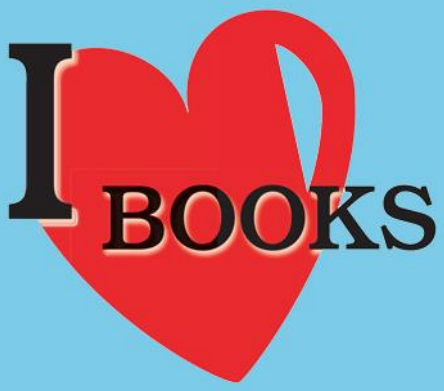


Lovereading4kids.co.uk is a book website created for parents and children to make choosing books easy and fun

Opening extract from

The Seaside Puppy

Written by

Holly Webb

Illustrated by

Sophy Williams

Published by

Little Tiger Press

All Text is Copyright © of the Author and/or Illustrator

Please print off and read at your leisure.

Lovereading4kids.co.uk

For Eva

www.hollywebbanimalstories.com

STRIPES PUBLISHING
An imprint of Little Tiger Press
1 The Coda Centre, 189 Munster Road,
London SW6 6AW

A paperback original
First published in Great Britain in 2016

Text copyright © Holly Webb, 2016
Illustrations copyright © Sophy Williams, 2016

ISBN: 978-1-84715-652-5

The right of Holly Webb and Sophy Williams to be identified as the author and illustrator of this work respectively has been asserted by them in accordance with the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act, 1988.

All rights reserved.

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, resold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form of binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed upon the subsequent purchaser.

A CIP catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

Printed and bound in the UK.

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Chapter One



"Are you going on holiday?" Max asked, whacking at a clump of nettles with a stick as they walked home from school along the lane. "We're going to Spain on Saturday."

"Yes, we are, but not until September, just before we go back to school," Jessie said. "We're going to Scotland for a week, to stay with my gran."

"We can't," Laura said, a little sadly. Almost everybody in her class seemed to be going somewhere amazing, but she was staying at home all summer. She gave a tiny sigh and peered over the bramble bushes to catch a glimpse of the sea. It was really blue, and the sun was making the ripples glitter. Laura knew they were lucky to live in such a beautiful place, but it would have been nice to go on holiday somewhere different!

"Mum's working," Laura went on. "It's the busiest time of year for her, the summer. All the cottages are booked up for the whole seven weeks. She says she's going to be run off her feet."

Jessie nodded. "Never mind. I'll be around until the end of August. We can go to the beach. Mum's booked me some bodyboarding lessons for the first couple of weeks. I want to get lots of practice in."

Max snorted. "Yeah, you *need* the practice."

Jessie blew a cloud of dandelion seeds at him, so they caught in his blond hair, coating it in white fluff. It made him look about sixty years older all of a sudden.

"Oi, get them off me! Uurrgh." Max flailed at his hair crossly. "They're all itchy."



"Serves you right," Laura pointed out. "Just because you've been surfing since you could stand up, doesn't mean you have to be horrible to Jessie. She's only lived here a year!" She smiled gratefully at Jessie – she was really glad that someone was going to be around for most of the summer.

Lots of their friends lived quite a long way from Tremarren and travelled in by the school bus, so it wasn't that simple to meet up with them in the holidays. Mum had promised Laura that they'd try to fit in some fun treats and go to the beach together, but Laura knew how busy she would be. Laura didn't like seeing her so tired. Managing the cottages meant that Mum was on duty twenty-four hours

a day, really, in case any of the guests had a problem.

Laura helped out as much as she could, although mostly she sat and did her homework while Mum was cleaning the cottages. But this holiday, now Laura was nearly ten, they'd agreed that she was old enough to stay at home while Mum was out. The holiday cottages and the little cottage where she and Mum lived had all been converted from the old farm buildings, so Mum would never be that far away. Since the beginning of term, she'd let Laura walk to and from school with Max and Jessie. Laura was even allowed to go to the beach for a little bit by herself or with friends. She wasn't allowed to swim on her own, though.

Mum had made her promise.

The best thing was that over the last few weeks, Mum had let her go to the village by herself to do some of the shopping. Laura had been begging for ages – after all, everyone in the shops knew her, she'd told Mum. It made a big difference, Mum not having to do all the shopping as well as everything else. Laura loved seeing her come home and look in the fridge, and say how nice it was to have everything done.

