

Otto's Tales



Let's Meet

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“How do I look?” Smidge the kitten showed off her new hat.

“**Ruff Ruff!**”

Otto barked. “This isn’t a fashion show, Smidge.”

“Yeah,” Dennis agreed, pushing a box across the attic floor. “We have to organize this stuff for tomorrow’s yard sale.”



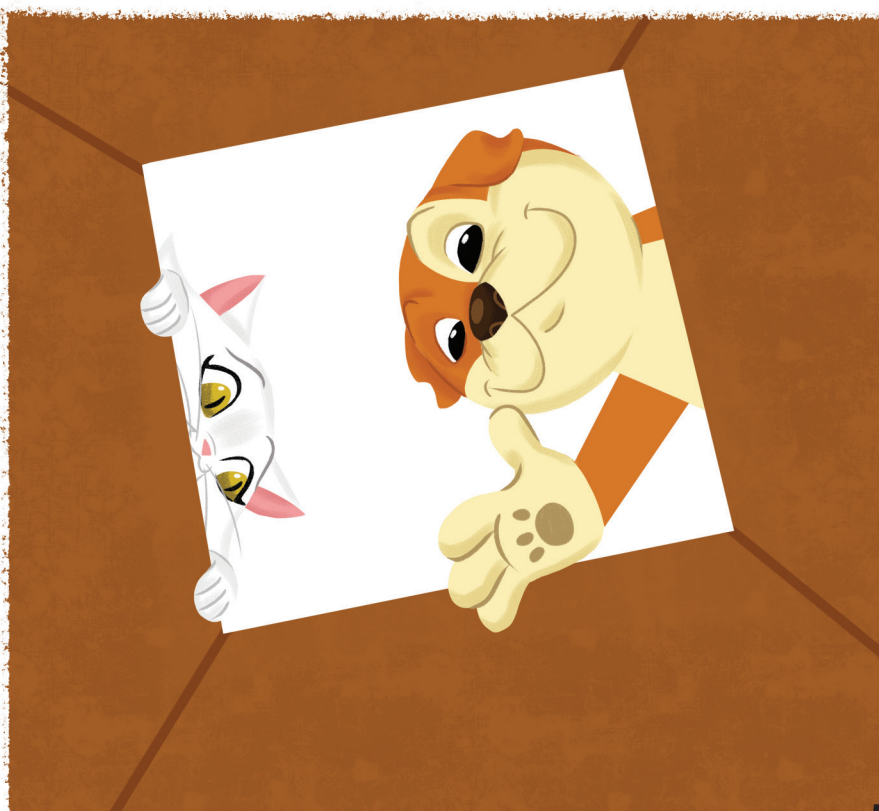


"I am organizing...what I want to keep!" The kitten peered curiously into the new box. "Well, there's nothing in here but a bunch of old boring books," she said.

"Hey, don't judge a book by its cover," Dennis said.

"Who would read these?" Smidge wrinkled her nose. "They smell weird, too."

Otto dug through the box. "There aren't just books in here. Look!"



