

The Adventures of Grandmasaurus: At the Supermarket

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The Adventures of Grandmasaurus is an entertaining picture book that shares a smattering of information about dinosaurs.

A girl's grandmother morphs into different dinosaurs in the picture book *The Adventures of Grandmasaurus: At the Supermarket*.

A girl and her friend are at the supermarket on a field trip to learn about healthy food choices. The girl's grandmother, Grandmasaurus, is also along for the trip. "Funny business" follows: a series of sneezes transforms Grandmasaurus from her human form into one dinosaur after another.

The book delivers dinosaur information in an appealing way, woven into the story. Each time Grandmasaurus changes shape, the children use their tablet to look up the dinosaur's name and characteristics. A visit to the produce section prompts a lesson about herbivores, carnivores, and omnivores. The field trip storyline doesn't fare as well: Ms. Priya, the teacher and guide, points out the different colors of fruits and vegetables, but there's no mention of why they're good food choices. And at the bakery, seafood, and frozen-food sections, little is said about the respective offerings. Grandmasaurus sneezes and changes into an appropriate water-oriented dinosaur and a woolly mammoth in turn, but the story's supposed focus on nutrition seems forgotten.

The book contains many funny images, as of Grandma as a *Parasaurolophus* hiding behind vegetables or the sight of oblivious store employees going about their business with a dinosaur just beyond their view. Grandma's bluish-white tuft of hair is visible atop each of her incarnations—another amusing touch. But the art also falls short on complementing certain aspects of the story. At the end of the book, Ms. Priya says, "Now that we know a little more about healthy food choices, let's have a snack!" but that snack isn't shown or discussed; early in the book, the teacher mentions that the students will get bonus marks if they include the "different food groups" in their reports, but those food groups are never mentioned, even in the book's post-story informational section, which focuses only on dinosaurs.

The one-page visual glossary at the end of the book is a charming, quick reference guide to the creatures seen in the story, though they're all rendered in a strange blue color. And the pronunciation guides are of limited use: "*Spinosaurus*" is broken down as "Spin-o-saur-us," but that doesn't indicate whether the first syllable sounds like "spin" or "spine." Further, the mechanism by which the grandmother changes into dinosaurs isn't explained, resulting in a narrative hole. And there's no explanation offered when she changes into a mammoth instead of a dinosaur, or regarding why, after a while, a sneeze turns her not into another dinosaur, but back to herself. And the students don't do anything to effect these changes, making them mere observers, rather than participants, in the story.

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PETER DABBENE (June 24, 2023)

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