

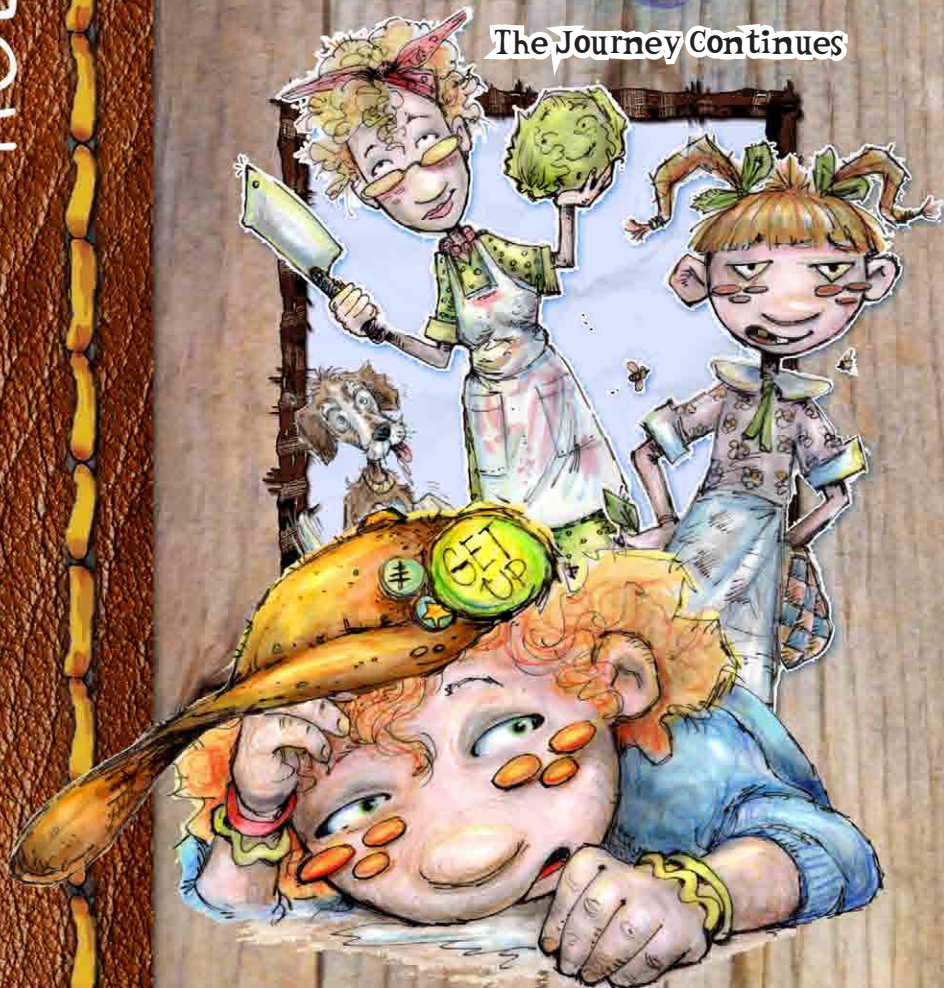
HOLLY WILD

GeEK Super Secret
SPECIAL Mini-Book EDITION



One Wild Ride

The Journey Continues



Written & Illustrated by LORI TAYLOR

Other Books by LORI TAYLOR

Holly Wild: Bamboozled on Beaver Island (Book 1)

Holly Wild: Let Sleeping Bear Dunes Lie (Book 2)

Holly Wild: Packing for the Porkies (Book 3)

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Holly Wild: The Young GeEK's Guide to Getting Outside

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**READING is
delicious!**

Delectable!

