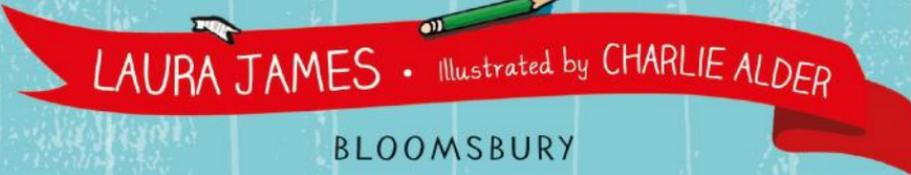




NEWS HOUNDS



THE PUPPY PROBLEM



LAURA JAMES • Illustrated by CHARLIE ALDER

BLOOMSBURY



NEWS HOUNDS

THE PUPPY PROBLEM





Books By Laura James

Illustrated by Églantine Ceulemans

Captain Pug

Cowboy Pug

Safari Pug

Pirate Pug

Illustrated by Emily Fox

Fabio the World's Greatest Flamingo Detective:
The Case of the Missing Hippo

Fabio the World's Greatest Flamingo Detective:
Mystery on the Ostrich Express

Fabio the World's Greatest Flamingo Detective:
Peril at Lizard Lake

Illustrated by Charlie Alder

News Hounds: The Puppy Problem



NEWS HOUNDS

THE PUPPY PROBLEM



LAURA JAMES • Illustrated by CHARLIE ALDER

BLOOMSBURY
CHILDREN'S BOOKS

LONDON OXFORD NEW YORK NEW DELHI SYDNEY

BLOOMSBURY CHILDREN'S BOOKS
Bloomsbury Publishing Plc
50 Bedford Square, London WC1B 3DP, UK
29 Earlsfort Terrace, Dublin 2, Ireland

BLOOMSBURY, BLOOMSBURY CHILDREN'S BOOKS and the Diana logo
are trademarks of Bloomsbury Publishing Plc

First published in Great Britain in 2021 by Bloomsbury Publishing Plc

Text copyright © Laura James, 2021
Illustrations copyright © Charlie Alder, 2021

Laura James and Charlie Alder have asserted their rights
under the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act, 1988, to be
identified as Author and Illustrator of this work

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced or
transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including
photocopying, recording, or any information storage or retrieval system,
without prior permission in writing from the publishers

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN: PB: 978-1-5266-2054-5; eBook: 978-1-5266-2055-2

2 4 6 8 10 9 7 5 3 1

Typeset by Tracey Cunnell

Printed and bound in China by C&C Offset Printing Co. Ltd
Shenzhen, Guangdong



To find out more about our authors and books visit www.bloomsbury.com
and sign up for our newsletters

For Sienna and William – L.J.

For J&W ... no, you can't have
a dog ... yet – C.A.





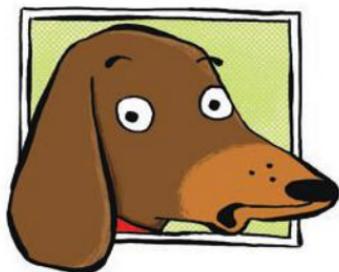


Gizmo was a city dog. A prince of the urban jungle. His paths were clear, and his lawns were mown. He and Grannie owned the streets they...

STOP PRESS!



GRANNIE MAKES SURPRISE MOVE TO THE COUNTRY TO WRITE MEMOIRS! GIZMO SHOCKED!



Gizmo worried as he and Grannie drove away from the only home he'd ever known. They were going to a place called Puddle. That didn't sound good – he hated getting his

paws wet. But where Grannie went,
he went.



Gizmo had finally managed to
nap, when a bump in the road woke
him. They'd arrived. He sniffed the
air. It smelt ... different. Too clean.



His worry deepened.

As Grannie made her way to the house, Gizmo explored the garden. It seemed very strange to him. For a start there wasn't a smartly dressed park attendant.



