



Out of Jim Riva's chapter book for kids (and adults that are kids at heart) come the first three chapters of *Marvin Mallard and the Magic Medallion* – with the illustrations by Sharyl Steinmark.



Marvin Mallard and the Magic Medallion
(the first three chapters, re-formatted)

Before the Board

In the state of Forngle, there was a detention center for ducks called the Quackery. The principal was a goose. Her name was Virginia Ruffledfeathers, but the ducks at the Quackery called her Honkalot behind her back.

In her office at the Quackery, Principal Ruffledfeathers was checking the “Into Trouble” section of the *Forngle Daily News*. She wanted to see if any of the ducks she had tried to reform had gotten into trouble. She came across one, Marvin Mallard, who got caught scaring the chickens in Chickenville while dressed up like a fox. “Oh, that Marvin,” she said. “If he could just stand up for himself and resist peer pressure, he’d be a great duck. He’s got a good heart. But if he keeps getting into trouble, the Forngle Board is going to sentence him to do hard labor in Jugaloo.”

The Forngle Board was hearing cases now. Eight of the nine members were present: a chicken, a goldfish, a sheep, a parrot, a sloth bear, a frog, an ostrich, and a hippopotamus. Only a raccoon, which was sick, was absent.

Standing before the Board in wingcuffs was Ross Albatross, who got caught for the thirteenth time flying recklessly. The Board reached a quick decision. The sloth bear remained seated and said, “We sentence Ross Albatross to three months of hard labor in Jugaloo.”

“No! No! Please! No!” Ross pleaded as two police dogs took him away. The hippopotamus then shouted out, “Next up, Marvin Mallard, who scared the chickens in Chickenville while dressed up like a fox.”

Marvin was not in wingcuffs. They didn’t have to worry about him trying to fly away, for he was flying impaired. He had managed to make it to adolescence because he was very good at hiding in his surroundings. At Duckmont High, he was the top student in Advanced Camouflage.

Marvin’s trouble-making made him a regular at the Quackery, where Principal Ruffledfeathers often yelled at him, “Marvin, do ya wanna get sent to Jugaloo and do hard labor? Do ya? Do ya? Do ya? Do ya?”

Scaring the chickens in Chickenville is not what got Marvin into trouble. What got him into trouble was dressing up like a fox. Dressing up like other animals was allowed only once a year – at the Annual Forngle Masquerade Party. The prank was Johnny Armadillo’s idea, and Johnny was the front part of the fox until he slipped away and left Marvin holding the costume. “It’s all Johnny Armadillo’s fault,” Marvin said to himself as he stood before the Board.



“Marvin, you’ve gotten just about all of the sympathy you’re going to get from us because of your disability,” warned the frog. “Everybody says that you’re a good duck at heart, but recently you’ve got me wondering.”

“You’re not going to pull the wool over *my* eyes, Marvin,” blurted the sheep. “You’re becoming a bad duck. Baaaaaad. Very baaaaaaad.”

“You’re a juvenile ducklinquent, that’s what *you* are, Marvin,” snapped the chicken. “Are you aware that one of the chickens, Henny Clucker, was so traumatized by your prank that she may never be able to lay another egg?”

A tear for Henny Clucker ran down Marvin’s cheek. “I’m really sorry,” he said. “You need to get wised up, Marvin,” lectured the hippopotamus.

“Principal Ruffledfeathers said that you seemed to make progress during your last stint at the Quackery,” said the ostrich. “But what you did in Chickenville was very foolish.”

“Foolish, foolish, foolish,” repeated the parrot.

“When I was a cub, my mother told me a story about a magic medallion that helps you get wised up,” commented the sloth bear. “You probably need something like that, Marvin.”

“We don’t want to send you to Jugaloo, Marvin,” said the goldfish. “But if that’s what it takes to get you wised up, then that’s what we’re going to do.”

“Let’s get this over with,” growled the sloth bear. “I want to get home and plop myself down on my sofa with my remote.”

