

Mellow's Exciting Adventure!

A Short Story



From the FEARLESS MIND of Author

Zack Roth



Tails
of Hope



Short Story Contest

The Tails of Hope Short Story Contest invited children to write about their beloved furry friend and use their imagination to bring their story to life through words and artwork.

This inspiring project celebrates the deep connection children share with animals and highlights their compassion, creativity, and appreciation for pets of all shapes and sizes. Through storytelling, Tails of Hope provides children with an opportunity to express themselves, build confidence, strengthen communication skills, and explore their emotions in a positive and meaningful way.

As future leaders, children play an important role in shaping a kinder and more compassionate world. Through initiatives like Tails of Hope, we can nurture empathy, confidence, and respect for animals while encouraging creativity and self-expression.

A special thank you to Pickering Animal Services, Pickering Public Library, and Scholars of Pickering and Ajax for contributing to the success of this initiative.

— City of —
PICKERING



Scholars
of Ajax & Pickering

Dedicated To:

Mellow, the rabbit:

Though you are not my pet rabbit, thank you for always showing me so much love and gentleness during our visits, and for inspiring me to write this story about your vacation. I hope you like it

Huckleberry "Huck" "Spot" Fin, the beta fish:

You bring me so much joy! I love to watch you swim around and explore your tank. I wrote this story to express that feeling of happiness when I see you, and I hope I did well!

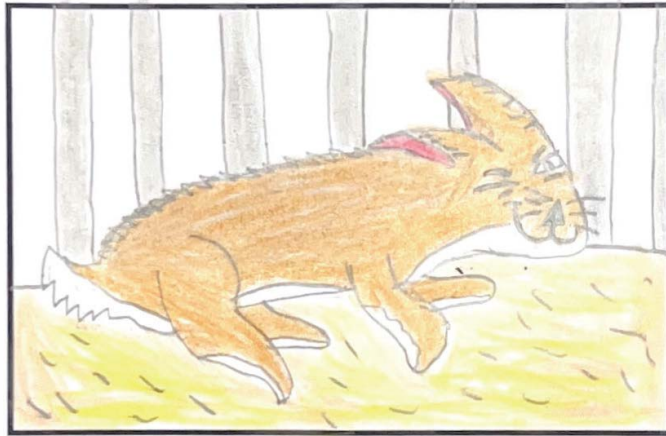


Chapter 1: The Rabbit Arrives

Zack

The front door to our quiet house swung open around 2:45 PM. I bounded inside, quickly threw off my shoes and backpack, and rushed to the dining room, in the corner of which we kept my cousin's rabbit. I found Mellow just as I left him that morning, sound asleep inside his cage. I opened the top lid and reached in to give him a soft scratch behind his ears, just as he liked best, and told him I was going to finish my homework for the day; I'd be back when I was done.

I didn't know it at the time, but Mellow was keeping a secret from me! Mellow had been on an adventure that day!



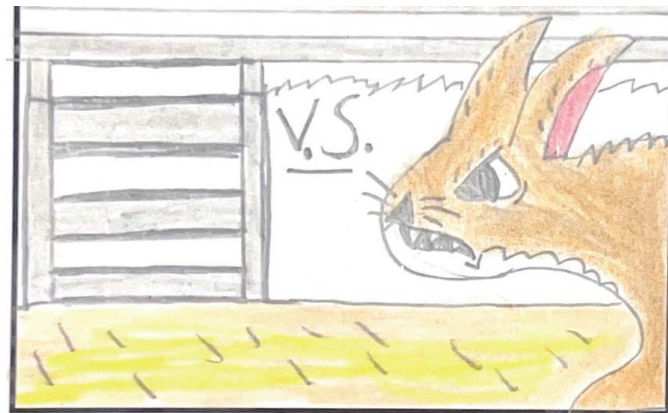
MELLOW

It was early morning, maybe 8:00 AM, and my friend Zack had just left for something he frequently called "school." I've always wanted to ask him what that was. Sometimes I imagine him jumping into Lake Ontario to swim with the local fish. My name is Mellow, and I am a Netherland Dwarf Rabbit. I had recently arrived at Zack's house just a day before. My people went on a trip but could not bring me along so they drove me to a trusted relative - Zack. I was eager to explore this new place as I hadn't been on "vacation" before (vacation - something else I will need to ask someone about later).