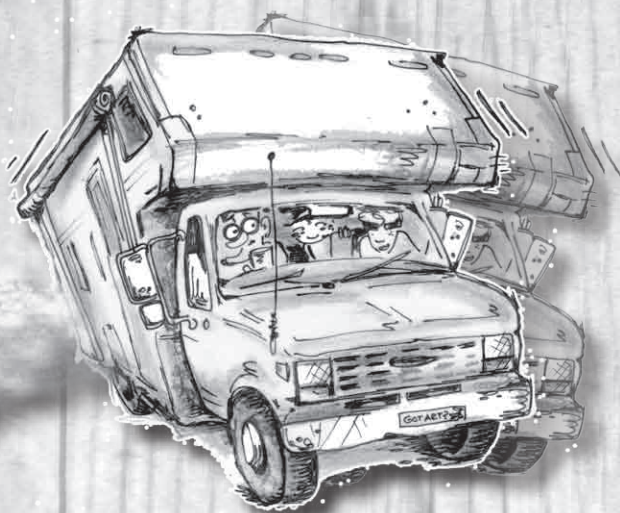
Divine!



bear track press
Pinckney, MI

One Wild Ride

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CHAPTER 1

Bump, Bang, All Aboard!

“Pit stop, gang!” Dad yelled. He wheeled the rust-bucket RV off the exit ramp to the rest area. “Next rest area 42 miles, better go now.” The moon hung like a golden pancake in the sky. My stomach growled.

I always hate going back home, but the end of this summer road trip meant heading back to homework, new teachers, and a new year as a middle-schooler. This journey had been rough on all of us, including our new, ancient RV, *The Beast*. She had sprung a leak in her, how can I say this delicately—poop tube.

“I wish you had fixed that hose, Dad,” I moaned. “Then we could go on the road. It’s kinda cool to run to the john when the RV is moving. I feel like I’m on a ship.” The Beast perfected the art of mimicking a rocking schooner at sea, or at least a Great Lake.

“Gross, Holly,” chimed Sierra, my best friend and official weather geek of Team Wild. She’s quite the Geo-Explorer Kid extraordinaire when it



comes to predicting storms and wind changes.

She went back to reading her magazine *Weather Or Not!* Jasper, my new, old beagle Yooper souvenir, wagged his white flag tail, seconding Dad's suggestion of a potty break.



"You should walk your dog, Holly," Tierra, or T, the other half of Team Wild and twin of Sierra. "He might be nervous with such a long ride." She squeezed his face and kissed his head. Sie is the Team's artist and recorder of

information and pet enthusiast—ok—nut! She had about ten cats from what I counted last time I was at their house. Not to mention her hamsters and their own drool machine hound.

The RV clanged and clattered to a banshee screeching halt. We grabbed seat belts and curtains, holding on for dear life. It was dark now, the sun had gone down after we crossed the Mackinac Bridge.

"If we're lucky we might see the northern lights, the aurora borealis," said Gram Wild. She threw open her rusted, squeaky door that sounded like a pod of dolphins feeding.

The door in back opened and we kids filed out, blinking at the darkness and yellowy lights.

Rows of RVs, campers, and semi-trucks filled the lot. I yawned. The day had been long one. Even though I didn't want to go back home to school, it sure would be nice to be back in my own bed.

Gram doled out quarters from her coin purse so we could grab a snack in the entryway of the center. Then she shoved the coin purse in my hoody pocket and handed me Jasper's makeshift leash—a ratchet strap used to tie

down the RV awning or a clothesline—whichever was needed. I walked him around where the gold light shone down on the grass. He sniffed a bit and did his doggy duty.

“Good boy,” I said, dancing. “Now it’s my turn.” I handed Dad the leash and he loaded Jasper back into the RV while I ran to the restroom.

The twins had already gotten their snack and gone back into *The Beast* to crawl into the back bunk. I was the last one in. So I quick splashed cold water on my face trying to stay awake long enough to get my snack. I could see Dad outside pacing and waiting for me by the RV.

“Great,” I said, feeling rushed and quickly selecting some stale snack. Fishing out coins and feeding them to the machine I punched the buttons for a Chippy-Chewy bar. The machine went through its motions. I waited. Finally, the coil started moving, the bar moved forward, then stopped. It dangled on the coil thingy sideways and didn’t drop.

