

THE ADVENTURES OF ELVIS THE PUG

Bullies are Bad...

KIDS R KOOL!!!

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so much more*

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*Special thanks
and input from*

Dan and Delores Elles

Awesome Parents and Grandparents.

Daniel David Elles

VOLUME II.

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Original illustrations are by Danica Smith. Others are "open sourced clip art" (openclipart.org) and/or otherwise are free.

Edited by Dominic Fiordilino: 5th Grade

ABOUT THE SERIES

The Adventures of Elvis the Pug is a children's educational series – with chapters and illustrations – for the ages of 7-to-11 (Grades 2-5). In order to accommodate the various reading levels of each child, there is a glossary and an appendix in the back.

This series follows the educational premise laid by Walt Disney, Dr. Seuss and Sesame Street that kids can learn more about school subjects and family values through other kids and fictional characters.

That's why the editing and illustrations are done by elementary students: Danica Smith, 4th Grade and Dominic Fiordilino, 5th Grade. However, Elvis is not fictional. He's real. And that can be confirmed by the 3,000-plus kids he engaged during the March 2016 National Reading Month.

That's right. While each story is told in an informative and exciting manner, 4th Grader Danica illustrates the handsome Pug puppy, Elvis, learning about science, math, geography, animals, etc. And, 5th Grader Dominic, edits.

Every book is full of twists and surprises that will certainly capture your kid's interest to learn valuable information, based on facts, along with cherished life lessons in these fiction-based stories. Moreover, each book is no more than 150 pages. That makes for a quick and easy read to provide a feeling of accomplishment and encourage children to continue reading. Most picture books are too simple and chapter books are too long. Every book, in the Elvis the Pug series, is just right.

DEDICATION

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*Dedicated to all the victims of bullying
and especially children with: ADHD,
Anxiety, Asperger, Autism, Depression,
Down's, Dyslexia, Stuttering, etc.*

*YOU can make OUR world – through
love; not hate – a better place to live. And
remember to use whatever gifts you may
have to help others. We are all more similar
than we are different. There is no “normal”.*

DON'T BE A BULLY. . .

BE A FRIEND!!!

=====

ABOUT BULLYING!

Bullying is not just an American problem. It's a worldwide problem that needs more attention. Not just by our schools – where bus drivers, teachers and principals are constantly under intense pressure and difficult situations – but by parents, caregivers, coaches, babysitters, etc.

In the U.S., October is National Bullying Prevention Month. And, in the U.K., November has an Anti-Bullying Week. These are excellent; however, anti-bullying should be a theme: EVERY DAY! That's why, after reading the facts below, I wrote this follow-up book in the *Elvis the Pug* series with my niece and nephew. Some U.S. facts:

- National Education Association estimates 160,000 children miss school every day due to fear of attack or intimidation.
- 56% of students have witnessed bullying at school.
- 71% of students report incidents of bullying as a problem.
- Harassment and bullying have been linked to 75% of school-shooting incidents.
- By age 14 less than 30% of boys and 40% of girls will talk to their peers about bullying.
- Those in the lower grades reported being in twice as many fights as those in the higher grades

Again, that's why I wrote this book. We need to educate Our Elementary Kids – before it's too late – so they can learn there is no "normal": Now! Today! For me, the best way is by an engaging and entertaining fiction story based in my hometown of St. Clair, Michigan.

THANK YOU!

Elvis and I want to thank all of the Elementary Students, Principals, Teachers and Board Members that made Volume I: Lost in Canada such a big hit.

Amanda McCarthy, Lakeshore Public Schools

Greg Scott, Roseville School Board

Principal Elizabeth Netschke, Violet Elementary

Principal Michael Domagalski, Palms Elementary

Principal Wayne Johnson, Fountain Elementary

Principal Eric Williamson, Warren Siersma Elementary

Andrea George, Warren Siersma Elementary

Principal Cindy Sam, Rodgers Elementary

Principal George Lewis, Masonic Heights Elementary

Nicole Dumbro, Masonic Heights Elementary

Principal Teresa Tomala, Kaiser Elementary

Joyce Muszall, Kaiser Elementary

Principal Daniel Schultz, Huron Park Elementary

Shannon Tocco, Huron Park Elementary

LEARN WITH ME...

Hello, boys and girls! I am Elvis the Pug. I'm just a little puppy who wants to help my friends learn some really awesome things that will certainly make your parents proud.



*Please read about my adventures and learn with me. If you're uncertain about a word or want to find out more cool stuff, then just go to the **Glossary** and **Appendix**; in the back.*

*Also, if you really want to learn more, then just have your mom or dad sign up on my website at: **www.IamElvisthePug.com**. When you become one of my fans, you can find out so many things and play some really great learning games. Plus, I'll send you a personally autographed photo and some really cool things!*

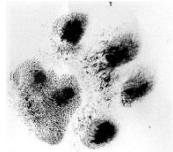
Thanks for taking the time to read about my adventures. I assure you that there will be much more – really exciting adventures – to come.

KEEP ON READING!

Your pal and friend,

Elvis

www.Iamelivsthepug.com



SYNOPSIS

Elvis is a beautiful brown Pug puppy who was recently adopted by his new family in the small town of St. Clair, Michigan.

In Volume I – “Lost in Canada” – Elvis, instead of a good night’s sleep, dreamt that he was swept away by the rugged St. Clair River and found himself over 30 miles away from home, in Canada. The poor little Pug befriended several animals, who helped Elvis – through lifetime experiences – safely arrive home.

In Volume II – “Bullies are Bad” – the new adventure takes Elvis to the family farm (on the outskirts of St. Clair) where he must protect the children and help them learn that all “Bullies are Bad!”

Can Elvis protect the lost kids from the animal bullies?

Can Elvis influence the kids to learn that “bullying is bad”!

PREFACE.

In the small town of St. Clair, Michigan, there lived a very fine family, in a huge house, along the beautiful St. Clair River.

Three months ago, Mr. and Mrs. Jones moved to the enchanting town, in Michigan's Blue Water Area, with their ten year old twins: Dominic and Danica.

Dominic, a strong and stocky boy, loved to play soccer and Danica, a delightful and charming girl, enjoyed drawing pictures of animals and dinosaurs.

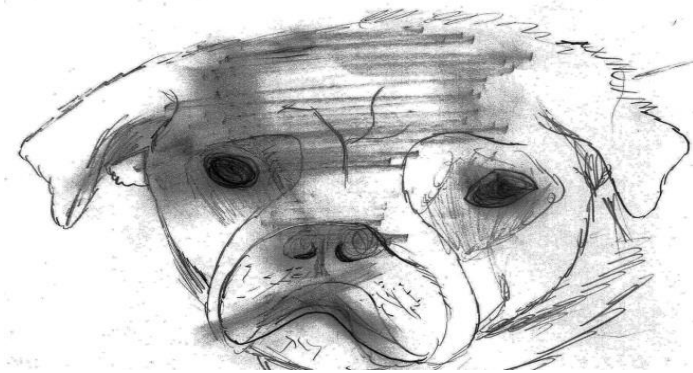
The twins truly loved their new home's huge bedrooms that were filled with awesome toys and amazingly lifelike stuffed animals. When they weren't inside playing games, they would go outside and play in their long backyard. And, if they weren't on the swings or trampoline, they would play tag and hide-and-go-seek.

While looking out her big bay windows, Mrs. Jones would often observe her children happily playing with their neighborhood friends. And,

when out on the patio, she would frequently warn them about getting too close the river.

All summer long, the twins and their friends had so much fun. Even Crazy, their orange-striped cat, had joined in the festivities. Yet, although everything was near perfect, something just wasn't quite right.

In some weird sort of way, something was somehow missing. But no one could put a finger on it. Then, Mr. Jones (St Clair's new Chief of Police) nailed it! He found the missing link. And that happened to be the surprise he brought home that summer:



"ELVIS THE PUG"

From Volume I: *Lost in Canada.*

“WAKE UP! WAKE UP, ELVIS! WAKE UP!”



The severely shaking Pug, thinking he was in doggy heaven, opened up his huge puppy eyes. He had no idea what God looked like, but he was sure that the person yelling wasn't God.

Danica continued, “Elvis, you had a nightmare. You've really been rattled for the past twenty minutes, or so.”

Uh. . .What. . .Where am I, Elvis thought, jumping up to his feet.

“Looks like he had a bad dream, Mom.”

“I think you're right, Danica. Do you want some breakfast, Elvis?”

“Look! He’s not even eating. That must have been one really bad nightmare.”

Elvis couldn’t eat. Not now. He wasn’t sure if he was dead or alive. So, he ran past his bowl and headed straight for Danica’s bedroom.

And there it was. Everything!

