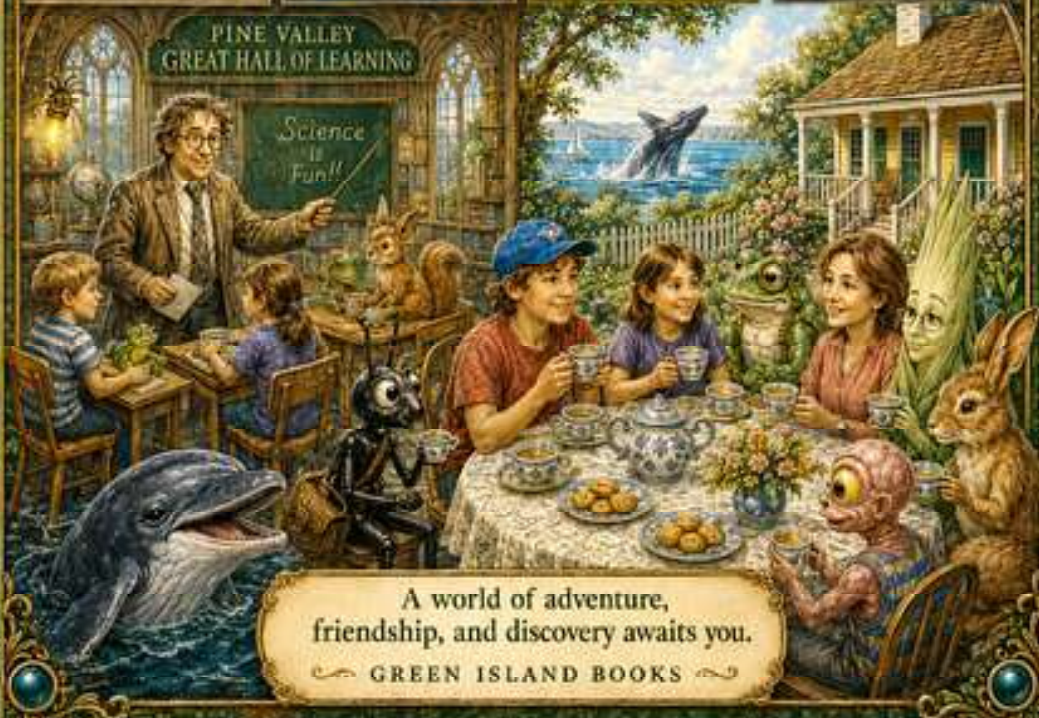


GREEN ISLAND PINE VALLEY PEI

Stories for Young Readers

PREVIEW

Four exciting adventures
from Pine Valley and beyond



A world of adventure,
friendship, and discovery awaits you.

GREEN ISLAND BOOKS

- being a short sampler of the current (Aug 2026) 4 books in the Green Island Pine Valley Stories for Young Readers series of books - a sampler to show the writing and illustration style of the books for those considering buying or becoming involved with the publishing thereof - beginning with the first book in the series - Ernie Mows the Lawn

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In the GI Sampler we have

Four exciting stories from Pine Valley and beyond –
adventures of friendship, discovery and imagination!

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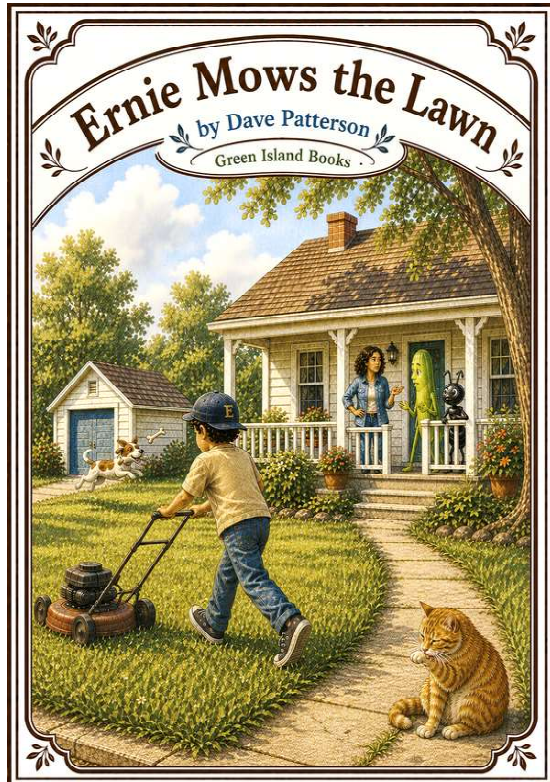
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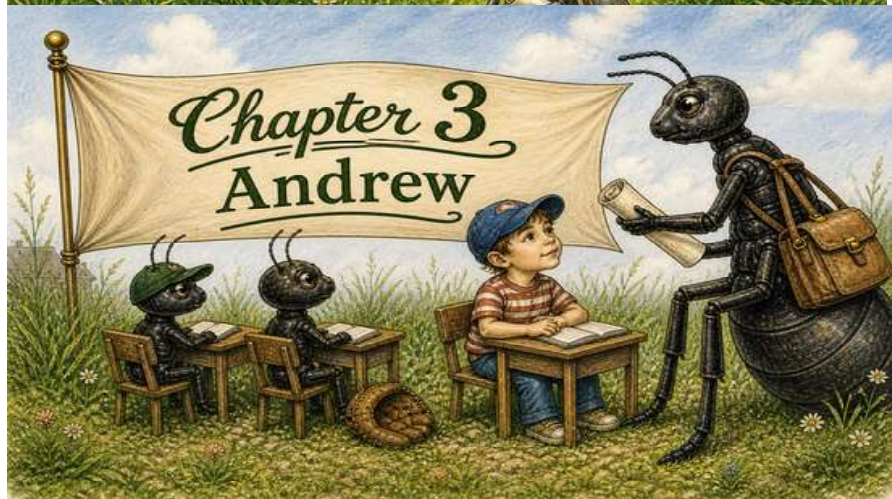
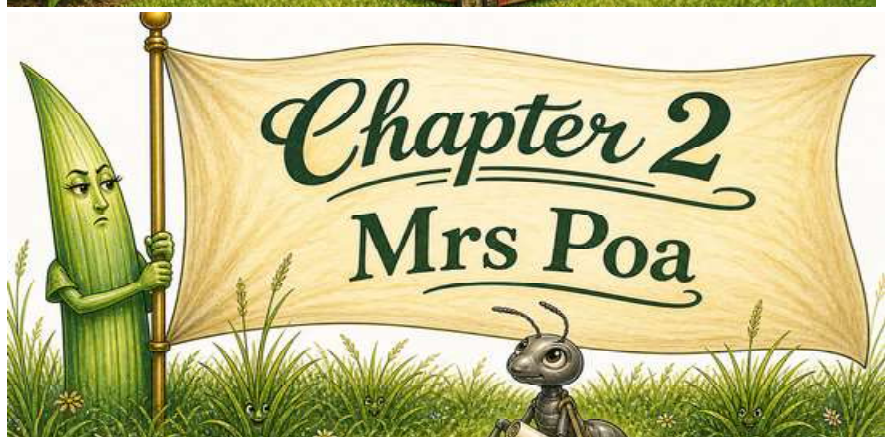
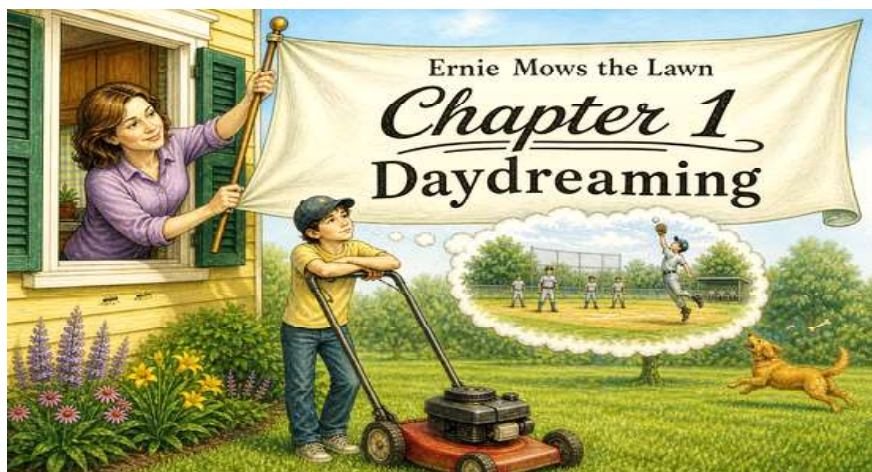


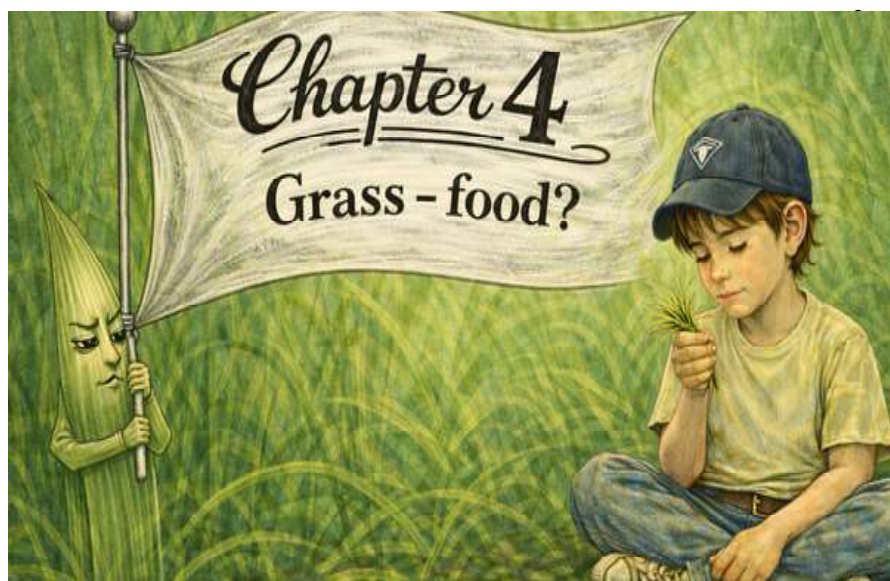
We hope you enjoy these stories!
Happy reading and happy exploring!