“Great, times two.” I moaned. I didn’t have time to select another thing. Gram was now outside *The Beast*, her hands on her hips, foot tapping. I ran out of the building.

“All aboard?” Dad yelled and clapped his hands. Then he slammed his door. It seemed to be more of a question than an order.

“Yep. Coming,” I said, galloping across the lot. I stopped to notice the really nice RVs. I liked collecting the names of these gleaming travel lodges, these rolling coaches that really made *The Beast* look like a bucket of bolts. White Wolf, Crouching Cougar, Soaring Osprey, Rambling River Otter, wild animal names that were



mighty and majestic. I ran to the open door when—

“BAM! WHAM times ten!” My head made contact—er—slammed into the mirror of a neighboring RV. I suddenly met the asphalt like a squirrel falling from a pine twenty feet off the ground. I got up and twirled around dazed.

“OOF! My head.”

My eyes crossed, my teeth and freckles were jarred



senseless from their home base in my skull. I grabbed my head, staggered up the steps, shut the door, and collapsed onto my bunk. The engine roared to life. We were off. So was my headache and the tail spin my brain was in. Fortunately, sleep won out. Sleep heals. When I woke I'd be home—ack!



CHAPTER 2

The Journey Continues

“Jasper,” I moaned. I was awakened by stinky dog breath and wet tongue. I was not as thrilled about dog spit as Tierra was. Saliva has its place and that is in a dog’s mouth. I rolled over, it was still kinda dark. My nose tickled. Then my freckles jerked to life. Bacon! Sizzling in a pan. If there is one thing that wakes a Wild, it is bacon. Maple soaked, hickory smoked, crispy, and lots of it. I leaned on my elbow in my bunk, my head buzzing. Why would Gram would be frying bacon at midnight or whatever time it was? But then again, we Wild’s never wait when the call

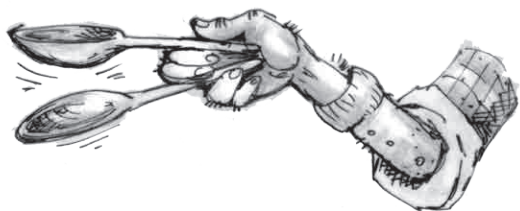


for bacon comes knocking.

“Gram?” I whispered. I heard movement, scuffling and shuffling by the stove. My eyes were as fuzzy as the dim light. Were we at another rest area? Dad does have the bladder the size of a hummingbird egg, Mom always said.

Dad was humming a little ditty somewhere in the RV

cabin. “Ol, Susianna, now don’t you cry fer me...she’ll be coming around the mountain with a banjo on her knee...” I wondered if the twins were sleeping through his rendition of the song. If anything, Sierra would up correcting his lyrics.



“Dad, can you keep it down? I have a total blow out headache,” I moaned. Then he started in with jangling silverware about. Must be anxious for bacon. But there was an odd tune to his flatware sounds. Almost musical. I sat up, threw off my covers and stared at him. What the?

There sat Dad in his flannel shirt, but with suspenders and a wiry, woolly beard. He hammered spoons together on his knee. Clackety-clacking between his knuckles, he rattled the spoons to his humming. The door slammed and in walked a girl.

“Bout time you were waked,” she said, setting down a bucket. Gram turned to look at me. She wore her hair up and clomped around in her boots as usual. But she was dressed in a long skirt and apron. Gram never wore aprons. She says they’re for sissies and scientists. And as for a skirt, she hadn’t worn one since her wedding and never again. What the heck was going on?

“Where am I?” I croaked. The dog who woke me with his dead fish and deer poop breath panted next to me. I jumped. That wasn’t Jasper. It was a mutt beagle mix, like half wolf, half beagle. As Dorothy said to Toto in the Wizard of Oz, I don’t think we’re in Kansas anymore.

“Skinny Bob,” yelled Gram. “Quit yer yodeling and call them jacks to breakfast.” Dad got up and winked at me. Skinny Bob? He snapped his red suspenders and danced out the door. I was frozen on my bunk. I repeated my name, smiled, and held my arm up over my head. That’s

what Gram said to do that if you think you are having a concussion. Or was that for a stroke?

