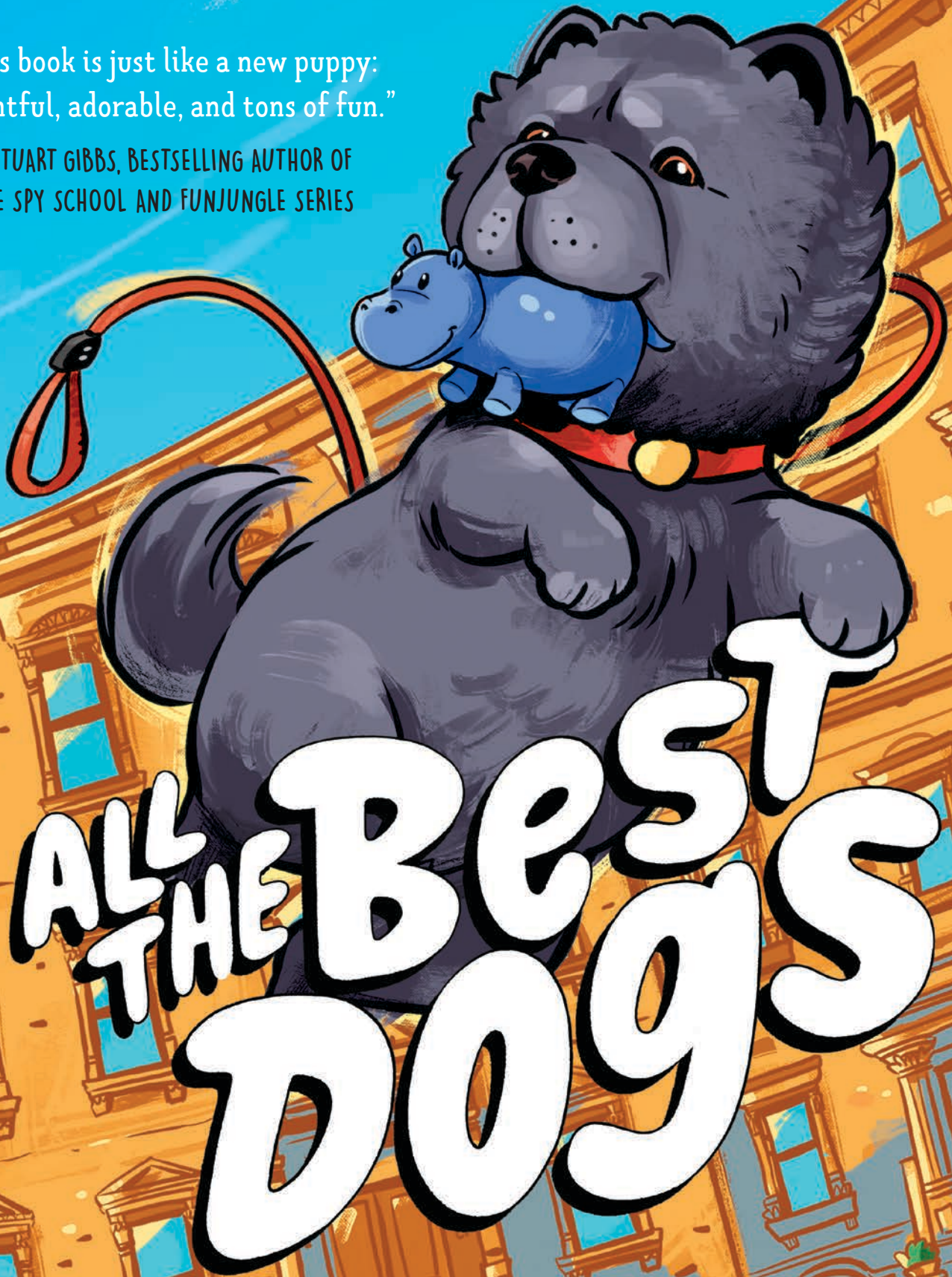


EMILY JENKINS
ILLUSTRATED BY MANUEL PREITANO

"This book is just like a new puppy:
delightful, adorable, and tons of fun."

—STUART GIBBS, BESTSELLING AUTHOR OF
THE SPY SCHOOL AND FUNJUNGLE SERIES



ALL THE BEST DOGS

EDUCATORS' GUIDE

RHTeachersLibrarians.com

About the Book

For anyone who loves a dog—and anyone who loves a laugh—this is a sensitive (and silly!) story about growing up and mending fences, with an enduring message of friendship, community, and the joy of pets.

