



**Mary Anne and the
Search for Tigger**

ANN M. MARTIN

SCHOLASTIC INC.

*With love to Val,
who is also Grandma Val and Madae Valesty*

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ISBN 978-1-338-81507-8

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 23 24 25 26 27

Printed in the U.S.A. 40
This edition first printing 2023

Book design by Maeve Norton

CHAPTER 1

"I just don't understand," Dawn Schafer said to me as we slowed down for a stop sign. "How can someone as small as Tigger knock his toys *behind* the refrigerator, so that you can't even get to them?"

I shrugged. Then I checked the street. The coast was clear, so we pedaled across the intersection. "He just does, that's all," I said. "And thank you for calling Tigger a someone instead of a something."

Dawn smiled. "I still don't get it, though."

"All I know," I said, "is that his toys roll into that space between the wall and the side of the fridge, where I ought to be able to get them out. You know where I mean?" (Dawn nodded.) "Well, they roll in there and I never see them again."

"Sort of a black hole for cat toys," said Dawn.

I giggled. "There's nothing *underneath* the fridge. I looked there with a flashlight. That leaves in back of the fridge. And I can't get there."

“Which is why we’re riding our bikes all the way downtown just to buy cat toys,” said Dawn.

“Exactly,” I replied.

In case you can’t tell, Dawn Schafer is my friend. (I’m Mary Anne Spier.) Dawn is one of my best friends, in fact. And Tigger is my kitten. My one and only. He’s a gray tiger cat with very pretty stripes. If I do say so, he’s smart. Smart and pretty. And he can catch flies, which is difficult. I mean, when you only have paws.

Dawn and I were on our way to downtown Stoneybrook, Connecticut, to stock up on cat toys for Tigger, since he keeps losing them behind the fridge. His favorites are those plastic balls with a little bell inside. They come three in a pack, and he loses about three a week, so cat toys can be expensive to me. Thank goodness I earn lots of money baby-sitting.

Dawn and I stopped at a traffic light. We had reached Stoneybrook’s main street (which is about as small as Stoneybrook is), and were only three blocks from the pet store.

“Hey, what did your dad say about the date last night?” asked Dawn.

We laughed. Dawn’s mom and my dad go out sometimes. We really wish they would get married, but we can’t help laughing. It’s just so weird

to see your own parents *dating*. Especially dating each other. They go out with other people, too, but when Dawn's mom has a date with my dad, she puts on all this makeup and checks her clothes twenty times and then asks Dawn to check her clothes again. And my dad puts on after-shave that smells like the dentist's office and gets nervous and can barely speak to me. Then they go somewhere together. What a pair.

By the way, the reason they can date is Dawn's parents are divorced and my mom died ages ago. I really don't even remember her.

"I think my dad had fun when they went out," I told Dawn. "What about your mom?"

"Same," she replied. Then she announced, "Pet store," and stopped her bike. "Hey, I just thought of something." Dawn was grinning.

"What?" I asked.

"Well," she replied, "there's not much space behind your refrigerator, right?"

"Right." We were chaining our bikes to a lamppost.

"Probably just enough space for the width of one toy, right?"

"Right."

"So Tigger's toys are probably behind the fridge in a line. And when the line reaches

the wall, there won't be room for any more toys, right?"

"Right," I replied as we entered the store.

"And *then* Tigger's toys can't get lost and you won't have to keep buying new ones."

"Yeah!" Honestly, Dawn is so logical.

I headed for the cat toy department and picked up two packages of Tigger's toys. In one package, the balls were half pink and half green. In the other, they were half orange and half yellow. I like to give Tigger a little variety in his toys. Then I began looking over the cat treats. Maybe I should buy some fancy food for Tigger.

I was counting my money when Dawn tapped me on the arm. "We better go," she said. "Club meeting in forty-five minutes."

"Okay. Just let me buy these." I held up the toys.