“Yes’m, you sleepy head in the corner raisin’ yer hand, you got a question?” Gram asked. She pulled a tray of biscuits out of the oven and set it atop. She pulled out a basin, dumped them in and handed it to the girl.

When the girl turned to look at me I nearly jumped out of my skin. Ivy Buckthorn! My neighbor, arch enemy number one, and major pain in my butt, times ten. But instead of her usual blond ponytail she wore two red pigtails. They swung about like savage horsewhips crackling and snapping midair as she grinned wide at me. She wore a pale pink calico dress and yellow stained apron. And to add insult to injury, she had freckles like me. This gave me the chills. Red hair is simply not handed out to just anybody and Ivy was the last person I wanted to look like me.

“Now, don’t you fuss with her none, Polly,” Gram said, all kindly. “She done knocked her noggin a good un and she needs to rest. Rest up so she can wash these here dishes after the jacks eat.” The pile of plates and cups filled two barrels.







CHAPTER 3

Holy Creeps x 10!

“Will someone please tell me what happened? Where am I?” I asked again. The room was the size of *The Beast*, and there was the familiar creaking like ship beams, and the splashing of water. T must be in the bathroom. I looked at my bunk of piled towels, rags, and tarps. Nothing unusual here.

“You is on the beautiful AuSable River is where you is,” Polly-Ivy said, smacking her lips, her ‘s’ in AuSable hissing like butter sizzling in a fry pan.

Gran slapped at her hand with a dishrag. “Ow, Gran!” Polly whined. I tried to interpret the information from our conversation of badly spoken English. On a river?! Did I climb into the wrong RV? That’s it. I crawled into the Crouching Cougar or Soaring Osprey instead of our filthy Beast. I wondered if my family knew I was missing yet. Who would rally the Team, keep Gram out of trouble, walk Jasper?

Right now though, I wanted that bacon I smelled. I swung my legs out of the bed pile. My legs felt as stiff as a board and as heavy as logs. Then I realized I was atop

a wood pile. I stood up, my legs feeling wobbly. Then I realized we were moving. Who was driving if Gram was cooking and Dad was banging spoons together?

“Who’s driving this—thing?” I asked, looking around. I saw gray, early morning light peeking in the window with tattered red curtains. Not unlike our very own pink trout curtains in *The Beast*.

Gran shoved a platter of pancakes as tall as a stack of three months-worth of library books into Polly’s hands. “Git em’ out girl, go on. They’s waiting and hungry and don’t want cold cakes. And take yer twin with you.”

Gran thrust a bucket of steaming pork and beans into my gut like a smelly, gassy football. My stomach turned either from the aroma or the fact that Gran called Polly my sister!

“Come quick, Molly,” Polly said, kicking open the door. Molly? I staggered behind her then stopped dead.



We weren't in a supermarket parking lot or Rest Area, but ON the AuSable River. I mean IN, as in floating on! I suddenly felt seasick and homesick and bean sick.

The river was full of floating logs with lumberjacks skipping over them like rabbits, while others were seated at the table threshing through food like starved hound dogs. Polly my sister grinned eerily at me as spoons and forks clattered, dishes were licked clean, and burps boomed. Something was seriously wrong with this picture.

"Excuse me, but I need to stop. Can you take me to the next exit please? I need to call my dad and Gram."

"Call yer Pa? You can holler from here," came a voice from the table.

"He's right over dere." I stared at the two jacks at the table. The one who spoke looked up at me with a knife in hand. T and Sie? They wore greasy caps and plaid mackinaw coats. Not the latest in back-to-school fashion.

"T, Sie, tell me where we are? Were we captured by RV pirates?" I asked as Polly splashed heaping spoonfuls of beans on to the tin plates I held.

"No, doing what needs to be done. We got da timber to untangle, jams to unjam," Sie-jack-jill said, slurping her coffee and belching. Extremely un-Sie-like.

