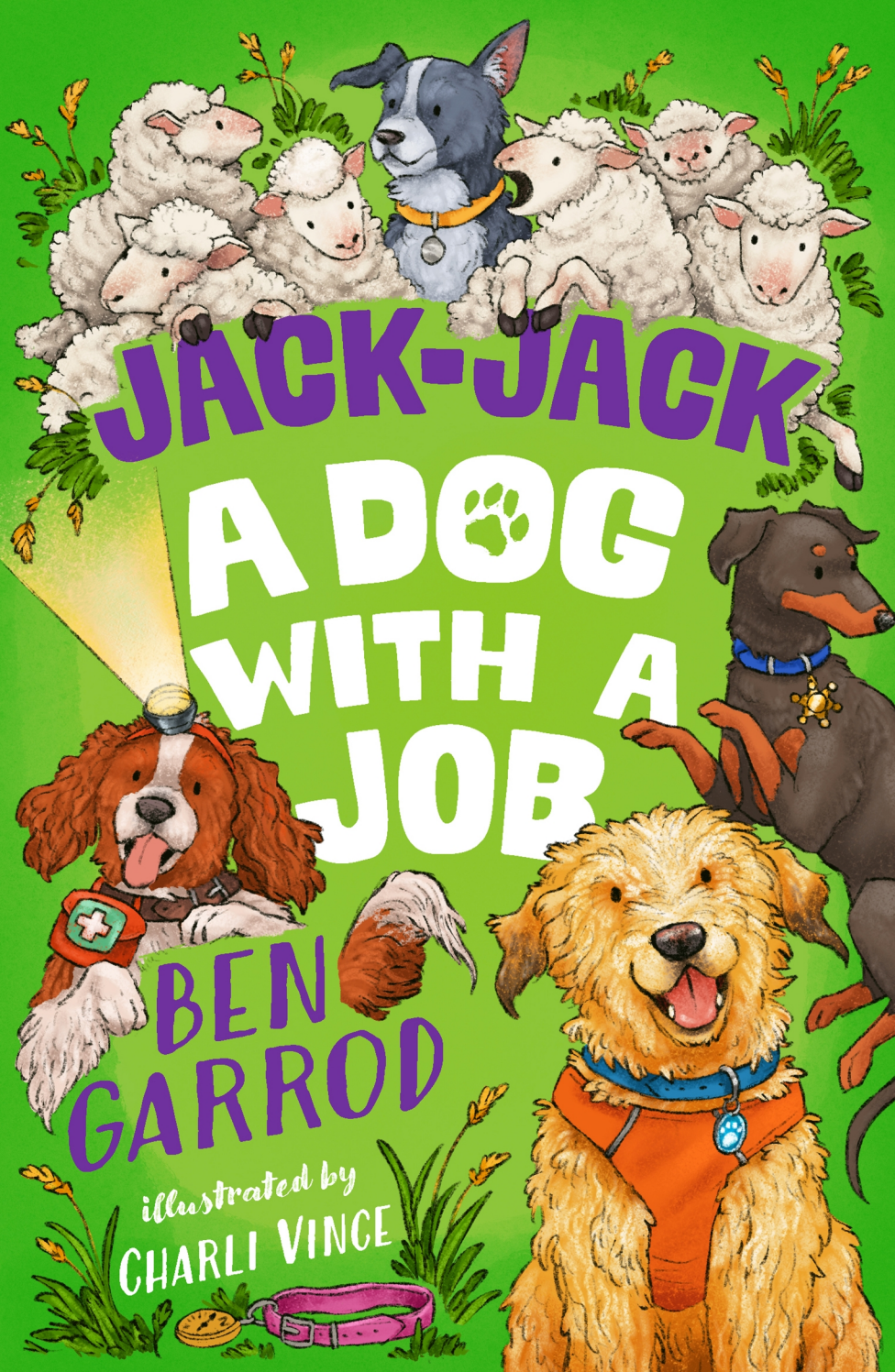

JACK-JACK
A DOG WITH A JOB
BEN GARROD
illustrated by
CHARLI VINCE

BEN GARROD

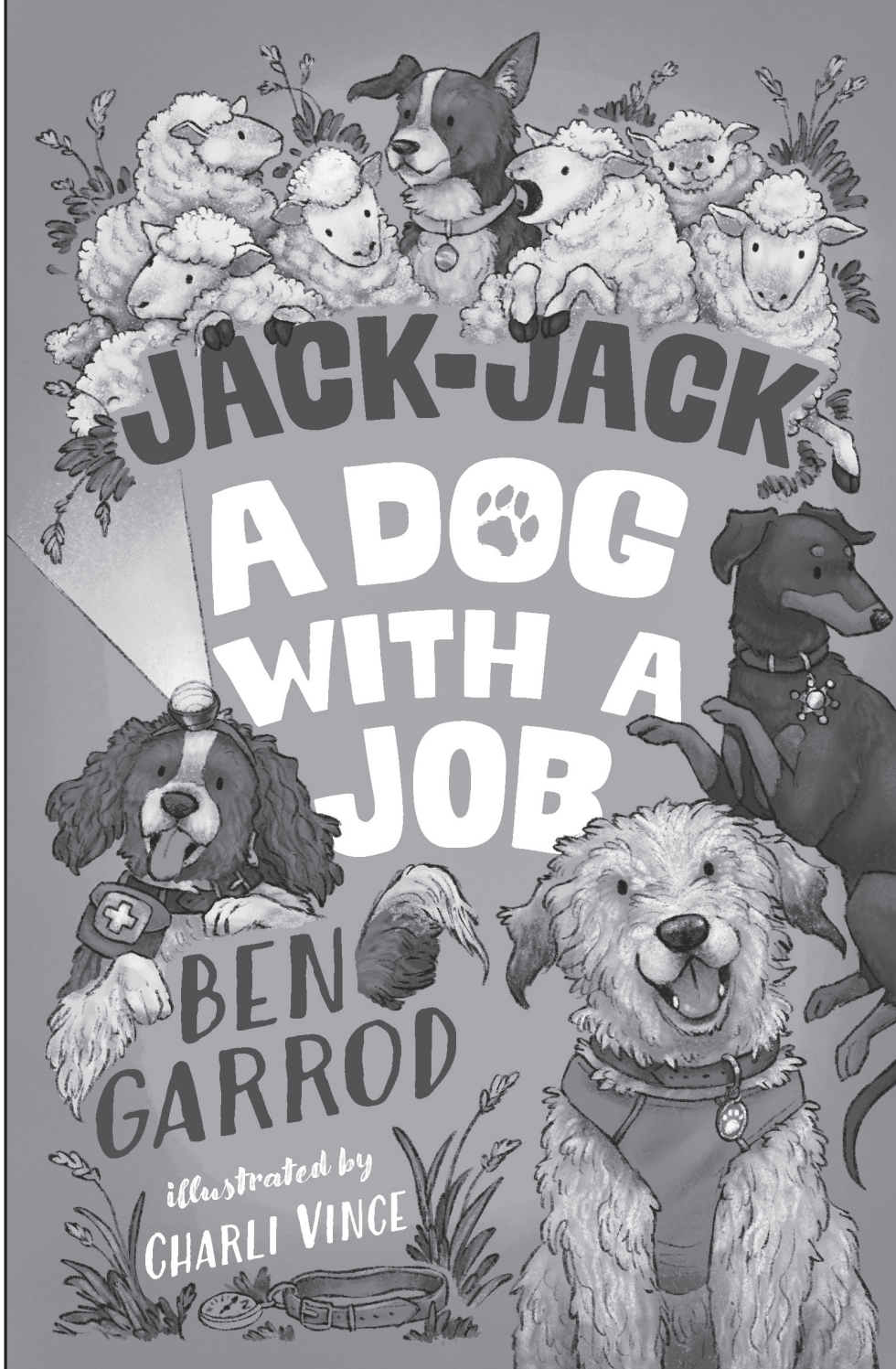
JACK-JACK, A DOG WITH A JOB

ALSO BY BEN GARROD

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To Rusty, Toby, Levi, Lomu, Barney
and Jack. Thanks boys.
BG

