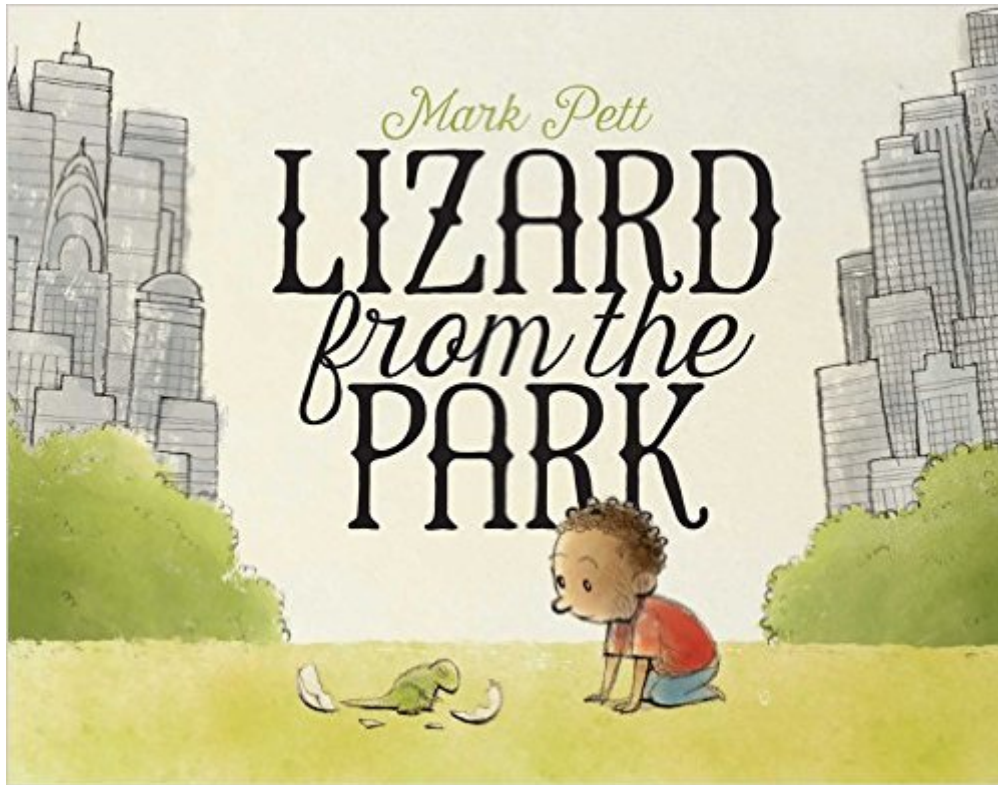


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# Lizard From The Park



## Synopsis

A lonely boy's new pet grows into a rather large dilemma and a Thanksgiving parade offers an uplifting solution in this charming tale from the author of *The Boy and the Airplane* and *The Girl and the Bicycle*. When Leonard takes a shortcut through the park, he finds an egg and takes it home, where it hatches into a lizard (or so Leonard thinks). Leonard names his new pet Buster and takes him all around the city: on the subway, to the library, to a baseball game, and more. But Buster keeps growing and growing and Leonard gets the sense that Buster is longing for something Leonard can't provide. Before long, Buster becomes too big to keep, and Leonard realizes he needs to set Buster free. So Leonard comes up with an inventive plan, one that involves all the balloons Leonard can find and the annual Thanksgiving parade, in an imaginative plot twist that will spark readers' imaginations and touch their hearts.

## Book Information

Lexile Measure: AD580L (What's this?)

