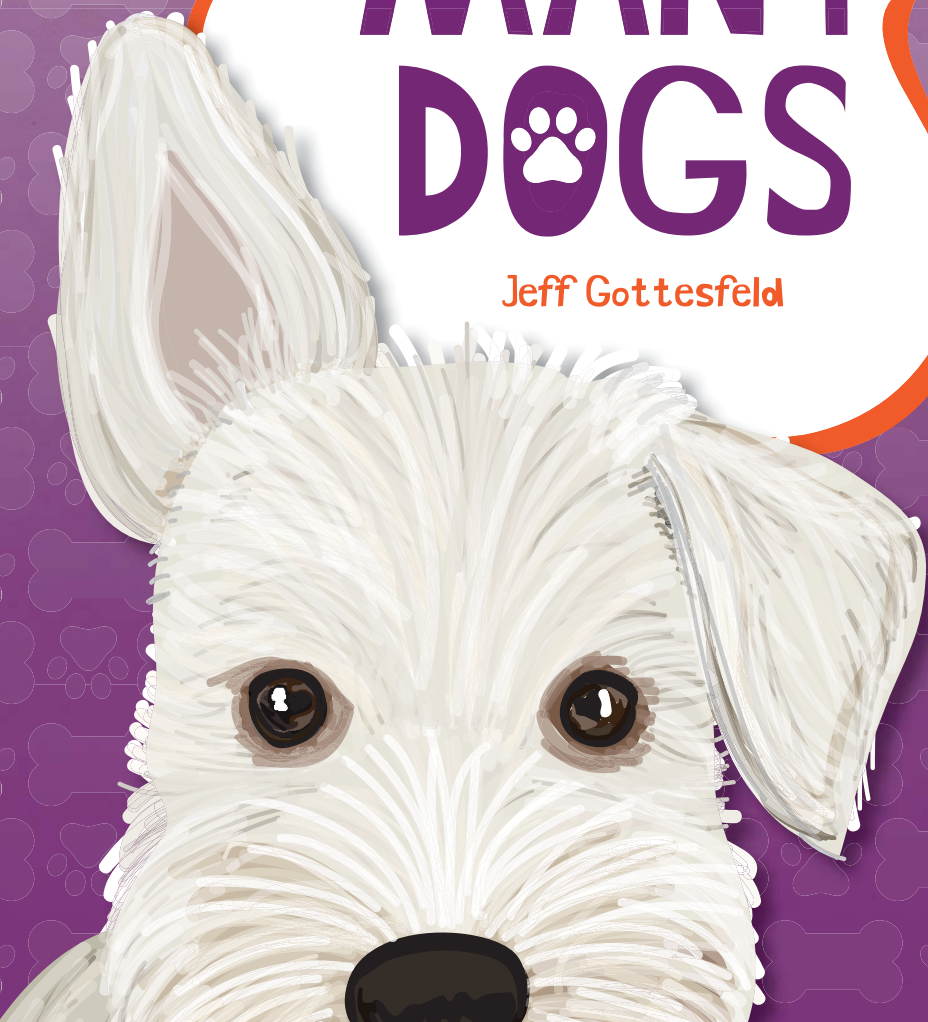
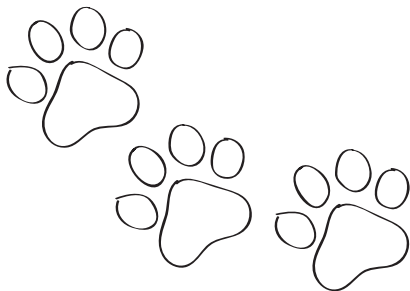