I'm a big fan of exploring new spaces so I felt excited to tour Zack's house! I overheard in the car that Zack has been doing "renovations" to his living room. I am curious to learn what kind of damage happened to the living room in the first place for it to need "renovations."

There is a problem with this plan, though! My cage door is locked! I can't explore with a locked cage. I can't even get out at all with a locked cage! Now, understand that I have tried COUNTLESS times on previous occasions to get this monstrosity open, but it was apparently designed specifically to sustain intense rabbit bites! I mean, what kind of material can survive MY chops?! None that I've ever seen. The cage tastes like some type of rusted metal beam - and it wouldn't budge!

Even if I could get the door to open, I'd have to do it before 12:00 PM; that's when Zack's Dad comes downstairs for lunch. If I get caught out of my cage unsupervised at my vacation home, he'll get upset and keep a much closer eye on me - maybe even install a security camera! Then I'll never be able to get out to do my own exploring when Zack is at school. Zack does take me out every afternoon, but I need to be out in my own freedom and on my own time, too. Afternoons are for Zack's amazing hugs. The mornings are for daring adventures! Once my first chance arrived, I'd have to go at the door with all my might and, well, hope it works.



Chapter 2: The Rabbit Escapes

I looked around the room. No one there. I realized the coast must be clear now. I prepared my leg muscles for a powerful running-long-jump centered at the cage door, and I opened my mouth, ready to bite the beams out of the locked position. I counted myself down aloud: "One ... two ... three-!"

"Alright, everyone! Coast is clear!"

I suddenly stopped my jump mid-count-down. A quiet but commanding voice had snapped me out of focus. I squinted around the dining table, but I didn't see the source of the sound - until a determined-looking shark poked out from a chair. He stared right at me with round, black eyes. "I said, you can come out now," he whispered.

Suddenly, out from behind literally every object in the dining room, emerged dozens of stuffed animals. There was a squid behind the flower vase, a snake under the cabinet, a Komodo Dragon from inside the cabinet, a dinosaur under the table, a panda bear on top of the table, a magpie bird under the place mats, and the shark sitting on the chair, to name a few. The sudden appearance of a small army of toys startled me and I backed up away from the door.

"W-who are you? Are you going to hurt me?" I stuttered. "We, my friend, are your escape committee!" answered the shark. "My what???"

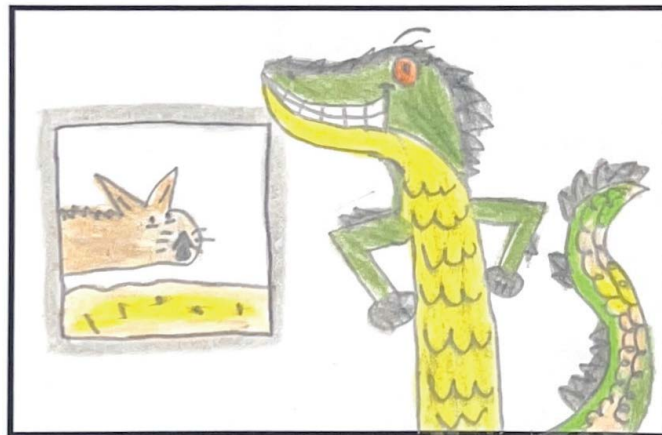


"Your escape plan. You know, the ones who are going to get you out of that cage!" "So, you are going to get me out of here?" "Yep!" "So that I can explore the house?" "Yes!" "How?" "Yes-oh. I...hadn't thought ... that far." "Well. .. (sigh) that's just great. I have an entire army of animals here to break me out, yet none of you know how to do it?" "Uh ... pretty much." All the animals nodded in agreement with their leader, the shark. "Ugh!" I cried out in annoyance.

"I might," said the Komodo Dragon. I looked at him skeptically. He flexed his massive claws. "I may be able to pull it open." I sighed, again. "It's worth a shot. We don't have much time." The lizard strode over to the cage door and grabbed the metal beams in his giant forelimbs. Then he let out a growl from deep in his throat and pulled with all his strength! The door didn't budge. "Aw, man! Sorry ..." he mumbled as he walked away, head hanging in defeat. "I could try!" shouted the squid excitedly. He crawled towards the door and latched onto it with four of his impressively strong arms and tugged with immense strain, but still, the door stood sturdy. "Grr ..." the cephalopod grumbled as he flopped backwards. The animals grew quiet, silenced by the weight of their newfound losses.

