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Dognapped!

Written by David J. Robertson

Illustrated by Ian R Ward

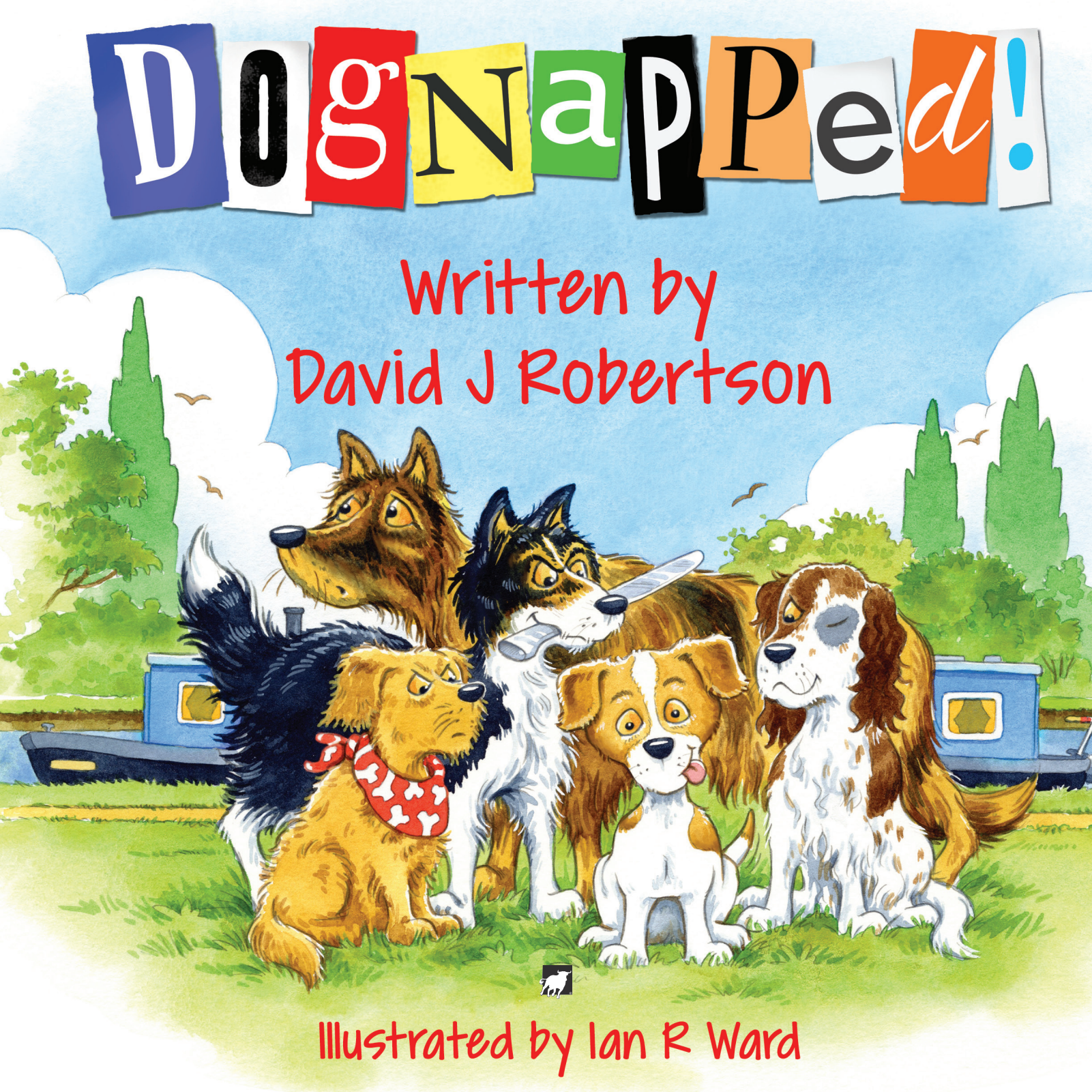
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DogNapPed!

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FOR KATE

CHAPTER ONE

THE BOAT

THUMP!

My eyes flew open beneath bushy brown eyebrows. My ears flicked to high alert.

'OW!'

I relaxed, the pained voice sounded very familiar.

