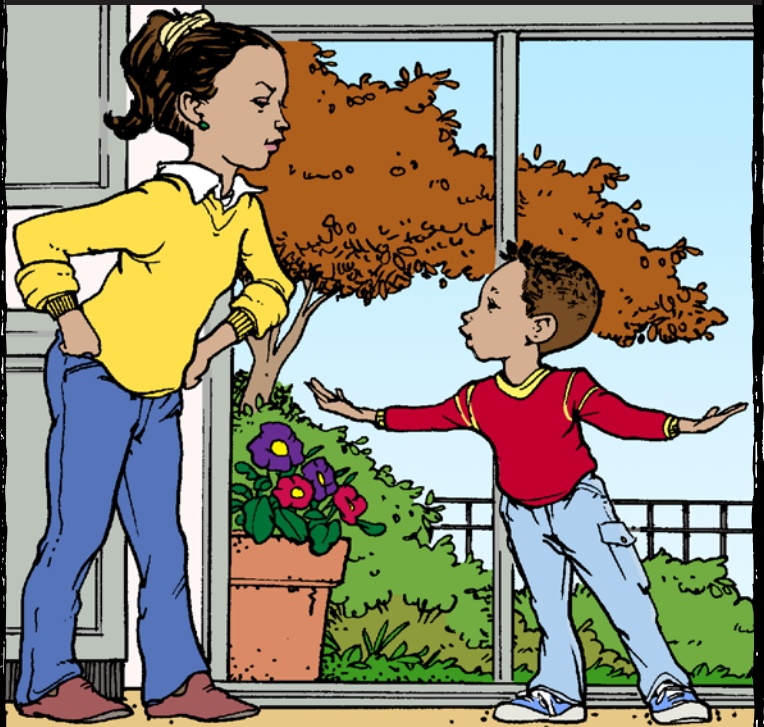


LEVELED BOOK • M

Marcus Loses Patches



Written by Clifton Holland
Illustrated by Joel Snyder

www.readinga-z.com

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Hi, I'm Marcus, and I love to play video games. So much so that my mom thinks I'm hooked on them. She might be right; I do spend an awful lot of time playing them.

"Marcus, will you feed Patches, please?"

That's my mom, and Patches is my dog. I'm right in the middle of this awesome game where I have to find my way through an Egyptian pyramid. I'll get past the sphinx, and then I'll feed Patches.

“Just a minute, Mom.”

“All right, but don’t forget. I need to get the casserole out of the oven for lunch,” Mom says.

This game is really difficult. I’ll try getting to the amulet from the sphinx one more time. Then I’ll feed my favorite canine.

Forty-five minutes and several tries later, I hear Mom again.

“Marcus, time to eat.”

Perfect timing. Man, was that hardcore—I’m wiped out from dueling the two-headed sphinx to save the magic amulet.

I go to the table, and Mom asks if I fed Patches.

Gulp. I'm in BIG trouble. I got so into my game that I forgot about my dog. I bet Patches is starving by now. I know I am.

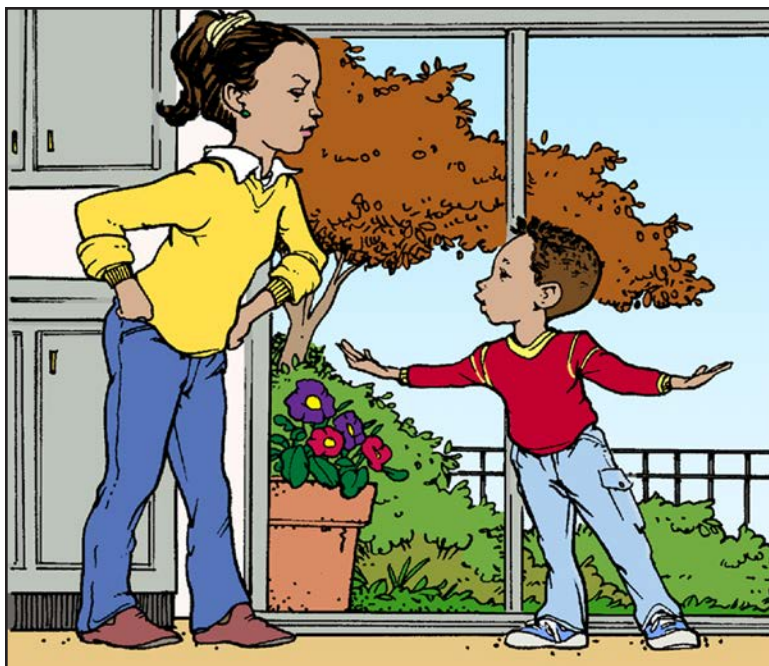
“Mom, I forgot. I’ll feed her now.”