"Come on, there has to be someone else who could open my cage?" I proposed. The stuffed creatures hung their heads. "Maybe I can help." said a caiman stuffy as she stomped over. Her deliberate footfalls instantly commanded respect as she stared down each and every other toy lining her path to the supposedly "un-openable" door.

She opened her mouth wide and wrapped it around the metal beams, while balancing her thick tail on the floor to strengthen her stability. She began to growl deeply as she pulled on the beams, to the extent of actually bending them! The door creaked under her power, and eventually gave way. The reptile slid the door open against the backdrop of surprised cheering and lots of clapping.



I, myself, was impressed! I made sure to thank the caiman on my way out and I also gave her a hug and -oh my, have I forgotten to state her name? Yes, it was Amber, because of her bright amber-coloured eyes. I later learned that the shark's name was Sharky, the Komodo Dragon was named Komodo, and the squid was named Tentacle. A couple of memorable names, I think. I surely won't forget them.

Anyway, back to more important business - I was FREE!!!

I was out of my cage, on the hard, wood floor, ready to explore the only other house I've ever been to. I was unsupervised, AND IT WAS ONLY 9:15 AM! This means that I had two-and-three-quarter hours before I needed to hop back into my cage.

I'd never been happier!

Chapter 3: The Rabbit Meets the Fish

HUCKLEBERRY

It was around 9:45 AM when I met the rabbit.

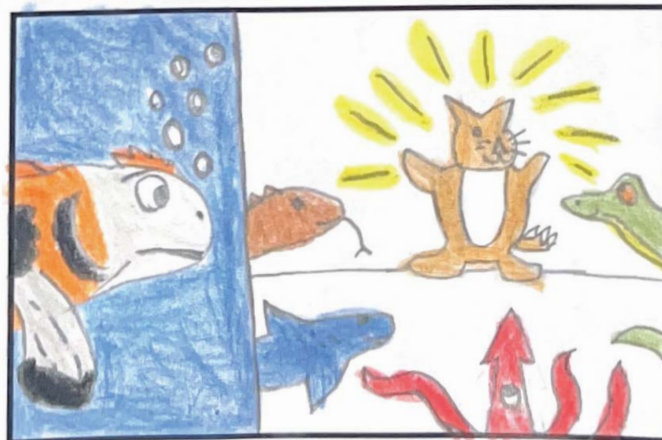
My name is Huckleberry Fin, named after the character from Mark Twain's classics, "The Adventures of Tom Sawyer" and "The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn," (but my name is spelt with only one "n" because I'm a fish) but you, dear reader, may refer to me as simply "Huck." My other nickname, "Spot," refers to the large, black circle on my right side. You may not refer to me as "Spot."

Since 9:20 AM, the rabbit had been parading around the main floor with his newfound buddies (The Stuffies - that's what they call themselves. I've overheard their many weekly meetings late at night), exploring the kitchen, the dining room, the laundry room, and the entryway. I saw him suddenly slip on the smooth floor as he started towards the hallway. I risked a slight chuckle as I watched it.

Obviously, I would disapprove of such behaviour without our mutual friend, Zack, knowing. I'd prefer to just wait until he got back home from his daily swim lessons (something he tells me is called "school") so that the rabbit can run amok around the "Roth Castle" with supervision. That's what I like to call it.

Then again, I would be interested to know the rabbit's name, his personality, how exactly he so quickly befriended the Stuffies, the second-fiercest group of toys in the household (the number one fiercest would be The Prehistories - the family of dinosaurs), and what he is even doing outside of his cage!

I decided to watch him hop around the house, making sure he doesn't try anything that Zack wouldn't appreciate. After about twenty minutes, my resolve softened for the creature. I realized he just wanted to explore the only other human residence he had ever been to. Suddenly, he didn't seem like this irresponsible mammal out to compromise the Castle, but instead a furry, warm, laid back, and light-hearted individual. Almost reminds me of my first impression of Zack. And we all know how great he turned out to be!



I continued to watch him for another few minutes, when, suddenly, he noticed the light of my tank and looked up at me, pausing his adventure abruptly. We locked eyes, and for a moment, I thought I saw a hint of pity for me. Now what do I need any of that for? I quite enjoy the quiet tank life. But the rabbit then turned to Sharky, Komodo, Tentacle, and Amber, the four highest-ranking members of The Stuffy family, and asked them something. I could not hear them very well, mostly because they were so far away and had such quiet voices. The stuffies said something in return, pointed at me, then motioned to continue their trek across the house. The rabbit looked back at me once more. I was surprised to see his eyes narrow to slits. Suddenly, he sprinted off towards the laundry room, followed by Sharky and Amber, who called after him. I didn't know what he was planning to do. Was he going to try to hurt me? Capture me? I suddenly got very anxious.

