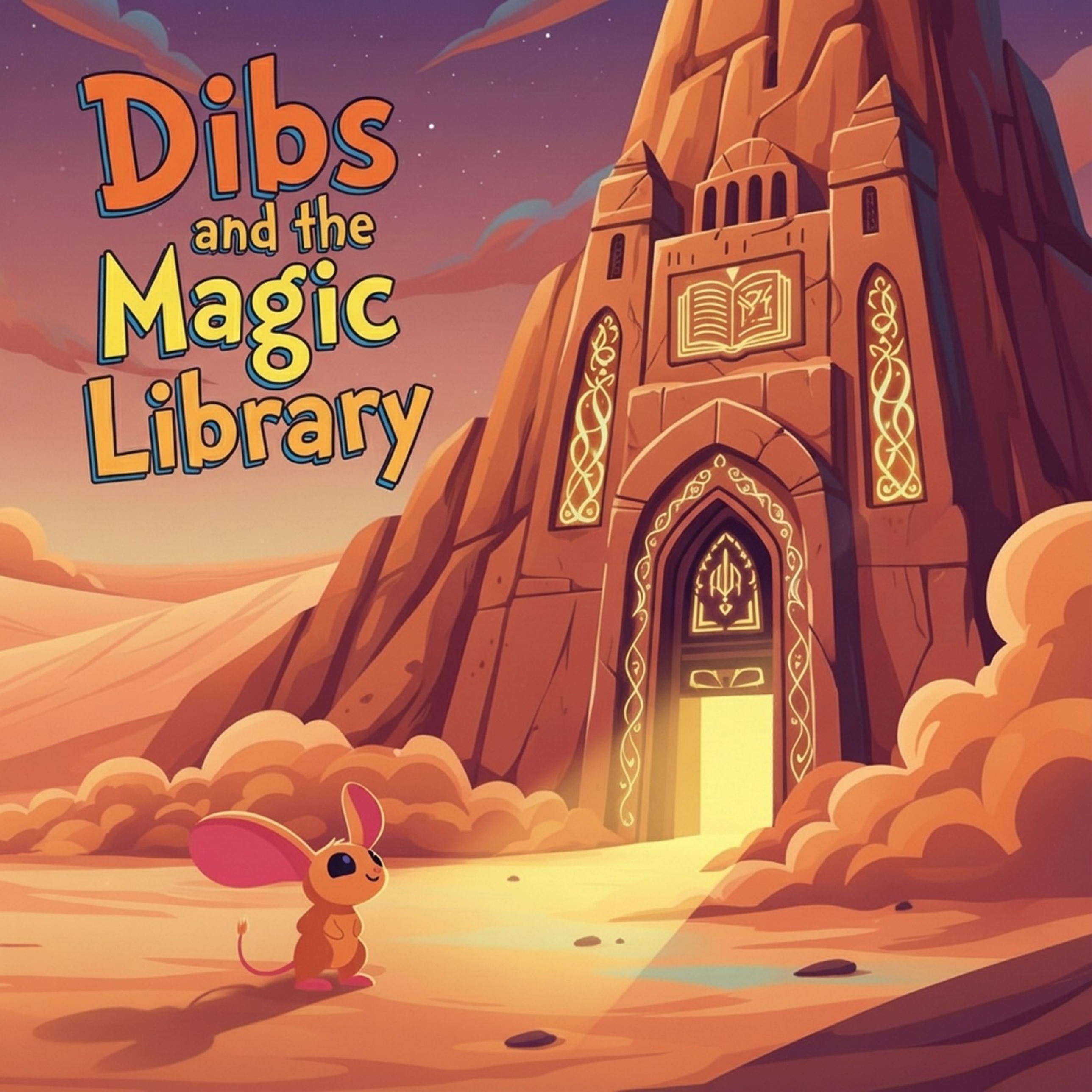
Dibs and the Magic Library



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Dibs loves books!

Today, Dibs and Papa are visiting the Magic Library.

GROWNUP NOTE

Let’s learn about authentication and authorization.

"Hello!" says the Librarian.
"What's your name?"

GROWNUP NOTE

Authentication : proving who you are.

"My name is Dibs!"
The Librarian looks it up in the big book.
"Welcome, Dibs!" says the Librarian.