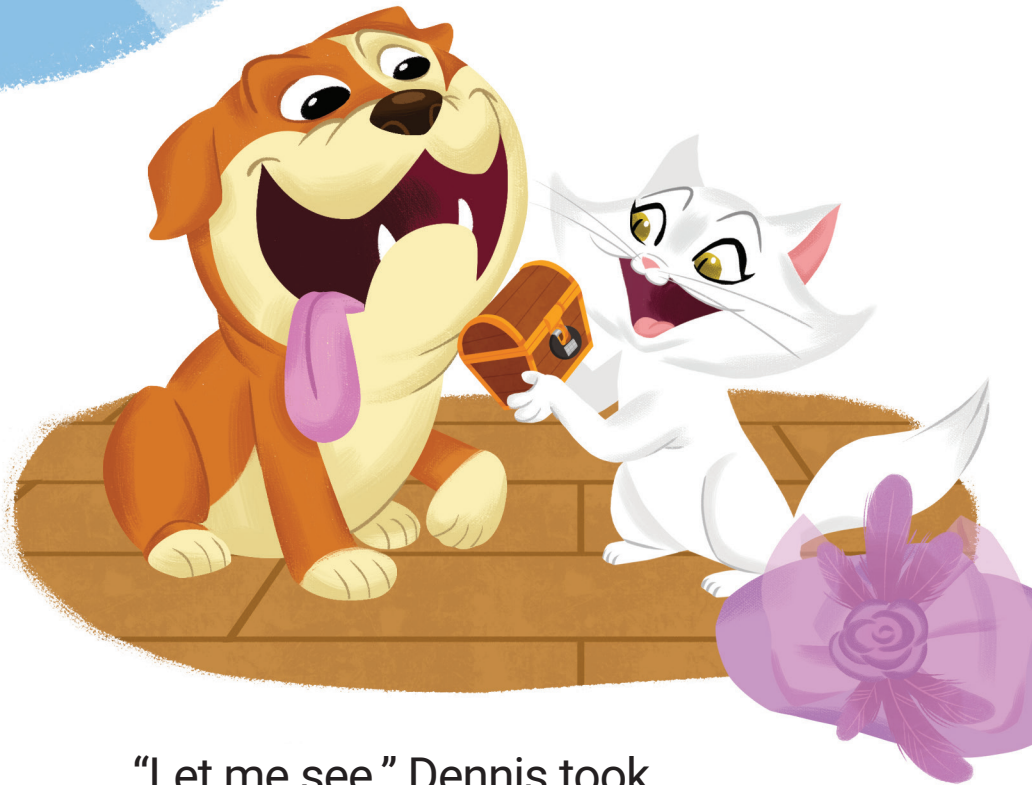


The kitten perked up. "Is that a treasure chest?"

"You never know," Dennis smiled. "One person's trash is another person's treasure."

Smidge grabbed the small chest and shook it. "Could it be gold?"

Otto sniffed it. "Or dog treats?"



"Let me see." Dennis took the chest and turned it over. A handwritten note was taped to the bottom.



The boy's eyes lit with excitement. "It's a riddle!" Dennis read aloud:

To unlock this chest,
three symbols you must guess.

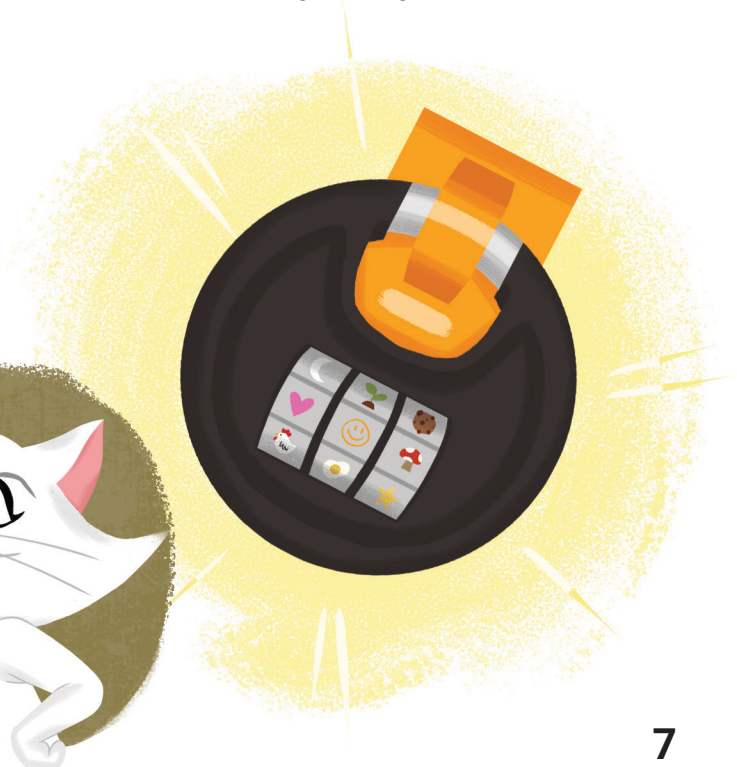
1. A tortoise and hare begin their great race,
but something distracts the hare from his
chase.

