this room a vault to display America’s history,” Miss Jane told them.





“So where’s all the history? It looks like an empty hallway,” Smidge observed.

“Unfortunately, Borglum died before seeing his dream come to life. But, in 1998, panels showcasing the words of our **Declaration of Independence** and **United States Constitution** were put in here,” Miss Jane explained.



She pointed to a stone slab at the entrance of the hall. "They're stored safely in a vault underneath that stone," she said.



"Wow, this feels like a movie!" Otto said in amazement.
"Thanks for a great tour, Miss Jane."

"Yeah!" Smidge agreed. "I'm really glad we didn't give up when Mr. Swindler left us. Turns out something better was waiting for us!"

"Dear me, you're very kind. It's been a delightful time. I can take you back down," Miss Jane offered.

"Thanks!" Otto barked. "Wow, Smidge, we're going to have so much to tell Dennis."



Back at Dennis's house, Otto and Smidge rushed into his bedroom.

"How was your trip?" Dennis asked.

"So cool," Otto said.

"Except for meeting a sneaky fox who took us to the wrong place and stole my snacks," Smidge muttered.

"Besides that," Otto went on, "we got to meet a nice doe named Miss Jane who brought us to the monument, and she even showed us a secret room behind Abraham Lincoln's head in the rocks!"

"Sounds like a blast," Dennis replied.

“That was my favorite adventure yet!” Otto exclaimed.

“You say that every time, Otto,” Dennis and Smidge said at the same time.



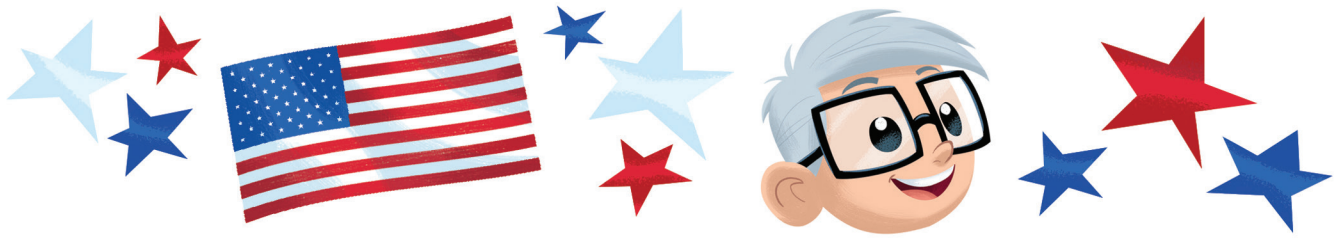
“Since you’re both experts now, want to help me put the finishing touches on my sculpture?” Dennis asked, handing them both a carving tool.

“I still think a fudge sundae is a better inspiration,” Smidge insisted.

Otto chuckled, “And I think it should be 59 feet taller. **Ruff Ruff!**”

“Well, I think it’s looking great,” Dennis said. “I’m going to ace this assignment.”

“Oh dear,” Smidge replied with a wink. “Be careful or else you might get a big head, Dennis!”



We Love Our History

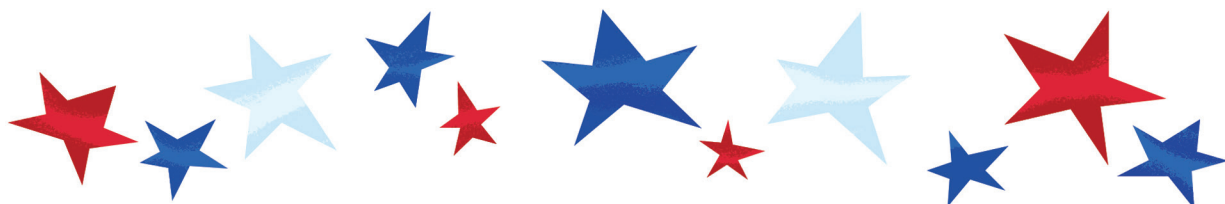
Mount Rushmore: Mount Rushmore National Memorial is a massive sculpture carved into Mount Rushmore in the Black Hills region of South Dakota. The monument's 60-foot-tall granite faces depict U.S. Presidents George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, Theodore Roosevelt, and Abraham Lincoln.

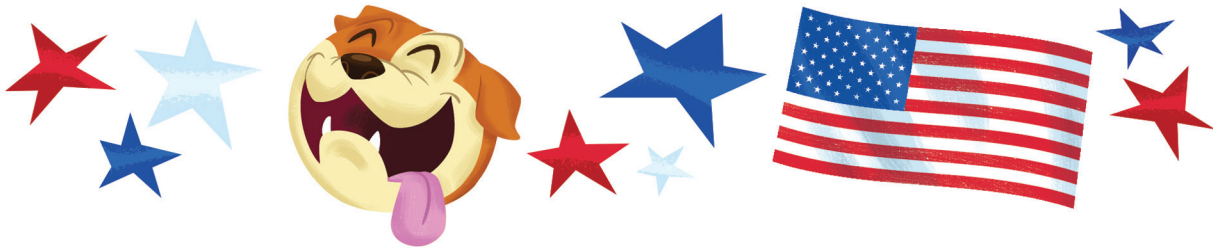
Muse: A person or imaginary being who is the source of inspiration for an artist.

South Dakota: A state in the Northern Central United States. Rolling prairies give way to the Black Hills National Forest. This state is home to two historical monuments: Mount Rushmore and the Crazy Horse Memorial.

Preservation: The act of keeping something as it is, especially in order to prevent it from decaying or to protect it from being damaged.

Hall of Records: A secret room hidden behind Abraham Lincoln's head on the Mount Rushmore Memorial. The idea came from Gutzon Borglum, the man who designed Mount Rushmore. His vision was to have a hall where America's most important documents were on display. Currently, the hall contains a large, granite slab of stone which covers a hidden vault. The vault houses a box containing panels with the words of several important documents on them, including the Declaration of Independence and the United States Constitution.





Gutzon Borglum: John Gutzon de la Mothe Borglum was an American sculptor best known for his work on Mount Rushmore. He is also known for other public works of art across the U.S., including Stone Mountain in Georgia, the statue of Union General Philip Sheridan in Washington, DC, as well as a bust of Abraham Lincoln which was exhibited in the White House by Theodore Roosevelt.

United States Constitution: The Constitution of the United States is a document that serves as the fundamental law of the country. It established how the federal government should be organized, and it guarantees a number of basic rights and liberties for American citizens. It was drafted in 1787 and became the supreme law of the land in 1788.

Declaration of Independence: The document that announced the separation of 13 North American British colonies from Great Britain. It explained why the Congress had resolved that “these United Colonies are, and of right ought to be Free and Independent States.” The day on which the Declaration of Independence was adopted, July 4th, 1776, has always been celebrated in the United States as the great national holiday—the Fourth of July, or Independence Day.



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**See you in
our *next* adventure!**

- Dennis, Otto,
and Smidge

ABOUT

Otto's Tales

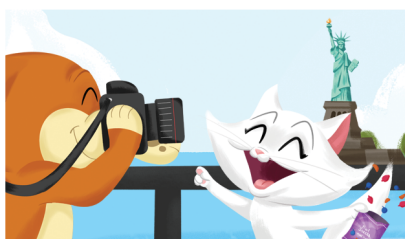
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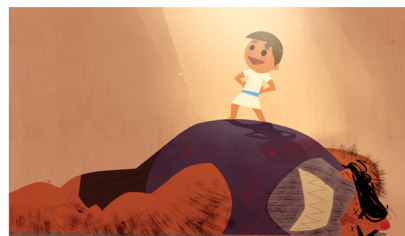
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