Ernie Mows the Lawn ISBN 978-616-631-974-3 © 2026 Dave Patterson.



Ernie Mows the Lawn is a young reader's adventure story about a Prince Edward Island boy named Ernie, a friendly Teacher-ant named Andrew, and the hidden natural world beneath the grass, to which he is introduced by Mrs Poa. Through floods, insects, and adventures underground, the story includes episodes introducing young readers to nature, ecology, and friendship. In this chapter following, Ernie gets a lesson from Andrew on how grass is food for many creatures, and just a bit removed even for him! (with many interesting illustrations throughout!)





There was a great silence. Ernie's mouth opened and his eyes grew large as he tilted back his head to look. But he didn't scream or leap behind Mrs Poa. Andrew hadn't budged, he didn't even look worried. The thing in the shrubbery was a light-green color and the size of a car. (Andrew was more the size of a large dog, in Ernie's present terms.)

He looked carefully at the thing overhead in the tall grass, as it hung there twitching the odd leg, then looked up at Andrew, who quietly returned his gaze. "Grasshopper, right?" he said calmly.

Andrew managed to look as if he had raised an eyebrow in surprise, although, of course, he didn't have any eyebrows. He looked knowingly at Mrs Poa, then replied, "Very good, Ernie - a grasshopper, of course. I didn't think you could be as simple as Mrs Poa said you were. Just a little stranger in a strange land, eh?"

At that point, the grasshopper regained consciousness - or whatever passes for that state of mind with such a creature - and began to struggle, creating much noise and confusion. It tumbled once more so that it seemed to hang by its feet from the sky. For

a second, Ernie looked directly into a huge, multi-faceted eye, so close he could have reached out and touched it. Then the creature turned and climbed up the grass blade, swaying from side to side.

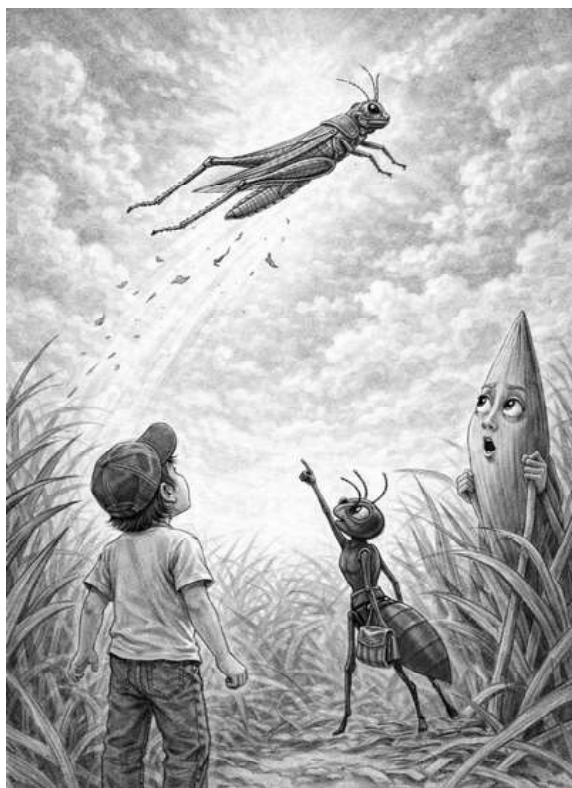
Ernie felt something grab his shirt at the shoulder and yank him backwards, just as a long grasshopper leg came seemingly out of nowhere to land on the ground where he had been standing.

"Oh, squash. That would have made me pretty flat," he thought, as he turned to see who had saved him. It was Andrew, who quickly released his shirt and retreated a step.

"Don't shout now, boy, or start waving your legs. I thought, perhaps, you, being a stranger and not used to our home, might not see what was going to happen. And there are some things I would like to talk about with you before you ah leave us, as it were, hm?"

Thanks, Andrew," he said, "I'm ..."

But he never did finish that sentence for, just then, there was a great "whoosh" that almost knocked him over. He turned just in time to see the grasshopper disappearing through the opening in the grass canopy that it had made on its wild flight earlier. Ernie



looked carefully around and listened. The coast seemed clear - for now.

"Flighty bunch," commented Andrew, lowering himself to the ground beside Mrs Poa, and not too talkative when they do drop in. Scream, crash, and confusion, then gone again until the next time. I hope you don't take after that kind, boy!"

He peered closely and inquisitively at Ernie while Mrs Poa made "humphing" sounds in the background.

"Oh, no, sir! At least, I don't think so - but how would one tell?" asked Ernie.

Andrew gave it some thought.

"Never mind," he finally concluded. "I think we'd know, and you wouldn't care, so it would seem to be a foolish thing to worry about. They are convenient little grass-eaters, when they don't get out of control, so we put up with them. Must, I suppose."

Ernie looked sideways at Mrs Poa for a second, then at Andrew.

"Grass-eaters?" he inquired.

"There," sniffed Mrs Poa, "I told you the seedling, or boy, or whatever it calls itself, didn't know anything!"

"Yes, of course, grass," said Andrew to Ernie, shushing Mrs Poa. "It's a very good food that many of us enjoy. What do you think we are supposed to eat? We ants take pieces of grass and leaves back to our home in the hill for others to share. Our other favorite plant food is nectar from flowers, which the workers also collect and take back to the hill."

"Collect nectar?" asked Ernie. "But isn't nectar a liquid? How do you carry it? I've never heard of ants having jars or anything."

"Jars?" queried Andrew. "Never heard of jars. We collect the nectar back here." And he gestured with an antenna to his very large abdomen.

(Ants and other insects have three main body parts: the head at the front, with its compound eyes and mouth parts and antennae; the thorax, that skinny part in the middle where the six legs are attached; and the abdomen, usually the part at the rear.)

"We have, you see," he continued, "two stomachs in our abdomen. There is a small one for our own use, and a large one called the 'crop,' in which we can gather nectar and other food to carry back to the hill. There we regurgitate it for the others to eat. Do you see?"

"It sounds a little yucky," Ernie said, looking from Andrew's face to his large abdomen, "but I guess if you don't have hands and jars, you have to do the best you can."

"Well, it's hardly a bother," said Andrew. "We've always done so. That's one of the things that workers are for, after all! These jars - some device for transporting things, I presume - sound like an awful nuisance to me. Our way sounds much easier! However, we were talking about how plants make food, I believe. You do know, I suppose, that only plants, such as grass, can actually make food, with water from the ground..."

".. air from all around, and energy from the sun!" finished Ernie somewhat triumphantly, and with only the slightest-of-slight looks at Mrs Poa.

"Quite!" continued Andrew, as unruffled as any good teacher. "And how would you find yourself feeling after a few days of only air and water and sunlight?"

"Me?" asked Ernie. "Seriously - a few days of only air and water and sun? No food?"

"Quite," replied Andrew.

Ernie thought for a second, perhaps two.

"No way!" he said with a chuckle, thinking it a good joke.

"Rather hungry, eh?" continued Andrew.

"I guess!" said Ernie.

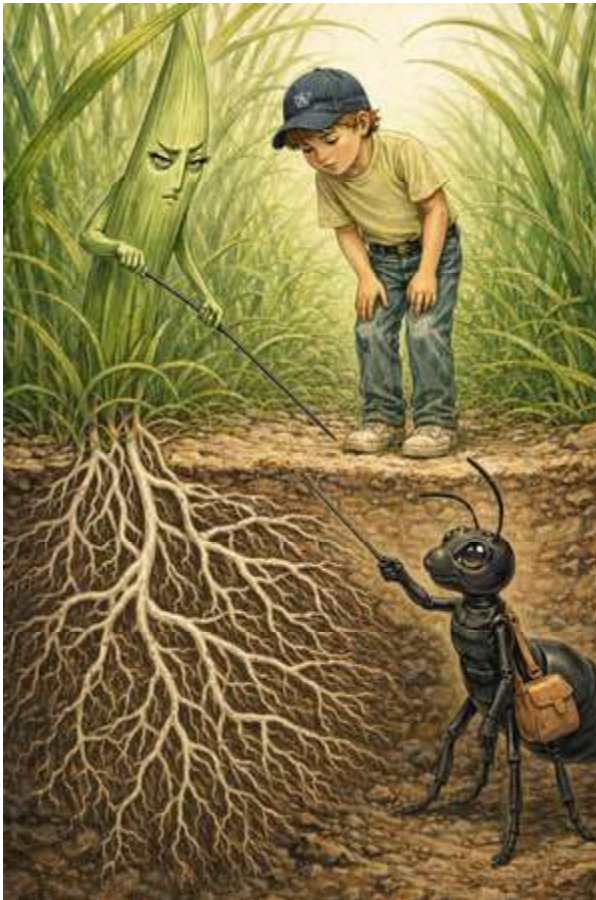
"Well then, boy, think about it a bit. I can see that I shall have to help you with that - thinking, that is. But that is, after all, what I do best. So, we are both most fortunate: you needing a teacher, and me being right here. Why, it quite boggles the mind!"

At whichi thought Andrew had to sit back for a moment to

ponder the wonders of the universe. That gave Ernie time to think about the food business, which led his thoughts back to Mrs Poa.

"But ..I..." he began, "but ..." he paused, not knowing quite how to say what puzzled him.

"What is it, dear? You shouldn't stand there with your mouth open: you look quite silly," said Mrs Poa in a



kinder voice.

"Well," sputtered Ernie, "you - I mean how can you just let them eat you?"

Mrs Poa and Andrew looked at one another, evidently not quite understanding the question.