2. Silver and gold may be treasures for fools,
but this woodcutter wants his trusty tool.

3. A girl goes on a quest to touch something
bright, climbing a rainbow to reach these
special lights.

"What does that mean?" Smidge was confused.

"Hmm..." Dennis tugged on the lock. "There are three
dials here with symbols and three clues on this paper. If we
solve these riddles, maybe we can unlock this mystery!"





“Dennis!” Mrs. Prager popped her head into the attic. “Almost finished up here? We’re setting things up in the yard.”

“Mom, look what we found!” He showed her the chest and clues.

“I don’t remember this—probably some old game. I’ll add it to the sale.”

“Wait!” Dennis cried. “We want to figure out what’s inside. It could be important.”

Mrs. Prager sighed. “We have a lot of work to do, dear. If you can’t solve it by the end of today, it’s going into the sale tomorrow.” She disappeared down the stairs.





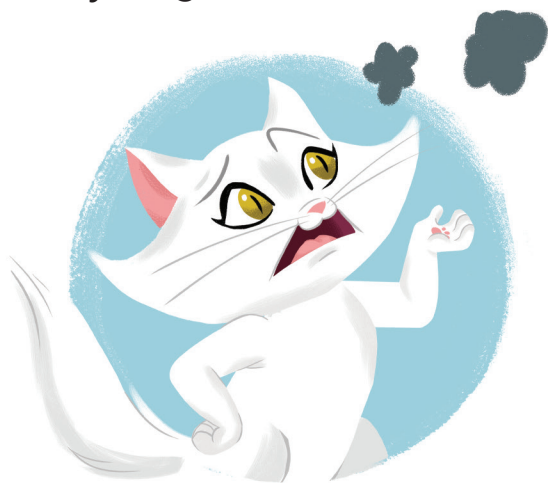
Otto and Smidge looked at Dennis.
“One day?! That’s not enough time.”

“Someone else is going to get my treasure!” the kitten pouted.

“You mean *our* treasure?” Otto corrected her.

Dennis shook his head. “Slow down, you two. We have to focus.” The boy continued, “These sound like **stories**, and the best place to find stories is at the **library!**”

“The library?” Smidge wrinkled her whiskers.
“That’s where you go to do homework and read—not where you go on adventures.”



“Reading is an adventure—in your imagination.” Dennis grinned. “Trust me...let’s go!”



As the friends made their way up the steps of the old, charming library, Smidge was already planning. “When we get inside, you two should do all the reading while I guard the treasure.”



“That’s not fair,” Otto said.
“If you don’t help us find the answers, we might not finish in time,” Dennis pointed out.





As they entered the lobby, Dennis's face lit up.
The kitten and bulldog paused in shock.
"This place is huge!" Smidge exclaimed.



"Shh!" Readers whispered at them.

"Remember to use your inside voice," Dennis reminded them.

"Now, follow me. I know a **librarian** who can help us."

The boy led his friends to a large desk, where an elderly lady with glasses sat reading a book. She looked up and smiled.

"Hello, Dennis, I'm glad to see you," she greeted. "Who are your friends?"



"Hi, Mrs. Anderson," the boy grinned back. "This is Otto and Smidge."

"How can I help you today?" Mrs. Anderson asked. "Is it another school project?"

Smidge piped up,
“We’re on a treasure
hunt!” The kitten placed
the chest and clues on
the desk.

The librarian read the riddles. “How
exciting! I’d be happy to guide you in your
search if you like.”

“Thank you!” the trio replied.

“Let’s get started,” Mrs. Anderson
instructed. “We’ll have to move quickly—
the library closes in two hours.”

As the librarian led them
through the maze of shelves,
Smidge asked, “Do you ever
get bored being surrounded by
books all day?”

“Never!” Mrs. Anderson
replied. “I love books—that’s why
I chose this job. Reading helps
us discover new worlds and
ideas, and I get to help others
find great books every day.”