All of the animal friends that he had met in Canada were all in Danica’s room. But...none of them were speaking. The lifelike animals were just sitting around, stuffed, in her bedroom. Could it be they were just stuffed animals?

He was right.

When Crazy the Cat nudged him from behind and simply meowed – with no words spoken – the confused Pug puppy assumed that he was actually alive. Then, his eyes lit up like a Christmas tree. And, without hesitation, he started jumping up and licking the twins. Elvis thought:

I certainly am the luckiest Pug in the world! I really am alive! Was it all a dream?



PART ONE.

Back to School!

CHAPTER 1.

It was just a dream.

"Elvis, what's wrong? You're home! You're okay!" Danica consoled the confused Pug puppy.



Startled and suddenly aware that he was actually home, in St. Clair, Elvis gleefully jumped into her outstretched arms and continuously licked Danica's pretty young face.

"OMG! I mean, Oh My Gosh," Dominic briefly paused. "You'd think that Elvis thought he died in that terrible storm last night."

Elvis immediately jumped onto Dominic's lap and began delicately nibbling and licking his ears; while thinking:

YES! I mistakenly thought that I nearly died in the river. How silly? Now, I know it was all just a crazy dream.

"Dad, do you think dogs dream? You know, like us?" Danica asked.

"I'm not sure. Perhaps your mother knows."

"Well, kids, during sleep dogs have similar brain wave patterns as people. I've also read that they go through the same stages of electrical activity called *Rapid Eye Movement or REM*. So...that means that they do dream."

"What's *REM*?" Danica and Dominic asked.

"Honey, can you make it easier for us all to understand?" Mr. Jones smiled.

"Okay, I'll try, she paused. "Dreams are a series of images, ideas, and emotions that happen during stages of sleep. That's when the brain's activity will increase and, consequently, we experience *REM* – where the eyes will rapidly move when we're sleeping – and we dream."

"What are *stages of sleep*?" Danica asked.

"First, depending on your age, we actually sleep many hours. So, when you two (she pointed to Dominic and Danica) were babies, you both slept about 16 hours a day..."

"Wow!" Dominic interrupted. "So, we actually slept 16 hours out of the 24 hours in a single day, Mom?"

"Yep. And now, you both sleep about 12 hours per day. Right?"

"I know! I know!" Danica interjected. "If there are 24 hours in one day, then 12 hours would be 50%. That means we sleep one-half of an entire day."

"Correct!"

"But why do you (Dominic pointed to his parents) seem to sleep so much less?"

"Great question," Mrs. Jones replied. "When we get older, we don't need as much sleep."

"Why not?"

"Well, when you're young, your body requires more rest to recover from all the activities you do every day. And, during your sleep, your body rests and your brain stores all the new information you learned and replaces certain chemicals so your brain can grow."

"Let's put it this way. Do you feel tired when you don't get enough sleep?" Mr. Jones added.

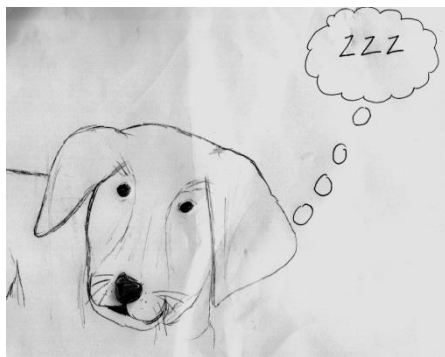
"Yeah, Dad, I do," Danica answered.

"Me, too," Dominic said.

"Now, you know why we always make sure you get your naps and go to bed early. When you sleep, your brain gets a break to absorb all the information that you learned during the day."

"So, when we sleep, our body grows and our brain learns. Is that right, Dad?"

"Correct, Danica! You really learn so much more when you're not tired."



"Okay, I understand all of that. But how many hours do dogs sleep?" Dominic asked.

"I'm not sure, Son. Let's ask Mom."

"Well, It all depends on their breed and age. But, I do know that most young dogs, like Elvis, will sleep over 18 hours per day."

"That's really a lot of sleep."

"Well, Son, he's still a puppy and getting sleep helps him to learn, too. Just like you."

"Mom, will he sleep less when he gets older," Danica asked.

"Perhaps. For most dogs, their age is seven times that of a human. So, when Elvis turns two in human years, that means he will actually be fourteen in dog years. And, when he's three...?"

"21," they both said.

"Yep. 2×7 is 14 and 3×7 is 21," Mr. Jones, answered, while happily winking to his wife,

"So, like us, puppies sleep a lot so they can learn. And they also dream, too. Right, Mom?"

"That's right, Dominic."

"Then, that means they also have bad dreams and nightmares, too. Right?"

"Hold on, dear. Is my tough boy worried about bad dreams?"

"Maybe?"

"I am," Danica said.

"Alright. Sleeping is good for kids and for puppies, like Elvis, so brains can grow and learn while sleeping. Am I Right?"

"Right!"

Mr. Jones smiled at his twins, again winked at his wife, and added, "I need to make sure that you know dreams aren't real. That includes *bad dreams* and *nightmares*. Okay?"

"Yeah, Dad. I sometimes have bad dreams." Dominic answered. "But, now that I know Elvis also dreams and that dreams aren't real...I really feel a lot better."

"Me, too, Dad," Danica paused. "I hate bad dreams. And, since dogs can have nightmares and it's just a part of sleeping, I feel better."

"You make me so proud."

"I agree, kids. Sleeping is a good thing and all dreams – good or bad – are just *dreams*. I'm happy we discussed this."

"Thanks, Mom," the twins replied,

Just then, as the Jones family gave a big "family hug" to each other, Elvis thought:

Wow! I really love my family. They know that my first adventure – Lost in Canada – was just a dream! But, I wonder if Crazy the Cat and other animals also dream. Like me?

After their family embrace, Mrs. Jones pointed towards the kids' bathroom and said, "I need you two ready for your first day of school tomorrow. So, get your evening baths and make sure to wash up good."

"Okay, Mom."

"Yeah! That means behind the ears and your knees and elbows, too!"

"We will, Dad. Tomorrow is our first day in our new school. So, we'll be clean," Dominic said while Danica shook her head.

CHAPTER 2.

The first day.

Earlier that summer, the Jones family had moved to the lovely little town of St. Clair, along the beautiful St. Clair River.

Although they were newcomers to the Blue Water Area, it was like a second home to Dominic and Danica. That's because Mr. Jones was raised in St. Clair and Mrs. Jones grew up in nearby Marine City.

Mr. Jones' father had been the St. Clair's Chief of Police for thirty-two years. So, when his father retired that summer, Mr. Jones became the new Chief. And, when Mrs. Jones took the job as the school district's new counselor, everyone was excited about St. Clair.

That excitement grew more when, one warm summer day, Mr. Jones brought home his surprise: Elvis the Pug!

As most kids would be very nervous to start a new school in the 4th Grade, the ten-year-old twins had no problem. In fact, their summer of

playing games and having fun with the neighborhood kids gave them the confidence to climb aboard the 7:30 am bus for the first day of school at St. Clair's Eddy Elementary.



"Hello," Mrs. Johnson, the 56-year-old grandmother of six and cautious bus driver, said as the twins stepped onto the bus. "I don't want to be late for the first day of school. Be careful. Safety is first."

"For sure, Ma'am," Danica, climbing up the steps of the yellow school bus, replied. "My Dad is the new Chief of Police for St. Clair, and he always says *safety first*, too."

"He's right. And that must be your brother behind you," Mrs. Johnson, rubbing her chin and gazing at Dominic, commented.

"Yep. We're twins." Danica smiled.

"I'm Dominic and that's Danica," the strong and stocky boy replied.

The twins promptly found an open seat near some of their summertime friends. Everyone was having fun and eager to begin their first day of school. However, along the way, there was one more stop to make.

"Why are we stopping?" Jimmy Shaw asked. "That house is haunted and. . ."

Jeffrey Styles interrupted, in his loud and obnoxious voice, "I know it's haunted! Nobody has lived there for years!"



"Well, my schedule isn't made by me. And it says our last stop is here," Mrs. Johnson replied.

Just then, the bus doors opened and a rather large, but timid and pale looking, ten-year-old boy slowly climbed up the bus steps carrying an old-style, 1990's "Superman Lunchbox".

"Hello. What's your name?" Mrs. Johnson asked the young lad.

"Mm. . .mmm. . .my name is . . .," the shy boy significantly stuttered. Unable to continue for about three seconds, he tried again, "I. . .I am. . . Her. . .Her. . .Herman."

"Well there, Herman, welcome aboard," the kind bus driver replied. "Find a seat and we'll be at Eddy Elementary in about ten minutes."