After a brief conference among the members of the Board, the sloth bear stayed seated and said, “We order Marvin Mallard to go back to the Quackery for one week, starting at 6:00 today. He will be placed on probation for sixty days. If he gets caught causing any more trouble during those sixty days, he will be sent to Jugaloo to do hard labor for a minimum of three months.”

Marvin thanked the Board and promised not to cause any more trouble. It was now 4:00, so he had plenty of time to go to Critters Cards and buy a sympathy card for Henny Clucker. He really felt bad that Henny might never be able to lay another egg.

Cool Regis

On his way to Critters Cards, Marvin saw Regis Rhesus, a hip rhesus monkey. Cool Regis, as everyone called him, was leaning against a vending machine that sold chocolate-covered ants for anteaters.



“Hi, Cool Regis. How are you?”

“I’m a spunky monkey, and you’re a lucky ducky. The German Shepherd Hans Houndzweig just told me about it. You’re going to have to be very careful during your sixty-day probation.”

“I’m not going to cause any more trouble ever again.”

“Why not?”

“I’ll get sent to Jugaloo.”

“Not if you don’t get caught.”

“I always get caught.”

“That’s because you’re a fool. Come along with me and I’ll wise you up.”

Getting wised up sounded good, so Marvin put off going to Critters Cards and went with Cool Regis.

“Wising you up is going to be almost as hard as turning a June bug into a July bug,” Cool Regis began as they walked past a goat getting his goatee trimmed at a barber shop and a pig coming out of a self-service hog wash. “But let’s start with a basic principle: Breaking rules is OK if you don’t get caught. Got it? Now get *this*: There’s an art to not getting caught. I’m a master of that art, which qualifies me to teach it.” After crossing paths with a dog dragging his pup to obedience school, Cool Regis continued, “First of all, you’ve got to keep an eye out for hidden cameras. See that weeping willow over there? It’s got a camera in it, so it’s really a *peeping* willow. And see that petunia?”

“It’s a peeping petunia?”

“No, it’s just a petunia. Come along.”

Cool Regis led Marvin past the Porcupine Acupuncture Clinic, the Penguin Tuxedo Rental Shop, and the Elephant Hearing Aid Center ... and then into a wooded area. On the other side of the woods, there was a jogging path for ostriches. Cool Regis pulled Marvin behind a tree. He looked up and down and all around, then put on a pair of gloves and continued, “There’s a new law against throwing banana peels in the paths of ostriches. That’s because there’s an ostrich on the Forngle Board this year. But I’m not going to let that stop me from having fun. Watch this.”

He took a banana out of his pocket, wiped it clean with his gloved hands, peeled it, and threw the peel in front of a jogging ostrich. The ostrich slipped on the peel and went up high and came down hard.

Cool Regis laughed while pulling Marvin away. Marvin wasn’t laughing. He felt sorry for the ostrich and wanted to go back and make sure that the ostrich was okay. Then it dawned on him that he had just been a partner in trouble-making. That meant that, if caught, he’d get sent to Jugaloo. He wanted to get as far away from the scene as possible. Cool Regis grabbed him by the neck. “Don’t be a fool and run,” Cool Regis said. “Nobody saw me do it, and I didn’t leave my fingerprints on that banana peel. So it’s just that ostrich’s word against ours. I expect him to show up any second now. Settle down and be cool. Can you whistle?”

Cool Regis and Marvin were whistling when the ostrich came stomping toward them in his jogging shoes. The ostrich looked at them suspiciously but didn’t say anything. “Ostriches sure are stupid,” Cool Regis said after the ostrich had stomped away. “They’re probably more intelligent than ducks, though. But you just learned another valuable lesson, Marvin. Now it’s time for you to put what you’ve learned into practice, and I know just the place. Follow me.”

He led Marvin up a hill. On the other side of the hill, there was a pond. A female zebra was standing in the pond in shallow water. She was looking at her reflection and admiring how she looked in her new skirt.

“Does that zebra know you, Marvin?”

“No,” answered Marvin.

“Good. Let’s do cannonballs and splash her.”

“I don’t think we should, Cool Regis.”

“It’s just water, Marvin. She’s going to have to take a bath sooner or later anyway.”

“But her skirt will get wet.”

