



BEACH BATTLE BLOWOUT

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CHRIS GRABENSTEIN

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Mr. Lemoncello's Library Olympics
Mr. Lemoncello's Great Library Race
The Island of Dr. Libris
Welcome to Wonderland: Home Sweet Motel
Welcome to Wonderland: Beach Party Surf Monkey
Welcome to Wonderland: Sandapalooza Shake-Up

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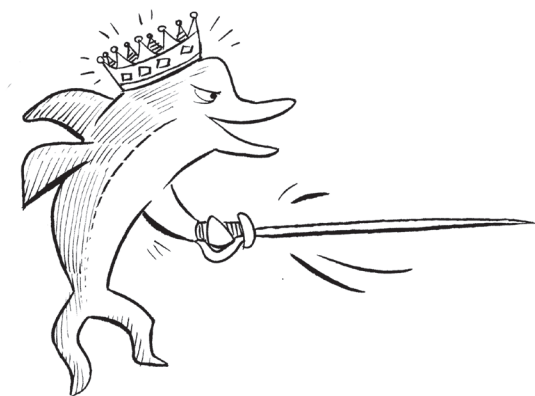
Daniel X: Armageddon
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House of Robots: Robots Go Wild!
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Word of Mouse

AND MANY MORE!



BEACH BATTLE BLOWOUT

• Book 4 •



CHRIS GRABENSTEIN

illustrated by **Kelly Kennedy**

Random House  New York

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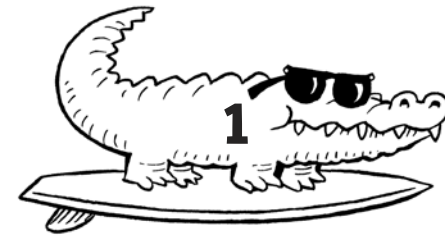
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First Edition

Random House Children's Books supports
the First Amendment and celebrates the right to read.

For the late Thomas Aloysius Grabenstein—
my dad



Duel with the Dolphin King

This weekend," I told my audience, "I had a duel with a dolphin."

"Whaaaa?" said everybody else.

Fact: when you live in a motel, you always have the best stories on Monday mornings.

"The Wonderland's right on the beach," I told my history class. "So I grew up speaking Dolphin."

I gave a quick demo. "*Eeeek squeeeee, klik-klik.*"

"What's that mean?" asked my bud Bruce Brandow.

"I have to go to the bathroom."

"Dolphins say that?"

"Yep. Then they do it. Right there in the Gulf. That's why the water's so warm."

"Gross," said Bruce.

We were between bells, just waiting for our

teacher, Mr. Frumpkes, to march in and put us all to sleep with a barrage of boring facts. It was up to me to spin a story so scintillating it could fight off the Frumpkes Funk.

“On Saturday, I was riding the waves, just surfing along—”

“Surfing?” scoffed Adam Shapera, a big guy who always sits in the back of the room so it’s easier to flick people’s ears. “Who taught you how to do that?”

“Kevin the Monkey,” said my good friend Gloria Ortega. “Star of the smash hit *Beach Party Surf Monkey*.”

Unimpressed, Adam blew a lip fart.

I didn’t let Adam slow me down, because everybody else was hanging on my every word, scooching their seats closer.

“I was carving across a wave. Totally cranking. It was epic. All of a sudden, out of nowhere, this dolphin pops up!”

“The dolphin blew his airhole at me. It sounded like one of Adam Shapera’s lip farts. It spooked me so much I wiped out.”

“What’d the dolphin want?” asked Bruce.

“To challenge me to a friendly competition.” I put on my best high-pitched dolphin voice. “I am Frederick, the Dolphin King. I challenge you to a duel!”



“Whoa,” said Bruce. “Just like that Alexander Hamilton dude with that other dude.”

“Aaron Burr,” said Gloria.

“Exactly,” I said. “But we wouldn’t be dueling with pistols. It’d be unfair. Dolphins don’t have trigger fingers.”

“That’s so true,” said Adam, finally getting into the story with everybody else.

“We decided on a race,” I said. “From the Gulf waters behind the Wonderland all the way up St. Pete Beach to the Don CeSar Hotel. It’d be me and my board against King Frederick and his mighty flippers. Human against dolphin. Mano a mammalo. I, of course, agreed to King Frederick’s terms. But only because I knew I’d win.”

“How’d you know that?” Adam asked eagerly.

“Simple,” I told him. “I was carrying a secret weapon!”