I stood in line at the counter, thinking about the Baby-sitters Club. My closest friends are all in the club: Kristy Thomas (she's my other best friend), Claudia Kishi, Jessi Ramsey, Mallory Pike, Dawn, and Logan Bruno (an associate member, who doesn't usually attend club meetings. I'll explain that later). Logan is basically my boyfriend, and he is incredible in every way. He's incredible-looking and incredibly nice and incredibly thoughtful and, well, incredibly incredible.

(There is also one person who's in the club who is not a close friend, and one person who is a close friend who's not really in the club anymore. I'll tell you about them later.)

The Baby-sitters Club is more a business than a club. My friends and I sit for families in our neighborhoods. We get a lot of jobs and earn a lot of money. And I spend a lot of my money right here in the pet store. The club was started by Kristy Thomas, our president. (I'm the secretary, by the way.) In some ways, Kristy is like me, but in more ways, she's my exact opposite. I think that's why she was my very first best friend. That and the fact that we lived next door to each other from the time we were born. Here are the things that are the same about us: We're small for our age and have brown hair and brown eyes. Here are the ways in which we're different: I'm shy and sort of held in; Kristy is outgoing and can be a loudmouth. I'm beginning to take an interest in what I wear; Kristy couldn't care less. She always wears jeans, a turtleneck, a sweater, and running shoes. (Well, not in the summer, of course, but you know what I mean.)

Kristy has more ideas than anyone I know. She's always thinking of things to do, or finding ways to solve problems. You can almost *see* her

brain at work. Lately, Kristy's life hasn't been too easy, though. It hasn't been bad, just not easy. For the longest time, she lived with her mom, her three brothers, and her collie, Louie, right next door to me. (Her parents had gotten a divorce.) Then her mom met this millionaire, Watson Brewer, and the next thing I knew, they'd decided to get married. After the wedding, Kristy's family moved across town into Watson's mansion. There was more room in the mansion, of course, but Kristy was upset. She had left her old neighborhood and her friends behind. And then Louie the collie died, which was terribly sad. On the other hand, Kristy gained a new little stepbrother and stepsister, whom she loves very much, and her family had gotten an adorable puppy. . . . And *then* they adopted a two-year-old girl! Kristy's life is never dull.

The vice-president of the Baby-sitters Club is Claudia Kishi. What a difference from Kristy and me. Claud, who lives across the street from Kristy's old house, is absolutely beautiful. Sophisticated, too. She's Japanese American, and her eyes are dark and beautiful. Her hair is long and black and she wears it all different ways. And her complexion is perfect. It's her clothes that amaze me though. (I think they amaze everyone.) Claud

mixes and matches the weirdest stuff and comes up with the coolest outfits. Like a loose blouse with a fake coat of arms on it worn over a very short black skirt. Around her waist, a scarf. On her feet, short black boots. Dangling from her ears, dinosaurs. And her hair might be piled on top of her head and held in place with hairpins that look like seahorses. She combines all this stuff — and she looks fantastic.

Claud's hobbies are reading Nancy Drew mysteries, eating junk food, and especially working at her art. She's really talented and takes lots of classes. She's good at drawing, painting, pottery, you name it. Unfortunately, as far as her parents are concerned, Claud's art does not make up for the fact that she's smart but a poor student. After all, her older sister, Janine, is an actual genius. Luckily for Claudia, her grandmother Mimi lives with their family, and she and Claud are very close, even now when I can see that Mimi's mind is starting to wander and get sort of fuzzy.

Dawn is our club's treasurer, and you already know a little about her, but I'll fill you in on the rest. Dawn hasn't been living in Stoneybrook for long. She grew up in California with her parents and her younger brother, Jeff. But her parents

split up, and Mrs. Schafer brought Dawn and Jeff to Stoneybrook to live, leaving Mr. Schafer three thousand miles behind. Dawn's mom chose Stoneybrook because she grew up here, and that's how she and my father know each other — they went to high school together years and years ago. Anyway, Dawn likes Connecticut okay, but Jeff never did. He always missed California and his dad. So after awhile he moved back. That was hard on Dawn. Now her family is split in half. But Dawn is very practical. She takes things as they come. She's not laid-back, exactly, she's just a real individual. Dawn solves her own problems and makes her own decisions in her own ways. And she practically runs the old farmhouse she and her mom live in. That's because her mom is totally scatterbrained. Nice, but living on some other planet. I wonder what kind of stepmother she would make.

