

A photograph of two small, black and tan dogs looking out from the open mouth of a large shark. The shark's teeth are visible, and the scene is dramatically lit from above, creating a high-contrast, somewhat scary atmosphere. The title text is overlaid in a purple, cursive font at the top.

*Two Little Dogs,  
One Big Shark*

*Story and Photos by Mark Kenz*

*Illustrations by Marisa Kenz*

# Two Little Dogs, One Big Shark

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## TWO LITTLE DOGS, ONE BIG SHARK

The itsy-bitsy town of Wauchula was one of the most beautiful places in all Florida. Unlike the rest of the State, which was flat, flatter and even flatter, the town was built high on a hilly hill. In the shady, shadowy valley below the hilly hill, a wet and watery winding river flowed through a foresty jungle of green and brown cypress and oak trees.





Long-legged hefty herons with bigamongus bills plucked plump wiggly, wobbly fish out of the coffee-colored waters.  
(Try reading this sentence really fast 3 times in a row - with a mouthful of peanut butter and onions!)



Townpeople called it Peace River because it was such a peaceful place to spend a day fishing and swimming, and because of the wild peas that grew along the banks.

Children loved to eat the peas because they knew it would make them grow tall and silly like their moms and dads.

One day a little girl named Tami-ami-mami-amy was kneeling on the shore near her parents when she saw something strange on the river bottom.



It was dark and shaped like a large slice of sugar-free chocolate pizza!



When she showed it to her parents, they gasped.

"It's a shark's tooth!" her mother exclaimed.

"Where did you find it?"

"There in the river!" Tami-ami-mami-amy!" replied.

"Oh no!" her father said, waving the tooth high above his head. "There must be sharks in the river! And this tooth is as large as my hand! That means the shark that lost this tooth must be the biggest shark in the whole wide wonderful world!

We have to get out of the river now and warn everyone!"

Tami-ami-mami-amy's father ran up and down the river bank shouting for everyone to get out of the water.

"Shark! Shark!" he screamed.



"Shark?" moo'd a cow. "There are no sharks in this part of the river.  
This is fresh coffee-colored water and sharks live mostly in blue-green salty water!"

"But my daughter found this tooth!" exclaimed the father. "There must be sharks here!"



"Oh my, that *is* a gi-normous tooth!" said the cow. "I think you are right. There must be a bullabadabonga big shark here! I hope it's a vegetarian!"

Soon the word spread all along the river bank and into town. Before long everyone knew there was a monster shark living somewhere in those dark brown waters. Nobody wanted to go anywhere near the river.

"What do we do?" asked Mayor Longshorts. "If people can't swim in the river, they will leave. They will move to other towns where there are no sharks! They won't eat our wild peas and grow up to be big and silly like us! Oh this terrible! There must be something we can do!"



"I have an idea," said Police Chief Snickerschizel. "We can call Inspectors Coonie and Taz."

"You mean the famous doggie detectives from Fort Myers?" asked Mayor Longshorts.

"Sure, maybe they're in their office today."

"Even if they are, what can they do?"

"Well, if there really is a big shark lurking in our river, they will find it!" said Chief Snickerschizel.

"Okay, but then what? How will they catch it?"

"Stop worrying," said the chief. "Let's call in the dogs!"

"Rrrring!"

"Hola? I mean Hello? I mean woof, woof?" answered  
Coonie.

"Special Detective Coonie, is that you?" asked the chief.





"Oh hi Chief Snickerschizell!" said Coonie. "I haven't talked to you in a coon's age. What's that? You want us to find a monster shark? Chief, have you been rolling in something dead? I'm just kidding! Yes, of course, we'll stop by the river tomorrow morning to check it out! But we get extra doggie biscuits if the shark is as big as you claim it is. And yes, we can't wait to try your delicious wild peas as long as they don't make us seriously silly!"



The next morning, Coonie and Taz hopped in their little blue truck and drove to Wauchula as fast as they could.

"What is it this time?" Taz asked Coonie. "Another cow stuck in a tree?"

"Something like that," replied Coonie. "We'll talk about it when we get there."