"But we've got to get home for school, middle school. You know, shop for clothes, notebooks, pens..." I pleaded with the twin jack-jills.

"Dis river is da only school we need here. River and trees," said T jack-jill, chomping on a hunk of ham sandwiched between two pancakes. The real T would not stand for this, she's vegan. "Dis is da life, Molly. Being a river pig is big adventure!"

"I mean I'm all for pancakes, who isn't, but this is crazy," I said.

"I know you like to eat, just vegan, and not this much—at one time. But really, that's no reason to call yourself a river pig."



“No, river pig, river rat, you know, as in we run along the slippery wet logs poking at them with a sharp iron hook on a stick to keep dem moving,” she said, grinning with ham fat dangling from her lips like a northern pike. OK, I definitely did not want to live life as a lumber jill river pig—no matter how many pancakes I got.

Just then another jack hopped aboard. My brother, Boy! I was so glad to see him. Soaked, he was dressed in his usual flannel shirt, jeans, and heavy black boots—but with mean cleats! He sidled up to an open seat. Strangely, he had color in his cheeks. Getting out of his basement-lair bedroom and away from his video games to hopping on moving logs did him a world of good. I’m sure Boy was all over the cleats on his boots. They did look pretty slick.

“Boy, how did you get here? Where’s Mom?”

He grunted something and shoved an entire biscuit



dripping with honey into each cheek. I could kinda get into this big breakfast meal thing. My stomach growled.

“Polly! Molly! Reload, on the double quick,” Gran shouted. Molly, ugh, what happened to my name? The wolf beagle dog happily licked grease off the floor in the floating kitchen. He looked up at me with ghostly white eyes like Jasper. I shoved my hands in my pockets in case he had any ideas.

“Molly, take this plate to yer pa,” Gran said, handing me a platter that made my mouth water. Cornbread, eggs, ham, bacon, doughnuts. I teetered my way to where “Dad” stood, trying not to fall in the log-crowded water.

“So what kind of RV is this floating thing, a Class Sea?” I sort of snorted at my joke. Dad kept on paddling the giant oar through the water.

“Wanigan,” he answered. Maybe he couldn’t hear me over the rushing water, and shouting river pigs, or the clacking of forks on tin plates, and smacking choppers.

“I said, what is this wooden-floaty-kitchen-rafty thing...?” I repeated.

“I said it’s a wanigan, Pippi,” he grinned. “This here wanigan I built myself when I was yer age, Mary.”

“It’s Molly—so I hear these days—but you can call me Holly,” I said, correcting him. He sure sounded and acted like Dad, and if he truly built this rig, we were all headed for that great whirlpool in the sky. Dad was not exactly a woodworker, he was more the pencil pusher.

“I always wanted to hold wooden things in my hand.” He looked wistfully over the log loaded river.

“Pencils dad. Not oars. You’re an artist. You love—no—you adore wooden pencils!”

“Naw, this is my job, my life now, Half-quart, got no use for pencils.” I sighed, this wasn’t the klutzy, brainy nerd Dad I knew. He secured the oar with a rope to eat his pile of food.

“Aw, who needs reading and ciphering, half-quart,” he said between bites. “We can go anywhere. The whole world is at our door and paddle. The Manistee, the Menominee, the Saginaw—the Dead River.” He grinned at me, his eyes glistening at the last river name. This did creep me out.

“Reading fills yer head with stuff. Books are heavy. Cumbersome comes to mind. Now there’s a word for ya. And if’n I knew what that word was I’d use it more often. Just kinda popped in there.” He finished his plate and turned to pick up his oar, tripping on the rope and knocking his glasses off. I take it back about him not being klutzy.

“Yep, books. Books are expensive,” he said retrieving his glasses, one lens busted from a log. “Books just don’t appear out of thin air.” He chuckled and shoved the broken glasses onto his nose.

“Well, yes, yes they do. Ebooks do,” I said. What year was this anyway?

