

Animal Rescue Team



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Braden North loves animals!

He loves to bring them to school to show his class, and he loves the classroom pets his teacher brings in.

But one day something awful happens. His school principal announces that animals, of any kind, will no longer be allowed in school! Braden must problem solve and come up with a way to bring animals back to school.

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by Linda Jakubowski

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ISBN-

Dedicated to Braden and Raylan

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Chapter 1 The New Rule

I remember the day school stopped being fun for me. It was near the end of last year. Our principal, Mrs. Sanchez, made the following announcement over the intercom:

“Due to the increase of the number of students with allergies here at Wolf School, we will no longer allow students to bring pets or animals of any kind – ever. This rule also applies to classroom pets. We will allow them until the end of the year, but that will be the last of any live critters in our school. Have a good day.”

Have a good day? How could a day be good after such terrible news?

Well now I am in a new grade. Miss Turns is my teacher. She seems to be pretty cool, except the fish tank on the shelf now has board games stacked in it. To look at that old dusty fish tank just makes me so sad!

I’ve always loved animals. I guess looking in my room kind of proves that. I have a dog named Regis, a cat called Queenie, two gerbil twins, Rufus and

Rust, a number of guppies, and a frog named Bumpy. Oh, and a tarantula named Trechie. I'm the kid who is always bringing an animal to school to show my teacher and my class. I'm the one you see poking around in the dirt during recess searching for an interesting bug. But now there's a new rule, a stupid old rule: No animals allowed! I can't seem to help finding a critter, putting it in my pocket and bringing it to school. And that's why I no longer enjoy school. Third grade is no fun, because I'm always getting into trouble.

My name is Braden North, I'm eight years old, and I just can't help bringing live creatures to school. I love the soft warm wiggly feel of a spring worm, or baby toad in my hand. I just can't help it. And that is why here, in my classroom, I'm hoping no one will notice the small garden snake I have wound around my fist in my pants pocket.

"What's that in your pocket, Braden?" Cheri Lee Gomez asked. Cheri Lee is the type of girl that ruins everything.

"Nothing's in my pocket!" I whispered.

"Then why is your hand scurrying around in there?" Cheri Lee said, loud enough to cause Miss Turns to look up from her reading group.

"Braden?" Miss Turns began.

“Miss Turns, I have to go to the bathroom, right now!” I yelled, running from the classroom. On the way to the bathroom, I pushed open an exit door and gently laid the snake in the grass. What a waste of a perfectly good garden snake! Darn that Cheri Lee!

Miss Turns greeted me at the door of the classroom, “There you are Braden, and we are just about to start science. Students get out your science books and turn to Chapter 2 Animal Environments.”

Oh boy, animal environments, but what good would studying this topic be without observing real animals? There had to be a way to get animals back at school, there just had to be, but how?

Miss Turns got that excited look she always gets when she is going to tell us about a new project.

“Boys and girls, as you can see we will be studying animal environments in this next chapter. Before we start, I would like us to come up with an exciting fun project that goes along with this topic. So your homework for tonight is to think of a creative project to help us learn about animal environments. Write a paragraph with your idea, and we will read them to the class tomorrow. Then we will vote for the best one to do as our assignment.”

As we walked out of class, I heard Cheri Lee say how she just knew she would have the best project; in fact, she was boasting how she already had an amazing idea. That Cheri Lee!

Chapter 2 The Idea

As I ran out of school toward the bus, I was so busy thinking about the project that I tripped over the log by the old storage shed. I fell on my knee and blood started to gush out. I pulled a Kleenex from my pocket to hold over my wound and hobbled onto the bus.

“Stupid old storage shed! It’s empty and they should just tear it down!” I muttered to myself.

I didn’t even notice my best friend, Lucas on the bus, because of my knee pain. Plus I was thinking about the new science project. How can you study animal environments when animals are not allowed in school?

“Helloooo, are you there?” My thoughts broke and I glanced at Lucas.

“What happened to your knee?” he asked with concern.

“Oh, I tripped over that log by the old storage shed. That storage shed is useless. I don’t know why it’s still there.” I plunked my book bag down beside Lucas and squeezed in next to him, hitting my wounded knee on the seat in front of us. New blood began to pour out.

“Yeah,” Lucas agreed, “if they did ever use that old shed for anything it would take an awful lot of work to fix it up; probably not worth it.”

I was only half hearing Lucas, as I was watching a huge turquoise bug crawling next to my right foot.

“Wow, look at that Lucas, that’s a beauty!” I grabbed a pen out of my backpack and carefully lifted the bug from the bus floor to examine it. “It looks like he’s searching for a new home.”

Lucas leaned in closer to get a better view of the unusual bug.

“Let’s help it out,” Lucas said. “Here’s our stop.”

We got off the bus and walked to the cool grassy area under the gigantic elm tree across from my house. I slowly lowered my pencil to the craggy bark of the old tree. The turquoise bug scurried up the trunk.

“He looks very happy there,” I sighed. “I wish all lost animals could find a good home.”

“Yeah, now he’s got a comfortable environment,” Lucas chimed in. “We could be animal heroes,” Lucas giggled.

“Animal Rescue Team! Environment Hunters! I love it!” I shouted.

It was then that my idea for our science project began to take hold. What a wonderful science project it would be! We rescue lost animals and help them find their perfect home! But I didn't mention my brainstorm to Lucas, because I needed to think on it some more. How could my class take care of animals while doing research to find their new homes, when animals weren't allowed in school?

As if on cue, blood trickled from my sore knee. I looked down at it and thought of the old storage shed.



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