GROWNUP NOTE

Now the system knows **WHO** Dibs is (authentication).

"You can visit the Story Room and the Puzzle Room!"
says the Librarian.

GROWNUP NOTE

Now the system determines **WHAT** Dibs can do (authorization). These are different!

Dibs tries the Story Room door.
A green light appears. The door opens!

GROWNUP NOTE

Permission check: **GRANTED** (yes).

Dibs tries the GrownUp Room door.
A red light appears. The door stays locked.

GROWNUP NOTE

Permission check: **DENIED** (no).

The Puzzle Room door?
Green light! It opens!

Now Dibs understands.
Green means yes.
Red means no.

GROWNUP NOTE

Permission decisions are made for a subject (Dibs), action (can open?), and resource (door).

Everyone wears a badge.

Blue for kids.
Green for teachers.
Yellow for helpers.

GROWNUP NOTE

Role-Based Access Control (RBAC) - your role determines permissions.

All the blue badges can open the same doors.
It's easy!

GROWNUP NOTE

RBAC: same role = same permissions.

But wait! She has a blue badge like Dibs.
Why can SHE open the Craft Room?

GROWNUP NOTE

RBAC limitation - not everyone with the same role should have identical access.

"She takes craft classes" says the Librarian.
"It's not just about badges."

GROWNUP NOTE

Roles aren't always enough.
Sometimes you need more granularity.

“There's a special bookshelf for families who visit together," says the Librarian.

“Papa is a library member," says the Librarian. "And you're his family. **So you can use it too!**"

GROWNUP NOTE

Relationship-Based Access Control (ReBAC): relationships between subjects and resources determine permission.

ReBAC - permission is determined through relationship chains (Dibs→Papa→Family Shelf).

Dibs tries the family bookshelf door. Green light! The door opens because Dibs is **WITH** Papa.

GROWNUP NOTE

Library members can access the Family Shelf. Papa is a Library member and membership includes family. Dibs is in Papa’s family so Dibs has access.

Now Dibs understands!
Sometimes your badge matters.
Sometimes **WHO** you're with matters.

GROWNUP NOTE

Modern systems can combine RBAC and ReBAC for simple and complex permissions.

"Here's a special ticket, Dibs" says the Librarian. "Today you can visit the Treasure Room!"

GROWNUP NOTE

Access token - proof you were granted permission.

Dibs shows the ticket. Green light!
Dibs peeks at the shiny treasures inside.

GROWNUP NOTE

Tokens work as proof of permission
...but they can become **outdated**.

The next day, Dibs brings
the ticket back. Red light!

"Your ticket was only for yesterday."
The Librarian says, "Tickets can expire, we always check if you **STILL** have permission."

GROWNUP NOTE

Token expiration - old permissions may not stay valid.

GROWNUP NOTE

Systems must verify current permissions,
not just trust old tokens **(New Enemy Problem)**.

Oh no!
Too many kids got into the Craft Room.
There aren't enough tables.
Everyone is crowded and unhappy.

GROWNUP NOTE

When authorization decisions are incorrect, resources can get overwhelmed.

At the Treasure Room, there's a long, long line. Each check takes forever. **Kids wait and wait and wait.**

GROWNUP NOTE

When authorization decisions are too slow, even correct permissions frustrate users. Speed matters as much as accuracy.

But look!

When the doors let in just the right number of kids...everyone is happy! The library glows golden!

GROWNUP NOTE

When authorization is both accurate AND fast, the entire system thrives. Everyone gets what they need.

Dibs waves goodbye to the Librarian.

The magical library helps keep everyone safe
and makes sure everyone gets what they need!

GROWNUP NOTE

Good authorization is the foundation of secure, functional systems. It's not just about saying "no" - it's about enabling the right people to do the right things at the right time.

A Note from the Team Behind This Book

Dear reader,

We're on a mission to fix access control, the invisible layer that keeps systems safe and running smoothly. We want to share that mission with you, and we believe stories are one of the best ways to explore new ideas together.

Just like in the Magic Library, when authorization is accurate and fast, the right doors open.

Thank you for reading. We hope it sparks curiosity.

With gratitude, **The Team at AuthZed**