Hardcover: 40 pages

Publisher: Simon & Schuster Books for Young Readers (September 8, 2015)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1442483210

ISBN-13: 978-1442483217

Product Dimensions: 11 x 0.4 x 8.5 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.6 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.9 out of 5 stars See all reviews (9 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #137,308 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #106 in Books > Children's Books > Holidays & Celebrations > Thanksgiving #112 in Books > Children's Books > Animals > Reptiles & Amphibians #2723 in Books > Children's Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Friendship, Social Skills & School Life > Friendship

Age Range: 4 - 8 years

Grade Level: Preschool - 3

## Customer Reviews

Very rare to have a male person of color as the protagonist of a children's story, so when I stumbled upon this gem, I jumped on it! The story tells of Leonard who one day walks through the park on his way home from school. He finds an egg and they become inseparable, even when that egg eventually hatches into a lizard that keeps growing and growing. Leonard must come up with a

solution to Buster's growth issue. The story is the perfect length to read to a 3 year old at bedtime. Not too long and not too simple/short. Some pages have one sentence. Others have two to three, and no more than four sentences on a page. I've seen picture books with multiple paragraphs on a page, which isn't really going to hold a toddler/preschooler's attention. Older children who are beginning to read should enjoy this too. I loved the illustrations! Soft, but represented "the city" very well. It was nice to see a major city represented as something not scary, tough, and mean. I should emphasize that isn't a story about an African-American little boy, but rather a story about a boy who just so happens to be African-American. The story wouldn't change whatever race Leonard was. It's just nice to have diversity in our home library for a change.

I'm impressed by how Mark Pett brings an unstudied gentleness to a topic that it usually pretty strong: dinosaurs. Having a kid find a dinosaur egg and hatch it is not, in and of itself, a completely new idea. But the way it's handled in Pett's book certainly is. For one thing, I love that there's a deep, dark part of Central Park where dinosaurs roam and no one has even noticed. The subtle humor continues as Leonard brings the egg back to his apartment tower home: "In his room, Leonard and the egg played together for the entire afternoon." Then there are the disguises, and Buster's sadness, which grows along with his lizardy body. Not to mention the shadowy follower you may not even notice till you flip back through the pages. Along the way, the book is also a love letter to NYC (yay, library lions!). And best of all, we come to an astonishing solution to the problem of how to get Buster back to the park now that he is really big and really green. Like Pett's earlier book, the wordless *The Girl and the Bicycle*, *Lizard from the Park* is tender without being saccharine. The illustrations are beautifully done, too. I like the design on pages such as the spread where Leonard is walking through the woods on the left, and an inset on the right shows him finding the egg (still surrounded by the trees in the larger image). Or the next page, where the apartment tower is shown at the far right in a way that balances nicely against the image of Leonard walking along the city street, an image that carries across the gutter for about 3/4 of the spread. Well, you just have to take a look! The illustrations remind me a little of Bob Graham's work (one of my favorites) and a little of Calvin from *Calvin and Hobbes*--if Calvin were a nice kid. I recommend you explore New York City with Leonard and Buster. Especially the deepest, darkest part of the park.

Treasures come in all shapes and sizes and children delight in collecting them. A typical shoe box might hold colorful leaves, sparkly rocks, a found trinket or toy, and yes, even eggs. So when main character Leonard discovers an egg in the park, the wonder of childhood is ignited and catapulted

into an imaginative story. Leonard doesn't initially bargain on the egg hatching, but when his new lizard friend grows beyond his control, Leonard provides an uplifting solution. Author/Illustrator Mark Pett offers a thought provoking image in the end that leaves us asking, "Was this real or did Leonard imagine it all?" • The soft water colors and innocent, observational expressions from Leonard encourage imagination and lead us to believe that Leonard may have imagined the whole thing. To be left in deep thought is another treasure that will spark many discussions, as well as an analysis of the plot. Do you see any clues?

When a little boy named Leonard finds a lizard egg at the park and brings it home, he gets a huge surprise...the tiny lizard is actually a dinosaur he names Buster! And Buster quickly grows and grows. Leonard soon realizes that Buster needs a much bigger home and with the help of giant Thanksgiving parade balloons, he sets out to set Buster free. Mark Pett's *Lizard From The Park* is a super sweet story that will make little readers laugh and engage their imaginations. The story of Leonard and Buster is both very touching and highly amusing. Pett's soft colored illustrations are fun to explore and perfectly capture the enchanting story. Both little readers and parents will love *Lizard From The Park*!

I love this latest book by Mark Pett. His work is fantastic and the story is laugh-out loud delightful! This is a perfect book for kids of all ages. My eight year old and I enjoyed this book so much that we are buying copies for the K-3rd grade classrooms at our public school.

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