"They're not really eating Mrs Poa, Ernie," began Andrew. "All they eat is the extra food she makes and stores in her leaves. It doesn't do her any harm. Here, you see ..."

Andrew stood back a step and pointed to an area just below Mrs Poa's face.

(Face? thought Ernie. Grass doesn't have a face! The thought passed as quickly as it had occurred.)

Andrew's long forefoot directed Ernie's attention to the spot where the blade of grass bent into a tube shape and disappeared into the lower stem, somewhat like a sheet of paper rolled into a cone and stuck into a bottle opening.

"This is where the growth happens, right here in the 'node.' All up there," and he looked up through the grass stems and waved, "all up there is just storage, and it hurts no one to take it off. Why, look, don't you have something the same on your head?" And with a long antenna he ruffled bits of Ernie's hair that stuck out beneath his baseball cap.

"Well, my hair isn't exactly grass," began Ernie, "but it does grow from inside and it is cut on top without hurting me. I guess it is a little like grass, but.."

"But nothing, then!" shouted Andrew, laughing. "Cut it or don't, eat it or not, it grows anyway! It's all in the roots! And what lovely, green food grass is for grasshopper and me!"

"The roots?" interrupted Ernie. "What do the roots have to do with all this?"



Andrew walked over to Mrs Poa and reached out to feel the white part of the plant, which stuck up from the ground beneath the green of the blade.

"The roots are very, very important," he answered. "How do you expect the grass to keep on spreading? Many things eat Mrs Poa's extra food, and often she doesn't get a chance to make flowers and seeds like other plants. So, she just keeps growing roots! Roots and new roots, and then new grass grows from the new roots! Do you see? First there was only Mrs Poa in a barren piece of ground. Now all you see around you came from her roots, growing and reaching out for new places. Not all the food she makes goes into the leaves for us to eat. Oh, no! She keeps lots for herself to grow new roots - white spreading roots. They don't make food and so don't need green cells. Look carefully..." Andrew began to dig a shallow trench away from the base of Mrs Poa and toward a nearby blade of grass that was just pushing its

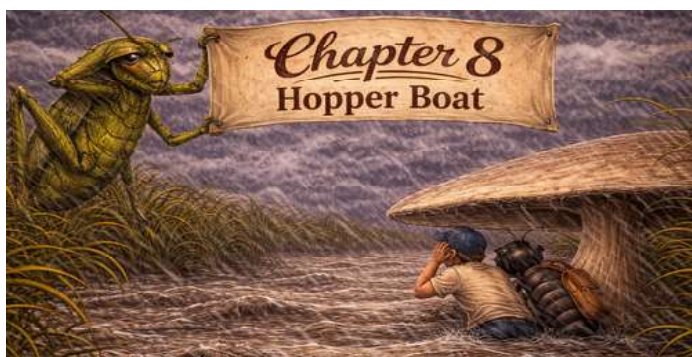
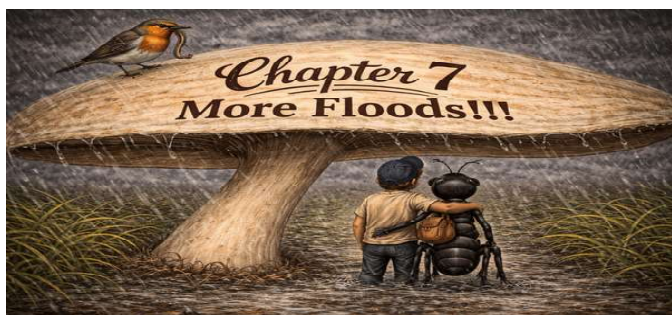
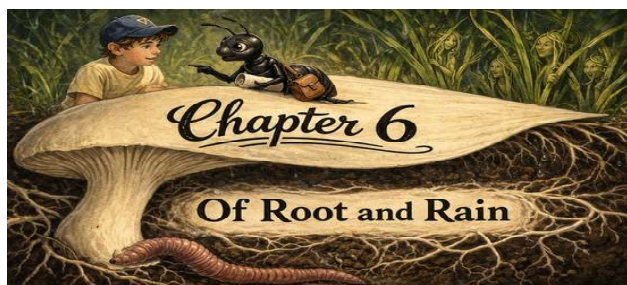
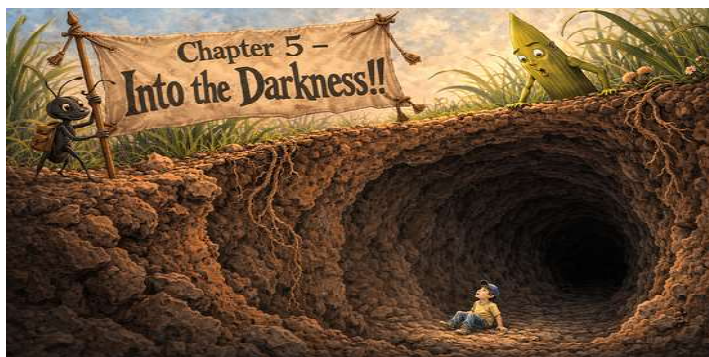
way up through the soil.

"Voila!" he exclaimed, pointing. "One root, two pieces of grass. And not just this one, oh no! But all the ones around! Yes! All from the one root! Now do you see?"

Ernie walked over to look at the white root and make sure it really was attached at both ends where Andrew had pointed, for his curiosity was balanced with a healthy skepticism. It all checked out, however, and Ernie turned to the ant to say so.

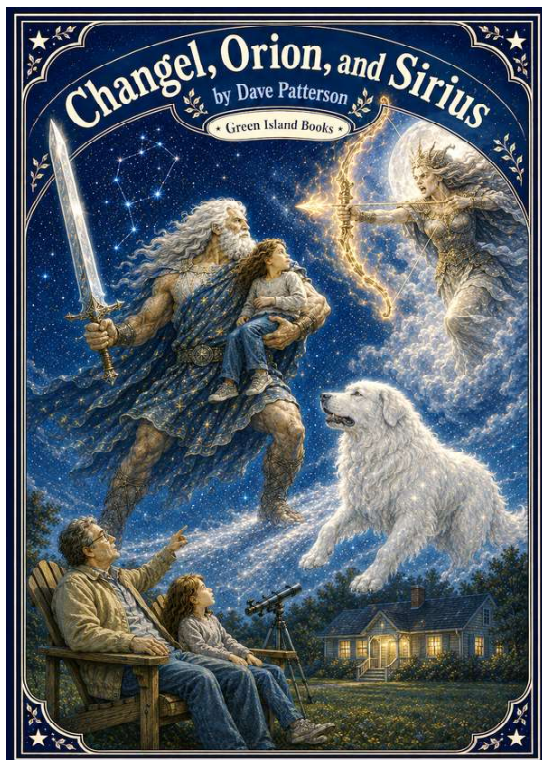
Suddenly, the ground beneath him crumbled and a hole opened under his feet. He felt himself falling backwards. He shouted in alarm as he reached out for Andrew . . . his hands clutched at dirt and felt it crumbling in his fingers as he dropped into blackness.







Changel, Orion, & Sirius ISBN 978-616-636-542-9© 2026
Dave Patterson.



Changel, Orion and Sirius is the story of a young Prince Edward Island girl who is studying the star constellations with her father in the back yard of their house one evening, and winds up having an adventure in the star paths of the night sky with Orion and his dog Sirius, who is being pursued by the Moon Goddess Diana. They meet many interesting constellation characters, including Pegasus the Winged Horse, Cygnus the Swan, and Scorpio the Scorpion as they flee from the wrath of Diana. For this adventure, let's see how the encounter with Scorpio played out



Changel was glad to be out of sight of the fierce goddess, but a loud, angry shriek reminded her that Diana was still on their trail. Even Sirius was glancing back with a worried look in his great eyes.

"Orion," ventured Changel, as they ran along the path, "I still don't understand why she hates you so. After all, you never really promised to marry her?"

Lines of worry furrowed his great brow, but he smiled and gently ruffled her hair with his free hand, for he of course had returned his great sword to its scabbard.

"She's not really as bad as she sounds, or seems, Changel," he said, "but she is very hot-tempered, and very spoiled and very used to having her own way - and very, very dangerous when she gets like this! She has long said that she loved me and would have me for her husband, but I never agreed to marriage. I had been too busy to think of a bride until I fell in love with Merope, and made the agreement with her father. Diana felt she had been betrayed, although she really had no reason. Once the night passes and a new day comes, she will realize that what she now

sees as a terrible outrage was not intended to hurt her. Sometimes even big-hearted people can be bad-tempered and unreasonable if they don't get their way, and may do things they will later regret. I certainly hope that you don't lose your temper as easily as Diana does!"

"Oh, I don't think so!" said Changel seriously, "It doesn't seem like a very nice way to be."

"It certainly isn't!" agreed Orion, smiling; "Still we had better keep out of her reach."

Orion paused momentarily to look around. Then he began to run, keeping the Northern Crown between them and Diana. "I may have thought of a way to get past her, if we can just get to the Swan," he explained to Changel as he ran.

"Look there, now - isn't that Hercules?" he asked, pointing to some stars in the distance as they ran on. Changel watched, and sure enough there briefly appeared the outline of another giant. This one was kneeling on one knee, with a club in one hand and what looked like a branch in the other.

"Hercules?" asked Changel, "I think I've heard of him. Wasn't he a great fighter, Orion?"

"Something like that, Young One," answered Orion. "He is famous for the Twelve Labours of Hercules - twelve tasks which were so difficult that no one could complete them until he came along. He was very strong, which is what he is best remembered for, but he also did some things which made him many enemies. No-one knows for sure, but this is perhaps why he has been placed in the sky in that kneeling position, to appease some of the gods whom he angered in life.