Ask anyone who has a dog, and they'll tell you that *their* dog is the best. Really, truly, the best dog in the world. Theirs is the best dog that ever lived, ever, ever, in the history of the known universe.

Welcome to the dog park! It's a playground for dogs in the big city. Here, four sixth graders (and their dogs!) overlap on one hilarious and important June weekend.

Ezra needs to find his lost dog.

Cup-Cup needs a friend. (She also needs to learn to walk on a leash.)

Mei-Alice wonders if anyone will ever understand her.

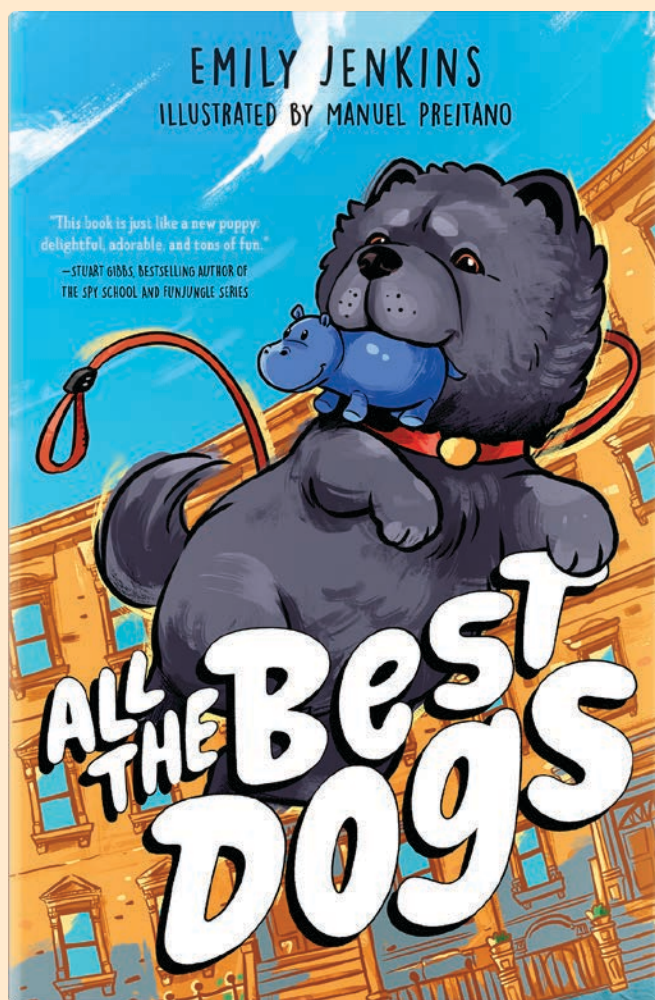
Panda wonders what will happen if she breaks the rules.

Kaleb is covering up a terrible mistake.

Grover and Lottie are making lots of terrible mistakes. (Some of them are disgusting.)

And Jilly needs to make a new life in a new place.

On this almost-summer weekend, a series of surprises, mishaps, and misunderstandings will end up changing all their lives.



About the Author



Emily Jenkins is the *New York Times* bestselling author of many books for children, including *Harry Versus the First 100 Days of School*, the fairy-tale collection *Brave*

Red, *Smart Frog*, and the *Toys Go Out* series. She coauthors the *Upside-Down Magic* series, which is also a movie on Disney+. Her picture books include the Sydney Taylor Award-winning *All-of-a-Kind Family Hanukkah*, *The Kitten Story*, *Toys Meet Snow*, *Lemonade in Winter*, and *Water in the Park*.

About the Illustrator



Manuel Preitano is an Italian illustrator and graphic designer, and the cocreator of the *Destiny, NY*, series. He has worked on a wide range of toy designs, book covers, illustrations, and comic books, both in the US and Italy.





Praise for **ALL THE BEST DOGS**



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It’s delightful, funny, adorable, and tons of fun.”

—STUART GIBBS, BESTSELLING AUTHOR OF
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“**Bursting with funny, happy, doggy goodness.**
I adored every delightful page, every heartfelt insight,
and every lovable—human and canine—character.”

