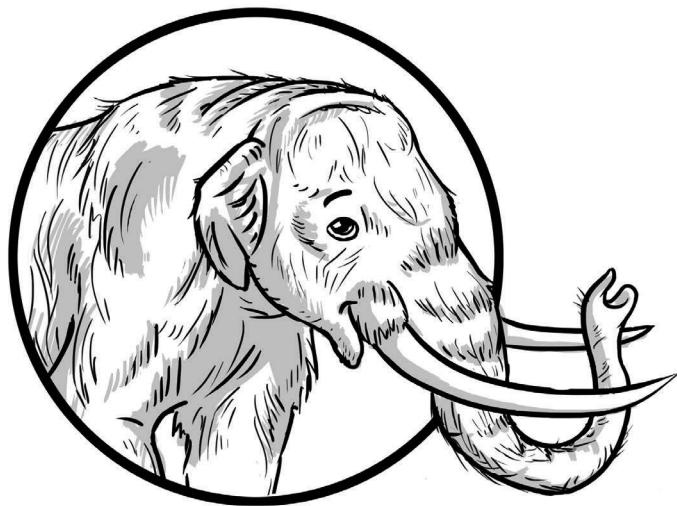


Our Friend the Mastodon

A Fun Book of
Reading • Writing • Thinking • Drawing

Dyslexia-Friendly Special Edition



Myrna Kemnitz

Illustrations by Christopher Tice

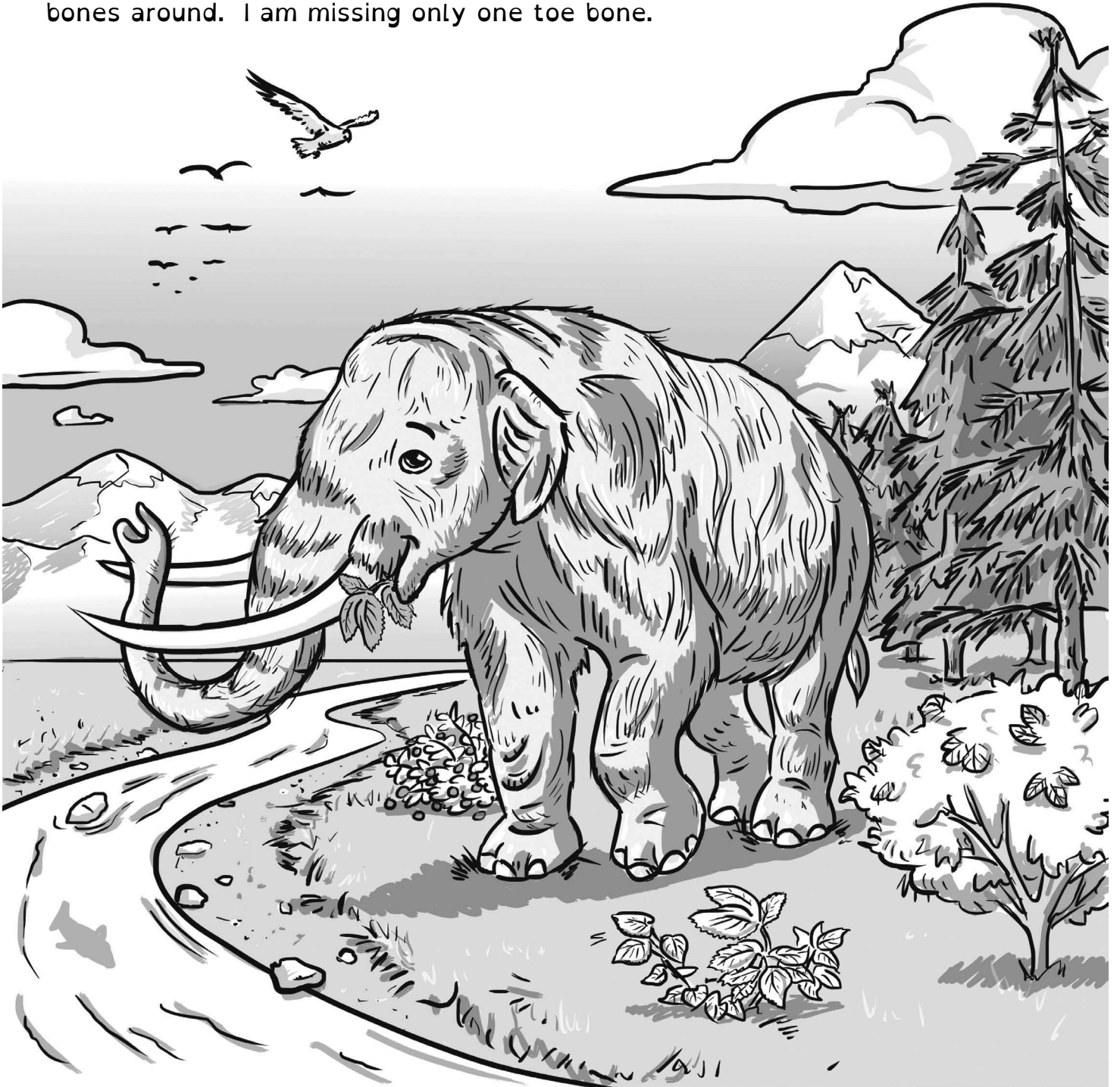
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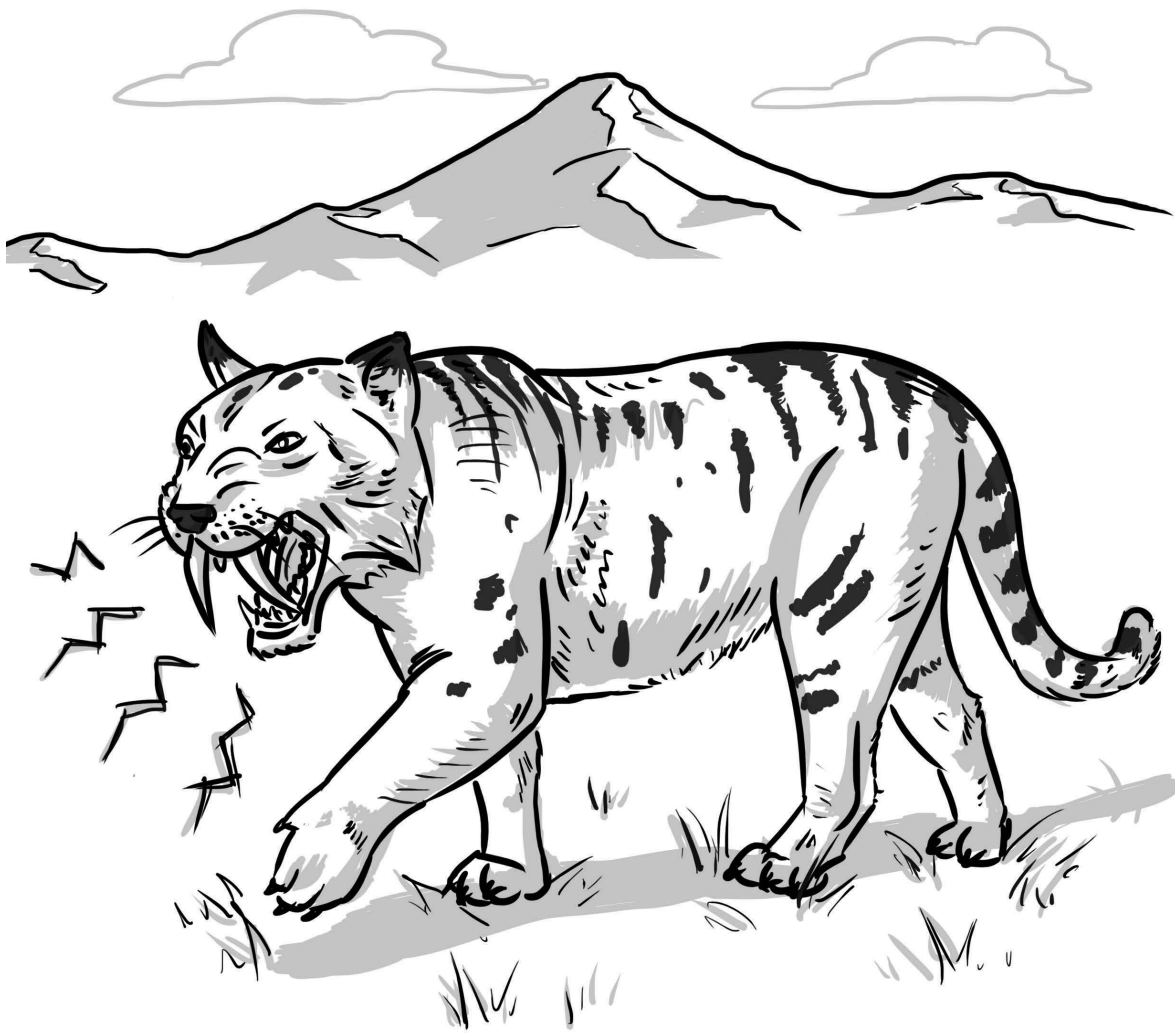
About Me

I am a *mastodon*. I am a distant *relative* of elephants. They are the largest land animals in the world. My scientific name is *Mammuth Americanum*, and I lived on the land that is now called Monroe, New York, 12,000 years ago. Scholars from the Museum of Natural History in New York City came to Museum Village to see me and have said that I am the largest, oldest, and best body of bones around. I am missing only one toe bone.