"Watch for speed traps!" warned Taz. "We don't want to end up in the dog house for going too fast!"

When they got to the Peace River, Coonie explained what Chief Snickerschizel had told her.

"Wow! A whompity-wap big shark must have a wickity-wackity big tooth fairy too!" exclaimed Taz.  
"Let's go find the biggitty beast!" she barked.



Before Coonie could stop her, Taz dashed back and forth along the river bank...



If there was a whompity-wap big shark in Wauchula, Taz was sure she could find it!



After checking the river banks, she bounded in front of Coonie, splashing around in the shallows!  
"Yap! Yap! Yapitty-Yap!" she yap, yap, yapitty-yapped.



"Stop it Taz!" growled Coonie. "If there *is* a big shark in these waters, splashing will attract it!"

"That's right!," replied Taz. "And then we can call the dog pound to throw a big net over it."

"But we want to see the shark before it sees us!" said Coonie. "And why are you running back and forth on dry land?"



"I'm looking for footprints!" responded Taz.

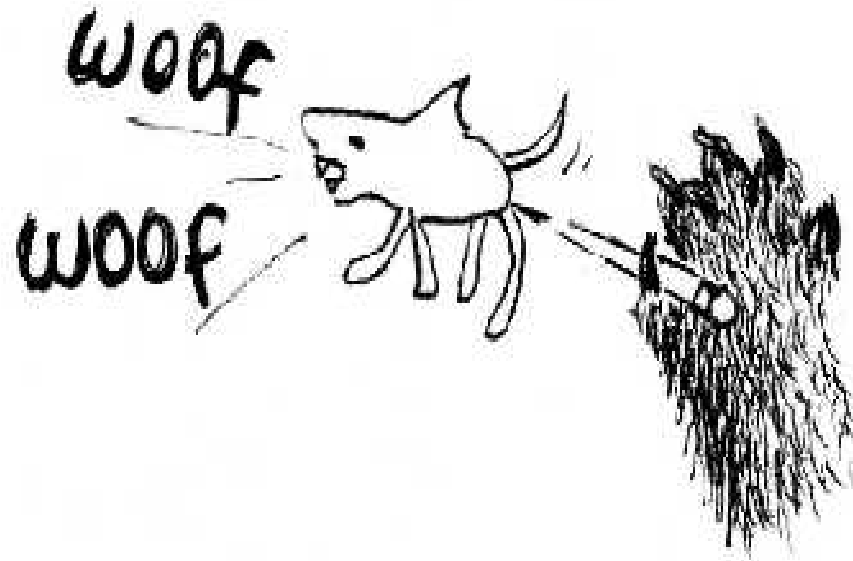
"Silly dog, sharks don't leave footprints!"  
explained Coonie.

"And big sharks don't live in shallow fresh water  
rivers," replied Taz. "I just want to be sure!"

Coonie sighed. "Did you eat some of the wild peas?"

"Yes," said Taz sheepishly. "I guess that makes me  
a no-no bad dog."

"A little silly is okay," said Coonie. "But just  
remember that the town is counting on us  
to find the shark!"