—SARAH MLYNOWSKI, BESTSELLING AUTHOR OF
THE WHATEVER AFTER AND BEST WISHES SERIES

“A cast of characters that **will have you
laughing, worrying, and celebrating.**”

—ROB BUYEA, AUTHOR OF THE MR. TERUPT SERIES

“**A real good, feel-good, doggy delight.**”

—KIRKUS REVIEWS

“A tale that’s **chock-full of heart and lots of good dogs.**”

—PUBLISHERS WEEKLY

Pre-Reading Questions and Activities

1. Discuss the statement “Dogs are the best animals.” Remember to set expectations, promote healthy disagreement, and welcomes all voices. Acknowledge that all students might not have or like dogs, and that different cultures have differing attitudes toward dogs. Explain that dogs are major characters in this book and that students should look for traits that the canine characters exhibit that contribute to the story.
2. Follow up with a nonfiction text connection. A few options are provided below.

Nonfiction Text Connections

- [“Are You a Cat Person or a Dog Person?”](#) (Discover English)
- [Dogs You Know: Be SAFE-Dog Safety Video for Kids](#)
- [“Petting Other People’s Dogs, Even Briefly, Can Build Your Health”](#) [video] (NPR)
- [“Dogs Through History”](#) [video] (National Geographic)
- [“Unconditional Love: Is Devotion to Pets a Cultural Universal?”](#) (Human Relations Area Files)



Questions and Activities While Reading

1. Keep a chart of the dogs, their breed, personality traits, other characteristics, and their family members as the class reads.

Example:

Dog	Breed or Other Characteristics	Family Members
Cup-Cup	50 lb. puppy	Kaleb

2. Emily Jenkins says very early that “each one is still the best,” referring to dogs. What does this mean? Revisit this question as you read. (p. 1)
3. The author gives a preview of what will happen in the story at the end of page one. Read the last paragraph of page 1 with students. Then direct them to preview the chapter titles and think about what hints the chapter names might give for these events.
4. Cup-Cup’s full name is Cupcake Ace Lieberman-Joseph. Have students write about their own name or the name of a pet. Choose a time limit that meets the needs of your students. Discuss this writing. Students might choose to add to this piece of writing later.
5. Research: Students will often ask very relevant questions that seem unimportant or off topic to us as educators. Instead of redirecting students immediately, we can use this natural curiosity to grow their research skills. If your classroom has devices, give students short, timed opportunities to look up topics like the breeds of dog to learn their characteristics or facts like typical size of an adult dog of a specific breed. If you do not have devices, print several short articles or play a short video and direct students to look for a fact to share with the class after the designated research time.

6. Point out and discuss the italics in the novel and how Emily Jenkins uses this text feature. This could include a discussion of the literary device of anthropomorphism.
 - a. How does the author's use of italics help the reader to visualize each dog?
 - b. Model different voices for each dog based on their physical and personality traits. Have student partners read a dog conversation in the book for fluency practice.
7. One major storyline is the tension between Kaleb and Ezra. The author hints at this early in the book. Why might Kaleb not want to see Ezra? (p. 4)
8. Kaleb is a comic collector. Do you collect anything? What would you like to collect?
9. A big part of middle school is trying new things—clubs or activities—to find out what you like, what talents come easily, and which skills you might have to work harder at developing. What are some talents that come easily to you? What are some skills you would like to develop? What talents do the characters in the book have? What skills do you see them developing?
10. What does the author mean when she writes “May-Alice’s feelings are on the surface”? (p. 11) How does this compare to Ezra or Kaleb and how they handle their feelings?
11. In chapter 5, Ezra and Kaleb come up with a nickname for May-Alice that is not very nice. Have you ever experienced this? If so, were you the person making up the nickname or the person who could have been hurt by it? What could Ezra and Kaleb have done rather than making up and using this mean nickname?
12. Compare and contrast how Ezra and Kaleb look at possible events. What are the pros and cons of each of their approaches? (Page 20 is one place students could find comparisons and contrasts.)
13. Should Ezra tell his dad about his thoughts and fears? Why or why not?
14. Lottie and Grover react differently to the big changes in their world when Jilly moves in with Valeria. What do you notice about their reactions? Write about a time when you have had a big life change and how you reacted.
15. Jilly and her mom can rely on Valeria when they need help. What adults might you rely on? (This might be a good time to discuss with students how they can access support from adults like teachers and counselors in your school.)
16. In chapter 9, the tension between Ezra and Kaleb intensifies. What advice might you give to each of them to resolve the situation?
17. On page 46, Emily Jenkins uses words used mostly to describe people to describe dogs and says that Kaleb “barks back.” What does this mean? Brainstorm a list of actions we normally associate with dogs. Have students use these words to write sentences about a person. Discuss what this might add to a sentence or a paragraph.



