The Trapped Puppy



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For all the amazing volunteers who work for Mountain Rescue teams around the world

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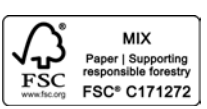
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Chapter One

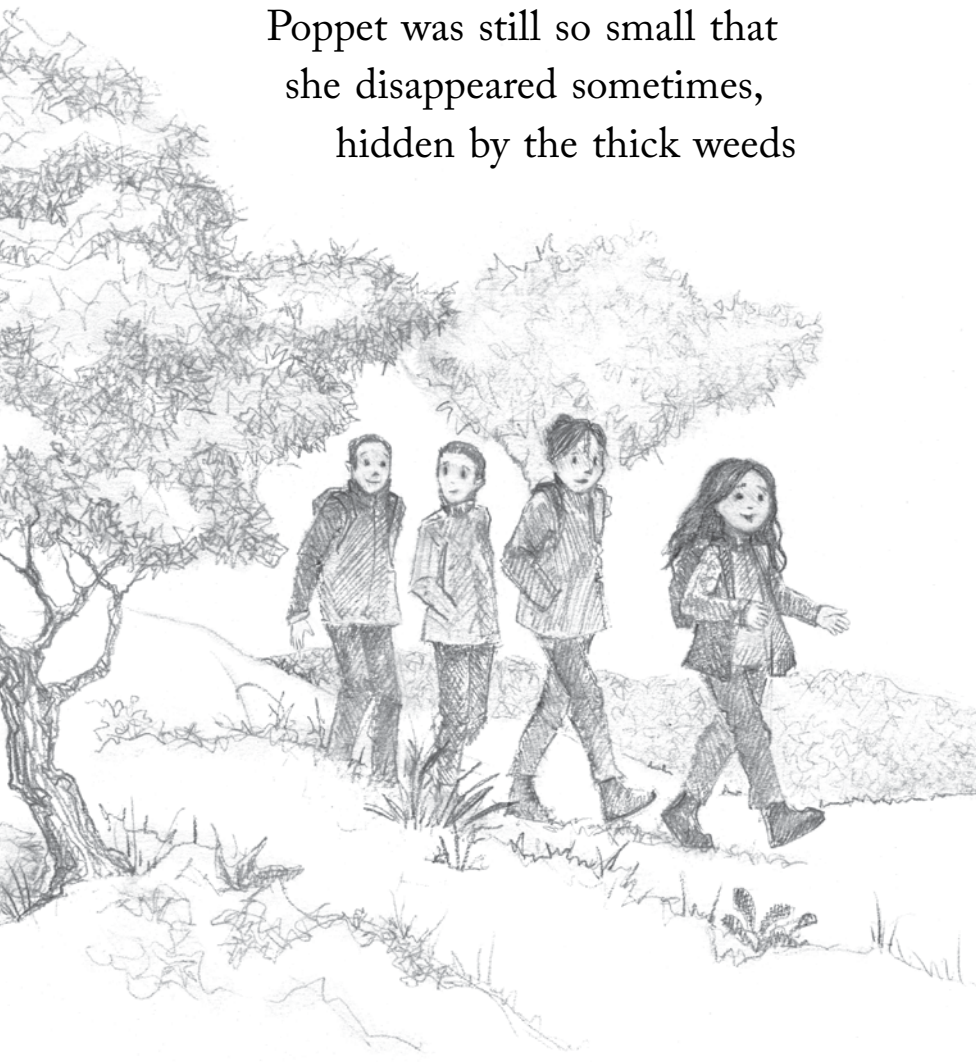


Amelia peered through the long grass at the side of the footpath, hunting for Poppet. Mum and Dad had persuaded Amelia and her older brother, Luke, to come for a walk up the rocky hillside above their village. It was a sunny spring afternoon, and Amelia could hear birds chirruping in the bushes and a hawk calling overhead. The sun

was warming the back of her jacket
too – it was blissful.

"Poppet, where have you gone, silly?"

Poppet was still so small that
she disappeared sometimes,
hidden by the thick weeds



and grasses, until she bounced up
to see where she was going. Amelia
spotted the grass shivering slightly
before the little black-and-tan terrier
appeared for a second at the top
of her bounce and was gone again.



"Poppet!" she called, and the grass wobbled again before Poppet whooshed out and leaped all over her, whining happily and scrabbling at Amelia's leggings.

"Oh, you're such a good girl," Amelia murmured, crouching down to rub the puppy's ears and make a fuss of her. They'd had Poppet for a couple of months now but she was only just old enough to start going for longer walks with their Labrador, Mickey. It was so much fun being out with both dogs.

Mickey stopped sniffing at a clump of brambles and looked over at Amelia as if he thought this was a bit unfair. He hadn't gone running off through the grass and had to be called back. Why wasn't he getting all

the praise and fussing? Luke noticed and leaned over to run his fingers along Mickey's spine, and the big dog closed his eyes and pointed his nose up to the sky. That was his favourite place to be scratched – it made him go all wobbly.



"Do you think the dogs need a rest?" Amelia's dad asked, sitting down on one of the large rocks by the edge of the path. "I could do with some water. Maybe a biscuit…"

Both Poppet and Mickey swung their heads round hopefully to stare at him.

They knew exactly what biscuits were.

Mum laughed. "Well, you'll have to give them something now," she said, taking off her backpack and starting to hunt for snacks – for both people and dogs. "But it's definitely time for a break. We must have been walking for over an hour and this path's pretty steep."