"And over there," he continued, pointing beyond Hercules, "is the great Lyre of Orpheus! What would the heavens be without music? That is perhaps the most famous instrument, which made

the most beautiful sounds ever known. It was fashioned by the god Mercury from a great tortoise shell, and given to Orpheus, who cast a spell over gods and mortals alike with his enchanting music. The Lyre was placed in the sky when he died, so none would forget him. Some say it was placed near Hercules to help him find peace. It does contain one of the most beautiful stars - Vega."



Changel watched with awe, as the giant lyre, shaped something like a harp, appeared in the sky around the large, bright star called Vega. It seemed as if a giant hand also appeared, and strummed the Lyre, just once, sending out a lovely-sounding chord of celestial vibrations.

"For now, we must not delay. Though it seems contrary to our purpose we must head west. We may face more danger, perhaps, for somewhere not far ahead is Sagittarius, the Archer - comrade, these many years, of Diana. We must..."

But Changel heard no more, for Orion's voice was silenced by a blinding flash as a huge star fell out of the sky toward them.

Changel screamed, Sirius barked, and Orion roared. Fortunately for all of them, as he yelled, Orion grabbed Sirius's collar and jumped backward. The huge fireball crashed onto the starpath where they had been standing, and they heard a great mocking laugh from far away.

"You cannot avoid the Archer, Orion!" cried a voice, "For if you do not come to me, I can shoot the stars themselves out of the sky and drop them where I choose!"

Off in the distance, where the evil laughter continued, they saw the Archer. He was unlike anyone - or anything - Changel had ever seen before. He had the body of a huge horse, but with the chest, arms and head of a man. His head was thrown back in



laughter, with his hair streaming out behind. He reared on his hind legs as they watched, and reached for another arrow in a quiver which hung from his shoulder.

At that very moment Orion made a tremendous leap to one side and they landed, breathless, on another path which ran steeply down hill - a hill covered with starry ice! They slid on and on down the great dome of the sky, leaving the laughing Archer and the pursuing Diana far behind. Changel, enjoying the gigantic slide and thinking she might as well make the most of this adventure, thought that perhaps now their troubles were over. Orion's grim look, however, quickly dashed her hopes.

"I fear we have fallen into a clever trap, Little One," he said; "Whether it is an intentional trap or simply bad luck, we are in great danger. Unless I am very much mistaken, we are being carried down into the lair of one of the most fearsome creatures in the entire sky - a creature which even I was unable to defeat. It was given a special purpose by an ancient king whom I once battled long ago - and that purpose is to cause my death!"

Changel tightened her grip on Orion's arm, and on Sirius, who was sliding along beside them.

"My goodness," she said, not without a little touch of exasperation in her voice, "there are certainly a lot of unpleasant people and creatures up here. Who or what could possibly be worse than that horseman or the moon person? It must be very bad to..."

Before she could say how bad it must be, she saw instead how bad it really was. For facing them was the most ghastly creature imaginable. Changel recognized it from pictures in her school science books, but the scorpions in the books were usually very small, and of course she had never seen one on Prince Edward Island. This one was monstrous - at least as long as Orion was tall and, even crouched on all eight legs, it came up to Orion's



belt. The creature raised its long tail and rattled its claws, as the three travelers thumped to a stop at the bottom of the slope.

Sirius, his teeth bared, laid back his ears and began barking furiously. Orion quickly set Changel down behind him and stepped towards the monstrous scorpion, sword held high in both hands.

"At last, Orion, we meet again," hissed the scorpion; "You escaped me once before when I should have ended your days. Now there is no escape from my lair - except by death!"

It waved its claws, and drew back its tail ready to fling it forward toward its victim. Changel screamed. Orion did the only thing possible to counter the attack and protect Changel. He raised his sword high with both hands, as if to smash it down on the scorpion's head, and rushed boldly toward the monster, right between the waving claws.

Scorpio, for that was the creature's name, stopped for a moment in confusion, not expecting a direct attack. Then it

turned sideways to avoid Orion's sword, and at the same time snapped its deadly sting over its head in a stabbing motion. Orion jumped to one side, narrowly avoiding being grabbed by one of the great claws, and lashed out in a powerful two-handed slash with his sword.

The sword dug into one of the scorpion's front legs. It screamed and lurched, almost falling. Orion circled around to the side of its injured leg so that the creature had to turn to protect itself. Changel was now out of immediate danger.

The combatants sparred back and forth for what seemed like many long minutes but in reality was only seconds, as are so many great battles. The scorpion rushed Orion as best as it could with its injured leg, while Orion avoided the waving claws and tail and tried to land a fatal blow to its head. And meanwhile Sirius circled around, barking and growling while looking for an opening. Finally he found one. He dashed in and fastened his thick, strong jaws around one of the scorpion's rear legs. Scorpio, roaring in surprise and anger, turned instinctively to meet this new attack. It was the opening that Orion needed. In an instant he leaped through the scorpion's defences and smashed his sword in a mighty blow on the evil head right between its eyes, dealing it a mortal wound.

The scorpion gave a great death scream, raised its head and reared back on its hind legs. Sirius let go and leaped out of the way of its thrashing claws and stinger. As the great Scorpio fell, its fearsome tail whipped forward - and Orion saw to his horror right towards Changel, and with a loud cry of defiance leaped to protect her. Wielding his great sword he managed to catch the deadly stinger with the thick blade. There was a loud, sharp crack and a burst of light as sword and stinger met. Then the scorpion finally lay still - dead at last.

Orion, stunned by the power released in his final blow, fell back onto the ice hill beside Changel. Changel stared at him in



dismay, fearful that he might be injured. Sirius, also concerned, leaped up beside Orion and began licking his face, whining in worry, once even laying the great tongue hastily across Changel's nose. (It was so big it actually covered her whole face.) After a few seconds of this treatment, Orion came round sputtering and laughing.

"Enough, Sirius, enough!" he shouted, "I'm all right. How is everyone else?" he hugged Sirius with one great arm and Changel with the other.

"You were right - it was worse than the moon-person or the horseman," said Changel, staring wide-eyed at the dead scorpion; "But look - what has happened to your sword?"

Orion's sword lay in front of them, still smoking and pulsating from that last great blow. But now, welded into the metal of the blade, just below the haft, were three gems, bright and shining like diamonds. Orion gently picked up the sword, like a man handling something very precious for the first time. As Orion



examined it closely, Changel reached over to touch it. Her small hand barely covered one of the sparkling jewels.

She looked up at Orion. "These were not there before you killed the scorpion - where did they come from?"

"It is a mystery to me also, Changel," replied the giant, gently touching the jewels, "But perhaps it is a message from the greater star world that our journey this night is being observed, and there are also those who wish us well. But there are many mysteries in the stars, so perhaps we will never know."

"Oh, look," Changel said, softly, nodding in response to Orion's words, "the middle one is full of light, like swirling clouds."

She raised her face to the stars shining above the bowl-like depression of the scorpion's lair.

"It is! It's just like the stars up there above us, only in the sword it's as if we were looking through a window at the uni-



verse. It's as if we were here, and also there..."

Orion smiled at Changel.

"You see a great deal from those young eyes, don't you, Little One?"

His eyes scanned the heavens, as Changel's had done, but only for a second. Then his muscles tightened,

as he breathed in sharply and jumped to his feet. Changel realized immediately what was wrong.

Diana stood at the top of the ice hill, near the spot where the fireball had crashed, waving her great flaming bow over her head. Her eyes were black and cold and wild with anger.

"So, Hunter," she cried, "you have escaped once again from the death you so deserve! You must fall soon, and then I will have you. But I would sooner take you now!"

Diana braced herself on the slope of the ice hill and pulled another arrow from her quiver to fix to her bow. Orion and Changel realized they were trapped in the scorpion's lair. Orion looked around desperately but could see no way out.

"So, I must face that terrible bow at last," he said; "Weakened as I am, I have little chance against her. But wait - perhaps there is one small hope!"

In one stride he was beside the scorpion, where it lay with its tail curled over its back. Quickly he grabbed Changel, and seated himself astride the end of the dead creature's tail.

"Come, Sirius, old fellow!" he shouted to the dog, indicating a place beside him, "It's all right!"

Sirius leaped up and settled himself, while Orion firmly grasped both the dog and Changel with one strong arm.

"Let's hope this works," he said. "Even now, the sting of the scorpion may contain enough power in the muscles for one last contraction. If I can just find the right nerve to release it..."

Strangely enough, in this moment of great danger, Changel remembered a science program she had seen on TV, explaining how the muscles of animals worked. Sometimes, she recalled, energy trapped in the muscles could be released, allowing short bursts of movement after an animal had died. She watched Orion's probings with interest.

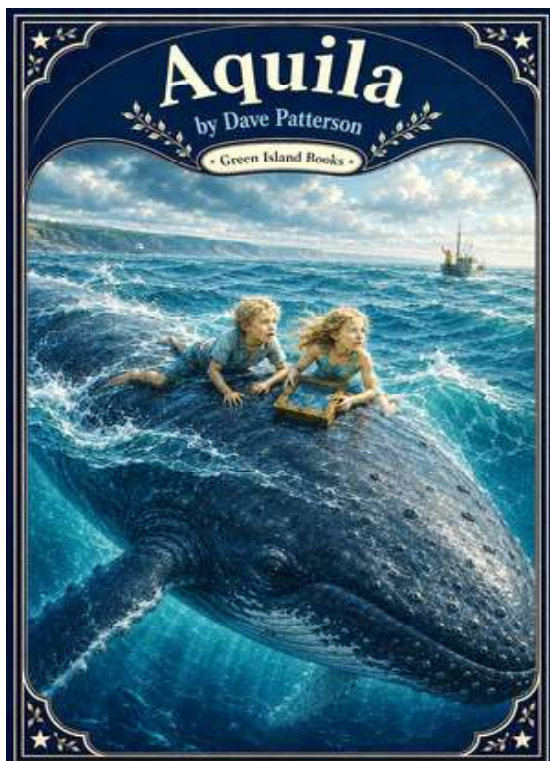
Carefully he poked his sword into the joint of the huge tail, but nothing happened. Diana was also watching. Realizing what Orion was attempting, she screamed angrily and began sliding down the ice hill toward them. Suddenly Orion's prodding sword struck the right nerve, and the great scorpion tail straightened out like a giant catapult.