“It will dry, Marvin. Listen, I’m trying to educate you, for your own good.”

“I don’t know, Cool Regis.”

“I know you don’t know, Marvin. That’s your problem. You’ve got to be able to see what you can get away with and what you can’t. This is a sure thing. I see an excellent escape route. We’ll be gone by the time she gets the water out of her eyes. Let’s take off on the count of three. One, two, three.”

Marvin got caught up in the moment and took off with Cool Regis down the hill, straight for the water in front of the zebra. He ran as fast as he could to keep up with Cool Regis and surprised himself by passing him. Cool Regis had stopped. He had suddenly seen what Marvin didn’t see: a police partridge in a pear tree. “Stop, Marvin, stop!” Cool Regis shouted. But Marvin didn’t hear him, and he did a cannonball in front of the zebra, splashing her from head to hoof.



Jugaloo

“It’s all Cool Regis’s fault,” Marvin muttered as the Royal Forngle Dismounted Police took him to the Jugaloo border. On the Jugaloo side of the border, a drawbridge was lowered over a piranha-filled moat. Marvin was taken across the drawbridge and into Jugaloo’s No-Go Zone. A squadron of coyotes was waiting to receive him. Marvin’s life flashed before his eyes, but the flashing got stuck on Principal Ruffledfeathers yelling at him, “Marvin, do ya wanna get sent to Jugaloo and do hard labor? Do ya? Do ya? Do ya? Do ya?”

The squadron of coyotes marched Marvin off to prison headquarters. His mug shot was taken, forms were filled out, and information was processed. Two baboons then walked him on the gravel of the compound to the Cinema Building, where he would be shown a film intended to convince him not to dare try to escape.

A gorilla standing guard at the entrance of the Cinema Building saluted the two baboons. They saluted him back. One of the baboons said, “We’ve got two animals to see the film – this mallard from Forngle, and a giraffe from Willavanna we’ll be bringing in soon. The mallard is flying impaired, which is why he’s not wingcuffed.”

The gorilla raised his walkie-talkie. “A flying-impaired mallard is coming in,” he said to a bear standing guard on the inside. The gorilla then pulled the door open, and the baboons pushed Marvin inside and closed the door behind him. “Sit wherever you want,” said the bear, which was the only other animal in the room.



Marvin waddled all of the way down to the second row and took a seat in the center. So he was going to have to do hard labor for three months. It was going to be on his record, and he was going to have to live with that. He pounded his wing on the armrest and berated himself: "Why do I keep falling for pranks like that? When am I going to stop letting myself get talked into doing things that I know deep down are wrong? I wish I could find the magic medallion that the sloth bear on the Forngle Board mentioned. I need to get wised up."

A giraffe was pushed into the room. Sentenced to six months of hard labor for bird-nest peeping, Gerard Giraffe bent his neck forward so his head wouldn't hit the ceiling, went all of the way down to the first row, and sat in the seat directly in front of Marvin.

"Excuse me. I won't be able to see the film with you sitting in front of me," Marvin said.

Gerard turned around, looked down at Marvin, and blurted, "Well, that's *your* problem."

"But I was here first," Marvin replied as the room went from dim to dark for the start of the film.

"And I was here second," Gerard snapped and turned back around as the curtains opened.

"Well, I think you're rude," Marvin said while getting up to move to another seat.

Gerard didn't mind being called a bird-nest peeper, but he didn't like being called rude. He waited a few seconds to set Marvin up, and then he yelled, "Fire!"

Marvin fell for the false alarm and took off for the exit. The bear came down the aisle with a flashlight and felt something feathery run between his legs. "ESCAPE ATTEMPT!" he shouted to the gorilla on his walkie-talkie.

The gorilla stepped toward the door to hold it closed, but Marvin pushed the door open as he was taking that step, and the gorilla stubbed his big toe on the door and fell painfully to the ground against it.

The bear saw Marvin push the door open and slip out, and then saw the door slam shut right behind Marvin's tail feathers. Unaware that the gorilla had fallen against the other side of the door and was blocking it, the bear charged into the door to push it open. But the door didn't open, and the bear hit his head so hard

on the door that he somersaulted backwards all of the way down to the first row.