"It's really hot," Amelia said, wriggling out of her backpack too – inside she had a bottle of water and the special collapsible dog bowl they always brought on long walks. She sat down in the grass and unfolded the bowl, pouring in a drink of water for Poppet and Mickey.

Mickey lumbered over at once but Poppet was still begging hopefully

for treats, her paws up against Mum's knees.

"You've already had two," Mum scolded gently. "No, Poppet, look, I'm putting them away. More later."

Poppet slumped down sadly and then shook her ears and trotted over to the water bowl. There was plenty of room for both dogs to drink but she nudged up close against Mickey, barging him with her shoulder.



"Poppet, you're so bossy!" Amelia said, rubbing Mickey's ears to make up for it. "Isn't she, Mickey? She's stealing your water… It's not fair, is it?"

The big Labrador stretched himself out in the cool grass and panted gently. He loved long walks. He didn't usually go very fast, just kept plodding along, slow and steady, while Poppet raced around. The little terrier probably covered three times as much distance as he did because she zigzagged back and forth, sniffing at interesting smells, chasing butterflies and checking on Amelia and Luke. She was a little busybody, Dad said. The two dogs were very different but Amelia's family adored them both, and Poppet and Mickey were best friends, even after

only a couple of months.

Now Poppet settled down next to her older brother, snuggling close against him and laying her dark nose on top of his golden paws. Mickey looked up at Amelia and she was almost sure he rolled his eyes.

"You love her really," she whispered, rubbing his ears again and scratching Poppet under the chin when the little dog nudged at her in a demanding way.

After a few more minutes' rest they set off on their walk again, but Poppet had definitely slowed down. She was trailing along next to Amelia, puffing a little.

"Did you wear yourself out?" Amelia asked, crouching down next to her. Poppet sagged down on the path,

looking up at her hopefully. She whined and Amelia giggled.

"Shall I carry Poppet for a bit?" she called to her parents, who were further ahead with Mickey.

"Oh dear, has she given up?" Mum said, turning round to look.

"It looks like she doesn't want to go any further," Dad agreed. "Are you sure you can carry her, Amelia? She gets heavy after a while."

"I don't mind." Amelia took off her backpack again and pulled her waterproof out, tying it round her middle instead. Now there was just enough room in there for a small, demanding dog. Poppet sat up hopefully, peering into the open bag.

"Yes, that's a space for you," Amelia

told her. "Come on then." She opened the bag invitingly and Poppet hopped in, snuggling down gratefully inside.

"I wish someone would carry me," Luke said, with a huge yawn. "You said this was a short walk, Mum."

"Well, it is…" Mum glanced over at him apologetically. "I'd forgotten how much hard work this path is though. We haven't been up here for a while."

Amelia slung her backpack carefully back on to her shoulders, feeling Poppet shift her weight inside. There was a snorty sort of yawn and then the little dog settled down for a nap.

"It's beautiful up here, even if it's tiring," Dad pointed out. "Just look at the view back down to home." He pointed across the hillside to their village, nestled

in the valley, with the river running through the middle. It did look really pretty from this height. It made Amelia think of their grandad's model railway, with all the houses so perfect and neat.

She smiled to herself as she heard a wheezy little snore from inside her backpack.





Poppet napped comfortably curled up in the bag, rocking gently as Amelia walked along. The bag was warm and she fitted neatly on top of Amelia's sweater. She snorted a little and padded her paws against the side of the backpack, chasing after Mickey in her sleep.

Then at last she blinked, yawned hugely and sat up, peering out of the open top of the bag. She gave a loud yap, and then wriggled round and licked affectionately at the back of Amelia's neck.

"Oh! You're awake again! Good timing, Pops. We're on our way down now."

"Here, I'll get her." Luke carefully lifted Poppet out of the backpack and the terrier zoomed in a tight circle around their feet, sniffing happily at the fresh grass. The backpack had been a little bit stuffy.

"Careful!" Amelia stepped over her. "I'll trip over you. Come on, Poppet. This way, look."

Poppet pranced back down the path ahead of the children, stopping every now and then to investigate the huge boulders dotted across the hillside.

She felt bouncy and full of energy after her nap, and she trotted back to say hello to Mickey as well, scrambling around his paws and then darting right under the big Labrador's tummy.

Mickey nosed at her and went on walking, while Poppet shot off again. She'd spotted – yes, there at the base of the big rock – a stick! She tugged at it but grass and weeds had been growing over it for a while and it didn't want to budge. She pulled harder and growled at it but still she couldn't get the stick to move.

"Do you want it?" Amelia asked, coming up behind her, and Poppet gave a demanding yap. She watched approvingly as Amelia pulled at the stick.

"Oooof! I almost fell over. This had better be a good stick, Poppet."

Poppet scurried backwards, barking excitedly and giving little jumps of joy.



"Ohhhhh, do you want me to throw it?" Amelia called, giggling. "Do you want to fetch the stick?"

Poppet danced around in skittish little circles, desperate for Amelia to throw the stick. Then she raced across the short, springy grass as Amelia tossed the stick into the air. She could see it starting to fall now – she was nearly there, just a bit further – Poppet leaped joyfully into the air, snatching at the stick before it reached the ground. She landed triumphantly on all four paws, her tail wagging in delight. She'd done it! She galloped

back to Amelia, dragging the stick, which was definitely longer than she was.

Amelia beamed at her. "You're so good at fetching! Clever girl, Poppet, good dog!" She took the stick gently from Poppet's mouth and pulled back her arm to throw it once more.

Poppet bounced with excitement, watching the stick in Amelia's hand – she couldn't wait to chase after it again.