To all the rescue dogs out there
and their wonderful humans.
CV







1
OUT ON PAWTROL

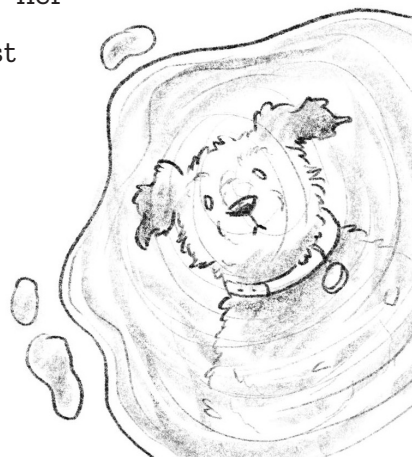
I didn't know *carpets* were especially dangerous, but apparently they are. And that's why my new friend Hattie was barking at a piece of deep red carpet right now. Dogs have a whole bunch of different barks, for when we're *playing*, when we're *scared*, or *excited*, and yes, even when we're *angry*. This was definitely an angry bark. Hattie's big, floppy ears were pinned back, her lips pulled up in a snarl, and the hair on her shoulders was bristling. This carpet was causing trouble. But how?

I should probably introduce Hattie, right? She's a Doberman, with a coat so black it looks like the sky between the stars at night. I've known Hattie for almost as long as I've lived with Ben and we see her every time we visit his mum and dad and Barney. She's a police dog, and from what I can tell, a lot of her work is about looking tougher than a rhino's elbow.

There is a thing called 'resting dog face', which is the look you have after scrunching your eyes and



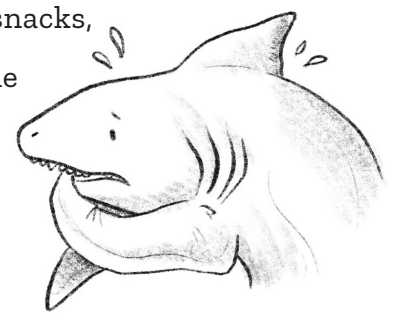
mouth up tight and then relaxing everything all at once. I once saw my resting dog face in a puddle, and it was as if I didn't have a single thought running between my ears. But even though Hattie is one of the happiest and friendliest dogs I know, her resting dog face makes her seem angry. I don't mean just a bit grumpy, but *so* grumpy that a glance from her would stop a lion in its tracks.



She seems so fierce, her stare could turn a pool of hungry crocodiles into a pile of scared vegetarians, or make sharks cry in the corner and suck their thumbs. You know, if they had them.



The piece of carpet Hattie was barking at wasn't even on the floor, which is where I've seen most carpets. It was wrapped around a man's arm, and he was shouting. Nothing was making much sense. I'd joined Ben that morning when he'd asked if I wanted to go somewhere new. I'd actually been planning a long nap, some snacks, another serious snooze, some stretching, then lunch, but I reckoned I could keep Ben happy by going with him. In the car, he kept using words



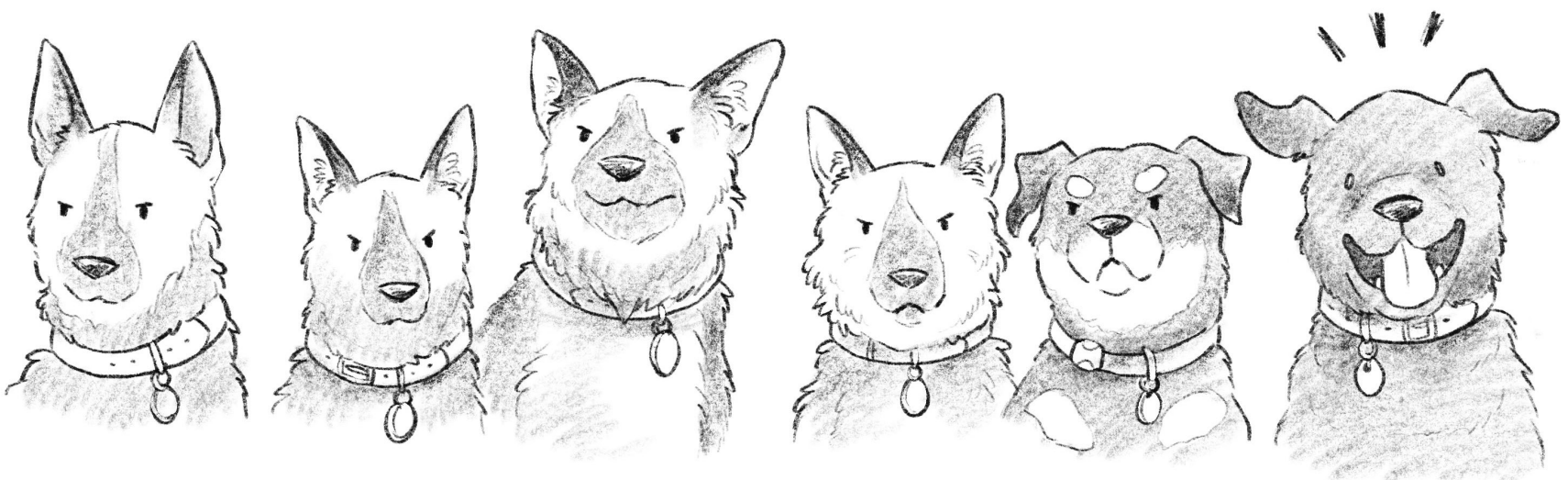
I'd suddenly been hearing a lot recently. 'Work' and 'experience' seemed to be his two new favourites words. They were related to me finding a *job*. I didn't really know what a job was, let alone how I was going to *find* one. I wasn't even sure I'd lost one. I hoped it wouldn't take too long, and I'd be back on my bed, or maybe I'd sneak into Barney's, which is even softer than mine, in no time.