Dawn has the longest, palest blonde hair you'll ever see, and bright blue eyes. She looks as Californian as all the health food she eats. (Dawn would never touch the junk food Claud loves.) I am *so* glad Dawn moved here because she's a great best friend. And it's neat that our parents are dating.

Jessi Ramsey and Mallory Pike are the junior

officers of the Baby-sitters Club. That's because they're the youngest in the club. Jessi and Mal are eleven and in sixth grade at Stoneybrook Middle School, and the rest of us are thirteen and in eighth grade at SMS. Like Kristy and me, Jessi and Mal are best friends who are somewhat alike and somewhat different. Unlike Kristy and me, I think they're more alike than different. Let me describe the two of them for you, and you can make your own decision. I'll start with Jessi.

I might as well be straightforward (even though I hardly ever am), and say right out that Jessi's family is Black. They moved to Stoneybrook near the beginning of the school year, and they're one of the few Black families here. A lot of people gave them a hard time at first, but things have gotten better. Jessi is a ballet dancer, a good one (I've seen her perform), and she *looks* like a dancer. She pulls her hair back from her face into a knot above her neck, and she has lo-o-o-ong legs. Besides dancing, Jessi likes reading. (She has to wear glasses for that.)

Jessi is very close to her family. She lives with her parents, her younger sister, Becca, her baby brother, Squirt, and a pet hamster. She feels like she doesn't quite fit in at school, and she thinks her parents sometimes treat her like a baby. But

mostly she's happy, especially since she met Mallory.

Now Mallory may be white, and she may have seven brothers and sisters (plus two parents and a hamster), *but* she wears glasses, she *loves* to read, and also to write and draw (she might want to write books for children one day), and she also feels that she doesn't always fit in at school, and especially that her parents sometimes treat her like a baby. The Pikes and the Ramseys did give in a little while ago and let Mal and Jessi get their ears pierced, but both of them still wish for trendier clothes. You can see how much Mal and Jessi have in common.

I guess that's about it. Logan's in the club, too, but I've already told you about him. He's the incredibly incredible one, remember? Then there's Shannon Kilbourne, whom I don't know very well (she's another associate member, like Logan, who doesn't go to our meetings), and Stacey McGill, who used to be in the club, but who moved away. More about them and everyone else later. Honest.

"Here's your change, miss," said the man behind the counter of the pet store. He handed me seventy-three cents and the bag full of cat toys.

"Thanks," I replied. (I hate being called "miss.")

Dawn and I headed out of the store. On the way, I passed the flea-and-tick products.

"Hmm," I said, stopping, "I wonder if Tigger needs a bottle of Doctor Herkie's Flea Tonic."

"How bad are his fleas?" asked Dawn.

"He doesn't have any yet," I replied.

Dawn pulled me out of the store. We unchained our bikes and began to ride home.

"Dawn?" I said when we were about half-way there. (Actually I shouted it. She was riding in front of me and the wind was blowing against us.)

"What?"

"Can we go to my house before the meeting? I want to give Tigger his toys. We'll have time." I also wanted to get the mail. It is my absolute favorite thing to do. I don't know why. There's hardly ever anything for me.

"Sure," Dawn called back.

So we stopped at my mailbox. Sure enough, nothing for me. But some days there are surprises. You never know. We parked our bikes near the front walk and ran inside, where I opened Tigger's packages of toys for him. Then we ran back out and across the street to Claudia's house. It was time for the Wednesday afternoon meeting of the Baby-sitters Club.