Just then, Jimmy Shaw yelled out, from his seat in the back of the bus, "Herman? What kind of name is that? I haven't heard that before."

Again, Jeffrey Styles interrupted his best buddy in an even louder and sarcastic voice, "I have! My parents and I watch reruns of *The Munsters*. He even looks like Herman Munster.

"I know that show!" Jimmy Shaw shouted. "He even lives in the haunted house..just like on *The Munsters*."

The kids that knew of the famous 1960's TV show, that was still in reruns today, erupted in laughter. The other kids – who never saw the TV show - followed along and laughed even louder.

Herman, with his head, meekly bowed in embarrassment, tried to find an open seat on the now moving school bus. However, the only open seats were in the back of the bus.

So, as Herman made his way to the rear, avoiding eye contact from the chuckling kids, he tried to sit on the first open seat. But it was not to be. Nobody would let him sit. And little did he know that the seats at the back of the bus seemed to be “reserved” for the followers of the two bullies: Jimmy Shaw and Jeffrey Styles.

Some called them the *J&J bullies* and others the *J.S. bullies*. But it didn't matter what initials were in front of the word: *bullies*. They were both mean and disrespectful kids.

Just then, Danica told Dominic to go to an open back seat. She knew that Dominic was no bully and that nobody would mess with him. Not only was he very strong, but every kid knew his father was the St. Clair Chief of Police.

Because they were twins, they often thought alike; and Dominic knew why his sister asked him to move.

So, after he found an open seat near the rear of the bus, Danica interrupted the bullying laughter and asked the stuttering new kid to sit alongside her.

Without saying a word, afraid of his stutter, he tightly grabbed his Superman Lunchbox and sat down next to Danica.

Now, with the moving school bus a little quieter, the two bullies tried to intimidate Dominic. But that didn't work. When the tough ten-year-old stood up, stared into their eyes and flexed his rather defined muscles, the *J&J bullies* actually shut up. They wanted no part of another kid that could, just maybe, *take them on*.

And the bus ride went without incident.

CHAPTER 3.

School days.



Although on that first day of school, the kids safely arrived at Eddy Elementary, the bullying of Herman never stopped. In fact, in spite of the twins support, the bullying seemed to get worse. And, as time went on, there was little that they could do about it.

Dominic was confident that, if necessary, he could beat the bullies up: one-at-a-time or two-at-a-time. It didn't matter to him. Sure, Jimmy Shaw and Jeffrey Styles were bigger, but Mr. Jones taught him to box. And he was tougher and stronger than them.

However, his dad warned him about using violence to resolve problems. He would say:

I know you can fight, Son. But first, always tell your teachers about the bad guys. And remember that the smart person uses intellect to avoid fights. That means, although you may

want to hurt a bad person, fighting is dangerous and may not be the best answer.

Dominic just couldn't always be there to help the stuttering Herman. And lunchtime didn't make the situation any better. Where most kids were provided with prepaid lunch cards for hot lunch meals, Herman continued to bring his old-fashioned Superman Lunchbox.

Not only did his lunchbox make the kids chuckle; but, out of fear of being bullied by Jimmy and Jeffrey, the kids wouldn't even let Herman sit at their table. That's why he often ate all alone in the back corner of the cafeteria without a single person to talk to or share with.



Some days, Danica and Dominic would go and sit with sad Herman, but the other kids would laugh and say mean things for everybody to hear. They made fun of Herman's name and they all said he was *spooky* because he lived in the haunted house on the outskirts of St. Clair.

After a couple of weeks of this nonsense, the twins told their parents about Herman and the mean bullying he received. At first, they explained it was just Jimmy Shaw and Jeffrey Styles. But now, it seemed like every kid was joining in to mock the poor boy.

CHAPTER 4.

What is normal?

When their parents asked why *this nice boy was being bullied*, the twins talked about how the other kids said *Herman is not normal*. They spoke of his haunted house, his speech disorder and how he couldn't read books like they did.

"Haunted House? There's no such thing!" Mr. Jones exclaimed. "And, if anybody doesn't believe you, then you tell them your dad ran all the ghosts right-out-of-town."

"You did, Dad?" Dominic asked.

"No, silly. Your father is trying to be funny."

"So, Mom, there's no such thing as ghosts and monsters?"

"No, Son. There's not."

"Then, what about Herman Munster and the haunted house they lived in? You know, on TV?"

"Herman Munster? That was a TV show when your dad and I were kids."

"But, Cable has reruns, and kids say that Herman is just like *a Munster*," Danica replied.

"Yeah, Mom. He's rather pale, really shy, and quite larger than most kids," Danica said.

"Okay, kids. That was just a TV show, and it's not real. Do you understand?"

"Yes, Mom," the twins replied.

"And there's no such thing as haunted houses and monsters or munsters, right?"

"Yes, Mom."

"Now, let's get serious and talk about the kids saying that Herman is *not normal*. Okay?"



The twins nodded their heads in agreement and Mrs. Jones, the counselor, asked, "Danica, do you know why he speaks like that?"

"I heard it's called a stutter."

"That's right, dear. But do you know why Herman stutters?"

Danica looked at Dominic, who just shrugged his shoulders, and said, "I don't have a clue."

"Well kids, it's a myth and . . ."

Dominic interrupted, "I know. A myth is a belief that people think is true, but it's not true."

"Yeah, Mom. And there are no facts to support the myth. Right?"

"You're both right. and I'm really impressed. A *myth* is something people say, and many other people will believe that to be true."

"Correct! It's a myth that people stutter because they are not normal, or they are too nervous, or it's a problem that is passed on from their parents," Mr. Jones added.

"So, Mom, it's a myth that he's not normal?"

"That's right, Danica. Scientists don't know why people stutter. And, in fact, many people outgrow their stutter."

"Outgrow? Really?" Dominic asked.

"Yep. There are so many famous people who stuttered in their youth," Mr. Jones said.

"Like who?"

"Well, Son, I'll tell you about a few that you probably know."

"Okay, Dad. I'm all ears."



"Do you like the *Star Wars* movies, kids?"

"Heck, yeah!" Dominic and Danica answered.

"Well, Darth Vader is the voice of actor James Earl Jones. And he stuttered in his youth."

"Don't forget about their favorite, like Bruce Willis and Julia Roberts," Mrs. Jones added.

"I love Julia Roberts. She is so beautiful and in so many movies" Danica said.

"And I love Bruce Willis! He's in *Die Hard*, and a tough guy who hates bullies...just like me."

"I know you hate bullies, Dominic," Mrs. Jones cutely smiled and winked at her husband. "Danica, do you know why Herman doesn't read like you and how he gets the words mixed up?"

"Not me. Do you, Dominic?"

"Not a clue!"

"It's called *dyslexia*. And, just like many scientists don't know why people stutter, they don't understand why people read differently."

"Uh? Read differently? How's that?" Dominic asked. The confused boy continued, "I see a word and pronounce it...just like I see it. Isn't that called *phonetics*? Right, Dad?"

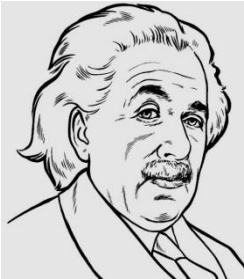
"Well, Son, it's not all that simple. Some people don't see words like we do. For them, the word appears different. So, they can't do the phonetics or the syllables like we taught you."

"Does that mean they're not as smart as the rest of us?" Danica asked her Dad.

"Not at all. Some of the smartest people in the world were dyslexic."

Dominic asked, "Dad, are there also famous people that are dyslexic? You know, that can't read, normal, like us?"

"Oh my gosh. There are so many. How about Jennifer Aniston, Jim Carrey, Whoopi Goldberg, Keanu Reeves, Vince Vaughn..."



Mrs. Jones interrupted her husband, "Honey, it's not only actors. Don't forget: Leonardo Da Vinci, Thomas Edison, Albert Einstein, Alexander Graham Bell and even Danica's favorite, Picasso."

"Wow! They're all geniuses," Dominic said.

"So, what you're saying is that..." Danica, clutching her little hands hard and holding them tight to her chest, paused. And, after failing to hold back her tears slowly dripping down, she continued, "Herman is not dumb? He's not stupid? He's really just as normal...as us?"

Mr. Jones, realizing that his kind-hearted daughter was somehow feeling guilty for her classmates' bullying behavior towards Herman, said, "I know what you're thinking, sweetheart. I really do and you're so right."

He then looked over at their tough boy and saw that he had even larger tears rolling down, like a small waterfall, on his bright red cheeks. He refused to make a sound. For such a strong boy, he certainly had a heart as wide as an ocean. But, he hated to cry in front of others.

Mrs. Jones, also on the same page as her husband, said, "Twins, you're now realizing that all those terrible things are not true and the myths, that your classmates spread, are false."