“Oh, you silly Molly, girls don’t need to read anyhow,” he chuckled. “Yessir, all you need is right here. The river, trees, frying bacon, biscuits, doin’ dishes, and sweatin’?” Uh—no—times ten.

No thanks, please, except for the bacon. Girls do need to read and cipher. I’ll take middle school with its homework and smelly gym lockers over this.

“When we can we go home?” I asked feeling desperate and wanting leftover pancakes with real butter.

“This is home kiddo. You, me, your sister, and Gran,” he grinned and steered the gigantic paddle through the water. I groaned at the mention of my sister.

“No sir, you don’t need school. Look at me. I had me a third grade edgy cashun and I turned out alright. Yessir.” I didn’t feel comforted by the fact that he couldn’t sing a lumberjack alphabet song further than the letter D.

I felt my freckles quiver, my feet felt unsteady. I had the overwhelming urge to be on land. Touch the green earth, steady myself by grabbing a pine that was actually standing and not floating. I looked over the scenery. Everywhere logs rolled. The shore seemed distant. Holy creeps, why didn’t Mom let me have a cell phone?

I took his empty plate back inside. I started feeling wiggly, my freckles twitched. Maybe if I carved my name and phone number on a stick and tossed it into the drink. Tree mail. Someone would find it—and find me.



Maybe they’d have to stop at some river rest area soon. The wolf beagle came over to lick my hoody—ugh—bean juice. I quick shoved my fingers into my hoody pocket in case he thought they were bacon strips. Wait! What?

Gram's change purse. The quarters she gave me when I went into the restroom.

"There's no place like school, there's no place like school," I mumbled. Maybe I should tap my quarters together three times. Heck, it worked for Dorothy when she was trapped in Oz.

Suddenly, I spied an old-timey phone mounted on the wall. What luck?!

I ran over, unzipped Gram's coin purse, deposited two quarters into the drawer and cranked the handle. I've seen these phones on old movies. I held the round, ceramic earpiece to my good ear. The one that didn't buzz. My head was still sore from the bang it received.

"Hello! Operator! Dad, Gram come get me quick. I'm on a..." suddenly, Polly's grimy hand slapped over mine to stop my cranking.

"That there's the coffee grinder, half-quart," she flashed a one-brown-tooth-and-one-missing-tooth grin.



“Whatcha need that fer?” A small pile of fresh, pungent grounds covered my coins.

Right then Gran grabbed my arm and spun me to face the barrels of fly-covered dishes.

“Molly, girl, time to get to washing so’s to be ready for cooking lunch.” She grabbed up a cabbage and whacked it in half with a huge butcher knife. I felt woozy and dizzy. I went back to sit on the bunk. I felt the throbbing knob on my head. I lay back to close my eyes and think.

“There’s no place like school, there’s no place like school,” I mumbled. My twin, Polly, came over and pulled something out of her apron pocket. She handed me a pine needle and cornhusk doll to play with.

“I made this fer ya since yer feelin’ so poorly,” she grinned. My eye was drawn to the dark hole cavern of her missing tooth space.

“You don’t need book learnin’ or schoolin, Sissy Moll—you can be jest like me, Gran, her Gran. Cook, clean—“

Right then I decided I had had enough.







CHAPTER 4

Homeward Bound

“Stop this wanigan. I wanna get off!!” I yelled. I looked at the faces around me. Dad, Gram, T and Sie! I was in my own kitchen bunk again. Whoa. What a wild ride. I felt the edge of the table bed. I looked out the window. No river. Whew.

“Are you OK, kiddo?” Dad asked, his brow wrinkled. “You had us worried! I thought we lost you. Your mother would have killed me.” He polished his glasses then pushed them up on his face.

“Sheila, can you hand me that glass of water, please.” Ah, the ink stain from his pens was still on his button-down plaid shirt. He was still an artist. He was still a smart nerd. He still had Sierra’s name wrong.

Gram felt my head. “Well, she’s had quite a knock on the noggin, but I think she’ll make it,” she said winking. “Strong enough to do the dishes.” Deja what?! She hovered over me like a mother hen. Then swatted me on the rump.