There were no fountains, no rows of benches, and where were the rubbish bins? To him it seemed wild and unruly. He was carefully edging his way around a flower bed when he heard a voice.



'Hello there!'

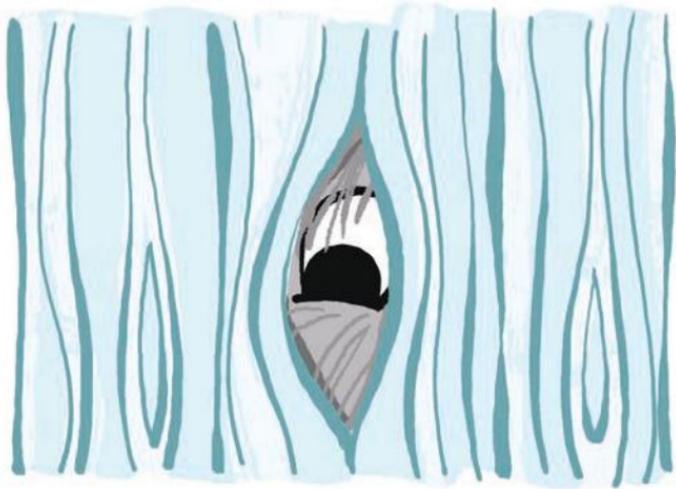
Was it the great dog in the sky?

'Over here!' said the voice.

Gizmo looked all around but he couldn't see anyone. Ahead of him was a white fence with a small hole in it. He peered through. More wilderness. All he could see were shrubs and bushes and four strange hairy tree trunks.

'Is there anybody there?' he asked.

'Yes, me!' came the reply.



Suddenly his gaze was met by an enormous eye. He jumped back, startled, and the eye blinked.

‘I’m Jilly,’ it said. ‘Pleased to meet you.’

Gizmo tried to wag his tail in a friendly way, but he was shaking.



‘Um, hello,’ he replied. ‘I’m Gizmo. I’ve never met an enormous eye before.’

‘Up here,’ insisted the voice. ‘At the top of the fence.’

Gizmo craned his head back as far as he could and saw the biggest, furriest face he’d ever seen. He recognised the eye.

‘What are you?’ he asked, amazed.





'I'm an Irish wolfhound!'

'What are you standing on?'

Gizmo asked. He couldn't work out how she could be looking over the fence when it was so high.

'Nothing,'
said Jilly,
confused.



Gizmo looked back through the hole in the fence and realised that what he'd thought were tree trunks were in fact Jilly's very long legs. She was the biggest dog he'd ever seen! He took a nervous step back.

'What are you?' Jilly asked.

'I'm a dachshund,' Gizmo replied. Despite his nerves he couldn't help showing off his long, smooth body. 'Or a sausage dog. It's easier to say.'

‘Mmm, sausages!’ said Jilly,
salivating. A droplet landed on
Gizmo’s head as Jilly leaned over
the fence.

‘Don’t eat me! Don’t eat me!’
Gizmo cried, covering his eyes with
his paws. ‘I’m not a sausage! I’m a
sausage DOG!’



Above him, he heard a snuffling, woofing sound. Jilly was laughing. 'I'm not going to eat you!' she said. 'Sorry I drooled. I just love sausages – ever since I had my pups, I'm always hungry.' Eventually her chuckling got the better of Gizmo and he joined in. Maybe he'd made his first friend in Puddle!

From the garden behind Jilly there was a whine. Putting his eye to the hole in the fence,



Gizmo saw a
puppy tugging
on Jilly's tail.

'Meet Wolfie,'
said Jilly, wagging
her tail free. Wolfie
gave a little bark.

'He's my naughty one,' said Jilly
fondly. 'Always wanting attention.
My other three, Wilfred, Wilma
and Willabelle, are in the garden
playing. Or at least I hope they are!'