Changel, Orion and Sirius flew off wildly into the night sky, right over the screaming Diana's head. They left her behind as the long, flaming arrow that she shot at them fell hopelessly short.

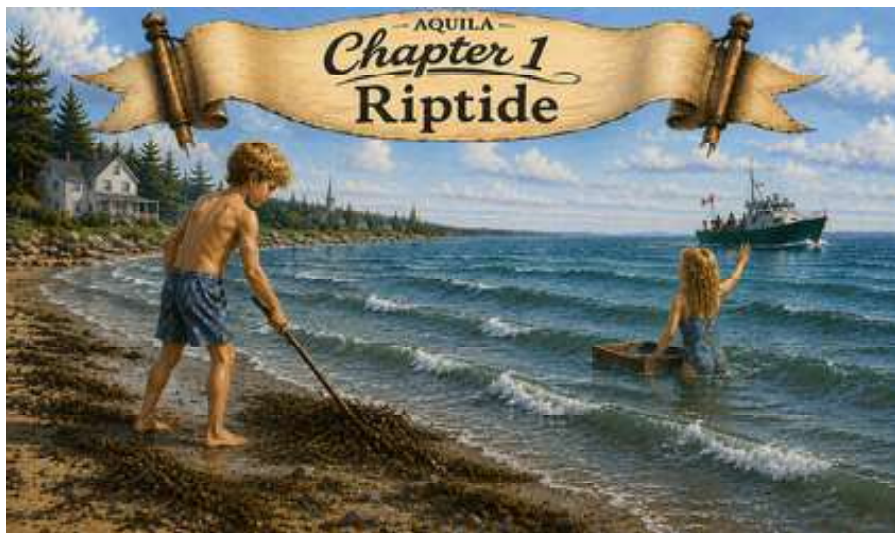




Aquila ISBN 978-616-636-149-0 © 2026 Dave Patterson.



Aquila is the story of two young children playing on the shores of Prince Edward Island who get washed out to sea via a riptide - and get saved by a Humpback whale named Aquila. They get to learn a lot about whales and life in the ocean during their adventure, before getting tossed around in a big storm and finally getting rescued for real by a local fishing boat - all enhanced by finely detailed illustrations as on the cover. We'll join them as their adventure starts



"Jenniferrrr - Mom said not to wade out too far. You never know when the rip tide's going to come in to shore. You know ..."

Cap, squatting on the hot sand examining a piece of washed up sponge, watched the sun reflecting from the bleached-blond hair of his twin sister as she waded in the shallows. They were playing on the beach near their parents' summer home on the banks of the St. Croix River in New Brunswick. It was near the end of the holidays - and, truth be told, they were just the slightest bit bored with it all and couldn't wait to get back to their real home and friends in Pine Valley, Prince Edward Island. Which probably had a lot to do with what happened.

Jennifer, older than Cap 'by a good five minutes!', so their Father said, was somewhat more adventurous than her quieter brother, and in no mood for warnings.

"Listen, Smarty," she turned and said, "if I need your advice I'll ask for it, OK? Anyway, I'm not too deep and there's no

tide at all. And there's all kinds of sand shrimps to see, and some crabs and moon snails and other stuff. Why don't you come and have a look?" she finished, relenting a bit from her initial short-tempered response - they really did get along well together, most of the time.

"Mmmmm..." was all Cap replied. He had broken his piece of reddish finger-sponge in half and was examining the tiny holes and spaces which made up most of its volume. Both he and Jennifer were fascinated by the many things to be found on the seashore, but he was more inclined to examine and think while Jennifer preferred to watch living things. A hank of his hair, also bleached to a sandy color, fell over his forehead, and he brushed it back absently.

It was a pretty lazy day. So far.

A Cape Codder fishing boat went by (a Cape Codder is a 10 to 20 meter boat with a very high, pointed bow and a wide, low deck behind the cabin), throwing up waves which made Jennifer jump back to shore. Cap looked up, and saw some of the people he'd met from the Biological Station in nearby Brandy Cove. They waved at him, and he waved back.

"YOOOOO, CAAAAPPP!", came a faint voice from the boat behind one of the waving arms.

"YOOOOO, FREEEDDDD!", Cap shouted back, smiling happily at this recognition, and waving even harder.

Jennifer was looking at the boat, and then to Cap.

"Wave, Jennifer," said Cap excitedly, "It's Fred from the station, remember?, and the Miss Michelle!" The Miss Michelle was the name of the Cape Codder, painted on the stern and each side of the high bow in large, slightly faded green letters on the white woodwork.



Jennifer looked out at the boat cruising by, and waved with her free hand. Her other hand was balancing her 'window' on the water surface, to which she quickly returned her attention. This

'window', made especially for her and Cap by their father, was a shallow wooden box about half a meter square and 20 centis deep, mounted in a piece of styrofoam, with a sealed plexiglass bottom. Their 'window to another world', as their father had first described it, thus the name that stuck, made it possible to see things clearly in the shallow waters of the shore area without the distortion caused by light rays bending when they left the water. It was one of Jennifer's favorite things, and she never went near the beach without it.

Talk around the supper table back at the cottage was often about what strange and wonderful things she had seen that day - sand dollars, sea urchins, seastars and odd-shaped snails or crabs being the more common finds.

As the station boat disappeared around the bend and the waves faded away, Jennifer waded along the edge of the water. Cap finished his examination of the sponge and tossed it to the line of seaweed from where he had originally found it. He got to his feet and looked around. He squinted across the river to the other shore of the St. Croix, about a mile distant

at that point, where the sun was starting to sink in the sky. Some gulls and crows and shore birds - sandpipers, plovers, a blue heron - were beginning to gather as the tide went out.

The mud flats around the Bay of Fundy were a great feeding ground for them, and during the spring and fall migrations there were often millions of birds feeding here - now, in late summer, the fall migration was just beginning, and each evening a larger number were seen.

"Almost time to be heading back, eh Jen?" he called; "You know what Mom thinks about us being late."



Jennifer looked up at him, then at the sun, and the birds wheeling in the sky. It was a beautiful, lazy, late summer day, just made for wandering by the shore.

"We've got a few minutes yet," she replied; "Come here and look - there's a huge moon snail under the window."

Moon snails were one of Jennifer's favorite finds, common though they were - big, greyish colored snails, with a foot often almost as large as her own. Much more exciting than the small black periwinkles which left their trails everywhere

- and much less dangerous than the rock crabs which usually seemed to be bad-tempered and come chasing sideways after your bare feet, fierce-looking claws waving all over the place.

Jennifer had actually been pinched by one of these crabs earlier that summer, when she was walking without watching where she was going, and even though it didn't actually hurt her much she was still cautious of them.

Moon snails didn't bite.

"I've seen thousands of moon snails, Jennifer - maybe even millions!" replied Cap; "What's so special about this one, eh?"

Cap had found a piece of an old lobster trap on the washed up seaweed pile, and was walking along the strand-line (the line of seaweed washed up to the high-water line at the top of the beach), poking through the grey-green mass to see if there was anything else interesting. A lot of sand-fleas (not real fleas, but like tiny, jumping shrimp - 'Just amphipods,' his father often said, as if everybody knew what 'amphipods' were) hopped out of the disturbed seaweed, but not much else of interest was to be seen. A bit of a breeze was beginning to ruffle Cap's hair, from the land cooling down as the sun set and the cooler air flowed out towards the sea. It raised little sand-spurts along the shore and ripples in the water. A fishing boat was coming upriver to dock for the night, in from the Passamaquoddy Bay which the St. Croix flowed into.

"Nothing so special," replied Jennifer, "but I bet it's a lot more interesting than that smelly pile of seaweed!"

And so saying she returned her attention to the window and the moon snail, as Cap poked into his smelly pile.

He slowly wandered a few more yards down the beach,

seeing nothing interesting.

Finally he turned back to shout to Jennifer -

"C'mon, eh, Jen? I don't want to be la- ..JEN! ! LOOK OUT!! LOOK OUT! !!" he shouted, for the large waves of the just-passed fishing boat were about to come to shore, and Jennifer hadn't seen them - she had wandered out into the water almost up to her waist, following the moon snail,



and Cap was sure the waves would mean trouble. He began to jog towards her.

Jennifer heard Cap yell, and looked up just in time to see the first and largest wave about to catch her, rising and rising over her waist and almost up to her shoulders. She kept on her feet as it lifted her as it passed, but only just barely - and then the second wave hit, not quite as high as the first, but since she was off balance it was enough to wash her feet out

from under her.

"CAAAAPPP! !" she yelled, as she lost her footing, "HEEEELLLLPP!!" - and then she had to take a breath and close her mouth before she went under - but she had had a chance to look back to the shore and see Cap running towards her. She wasn't panicking - her parents had taught her a lot of things about being independent and dealing with things that happen to you, and she was pretty brave to begin with, and she had been playing around the sea for all of her life and was a good swimmer - but she was definitely worried as her instantly doubled heart rate proved, as her feet were swept out from under her and she fell beneath the waves.

She kept a firm grip on her window - it was almost as good as a life jacket, and very buoyant as it was made of wood, and as her feet felt for and found the sandy bottom she pushed herself towards the surface, kicking to try to stand again. She got her feet under her, and realised that she had been swept several meters further offshore already in the backwash of the waves, for the water was now well over her waist, with the following waves reaching almost to her neck, and making her start to lose her balance again.

Cap was splashing through the surf towards her, shouting "JENNIFER!! JENNIFER!", as she spluttered and gasped trying to get a breath.

Then Cap was there, just a few feet away in shallower water, shouting advice as the waves from the fishing boat kept knocking at her, smaller with each pass but still strong enough to push her more and more away from shore - "The window! The window! Reach me the window and I'll pull you in!"

