

Chapter 1

The Time Machine

It was Saturday morning. Nik and Abby were at Henry's place. Nik was supposed to be finishing (... well, starting and finishing) his homework project and, as usual, had been trying to get the others to help him. It hadn't been working though, and Nik was ready to give up.

"I'm soooooo boooooored!" he groaned. "Can't we do something exciting? Go have an adventure?"

"It's pouring with rain, Nik," said Abby, who was lying upside down with her head off the sofa. "And I am doing something exciting – I'm reading."



“How can you read upside down? You’ll be sick. And what is it that’s so exciting about your book?”

Nik snatched the book out of Abby’s hands. “You are kidding, aren’t you?” he laughed. “*THE HISTORY OF THE MELBOURNE DOCKLANDS?*”

“Give it back! It’s actually super interesting. You see the Docklands were ...”

“Nope. Dooon’t care,” scoffed Nik. “I’m never going to need to know that stuff. Henry, tell me you’re doing something a bit more exciting!”

Henry had been quietly working on some sort of wrist device. Nik and Abby hadn’t been paying much attention – Henry was always tinkering with some invention.

“Guys, I think I’ve created a time machine!” announced Henry.

“There’s no way that could really work, could it?” asked Nik, peering closely at the device.

“Not a chance,” said Abby, looking up from her book.

“I think it might,” claimed Henry. “It should work by scanning images of any time and then sending you there.”

“Awesome!” shouted Nik. “Let’s go and ride dinosaurs!”

“Nik, I invented it so I can visit some of my favourite places throughout time,” said Henry patiently. “You wanted to do your project, didn’t you? Maybe we can make it more ‘interesting’.”

“Ugh, boring!” groaned Nik. “We should do something cool, like riding dinosaurs!”

Henry began to explain that he wanted to see how his favourite places had changed. "People change the environment all the ... HEY, GIVE THAT BACK!"

Nik swiped the time machine from Henry's hands. Henry tried to grab it back and they started fighting, pulling the device backwards and forwards from one another, like a tug-of-war.

"First I'm gonna ride a T-Rex, then a pterodactyl..."

"Nik, we can't use it yet; it hasn't been tested! And the only ride a T-Rex would give you is in its mouth," shouted Henry.

Abby got up from the sofa and, still carrying her book open at the page she was reading, tried to calm things down. "Guys, break it up, before something bad ..." She was cut off by a loud cracking sound, like lightning.

The three friends disappeared, spinning around in a purple energy cloud.



Chapter 2

In the Wetlands

Nik, Abby and Henry couldn't believe what had happened. They were no longer in Henry's room. They had landed gently on a patch of grass surrounded by wetlands.

"Is everyone okay?" asked Abby.

"I think so," said Nik, still holding the time machine, "but I'm soaked. Where are we?"

"I don't know where we are," groaned Henry. "You must have pressed the button and activated the machine! Actually ... oh wow! IT WORKED! I'm a genius!"

"I think I might know where we are," murmured Abby, "but I've no idea *when* we are!"

Abby was still holding her book open at the page she had last been reading. The picture in the book was starting to look familiar.

Henry snatched the time machine from Nik, glared at him and strapped the device firmly onto his wrist. He pressed a button, looked directly at the machine and stated in his clearest and loudest voice, "Computer, where are we?"

A computerised voice responded, "Melbourne Docklands, 1804".

"1804?" shouted Nik. "YES! We've made it to the time of the dinosaurs!"