We had arrived at a place where there were a lot of tough-looking dogs. There were four German Shepherds, who all said 'Hallo' slightly differently and kept saying 'Ya, ya, ya,' whenever they nodded their heads. The big Rottweiler next to me said this was just the way they spoke. She was called Sweetie, and all she had to do was stand there. No one was going to mess with her. There was a Ridgeback, whose eyes were narrowed and who seemed to be endlessly chewing on something, even when his mouth was empty.

And there was Lomu, the most enormous Labrador ever. Despite looking tough, and majestic too, his face broke into the widest smile I have ever seen on any animal. Apart from a happy fruit bat, who used to fly around the camp in Africa, and liked to eat mangoes when they'd gone all fizzy. Lomu kept asking me if I had any snacks. Not once or twice, or whatever comes after twice, but loads. I kept saying I didn't, and asked him where he thought I was keeping them, because as far as I know, dogs don't have pockets.

Before long, we were chatting about the best sort of snacks. I said gravy bones, Lomu said I was wrong and that the best sort of snack was any snack that was in his mouth. That seemed deep. Just then Hattie barked us to attention, though to be fair, the others were already standing like very straight, doggy statues. She told them they were good boys and girls, but I had the feeling that me and my new mate weren't included.

Hattie told us we were there to be trained to protect our humans. I already do this. I've been



living with Ben for a long time and I can one hundred per cent, with my paw on my heart, say that since I arrived, not a single lion has attacked him, not a single snake has ambushed him (not including that baby grass snake we saw on a walk last year that scared me so much I did a wee), and not once has a hippo come running out of the pond to try to stomp on him. This can't be coincidence, can it? It must be because I've been protecting him. Anything dangerous must know I mean business, right?



Anyway, it seemed Hattie wanted us to *attack* carpets. While the humans around us were busy talking, she told us one of them was going to pretend to be a 'bad guy' and that we'd take it in turns to attack him. First, we'd have to chase him (urgh, I hate running) and bark (I really don't like all that noise, if I'm honest), and then jump up and *bite* him on the arm, which would be wrapped in the thick red carpet to protect him. Erm, what?

Even *if* I chase someone, I don't think I'm going to catch them. I'm not keen on the barking and I'll leave leaping to salmon, geckoes and gazelles. As for biting someone wrapped in a carpet... What's a carpet ever done to me to make me want to bite it? Actually, I did pee on a carpet once, which means a carpet *might* be more annoyed with me.

I watched each dog wait for their turn, and when their human was approached by the 'bad guy', arm wrapped in carpet, Hattie would give her command

and they'd run after him, barks and drool and legs flying everywhere. Each dog would wrestle him to the ground, hanging on to the poor red carpet, until the human teaching the lesson called out. Hattie would signal this with a flick of her ears. The Ridgeback went before me, then walked back panting and chewing, but this time with wisps of red carpet between his bright white teeth.

Because it was getting late, it was decided Lomu and I would go together – obviously they saw we were a highly-trained team. The bad guy with the carpet-arm came towards us, shouted and ran away. Okay, I admit it, I got into the spirit of things. I was ready to do this. I would defend my human, chase this guy, and bite him right on the carpet.

