

TWO DOGS

IN A TRENCH COAT

Go to
School



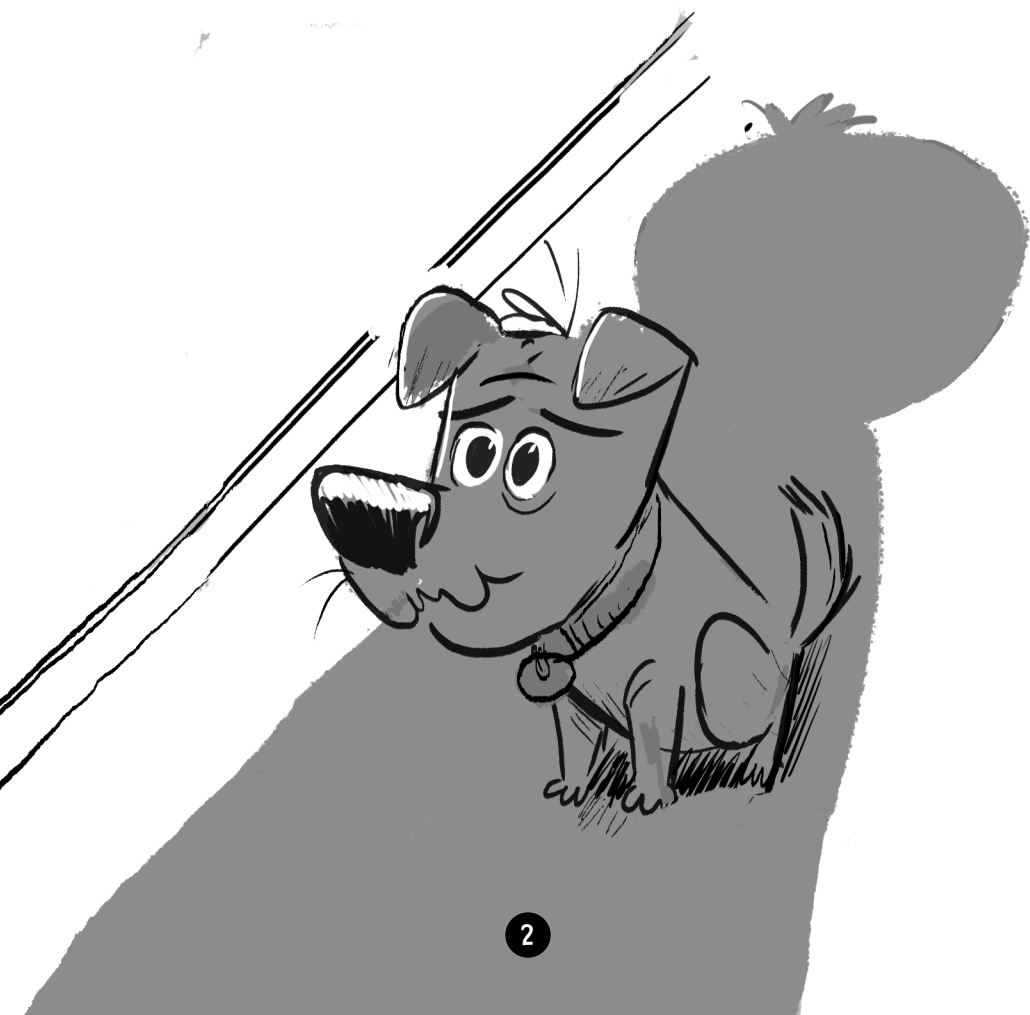
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CHAPTER ONE