It seemed like hours before he returned ... holding my Transport Cup in his mouth. Now, you must understand that my "Transport Cup" is - one: the cup I originally lived in before the Roth family took me home, and two: the cup I always go into when Zack must rid my tank of disgusting algae.

I had no idea what he had planned for me, and if he would want me to get into the cup. But there was no more time to wonder. He jumped up onto the counter that my tank resides, placed the cup down, and said, "Hi, my name is Mellow. What's yours?" "Uh, I'm Huckleberry. A pleasure." "Well, Huck - can I call you 'Huck'? - I just arrived here from Zack's cousin's house and I'm exploring - want to join me?"

I had to stop and think for a moment. Mellow brought the cup so that I could roam around the Castle, which I haven't done since I got here. He obviously seems warm and genuine; could make a good friend. He seems to value kindness. There were not many cons. I accepted. "Wonderful!" Mellow exclaimed. "Now, just get into the cup." He pushed the cup over and into my tank as I swam nervously inside it. Mellow grabbed the edges of the plastic and pulled me out of the water, attaching the lid sturdily. "Hey Sharky!" he called down to the stuffies, who had gathered around the counter. "Please send ... uh ... the big lizard guy up here! I'm going to need transport support!"

After my cup was firmly fastened to Komodo's back, we started moving. Mellow explained to me the situation: how we had to get back to our places by 12:00 PM, why he wanted to explore so badly, and even why he helped me escape, too. " ... I saw another creature who was cooped up in a cage, with nothing to do, nowhere to go; it reminded me of myself, and how I desperately had to get out of my cage, so I wanted to rescue you. Oh, and I also thought that it would be really cool having a living creature as a new friend."

"Hey!" yelled all 30-something of the stuffies, including Komodo, Sharky, Tentacle, and Amber, in unison. Those specific four animals, though, glared intensely at Mellow. They had surrounded him at the front of the crowd to lead the way around the house.

"Sorry, sorry! I meant, like, flesh and blood creatures."

"Oh. Yeah. That makes sense." they mumbled. I assumed they had been offended by Mellow's remarks.

Chapter 4: The Rabbit and The Fish Explore

Over the course of the next hour-and-a-half, Mellow and I explored under the kitchen table and through the family room. Mellow had paused, sniffing around. He muttered something under his breath, but I didn't hear. We travelled up the stairs and into Zack's bedroom, examining his seemingly never-ending book collection. Mellow wanted to go downstairs to the basement next, but I had persuaded him to reconsider.

"... the door to that floor is closed for a reason. Zack does not want us to go down there. Maybe it's because we could get into danger, lose our way back, or experience injury. But those are chances I'm not willing to take. I'm betting you aren't either. Please. For Zack." Mellow furrowed his brow in thought. "Alright, Huck. No basement."



Through our house-wide adventure, meeting other toys and exploring new environments, the rabbit and I began to bond. We shared laughs, excitement, fun, and hugs (you try to imagine what this would look like). We were really becoming friends.

During our universal trek across the Castle, we met up with The Prehistories and The Builds - the LEGO family that lives here too. They were friendly enough. We met a Spinosaurus named Spiny and a LEGO chicken named HeiHei - he says he appears in the Disney: Moana films.

"Yeah, sure my feathered companion, we all wish we appeared in Disney movies. I sincerely doubt that a LEGO building toy played a supporting character in a mu/ti-billion-dollar franchise." Mellow argued. LEGO HeiHei sighed, "Yeah, I guess you're right. I could be a reincarnation of the character-!" "NOPE. NO." Mellow said, exasperated.

We also saw new lands - Zack's enormous desk and shelves, the many tables throughout the main floor, and the gargantuan drop from the second floor down to the main floor. Now we were resting in the dining room. As you can probably deduce, our adventure was a very exciting and long one, lasting from 10:00 AM to 11:50 AM (one hour and fifty minutes)!

Wait a second - it's 11:50 AM!?!? The time to get back to our normal places was nearly upon us!

