

Perry the Possum

In the Land of the Dinosaurs

A Teleplay for a Half-Hour Animated TV Special

SYNOPSIS

ACT ONE

Perry the possum travels with his brother and two sisters on the back of his mother, through a shrubland about a hundred million years ago.

One day, while his family feeds in a clearing, Perry runs off after a little lizard. Quick, camouflaged, and leaving its tail behind, the lizard escapes; so Perry chases him ever deeper into the shrubland.

Eventually, Perry emerges from the shrubs and finds the lizard tracks leading into a grassy field; so Perry follows. However, he soon finds himself lost in the tall grass and begins to cry.

Suddenly, a thunderous sound is heard; and from above, giant feet crash down, almost crushing Perry. He jumps up and comes down on the large, swishing tail of a strolling brontosaur, who carries Perry far off.

As the brontosaur starts to enter a primeval swamp, Perry jumps off its tail and plops down on the shore. Lost, muddy, and cold, poor Perry is miserable.

Pulling himself together, Perry tip-toes through the cattails down to the water's edge and then leaps out onto the lily pads. He splashes himself clean and then hops from pad to pad as he chases a fish for lunch. Diving into the water, he misses the fish, so he swims to shore.

Still hungry and smarting over letting the little fish and lizard get away, Perry is happily surprised to find on the shore a mud nest filled with little "lizards." Perry runs over and grabs one; but just then, out of the water comes an angry roar from the toothy jaws of a giant prehistoric crocodile!

ACT TWO

Perry, as possums do, has frozen, dropping the baby crocodile back into its nest. The mother crocodile turns her back and swats Perry away with her mighty tail. Knocked out of his shock, Perry runs off.

Hungrier than ever, Perry notices a little bird flying from its nest high up in a tall tree. Though weak with hunger, Perry climbs and climbs, eventually clinging to the very bark of the tree trunk. Just out of reach of the nest, Perry stands on an abandoned hornets' nest and moves his forepaws along a vine overhead. Suddenly, the hornets' nest breaks free, leaving Perry dangling

by his front claws a hundred feet off the ground! Gathering his last ounce of strength, Perry pulls himself up and into the nest.

Perry feasts on the hard-earned meal of eggs and then lies back in the nest to sleep. However, through his closing eyes he sees the silhouette of approaching wings. Though he plans to simply shoo away the returning parent-bird, Perry is horrified to discover the wings belong to a giant pterosaur, who grabs onto Perry and flies off with him.

Flying over the grassland and shrubland, Perry is helpless to escape what appears to be his fate—being fed to the pterosaur's young in their nest in the cliffs up ahead.

As they fly over the river valley at the edge of the shrubland, a downdraft catches the pterosaur and sends it nearly into the river; but the winged reptile doesn't let loose its grasp on Perry, who gives-up hope. Suddenly, as the pterosaur flies away, up from behind the trees bordering the river jumps a monstrous tyrannosaur, which latches onto the neck of the pterosaur—they all crash down into the raging river below.

As the tyrannosaur makes a meal of the pterosaur (now out of view), poor little Perry is swept far downstream. Barely managing to avoid drowning, Perry makes it to shore. Swearing to never again run away if he ever does get home, Perry is startled by a rustling of the bushes along the riverbank. Before he can run and hide, out of the shrubs emerges his family! After Perry cheerfully romps with his brother and sisters, his mother nips, then nuzzles her impulsive, yet

beloved son. She carries them on her back, off into the shrubland.

Settling into their family's safe, snug burrow for night, after the most adventurous day in his young life, Perry appreciates that he is a lucky possum indeed!