All of this happened, of course, much faster than it takes

to tell it - and as Jennifer looked at her left hand, there it was - the window; she just hadn't thought of it as a lifeline. Swaying in the waves, almost knocked off her feet again as she bounced from the bottom on tippytoe, she tried to get it around in front of her, where Cap could reach it.

"Just a little more, Jen," he panted, now almost shoulder-deep in the waves, eyes wide, reaching towards her, "just a little more. ..there! I've got it! I've ..aaugghh!!"

Suddenly, with the waves still breaking over her head, and just as she was certain Cap was going to pull her in to safety, Jennifer saw her brother lose his balance and fall under the water, as if his feet had been yanked out from under him. He went right in over his head, only to emerge beside her, still gripping the window, spluttering.

"The rip tide!!" he gasped, looking at her with wide and frightened eyes; "The rip tide is running!"

Then Jennifer felt it herself - a very strong, irresistible current flowing along the bottom, as high as her knees, like a million strong hands pulling and pushing at her legs - and then her toes lost the bottom, and she was being swept along the shore, and finally away from it. She still had a grip on the window, which helped her keep afloat, and as she looked to it she could see that Cap also had a hold of it.

He looked at her from the other side, wild-eyed.

"KICK!!!" he spluttered, spitting water from his mouth as he shouted, "KICK TOWARDS THE SHORE!! MAYBE WE CAN GET BACK IN!!"

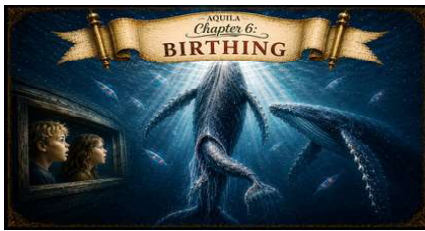
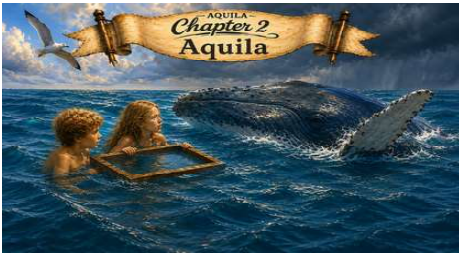
And as he shouted, he flattened his body in the water, kicking for all he was worth. Jennifer caught on instantly, and did the same. They had both completely forgotten their

father's words about rip tides - to swim sideways away from the riptide until they got free from the strong current, and only then swim back towards the shore.

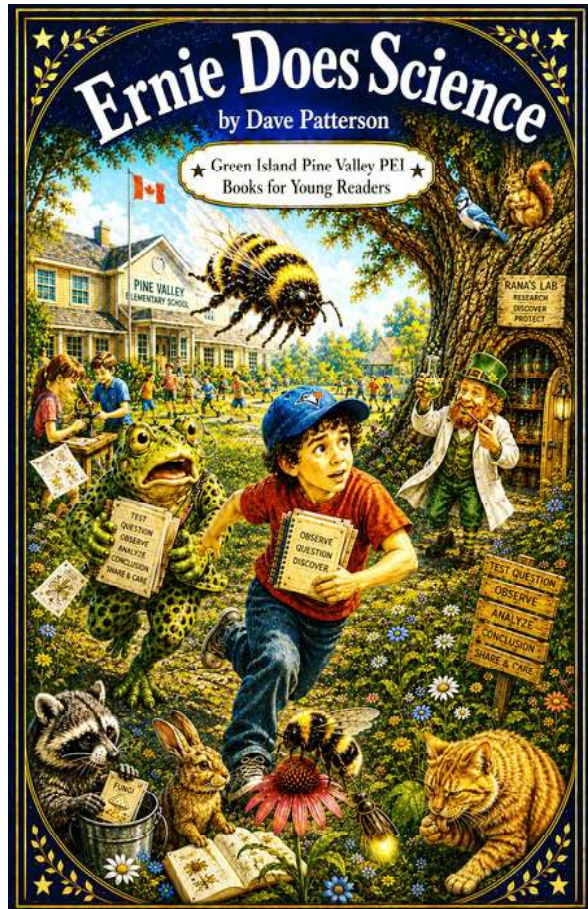
For a minute they held their own, and thought they might even be going to make it. But they were too far out, with the rip tide pushing them further and further away from the shore.

The ebbing tide, gathering speed with the pull of mighty Fundy, toyed with them for a bit as the riptide merged with the ebbtide, then snuggled them up and took them out to sea.

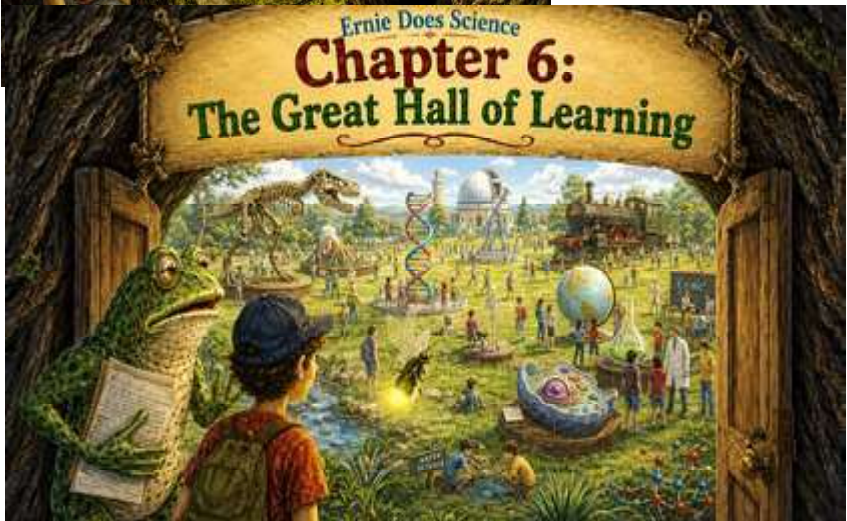
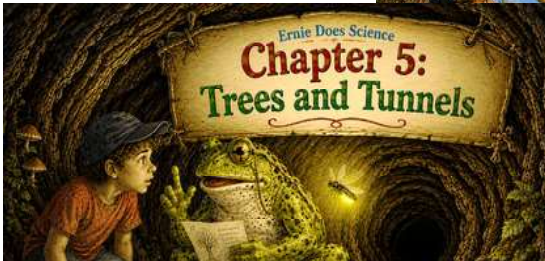
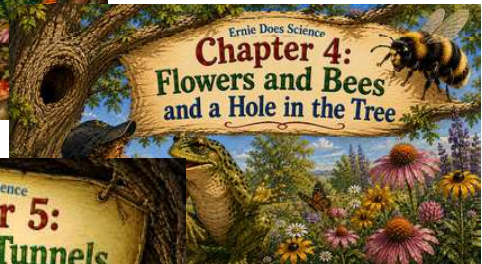
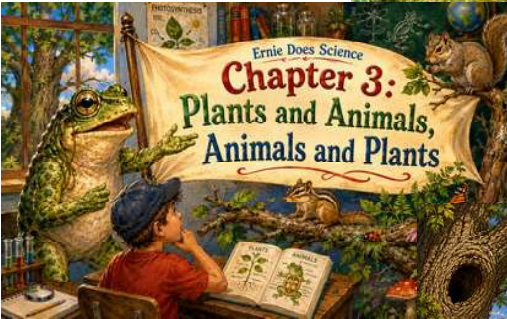
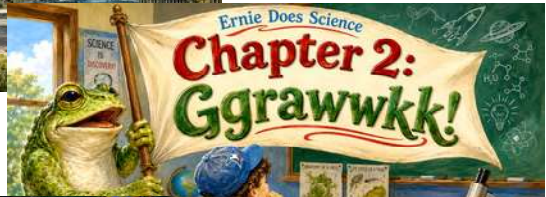
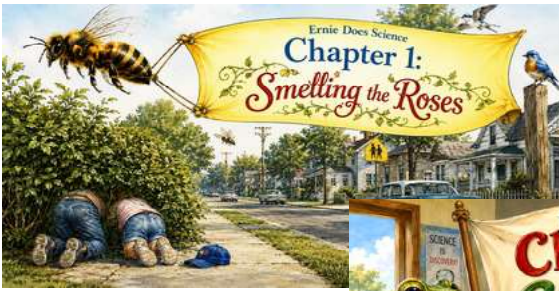


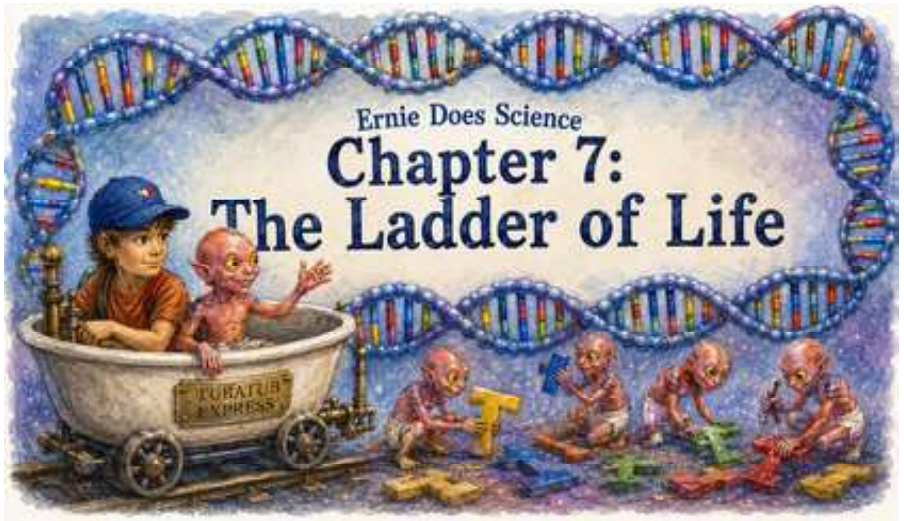


Ernie Does Science ISBN 978-616-637-046-1 © 2026 Dave Patterson.