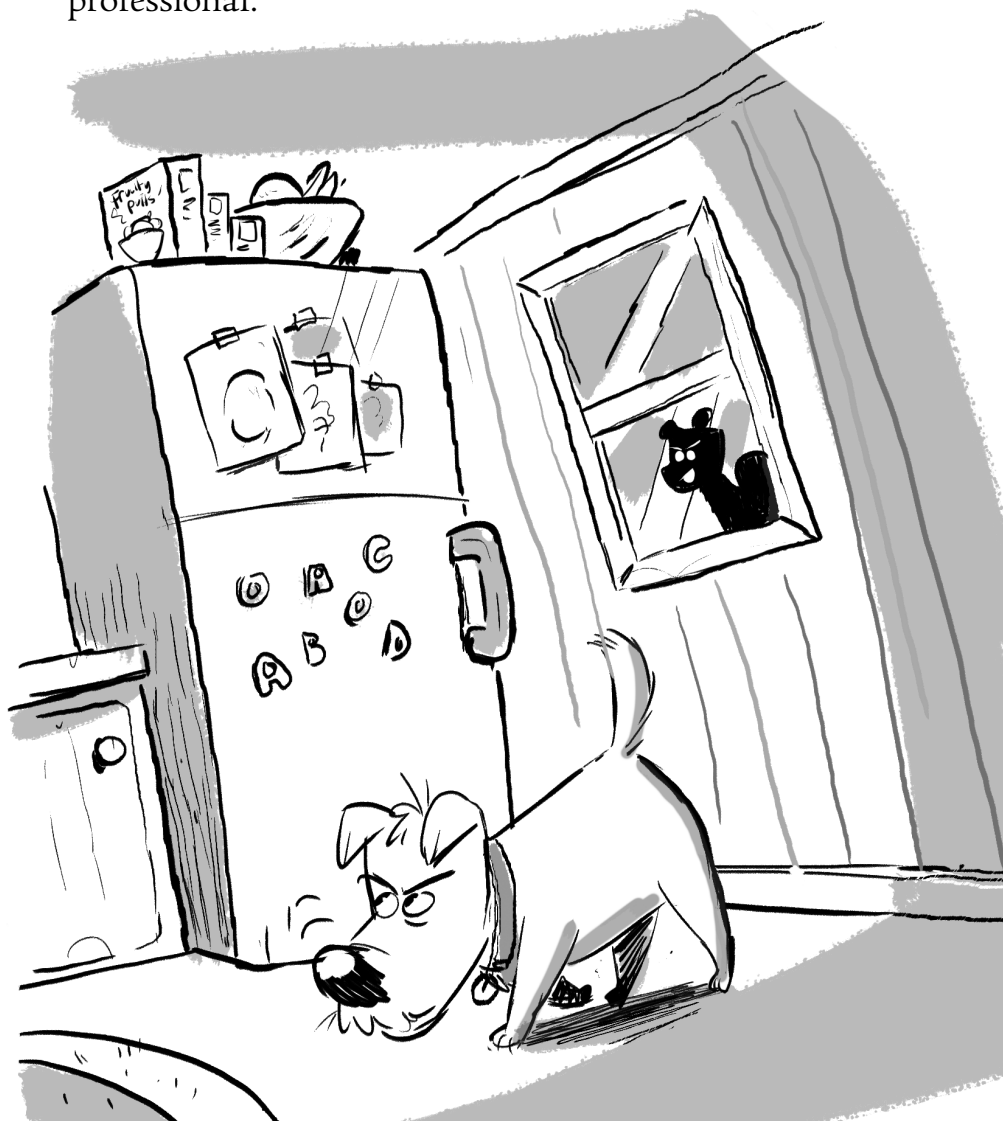
Waldo was pacing the perimeter. He was a small and scruffy dog who smelled like **kibble** plus something else he'd rather not discuss.