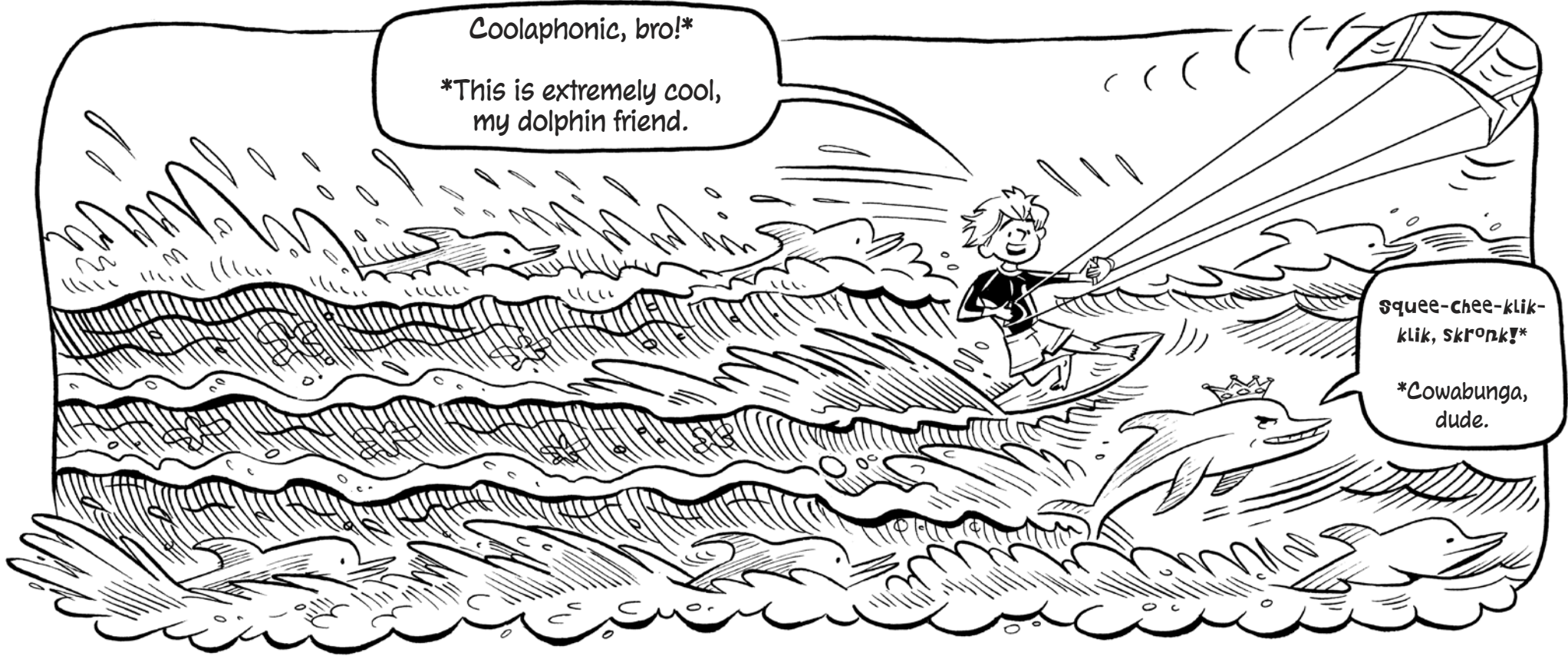
King of the Seas

“Six other dolphins surrounded King Fred,” I said, then switched back to my squeaky dolphin voice. “‘Make a lane, oh loyal subjects! Three of thee on either side.’”

Gloria had her fingers jammed in her ears. She hates when I do Dolphin. She says it sounds like a fork scraping across her teeth.

“The dolphins split up, formed two lines. The king and I were in the middle—me on my board, him on his belly. The Dolphin King squealed, ‘Kaaah! Quee! Eeek!’ and the race was on! He shot off to an early lead. But remember—I still had my secret weapon!”

“So, what was it?” asked Bruce, who couldn’t stand the suspense, which, by the way, is a very important part of any story. Because if the thread



of your story leaves your audience dangling, they won't dare let go.

"You ever heard of kitesurfing?" I asked him.

"Sure."

"Well, Fred the Dolphin King hadn't. Imagine his surprise when I unfurled my kite, caught a tailwind, and flew up the Gulf at forty-six miles per hour."

"That's forty knots," explained Gloria, after she tapped her calculator. My best friend is a business

wiz. Her calculator is always fired up and ready to crunch numbers.

"Since the rules of our race didn't specifically prohibit kites or outboard motors or *anything*, the Dolphin King graciously admitted defeat when he and his pals finally caught up with me at the finish line. He offered me his crown, but I told him, 'No thanks, King Fred. Winning is its own reward.'"

"Cool," said Bruce.

"Yeah. I read that in a fortune cookie once."

In the back row, Adam was raising his hand. He had an extremely skeptical look on his face.

“Yes?” I said.

“Where’d you stash all your secret gear? The kite, the harness, and the towlines?”

“In my board shorts, bro.”