Off we both dashed, running as one beast with two atrocious heads. But I haven't had a haircut in a while and suddenly, I couldn't see where I was going. A furry mop of a fringe fell over my eyes and

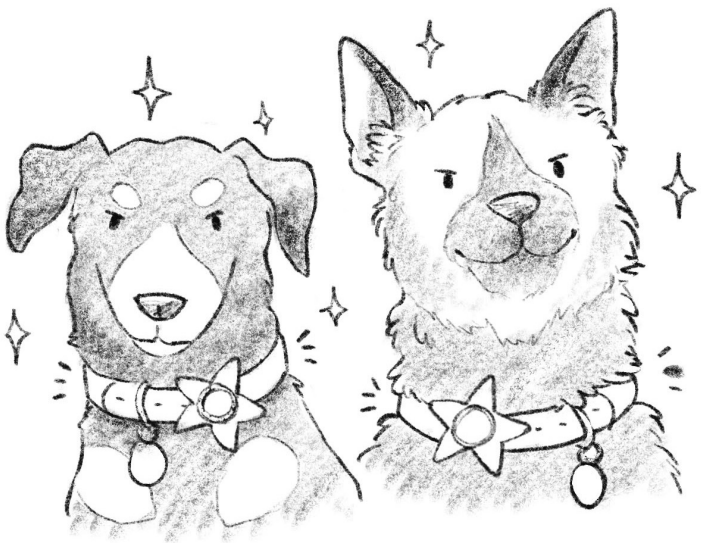
I tripped, skidding along the leaves and crashing into the bad guy. He tried to avoid me but ended up slipping in the mud and fell over too. I landed on top of him in a pile... Not quite what I'd planned, but I *did* have him on the ground at least. And I still had my new mate as back-up. I tossed the hair from my face and saw Lomu, eyes wide as he dashed towards us. His mouth was open and his huge pink tongue hung over the side of his gleaming teeth. Together, we'd do this. We'd get a medal or certificate or whatever the other dogs who passed this class got. But just as



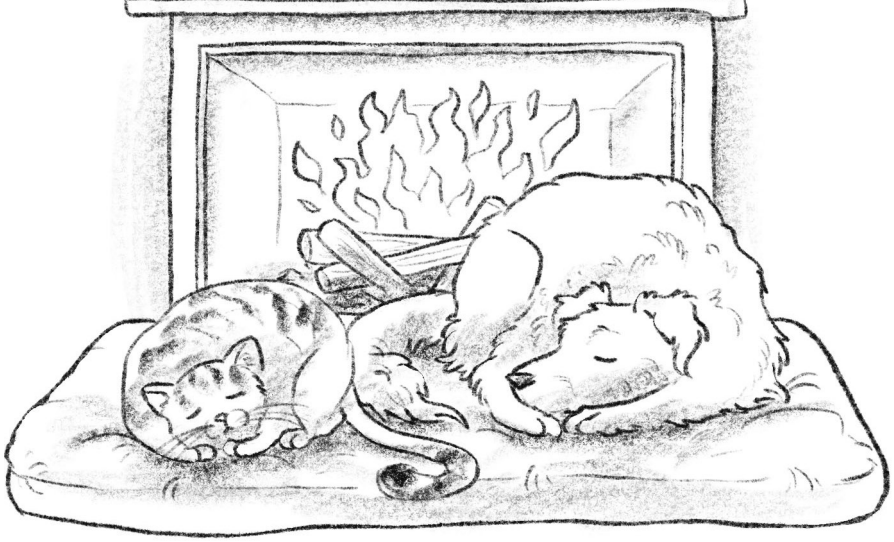
Bad Guy untangled me and started to get up, Lomu knocked him back down with his massive, wagging tail. Great! He stood over him looking scary. Perfect! He even managed to snarl at the carpet on Bad Guy's arm. Amazing! He lifted his leg... and he peed on it. Ah. Not so great.

By the time he'd finished, the red carpet was soaked. Lomu walked off looking pleased with himself. Later, the other dogs all received little stars, which dangled off their collars and caught the light, making them twinkle and wink. They stood tall and proud. Their humans stood behind them, beaming.





I stood next to Lomu, both of us at a distance from the others. Our humans clearly loved us, but they definitely didn't look proud of us then.