"That sounds exciting," Otto agreed.

"It's *really* exciting." The librarian stopped at a shelf. "Now, let's think about your first clue."

"It talked about a race between a tortoise and hare," the bulldog remembered.

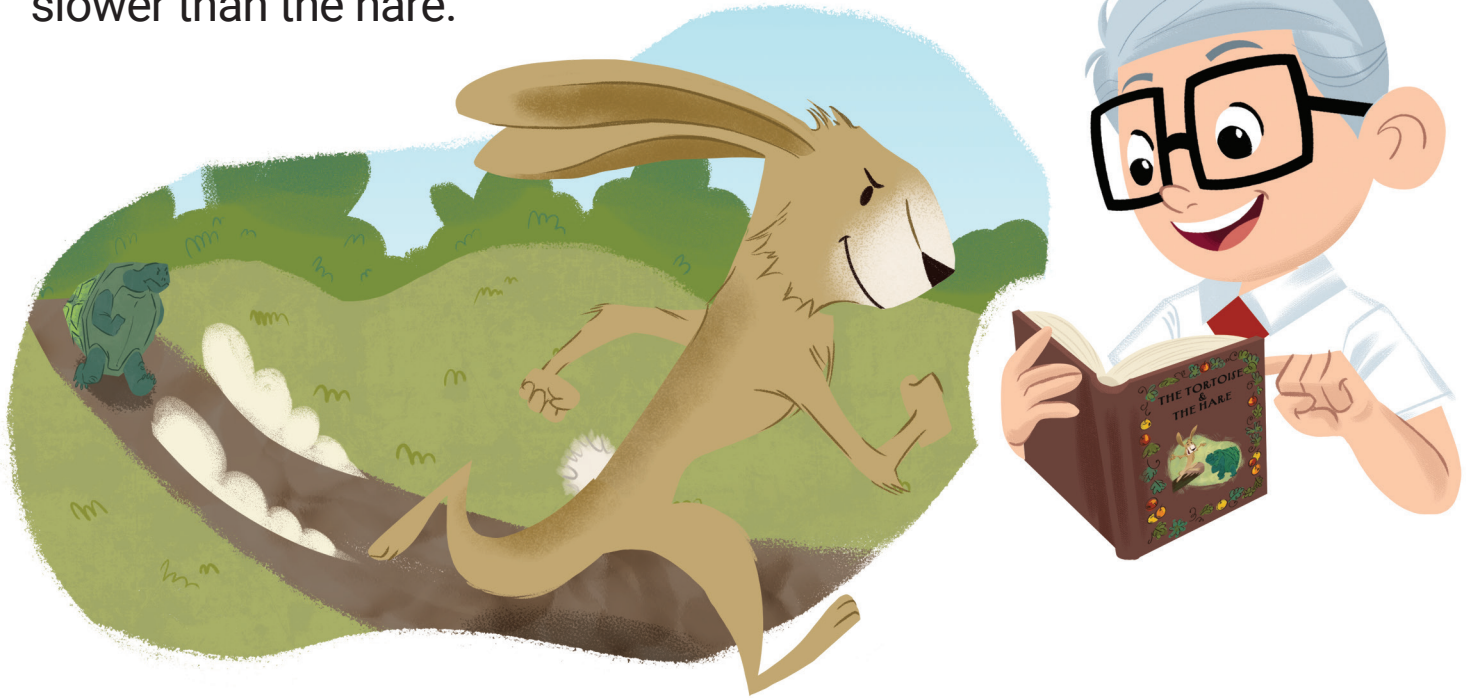


"Right. I know an old story about that," the librarian replied, pulling a book from the shelf and handing it to them.

"Oh, it has pictures!" Smidge was delighted.



Dennis flipped through the pages. He paused on an **illustration** of a race. “That’s it,” the boy said. “The tortoise is much slower than the hare.”



“Obviously, the hare is going to win,” Smidge observed.