"So, that means that Herman is normal," Dominic paused while wiping a long tear that had fallen from his handsome face. Like us?"

"That's right, Son. Just because someone may stutter, not read like you, or not act like you; it doesn't mean they don't have the same heart and soul and intelligence...just like you."

Danica – noticing that her twin brother was still silently shedding tears, her mom was choking-up and that Elvis had somehow sensed

their sorrow – innocently asked, “Dad, what should we do about Herman?”

Mr. Jones, also brushing a tear aside, answered, “I don’t know, kids. Honey? Help?”

Mrs. Jones, the sophisticated school district counselor, softly replied, “I think you should invite Herman to play with you. You know...during recess and even after school.”

“See that, kids!” Mr. Jones, hiding his emotions, exclaimed. “That’s why your Mom is so smart. Maybe Herman has some awesome skills that can help during your school games?”

Dominic, scratching his short brown hair and sweeping several tears from his red face, replied, “I don’t know, Dad. I never see him when we play soccer, tag, or anything during recess.”

“I do, Mom!” Danica excitedly replied. “When we skip rope and stuff, sometimes I’ll see him over by the slide. Over on the playground.”

“Okay, then. Just try to do your best. I’ll be very proud of you. I mean that.”

“As will I,” Mr. Jones said. “No matter what.”

CHAPTER 5.

The bullying gets worse.

The twins sincerely took their parents suggestion. But that didn't work.

Even when they approached Herman, he couldn't get the courage to play with them. He felt more like they were "just being nice". Besides, because of his stutter, he was very shy and hated to talk.

Then, one day, while Dominic was playing soccer and Danica was skipping rope, poor Herman was all by himself and continuously crying underneath the playground slide.

Although the slide was on the playground, it was a considerable distance from the soccer field. However, it was only about 10 yards from where Danica was happily skipping rope.

"Wait! Hold on!" Danica shouted to her companions. She picked up the rope, handed it to her best friend, Brittany, and continued, "I need to see what's up with Herman."

"Herman?" Brittany asked.

"*Herman the Munster* from the haunted house," Kitty interjected. "He's from a bad family and his father is really mean. My Dad told me that he has all kinds of guns. He's a bad guy."

"Yep, I heard my parents talking about that house and about his father," Abby commented.

"Yeah, yeah, yeah," Danica adamantly replied. "You all don't know a *myth* from *reality*."

"Myth?" Kitty asked.

"That's right!" Danica replied. "A myth is something that people spread around. But it's not true and not based on any facts."

"Really?" Brittany asked.

"Yeah, a myth is just like a rumor."

"I know! It's like when Jimmy Shaw told everyone that he saw Kitty holding hands with Jeffery Styles," Abby said.

"EEEWW! NO WAY!! EEEWW!!!" Kitty screamed, and the other girls shockingly shook their heads.

"True, or not?" Danica asked.

"Of course," Kitty paused. N-O-T! NOT!!!"

"Well, now you know the difference between *myth and reality*," Danica grinned.

"I get the *myth and reality* thing," Brittany said. "And I also support Danica. If she wants to see Herman, let her go. We should respect that."

While satisfyingly smiling back at Brittany and Abby, Danica walked across the playground to the slide where poor Herman's sadness was on full display.

"What's wrong, Herman?"

"Hi. . .Dan. . .Dan. . .Danica," the innocently crying kid, trying to hide his tears, reluctantly responded without any eye contact.

"Why are you crying? Please tell me, and I don't care about your stutter. I don't."

"You. . .rr. . .ree. . .really don't?" Herman, lifting his face from his shrugging shoulders and trying to make soft eye contact, answered.

"No, silly! Not at all. Do you know what my parents said? You know? About stuttering?"

"Nn. . .nnn. . .No."

"They said that it has nothing to do with intelligence or nervousness. The whole world's best scientists don't know why people stutter."

"Th. . .thh. . .they. . .don't?"

"They don't! And get this?"

"Wh. . . Wha. . .What?"

"Many kids outgrow their stutter."

"Th. . .thh. . .they. . .do?"

"Yeah! And guess what else they told me?"

"Wh. . .Wha. . .What?"

"They said that many famous people had stuttered at one time or another!"

"Rr. . .Rre. . .Really?"

"Yeah! Do you know famous actors like Bruce Willis and Julia Roberts?"

"I. . . I. . .do."

"Well, they stuttered!"

"Th. . .thh. . .they did?"

"Yep. And Darth Vader, from Star Wars, stuttered. His real name is James Earl Jones and everyone loves his voice. Now...they even pay him millions of dollars to him speak."

With a smile from ear to ear, the surprised Herman said, "I never knew that."

Shocked at his sudden stop of stuttering, Danica replied, "Herman! Did you hear that?"

"No. I didn't. What?"

"You didn't stutter!"

"I didn't?"

"No! And you didn't stutter now, too."

"Thank you, Danica."

"Now, you tell me why you're crying"



Herman, in his sometimes stuttering voice, explained that the two bullies took his lunchbox and ate some of his food. Then, they hid his

lunchbox in the girls' bathroom and blocked the door. And, the worst part was, that they spit inside a sandwich and wanted him to eat it. Otherwise, they wouldn't give him back his Superman Lunchbox.

"OMG! You didn't eat it, did you?"

"N. . .nn. . .No. That's wh. . why I. . .I. . .I am here n. . .nn. . .now."

"Don't worry. I'll tell Dominic and we'll get that lunchbox back for you."

"You ca. . .ca. . .can?"

"Absolutely! Those bullies are worried that Dominic can take them on because he's so strong. I'll go in the bathroom and get your lunchbox. And Dominic will handle the bullies."

"Th. . .Th. . .Thank you."

"Don't mention it. But, I want you to know one more thing."

"Wh. . .Wha. . . What?"

"You're not dumb or stupid because you can't read like the rest of us."

"I. . .I. . .I'm not?"

"No, silly! You have dyslexia. do many famous people!"

"Like wh . . wh. . .who?"

"Well, do you know famous actors like Jennifer Aniston, Jim Carrey, Whoopi Goldberg, Keanu Reeves and even Vince Vaughn?"

"Ye. . .yea. . .yeah."



"How about geniuses, like Leonardo Da Vinci, Thomas Edison, Albert Einstein, Alexander Graham Bell and Picasso? He's my idol!"

"I. . .I. . .do."

"Well, they're all dyslexic!" Danica firmly stated. Then she grabbed his hand, in a friendly and supportive gesture, while saying, "Herman, they're all just like you!"

And, when Danica told Herman about one of his favorite actors, Tom Cruise [of the Hollywood Education for Literacy Project (H.E.L.P)], he



happily cheered up and his smile shined like the morning sun in a bright blue sky.

She even told Herman that Tom Cruise had once described himself as “functional illiterate” (because of his childhood dyslexia). Then, Herman’s smile seemed to be as wide as the half-mile wide St. Clair River.

With so many famous people having similar issues as he, Herman’s stutter was suddenly slipping away.

Danica just hoped that she could make her classmates feel the same.

PART TWO.
TWO MONTHS
LATER...

CHAPTER 6

Elvis gets invited.

"Good morning, sweetheart," Mrs. Jones softly said, while pulling on Danica's covers.

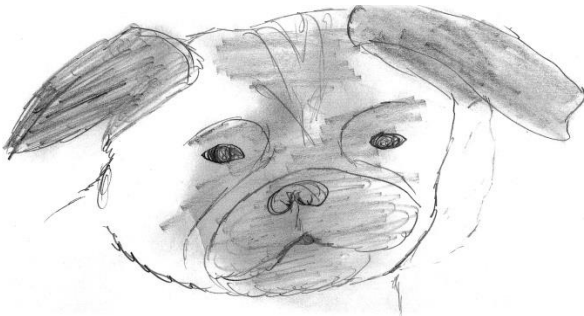
The startled youngster, rubbing the night's sleep from her eyes, answered, "I know, Mom. Today's the school *Field Trip* to Pappa's and Nanna's (Grandpa's and Grandma's) Farm."

"Then, why aren't you up and ready to go?"

"I was. I was," Danica paused. "But, since I was so excited about today...I couldn't sleep well. And I was worried about Elvis."

"Elvis? Why are you worried about him?"

"Because, he knows and he's already upset. Just look at his face."



"Why's that?"

"Mom, if all the kids are going to *The Farm*, he'll know. I just think he won't be happy and he'll miss seeing all the kids."

"What do you mean by *all the kids*?"

"Every school, in our district, is going to *The Farm* today."

"And?"

"And Elvis really loves to play along with everyone. You know how he is, Mom."

"Oh, I see. Why don't I have your father drop Elvis off, at *The Farm*, on his way to work? Would you like that?"

