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Written by

Ashley Birch

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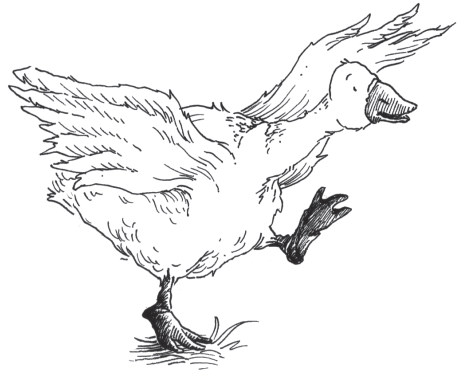
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Magic Farm

A Big Surprise!



Ashley Birch

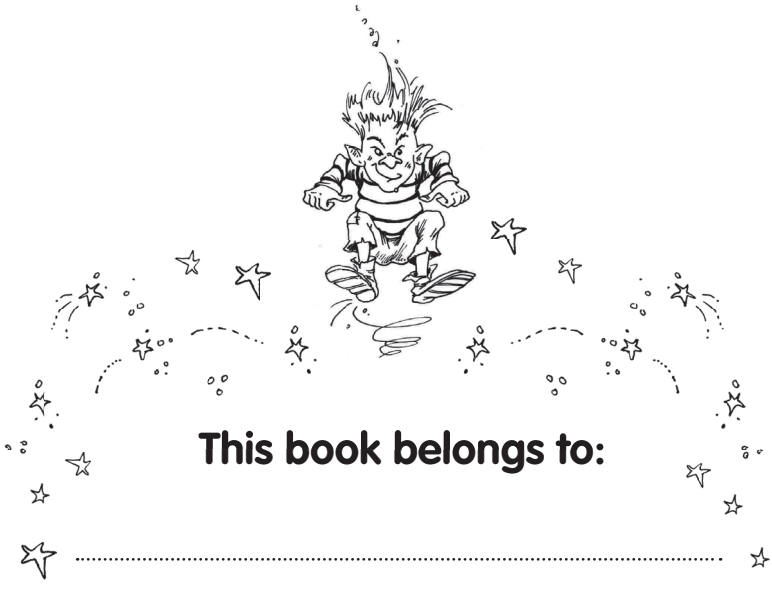
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Books in the Magic Farm series

A Whole New World

A Big Surprise!





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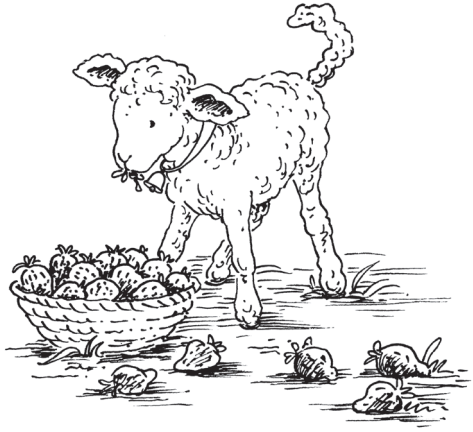
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Strawberry Surprise

Woof! Woof!

'Shush, Max!' Olly gently ruffled the glossy black and white fur of the Thompson family's new sheepdog. With his spare hand, he hugged a

little white lamb. ‘And don’t you start bleating, Woolly!’

Baaa!

‘Olly, try to keep them quiet,’ whispered Olly’s friend, Aidan.

They crept along the outside of the farmhouse wall, keeping low until they were beneath the kitchen window sill. Olly bobbed up for a

quick peek. His sister, Hannah, was at the kitchen sink, washing a huge basketful of strawberries.

Olly grinned as Aidan fixed a large metal hook to the end of an old fishing rod.

Baaa!

'Quiet, Woolly!' Aidan whispered. He edged up and peeped through

the open window, then ducked down again. 'Hannah's filling a bowl with some of the strawberries. Wait till she takes them to the fridge and leaves the basket.'

Olly heard Hannah's flip-flops slapping across the kitchen floor. 'Now!' he said, leaping up.

Aidan jumped up too, and poked

the fishing rod through the window. He quickly hooked the basket of strawberries and swung it out into Olly's waiting arms.

The boys laughed softly as they heard Hannah gasp.

'Who's there?' she said.