“Maybe not,” Otto answered. “The story says the hare decided to pick fruit for all his friends, and that makes him so tired that he takes a nap... which gives the tortoise enough time to win!”





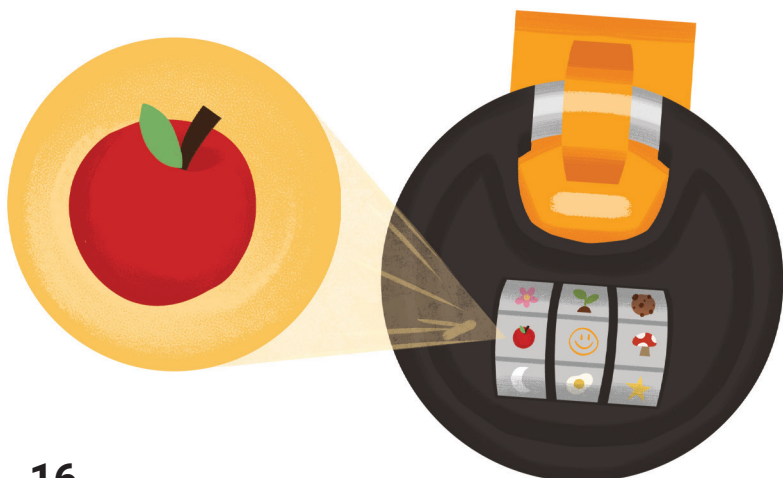
Dennis pointed to the chest.
“The first symbol must be a fruit!
Since that’s what first distracted
the hare.”



“Great job,” Mrs. Anderson
encouraged. “Sometimes,
slow and steady wins the
race. I love how stories can
surprise us with things we
don’t expect.”



“It definitely surprised me,”
Smidge revealed. She turned
the first dial until she found a
fruit symbol—an apple! “One
down, two to go!”





“The next clue is about a woodcutter and his trusty tool,” Otto said. “Where would we find that?”

Mrs. Anderson smiled. “Oh, that’s a good one. Follow me.”

“How do you know where everything is?” Smidge wondered. “There must be thousands of books in here!”

“I make sure everything has a place. A librarian must be organized so people can find books easily. I wouldn’t be able to help anyone if I didn’t know where things were. This is why we have different sections to separate books based on their category or **genre**,” Mrs. Anderson explained.

“Oh, that makes sense,” Otto nodded. “It would be weird to find science books with fairytales.”



“Exactly,” the librarian agreed. She peered closely at a row of books and plucked one out. “This is a favorite of mine. I used to read it when I was about your age.”

Mrs. Anderson led the friends to a corner with cozy chairs. She began to read the story of the woodcutter to them.



Smidge listened closely and became more curious with each page that turned. In the story, a woodcutter’s favorite axe was lost in a river, and when a fairy offered him a silver and gold one to replace it, he refused. “Why would he say no to getting new gold and silver axes?” the kitten asked.



"Because he was honest," Dennis answered.
"Right," Mrs. Anderson said. "The best stories
teach us important lessons about life."



Otto jumped up. "Hey, we know the
second clue! His trusty tool was an axe!"

Smidge had been so interested in the
story, she'd nearly forgotten about the
treasure hunt!

The kitten clicked
the second dial
into place.





Mrs. Anderson gasped. “My, look at the time! The library closes in 15 minutes. I’m afraid I can’t help you find the last clue.”

“Could you point us in the right direction?” Dennis asked.

“Sure, let’s see...a girl who climbs a rainbow to reach special lights. Another wonderful story! That’s three shelves to your right, second row from the top, fifth book in,” Mrs. Anderson finished.

“Thank you!” The friends rushed off, searching for the last story. When they arrived at the spot, they paused. The slot was empty!



“Where is it?” Smidge panicked. “It should be right here. Is it stuck or hidden?” The kitten shimmied into the slot, reaching her paw back as far as it would go.

“Smidge, be careful,” Dennis warned.

“Help! I’m stuck!” the kitten cried out.