The whole class, including Adam, cracked up.

Yep, everybody in the classroom was laughing.

Except our teacher, Mr. Frumpkes.

He was standing in the doorway, scowling at me.



Grumpy Mr. Frumpkes

“Do you know what we call this class, Mr. Wilkie?” asked Mr. Frumpkes, both hands jabbed against his bony hips so he could glare at me even harder.

“History, sir,” I replied. “Unless, of course, you want to switch it to recess, which would be awesome. Adam Shapera brought his soccer ball.”

Mr. Frumpkes blinked repeatedly. His glasses magnified his flickering eyelashes so much they looked like moths dancing near a bonfire.

“Mr. Wilkie,” Mr. Frumpkes fumed, “this is, indeed, history. A class where we study facts. We do not regale our classmates with implausible recitations of untruths such as your ridiculous tale about the Dolphin King. Dolphins do not communicate with humans, and they do not have kings.”

“Are you sure, sir?” asked Adam from the back



row. "My little sister has a hair clip shaped like a dolphin, and it's wearing a sparkly gold crown."

"I saw a talking dolphin in a TV commercial," said Bruce. "I think it was for swimming pool supplies. . . ."

Mr. Frumpkes closed his eyes. "Do you see what you have done, Phineas Taylor Wilkie?"

Fact: whenever Mr. Frumpkes is really seriously

annoyed with me, he calls me by my full name instead of just P.T.

"You have warped your classmates' impressionable young minds with your preposterous whoppers."

Gloria raised her hand.

"Now what?" said Mr. Frumpkes, clearly seething. "Do you have a problem, Miss Ortega?"

"No problem here, sir," said Gloria. "However, if you are referring to Whoppers, the malted milk balls manufactured by the Hershey Company, *you* may have a problem. Whoppers is a registered trademark and, as such, can't be used without written consent from the Hershey legal department."

"Never mind!" hollered Mr. Frumpkes, his face going code purple. "Open your books. Today we will be learning about another famous Floridian—the Miami pharmacist who, in 1944, developed the first widely used sunscreen. . . ."

And blah-blah-blah for almost an hour. When the bell finally rang, Mr. Frumpkes was telling us how Ponce de León had planted Florida's first orange trees "sometime between 1513 and 1565."

A fifty-two-year period.

Which is exactly how long a period in Mr. Frumpkes's history class usually feels.



After-School Activities

Gloria and I always ride the bus home together after school when she doesn't have a Junior Achievement meeting with her fellow business-loving buds.

Gloria and her dad are "extended stay" guests at my family's wacky motel on St. Pete Beach because her father is a sportscaster for WTSP, channel ten. When you work in TV, you change jobs a lot. Cities, too. Gloria and Mr. Ortega have lived in Scranton, Buffalo, Chattanooga, and Tucson (to name just a few), where he worked for WNEP, WKBW, WRCB, and KVOA, respectively.

Fact: when you work in broadcasting, your life becomes a gigantic jumble of letters with lots of extra Ws. It's kind of like playing Boggle.

Since the Ortegas don't know how long they'll be living in Florida before they move on to their next

TV gig, staying at a motel makes more sense than buying a house.

It's also more fun, especially for Gloria. If you're a kid, our motel is the best place on earth to call home.

Think about it: There's a swimming pool, a miniature golf course, goofy decorations, a beach, a video game room, and all the ice cubes you could ever need. Someone vacuums your room and makes your bed every day and (here's the best part) it isn't you! There's a hair dryer in the bathroom and a microwave in the bedroom, so your zapping needs are totally covered. Did I mention the free Wi-Fi and cable TV, plus vending machines filled with convenient snack-food items and frosty beverages, plus, out back, the Banana Shack, where hamburgers sizzle on an open grill night and day?

Fact: the Wonderland Motel is kid heaven.

The school bus chugged down Gulf Boulevard, dropping people off every three or four blocks.