"Really!" Danica, rising and tossing her night blanket to the side of the bed, shouted.

"Well, that settles it. I'll tell your father and he'll take Elvis to be with you and *all the kids*."

"Thank you, Mom! Thanks so much!"

"What's all the commotion?" Dominic asked, after crossing the hallway from his bedroom. "It's almost time to catch the bus and..."

Danica immediately interrupted her twin brother, "Dominic, guess what?"

"What?"

"Mom said that Elvis will be at *The Farm* for today's *Field Trip*! Now, he can see *all the kids* from every school. Isn't that awesome?"

"Sure is! Do you hear that Crazy?" Dominic softly glanced over to the orange-striped cat that had quietly entered the room.

"Okay. I get it." Mrs. Jones knowingly sighed. "Crazy the Cat can also go to *The Farm*."

"MOM!"

"Yes, Dominic."

"YOU'RE SICK!"

"Sick?" Mr. Jones, approaching the kids' upstairs bedrooms, interrupted the conversation. "Your mother never gets sick."

"No, Honey. Kids nowadays say *sick* to mean *awesome*. You know, how we used to say *cool* to really mean *hot*."

"I guess your Mom and I are...S-I-C-K!" Mr. Jones spelled out the word *sick* and laughed.

"Dear, that depends on whether you agree to take Elvis and Crazy to your parents' house this morning. You know, for their big *Field Trip*."

"So, they want Elvis and Crazy to go to *The Farm* today? Is that it?"

"Yeah, Dad!" Danica exclaimed. "Today is the BIG *Field Trip* where all the schools get together. Mom arranged it so they could be at *The Farm*."

"Okay then. I guess I'm SICK!"

"Thanks, Dad," Dominic said. "You Rock!"

"And Rock means..."

"I know that much, Danica," Mr. Jones smiled. "I'm not that old."

And that was that.

Mrs. Jones went to work. Dominic and Danica went to school at Eddy Elementary. And Mr. Jones dropped *Elvis the Pug* and *Crazy the Cat* off at his parents' house: *The Farm*.



CHAPTER 7.

The Farm.

The Jones Family Farm consisted of five hundred acres located on the outskirts of St. Clair City, off of King Road, and only about three miles from the bordering town of Marine City.

The Jones Family Farm was already huge. And the generous land donations from the Greig and Mahn families were necessary to adequately accommodate the awesome animal donations (bison, bovine, deer, llamas, pigs, horses, etc.) from the Allison and Meyers families.

That made The Jones Family Farm one of Michigan's best known animal sanctuaries and a "must see" for everyone! So, today was no exception for the five elementary schools, of the East China School District, to make this their annual *Field Trip*.

The only difference, however, was that today: **ELVIS THE PUG was at *The Farm*.**

PART THREE.

The Field Trip...

CHAPTER 9.

Bullies are everywhere...

Although EVERY principal and teacher is aware of bullying and does their best to prevent it, they simply cannot be everywhere all of the time. That's why bullying happens when they and/or the *grown-ups* are not around. And it also continues on so many school busses.



It's so difficult for bus drivers to prevent bullying while also ensuring safety and keeping their eyes on the road ahead. They definitely try their best, but it's an extremely difficult task and there still seems to be a bully on so many buses throughout America. And, on their way to the annual *Field Trip*, each school bus had its bully.

For the Eddy Elementary School Bus, Herman's bullying was certainly subdued. That's

because Danica sat with Herman, and the *J&J bullies* were worried about Dominic. When the bullies even thought about “acting-up”, Dominic would stare them down and flex his muscles.

However, the other buses didn't have similar kids, like the twins, and each had their own bully. That's why, once on the bus, the bullying targeted the most vulnerable classmates and in the most insulting manner.



For Gearing Elementary, it was a huge 4th Grade kid who would take advantage of their only ADHD (*Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder*) child.

Gearing's principal and teachers did their best to prevent the bullying. They instructed students that ADHD was the most commonly diagnosed disorder that affects over 40 million kids and, just like stuttering and dyslexia, the cause is unknown.

But that didn't matter. The poor kid was still bullied. And, when the bus left the school grounds, it became worse. Many had no idea why they mocked the poor kid and went along.

And Gearing Elementary was not alone.

Both the Belle River and Pine River Elementary Schools each had an Autistic and Asperger child that, when given the chance, was bullied. Again – even though their principals and teachers tried to prevent the behavior – the bullying still happened.

That's why it didn't matter that the other elementary school kids were safely on the bus. Someone seemed to always be bullied.

The East China School District was a strong advocate of anti-bullying – long before it became a national issue – however, it still happened.

The abusive behavior was a worldwide problem and a common factor in every school, on every bus, and throughout every playground. And even worse online. Again, as much as every grown-up tried to address, prevent and stop bullying; it just seemed to keep happening everywhere around the world. And it had to stop.

Danica, sitting next to Herman, recalled how she overheard her parents talking about bullies:

"I knew that bullying was a big problem in our country, but I didn't think we'd have it in our small town," Mr. Jones said.

"Well, it's definitely everywhere and it needs to stop," her mother replied.

"How can we stop it? We just have our two kids and they know better than to bully."

"That's where we need to start...with our own children who, in turn, can help influence their classmates to stop bullying."

"How can we teach them, sweetheart?"

"We educate and encourage them to read websites like: Pacer.org, Stompoutbullying.com, Stopbullying.gov, Antibullyingpro.com, etc.

"You're right, dear. And I bet those sites have Facebook and Google pages too."

"They do. Also, both Facebook and Google have been leaders in anti-bullying and donate millions to prevent bullying around the world."

"Around the world?"

"Correct. In America, October is National Bullying Prevention Month. And, in the United Kingdom (U.K.), they have Anti-Bullying Week.

"Really? I didn't know that. I'm so glad that you took the job as School District Counselor. I know that all schools do the best job they can to promote education and eliminate bullying. But we need to do more."

"Well, we need to inform our children that everyone is unique in their own way. And we

need to educate them that every child is different and there is no normal child or right way to raise them in today's society."

"And our job is to also help Our Principals and Our Teachers to effectively stop bullying.

"That's right. But first, we need to start with our own kids and hope and pray that others do the same."

As the bus approached The Jones Family Farm, Danica looked over to Herman, smiled and thought:

Now, I know that so many kids, just like Herman, are getting bullied around the world. What a bad thing. We must care about other kids because, in spite of differences, they are just like me and they have feelings, too!

CHAPTER 10.

Educating the kids...Bovine.

After exiting the yellow school buses, the kids gathered in the front yard of *The Farm* and Grandpa Jones came out to greet everyone.

"Good morning!" Grandpa Jones, with Elvis the Pug and Crazy the Cat by his side, yelled out to the anxious kids.



"Who wants to learn all about farm animals?" Grandma Jones said.

"YEAH! We do! We do!"

"And history, geography, and the ecosystem?"

"Yeah! Yeah!"

Feeding off the kids' excitement, Elvis the Pug jumped up and down. Then he immediately ran over to Danica and Dominic.

"Hey, guys! This is our dog, Elvis, and he's a Pug puppy who will be with us all day."

"Don't forget about our cat, Crazy.

"Oh, yeah. He's going with us, too," she said.

"Great! Follow Grandpa Jones to our main barn and he'll teach you some really cool things. And I'll make lunch for everyone," the delighted grandmother said.

With the large group of students following the happily grinning grandfather, it actually seemed like Elvis, in front, was leading the way. Somehow, the smart puppy knew why the kids had gathered at the Jones' Family Farm.

As for Crazy the Cat? He was a wise old feline that knew how to remain quiet and simply observe all of the activity.

"Okay, kids. What do we have here?" Grandpa Jones asked.

"COWS!"



"That's sort of right. They're actually called *bovine*," Grandpa Jones, noticing the confused looks on several kids, paused. "A cow is a mature female bovine, and a bull is a mature male. While a young female is called a *heifer* and a young male is called a *calf*."

"Why does my Uncle Aldo call them *livestock*?" Jason, from Belle River, asked.

"Livestock are bovines raised for meat. But ours are raised to provide dairy products."

"Like milk?" Ed, a Pine River student, asked.

"And much more. My cows provide us with cheese, butter, sour cream, yogurt and my favorite: Ice cream."

Willow, from Eddy, smiled and said, "I love cows then...because I love ice cream."

"What happens when they die," Brooke, from Palms Elementary, asked.

"Well, the hide is used for leather to make shoes, couches, clothing, footballs and more."

Brian, the athlete from Belle River, said, "I also love bovine...because I love sports."

"Did you know that a bovine is a herbivore?"

"Yes, sir," Greg, from Gearing, said. "That means they eat plants and grass."

