Life Doesn't Frighten Me
Jean-Michel Basquiat, 1978

Gentle jazz music plays

This is Redstart Radio, the station that brings you all the hottest art news and stories by Chard's finest art detectives.

In this episode, agents investigated a book illustration by the American artist Jean-Michel Basquiat. He was born to parents who came from Haiti and Puerto Rica. You'll hear what the agents uncovered about this artwork very soon. But first, a little about the picture.

The book is a poem called Life Doesn't Frighten Me and it was written by an American author called Maya Angelou in 1978. She asked the artist Jean-Michael Basquiat to paint illustrations for the book. That's why you're listening to this episode outside the library. The cover illustration features a black t-rex dinosaur. A yellow crown hovers above the dinosaur's head.

Now it's time for you to hear some stories, written and performed by the agents who investigated this artwork.

Bright upbeat baroque string quartet music plays

I want to steal something!
It's the opening of the crown jewels. We're dinosaurs for goodness sake!

Heck yeah!
Let's head off then.

The bright baroque music swells.

Slip your balaclava on.

Sounds of struggling to get a tight balaclava on.

Follow my lead brother.
Always.

Low ominous fast paced heist music plays, with a sense of a heartbeat.

Left or right?
Uh, right.
We're so close, I can tell.
Almost, brother.
Is this the room here?

High pitched metallic tinkling sounds

I see the crown jewels!
Can you see why they're so expensive?
Brother, your eyes are watering!
The jewels, they're just so beautiful.
I'll carry them.

Sounds of smashing glass and more struggling sounds

We can't even get the jewels, our arms are just too short!

Sounds of a burglar alarm

Oh, for goodness sake!
We have to jump out that window!

Sounds of smashing glass and low echoey roars.
Sounds of tuned drums beating out an expectant rhythm.

The attack of the dinosaur!

We really need to stop this dinosaur.
Yeah, but how do we stop it?
Give it food?
No, that's a terrible idea. If we do that we will be the food.
Ohhhhhhh.
Maybe we should trap it in a cave?
Good idea, but where's the cave?
On top of Mount Puja has lots of caves, Grub.
It's the most dangerous mountain ever, Leova!
The cave is near us, on top of Mount Puja.
Ok.

A drum roll then the expectant beat once again.

The two cave people find the dinosaur.

Sounds of a cold swirling wind in an echoey cave, and someone breathing hard from the effort of climbing a mountain.

This is hopeless!
Maybe throw some meat into the cave?

Sound of something squishy landing on stone

The devious monster gets trapped.

Speaking in a low rough growling voice
Raah! Rahh! Let me out humans, or I'll eat you!

But they ignored the vicious creature.
We finally did it! We've saved everybody!
But did we?

A drum roll then the expectant beat once again.
Fades and is replaced with echoey dripping water in a cave.
The voices are echoey.

Where am I?
Isabella walked into the cave slowly, because she heard something.

Sounds of distant roaring and growling.

Hello, my name is Aries.
How are you speaking?
I can speak. By the way, I'm a raptor.

Sounds of heavy footsteps stomping, then even louder roaring and growling.

Raptor ran off. He ran up the hill above his cave. On the top of the hill was a huge T-Rex. The raptor ran over to the big monster and said

Hey Mr Big Dino!
Yes, little raptor? What's your name?
It's Aries, don't wear it out man! What about you?
Oh me? It's Rex.

By this time Aries and Rex were really hungry.
Aries started running towards Isabella.

Sounds of heavy footsteps, then a girl screaming.

Why are you trying to eat her?
I'm hungry!

A drum roll then the expectant beat once again.
More echoey voices within a cave.

Wanna get eaten?
No, obviously.
Well, I pick what you say.
No you don't! I do!
Well, you get eaten so come closer.

Sounds of huge jaws chewing and a human yelling.

Get me out!

Sounds of coughing, then the sound of a person hitting the floor as they are coughed up.

I wanna go home!
A big roar.

Gentle jazz music plays.

You're listening to Redstart Radio. Remember, there's 10 episodes to find, all around Chard. Where will you go next?

If you enjoyed these stories inspired by paintings, why not create a new story yourself? Investigate a painting, fire up your imagination and let the story flow!