“OK Wolf, we got to put miles behind us. Gotta get the girls back in time for school.” I stared at the twins, Sierra with her arms crossed and Tierra’s arms around Jasper, who blindly panted and smiled.

“And you were there, and you were there, and you kinda, Jasper, only wilder and slightly creepier,” I said to the twins, still in bedhead mode. Sie delivered her usual squinty smirk.

“What the heck happened?” I asked. “Last thing I remember, I hit my head on an osprey or cougar, then I was out like a light.”

“Only you, Holly,” Sie said shaking her head. Jasper stuck a soft, white, non-wolf paw into my lap.



“The Wanimans, the kind people who called us met up with us here at Hartwick Pines State Park. They found my coin purse in your pocket with my cell number on it.”

“You mean, I really did crawl into someone’s RV?” I sat up. This was getting good.

“Yep. The grandmother called and said that her granddaughter found you asleep on the floor. Almost stepped on you when she went to the privy. Said you never stirred.” I do remember the sloshing water sound. I guess I thought it was the river. It was comforting to know it was all a hallucination dream thing.

“Did you see their rig, Gram,” I asked peeking out the window to look.

“Come to think of it, no,” she said, “The young park ranger brought us over to where you were propped up on a bench next to the grandmother when we got there. Maybe it was parked elsewhere.” Yeah, like in the river!

“Nice lady, though. She said she was much obliged to return you and that they had to get home.”

“I guess,” I said. “Wherever that is.” Everything seemed foggy and weird.

“Anyway, Park Ranger Beau or Bob, said we could stay in the park until morning when you felt better.” Dad said scratching his chin. He slurped his coffee.

Just then there came a tapping at the Beast’s RV door. Gram swung it open and in walked Polly! She was a dead ringer mash-up of me and Ivy, in a pink gingham dress. She smelled faintly of bacon and beans. T’s eyes bugged out and Sie’s mouth hung open like a large mouth bass.

“Holy creeps! Polly!” I yelped, holding on to the bed. I wasn’t going anywhere with her!

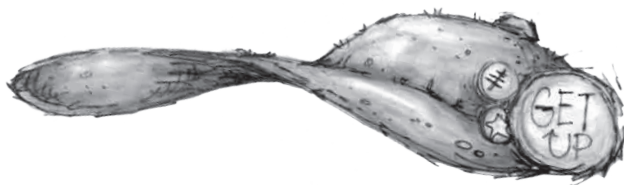
“Naw, I’m Molly, Polly’s my sister,” she said, grinning. “She wanted me to give this to you, you almost forgot it,” she said laying a stained, yellow apron in my lap. I stand corrected. This was getting much weirder!

“But I-I,” I stammered. “I don’t own an apron.” She smiled. I opened it. There lay the tiny corn husk pine needle doll. “Maybe we all can play together, next time you’re up this-a way.” Then like the wind, she was down the steps and out the door, red braids flying behind her.

“And I’d shore like to know more about those lighter than air books,” she called, her one missing tooth space whistling long like a kettle on “books-s-s.” Creepy.

T, Sie and I stared like we’d seen a ghost. And something tells me we did. Those old lumber camps hold all kinds of mysterious secrets. I guess we’ll have to come back next summer. Awesome, times ten!

But for now, there’s no place like home.





Author/illustrator and her granddaughter (not a ground squirrel).

LORI TAYLOR is an author/illustrator who loves exploring Michigan and gathering stories outdoors.

While Lori was recently camping in northern Michigan, she was napping beneath a shady pine when suddenly a curious ground squirrel nibbling on her finger, woke her. Leaping to her feet to run get her sketchbook from their RV she about knocked her self senseless by running into its awning.

Excited to tell a tale and learn more about Michigan's lumberjack life, Lori hopped aboard a real wanigan hitched to the shore of the AuSable River at Lumberman's Monument National Forest. And that is how stories begin! Adventure begins outdoors.

LUMBERJACK ALPHABET SONG

Skinny Bob always forgets the words to his songs! Fill in the blank with your lyrics to help him out. When you're finished, sing your song loud and clear!