"And carnivores are animals that eat meat. Right, sir?" Peter, from Palms Elementary, said.

"Correct! But, did you know that bovines are the most common, large domesticated ungulates and there's over 1.3 billion in the world?"

"What's an *ungulate*?" several kids asked.

"An ungulate is a hooved large mammal that includes horses, rhinoceroses, pigs, giraffes, camels, deer and even hippopotamuses. And, since most ungulates use the tips of their toes, usually hooved (he picked up a cow's leg to show the kids), to sustain their whole body weight while moving....they're called *hoofed animals*."

"My grandpa said that bovine are really strong; and he used them to plow his farm," Samuel, from Eddy Elementary, said.

"Well, that means his bovines were used as working *animals*, and they're called *oxen*."

"Oxen?" several students asked.

"An ox is a cow, and oxen is plural. In the old days, they were used for plowing farm fields, pulling carts, hauling wagons, and even moving logs in forests."

"So, Our Founding Fathers and Pilgrims used bovine for so many things to help build our country," Danica commented.

"That's right, sweetheart."

"My father said that cows are special in his home country?" Kyra, from Eddy Elementary, said. "He comes from India."

"That's true. Due to their benefits, as I mentioned, bovine hold sacred beliefs in many societies and religions. For example, in India, the killing of bovine is prohibited and illegal."

"That's so silly," Jimmy, from the *J&J Bullies*, said. "I'd kill it and eat it. Those people, from those third-world countries, are dumb."

"That's simply not true," Grandpa Jones said.

"Why not?"

"Because not only do religions in India, like Hindu, consider cows sacred," Grandpa Jones paused. "But, religions in ancient Egypt, ancient Greece, ancient Israel and even ancient Rome held similar beliefs."

"Okay, let's move on to the other animals," Jeffery, the other half of the *J&J bullies*, frowned and replied.

"Good idea. Who likes horses?"

Daniel David Elles

PART FOUR.

Herman the Hero!

CHAPTER 16.

We're Lost...Oh No!

It ended up that a small group of nine kids, out of the thirty-two, followed Danica and Dominic to the main house.

After arriving and going to the bathroom, everything went without incident. That was until they headed back to rejoin their group at the bison barn. In fact, they were only halfway back when everything turned for the worse

"Oh, man! I have to go again!" Jimmy said.

"No way!" Dominic yelled.

"I mean it. I really have to go."

"N-O spells NO! We're almost there."

Elvis, not knowing what was going on, actually dropped the stick from his mouth. He knew the word *NO* and he hated it because it mostly meant for him to stop doing something. But, this time, he was in the clear.

"Let him go!" Jeffrey, the other half of the *J&J bullies*, yelled back at Dominic.

"Yeah, dude. I'll just go right over there."

"Where?"

"By that tree (he pointed to a large Oak tree near the woods)...I'll be right back. I swear!"

"Darn it! Danica, what do you think?"

"Well, we're actually half way between the house and barn," she thought hard before continuing. "Just let him go, but be fast. I told, Ms. Zimmer we'd be back in 30 minutes."

"Okay. Okay."

But, what was only supposed to be a 2-to-3 minute delay, suddenly became longer. And longer. And even longer still.

"Dominic. Go see what the heck Jimmy is doing in those woods."

"Okay. I'll be right back."

"I'm going, too," Jeffrey said.

"No way. You stay here!"

"Dominic! There's no way I'm letting you go to get my best friend."

"Alright then. You both go, but get back here right away or I'm telling Pappa, Nanna, and Ms. Zimmer, too.

"We'll be right back, but I can't say that Jimmy and Jeffery will both still be in one piece."

"Just go, Dominic. I'll keep an eye on the rest of us. Hurry up!"

They did rush to get there but, as for coming back, that was another story. As several minutes passed, they could no longer be seen by the group. Then, after even more minutes went by, long minutes, Danica became really worried.

"Dominic! Dominic! Get back here NOW! I mean. . .NOW!" Danica yelled. But to no avail.

"I don't think they can hear us," Willow said.

"Mm. . .mmm. . .may. . .be. . .we ca. . . can go get. . .th. . .them?"

"Yeah, Danica. Herman's right. We need to make sure they're okay. What if something happened?" Brittany said.

Danica, analyzing the situation and remembering her father taught about safety in numbers, firmly stated, "I think it's best that we find them. And we're all going together."

"That's a good idea. Every time I see a scary movie and the group breaks up. . ." Brittany briefly paused. "They get killed."

"She's right! No way! I'm afraid of the woods," Kitty said. "There are wolves and even wild dogs and cats in the woods."

"So, the girl named *Kitty* is afraid of cats?" Leah, trying to calm the others, laughed.

"Ha...Ha! Very funny," Kitty said.

"Hold on," Danica said. "Dominic! Dominic!"

No answer.

"Jimmy! Jimmy!"

Still no answer.

"That settles it. We're all going to find my brother and the bullies."

"Bu. . .bu. . .but, wha. . .wha. . .what about Mm. . .Ms. Zi. . .Zimm. . .Zimmer?"

"Herman. If we go back without them, then we're all gonna be in really big trouble."

"She's right," Willow said.

"And, that means we all go, too," Leah said while looking over at the really frightened Kitty.

"Okay. Okay. Let's go. I'm not going to break off from you guys and end up dead like on those awfully scary movies."

"Are you just joking around?" Brittany asked.

"No! I'm not! The woods can be dangerous."

"Don't worry. We'll totally stick together and be really careful," Danica reassured everyone. "I bet we're back in 5 minutes."

Soon after the group left the field and entered the beginning of the woods, they ran smack into Jeffrey Styles.

"Why didn't you answer when I called your name?" Danica, in a scolding voice, said.

"You yelled for *Dominic* and *Jimmy*, not me"

"I meant any of you."

"Uh?"

"Never mind," Danica replied. "Where are they? Where's my brother?"

"Well, we both came out here, but we couldn't see Jimmy. So, Dominic told me to wait. And here I am...waiting."

"Wait for what?"

"For them?"

"OMG!" Danica exclaimed. "Did you see where Dominic went?"

"He went that way," Jeffrey pointed to the deepest and darkest part of the woods.

"Well, we need to find them. . .NOW!"

"Okay. You go ahead and I'll keep waiting."

"I don't think that's a good idea. We should all stay together," Danica replied.

"Yeah," Leah said. "Remember the movies?"

"I don't care," Kitty replied. "I'm not going. Not even a single inch further."

"But, we're a team and that means we need to watch out for each other," Willow said.

"I agree," Abby added.

"Let's go get my brother and Jimmy."

"Th. . .they. . .wen. . .went th. . this way."

"How do you know, Herman?"

"Mm. . .my Dad is a Ma. . .Ma. .Marine and he ta. . .tau. . .taught mm. . .me th. . .things."

"Okay, guys! We're following Herman's lead to find my brother and Jimmy."

Herman, afraid of his stutter, didn't say a word. However, he immediately began to use the tracking techniques his father taught him.



He was able to distinguish human footprints from that of animals. He could see where human heel prints could tell how big they were and if they were walking or running. And, after noticing some broken twigs and branches, Herman told the small group that the boys were just ahead.

The concerned Kitty asked, "Herman, how do you know these things?"

"My Dad taught me these things."

"Herman!"

"Yes, Danica."

"You didn't stutter. You didn't stutter a single word, and you're helping us so much."

"Yeah! That's so cool," Jeffry commented.

"But you all need to be quiet," Herman said.

"There are many dangerous animals in these woods...like wolves and bears."

"Herman, I'm so proud of you. You stopped stuttering, and you've become our leader," Danica said. "Even Elvis is lost!"

Elvis, hearing his name, looked up and, with his big Pug eyes wide-opened, gazed at the group. Yep, he was lost; however, he knew that Crazy could help them find their way back.

Just then, there was a large roar from deep inside the woods. It was a bear. A big black bear!

CHAPTER 17.

The black bear is roaring.

Although 90% of Michigan's 20,000 black bears live in the Upper Peninsula, that meant that 10%, or 2,000, live in the Lower Peninsula. And, The Jones Family Farm was in the Lower Peninsula. In fact, it was squarely in the middle of the highly wooded St. Clair County and a preferred environment for black bears.

"Oh my gosh! What was that?" Danica asked.

"That's a black bear," Herman, their non-stuttering leader, replied.



Herman was no longer stuttering, or scared, or even shy. He was in his element. Herman's mind was totally focused on helping his scared and frightened classmates navigate through the dense woods.

"No! No!" Kitty screamed out and continued, "I told you that the woods were dangerous."

"We gotta go! Just leave them!" Jeffery, the bully, yelled out. "I'm so scared."

"Don't be afraid. Look what Elvis is doing," Herman pointed at the Pug puppy frantically barking louder and louder.

