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Written by

Ali Sparkes

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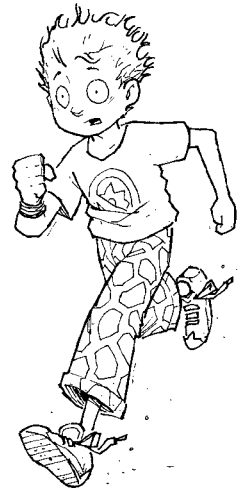
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SWITCH



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Ant Attack

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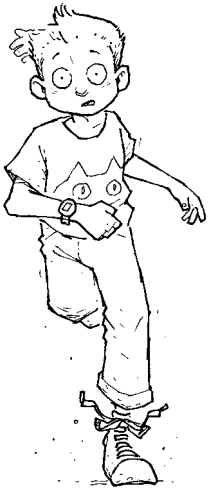
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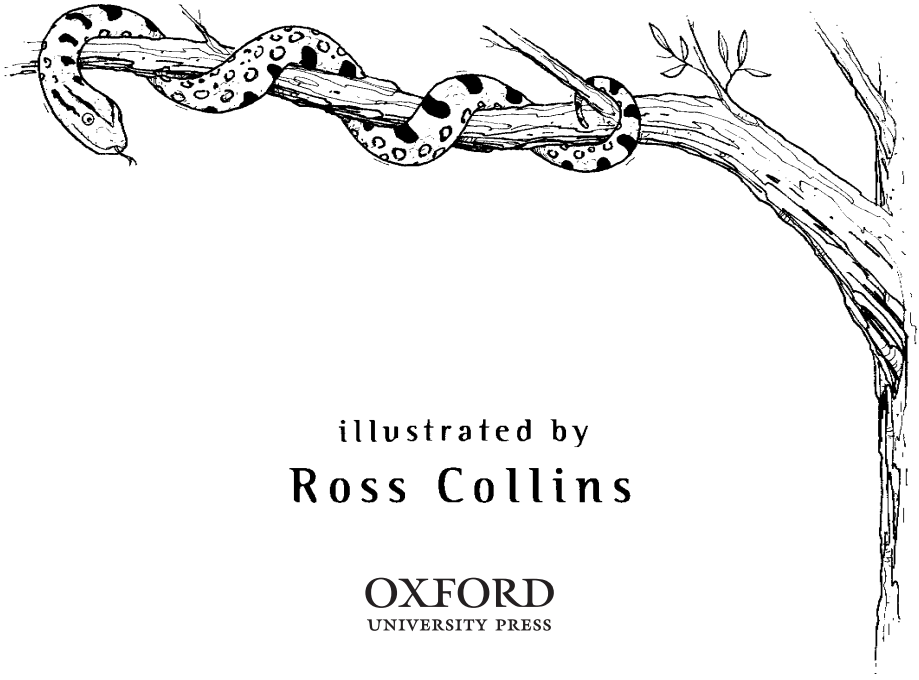
Alligator Action



SWITCH

Anaconda Adventure

Ali Sparkes



illustrated by
Ross Collins

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regulations of the country of origin.

Photograph on page 127: Thanks to Tiny Drury, cool chameleon.



For Tobey Cole

With grateful thanks to
John Buckley and Tony Gent of
Amphibian and Reptile Conservation
for their hot-blooded guidance on
SWITCH's cold-blooded reptile heroes.

Danny and Josh and Petty

Josh and Danny might be twins but they're NOT the same. Josh loves getting his hands dirty and learning about nature. Danny thinks Josh is a nerd. Skateboarding and climbing are way cooler! And their next-door neighbour, Petty, is only interested in one thing . . . her top secret SWITCH potion.