I go to the backyard to bring Patches in, but I can't find her. She's not lying under her favorite shade tree. She's not watching our neighbors walk by through the gate.

Wait, the gate's open. Oh no! Patches is gone, lost, nowhere to be found. I must have left the gate unlatched when I took her out this morning. I'm in even BIGGER trouble now.





“Mom, Patches isn’t in the yard. I think I might have left the gate open this morning. I think she escaped.”

“She’s not there? Marcus, this is bad news,” Mom says, “very bad news.”

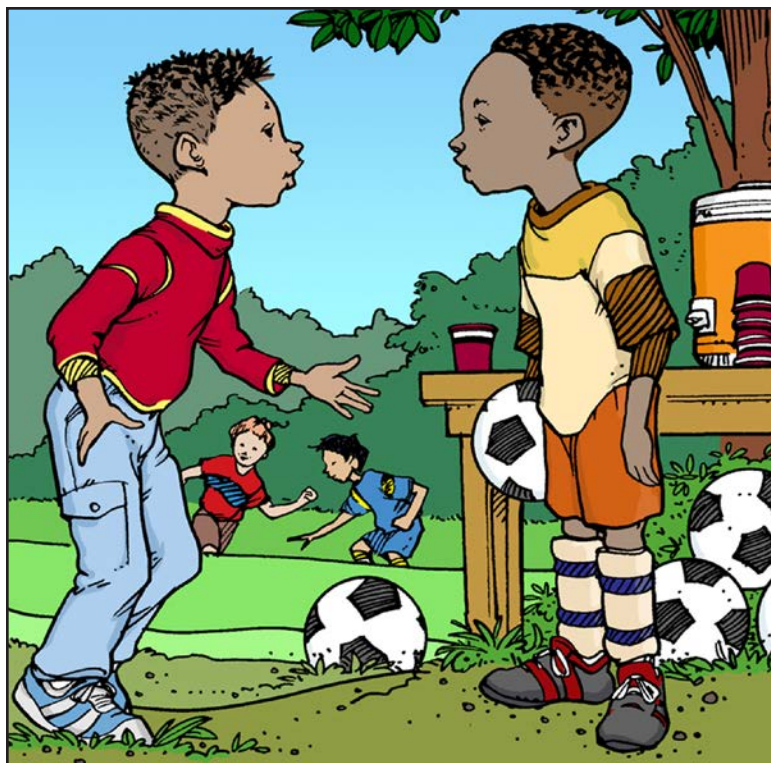
I know she’s right, but I’m torn between being psyched about beating the sphinx and sad about Patches being gone.



I hear Mom making telephone calls trying to locate Patches. From what I can hear, it sounds like no one has seen her, and I'm worried. I know what I'll do—I'll make signs so people can contact us if they see Patches. Then I'll go look for her.

Mom helps me make signs even though she's still disappointed in me for being so irresponsible. When we finish the signs, we walk around the neighborhood to hang them up. We go to the park to see if Patches is there.