TOO MANY DOGS

Jeff Gottesfeld





MEET THE



Eva

Age: 12

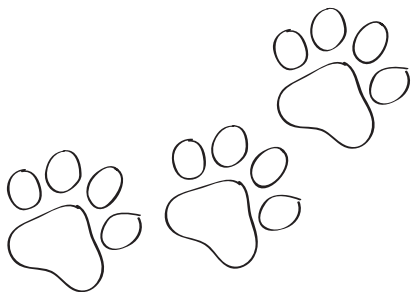
Least Favorite Chore: dusting shelves

Career Goal: to run a charity that feeds hungry kids

Favorite Music: modern Hawaiian hip-hop

Best Quality: level-headed

CHARACTERS



carmen

Age: 11½

Greatest Fear: being alone outside after dark

Special Talent: can say hello in 28 different languages

Favorite School Subject: geography

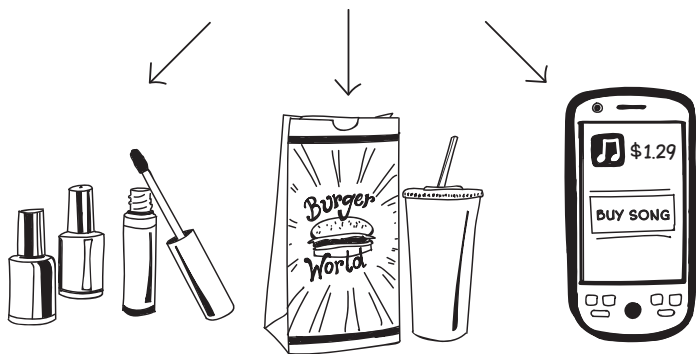
Best Quality: cooperative

1 MONEY!

Eva White pushed her dark, curly hair off her forehead. Then she looked up at her mom. “Can I have ten dollars?”

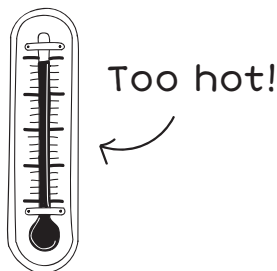
“Ten bucks?” Mrs. White frowned. “What do you need it for?”

Things \$10 can buy



Eva's best friend, Carmen Flores, spoke up. Her voice was soft. "Stuff. It costs a lot to be a teen these days."

The summer sun was hot and bright. Mrs. White walked to the kitchen window and pulled down the shade. Then she laughed.



"That's funny. Neither of you is a teen yet. You're in sixth grade. Anyway, you two know the deal. Your mom and I agree, Carmen. If you need shoes, we pay. Books, we will get them. New apps, we'll discuss it. When I was your age—"

Eva held up a hand. "Mom?"



“Yes?”

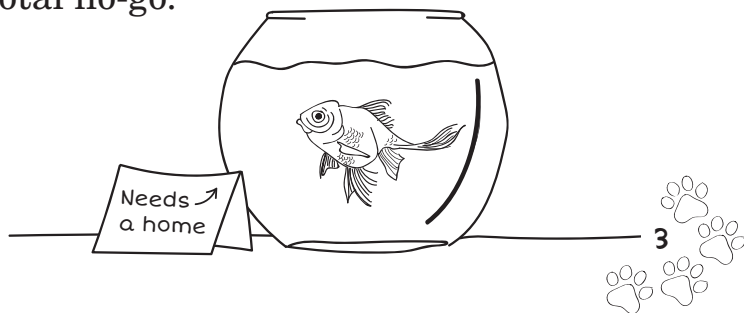
“I’m sorry to cut in like this. But when you say, ‘When I was your age?’ That was a *really* long time ago.”

Everyone cracked up, even Mrs. White.

Eva’s and Carmen’s parents were also best friends. They agreed on everything. Often, they went to plays together. Cooking was their favorite hobby.

Their moms had another thing in common. They didn’t let the girls have pets.

“You’re too young.” That is what Eva’s mom always said. “Learn to be responsible. Then we can talk about it.” Until then, they couldn’t even have goldfish. It was too bad. Eva and Carmen wanted pets. But it was a total no-go.



“Look, Mom,” Eva went on. “It’s just to go to Chill. With our buds.”



Chill was the local frozen yogurt place. Their friends met up there most days. Eva and Carmen wanted to go too. But their moms said Chill was a waste of money.

Mrs. White looked away for a moment. Then she turned back to the girls. “Okay. I get it. You want spending money. But you need to find a way to earn it.”

Eva sighed. Her mom did not get it. There were few jobs for kids their age. No one they knew cut lawns or even babysat. High school kids got all those jobs.

“What can we do?” Eva asked.



“Figure it out,” Mrs. White said. “Here.” She dug into her pocket for a twenty-dollar bill. Then she put it on the kitchen table. “If you can earn twenty dollars, I’ll match it.”

She left the room. The cash stayed on the table.

Carmen winked at Eva. “I say we grab it and go to Chill.”

Eva shook her head. “Nope. I want us to earn it. And I think I know how.”

What’s better?



or