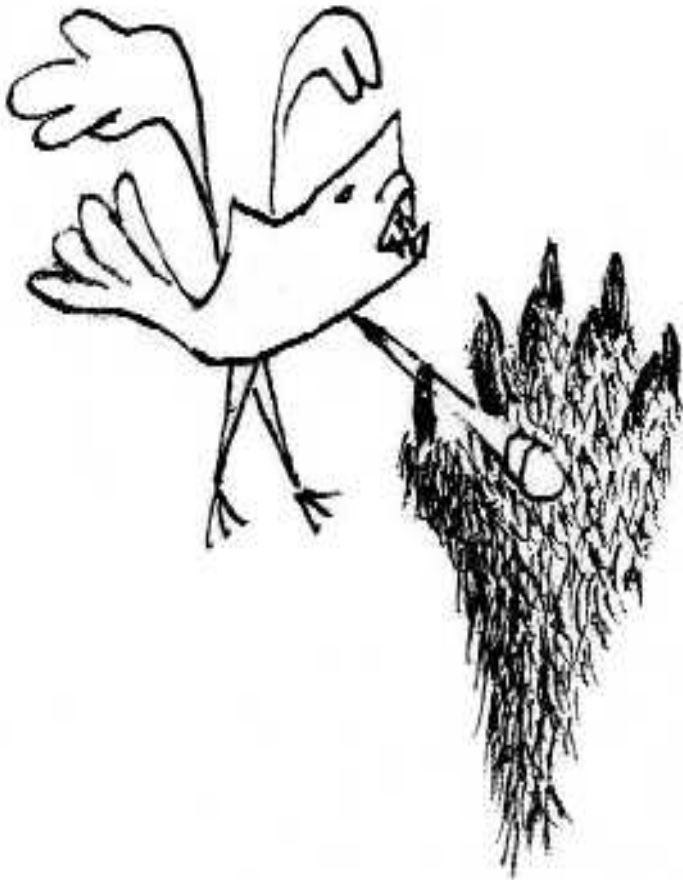


Still thinking about those footprints, Taz pulled out a pencil and a piece of paper.

"Here is what I think our big shark looked like!" she told Coonie.

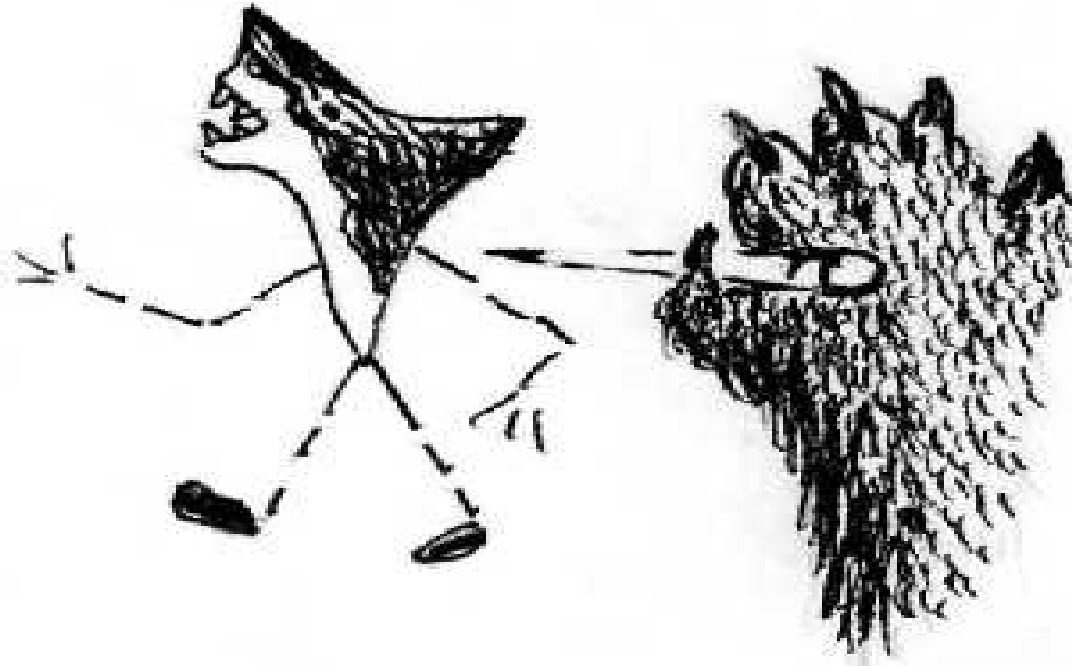


"Tazzy, Tazzy, Tazzy!" said Coonie. "Forget about the legs! Sharks don't look like dogs with four legs!"