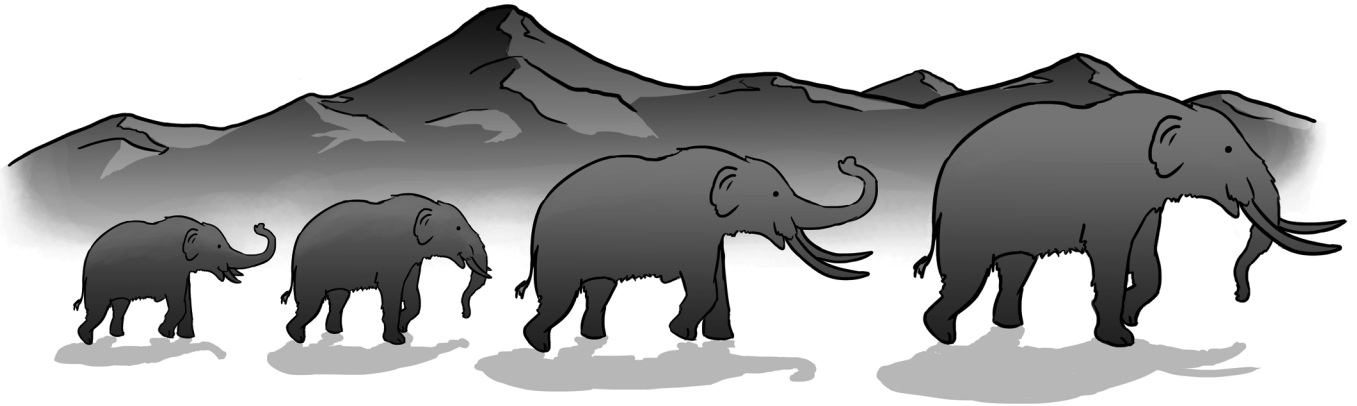
My ancestors traveled a long distance to come to North America. They were able to walk all the way from Africa, Europe, and Asia across what is now called the Bering Strait. Because the Earth's climate was colder and ice covered the land, the seas were 200 to 300 feet lower than they are now. A land bridge stretched from what is now Siberia to the place that is now called Alaska. Paleo-Indians walked with my ancestors in a place now called Dutchess Quarry Caves in Goshen, New York. In these caves they drew pictures of my ancestors. These men hunted us with stone-pointed spears for their food and clothing. My family is now called extinct because the last of us died about 10,000 years ago.



Unlike people and our other enemy, the saber-toothed tiger, we were herbivores. We did not eat meat. We ate only plants, roots, and berries. Hornbeam and hazel leaves were delicious. We ate as we moved. We slept standing.



My family was called a *herd*. My mother was called a *cow*, and my father was called a *bull*. A baby was called a *calf*. Mother only had one baby at a time. We could grow to be eight feet high and weigh as much as eight tons. That is 16,000 pounds. My father could eat about 600 pounds of food a day. He could drink about fifty gallons of water. We could live to be sixty years old.



I used my *trunk* for breathing, smelling, bathing, drinking, picking up things, and bringing leaves to my mouth to eat. Because the tip of my trunk could act as fingers to pick up small objects, it was called *prehensile*. My *ivory tusks* curved upward and could grow to be twelve feet long and weigh 250 pounds! I used them for carrying things, for protection, and for digging up small trees. The bottoms of my feet were *padded*. Under my coarse, shaggy hair, I had a thick layer of fat to protect me from the cold.



Words to Know

Using the mastodon's story, tell what each word below means.