Getting to my paws I shuffled forward and peered around the entrance to my kennel. One-Eyed Rose sat outside, pulling a face as she rubbed her head.

'Wow! Hello Misty,' she winced, 'I bashed into your house.'

'I suppose you were running around sniffing at this and sniffing at that…'

'Not looking where I was going!' she interrupted.

'…as usual,' I continued. One-Eyed Rose always runs around sniffing at this and that.

She stood up a little unsteadily, her shaggy spaniel ears dragging on the ground.

'Are you alright?' I asked. But One-Eyed Rose is never anything else.

She wagged her tail enthusiastically as though nothing had happened, although a big lump had appeared through the scruffy brown fur on top of her head.

'So what shall we do today?' One-Eyed Rose looked at me through her one good eye.

She had been squashed by the school bus when she was a puppy. Even then she never looked where she was going. The vet people fixed her really well, but they couldn't mend her eye, so now she bumps into things a lot.

'Perhaps we should try to find Bertie,' I replied. Bertie is one of our friends. 'He was going for a walk along the canal.'

'Wow! I like the canal, there are plenty of things to sniff.' One-Eyed Rose scampered off to find Bertie.

I stretched out my front legs, white socked paws flat along the ground. I arched my back and shifted forward to stretch my hind legs.

I shook myself from head to bushy tail so my shiny black and white fur fell back neatly. We Border collies are very particular about our appearance.

Smoothing out my bib I licked a stubborn tuft of fur into place and ambled off after my dizzy friend.

Bertie sat on the tow path. One-Eyed Rose stood beside him. Both had their heads tilted to one side, concentrating hard as they stared at a narrow-boat which was moored alongside. The boat was coloured in shades of blue with lots of windows along the sides.

'Hi guys, what's happening?' I asked as I got nearer.

'Wow! You'll never guess, Misty,' One-Eyed Rose ran around in excited circles.

'Guess what?'

One-Eyed Rose looked puzzled, 'I'm not sure. You'd better ask Bertie.'

Bertie is a small brown terrier. He is always smartly dressed with a bone-patterned scarf instead of a collar. Bertie is very old, so he knows a lot of things about a lot of things. He looked deep in thought as he stroked his long grey whiskers.

'OOOOwwww!'

I jumped at the noise coming from the boat, my fur standing on end.

'Wow!' One-Eyed Rose stood still for a second, 'It happened again!'

Bertie turned to look at me, 'That noise keeps coming from the chimney,' he pointed a paw at a long black tube sticking from the roof.

'It's very scary!' shouted One-Eyed Rose, 'Let's go and see what it is.'

'Be careful, Rose,' I warned her.

Our friend wasn't easily frightened. She scurried to the boat and tried to jump onto the roof. She failed at the first attempt; and the second. After the third clumsy landing, she lay panting on the grassy bank. 'It's too high,' she complained.

Bertie considered the problem. 'You need something to stand on,' he announced.

I grimaced as One-Eyed Rose stuck her paw in my ear. She squashed my nose as she tried to balance on my back. 'It's still too high,' she shouted, jumping up and down trying to scramble onto the roof.

'Rose, you're messing up my fur!' I grunted as she landed on top of me again.

Bertie stroked his long grey whiskers harder, 'You need something taller; where's Rascal?'

One-Eyed Rose tumbled to the ground, 'I haven't seen him.'

'Nor me,' I shrugged.

'He was here not long ago,' Bertie peered along the towpath. 'Just before that noise started.'

'OOoowww!' moaned the chimney.



CHAPTER TWO

TICKLING

Bertie and I exchanged knowing looks. Rascal is a huge German shepherd with paws as big as my dinner bowl. He looks fierce, but Rascal is scared of his own shadow.

'He's hiding!' we said together.

'Let me find him,' our sniffing friend set off, tail wagging crazily. She sniffed at this and that until she stopped in front of a tree pointing her nose.

Two large trembling ears stuck out either side of the trunk.

'OOOWWW!' went the boat.

'Oooh!' moaned Rascal softly.

'Rascal, we need to stand on your back,' I looked around the tree at the giant who sat shaking with his front paws over his eyes.

'Noooo!'

Bertie ambled over, 'Rascal, we need your help.'