Even though Wolfie was still a puppy, he was already taller than Gizmo. Gizmo said a shy 'hello', and Wolfie nearly got his nose stuck in the fence in his enthusiastic response. Gizmo had to admit, Wolfie looked very sweet.



‘Gizmo! Supper time!’

‘That’s Grannie. I have to go,’
said Gizmo.

‘Of course,’ said Jilly. ‘Come
around tomorrow to meet the
puppies properly.’

‘Gizmoooooooo!’ Grannie was
rattling the kibble tin now.

‘I’ll see you tomorrow, Jilly!’
said Gizmo, before hurrying
inside for his food.





The following morning, after breakfast, Gizmo went to the hole in the fence and waited for Jilly. Soon her huge nose was snuffling at the hole. When she smelt Gizmo, she heaved a huge, sad sigh.

‘Are you OK, Jilly?’ Gizmo asked.
‘Meet me out the front,’ she told
him.

Gizmo did as he was told and
squeezed through the bars of his
garden gate to wait for Jilly.

With her were all four of her
puppies. They were a charming
if rough-and-tumble lot, pulling
on each other’s ears and tails.

Gizmo could tell that Jilly was
very proud of them, but that

there was something making her very sad.

Jilly made the introductions. 'This is Wolfie, who you met last night.' Wolfie gave a loud bark and then immediately sat down to scratch his ear. 'This is Wilfred.' Wilfred hid behind Jilly. 'He's quite shy,' Jilly told Gizmo in a whisper. One of the puppies then stood in between Jilly's paws. 'Wilma.'

'Hello, Wilma,' said Gizmo.



‘And last but not least,
Willabelle.’ Willabelle rushed
towards Gizmo and licked him.

Gizmo flapped his ears in
amusement. ‘Lovely to meet you
all,’ he said. ‘What a charming
family you have, Jilly,’ he added.



‘They are sweet, aren’t they?’ she replied as the puppies began to race each other back and forth under the hedge. As soon as they were out of earshot, Jilly burst out, ‘Oh, Gizmo, something terrible has happened!’

Gizmo looked at his new friend in concern. ‘What, Jilly?’

‘My owners are planning to sell the puppies by the end of the week. They’re going to be sent

far away from Puddle and I'm never going to get to see them again.'

Gizmo put his paw on Jilly's. 'This is terrible news,' he sympathised. 'What can I do to help you?'

'I thought we could ask around the village today and see if any of the other dogs can help find homes for the puppies. Will you come with us? It'll be a

good way for you to meet everyone,'
said Jilly.

'Of course!' said Gizmo.

'Don't worry, Jilly, I'm
sure someone will
be able to help us.'



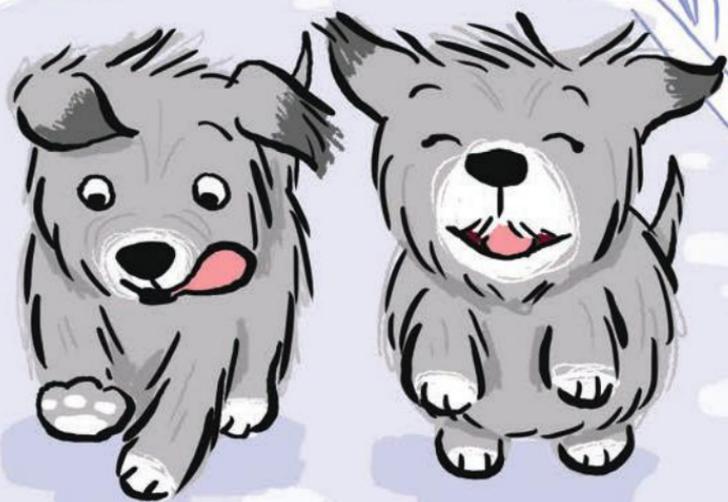
‘Thank you, Gizmo,’ replied
Jilly. ‘You’re a true friend.’