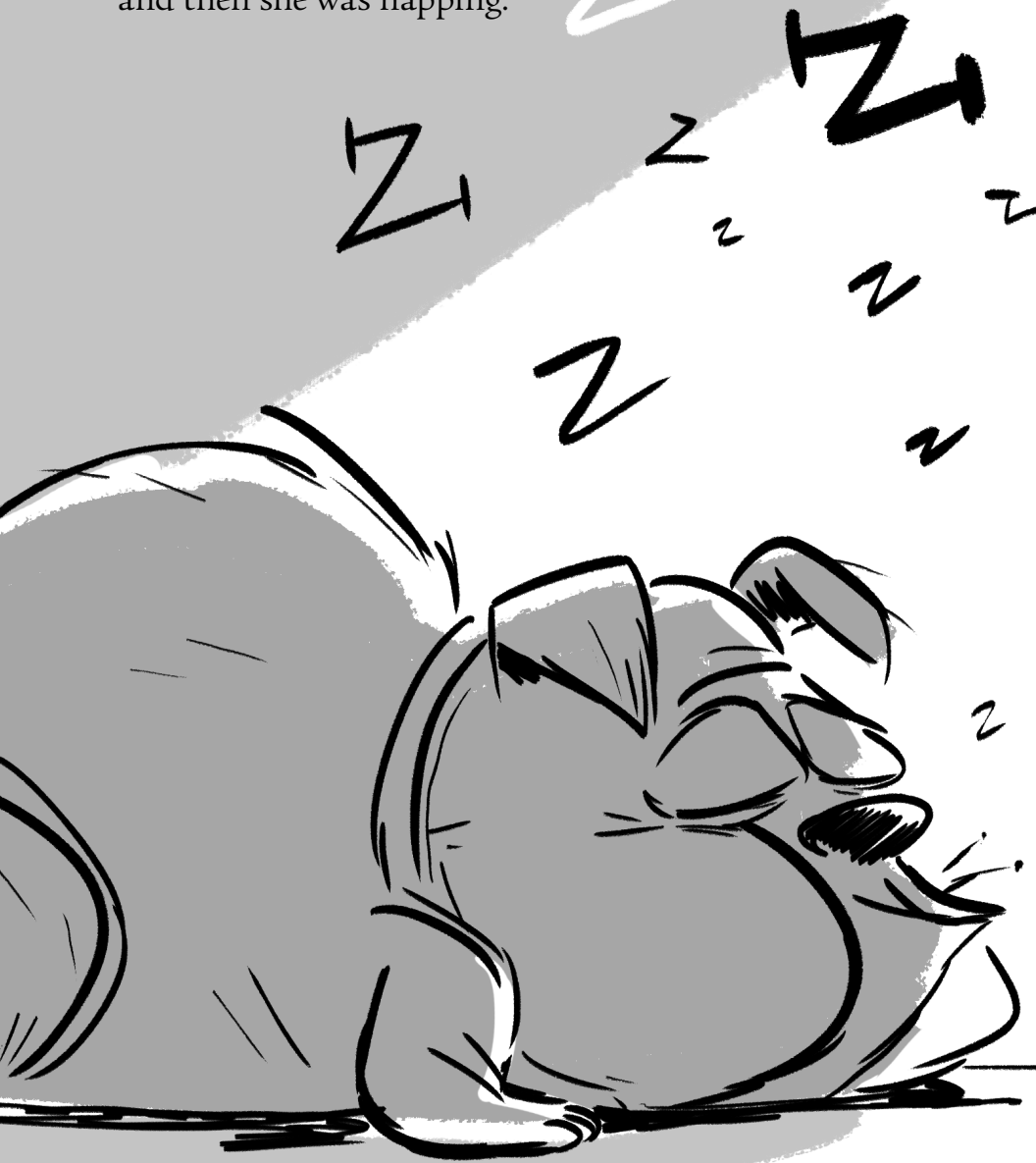
Waldo walked from room to room, checking all the doors and windows. What was he checking for? **Stray meatballs.** Squirrels. (Squirrels were a real threat, and required constant vigilance.) He also had to check for his humans. Every day they escaped, despite Waldo's best efforts. He begged. He pleaded. He made his eyes extra sad. And still, every day, they escaped. Somehow.