"What!"

"Elvis is barking because black bears are more afraid of a group. He's protecting us!"

"I see the bear! I see him!" Leah shouted.

"Me, too!" Willow said.

"He's behind that tree," Abby yelled.

"I said No Woods! NO WOODS! Now we're all gonna die!" Kitty cried.

"He's gonna get us!" Jeffrey screamed out and tried to run away.

But Herman forcefully held him back and stopped him from fleeing. Otherwise, he would have run right into the big black bear that had quietly poked his head around a tree.

Just then, the huge bear stood up and savagely roared, while slobbery rolling his tongue across his large, vicious-looking teeth.



He saw his dinner. That would be the lost KIDS! One or two, it didn't matter for this bullying bear. They would become his meal.

Then, all of a sudden and quite unexpectedly, Elvis quickly ran towards the 8-foot tall bear.

"ELVIS! STOP!" Danica yelled to her treasured Pug.

But he didn't. Instead, he came within the bear's striking distance and loudly barked.

The bear lunged forward to get the protective Pug but missed.

Elvis dodged the tormenting bear and continued to hysterically bark back. Even Danica was amazed at his turn from a handsome licking puppy to a mean and ferocious canine.

Then, with his tongue hanging out and heavily breathing, Elvis quickly darted back to join the group.

He wasn't going to flee. Not Elvis. He was a proud Pug, and he was ready to fight. Elvis knew that this big bear was a real "bully", and that he needed to be scared away.

So, again, he swiftly ran just a few feet from the bear and, like a fearless dog, he brutally barked back at the approaching black bear.

""RUFF! RUUUFFFF!! RRRRUUUFFFFF!!!"

"Elvis wants us to make noise," Herman said. "Black bears will run from the noise because they think we are going to attack them."

Herman was right. Within a few short seconds, the bear subsided and disappeared back into the woods.

"That was close!" Jeffrey exclaimed.

"It was, but you guys were great," Herman said. "We can't back down from this bullying bear. He's actually more afraid of us."

"Yeah! Don't show fear," Leah replied. "Remember what Grandpa Jones told us."

"So, Elvis can sense the black bear's fear, and he's warning him not to come closer. He hates bullies. Right, Herman?" Danica asked.

"That's right! But, we need to make even more noise to show the bear that he can't win."

With kids continuing to yell, Herman interrupted, "Guys! Hold on! Do you hear that?"

"No!" Jeffery exclaimed. Then, the frightened bully asked, "Herman, what do you hear?"

"That's Dominic and Jimmy."

"I hear them. Let's go," Danica replied.

With the black bear now seemingly scared off, the 4th Grade group then made their way to reunite with their classmates.

Herman – not wanting to further frighten his classmates – didn't tell them that black bears will track their prey through the woods and even travel 18 miles to a food source. And, such food sources sometimes included humans.

He also didn't tell them how other animals could smell their presence and that the young 4th Graders would be considered vulnerable prey. In other words, they were still considered a food source.

For now, however, that didn't matter. Herman knew they had two goals: (1) to find both Dominic and Jimmy and (2) to safely make it back to The Jones Family Farm...in one piece.

CHAPTER 18.

No contact!

With all the noise, the lost duo (Dominic and Jimmy) found the others. And, after reuniting, goal number one was accomplished. But now, they had to get back to the farm. As the saying goes: *They weren't out of the woods, yet.*

Danica immediately ran up to Dominic and said, "I'm so happy to see you and glad you're alright. You had us so worried."

"What about me?" Jimmy asked.

"You can ask your bullying partner, Jeffrey Styles," Kitty said, and both Willow and Leah simultaneously smiled.

"Jeffery, did you miss me, man?"

"Yeah, but...sorry dude. I've been following Herman so we could find you.

"Her. . .Her. . .Herman?" Jimmy Shaw replied, in a mocked stutter to imitate and tease their new leader.

"Without Herman, we would've never found you," Jeffrey said. "Besides, what the heck

happened that you two would end up so far back in these woods?"

"I'll take that one," Dominic responded. "Your best friend, after going pee behind the tree, decided to follow the American Bald Eagle."

"Yeah, man. It was great. I wanted to see where he made his home so...I kept on watching and following and..."

Danica immediately interrupted, "I already know. Then you got lost. Am I right, Dominic?"

"He did. So, when we got here, I left Jeffrey by the tree and tried to find Jimmy."

"Why didn't you just come back and let us all know what was going on?"

"Well, I wanted to. But, once I kept on going and finally found him..."

"Let me guess. Then you also got lost," the frustrated Danica frowned towards her brother.

"Danica, speaking of lost, we really need to get back to the bison barn," Leah frowned.

"Yeah, we do. We're already about 20 minutes late," Samantha said.

"Make that one hour late," Herman said, looking at the military watch his father gave him.

"Really, Herman?"

"He's right, but we have time to catch the bus," Leah said. "It's nearly 2:00, and we need to be back at 2:30."

"Okay. No problem. Let's just call my Pappa and Nanna and tell them that we're on the way."

"Who has a cell phone?" Dominic asked, realizing his cell phone had no reception.



After suddenly becoming aware that nobody had a signal, their situation went from chaotic to terribly bleak.

"Oh my gosh!" Danica exclaimed. "That means we have no way to contact anyone."

"I told you all, from the beginning, it would be dangerous. NO WOODS!" Kitty exclaimed.

"Never mind. Let's just find our way back before it gets dark," Dominic calmly responded.

"yeah, it won't get dark for a few hours."

"I know, Danica," Herman paused. "But, look at the sky. There's a mean storm on the way. And, when the clouds cover the woods, we won't be able to see a thing."

Leah interrupted, "I see the clouds, but maybe we can make it back before it hits."

"Alright. We better get started and, if we get a signal on our cell phone, we'll call."

"Great, Danica," Dominic said. "But, how do we find our way back?"

"I say we follow Herman," Willow responded.

"I agree. We need Herman," Samantha said.

"Okay. Follow me," Herman replied.

"Hey! What happened to his stutter?" Jimmy Shaw suddenly realized that young Herman was speaking just as normal as him.

"Never mind. Let's just go," Jeffrey replied. "I'll tell you on the way."

CHAPTER 19.

The grey wolves are howling.

Elvis and Crazy somehow sensed that the group was now lost.

The Jones' older and clever cat, Crazy, could find his back to most places. However, the woods were really difficult, especially with the clouds starting to make the woods darker.

And for Elvis? He was just a puppy and had no clue how to return. But, he was a good boy and would certainly protect everyone.

Nevertheless, Herman knew that these two pets would either help them to find their way home or ward off any predators in the darkening woods. And, just maybe, even both. So, he asked if the pets could walk beside him. And the twins agreed.

"Why's he leading the way," Jimmy, pointing towards Herman, asked.

"Because he knows this environment, the ecosystem, and much more than you or even all of us," Danica answered.

"Yeah, like Jeffery told you. He's the reason why we found you," Willow said.



Just then, there was a humongous howl coming from the left side of the creepy woods.

"What in the heck? Did you guys hear that? Kitty, the spooked girl, asked.

"It sounds like there are many animals making that eerie sound," Jeffrey added.

"We gotta get out of here. We need to run," Jimmy responded.

"No! That's a bad idea," Herman said. "That was the howl of wild wolves. And, if we separate, they will single out one of us."

"To Kill!" Jimmy shouted. "I'm faster and stronger and tougher than all of you. So...I'm going to run. Far and fast! NOW!"

"If you do, you'll die," Herman told the bully. "Michigan has over 500 grey wolves, and they're predators that hunt in packs."

"Packs? There's more than one," Abby asked.

"Yep. They will intimidate their prey to make them break off from the group. Then, they will kill and eat the one that breaks off."

"I told you all...NO WOODS!" Kitty exclaimed. "And about the scary movies, too. The one that breaks from the group...always gets killed."

"Don't worry. Check out Elvis, Danica."

"Oh my, Herman! He's barking back to tell those big bad wolves to back off."

"RUFF! RUUUFFFF!! RRRRUUUFFFF!!!"

"He certainly is. See how he is getting up on his hind legs and aggressively barking?"

"And check out Crazy. He thinks that he can take on any wolf, too," Dominic added.

"Remember what Grandpa Jones told us about when animals, like cats and dogs, are cornered," Leah reminded the group.

"Oh, yeah. They'll attack," Leah said.

"So, Elvis and Crazy are protecting us from the wolves?" Kitty asked.

"Yep. And they also protected us from the black bear that's still tracking us, too," Herman, without a single stutter, replied.

"Black bear?" Jimmy, slightly worried, asked.

"He's right, Jimmy," the other half of the *J&J Bullies* answered. He continued, "Herman knows what he is talking about, and I really trust him!"