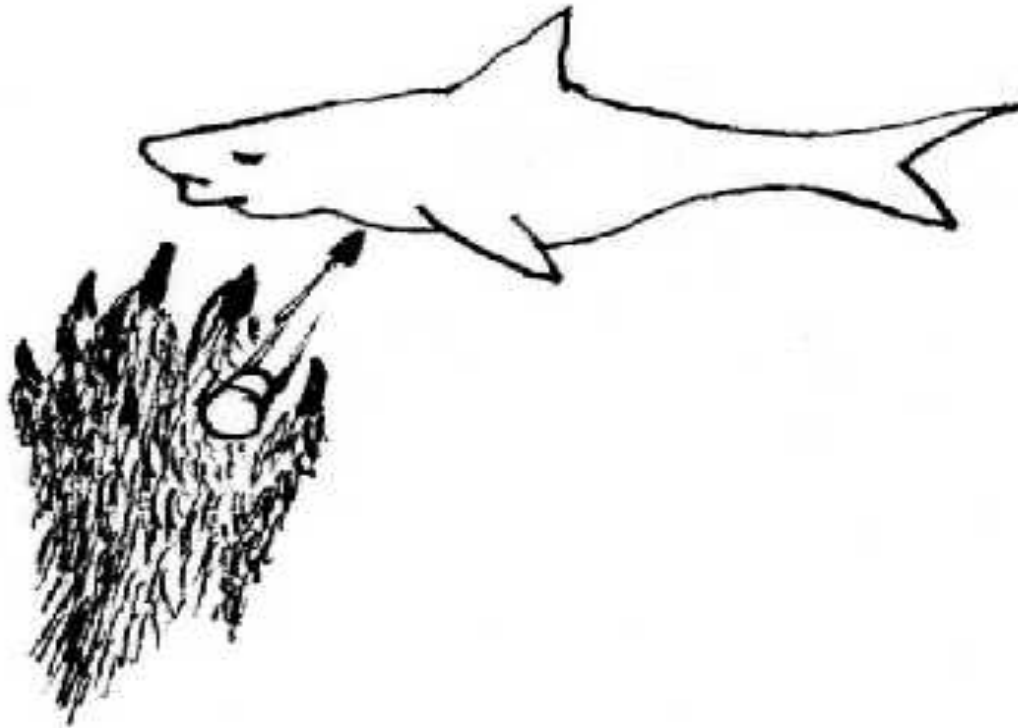
"Okay, then how about this one?" said Taz.

"Sharks don't look like birds with wings either!"  
snapped Coonie.



"I got it! How about this?" Taz asked excitedly.

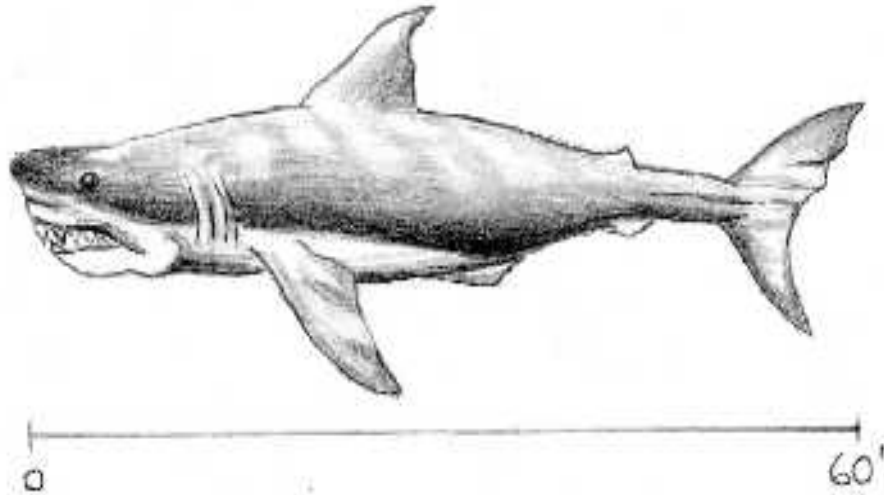
"Nope! Sharks don't look like people with legs and arms either!" barked Coonie.



Coonie took the pencil away from Taz.

"Here is what our shark probably looked like," she said. "No legs, no wings, no arms. Just fins and teeth!"