'It sounds scary! I'm stopping here!'

One-Eyed Rose pushed her paws deep into his long thick fur and shoved with all her might. Rascal didn't budge.

'OOOOwwww!'

'OOOh!'

Rascal trembled.

Bertie stroked his long grey whiskers, thinking once more.

I sat with One-Eyed Rose on the bank and watched the chimney, both of us cocking our

heads every time it made a noise, trying to understand what was going on.

'Got it!' Bertie shouted. 'I've had a big idea.'

Bertie is good at big ideas. He has big ideas a lot.

He wandered across to whisper into my furry ear.

I nodded.

I lifted One-Eyed Rose's long floppy ear and repeated Bertie's big idea.

'Wow!' she smoothed her ear back into place, 'We're going to pickle Rascal! Why?'

'Ssssh!' we shushed. 'We don't want Rascal to hear and run away.'

I whispered to her again, making sure that she heard properly this time.

'Oh!' said One-Eyed Rose rather too loudly, 'I think I understand.'

Bertie smiled at Rascal as he rounded the tree trunk. 'How are things?'

Rascal looked at him suspiciously. I got into position while his attention was distracted.

One-Eyed Rose whistled innocently as she approached from the other side.

'Go!' shouted Bertie.

I jumped forward and began to tickle Rascal's tummy.

'Ohhh! Nooo! Ha ha. He hee,' he leapt to his feet.

One-Eyed Rose grunted as she pushed from the back.

Bertie panted as he steered from the front.

Rascal unwillingly edged forward.

'Nooo! Ha he. He ha.'

Tickle.

Push.

Pant.

'Ha. Noo! He.'

Steer.

Grunt.

Tickle.

Rascal shook through fear and ticklement, but we coaxed him alongside the boat.

'Now!' puffed Bertie, out of breath.

I hurried out from beneath the long legs and leapt onto Rascal's back. One-Eyed Rose followed, scampered up my bushy tail, clambered onto my back and leapt for the roof.

Her paws flailed, trying to get a grip.

She began to slip backward.

'OOOwww!' howled the chimney.

Rascal shot off in terror tripping over the mooring rope as he went, tearing it loose.

I briefly hung in mid-air.

One-Eyed Rose made one last lunge.

I tumbled, landing hard on my tail bone.

The spaniel dangled from the boat. Slowly she hauled herself up.

I rubbed my sore tail. Bertie had disappeared and I could see Rascal's quivering ears sticking out from both sides of the tree trunk again.

'Wow! That was fun!' One-Eyed Rose called from somewhere above me.

'OOOwww!' went the chimney.

I looked up. One-Eyed Rose already had her one good eye peering down the tube.

'There's something stuck in here,' she called.

'Perhaps you'd better not disturb it, Rose,' I shouted.

One-Eyed Rose tore out of sight across the roof, 'I need a stick.'

'Oooooww!'

The spaniel reappeared carrying a broom in her mouth. She twisted her head and plunged the handle into the narrow vent.

'OWWWW!' from the chimney.

One-Eyed Rose pushed again.

'OOOOOW!'

THWUP! A puff of soot shot out of the pipe

There was a loud THUMP somewhere inside the boat. The broom handle clattered down the chimney and sat with the brush rocking on the rim.



CHAPTER THREE

ASHLEY

One-Eyed Rose peered once more into the chimney. 'Wow! It's gone – whatever it was!' she exclaimed, standing back. Now her one good eye had a black sooty ring around it.

I leant my paws against the window and put my nose to the glass. Inside were two black lumps. One was vaguely Bertie shaped. The other was a lot smaller.

The largest lump shook violently. Soot billowed through the air. It was Bertie! He blinked at me through the glass and pointed toward the back of the boat as he shouted, 'The door was open all the time.'

I scurried along the bank and sprang onto the tiny deck. Clouds of black dust hung around the open door. Carefully, I made my way down three narrow steps and peered into the gloomy cabin.

Bertie stroked his long black whiskers which were slowly becoming grey again. In front of him the small black lump trembled. Two vivid white circles appeared.

The lump had eyes!

I took a step back. This was getting scarier. Even Bertie, who knows a lot of things about a lot of things looked worried.