18. Jilly gives Ruth some advice when Ruth thinks Grover and Lottie don't remember her from their puppy days. Jilly says "I just know. They're excited to see you. Like they missed you and you're their family." What insights does this give us into Jilly's own feelings about being away from her mom? How do you know? (p. 57)
19. Why doesn't May-Alice tell her mom the reasons for her tenseness at dinner with the Liebermans? (chapter 16)
20. When Cash is missing, Lincoln says he wants to go to the dog park anyway. He says that everyone there will care. Do you agree or disagree? Explain your answer. (p. 72)
21. Jilly feels an immediate connection to Ezra. Why do you think that is? (p. 75)
22. Lottie accepts Jilly more easily than Grover does. What makes it easier to accept a new person into your life? What makes it harder? (Depending on your classroom community, this might be best done as a writing activity. Take care to allow students the choice to share or not, depending on their situations.)
23. What clues has the author given that foreshadow what might happen to Panda? (p. 80)
24. Like Kaleb, as we get older and take on new roles, we might find ourselves working with others who are not necessarily our friends. Has this happened to you yet? What advice might you give Kaleb or someone else in this situation?
25. How does Ezra interpret Kaleb's silence? What do you think Kaleb's silence means? Why do you think this? (p. 87)
26. Why do you think it is easier for Ezra to think of bad possibilities than good? What advice might you give Ezra?
27. Sometimes writers draw out a situation for suspense. Emily Jenkins does this in chapter 23 with Panda's chocolate eating. Which lines add suspense? How might you use this as a model for your own writing?
28. Should Kaleb confess to being the student who lost Germie? Why or why not? (pp. 99–100)
29. How are the families of your class members different? Brainstorm some ideas to celebrate the differences in everyone's families. This might lead to an after-reading celebration!
30. It is surprising to think of vomit as "lucky." Can you think of other situations where something is seen in a way it usually wouldn't be? How might this change the way we look at tough situations? (p. 106)
31. Is Panda really "spectacular" like she says? Why or why not?
32. Write about a time when you said one thing but meant another. (Page 115 has an interaction between Kaleb and Ezra that could be a great mentor text.)
33. Do you think Kaleb and Ezra have to talk about all the unsaid things between them? Why or why not? (p. 116)
34. Ezra feels as though "he's finally back at home." What does he mean by this? Write about what home feels like for you.



Questions and Activities After Reading

1. There are so many books about dogs that it could be considered its own genre. Host a “Puppy Chow: Dog Book Tasting” for students, where all selections feature dogs. You might prepare or purchase dog-themed snacks to include in this literacy celebration and to encourage students to keep reading books that feature dogs. This could be incorporated into a book club or independent reading as a follow-up activity. Some possible titles to include:
 - *No More Dead Dogs* by Gordon Korman
 - The Shiloh series by Phyllis Reynolds Naylor
 - *Love That Dog* by Sharon Creech
 - *The Incredible Journey* by Sheila Burnford
 - *Where the Red Fern Grows* by Wilson Rawls
 - *Dogsong* by Gary Paulsen
 - *My Life in Dog Years* by Gary Paulsen
2. According to the book, Brooklyn has a law that dogs must be on leashes. What are the dog laws in your community? These might include neighborhood ordinances, city, or state laws.
3. Invite a community speaker into the classroom. This might be a dog fosterer, a veterinarian, or a representative from a local humane society. If your building allows it, invite them to bring along a dog.
4. The dog park is a community space where dogs and families gather. List some community spaces where folks from your school gather. Consider hosting an event that can bring your school community (and their pets!) together.

Classroom Pet Resources

Having a classroom pet or having animals visit the classroom can impact our students greatly. Research on reading therapy dogs indicates that dogs in the classroom have a positive impact. While dogs in the classroom might require special training or licensing depending on your district and building rules, there are many smaller pets that can be brought into the classroom for students to care for and learn from. Check into these classroom pet resources:

- [Pets in the Classroom](#)
- [A Teacher's Guide to Having Classroom Pets](#) (Petsmart)
- Check with your local pet store or veterinarian offices to see what local resources might exist to help support you in getting or maintaining a school pet.
- For younger students, if live animals are not an option, consider having a set of stuffed reading buddies or “pets” for adoption throughout the school year.



*This guide was prepared by Anna Gotangco Osborn. Anna is a doctoral candidate at the University of Missouri-Columbia and a reading specialist at Jefferson Middle School: A STEAM Academy in Columbia, Missouri.
Jefferson Middle School is an animal-friendly school with a working zoo and a STEAM elective animal sciences class.
Anna's dog Skye attends school with her daily, and Anna plans to have her trained as a reading therapy dog.*



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