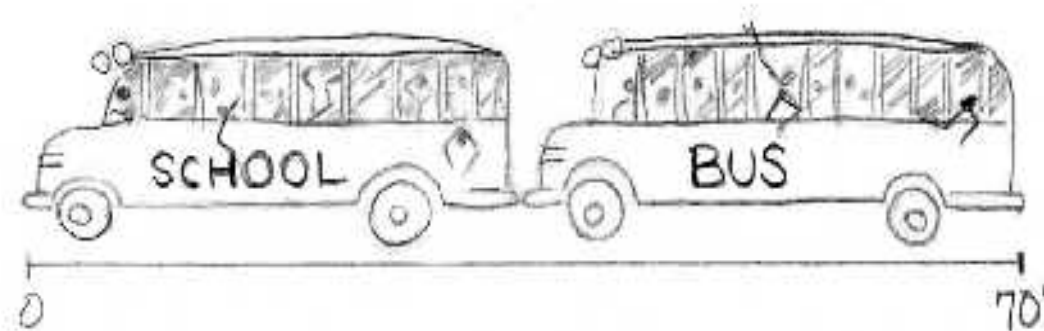
"I don't see any teeth," said Taz.



Coonie added teeth and more detail to her drawing.

"It was longer than two school buses too!" she said. "Maybe as long as 60 feet!"

"A shark with 60 feet? I thought you said it had no legs? Was it longer than an hour?" asked Taz.



"No more wild peas for you young doggie!" said Coonie. "You're acting super sort-of silly again! That's not the kind of long I'm talking about. Now pay attention and let's figure out how we're going to find that big big, long long shark!"



"The first thing we have to figure out is how we're going to see underwater and make sure the shark doesn't bite our little noses off while we're looking!" said Coonie.

"Wait a minute..." said Taz, stopping to scratch a flea on her belly. "What if we place a human on a leash and stick *his* face in the water wearing a mask and snorkel. He can signal us as soon as he sees the big shark!"

"You're so clever!" said Coonie. "Are you sure you're not part cat?"



Since no one in town would get in the water, Coonie and Taz had to hire a silly adult human from another town. They told him to keep his face down in the water. Look for anything unusual, especially if it has fins and teeth. No laughing under water. Or singing, or dancing, or sleeping, or eating wild peas underwater either!



While Coonie and the silly adult human searched the river for the mucho-mondo big shark, Taz watched closely from a tree above.



Then she crept through tall-tale green and grimy grass, still looking for footprints...



and warned the cows to stay out of the river for a few days...



and took breaks now and then to roll in something stinky.



Then stopped to sniff out tasty clues from the local townspeople. Wild pea chips were her favorite snick-snacks.



Later she watched Coonie and the human from a chair that kept her high and dry, except for her tail.



Suddenly, the human screamed underwater, "Ewwcrob, Ewwcrob!". He then leaped straight up in the air and knocked Coonie into the water. Coonie dog-paddled for shore as fast as she could, her little heart pounding as loud as a woody woodpecker against a hollow tree. What startled the human, she wondered?  
She didn't dare look back in case it was the big shark...



Instead it was a blue crab! Or "Ewwcrob, Ewwcrob!", if you're a silly adult human shouting underwater. Fortunately, the crab missed the human's nose and got one of his ten tender toes. No one knows which of his toes but it must have been his big toe since it looks the most like a nose. So the story goes.



"Look over here!" said Taz, pointing to some tracks in the sand.  
"Maybe our mighty-mouthed shark really can walk on land!"



"Hmm...I'm not sure what kind of tracks those are Taz, but they're not from a big shark!"

(How about you who are reading this book...Can you tell what animal left these tracks?)

Then Coonie noticed a floating log with eyes.

"I think I know what animal left the tracks," she said. "And it might be wiser to start hunting for the big shark by boat!"

"Yappy cool!" said Taz. "How about if I go rent us a couple of kayaks from DOUG'S BOATS & BONES?"

"Go for it!" answered Coonie.





When she arrived, Taz found Doug the owner taking a cat nap and snoring.

"Zzzzz, meow...Zzzzz, meow!" snored Doug.

"Yap, yap, yippity-yap!" Taz barked, waking him up.



"How much to rent that one for two days?" asked Taz, pointing at the red kayak.

"That'll be two veggie bones per day," responded Doug.



"That's kinda high...mind if I taste it first?" asked Taz.



