

BATTLE BUGS

THE KOMODO CONFLICT



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SCHOLASTIC INC.

With special thanks to Adrian Bott

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ISBN 978-0-545-79148-9

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 16 17 18 19 20

Printed in the U.S.A. 40

First printing 2016

Book design by Phil Falco and Ellen Duda



CALL FOR HELP

Vacation was so close, Max Darwin could almost taste it. Soon, there would be no more classes and no more books! Now there was only one thing standing between him and bug-hunting fun in the sun: the school science fair.

The school gym was crowded with tables, each one showing off a different

student's project. Letters made of colored paper and foil spelled out their titles.

Max and his friend Steve wandered up and down the rows of tables, checking out the competition.

“That potato battery is so lame.” Steve laughed. “Come up with something original!”

“Like your soda volcano?” Max teased.

“Hey! The soda volcano is a classic. Like the Harley-Davidson.”

Max rolled his eyes. “Whatever you say, Steve.”

Max didn't think his friend had much chance of winning. He'd chosen his volcano project because it was easy and both his

brothers had done it before him. Max, on the other hand, had worked hard on his own exhibit: a spectacular ant farm.

Max hoped he had a chance of making the top three. Although, he had to admit, some of the other projects were cool. One girl had made a rotating model of the solar system, and just across from his table, one boy had made a balloon-powered rocket.

The two boys crossed the gym and made it to Steve's workstation just as Principal Marsh did. Principal Marsh was tall and dressed all in brown, reminding Max of a walking stick bug.

"What's your project all about, Steven?" he asked.