Marvin stopped running as soon as he felt he was a safe distance from the building, and he looked back at it. There was no sign of fire. There was no smoke. There was just the gorilla down on the gravel and in agony at the entrance. Marvin went back to try to help the gorilla, but he suddenly froze when a vulture in a watch tower yelled, "Freeze!"

The vulture left its post and came straight at Marvin with its razor-sharp talons opened wide. Marvin panicked and ran for his life. He rounded the corner of the Cinema Building and looked for camouflage. There was tall grass not far away, but it was too far to get to; there were weeds growing here and there in cracks in the gravel, but they weren't dense enough to hide in; and there was an uncovered garbage can.

Marvin jumped straight into the garbage can and did a quick full-body maneuver to try to make his colors blend with some of the greens and browns of the trash. It was Marvin Mallard at his camouflaging best. His Advanced Camouflage teacher at Duckmont High couldn't have done any better. The vulture looked down at the garbage can while flying over it and kept on flying.

Marvin got out of the garbage can and made it to the tall grass without being seen. Sirens sounded. The hunt was on for the fugitive duck. Loudspeakers in trees carried a warning: "MARVIN MALLARD, YOU CAN'T ESCAPE. GIVE YOURSELF UP NOW OR YOU'LL BE SORRY."

Following the scent of a feather that came out of Marvin's tail when he dashed out of the Cinema Building, bloodhounds, led by Sergeant Barker, surrounded the garbage can. The sirens stopped. They thought that they had him.

The garbage can was overturned and emptied. They realized that they *didn't* have him. The sirens went back on. Frustration set in. The Jugaloo authorities wanted to get Marvin Mallard before he fell into the hands of the Frustrators, who did anything and everything to frustrate the authorities.

Sergeant Barker and his regiment of bloodhounds picked up the scent again and were back on Marvin's trail. Marvin ran into a marsh and paddled with his wings to make himself go faster. The barking was getting louder. Marvin made it through the marsh and got out and ran without even stopping to shake himself dry. Slipping and sliding on wet webbed feet, he ran on pebbles, then uphill on rocks. Between big rocks, he saw a cave. He had no choice; he had to go inside.

The cave was dark and cool. In the back of it, light was coming from a television. Two lions, Roary and Pawla Prowler, were watching TV in their living room. Regular programming had been interrupted to bring a special news bulletin about the fugitive, Marvin Mallard.



Marvin backed up against the wall in the dining room. He heard one of the lions say, "It would be nice if that mallard delivered himself to us for dessert, and he might be doing just that. Can you hear bloodhounds coming this way?" Marvin

then heard the other lion say, "Yes, I can.... And I think I smell a mallard in here right now."

The Prowlers jumped out of their chairs and came into the dining room, licking their chops. Marvin pressed his back hard against the wall and turned his head sideways. There was a hole in the bottom of the wall near the television. Marvin saw it. His only chance was to make it through that hole. But the Prowlers were getting closer and closer.

Marvin was frozen with fear. His bill was chattering. "Here he is," Pawla said and showed Marvin her big, long teeth. Thinking that this was the end, Marvin said what he thought would be his final words: "It's all Cool Regis's fault."

Pawla was all set to take a bite out of Marvin when Sergeant Barker shouted out at the cave entrance, "By the authority of the Jugaloo Police, we have the right to search and seize!"

Pawla was bewildered because she misunderstood Sergeant Barker to say that he had the right to "search and sneeze". Roary stepped forward and asked the sergeant if he had a search warrant. The sergeant told Roary that he didn't need one, and then he sneezed. "There's the duck!" a bloodhound in the front line shouted.

Marvin had made a mad dash for the hole. "Sic him!" Sergeant Barker hollered and sneezed again. Marvin slid head-first toward the hole. One of the bloodhounds got Marvin by the tail but ended up with just a mouthful of feathers. Another bloodhound hit the wall above the hole as Marvin slid through it.



An audio-recording of the next three chapters (four through six) is free of charge in an MP3 file at www.jimriva.com. The whole eBook, all twelve chapters, can be purchased on a CD through the website.