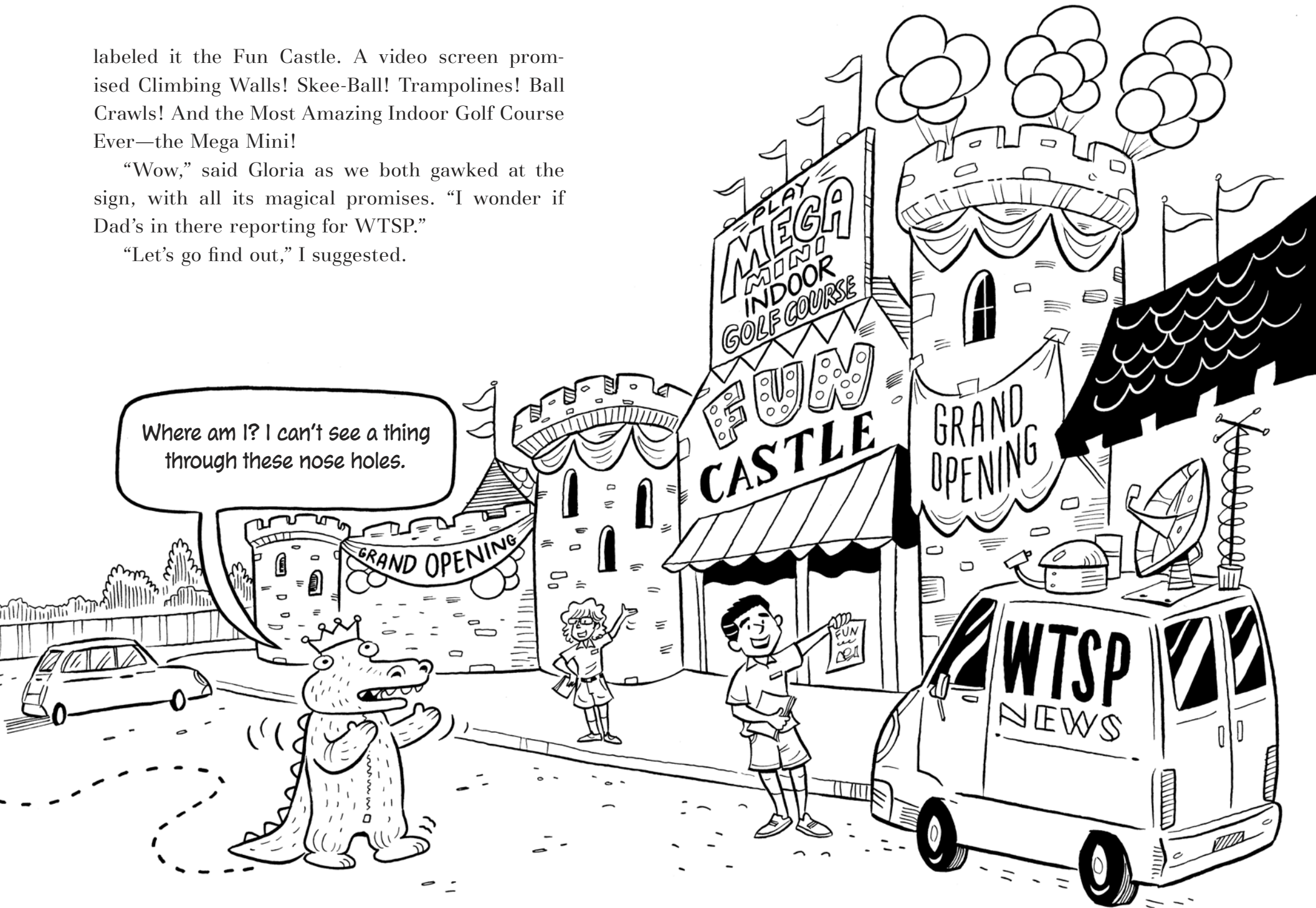
"Hey, there's the WTSP news van," said Gloria as we neared the bus stop one away from our own.

The TV station's truck, with a satellite dish and a forest of antennas on top, was parked in front of a brand-new boxy building that looked like a flamingo-pink and neon-green castle. Its freshly paved parking lot was decorated with Grand Opening! banners and balloons. A flashy sign out front

labeled it the Fun Castle. A video screen promised Climbing Walls! Skee-Ball! Trampolines! Ball Crawls! And the Most Amazing Indoor Golf Course Ever—the Mega Mini!

“Wow,” said Gloria as we both gawked at the sign, with all its magical promises. “I wonder if Dad’s in there reporting for WTSP.”

“Let’s go find out,” I suggested.



We grabbed our backpacks and headed up the aisle.

“This isn’t your stop, kids,” said the driver, a nice lady named Ms. Terbock, who *loves* our Wonderland shampoo because it smells like coconuts mixed with limes. (I give Ms. Terbock a ton of the tiny bottles on special holidays I make up during the school year, such as National Drive a Bunch of Kids to School Day.)

“We want to see if my dad’s inside,” said Gloria.

Ms. Terbock swung open the door for the kids who usually hopped off at that stop.

“Ooh, your father is soooo handsome,” she said, practically swooning. “You know, I never enjoyed sports until your father came to town. I still don’t. But I *love* him!”

Gloria laughed.

“See you tomorrow, Ms. Terbock,” I said. “It’s National Hair Conditioner Day!”

“Sweet!”

Gloria and I bounded down the stairs. The letters on the Fun Castle’s video screen flipped and spun into a sparkling message: Welcome to St. Pete Beach’s New Home for Fun in the Sun.

Huh.

I figured that meant the Wonderland was its *old* home.