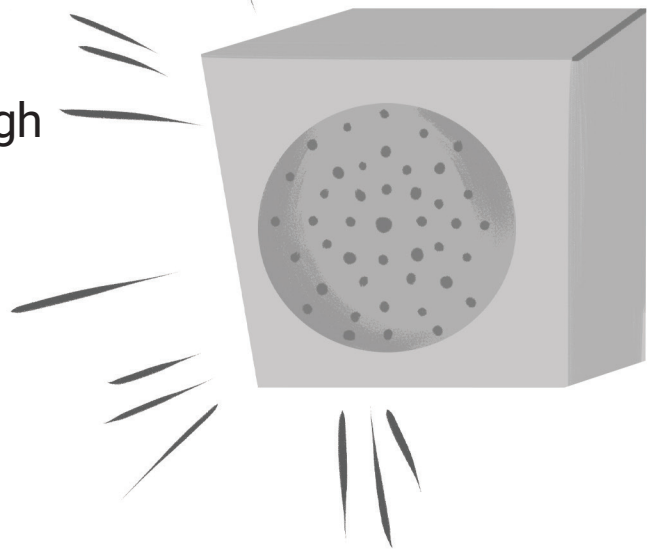
Dennis and Otto grabbed her feet and pulled. With a **THUMP, THUMP, THUMP**, Smidge tumbled from the shelf, along with several books. “Ouch!”



Otto sighed. "Let's hurry and clean this up. We still have to find that book."



When the books were back in their place, an announcement echoed through the room. *"The library closes in five minutes. Please check out any books you'd like to borrow at the front desk."*



Dennis watched people heading towards the desk with stacks of books and got an idea.



“Someone must have the story we’re looking for. Let’s split up and search,” Dennis instructed.

Smidge searched row after row, but each section was empty. Then, she heard pages rustling. A young girl was sitting quietly in a corner, a book in her hands.

“Hi,” the kitten approached her, “what are you reading there?”

Dennis and Otto joined them.

The girl smiled. “It’s a story about a girl who wants to touch a star. She goes on a magical quest and finds a rainbow that she must climb to get to the sky.”



"The special lights are the stars," Smidge realized. "That's the last clue!"

"Let's go open the chest!"
Otto wagged his tail.



"Wait," the kitten paused, looking at the girl. "Do you know if the girl in the story ever touches the star?"

She handed Smidge the book.
"You can find out for yourself. I've already read this 10 times!"

"Thank you!" The kitten bounced gleefully.

On their way out, Mrs. Anderson helped the friends check out Smidge's new book. "I see you found something." She winked. "I also set aside a few more exciting stories for you."



“Really? Thanks!” The kitten beamed, clutching a stack of colorful books. “Reading is not so boring anymore. I love how stories take me on adventures!”

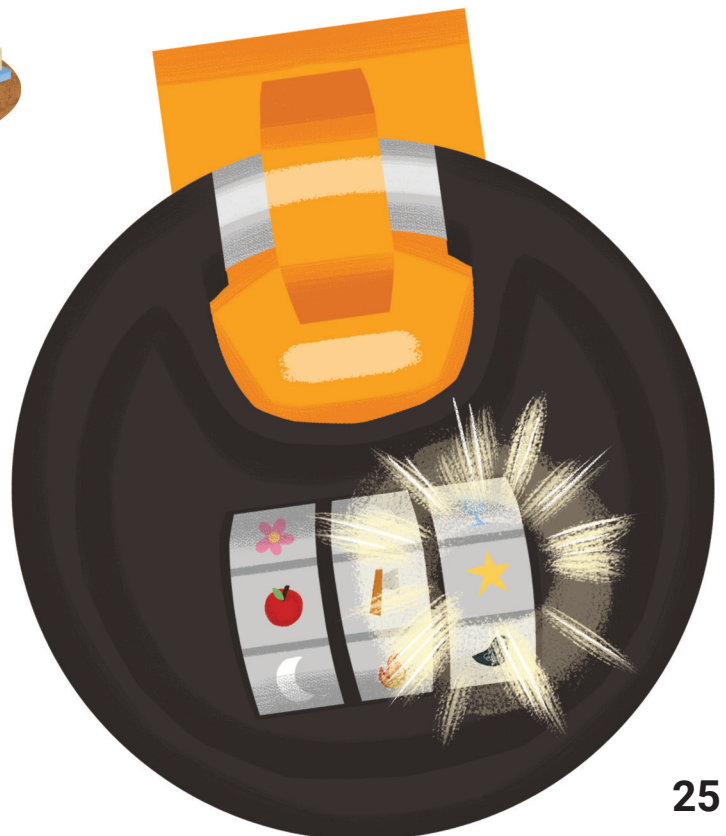
Otto added, “I love how they teach me new things and make me curious.”