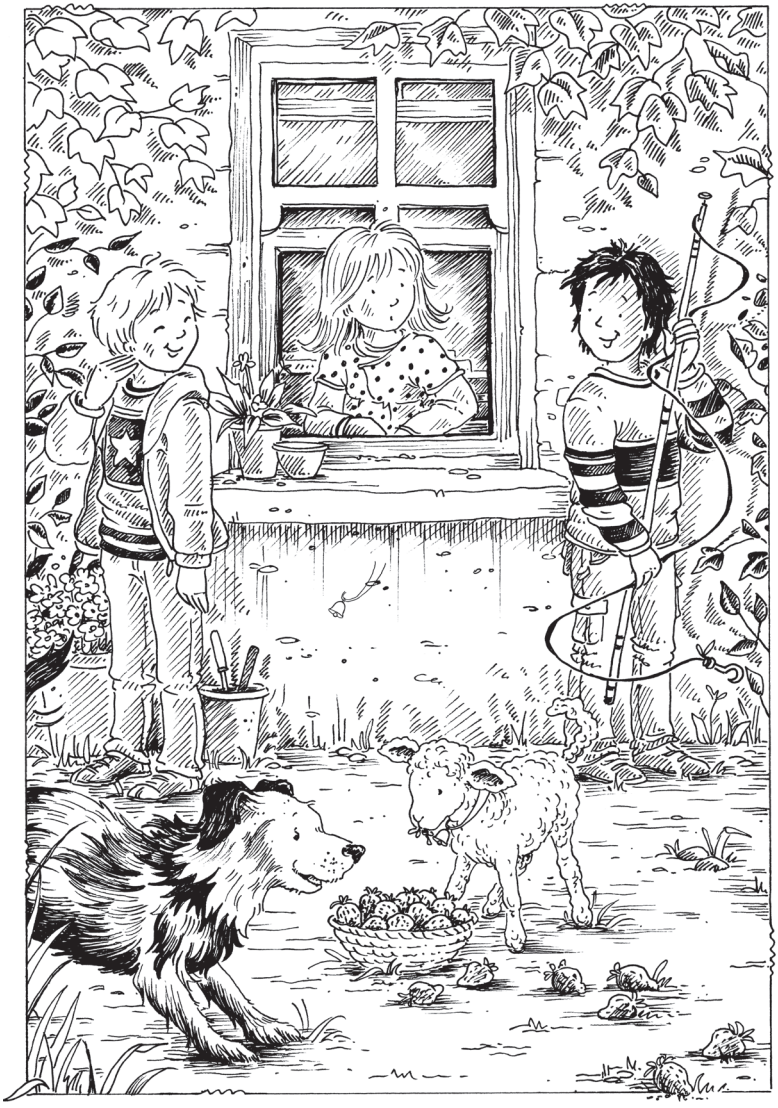
Woolly poked her little nose into the strawberries and began nibbling.

Olly pulled the basket away and Woolly's nose came out stained pink. She bobbed her head happily; strawberries tasted good!

'Stop it, Woolly,' Olly whispered.

The lamb bleated and the tiny bell round her neck tinkled.

'*Now* I know who it is!' came Hannah's voice.



Her face appeared at the window. ‘You two are so terrible!’ she said. ‘Don’t let Woolly have any more – she’ll finish the lot. They’re the nicest strawberries ever!’

‘And we grew them on our very own farm,’ Olly added proudly. ‘Hey! Where’s Max?’

‘He’s here,’ said Hannah. ‘He ran

in to see me.' She brought him out, leading him with a finger hooked under his collar.

Max was a working dog – he wasn't meant to be in the farmhouse. The Thompsons hadn't lived on Golden Valley Farm very long and they were getting new animals all the time. They already had a horse and

some chickens, and now that they had sheep they needed a dog to help look after them. They'd bought Max from a nearby farmer, and Dad had built him a brand new kennel. Max had a comfy bed in there, and his own cosy blue blanket. He loved his new home in the farmyard!

Max started barking excitedly and

Woolly darted away, springing across the grass.

'Come back here, Woolly!' Olly shouted, running after her.

Max chased them both. An escaped lamb? This was his job!

Aidan grabbed a big handful of strawberries. 'Here, Woolly! Here, Woolly, Woolly, Woolly!'

The lamb raced back to Aidan and leapt at him, squashing the handful of strawberries. Over they both went! Olly and Hannah burst out laughing as their friend lay in the grass with Woolly nibbling at his strawberry-stained face.

'Get off me!' Aidan spluttered.

Olly picked up the lamb, cuddling



her close. Woolly felt warm and soft in his arms.

'Don't get attached to her, Olly,' said Aidan, smiling. 'Lambs aren't

pets – they're farm animals, like Max. Shouldn't Woolly be with your other sheep?'

'I think she should,' said Hannah. 'She's already flooded the bathroom floor.'

Olly giggled. 'Yeah, she jumped in the bath with me!' He hugged Woolly tight. 'Aah, she's no trouble.

She follows me everywhere.'

'Sometimes that's a nuisance though, even if she is cute,' said Hannah. 'Remember when Woolly joined in our football game and headbutted the ball into the river?'

'Exactly,' said Aidan. 'So why don't we go somewhere we know Woolly can't follow us?'

‘Like where?’ asked Hannah.

Aidan grinned. ‘Like Magic Farm?’