Ernie Does Science is the story of a young Prince Edward Island boy who accidentally inhales some chloroform during a science class, and has a fabulous adventure in the World of Science, guided by a giant frog teacher named Rana. During the story Ernie experiences parts of the life of plants and animals from inside their world, with many wild adventures along the way with fireflies, bomber bumblebees, and more! And with again many excellent illustrations along the way. Let's join him briefly in the Hall of Chemistry





As Ernie pulled the large door shut behind him, the darkness was suddenly lighted. He looked up, and there on the walls were small shelves like he had noticed in the first tunnel down from the Learning Tree, except that there were fireflies perched on these ones, which had lighted their tails when he entered.

As he took stock of his surroundings, he saw that he was in a tunnel much like the first one he and Rana and Lampyr had been in coming from the Tree of Learning - kind of narrow, soon curving up ahead so you could not see where it went, dark black shapes like windows, and with walls of hard wood. This did have one big difference, however - just in front of him, on the right hand wall which would adjoin to the huge tank he had seen through the window, was a staircase going up a long ways to a landing high above.

Ernie wasn't long in making up his mind - he had come to see what was in that huge room a little closer, after all, and that landing and the doorway on it appeared to look right into it. Up the stairs he started.

When he got up a bunch of steps to a landing-type place lit by the usual fireflies on shelves, he stopped for a moment to catch

his breath, for it had been a long climb, then reached for the handle of a large metal door in front of him, with a window near the top, a bit too high for him to see out of without jumping. He turned and pulled - and it was locked.

"Locked!" he thought; "Great! What now?"

He reached once again for the handle to give it a shake, and to his surprise the door opened as he reached for it. He quickly stepped back so he stood behind the door, against the railing around the landing. A voice was coming through the door.

"Alright, Rx," said the voice - a low feminine voice, no-nonsense type but still motherly patient with a smile in it somewhere; "Carry on with getting the DNA replication display for our group tomorrow - I am curious to see how it works."

Ernie's eyebrows raised a bit at 'DNA', he remembered Mr Basnoozer saying something about DNA in a recent class, something they were going to study later, pointing to a big display which was part of the River of Life sideboard, some kind of spirally ladder looking thing - right, he thought, like he had seen through the window from the outside.

As the voice spoke, a green-smocked figure appeared through the doorway, or at least her back did, and she stood for a moment holding the door while finishing her instructions to whoever was listening on the other side.

"So - anything else Rx?," she finished.

Ernie could hear a low voice on the other side mumbling something in reply.

"Ok, Rx, carry on, see you tomorrow, then," the green smock said, closing the door as she stepped into the landing and then stopping as she saw Ernie.

"Oh!" she said in surprise, looking at him, "What are you

doing here? Who are you? Are there lessons today? I have no lessons on my schedule, I'm sure ..."

And she began to quickly leaf through the sheaf of papers attached to the clipboard she was carrying. Ernie hadn't quite known what to expect, from listening to the voice behind the door, but what he saw was safe.

The lady was very nice looking, wearing a green lab-type coat with medium-length curly brown hair, lively brown eyes, a few freckles on her cheeks, and a quick smile, which she now threw Ernie's way.

"Well, now," she said, "c'mon and answer me now, I'm a bit rushed today, I'm afraid! Who are you and what are you doing here? I'm very sorry to be so hasty, but I do have a lot to do today, before my class arrives tomorrow morning. My name, by the way, is Dr Molly Kuel - but visiting students usually call me Molly," she finished, looking down and pointing to a name tag on her lab coat

"Ah - good morning, Dr - I mean, Molly," said Ernie, once again trying to figure quickly how to deal with this new situation. He was getting better at it, though - he had had a lot of new ones to deal with recently, and practice does help calm down the first-time jitters.

"It's a long story, really, and if you're busy I guess I won't try to explain it all now," Ernie said, "But my name is Ernie, and I was just looking around the Great Hall out there, and saw the - um - Chemistry of Life? - yeh, Chemistry of Life display in the window, and it looked pretty interesting, something my class at school was going to study soon I think, so I thought I'd go through the door and take a closer look, and see if my Teacher Rana was around here somewhere - I need to find him to get back home, you know? That's all, really!"

Molly Kuel looked at him for a moment, in a friendly way,

trying to decide what to do. The Hall of Learning was a wonderful place, but she was well aware that there was also danger with it if one wasn't sufficiently cautious in certain places - which was one reason certain places were behind doors which were normally entered only with supervision. The Chemistry of Life vault was not as dangerous as some of them - no live dinosaurs or sharks or lions, or poisonous chemicals, or high-voltage electrical displays or other dangerous things were here - and if one stayed within the observation platforms along the walls or entered only with supervision there really wasn't too much to worry about.

"Well, alright, Ernie," Molly Kuel said with a smile, "I'll call one of the lab techs who often do little teaching classes to show you around, so you should be able to see some interesting things even if you haven't studied it yet. And I will see if I can locate your teacher for you as well - ok?"

So saying, she opened the door again and looked around, and then called out "Rx! - Come back a minute - we have a visitor you can show around a bit!" - and she turned around and gestured for Ernie to come on through the door. Ernie nodded, kind of wishing that Molly would be showing him around, but he smiled as she waited, and said, "Okay - thanks very much, Dr - ah, Molly. See you later, maybe."

As Molly turned to walk down the stairs, Ernie turned back and looked around the room, or cavern really, far larger than it looked from the window. It was the size of a huge closed in sports stadium like he saw on TV, at least - he couldn't even really make the walls out on the other sides. The window he had looked through was just down and to his right, and it looked tiny in the vast expanse of the wall as he saw the green smock of Dr Molly Kuel hurrying in front of it.

But what the room contained was even more amazing and mysterious than the size of it all.

The strange, twisting ladder-shapes were still the main features - there was one huge one just a few feet out from him, and many others in the near and far distance. The one so close it almost looked as if he could reach out and touch it was so long he could not see the ends of it, stretching way up above and way down below until the ends just disappeared, spiralling and twisting into the distant haze. There were many other similar long ladders throughout the cavern, and flying all among and around them a whole lot of small flying machines, kind of like open-topped go carts or something, with little people inside them, and often pulling pieces of things, some of them stopping in mid-air to talk to each other.

It was all very fascinating to Ernie, who had building blocks and meccano sets of all kinds at home and spent many long winter nights or rainy weekend afternoons building things. As he looked away from the long ladder after his initial examination of it, he tried to see what all of the hundreds of smaller shapes floating around the air were. He saw that a lot of them were also T-shapes, of the same colors, but just floating loose. He also saw a lot of square block-like things, with different sorts of notches on one or two sides of them. And then - there! A shape was moving rapidly around, like a little airplane of some sort - and it was coming right at the landing where he stood. As it came closer, he saw that it was a little vehicle, very plain, kind of like a shallow bathtub in shape - and there was a little pink hairless person inside it!

Ernie hardly had time to wonder at it or get frightened - he was thinking that Molly Kuel had said it was safe in here, perhaps, so he didn't worry too much at the little strange pink creature. As the bathtub-car came to a stop just beside the landing where Ernie stood, the occupant hopped quickly out and over the rail beside Ernie.

The little person was completely hairless, a pinkish-red color

with blue stripes at wrist and shoulder, and wore a pair of white shorts but no other clothing. It was completely bald, and hairless all over. It had only very small ears and nose and mouth, although its eyes were quite large and round and yellow. Its arms and legs were long and skinny, its hands and feet quite large and powerful looking, with three fingers and a thumb on all four limbs.

It spoke to Ernie.

"Greetings, small earth person," it said, in a rather high-pitched voice, "I heard Molly call as I was flying back to work - so you want to look around our beautiful Chemistry of Life display, is that right?."

"Um, yes, I - ah - Molly - that is, Dr Molly Kuel told me I could come for a look," said Ernie, "She also said that some person called - um - 'are-ex' would help explain things. So you are this Rx, are you?"

"Well," said the little red person, "Yes, I myself am Rx - they don't give me fancy titles like Doctor, you see, or Professor even, or even Laboratory Assistant, or even nice initials like MSC or BSC or MA or QVBR or CRJK or any of that stuff after my name - oh, no, just plain old Rx. But I don't mind." He sniffed a bit as he looked out over the great vault. "I know, you see, all the secrets of the Chemistry of Life, and this place would quickly grind to a halt without me."

He turned back to look at Ernie, smiling.

"But I don't really mind not having those fancy titles," he said, "I just love working here! It's the very most important part of all of our learning, you see. You can have your biology and your physics and your mathematics and your theories of where peanut butter comes from or where monkeys started and all of those things - but without these wonderful chemicals," he waved towards the great ladder-shapes, and lowered his voice while putting his face close to Ernie's ear, "None of it would ever

happen! No life without the DNA! Not even little germs or huge dinosaurs or foolish chickens or smart humans - nothing at all! No trees or flowers or whales or bumblebees! No DNA, no people! No people - and who cares about the rest of it? No people to think, no physics to be thought of, yes? Ha ha! It is all here! Ha ha!!"

Ernie kind of stepped back from the little pink fellow who called himself Rx as he saw his eyes getting a peculiar light in them while he spoke, and then laughed as he finished almost like a mad scientist on TV, but there was not far to go, as his back ran into the wall beside the door.

Rx looked back to Ernie from where he had been looking at the ladder shape in front of the landing, and immediately became somewhat abashed.

"Oh, my, I am so sorry!" he said, stepping up in front of Ernie and looking up at him with those huge eyes, "My enthusiasm has frightened you! I am not really a crazy chemist - but I do love it all so much that I just get carried away sometimes! I am here to teach, and will tell you anything you would like to know! Please don't be afraid of me!"