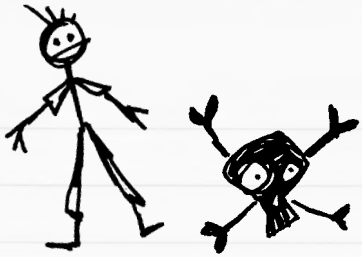


Danny

- FULL NAME: Danny Phillips
- AGE: 8 years
- HEIGHT: Taller than Josh
- FAVOURITE THING: Skateboarding
- WORST THING: Creepy-crawlies and tidying
- AMBITION: To be a stunt man







Josh

- FULL NAME: Josh Phillips
- AGE: 8 years
- HEIGHT: Taller than Danny
- FAVOURITE THING: Collecting insects
- WORST THING: Skateboarding
- AMBITION: To be an entomologist

Petty



- FULL NAME: Petty Hortense Potts
- AGE: None of your business
- HEIGHT: Head and shoulders above every other scientist
- FAVOURITE THING: SWITCHing Josh & Danny
- WORST THING: Evil ex-friend Victor Crouch
- AMBITION: Adoration and recognition as the world's most genius scientist (and for the government to say sorry!)

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Getting Legless

'Slithery, slithery, slithery . . . ' Petty Potts pushed her face up against the glass, steaming it up with her breath and bending her nose sideways.

'She's going wrong again,' muttered Danny.

'Ahem! Who's *she*?' demanded Petty Potts, stepping away from the glass and shoving her thick spectacles up the bridge of her nose so she could glare at him. 'The cat's mother? I was merely trying to build the excitement.'

'You don't need to build any excitement!' Josh pointed to the enormous snake on the other side of the glass. 'You're just about to SWITCH me and Danny into one of *those*. It doesn't get more exciting than that!'

'Although we're not sure why you want

to do it *here*,' Danny added. They were in the reptile house at The Wilderness Zoological Park. 'I mean—surely it would be safer to do this SWITCH in the lab?'

'It would,' Petty said. 'But I'm working on a new theory. Will your behaviour patterns be affected if you SWITCH in close proximity to a real snake?'

Josh and Danny stared through the glass and shivered with excitement . . . and a little fear. On the far side a yellow and black scaly face rose up, staring back at them through almond shaped eyes. A black forked tongue waved in the air, trying to scent them.



'A yellow anaconda,' read Danny, peering at the little information plaque next to the display. 'Grows up to two or three metres in length and eats birds, reptiles and mammals. Non venomous. Kills prey by constriction. Not large enough to kill humans. Aaaw!' He turned to Petty. 'I want to be large enough to kill humans! Why can't I be large enough to kill humans? It's not fair.'

Josh thwacked the back of his twin brother's head with a rolled up Wilderness Zoological Park souvenir guide, briefly flattening Danny's spiky blond hair. 'You're not planning to kill any humans, are you? So it's not really a problem!'

'I know . . . ' pouted Danny. 'I'd just like to know we could if we wanted to . . . '

'Which is precisely why you're getting this SWITCH spray,' Petty said, holding out a small white plastic bottle with a spray nozzle on the top. The letters 'Y A' for yellow anaconda were written on it in permanent marker. 'I do have a green anaconda spray too, and they're the huge, human-eating size. But that's for later. For now, I don't want you getting over-excited and

deciding to crush me to death on a whim. And in any case, you're only going to be SWITCHed for half a minute. This bottle has a very precise spray button and I've calculated the dose for exactly thirty seconds and no more.'

When Josh and Danny had first been SWITCHed it was by accident—into house spiders. It had been utterly terrifying to be the unwitting guinea pigs for Petty's Serum Which Instigates Total Cellular Hijack—and it would never have happened at all if Piddle, their dog, (named after a rather unfortunate habit he had when he got excited) hadn't run into their neighbour's back garden. It was while rescuing him that they'd stumbled into Petty's secret underground laboratory—and right into a jet spray of SWITCH.

Now, months later, it was hard to imagine how they'd resisted getting involved with Petty's SWITCH Project. Since they'd helped her find the missing code to the Reptile SWITCH formula they'd been more and more excited about taking part in the experiments. Being SWITCHed into reptiles was going to be amazing!

Even so, today Josh felt a twinge of worry—a zoological park was a bit public for a brand new SWITCH. 'Are you sure about this?' he asked Petty. 'It will definitely only last thirty seconds?'

