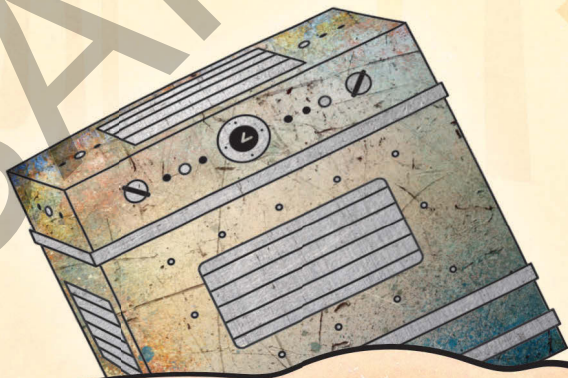
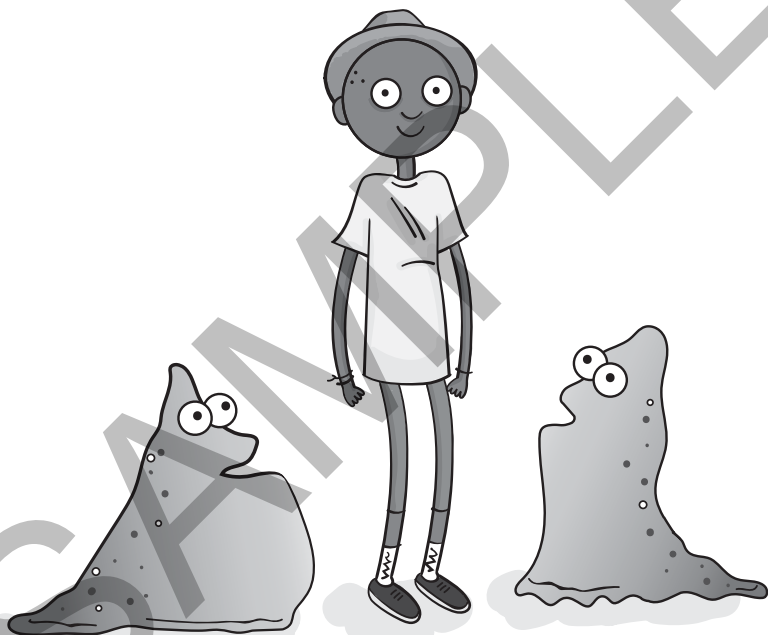


# OUT OF GAS



VICKI C. HAYES

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VICKI C. HAYES

# red rhino

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ISBN: 978-1-68021-900-5

eBook: 978-1-64598-222-7

Printed in Malaysia

25 24 23 22 21 1 2 3 4 5

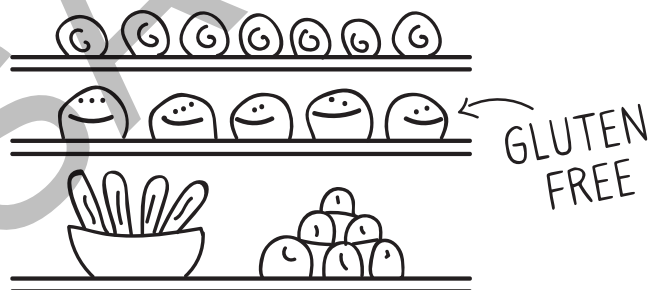
1

## NO IDEA

“School is the worst!” Trey said. “I want to play soccer. But Mr. Dean says no. He wants me off the team.”

“Why do you think that?” his dad asked.

Trey grabbed a warm loaf of bread and stuffed it in a bag. Then he plopped the bag on a shelf.



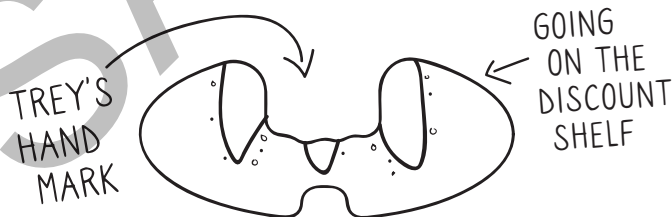
“He wants my idea,” Trey said. “For the sixth-grade science fair. I need one by Monday or I’m off the team.” Trey dusted flour off his hands. He was helping his parents. They owned a bake shop.

His mom took more bread out of the oven. “That should be easy. You like science.”

“Yeah,” his dad said. He was mixing dough. “I thought space was your favorite. How about looking for a new planet?”

“What about spaceships?” his mom added. “Or aliens?”

Trey grabbed another loaf of bread. He held it a little too tight.

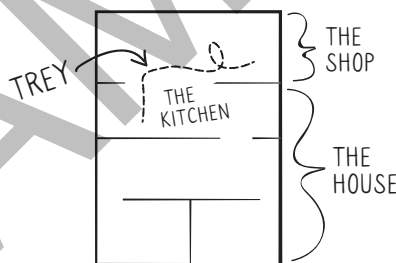


“No,” he said. “Something has to be tested. I need to show how it works.” He shoved the bread into a bag.

His mom looked at the squashed loaf. “Why don’t you take a break? Go for a walk with Max. Maybe you’ll think of an idea.”

Trey nodded and put down the bag of bread. He walked through the shop’s back door into the house kitchen. The two buildings were connected.