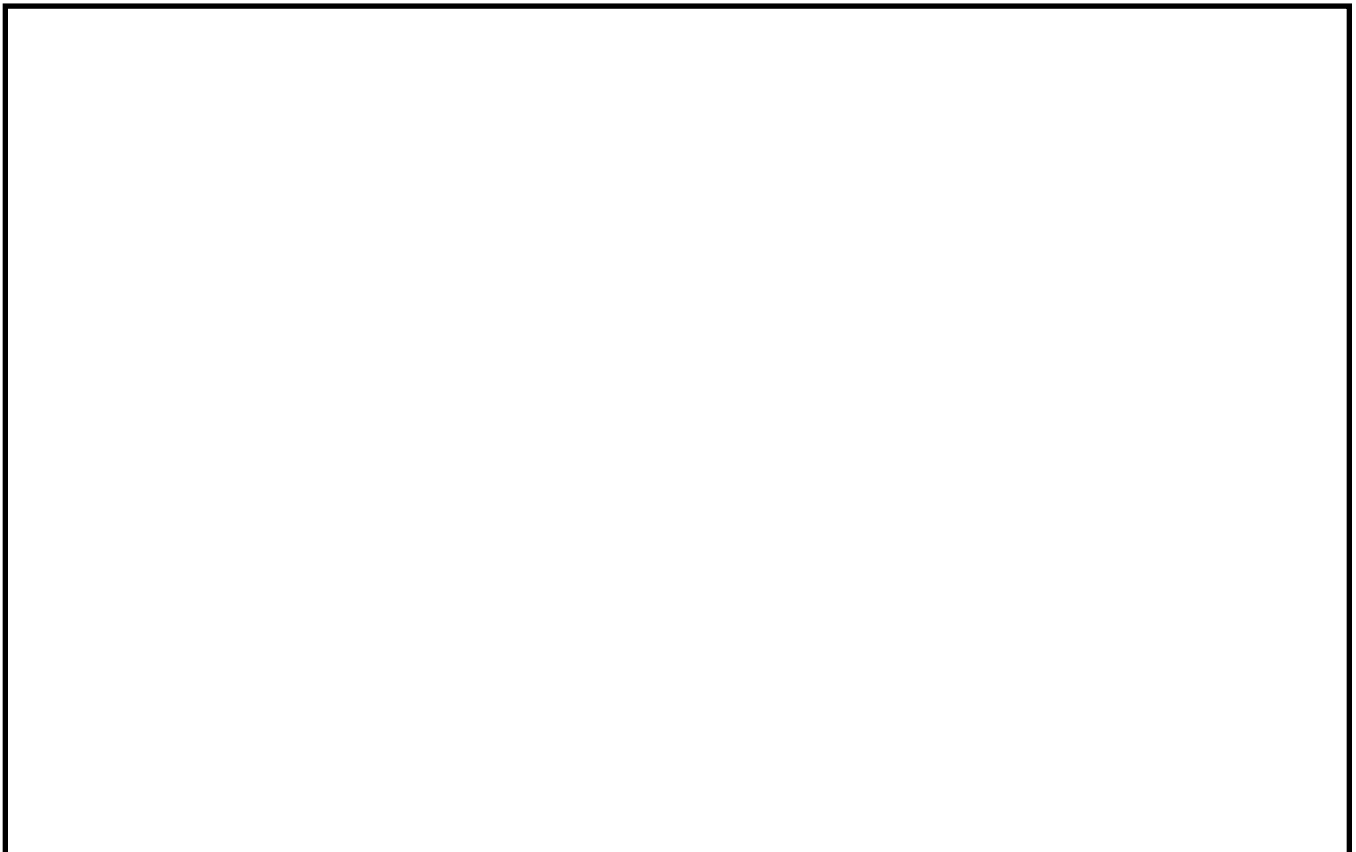
| | | | |
|------------|----------|---------|-----------|
| mastodon | cow | bull | calf |
| extinct | tusks | trunk | herbivore |
| prehensile | relative | climate | herd |

Questions to Think About

- 1. Remembering:** Describe what a mastodon looked like.
Name two of the mastodon's enemies.
What modern-day animal is a relative of the mastodon?
What is the Bering Strait?
- 2. Understanding:** Explain how the mastodons were able to cross the Bering Strait.
- 3. Applying:** What information given by the mastodon proves that she was born in North America?
- 4. Analyzing:** Why don't modern elephants have coarse, shaggy hair?
- 5. Evaluating:** Which would you rather have as a pet: a mastodon calf or an elephant calf? Why?
- 6. Creating:** If you could design the perfect place for a mastodon to live, what would you include in its habitat?

Some Questions to Think About and Talk About

- How do you think mastodons communicated with one another? What do you think they told each other?
- If you could talk to a mastodon, what questions would you ask it?
- If you were a mastodon, what important things would you want present-day children to know about you?
- Mastodons had feet like elephant feet. What do you think their footprints looked like? Draw their footprints in the box below. Then draw saber-toothed tiger footprints near the mastodon footprints.

A large, empty rectangular box with a black border, intended for drawing footprints of mastodons and saber-toothed tigers.

More Questions to Think About and Talk About

- Why do elephants in North America live in zoos?
- Do you think a zoo veterinarian who takes care of elephants could take good care of a mastodon too? Why or why not?
- How many five-pound bundles of hay would a fully-grown mastodon eat in a day? Show your math work in the space below. Hint: How many pounds of food could the mastodon's father eat?