“I think you’ve already found your treasure.” Mrs. Anderson’s eyes sparkled. “I hope you come back soon. I have so many more books to recommend!”



When the friends arrived home, Smidge eagerly flipped the last dial to the star symbol. **Click!** The chest sprang open!



“Where’s the treasure?” the kitten frowned. She turned over the box and dumped old photos out of it.



“What’s all this?” Mrs. Prager asked, examining the mess.

“The answer to our riddles,” Dennis explained. “We went to the library—the clues were all about books! Mrs. Anderson helped us read stories and learn about new people and places.”

“I can’t believe it!” Mrs. Prager’s eyes turned misty. “These are old family pictures, and there are even love letters here from my dad to my mom.”



“Oh, like a love story? I want to read them,” Smidge was instantly curious.

“What do they say?” Otto asked.





Dennis's mom began, "My dear, let me tell you a story about when we first met..."

As Mrs. Prager read Grandma and Grandpa's story, Smidge realized something special.

"This treasure hunt didn't go the way I expected, but I learned something more important. This treasure isn't mine to take. It belongs to you, Mrs. Prager."

"That's very kind of you, Smidge," Dennis complimented. "Mrs. Anderson would be proud."

"Please write her a thank you note. I'll sign it too," Mrs. Prager suggested.

"We will!" The trio agreed.

"That was my favorite adventure yet!" Otto barked.
Smidge nudged her friend.
"You say that every time, Otto."



Dennis and Otto spent the rest of the evening setting up for the yard sale, but Smidge couldn't stop reading. She flipped through each page of every book that Mrs. Anderson lent to her. When she discovered a cover titled *Treasure Island*, her eyes widened, and her ears perked straight up.



Dennis grinned at Otto.
"She does know that book is **fiction**, right?"

"**Ruff Ruff!**"