"Mellow! Mellow!" I shouted frantically to get his attention. Many stuffies joined in my struggle (namely Komodo, Sharky, and Tentacle) after they too realized the time. A few, in fact, had slunk off into the shadows already, fearing exposure from Dad. Mellow finally looked up from his conversation with Amber and a few other toys at me. Our eyes locked once again, and I knew he could see the fear in mine, as he figured out that - "It's time, isn't it?"



Chapter 5: The Rabbit and The Fish – On the Run!

Suddenly, the entire crowd of LEGOs, dinosaurs, and stuffies erupted into chaos, running this way and that, struggling to get back to where they belong before Dad came downstairs. Sharky, Tentacle, Komodo and Amber were loyal, though, and did not leave Mellow and I to find our way back alone.

"We're not leaving you behind!" yelled Amber over the cacophony of shouting voices. "Agreed. Amber and Tentacle take Mellow to his cage, Komodo and I will put Huck back inside his tank. Got that?" said Sharky. "Good. Now let's move out!"

"It was a pleasure meeting you, rabbit!" I yelled as Komodo raced me back to the living room.

"Goodbye, Huckleberry Finn!" Mellow replied as he was ushered into his cage by Amber.

"It's just one 'n' !" "Oh, right! Sorry!"

The rabbit and the caiman shared a heart-warming goodbye that was incomprehensible from my current position) as they reached Mellow's cage, before the crocodilian scrambled off with the rest of The Stuffies. Tentacle shoved the metal door back into place before following Amber.



Komodo hastily climbed to the countertop and unwrapped my cup from his back, saying, "You know, today was a lot of fun. Thank you, Huck." I smiled back at him, knowing that I had made someone's day better. The lizard opened my cup and poured me into my tank once again, then threw the empty cup down to Sharky, who flopped towards the laundry room to put it back.

"Bye, fellow fish!" he said as he flopped to follow the other stuffies, including Komodo, who had jumped off the counter to join them. They quickly dashed up the stairs to Zack's room, where they stay while he's at school.

I caught a glimpse of Mellow peeking out from behind the metal door at me. He smiled and mouthed 'thank you.' I smiled back, mouthing 'that was fun.'

Mere seconds later, Dad came down the stairs for lunch. He noticed nothing out of place.

Chapter 6: The Rabbit and The Fish:

The Beginning of a Friendship

THE NARRATOR

Later that night, when Zack finally let Mellow out of his cage:

Zack stood up suddenly from playing with Mellow. He had to wash the dishes and would be a few minutes.

Mellow watched him until he had gone. Then he turned to Huck, who had been waiting patiently in his tank for this moment since 12:00 PM. Mellow waved. Huck waved back.

They suddenly exploded into conversation, speaking about their adventure earlier that day. After a while, Huck said, "So is this the end? Do I get to go on adventures with you - no more?"

"Of course not, silly!" Mellow answered. "Once you start with the rabbit, you don't end." "That's wonderful news! What about tomorrow? Can we do another exciting adventure again tomorrow?" "Sure, why not?" "Thanks, partner." "Hey, that's what I'm here for! Anytime. But ... it could use a name." "What do you mean?" "We could name the adventure something! So that we never forget it. How about, 'The Rabbit and the Fish,' as an example?" "Oh, I see. Or, 'Mellow's Exciting Adventure?111 "I totally dig that name!" "Well, the adventure was your idea."

Mellow jumped up to the top of the counter to be closer to Huck. Huck put his fin up against the glass, and Mellow placed his paw on the glass in the same spot, giving each other a high five.

Zack started back to the room; Mellow jumped off the counter to the floor, just in time to meet him there.

The rabbit took one last look at the fish, and gave him a wink. The fish winked back.



*** The Beginning (Not the End) ***

** (Heartfelt music plays in background) **

About the Author/Illustrator

-Zack Roth-

Author of "Mellow's Exciting Adventure" and many other Fearless Tails



Zack is a passionate U-year-old who pours his heart into creating each of his stories. When he is not writing, he can usually be found reading or drawing. He is fascinated by everything related to dinosaurs and prehistoric life, as well as nature and science. Zack lives in Pickering, Ontario with his mother, father, and beta fish - Huckleberry (and occasionally Mellow the rabbit when he goes on vacation to Zack's house!).

"I hope you have enjoyed this story of friendship, kindness, empathy,
and perseverance!"

Thank you for reading!