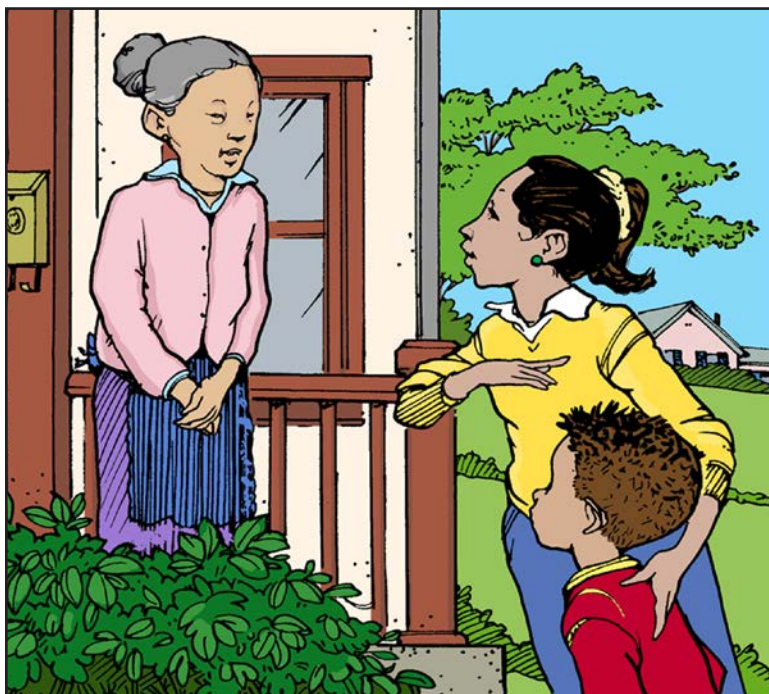




My friend Thomas is playing soccer in the park, so I ask Thomas if he's seen Patches. He says he hasn't.

My stomach growls loudly as we leave to look elsewhere—I haven't eaten any lunch. Mom asks if I'm okay. I tell her I want to keep looking for Patches; I'm really worried now.

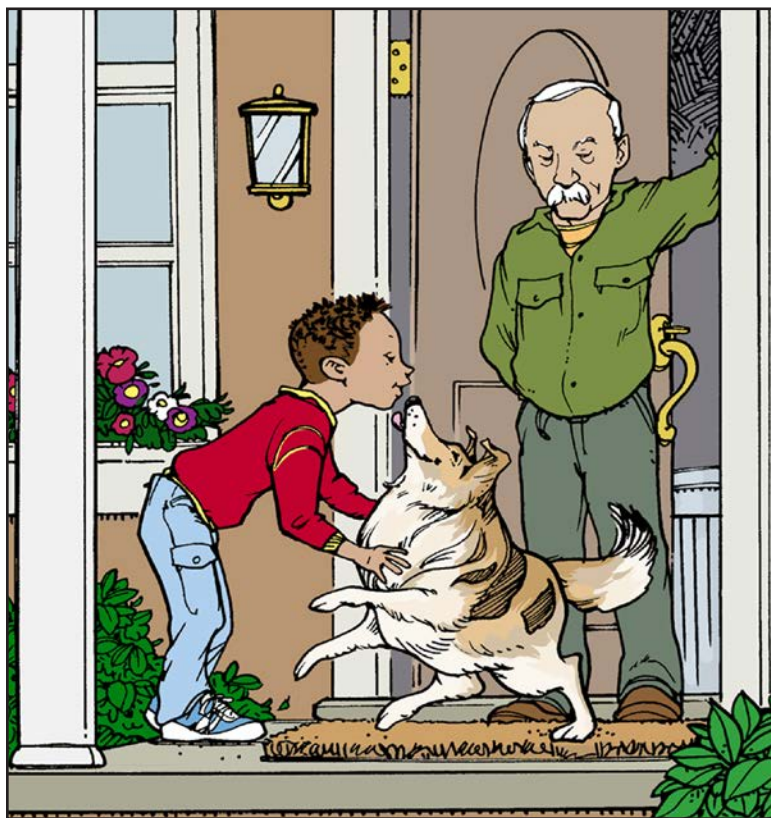
We visit house after house asking neighbors if they have seen Patches. Nobody has.



We're almost to my grandpa's house, a few blocks from our place. I'm really hungry. Maybe he'll have a snack—I could use a hug, too. It doesn't seem like we'll ever find Patches.

I knock on Grandpa's door, and I hear barking—I hear Patches!

When Grandpa opens the door, Patches jumps up and licks my face. I hug her and pet her, and even rub her stomach just where she likes it.





When we get to Grandpa's backyard, Grandpa asks me what happened.

I tell him how I accidentally left the backyard gate open and how Patches got out—probably looking for food.



“Can you explain how you forgot to feed her?” Grandpa asks.

“I started playing one of my video games, and I couldn’t get past this one part. When I realized Patches was gone, I was so worried.”

“How could a video game be more important than your dog?” Grandpa asks.

“It’s not,” I say.

I'm happy Patches is safe. I feel awful that my dog could have gotten hurt because of me.

I walk over to Mom and Patches.

"Mom, I'm sorry I didn't listen to you, and I'm sorry I made you worry. And Patches, I'm sorry I forgot about you."





“Thank you for the apology, Marcus,” says Mom. “Let’s go home and eat.”

I’m sure I’ll still forget to do things sometimes. I do love my video games; but I love my mom, my grandpa, and my dog, even more.

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Level M Leveled Book
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