"Alright, Jeffrey. If you trust him so much, how's he getting us back to *The Farm*?"

"That's, actually, a good question. How can Herman help us, Danica?"

"His dad taught him so many things about the animals and environment. That's how!"

"What's that?" Dominic asked.

"Like our dad is a police officer and taught us about safety and such...Herman's dad is a U.S. Marine and a combat vet! So, he taught Herman about the environment and survival."

"That's true. We used to live in North Carolina and after my Dad served in Afghanistan and Iraq, we moved here."

"That's why my parents say you like guns and live in a haunted house?" Abby asked.

"My Dad hates guns that are in the wrong person's hands," he paused. "After my mom passed away, we moved to his childhood home."

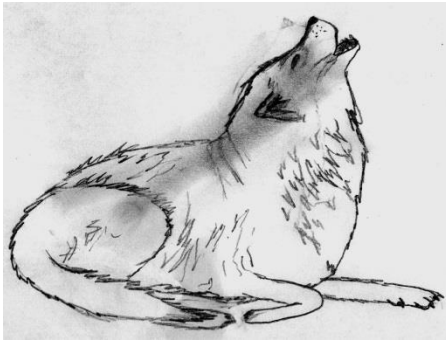
All of a sudden, all of the kids felt so guilty for teasing Herman. Here was the bullied boy, no

longer stuttering, and helping them get out of their horrible predicament.

And the things said about him and his family were...all just myths. The actual reality is that his father is a veteran and a war hero.

But, nobody knew that. And, with his stuttering so severe, the shy and bashful boy never told anyone.

"RUFF! RUUUFFF!! RRRRUUFFFF!!!" Elvis,



with his frantic bark meant to scare the wolves away, interrupted the kids' conversation.

"Okay, everyone. We need to stick together to be safe," Herman instructed the group. "Elvis is shooing away the wolves. He hates bullies!"

"And Crazy is behind him. Doing the same," Dominic proudly said.

Just then, one of the younger grey wolves broke from the pack and sneakily approached the lost kids. He wanted to show the wolf leader

that he could hunt on his own. So, with the cover of clouds darkening the woods and making it really difficult to see his grey fur, he was almost upon them when. . .

“RRRAAARRR!” Crazy the Cat leaped at the young wolf and scratched his nose.

Crazy had no problem seeing in the cloud covered woods. Cats see better at night than during the day. They have reflectors, like a car, and that’s why their eyes seem to glow at night. In fact, a human’s eye would have to be 8 inches wide to see like a cat can!

With the startled young wolf heading back to the safety of the pack and the kids making noise to scare them away, Elvis ran alongside Crazy and began his frantic barking. Together, the proud Pug and clever Cat could ward off any threat to the kids. They could see in the dark and anywhere around them.

Dogs and cats see differently. Where cats see things better at night, dogs can see more things. Because a dog’s eyes are on the sides of its head, they have a 250-degree vision span. (NOTE: humans see about 180-190 degrees).

Now, as the howling seemed to go away and the way back seemed to be clear from predators, everyone began to praise Elvis the Pug and Crazy the Cat. But, it was Jeffrey Styles' comment that made them appreciate Herman.

"Elvis hates bullies and so does Crazy. I get that," Jeffrey said. "But, without Herman, we would've never found Dominic and Jimmy. He's awesome. I really mean that."

"That's so true," Danica smiled.

"Yeah, we'd be stuck somewhere in the woods with wolves and bears," Leah added.

But, they were *not out of the woods* yet. They still had a long way to go to rejoin the group, and it was getting late. In fact, it was nearly 2:30; and they were at least another 30 minutes away from the main house.

That's when the rain started pouring down from the cloudy skies and making the woods darker and darker. Visibility, for the soaking-wet kids, was at a minimum.

"Herman, we need your help. You have to lead us back to the main house," Danica said.

"Okay. I will. Follow me."

GLOSSARY

Absorb: to soak in or grab the attention of someone.

Accomplish: to achieve or complete.

Accustom: customary or usual.

Address: to speak in a formal way.

ADHD: Attention-deficit Anxiety Disorder that many children have and can also go into adulthood.

Admire: to look at with pleasure or warm respect.

Aggressive: ready or likely to attack.

Appreciation: an enjoyment or, a full understanding of a situation.

Assumed: supposed to be the case, without proof.

Awfully: very badly, or unpleasantly.

Awkward: causing difficulty, or a feeling embarrassment.

Benefit: an advantage or a gain.

Bleak: miserable, not good.

Bristled: hair or fur to stand upright; especially in anger or fear.

Brutally: harsh, severe.

Cautious: avoid problems or danger.

Century: a period of 100 years.

Benefit: an advantage or a gain.

Chaotic: confusion and disorder.

Classified: arranged in categories.

Common: something done often.

Commotion: a noisy situation.

Communicate: to speak. Or, to share, or exchange ideas, news, etc.

Compliment: to praise or admire.

Concerned: worried or troubled.

Continuous: to keep going on.

Decade: a period of ten years.

Dimensions: a measure, such as length, breadth, depth, or height.

Bullies are Bad...Kids R Kool!

Distract: divert one's attention from something unpleasant by doing something more pleasurable.

Disturbed: a normal pattern or function changed.

Domesticated: tamed or kept as a pet on a farm.

Dreary: dull, bleak, and lifeless; depressing.

Drenched: wet thoroughly; soak.

Dyslexic: difficulty in learning to read letters or words.

Eagerly: a rather impatient desire or interest in something **Ecosystem:** how biology's creations interacts with the environment.

Ecstatic: overwhelming happiness.

Elated: very happy.

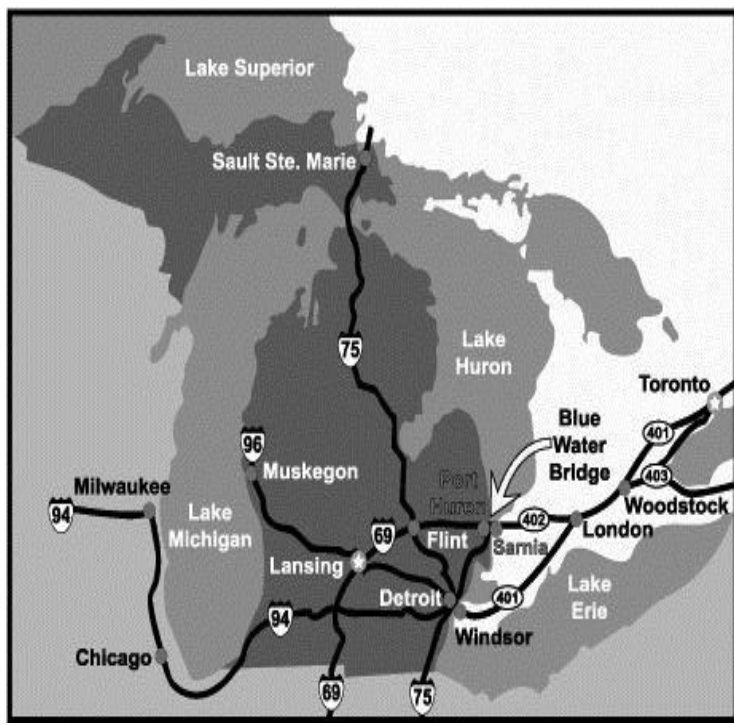
Elegant: pleasingly graceful and stylish in appearance.

Element: an enjoyable situation that a person likes.

Enlightened: a well-informed outlook and good understanding.

Enormous: very large.

Exceptional: unusually good, really outstanding.



APPENDIX

Source: Wikipedia

The seven continents are: Europe, Asia, Africa, Antarctica, Australia, North America, and South America.

The Americas, or America, also known as the Western Hemisphere, comprise the totality of territories in North America and South America. Its area is 16.43 million square miles and has a population of over 953 million.

The United States of America (USA), founded on July 4, 1776, is a country of 50 states covering a vast band of North America, with Alaska in the extreme Northwest and Hawaii extending the nation's presence into the Pacific Ocean. Its capital is Washington D.C. As of 2015, the population is 319 million.

The Great Lakes – formed at the end of the last glacial period around 100,000 years ago – are a series of interconnected freshwater lakes (Erie, Huron, Michigan, Superior and Ontario) located on the Canada-US border. With 21% of the world's fresh water, they are the largest group of freshwater lakes on Earth.

St. Clair, about 40 miles north of Detroit, is a city in St. Clair County's Blue Water "Thumb" area of Michigan (NOTE: They call it the "thumb" because, on a map, Michigan looks like a hand). It's bordered by Marysville and the county-seat of Port Huron to the north; while Canada is directly across from the St. Clair River.

Daniel David Elles



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