### FLOOR PLANS



“Here boy,” he called. Max ran over. The big dog barked as Trey clipped on his leash.



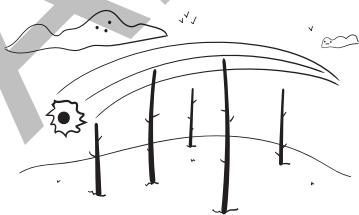
“Let’s go for a walk.” They left and headed into the woods.

Trey liked walking with Max. He could tell the dog his worries.

“What will I do?” Trey said. “I need an idea. The science fair is stupid. All I want to do is play soccer.”

Max stuck his nose into some leaves. Then he froze. Something had caught his attention.

Both Trey and Max looked up. A bright light streaked across the sky. Then there was a loud crash. It came from up ahead.



Trey felt a wave of heat.

“What was that?”



Max barked.

“I don’t know either. Let’s go see.”

Trey and Max ran toward the sound. Up ahead, the woods looked odd. They stopped.

“Something weird is going on here.” Trey looked around. Many trees were broken. Branches laid on the ground. A few were smoking. Leaves floated through the air. The ground was hot.

A shiny object caught Trey’s eye. It was a big silver box. It looked like the ovens in the bake shop. An oven would not fall from the sky though. Whatever this thing was, it didn’t belong in the woods.





“I think it crashed,” Trey said. “Hard.”  
The box was jammed into the ground.

Max whined and sniffed the air. He tried moving closer to the box.

“No, Max.” Trey grabbed him. “That thing doesn’t seem safe. It looks hot. What if it blows up?”



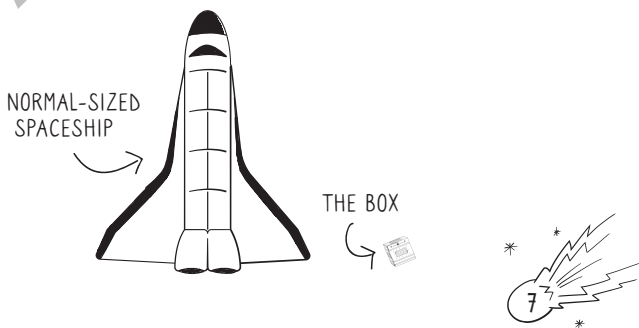
## THE CRASH

Trey stood behind two trees. He talked softly to Max.

“What could it be?” Trey asked. “Part of a spy plane?”

Max sniffed the air again.

“Did NASA send this thing? Could it be a spaceship? Maybe it was going to the space station. Then it crashed. Or maybe not.” He shrugged. “It’s so small. Spaceships are bigger.”

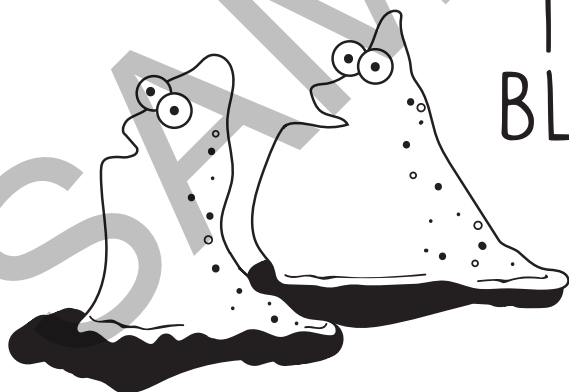


Trey stopped talking. Something was happening. There was a door in the box. It opened slowly. Two creatures oozed out. They looked like blobs

“I was right,” Trey whispered. “It is a spaceship. But not one from Earth. Those look like aliens!”

Trey watched the blobs. He thought of an old video game. There were ghosts in it. That was what these things looked like.

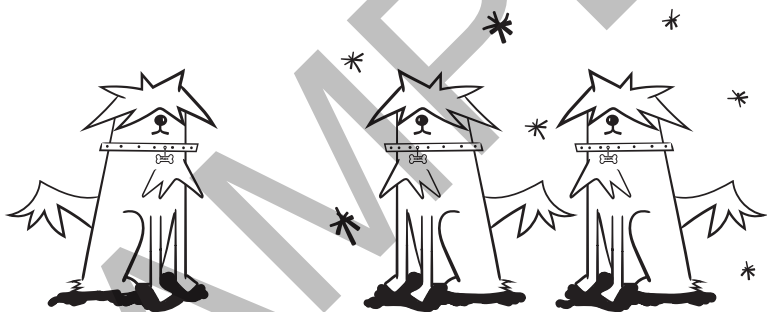
## THE BLOBS!



Max pulled on the leash. Trey lost his grip. The dog ran over and barked at the blobs.

The blobs looked at Max. They shimmered and stretched. Then they changed shape.

Trey stared in shock. Now there were three dogs. They all looked like Max. How did the blobs do that?



The three dogs met. They sniffed each other. Trey was worried. Were the blobs going to hurt Max? He ran out from behind the trees.

“Stop!” he yelled. “Don’t touch my dog!”



But which dog was Max? Trey wasn't sure. He called Max's name. All the dogs looked at him. One wagged its tail and ran to Trey. It was Max.

The other two dogs shimmered. They stretched and changed. Suddenly Trey was looking at two more Treys.

"No way!" he said.

The other two Treys stared at him.

