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Book  3

Shelter Pet Squad

Paloma

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To Toni and Terry



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ISBN 978-0-545-63604-9

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 16 17 18 19 20

Printed in the U.S.A. 23
First printing 2016

The text was set in Janson MT.
Book design by Nina Goffi

Shelter Pet Squad

“Hurry, Mom!” I said as our car pulled into the parking lot at the Maplewood Animal Shelter. “I don’t want to miss the secret surprise!”

“I’m sure Ms. Kim and Ms. Flores will wait until *all* the kids in Shelter Pet Squad have arrived before they share the surprise,” Mom said for the third time. “Have you finished your toast?”

I crammed another bite of toast with jelly into my mouth. I was too excited to be hungry, though.

Most Saturdays, my parents and I have a routine. When I wake up, I watch a few cartoons, and then we have breakfast together. After that, we get dressed and Mom or Dad drives me to the animal shelter. I'm a member of Shelter Pet Squad, a group of kids who volunteer to help the homeless pets at the shelter. With our leaders, Ms. Kim and Ms. Flores, we make fun things to keep the animals busy and happy while they're waiting to be adopted.

This Saturday morning was a little different, though. On Wednesday night, Ms. Kim had called my house.

"Could you come to Shelter Pet Squad early this week?" she asked. "We have a special surprise arriving on Saturday morning. Ms.

Flores and I could use extra help getting ready for them.”

“Them?” I asked. “Are they cats? Dogs? Llamas?”

“Not llamas,” Ms. Kim said. “But you don’t want me to ruin the surprise, do you?”

Part of me *did* want her to ruin it. “Maybe just a hint?” I asked.

“Okay, here’s a hint,” she said. “This surprise is coming from an island in the ocean.”

“An island?” I asked. “Is it monkeys?”

Ms. Kim laughed, but she wouldn’t say anything else.

On Saturday morning, I got dressed as soon as I woke up. I tucked Whiskers, my favorite stuffed-animal mouse, inside my jeans pocket. He’s little enough to hide in there and all anyone sees is a bump in my pocket.