"What about the blue kayak...how much is that one?" asked Taz.

"I gotta charge you more for the blue one," said Doug.



"Why?" pressed Taz. "It's the same kind of kayak, only a different color."

"That's true, but the blue one is stinkier," said Doug. "It smells a lot worse."



"Okay, if you can guarantee it will smell bad for the entire two days, I'll take the blue one for me and the red one for Detective Coonie."



"How about a couple of cow patty pies for extra energy on your kayak trip?" asked Doug.

"Are they still dark and runny?" asked Taz. "And were the cows fed grain or coconuts?"

"Coconuts! And I collected the poo fresh from the pasture this morning!" said Doug.



"Yum, yum...A smelly kayak and some tasty cow poo!"  
thought Taz. "I'm beginning to like shark hunting!"

"Okay, wrap the poo and load the kayaks onto my truck," she said, handing Doug a small bag of veggie bones.



As she drove away, she noticed Doug was already sound asleep again and purring like a cat.

"Lucky dog," Taz thought. "What a great job he has. I'll bet he's chasing a cat in his sleep right now!"



"This is fantastic!" said Coonie, plopping down on the kayak in the middle of the river. "I feel much safer looking for the big shark now!"



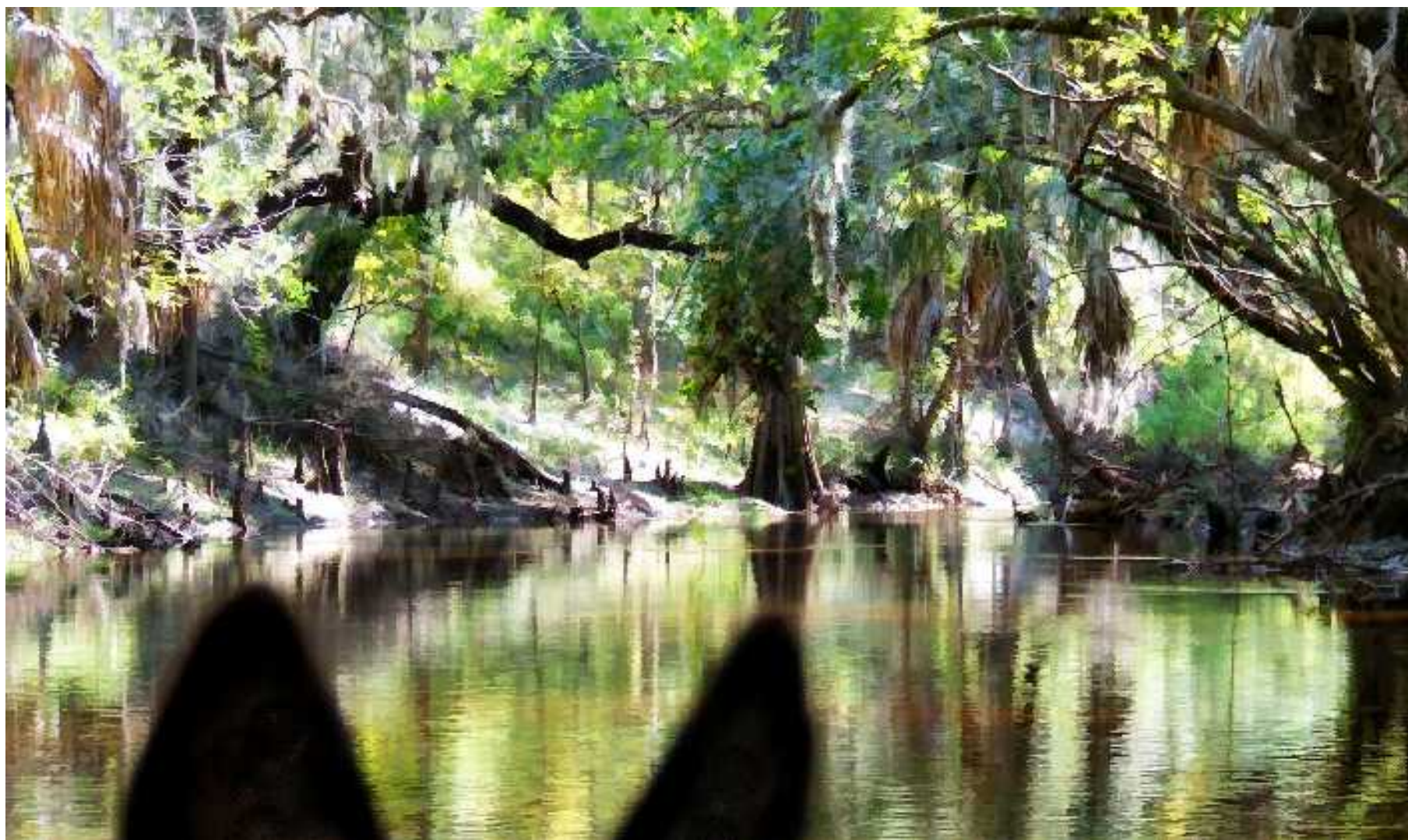
"I can see in all directions!"