They were coming into the village now, and Jessie and Max waved goodbye as they headed down their road. Laura had to go on a little bit – Tremarren Farm, where she lived, was just on the other side of the village.

Laura sped up as she saw Mrs Eccles out for a walk with her Jack Russell, Toby. Mrs Eccles had been Laura's Reception teacher. She'd retired a couple of years ago and got Toby to keep her company.

"Hello, Laura! It's the last day of school, isn't it?" Mrs Eccles called. "Are you excited about the holidays?"

Laura crouched down to stroke Toby's ears. He was such a sweet dog, even though Mrs Eccles said he was really naughty and a terrible thief.

"Don't fuss over that little horror too much," she said to Laura. "He ate my breakfast this morning. A whole piece of toast! I don't think he even chewed it – it just went straight down his throat. Little monster, aren't you?"

she told Toby lovingly, and he sat there beating his tail hard against the pavement. He loved being petted, and Laura was one of his favourite people.

"Oh, you bad dog," Laura murmured, scratching under his chin. "You'll get fat!"



"Luckily he goes three times as far as I do whenever we're out for a walk, what with all the dashing around, sniffing and chasing butterflies," Mrs Eccles said. "We're going all the way to the lighthouse this afternoon. He can work off that toast! See you soon, Laura. Have a brilliant first day of the holidays!"

Laura waved as Mrs Eccles and Toby turned down the side street that led to the cliff path. A lovely long walk all the way to the lighthouse with gorgeous Toby… She watched enviously as they disappeared round the corner. Walks were so much more fun with a dog. She'd seen Toby chasing sticks and Frisbees, jumping in and out of the sea and barking at

the waves. Maybe Mrs Eccles would let her come along with them at some point over the holidays? Laura nodded to herself. She'd ask Mrs Eccles, the next time she saw them.

Henry padded uncertainly through the house, sniffing at the furniture. He didn't understand what was happening. He felt dizzy and a bit sick from being in the car for so long. And when they'd got out they weren't back home. They were somewhere else.

But at least Annie was here. She was rushing around with the others, up and down the stairs, throwing doors open. They kept shouting. One of the

boys had tripped over Henry and then trodden on his tail – so now the puppy was keeping out of the way. Perhaps this was his new home, he thought worriedly, sitting down under the kitchen table in a forest of chair legs.

"Hey, Henry!" Annie crouched down to pat him. "Are you all right? Did you find your basket? Here, look."



Henry followed her over to the corner of the kitchen and sniffed obediently at his basket. Fortunately *that* was the same.

Annie put down a bowl of water, which he drank eagerly. But when he looked up she'd disappeared again, and his ears drooped. He climbed into the basket, slumped down with his muzzle sticking out over the dipped edge, and waited.

He wasn't really sure what he was waiting for. A walk? For Annie to come back and pick him up? He lay there, listening, his ears flicking. Every so often he thumped his tail on his cushioned basket when he heard someone come past. But no one stopped to fuss over him. Eventually, Henry drifted off to sleep.

Chapter Two



"I'm a bit worried about that big group in the old farmhouse." Laura's mum sighed. "I've just been over to check how they're settling in. The whole house is in a mess already, and they've only just arrived. Bags and clothes all over the place! I don't think any of them are more than eighteen. They've having a holiday together

because they've all just finished their exams, I imagine."

"Are they staying long?" Laura asked, pouring milk over her cereal. She was still in her pyjamas, looking forward to a lazy breakfast with no need to rush off to school.

"A whole fortnight!" Mum rolled her eyes. "I suppose it means less fuss changing over the farmhouse for another family after a week, but I do wish they were a bit more sensible." She sighed again, and then smiled at Laura. "They've brought a very cute little dog with them, though. He's a spaniel, I think. I'm sure you'd know, Laura."

Laura sat up straighter and peered out of the kitchen window, wondering if she might see the little dog.

The old farmhouse was the biggest of the holiday homes, and it was just across the pretty paved yard from Laura and her mum's cottage. The farmhouse was right next to the lane that led down to the beach and it had amazing views of the sea. It was always booked solid in the holidays. But right now the whole house looked quiet. All the curtains were still drawn and there was certainly no sign of a dog.