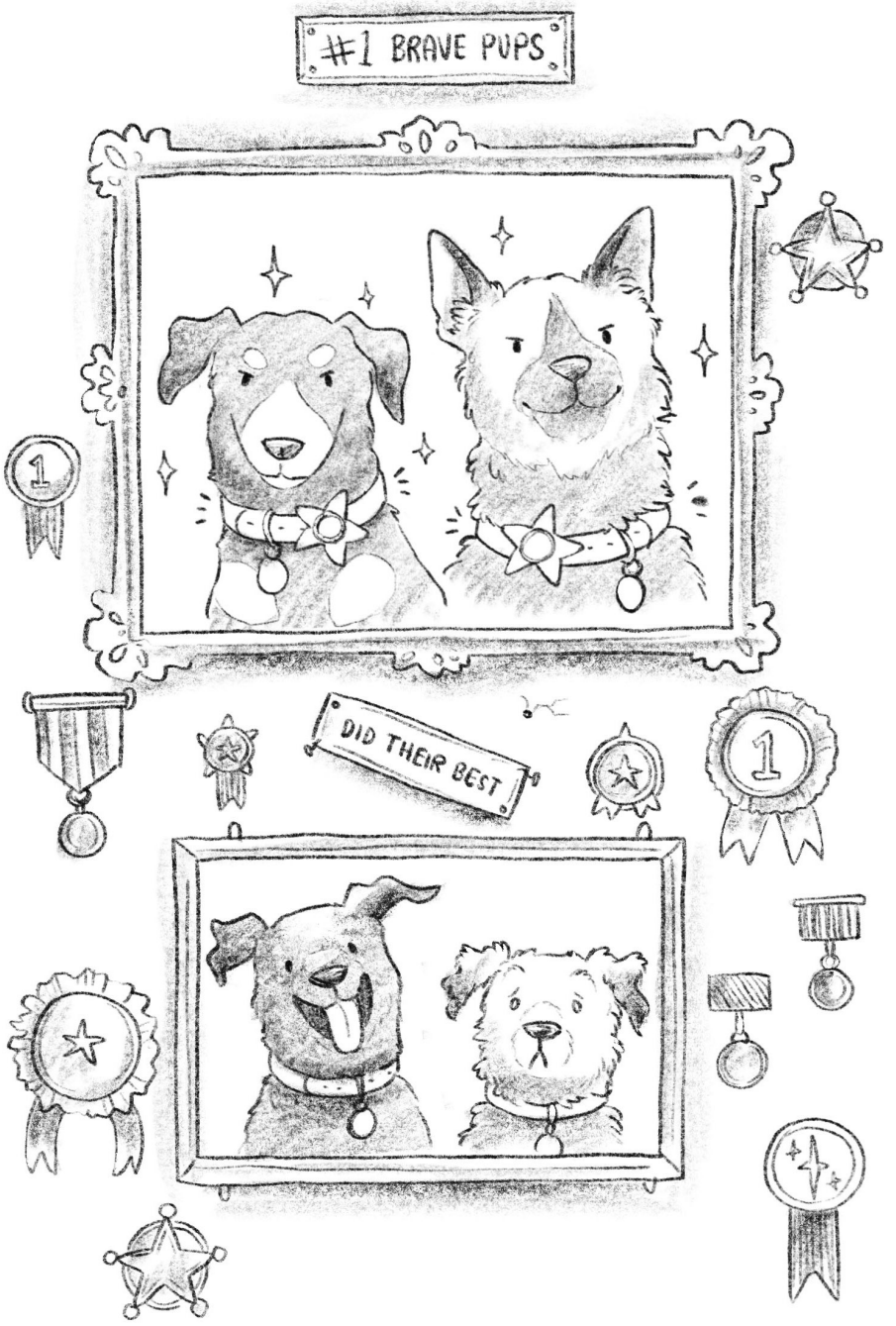
That night at home, as I curled up with Newbie, so that we weren't too close, but close enough to both get warm by the fire, I told her about my new friend, and about not managing to be a very good police dog. She laughed and told me she'd heard Ben talking on the phone earlier. He was telling someone that my next job interview was tomorrow and would involve rounding up sheep. That sounded fine, I told her.

A little while later, I disturbed her purring to ask, 'What's a sheep?'

She smiled a wicked smile and said I'd find out in the morning.






#1 BRAVE PUPS
DID THEIR BEST