Looking round I spotted a carving knife lying on a table. I picked it up in my jaws – just in case!

'Ahh…!' went the tiny black lump.

It trembled harder than before.

…AAh!'

And even harder.

'Is everything all right?' One-Eyed Rose yelled down the chimney.

'…Tishoooo!' sneezed the tiny black lump, showering more soot into the air.

'Wow! What was that?' boomed from the chimney. 'Hold on I'm coming down.'
The tiny lump puffed out its cheeks. 'Tshoo,' it sniffed. It was now mostly white with brown patches and a brown tipped stubby tail.

Scamper!

Clatter!

Bang!

Thump!

One-Eyed Rose fell down the steps, 'Wow! A puppy dog!'

The pup looked at Bertie with his bone-patterned scarf. He stared at me armed with a knife. Finally he gaped at One-Eyed Rose with the black ring around her one good eye like an eye-patch. 'Arggh! Pirates!'

'Wow! Where?' shouted One-Eyed Rose, looking around anxiously.

I dropped the knife. 'He means us, Rose,' I told her, 'we've frightened him.'

The pup bounced up and down on all four paws. 'I'm not frightened! Come on! I'll fight you all. Yippity yap!' he barked in a squeaky voice.

Bertie sighed. With a sharp clip of his paw he tapped the puppy across the tail making him somersault backwards.

'Ow! I surrender!'

'What sort of dog is that?' One-Eyed Rose sniffed at the defeated baby.

'I won't tell you anything! We Jack Russells are very brave!'

I looked at the brown marks on his fur, 'I bet his name is Patch.'

The little dog grinned at me defiantly, 'You'll get nothing out of me, you nasty pirate. From now on Ashley says nothing! Yappity yip!'

'So, Ashley, what was a Jack Russell puppy doing up the chimney?' Bertie asked.

Ashley pouted, 'I was exploring.'

'It's a good job I poked you out with that brush. If someone had lit the fire you might have singed your tail,' One-Eyed Rose said helpfully.

Something felt wrong. Glancing up I noticed a tree moving slowly past the window. 'Er, guys…'

Bertie and One-Eyed Rose were examining Ashley. They ignored me.

'…guys…' Another tree went by, slightly faster.

'…we're moving!' I shot out of the cabin, onto the deck. The mooring rope skittered along the towpath as we drifted away.

'Wow! What do we do now?' One-Eyed Rose had clambered up beside me.

'Help! I'm being dognapped!' Ashley yapped.

'I've had another big idea,' Bertie announced, shouting, 'Rascal!'

Rascal peered around his hidey tree as we wallowed along.

'Grab the rope,' Bertie pointed with his paw.



Rascal hesitated for a moment, but even a big furry coward could not leave his friends in trouble. He galloped forward.

'Oh no!' Ashley sighed, 'Another one; my goodness, isn't he big!'

Rascal grabbed the rope in his massive jaws and dug his paws into the bank.

The boat was too strong.

Rascal skidded along behind, straining for all he was worth.

'Come on, Rascal,' we shouted encouragement.

Rascal dug his paws in deeper.

'I hope you fall in the water, you baddy,' shouted Ashley. 'Yippity, yip, yap!'

Rascal ploughed four furrows into the grass.

The boat slowed.

We cheered.

Ashley booed.

Rascal caught his front paws in the soft ground.

'Yippity, yappity. Yip!'

Rascal's front legs stopped; unfortunately his tail end didn't.

'Aaaagh!' Rascal catapulted through the air.

He dropped the rope.

'Wow! Rascal can fly,' One-Eyed Rose watched in wonder as our friend sailed overhead.

SPLAAADOING!

Rascal landed hard on the metal roof.

I winced; that must have hurt.

'Hah!' Ashley clapped his paws together, 'One down, three to go!'

Ashley bounced off my back and sprang onto the roof. He stood on poor Rascal's back, 'Ashley the pirate slayer!' he cheered.

Rascal groaned as he tried to stand, dislodging the puppy.

Ashley flipped over, 'Ow!'

Stunned, Rascal fell off the roof, crashed down the stairs and disappeared into the cabin.

'Rats!' muttered Ashley, 'I thought he was dead!'