Thank You

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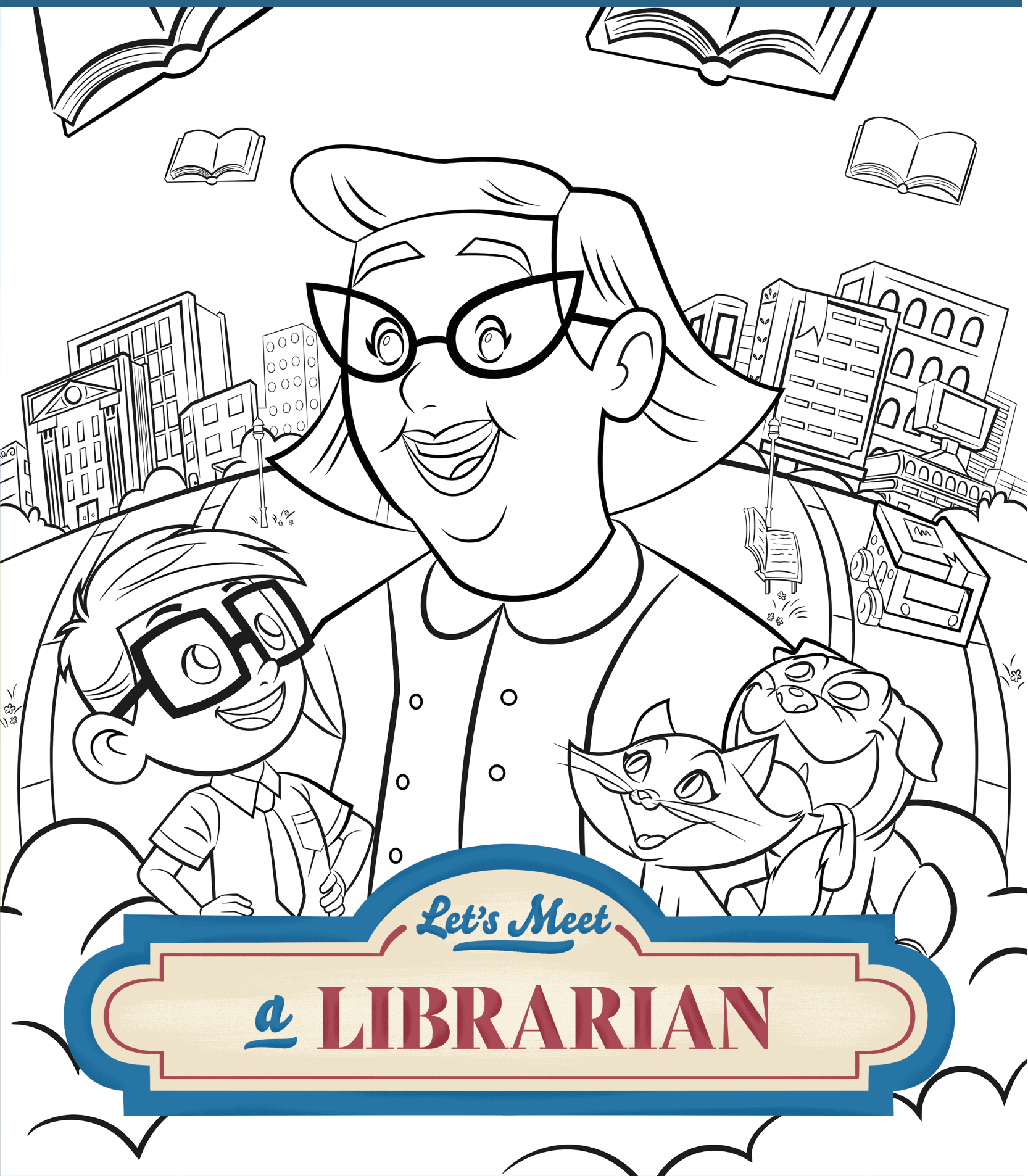
From  PragerU
Kids

Dear



▲ PARENTS, CUT ALONG THIS LINE FOR YOUR CHILD TO WRITE A THANK-YOU NOTE.

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Let's Meet

a

LIBRARIAN



We Love Our Community

Stories: Narratives that follow a series of events, which can be real or imaginary. Popular examples of stories include fables, legends, myths, folktales, etc.

Library: A building where materials such as books, music, films, and other media are available for the general public to study, read, or borrow.

Librarian: A person who is specially trained to work in a library and assists others in finding information or using the resources available at the library.

Illustration: In books, it is a drawing or visual depiction that explains or shows what is happening in the story.

Genre: A category or type of literature, writing, or artistic composition. Common examples include fantasy, history, mystery, etc.

Fiction: A story created from the imagination, involving people, events, and places that are often made up.



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

- Dennis, Otto,
and Smidge

ABOUT

Otto's Tales

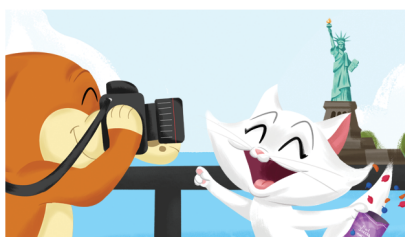
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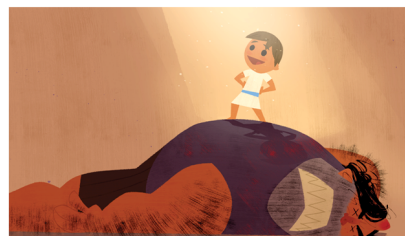
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