

# Just in Case

A sequel to "Finders, Keepers"  
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by SARAH JOHNSON



## The story so far ...

Joe found a strange egg in the laundry. Then a dinosaur arrived through a space-time portal and took the egg back through the portal. Ever since, Joe has been hoping the dinosaur will reappear.

Joe and Leigh were preparing Molly for the school's annual pet show. Molly wasn't the ideal pet to enter. She was scruffy, hairy, and at that moment, rather grumpy. But she was the only pet they had.

It was while they were brushing the tangles from Molly's tail that she made a dash for freedom into the broom cupboard.

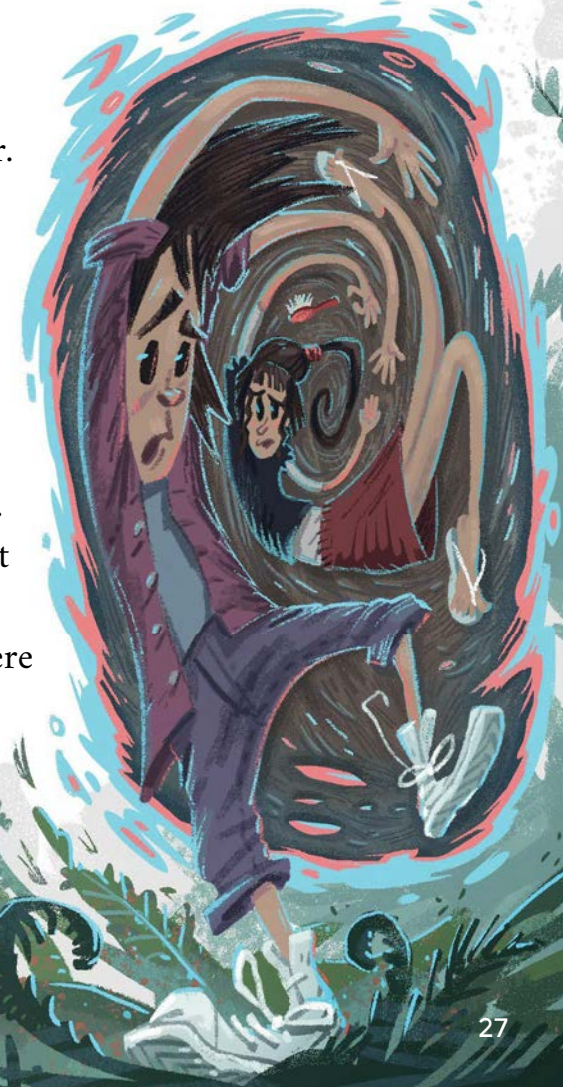
"Where's she gone?" asked Leigh, peering into the cupboard's shadowy corners. "She's disappeared."

Joe examined the swirling wood-grain on the cupboard's back wall. "I think I know," he said. "It looks like another portal has opened."

"A what?" said Leigh.

"A space-time portal," said Joe. "We'll have to go after her. Follow me."

Joe grabbed Leigh's hand, and they stepped straight through the back wall of the cupboard. Being in the space-time portal was a bit like being on a ride at the fair. They dipped, flipped, spun, felt sick, then came right way up again. When they did, they were standing in a clump of oversized tree ferns.



"Where are we?" asked Leigh.

Joe gazed around. They were in a dense forest, surrounded by gigantic tree trunks, tangled vines, and lush flowers the size of dinner plates.

"I'm not sure," he said.

There was a rustle in the undergrowth, and a small animal tumbled out of the bushes. It had a long tail, clawed fingers and toes, and a strange, beaked snout.

"That's some sort of dinosaur," whispered Leigh. "Do you know what kind it is?"

"A cerapod," said Joe. "We must be in Gondwana."

The dinosaur started chasing its tail.

"It's just a baby," said Leigh. "Do you think it's lost?"

"If it is, we could borrow it for the pet show," said Joe.

"We'd win hands down!" Joe and Leigh inched towards the baby dinosaur. As they got closer, it stopped spinning and swung to face them, baring its sharp teeth and growling.

"Maybe not," said Joe.

Suddenly, another, far larger dinosaur crashed out of the bushes and landed beside the baby. It had stumpy arms and a row of spines down its back. Joe recognised it immediately.

"Hi," he said. "Remember me? We met through the space-time portal."

Leigh peered suspiciously at the dinosaur. A tell-tale piece of black fluff was stuck to its bottom lip. "Have you seen our cat, Molly?" she asked.

"What's a cat?" said the dinosaur.

"A type of mammal," said Joe. "I don't think they've evolved in your world yet."

"Can you eat them?" asked the dinosaur.

"Definitely not!" snapped Leigh.

At that moment, a fluffy, black blur shot out from behind a fern. It disappeared down a track through the forest.

"There she is!" cried Joe.

"Oh, so that's Molly," said the dinosaur. "I was hoping to eat her for lunch."

"After her," shouted Leigh. "She's getting away!"



Joe and Leigh raced after Molly, until the track stopped at the edge of a swamp. A gigantic dinosaur was lumbering through the shallows. It was the length of three buses and higher than a house.

“Good grief! What’s that?” said Leigh.

“Relax,” said Joe. “It’s a titanosaurid. They only eat plants.”

“But it’s chasing Molly!”

Leigh was right. Molly was bounding across the swamp, just ahead of the dinosaur. She leapt from log to log, trying to reach the safety of the far bank. She made one last leap, the dinosaur roared – and Molly fell head first into the water.



“Molly!” yelled Leigh.

The gigantic dinosaur swung around to look at them, sending up a tidal wave of slimy water. Then it roared again and started towards them.

“Oops,” said Joe. “Time to go!”

Joe and Leigh raced back the way they had come. Vines wrapped round their legs, and sticky leaves slapped their faces. They could hear crashing footsteps behind them. The ground shook, and the forest echoed with the sound of splintering trees.

“We’re nearly there,” yelled Joe. They reached the grove of tree ferns. Joe grabbed Leigh’s hand and leapt straight through the space–time portal without glancing back at Gondwana.

“Phew,” said Joe as they stumbled out of the broom cupboard. “That was close.”

“But we didn’t rescue Molly,” wailed Leigh. “Now that dinosaur will eat her.”

“Perhaps she’ll find her own way back,” said Joe. But when he tested the wall of the cupboard, it was solid. The portal had gone.



There was a loud splash from the bathroom, followed by hissing and yowling.

“What’s that?” said Leigh.

They ran to the bathroom, arriving just in time to see a bedraggled Molly scabbling out of the toilet bowl.

Leigh wrapped the cat in a towel and gave her an enormous hug.

“The portal’s shifted again,” said Joe.

“Never mind that,” said Leigh. “At least Molly’s back.”



Joe peered into the toilet bowl. Strange, silvery specks swirled round the rim, and he thought he could hear a faint roar bubbling up through the water.

Quickly, Joe reached over and closed the toilet lid. “Just in case,” he said. “Just in case.”

*illustrations by*  
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by Sarah Johnson

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