

THE ISLAND RULES?

TIM DAVIS

PENNY CRESS

The Island Rules? / by Tim Davis

www.timdaviscreations.com

Copyright © 2021 Tim Davis. All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means - electronic, mechanical, photocopy, recording, or any other - except for brief quotations in printed reviews, without the prior permission of the publisher.

Summary: Creatures of the land and sea are set against each other in a plot to change the rules of the Island

ages 7-12

Star field obtained from: [kjpargeter](#) / Freepik

Orions Belt Constellation from GoodStock

Cover design by Tim Davis

Pennycress Publishing

Greenville, SC 29609

ISBN: 9780998943589

With gratitude to my friends at the
Highlights Foundation, offering
“intimate and inspiring workshops
for children’s authors and illustrators.”

I began writing this story under the
influence of their magic, and couldn’t
stop until I’d finished.

Other books by Tim Davis

Mice of the Herring Bone

Mice of the Nine Lives

Mice of the Seven Seas

Mice of the Westing Wind (Book One)

Mice of the Westing Wind (Book Two)

Tales from Dust River Gulch

More Tales from Dust River Gulch

The Island Rule

Mort and the Sour Scheme

Mort Finds his Roots: Mushrooms in the Wild

Mort's Circle

Author's Note

Underground is a great place to hide things. Secrets held in ancient wonders buried in the deep challenge us to rethink some of our most basic ideas—perhaps even correct our errors.

In the dark, we can learn to see in new ways. So much information is gathered by sight, we often consider our vision the sense that's most reliable. But in *The Island Rules*? some creatures see what they want to see or miss something right in front of their eyes. Hidden objects in the cave drawings might give our heroes the clues they're looking for. But nature is also full of distracting patterns leading us to believe something that may not be as it seems.

In *The Island Rule*, action happened mostly in daylight. But this second story of the Island series spends more time underground. Try to imagine what might be hiding in those dark places you can't see.