As Rx finished, he clasped his hands in front of him and cast his eyes to the ground in such a sad way that Ernie instinctively put his hand on the other's shoulder and gave him a quick squeeze.

"Of course I'm not afraid of you, Rx," he said, laughing, "You just startled me for a moment, that's all."

"Oh good! Oh so very wonderful!" cried Rx, immediately joyful again, looking up at Ernie with a smile on his face; "Come then, and I will show you all about the wonderful Chemistry of Life!"

He stepped to the rail and leaped over into the little bathtub

aircar, onto a little seat at the front where there was a little box with a couple of simple controls on it. He looked up at Ernie.

"Oh, my," he said, smiling apologetically, "What a hurried excited little creature I am! What is your name?"

A few minutes later Ernie felt like he was suspended in the middle of the universe, a universe full of odd shapes and colors and strange and wonderful things. He was sitting beside Rx in the tiny aircar - "My DNA Explorer is what I call it," Rx had told Ernie - and hovering beside the nearest of the huge ladder shapes.

'Oh, by the way, Rx," said Ernie when Rx stopped talking for a second, "you keep talking about DNA - but what does that mean exactly, anyway?"

"Oh, Ernie," replied Rx, 'that is a big loooooong name we don't try to remember - but so you know - it is De-oxy-Ribo-Nuc-leic Acid, one of the most important chemicals in the whole world, as I said!! - but don't try to remember all that right now - later when you get into more advanced chemistry you will understand it all - but for now, just remember those very important letters - DNA!"

"DNA," repeated Ernie, "ok, I will just remember that - and wait until when I have more time to study what it is. But I still don't quite understand - you say it is very very important for human life - but what does this DNA actually do??"

"Ahh yaa!!" said Rx, slapping his forehead and rolling his eyes, 'Of course! What does DNA actually do?!!! That is of course the big sososo important thing about DNA - and I have got so excited I forgot all about it!!"

"So what we tell our first-time classes here is that DNA is like a huge list of instructions for how to make all the different parts of your body - or a frog's body or a fish's body or a tree or

flower - all contained on those long long chemical ladders!!" Rx continued, "In your Ernie DNA there are instructions for hair, or fingernails, or eyes, or fingers - for every different part of your body - simply amazing!!"

Ernie listened thoughtfully as Rx spoke - and then looked out at the big ladder like DNA thing in front of them. After a few seconds he looked over at Rx seriously - "Actually, Rx, I'm not quite seeing that here ...??"

"Oh," replied Rx, taking Ernie's arm as he explained, "it is all very very complicated after that - you see these ladder-like thing between the two long arms..." - Ernie looked, the ladder-spoke like things were clear enough, and nodded his head, looking back to Rx, "Well, there are thousands and thousands and thousands and more thousands of these on every ladder here - and they actually are instructions for things called proteins, and these proteins all then come together to make the different parts of your body, or a tree or flower - and that is all much, much MUCH too complicated for right now!! I have a better idea - let's just take a little fly around the display, and I can show you some of the different things here - how does that sound?"

Ernie thought it sounded fine - trying to understand how thousands of these little ladder bars could make his eyes or a flower petal were starting to give him a headache; "That sounds great, Rx," he said a bit more enthusiastically, 'A ride in your DNA Explorer sounds like it might be more fun - that is to say, helpful - let's go!!"

"Good! Wonderful!" cried Rx, "You've got it exactly! So I won't go into any more detail than that right now, for there are so many other wonderful things to see and we don't want to confuse you with little details!"

And he reached for the knob on the control box, and the Explorer banked away from the landing and the long DNA ladder

and zoomed away. Ernie grabbed the front of the aircar and grinned as the wind blew back his hair and made him squint his eyes. He smiled over at Rx.

"Boy," he shouted, "If all science was like this, it would sure make school a lot more fun!"

Rx laughed out loud, and reached over to pat Ernie's back. Soon they were approaching another long DNA ladder, but there was a lot of activity around it, and a lot of little T-shapes floating around. Rx slowed down the Explorer as they approached, and spoke again, pointing to the different things they were seeing.

"This is one of my favorite things," he said, "for here is where we can see how the DNA does the most important thing of all - making more DNA!"

"It must be really complicated," said Ernie, "putting together all of those millions of steps!"

"But that's the beauty of it all," laughed Rx, "It's really very simple! Look closely - there are only four different shapes that make up the whole ladder."

Ernie looked at Rx in surprise, and then looked closely at the ladder in front of them, and the hundreds of Ts floating around them. Soon he had to agree with Rx - there were only four different shapes to be seen, the black and white, and blue and yellow. He told Rx what he saw.

"Exactly," said Rx, "and if you look closer now, you will see something else - they only go together in one way! When the long parts of the T-shapes join together, the black T is always joined to the white T, and the blue T is always joined to the yellow!"

Ernie looked at Rx in surprise at this information, and then looked up and down the ladder as far as he could see - and it

was so - always a black and white joining in the ladder, and always a yellow and blue.

"So," continued Rx when Ernie had shown that he understood it so far, "When the DNA wants to make more DNA, it is quite simple. The ladder separates itself, right down the middle where the ends of the Ts are joined - and another T joins on to each side of the broken ladder - and since there is only one way they can go together, each half of the ladder becomes a new one, exactly the same as the old one - except there are now two where there was only one! Each exactly the same! Watch - it should be starting soon!"

And so it was. As Ernie watched, he could see happening what Rx had described. In front of where they sat, the DNA ladder was separating down its very center, with white Ts breaking away from black Ts, and yellow Ts from blue. As he looked upwards, he could see the whole ladder was now like a giant Y, with the bottom stick of the Y being the original DNA ladder, and the two upper bars of the Y the two new DNA ladders. At the place where they met, there seemed to be a great deal of activity, where the new Ts were being joined.

He now saw the purpose of the little boxes with funny notches out of them. Each box was designed to carry a different color of the T-shape, and as the rungs of the ladder separated, one of these boxes would dart in with the matching color and attach it to the empty space, making a whole new ladder step out of the half step.

The empty box would immediately speed off, and as Ernie watched one of them he saw that it just went far enough to find a new T of the same color. It would then pick it up in the notch, and speed back to the growing ladders, finding an empty half-rung of the matching color and joining the T, then darting back away for another one. As he watched, the two new ladders grew very rapidly in length, and soon there were two new strands of

DNA in front of them where just seconds before there had been one.

"That's just amazing, man!" said Ernie to Rx as they watched the new ladders growing in front of them, "Just awesome!"

Rx laughed happily.

"It is! It is! It is!" he laughed again, "Utterly incredible! Just like all of the Chemistry of Life! And soon there will be enough new DNA to make new cells for the body, for that is what this is all about! Come - we will go to the next stage and I will show you!"

Once again Rx found the controls, and with a joyous swoop under the DNA ladders they sped off deeper into the huge room. Suddenly Ernie grabbed Rx's arm.

"Look! What's that?" and he pointed past Rx to where a black shape was flying rapidly towards them; "It doesn't look like the other things flying around here! It isn't! It's - LOOKOUT, RX!"

For approaching them like a wild meteor falling out of the sky was none other than Bombini, buzzing loudly and with a very angry look in his black eyes.

"What!?! " was all the time Rx had to say before the huge Bumblebee was upon them, flying straight at the Explorer as if he meant to ram them - and he was big enough and angry enough to endanger the little aircar.

"LOOKOUT!" cried Ernie again, and Rx pushed the control forward so the Explorer dived just in time, and Bombini flew past them, missing them by only inches. Ernie could feel the strong wind caused by the bee's rapidly vibrating wings, and the noise of its buzzing was very loud - and the huge, deadly-looking stinger was so close he could almost have reached out and touched it.

As Ernie looked back, he could see the bee making a quick

turn and speedily flying up again behind them.

"Won't the Explorer go any faster, Rx," he asked desperately, "Bombini's going to catch up soon!"

"Oh, my," replied Rx, "I don't know anything about terrible flying monsters!! - the Explorer is only designed to watch things, not race! What is going on .."

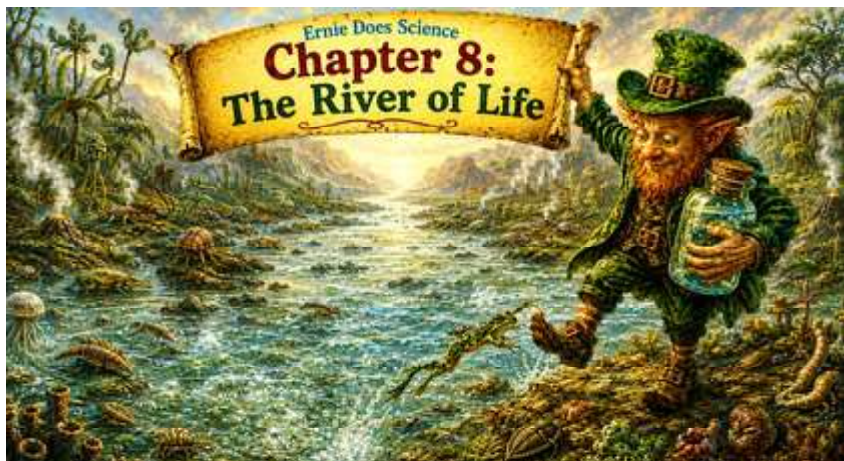
But he never had a chance to finish what he was going to say, for Bombini had caught them.

"TURN, RX, TURN!" shouted Ernie, looking back at the huge eyes of the bee which seemed to be right over his shoulder.

Rx looked back, and pulled the small aircar over to the side just as Bombini attacked. It almost worked, but not quite. The furious bee caught the Explorer a glancing blow only, but it was enough to upset the small craft.

Ernie screamed and tumbled into space. The last thing he saw before he fell out of sight was Rx hanging onto the side of the Explorer as the little aircar spun slowly in a large circle, and the underside of Bombini as the giant bee turned, buzzing angrily, and prepared to dive at it once again.





THAT'S ALL FOLKS!

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