

CHAPTER TWELVE

The Rescue

NOW, there were two of us huddling at the bottom of the cave.

Compared to Josh, I looked pretty good. I had a few bruises. He had this huge bump on his forehead, with blood oozing from it. And his left arm was bent funny.

I touched it. Josh shrieked.

"So, how did you get here?" I asked.

"I tripped over a vine and fell onto some rocks. I started to slide. Next thing, I waked up in this big dark hole."

"Woke up, not waked up."

"Okay."

"Why didn't you yell? Someone would have found you."

"Because ... because."

"I told you to sit on that stump until we got back. Why didn't you listen to me?"

"I don't know, Dennis! Sometimes I do dumb stuff, and I don't *know* why ...!" And he began to bawl.

"Okay, Josh. Cool it. You want to get out of here, don't you? That means we have to think." I rubbed at a bruise alongside my right leg. It hurt, and I yanked my fingers away. "Yeah. Think about it. First, the whole neighborhood's out there looking for you. Second, we're both loudmouths, and we know how to holler. I'd say ... it's time to holler."

"... holler," he echoed.

"Cup your hand over the bump on your forehead to protect it. Then I'll count to three. When you hear me say 'three,' we both open our mouths and yell."

He nodded. "Three."

"One ... two ..."

Josh cupped his right hand over the bump and sucked in his breath.

"... THREE!"