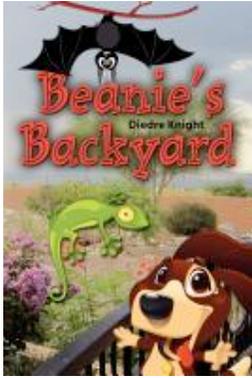


A cartoon bat with large black wings and a white face with large eyes is hanging from a brown branch at the top of the page.

Beanie's Backyard

Diedre Knight





Beanie's Backyard chronicles the remarkable discoveries of a curious young boy who never has to look very far for amazing adventures in a fascinating world where a kid and his furry best friend can find power in friendship and joy in surprise with only a sneaky lizard for an occasional guide.

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First Edition

Chapter One – Sneaky Lizard

On a very hot summer day Beanie was standing on his Spiderman skateboard wondering where his yellow ball had gone. That's when he first heard it: a strange rustling in the leaves just off the patio. And he thought he saw a skinny tail disappearing under the Pomegranate bush. Beanie was off and running through tiny purple flowers in a flash. He had a sneaky lizard to chase!

Beanie peeked beneath the bush. The lizard was busy doing push-ups in the shade. Before Beanie could get any closer the lizard darted away toward the Ocotillo plant. Beanie slowed down a little because he didn't want to run into the Ocotillo and maybe get poked, but before he reached the Ocotillo, the lizard had taken off again. This time the not-so-sneaky lizard ran straight across the grass in plain sight of anyone who might be looking, zigzagging left and right until it had crossed the grass and was back in dirt again. The lizard stopped beside a Saguaro and did a couple more push-ups, as if waiting for Beanie to catch up.

All around the yard they went as the lizard zipped around tomato plants and grape vines, around two Palo Verde trees, up the bridge that crossed a small stream that flowed when it rained, across the patio and back into the yard with Beanie close behind him. Suddenly the lizard raced under the bridge. Beanie almost gave up the chase until he noticed it was very shady under the bridge. He decided to follow. It was indeed very shady and much cooler—and a little dark. The lizard was still crunching through the leaves, getting farther away, but at first Beanie couldn't see a thing. He stood still for a moment while his eyes adjusted. When they did he could hardly believe what he saw. There in the cool shade under the bridge was Beanie's yellow ball. The sneaky lizard had helped him find it!

Chapter Seven – Tomorrow's Grill

Papa was cleaning the patio grill. Beanie loved every delicious morsel ever cooked on that grill. He loved the tantalizing aromas and the big utensils Papa used just for grilling, but this cleaning business was something new. Beanie watched with rapt attention. *There could be only one reason for this*, he decided. *Papa's gonna grill something really good to eat.*

Beanie stood on tiptoe, watching every sweep of the brush over the grill grates. “What are we havin?”

“Tomorrow’s grill.” His papa said.

“Huh?”

“Tomorrow the whole family will come for the holiday.” His papa waved the brush. “This grill is going to get a real workout.”

“Oh.” Beanie was unable to hide his disappointment at having to wait. “Then why are you cleaning it today?”

“So we’re ready when the time comes.”

Beanie frowned and crossed his arms against his chest. “But I’m hungry now!”

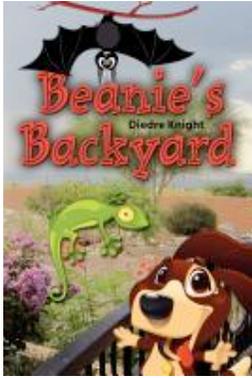
Papa reached for the hose and pointed it right at Beanie, who grinned and ducked. “Here,” Papa said. “We’ll need the porch washed off for tomorrow’s grill.” Handing Beanie the hose, he turned the water on. “There are lots of things worth waiting for, you know.”

As Beanie sprayed the dirt and leaves off the porch, he tried to think of something else worth waiting for and almost couldn’t, until he nearly tripped over Frito. As if hearing Beanie’s thoughts, the small dog wagged his tail.

It had been a torturous wait. The woman at the pound had said the little yellow dog had to stay another day for shots and other stuff when Beanie had wanted to take him home that very day. It had helped that they spent the next few days getting ready at home. They had secured the fence, gotten bowls and a comfy bed and a bucket and a brush for when the dog needed a bath. As it turned out, Frito needed a bath

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nearly as often as Beanie did since they did everything together. He gave the dog a playful squirt and got a smiling bark and a come-get-me tail wag in return. *Yep, Frito was worth waiting for*, Beanie thought. He grinned at his very best friend. “We’re getting ready for tomorrow’s grill!”



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