Jilly organised the puppies
as best she could, reminding
them to keep their paws clean,



and they set off. It wasn't long before the puppies were running ahead.





Gizmo was both excited by and nervous about the chance to explore the village and meet its residents. They'd just passed the school when something or someone shot past them like a



rocket. Gizmo was so taken aback that he fell into a nearby privet hedge.

‘What was that?!’ he asked.

‘Oh, that’s Lola,’ replied Jilly.

‘She’s always on the run.’

Just then Lola came back into view. 'What's up, Jilly?' she asked. 'Oh, and who's your friend?'

'This is Gizmo,' said Jilly, helping Gizmo back on to his feet. 'He's just moved in next door.'

'Gizmo! Lovely to meet you,' Lola said. 'What kind of sports are you into? Stick carrying?'

'No.'

'Chasing squirrels?'

'Um, no, not really.'

‘How about pond swimming?
There’s a lovely one in the middle
of the village.’

‘I’m not very good at sports,’
Gizmo confessed. ‘I mostly like
napping ... in a chair or on a sofa,
sometimes behind the sofa,
sometimes in my bed, sometimes
even upside down ...’ Gizmo trailed
off, fondly remembering a
particularly good nap he’d had
just the other day.



‘Wow! You’re so versatile,’ said Lola. ‘You’ll have to teach me how to sleep upside down one day.’

You're lucky to have met Jilly,' she added. 'She has her paw on the pulse of Puddle. Knows everyone!'

It was clear to Gizmo that Lola was itching to keep running. He felt he had to speak quickly before she dashed off again.

'Lola, do you know anyone in the village who might like to adopt one of Jilly's puppies?' he asked her.

'Oh! Moving out, are they? Exciting!' She had a quick think.



‘Not off the top of my head, but I’ll let you know if anyone comes to mind. Bye!’ she added before sprinting off in the direction of the woods.

‘Who was that?’ asked Wilfred, who was lagging behind his siblings because he’d been distracted by a pigeon. ‘She was speedy!’



‘That was Lola, Wilfred,’
Jilly told him. ‘And yes,
she’s always in a hurry.



Why don’t we go to the farm now?
Run ahead and tell the others.’

Wilfred did as his mother asked.

‘Bunty might know someone,’
Jilly told Gizmo, trying not to
get downhearted.

Gizmo had never been to a
farm before. The route there
took them through a meadow.

As the grass went over Gizmo's head, Jilly suggested she give him a piggyback. The puppies ran ahead, happily exploring the hedgerows.

The name of the farm was



painted on a sign.

Gizmo read it out loud:

Withy Hook Farm

‘I never knew it was called that,’
Jilly replied. ‘You learn something
new every day.’

Bunty was at the farm gate
when they arrived. Buzzing round
her head was a fly whose name,
Bunty told Gizmo, was Fliss.



Being a basset hound, Bunty wasn't that much taller than Gizmo. He decided to dismount to say a proper hello. Unfortunately he landed bottom first in a cowpat! Bunty's fly, Fliss, found this very funny. Bunty snapped at her.



‘It happens all the time,’ she told Gizmo kindly, and then led him to a water trough. ‘Here,’ she said, ‘you can try and wash off in this.’

While Jilly and Bunty discussed the puppy problem, Gizmo took a deep breath and scrambled up on one end of the trough. Perching himself on the narrow edge, he slowly lowered his backside into the water. Unfortunately, as he

did so, a cow came along for a drink,
and the shock of seeing her made
him fall completely into the water.