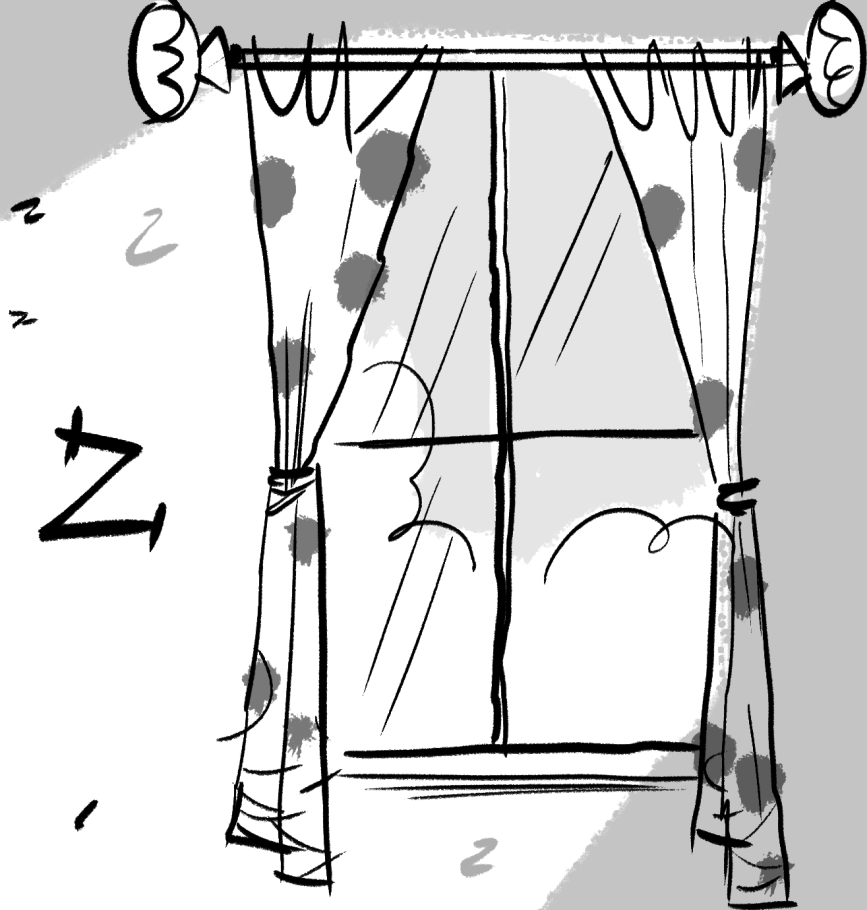


Even though the humans got out every day, Waldo was the best at his job. Had a squirrel ever gotten into the house, for instance? No. Never. And while he had yet to find a **stray meatball**, he was very good at finding odd bits of **cheese** around the refrigerator, and he cleaned them all up, as a good dog should. He was a professional.



Sassy was a lot bigger than Waldo. She had helped him pace the perimeter earlier, but then they got to the part of the front hall with the wood floors and her back feet kept slipping and then she was lying down and then she was napping.





Every afternoon a square of sun came in the window and made a warm spot on the floor. It was very important for Sassy to nap in the sun square every day. It was her job. She also kept the squirrels out of the house. (Had there ever been a squirrel in the house? Not a one.)

Sassy was the best at what she did. Not only did she keep all the squirrels away, but she also let the humans rub her belly, which they loved to do.

Sassy had reached the good part of her nap where the sun was so hot it was like a blanket of fire, plus she was so relaxed she couldn't move. The only thing ruining this stellar nap was Waldo. He kept walking by her head and clearing his throat, which sounded like a bullfrog doing a dog impersonation.

"How can you sleep when there are so many squirrels and imminent intruders?" asked Waldo.

Sassy lifted her head. She sneezed. The sun made her sneeze, and whenever she sneezed, she sneezed *fifteen times* in a row. "There are intruders?"





“Imminent intruders. That means there might maybe be some in the next year.”

“That’s not really what that means,” said Sassy.

“Also our humans might be back at any second!”

“You know they won’t be home for another twenty-two minutes. I’m going back to sleep.”

“There’s something else we need to talk about,” said Waldo.

“Are you sure? Because I need to nap.”

“Something absolutely must be done about this school situation.”

“Oh, fine,” said Sassy, sitting up. “Let’s do something about it. But what?”

It had been going on for a while. Every day Waldo and Sassy’s boy, Stewart, trudged off to this awful place called school. Waldo and Sassy knew it was awful because every night Stewart’s parents asked him

what he did at school, and he said, “Nothing.” Plus he smelled like a weird mix of boredom and anxiety. This school place was clearly the worst.

“I’ve got a plan,” said Waldo.

“Oh, really,” said Sassy.

“What, you don’t think it’s a good plan?”

“You haven’t told me what it is yet.”

“You’re always so negative, Sassy,” said Waldo.

“I’m not being negative, you just haven’t told me what your plan is.”

Waldo padded around the room. He checked the doorways and looked under the table. He made sure there wasn’t a spy near the refrigerator and got distracted by a **muffin crumb**.



Sassy yipped to get his attention. “Hey! Mr. Investigator! What’s your plan?”

“Oh, right,” said Waldo. “Like I said, we need a plan to deal with the school problem. So, are you ready?”

“Yes,” said Sassy.

“Maybe you should sit down. It’s a good plan.”

“Fine.” Sassy sat.

“Maybe you should lie down. Maybe we should both lie down for a bit.”

