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Opening extract from

Jake in Danger

Written by

Anne Butterworth

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Chapter One



Jake was fed up.

Usually, he loved going for walks in the local park with his friend, Sam.

Usually, he was the star attraction with the other dogs. Holly, the Rough Collie, and Charles, the Irish Wolfhound, thought he was great fun. He played football like no other dog they knew. He could head the ball, then trap it with his legs and dribble it back along the ground, from any distance,

in no time at all. Jake was the cleverest and the bravest of them all. He was every dog's favourite.

Usually.

But now a new dog had arrived in the neighbourhood, an Afghan Hound called Boris. He was extremely handsome with long flowing hair. He could run like the wind and could easily outrun any dog in the park, including Jake.

Boris told wonderful tales of foreign lands where he had lived. He talked about places far away, of different animals and smells. His owner had even taken him hunting from time to time and Boris had helped catch moose and deer.

"Not very nice for the moose and deer," Jake thought.

The other dogs were impressed. While

Boris was around, no other dog got any attention, including Jake, and he wasn't used to this at all.

For the first time in his life, Jake felt jealous. And he didn't like it.

He tried to talk to his best friend, Holly, about it. She lived next door to Jake.

Holly told Jake that he was just being silly. Of course everybody still liked him, but really, Boris was so interesting.

So even Holly was impressed by Boris. And Jake was fed up.

Chapter Two



Jake's friend, Sam, was an old man whose garden backed onto Jake's. Through Jake, Sam had made friends with Jake's owners, Mr and Mrs Foster. Sam took Jake for walks in the local park, twice a day, weather permitting.

The summer was over now and the leaves on the trees were changing colour, ready to

drop to the ground. It was Sam's favourite time of year. He liked the colours of the trees, especially the vivid red of the maples.

One morning, when Sam arrived to take Jake for his walk, Mrs Foster had some news for him.

"Do you know the old man, Mr Wood, who lives in the big house next to the park, Sam?" she asked.

"He has lots of animals living with him, doesn't he? Some unusual animals, I've heard," said Sam.

"Yes," replied Mrs Foster. "Well, he's quite ill and can't look after himself. He's got to go into a home, so they need to do something with all his animals. Nobody seems to know how many he has or what they all are. Someone said that he has even got an alligator in there! Certainly, he has

got five parrots because I've been told they need to rehouse them. The trouble is, Mr Wood doesn't want them to go into a zoo and he wants the parrots kept together."

"Well," Sam said, "I would be willing to take one, but what would I do with five parrots?"

"I don't think anyone will want five parrots. Apparently one of them can talk but I think it can only say 'clear off'. Not very friendly! It must be used to hearing Mr Wood," Mrs Foster laughed.

When Sam and Jake arrived at the park, Holly and her owner, Mrs Thirkettle, and Charles with his owner, Mr Grant, were already there. Jake was disappointed to see Boris and his owner, Mrs Baker, arriving as well.

As the dogs trotted together through the



park, Boris talked non-stop about Canada, another place where he had lived. They had reached a big mound in the ground which was covered in grass and bushes. There seemed to be a small hole in the side of the mound. Boris stopped talking about Canada to ask if anybody knew what it was.

Jake knew. He'd been through the hole into the mound many times.

He started to explain that inside the mound was an underground cave, very dark and damp. He had heard Mrs Thirkettle telling Sam something about it. She said it used to be an ice house. Ice was stored inside it and the ice was used to keep food cold and fresh, before people had fridges. Jake told Boris that now the hole was a great place to explore.



But Boris wasn't listening any more. He heard the word ice and carried on talking about Canada and how icy it was there and how he had once caught and killed a hare in the ice.

Jake wasn't used to dogs ignoring or interrupting him before he had finished. He was astonished.



The ice house was one of Jake's special places in the park. He liked to go inside to check it out whenever he could. There were only a few old tools in there and the odd mouse, but for Jake, it was a secret place, hidden away from prying eyes. It was special. Jake felt quite hurt that Boris didn't even let him finish his tale.

The other dogs ran off towards the lake, listening to Boris's stories, leaving Jake alone, next to the ice house.

"That Boris," Jake thought. "He's too full of himself. He's got too much to say." Then he trotted slowly towards the lake, gradually catching up with the others.

When Jake arrived at the lake, the other dogs had already made a horrible discovery. There was an injured gosling lying by the side of the lake.

Sam counted the goslings and sighed. "One has disappeared. And this one is dead I'm afraid. Foxes, I suppose," he said.

"Just a minute," said Mr Grant. "This footprint in the mud is too big for a fox. It's more like a big dog or even a wild cat!"

"Good gracious!" said Mrs Thirkettle. "I've heard about that sort of thing. In my newspaper there was a story about a puma that escaped from a zoo. It attacked several little dogs before it was captured. I hope we haven't got something like that here!"

The dogs looked at one another. They hoped so too. But there was definitely something prowling about the park and it had killed the goslings.

Jake looked again at the paw print. Somehow, it didn't look like the shape of a cat's print, even a big one. It reminded him

of somebody else's paw print.

Jake looked suspiciously at Boris.

"I don't trust him," Jake thought. "He lives right next to the park and could sneak in here any time. He needs watching."