A is for axe we to use to chop trees.

B is for _____ we smell in the breeze.

C is for cap we wear on our head.

D is for _____ in case there's no bread!

E is for ears that freeze red in the cold.

F is for _____ that tastes good I'm told.

G is for grub we get four meals a day.

H is for honey, and horses, and _____.

I is for ice to we slide stacked timber on.

J is for jacks named Jimmy and _____.

K is for kitchen to find plates, fork, and knife.

L is for Lake _____ and lumbering life.

M is for mackinaw a coat plaid, woolen red.

N is for _____ you find in your bed.

O is for Olaf who eats like ten hogs.

P is for peavy a spiked hook that moves _____.

Q is for quiet, winter's white quilt of snow.

R is for river where spring rolling _____ go .

S is for suspenders, they hold up our pants.

T is for _____ who like to dance.

U is for underwear, we hang from our bunk.

V is for the _____ we hide in our trunk.

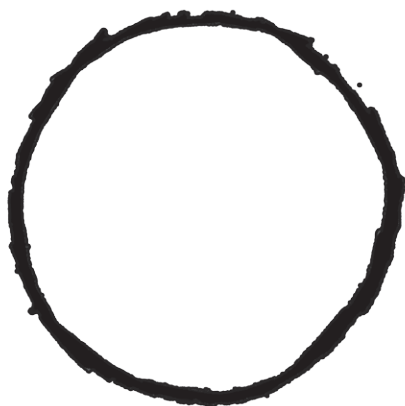
W, X, Y are end marks that stamp our log goods.

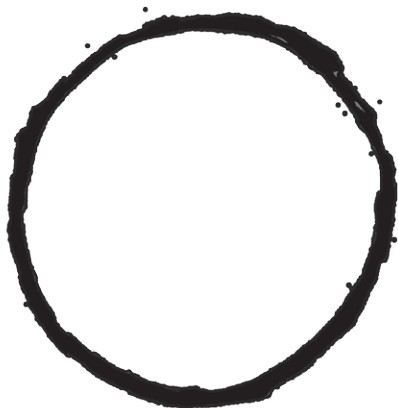
This is Z song's end, now _____ to the woods!

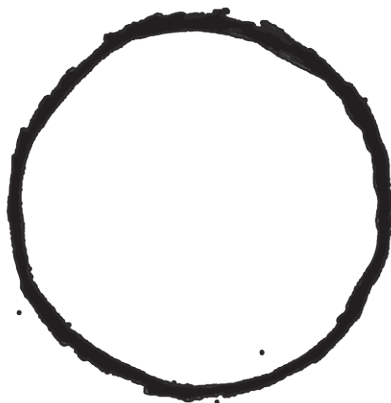
LOG END MARKS

The simple designs stamped into the log told at a glance who the owner was. Design and name your own end marks.

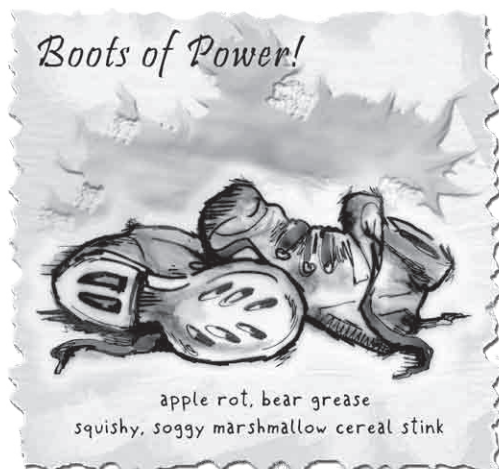








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and so is bacon. Both
are meant to be
enjoyed!

*WARNING. Bacon was consumed
in the making of this book. It served
as inspiration, was a model, and kept
Jasper quiet.

CUT OUT this bookmark but **DO NOT**
EAT it! And **NEVER USE** a real piece
of bacon as a bookmark—that's just
weird and gross.



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