“Just tell me the plan already!”

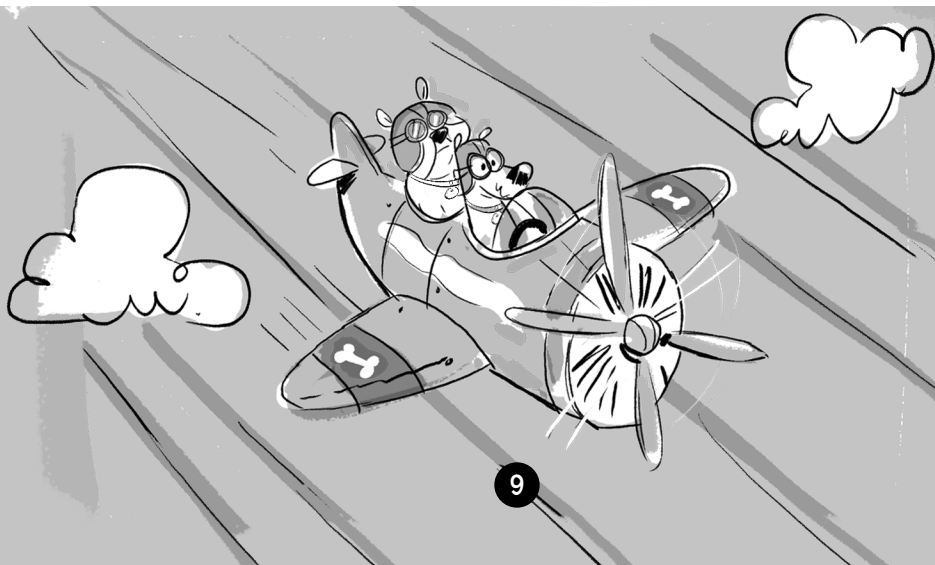
“The plan is . . . well, first, we get an airplane.”

“Oh biscuits, are you kidding me?” said Sassy. “Where are we going to get an airplane?”

“I don’t know. The airplane store? Or order it from that internet thing?”

“No. Shh,” said Sassy. “Someone’s coming!”

“What do you mean, ‘shh’? Let’s bark!”



The dogs commenced the standard Bark and Waggy Greet procedure, to remind the humans that the Waldo and Sassy Household Protection and Face-Licking Service was as relevant as ever.

Stewart sat on the floor to pet his dogs. He was a rumpled kid who didn't mind some dog slobber on his cheeks or muddy pawprints on his jeans.



"You're the best dogs in the world," said Stewart.
"You're better than all the humans."

"He's just stating facts," said Waldo.

"Kid's speaking the truth," said Sassy, licking Stewart's chin.

"If he likes us that much, why doesn't he give us **hot dogs** all the time?" said Waldo.

“That’s a good question,” said Sassy.

Just then Stewart’s dad walked in, and the dogs Waggy Greeted him, although he was more reserved than Stewart, and they’d learned they weren’t allowed to jump on his pants to lick his elbows.

“Hey, kiddo,” said his father. “How was school?”

Stewart sighed. “Boring.” Sassy met Waldo’s eye. Yep. This school problem was just as bad as ever.

“Well, great,” said Stewart’s father. “Good for you. You know what I always loved about school? Lunch. Oh boy, lunch was great. When was the last time I had a **bologna sandwich**? Why don’t we eat those anymore?”

“Yes,” said Sassy, “I have no idea what a **bologna sandwich** is, but my inner dog sense is telling me it would be fantastic.”

“I didn’t have a **bologna sandwich**,” said Stewart. “I ate the lunch you packed for me this morning.”

“Oh, right.”

“This is worse than I thought,” Waldo told Sassy.

“Why?”

“I saw that **sandwich** the father made. It had **sprouts** and **low-fat soy cheese**. The side dish was **tiny carrots**.”

“I like **tiny carrots**!” said Sassy.

“Better than **bacon**?”

“No, of course not. You know what would be good?” said Sassy.

“**Bacon** wrapped around some of those **tiny carrots**,” said Waldo. “But never mind that. What I’m saying is, Stewart must be seriously glum to have eaten that lunch.”

“Our poor Stewart.”

Waldo closed his eyes for a moment in deep concentration. “I think,” he said, “that we have to make sure Stewart never leaves the house again.”



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