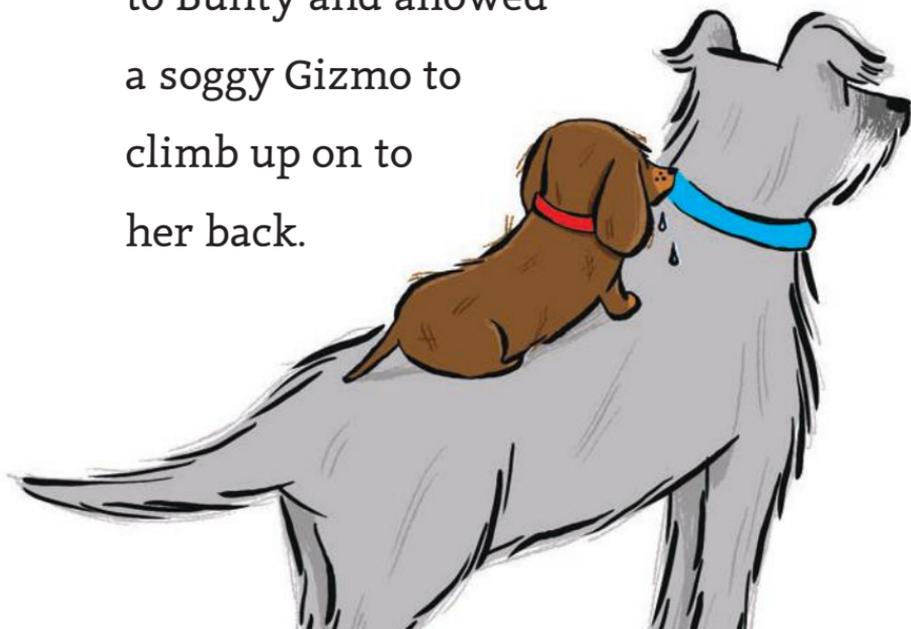
The cow kindly grabbed Gizmo by the collar and fished him out, and then proceeded to lick him. This tickled so much it made Gizmo roll around. As he did so, bits of straw from the farmyard stuck to him.

‘Maybe you should take him over to the salon,’ suggested Bunty, eyeing Gizmo, who was now looking like a scarecrow. ‘Bruno could put him under the dryer.’

Gizmo felt a bit of a fool, but Jilly was happy to see her puppies enjoying his antics.

‘Sorry I couldn’t help,’ Bunty said quietly. ‘But I’ll let you know if I have any ideas.’

Jilly nodded her thanks to Bunty and allowed a soggy Gizmo to climb up on to her back.





Together they headed for
the heart of the village.

The main street of Puddle was
lined with trees and had a few
small shops. The first of these was a
hairdresser. In the doorway lay an
Alsatian called Bruno.

Bruno was very understanding. When his human was busy chatting with her customer, he sneaked Gizmo and Jilly to the back of the salon. Gizmo was beginning to shake from the cold. Jilly helped Gizmo on to a chair and Bruno set up an old-fashioned dryer to warm him up. It didn't take long before Gizmo was feeling much better, if a little fuzzy. He saw Jilly whisper in Bruno's ear





and glance at the puppies. Bruno looked very serious, but shook his head.

Gizmo was beginning to feel he wasn't being much help to Jilly. He could see she was getting more and more worried. Even the puppies seemed to know something was wrong. Their tails weren't wagging as much any more.

Their journey home took them past Puddle train station.

A Jack Russell terrier was busying himself on the platform, but he stopped when he saw Jilly. Jilly introduced Gizmo to Bob, the station dog.



Gizmo waited patiently while Jilly explained the puppy problem to Bob. Bob promised her that he'd mention it to every dog who came through the station.

'Oh dear, can't you read, my friend?' Bob asked Gizmo. Gizmo turned his head to see that the bench he'd been sitting on had a WET PAINT sign.



‘The colour suits you,’ Jilly teased him as they walked home.

Gizmo laughed. He was amazed how kind she could be even when she was so worried about her puppies. It made him more determined than ever to help her.

‘I’m sorry we didn’t find anyone to take the puppies, but we shall have to just keep asking,’ he reassured her.

‘There’s not much time left, Gizmo,’ replied Jilly sadly.