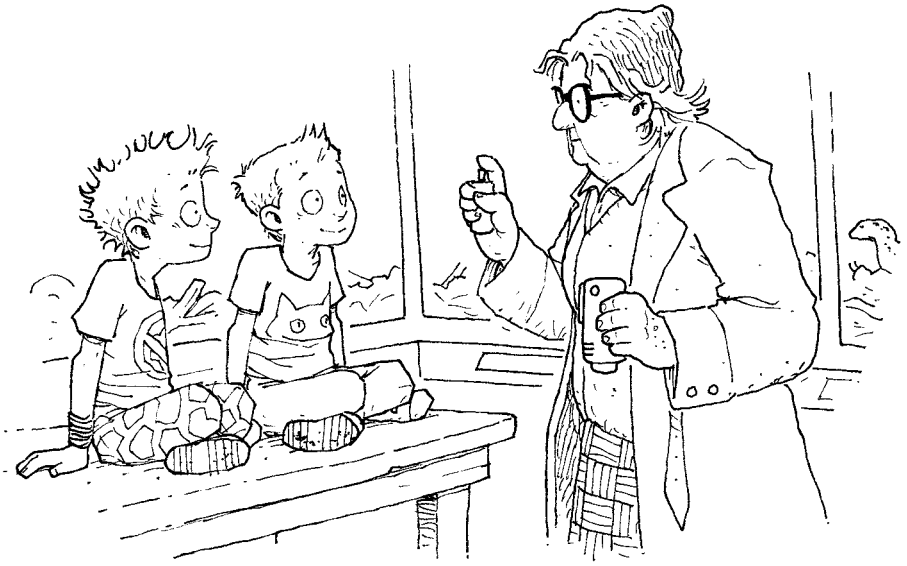
'Certain!' Petty said. 'Now—check there's nobody coming and we'll give it a blast.' While Josh and Danny poked their heads out past the door of the reptile house—a humid hexagonal building filled with large glass-fronted displays containing all kinds of exotic cold-blooded creatures—Petty put her bag down on a table in the centre of the room. It was used as an education centre too, so there were tables and chairs and benches along one wall.

'Nope—nobody around,' Danny said, coming back in. 'Good job we're off school on a teacher training day. This place would be full of kids at the weekend.'

'Yes—but school parties sometimes come in too,' Petty said. 'And I saw one back by the entrance gate. Still—if nobody was anywhere near the bottom of the path we know we have a minute or more. It's a long walk up here. So—climb on

the table please. As soon as you SWITCH, pay attention to the yellow anaconda. Look at it. And let it look at you. I will be filming to see if there are any differences in behaviour. And you'll SWITCH back in half a minute—so no chance to get chummy with my windpipe!'

Danny and Josh sat cross-legged on the table, grinning with excitement. They'd been looking forward to this moment for weeks and weeks—ever since they'd found the last REPTOSWITCH cube and Petty had begun working on the new formula. Josh decided to stop worrying and just have fun. He fixed his blue eyes on Petty and said 'Ready!' Petty sprayed him in one short burst. Then Danny.



Three seconds later two yellow anacondas were coiling on the table, black and yellow scales gleaming in the soft light, diamond shaped heads swaying back and forth and black forked tongues flickering in the air.

'YESSSSSSSSSSS!' hissed Danny.

'This is SSSSSSSSSO cool!' hissed Josh.

Although it was weird to have no arms or legs, he could feel the immense strength and agility of his sleek body. He lifted his head, feeling the muscles contract and relax in waves just under his beautiful gleaming scales, and rose up majestically to stare at Danny.

'Look at my toooongue!' Danny poked out his forked tongue and waved it around. It was like a tiny snake in itself—strong and agile.

'We're quite small,' Josh said, eyeing his tail. 'About a metre, I think. Not big enough to kill much more than a mouse. Oooh—quick—look at whatsisface! We've only got about ten seconds left.'

Whatsisface, the real anaconda, was now staring at them through the glass with interest.