Instead of dog-paddling, Taz hired the long-armed, long-legged silly adult human (who happens to be the author of this book) to paddle, so she could spend all of her time searching the river.



All afternoon they searched without even seeing a small fish. They were just about ready to quit for the day when Coonie noticed some really rowdy ripples on the left side of the river. Something bigitty-big was swimming swishingly through the water.



Then the ripples stopped moving and the water became as still as glass.



Suddenly, a huge fin popped out of the water!



"Umm...We're gonna need a bigger Kayak!" said Coonie.



"Whatever..." mumbled Taz, unaware of what Coonie had just seen. "My kayak is just the right size if you ask me."



Coonie started to scold Taz for not paying attention but the waters calmed down again.  
Everything grew quiet. Not even the birds were singing.



Just as *Coonie* thought she must imagined the huge fin and the ripples, a biggy-mongus jaw as wide as the moon opened up and swallowed them both with a loud...*GULP!*



"What happened?" asked Taz, peering out of a dark cave lined with jagged edges.

"Don't panic, but I think we are in the belly of the shark!" whispered Coonie.

"Uh, oh...What do we do now?" asked Taz nervously.



"Turn off your imagination!" replied a thundering female voice in the cave.

"What? Who's there?" said Coonie.

"It's me." answered the voice.

"Me?" said Taz. "Me who?"

"This is no time for knock-knock jokes," replied the voice. "My name is Meg, as in megalodon. I'm the big shark you've been hunting!"

"So you're the one who swallowed us!" said Coonie.

"I really didn't swallow you," responded Meg.

"Then what are we doing in your belly?" asked Coonie.

"You're not in my belly," replied the shark, "because I don't exist."

"That's impossible!" said Coonie. "Where are we if we're not in your belly?"

"And what's that terrible smell I'm rolling around in?" asked Taz. "That's got to be real!"

"You are in an imaginative-taginative world that you and the entire town of Wauchula created," replied Meg.

"You mean, we made you up?" asked Coonie. "But you seem so real!"

"Of course I do," said Meg. "When people and dogs are afraid, it's easy to imagine things that aren't there."

"Like a monster shark?" asked Taz. "Then how do you explain that big tooth Tami-ami-mami-amy found?"

"The tooth was real!" said Meg.

"I don't understand," said Coonie.

"The tooth was real because I was real a long, long time ago," said Meg. "When sharks like me were alive, all of Florida, including the town of Wauchula, didn't exist. Instead, there was an ocean here, with big sharks, little sharks, whales, dolphins and sea cows called dugongs."



"But what about that bigamongus tooth?" asked Taz.

"That tooth fell out of my mouth while I was eating - a long, long, long, long, long, long, long time ago. I'm a shark and we sharks replace our teeth as fast as we lose them," said Meg.

"Your tooth fairy must get really tired collecting all those teeth!" said Taz. "How much money does she leave under your pillow?"

"How come your tooth is still here today?" asked Coonie. "If you were alive a long, long time ago, wouldn't your tooth have fallen apart by now?"

"Do you know what a fossil is?" asked Meg.