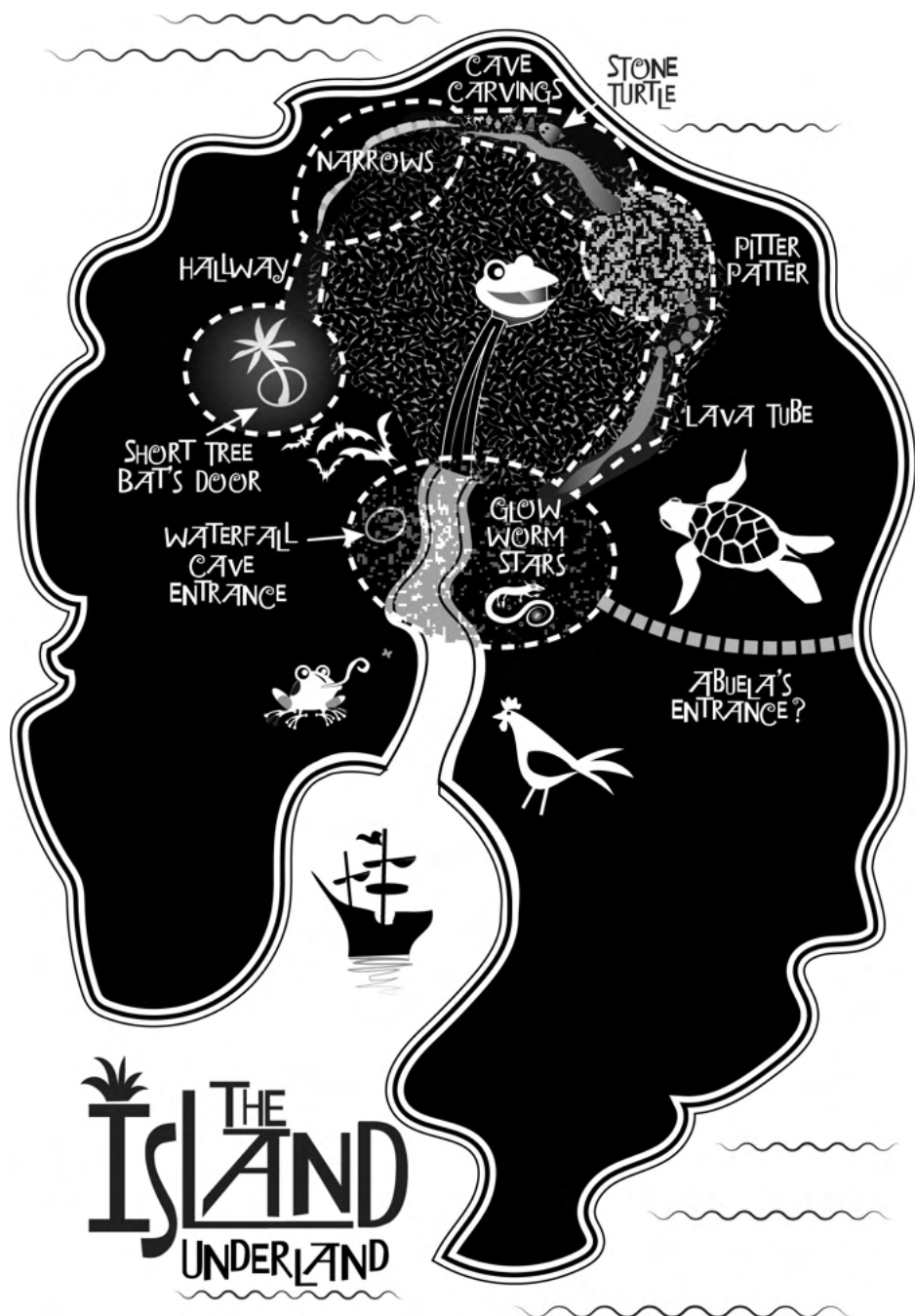
Table of Contents

Prologue	Belly of the Volcano.....	1
Chapter 1	End of the Island?.....	3
Chapter 2	Bat's Door.....	11
Chapter 3	Going Down	17
Chapter 4	Up Above.....	21
Chapter 5	The Writing on the Wall	27
Chapter 6	Stony Passage	33
Chapter 7	New Companion.....	41
Chapter 8	Back to Boofo	47
Chapter 9	Calling All Bats.....	53
Chapter 10	Parting Ways.....	57
Chapter 11	Going Solo.....	63
Chapter 12	Jajumbee's Ascent.....	69
Chapter 13	Bat News	75
Chapter 14	Out of Sight.....	83

Chapter 15 Fear Abounds.....	89
Chapter 16 Tales of Abuela.....	95
Chapter 17 Connecting Dots.....	103
Chapter 18 Trouble Above.....	109
Chapter 19 Old Nemesis.....	117
Chapter 20 Birds of a Feather.....	123
Chapter 21 Short Tree/Bat's Door.....	129
Chapter 22 Zani's Answer.....	135
Chapter 23 The Artist.....	141
Chapter 24 Stage Performance.....	147
Chapter 25 Ancient Tale.....	155
Chapter 26 Ship at Anchor.....	159
Chapter 27 Lost Cause?.....	167
Chapter 28 Starry Night.....	171
Chapter 29 Bay Play.....	181



THE
ISLAND
CAVES



PROLOGUE



THE BELLY OF THE VOLCANO

It belched. Like a huge black snake slithering up from the depths and escaping into the sea. Molten rock bubbled up and over the volcano's mouth. Lava poured down its lips. It steamed, sizzled, and streamed down through the rain forest like a giant glowing blob, digesting the palm trees in flames along the banks of the stream toward the bay.

Boulders fell from the volcano's narrow upper face, crashing into the forest below. Would it explode? The island creatures fled to the beach and trembled in fright. Waiting . . . waiting. But the ground stopped shaking. Was it done? Was it over? The cloud above it was small, and swept away by the winds of the sea. So the island was not covered in hot ash. Apparently it was only a burp of fiery indigestion. The volcano had

slept so long—simmering with a lazy plume of haze for as long as the island creatures could remember. Now it had awakened.

Sunlight breaking through the haze, every eye stared intently at the peak of the great volcano. Every ear listened—hoping for silence—hoping the mountain would return to its slumber. Nothing could have prepared them for the sight that emerged through the still wrinkling heated air. A face! A face in the rock! All eyes searched the crowd of creatures huddled along the beach. All looked for one of their number. For that face.

“It’s the gecko! It’s Jajumbee!”

CHAPTER 1



THE END OF THE ISLAND?

In the purple light just before sunrise, Jajumbee the gecko and his plump friend Boofu the treefrog walked and hopped along the beach. The sand cooled their toes, and Boofu's belly. It was the only peace the gecko had enjoyed for hours. He was out of sorts, since everyone seemed to be whispering about his . . . and the volcano's . . . face.

A sand crab popped from his hole and sidestepped over to them. "How can this be?" asked Carlos, pointing back toward the mountain. "The volcano—it looks like you!"

The gecko closed his eyes and put his hand to his forehead. It stuck. He sighed, then released the suction at the tips of his fingers. "They see what they want to see," he answered, wiping the back of his hand over his eyes. "Patterns in nature. We see them all around us!" Jajumbee gestured out toward the waves of the sea. "Is that a turtle? Or just a wave? Anything can look like something else."