"No," said Coonie and Taz, shaking their heads left and right.

"When I lost my tooth - and many other teeth, they fell to the salty ocean bottom and were covered quickly by sand and mud," said Meg. "The sand and mud kept the tooth from falling apart.

At the same time, minerals such as iron soaked into the tooth and made it harder, preserving it. By the time Tami-ami-mami-amy found it, my tooth had been preserved for millions of years, which was before her mom and dad were born. Then the fresh-water Peace River washed all the sand and mud off the tooth until one day someone could see it. If you peek outside of my jaws and look down, you'll see hundreds of my teeth on the river bottom!"





"Wow!" said Coonie. "So Tami-ami-mami-amy found a fossil sharks tooth, not a tooth from a live shark!"

"And megalodon sharks no longer live anywhere in the world, right Meg?" asked Taz.

Before she could answer, Meg lifted her head high into the air.

"Ahh....ahhh...ahhh..." she said, taking several quick deep breaths. "I'm sorry, but I have a cold. I'm trying *not* to sneeze all over you."



Meg lifted her head high into the air again. "Ahh...ahh...ahh...AHHCHEW!!!!" she blew.

Her powerful sneeze sent Coonie and Taz shooting through the air like furry little cannon balls.



"Kersplash!!!

When they landed, they were still in the water and dog-paddled as fast as they could toward shore. Up the bank they climbed until they were safely away from the huge shark's kabootacus jaws.



"Meg? Meg, are you still in the river?" asked Taz, looking around in case sharks really can walk on land. But no one answered.

"I don't think Meg is going to answer us," said Coonie. "And I think we've solved the problem of the bigitty-big shark. We were so frightened by the tooth that we thought the shark was alive and still swimming in the river! But it was a *fossil* sharks tooth Tami-ami-mami-amy found from a shark that lived and died here long before any of us were even born! Let's go tell Chief Snickerschizel and Mayor Longshorts that the megalodon shark is gone, but her fossil teeth are fun to find!"

"Hey, you wanna swim back?" suggested Taz.

"I don't think so," answered Coonie. "There may not be any megalodon sharks in the river, but there are plenty of alligators now that we are away from town and way upstream. Let's swim when we get back!"



Before paddling back to town, Taz couldn't resist running up and down the banks looking for footprints of sharks or whales or fish or snakes or any other animal her imagination could think of!  
She also looked up into the trees just in case sharks like to climb!



Coonie, who hadn't slept a wink since they got to the river, finally took a nice long doggie nap!



After her nap, Taz suggested they switch kayaks for the paddle home. Coonie tried to paddle Taz's kayak but it was just too stinky for her to handle. She ran into the shore several times!



Taz also ran into the shore with Coonie's kayak. "Maybe we should walk back!" she said.



When the townspeople heard the news that Coonie and Taz had saved them and the bigitty-big kabootacus megalodon shark was gone forever, they all cheered and presented the pair with a mountain of doggie biscuits in the shape of...you guessed it...bigamongus megalodon sharks teeth! Yum! Yum!



Soon, buses of visitors showed up all along the river.  
They each wanted a chance to find fossil sharks teeth of their own.



Coonie led the first fossil hunter back into the river!



Tami-ami-mami-amy also showed up to look for her favorite fossil of all...



a megalodon sharks tooth as big as a slice of sugar-free chocolate pizza!



Her whole family joined her, including her mom and dad and brothers and sisters and cousins!



"This is the life!" said Taz, who swam between the fossil hunters, splashing and yapping!  
"Yap, yapitty-yap!" she barked.



Until Coonie called her a "no-no-bad-dog" and gave her a time-out.



At last, it was time to leave Wauchula and head back to Fort Myers.

"C'mon Taz!" Coonie yelled. "If you promise to go slow, I'll let you drive!"



"That makes me a yes-yes-good-dog!" said taz, waving goodbye to all the townspeople.

As they drove away, the dynamic doggy duo hoped it would be the last call they got about megalodon.

But...just in case they were wrong, Taz left a sign for any other sharks  
that might think about swimming in the Peace River...



Beware of the  
Two  
Little dogs!!