"I suppose," said the crab, "But other creatures—they think it's a sign—a sign from below."

"A sign?" exclaimed the gecko, one eyebrow raised. "Of what?"

Carlos shrugged his oversized front claws. "Who knows? Maybe the end of the Island as we know it." His eye stalks raised at the very thought of it.

"Island doom?" croaked Boof. He was a frog of few words, and he wanted even those two back as soon as he had spoken them.

Jajumbee hung his head and sighed again.

"Sorry, Jajumbee."

"It's not your fault, Boof." Jajumbee patted his friend's orange and black spotted shoulder. "Even my songs—no one sings them no more."

“Your songs,” croaked the treefrog, “the best.”

Carlos clicked along beside them. His eye stalks lowered, and he shielded his mouth so no one else could hear him. “They are afraid,” he whispered.

The three sat in the sand watching a pink dawn paint the gentle waves lapping onto the beach. But the beach was now blackened by the cooled lava all along the banks of the stream.

A young sea turtle’s head popped up from the water in front of them—bobbing gently in the bay. Then her shell emerged, looking like a stone crafted with painted tiles.

“Zani!” The sight of his sea friend seemed to give Jajumbee a glimmer of hope again.

“You see?” muttered Carlos. “It *was* a turtle.”

Panzanilla—Zani for short—shook herself and crawled onto the sand.

The gecko was eager for her report. “The bay, how is it changed?”

“Changed?” Zani responded, “Yes, much changed! Part of the reef is covered over now, as smooth as black glass. Much easier to navigate.”

Throwing his claws up, Carlos complained, “The reef was a shield against ships—like the wreck that covered my hole in the sand.”

“The volcano just rolled out a welcome mat to the sea,” Jajumbee said. “So the Island is now open for visitors.”

Boofo’s eyes widened at the thought of what that could mean, especially after all the trouble they’d had with that pirate ship, the one with the spider flag.

Carlos just grumbled and clicked his claws.

“I was a visitor too,” Zani reminded her friends.

Sunrise looked like a fiery halo behind Zani’s head. And just as quickly, a rooster crowed from the edge of the forest. He crowed again and again, seeming to love the sound of his own voice.

Carlos covered his ears and skittered back to his hole in the beach, tossing up sand as he dropped into it.

“Rosie’s kid, always crowing.” Zani narrowed her eyes and pulled a face toward her friends.

“Too much!” added Boofo.

Jajumbee sighed as Chanty, the young rooster, stole the peace of the moment again.

Zani moved to the place where Carlos had been. "The creatures are worried. The volcano's eruption set them on edge," she said.

"It's like they don't feel at home on the Island anymore," Jajumbee agreed. "And this is the only home they have ever known!"

"Island home," Bofo agreed.

"Maybe the Island has its own answers?" said Zani.

"Some way for everyone to better appreciate the very ground they stand on," added Jajumbee.

Zani continued, "In the caves . . . remember? The drawings we saw on the walls?"

Bofo nodded. "Island stories!"

"Yes," agreed Zani. "Our history."

"Where I dropped our torch and we were left in the dark," Jajumbee remembered, "I was so surprised to see. . ."

"You," croaked Bofo, "you and your stew."

Jajumbee was known for his Blessing stew, made from all good things that the Island gave. Even that was inscribed on the cave walls.

“Those drawings—are they more than ancient history? . . . Maybe they’re a key to the future, too?” Zani wondered.

“We should go back to take another look,” Jajumbee said. “Perhaps those drawings in the dark could enlighten creatures up here. Give us the answers we need.”

“But,” he continued, “what will everyone think if I go down into the caves—into the very heart of the volcano they say now looks like me?”

“Who knows?” Boofa shrugged. “But they leave you alone.”

“Will you two go with me?” the gecko asked.

“Not my face,” answered Boofa, looking toward the volcano. “Too dark. No mosquitoes. Not again.”

“I understand, my friend.” Jajumbee nodded. “Perhaps it’s best you stay above. Something’s brewing here on the surface, too—maybe even more dangerous than the volcano.”

Boofa’s eyes got bigger at the very thought of it. “More dangerous?”

“Yes. Mistrust and division are spreading.”

Zani raised a flipper. “I’ll go with you, Jajumbee.”

“Thank you, my friend. The mountain may be calling me, but I’d rather not go alone.”

Then Jajumbee remembered a song.

Pit, pit. Pit, pitter, patter.

Go down, See what’s the matter.

Who knows? Follow the water.

Could be, that’s how we got here.

Pit, pit. Pit, pitter, patter.

Goes down, down goes the water.

In caves, in lower places,

Follow the path it traces.

