

JiNA JEONG

Project Toad



BY CAROL KIM

ILLUSTRATED BY AHYA KIM

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Chapter 1



PROTECTING THE PANDAS

“What shape should I make this time?” asked Jina’s mom. She had just slid a pancake shaped like a star onto Jina’s plate.

“Can you make a panda?” Jina asked.

“One that looks like Noodle!” Jina held up her stuffed panda.

“That might be beyond my pancake skills,” Jina’s mom said, smiling. “But I’ll give it a try.”

“I’m so excited we’re going to the zoo tomorrow,” Jina said with a mouthful of pancake. “Did you ask Auntie Ava if Shawn could come with us?”

“I sure did,” said Mom. “They are all coming over for dinner tonight. Your auntie wants to tell you about a special exhibit she wants you two to see. Something about an endangered animal.”

“Ooooooh!” Jina cried, jumping up and down in her seat. “Is it about pandas?”

“Umm, I don’t think so,” Mom said.

“But speaking of pandas, here you go.”

She placed another pancake on Jina’s plate.

It was one big circle with two smaller circles at the top like ears.

Jina laughed. “Thanks, Mom. I guess it kind of looks like Noodle,” she said.



Mom gave Jina another pancake. This one was long and thin, with skinnier pieces sticking out from the main part. “What’s this?” Jina asked.

“Well, I was trying to make a tree,” said Mom.

Jina smiled. “Hey! It looks like bamboo. Which is what pandas eat.” Jina poured syrup on her pancakes. “Did you know pandas can eat more than fifty pounds of bamboo a day?”

“You are quite the panda expert,” Dad said, walking up to Jina and ruffling her hair.

“And panda babies are about the size of a stick of butter,” Jina said.

“Wow, that’s really small,” Dad said.

“Hey, can I check the panda cam?”

Jina asked.

“Yep! Dad can help you,” Mom said.

Jina rushed to place her empty plate and juice glass next to the kitchen sink.

“Come on, Noodle. Let’s go see what the pandas are doing.”

Dad pulled up the website for the National Zoo and the panda cam.

On the screen a panda was sitting and eating bamboo.

“There’s my panda,” Jina said, clapping her hands. “He’s eating breakfast. Just like me.”

Last year Jina had talked her parents into letting her adopt a panda. They made a donation to a panda protection program. In return, Jina got a stuffed panda, certificate of adoption, and a photo of a panda. The donation helped protect pandas in the wild.

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At dinnertime, Auntie Ava, Uncle Greg, and Shawn arrived at Jina's house.

"Hi Auntie! Hi Uncle!" Jina said, hugging them.

"Hey, Jina," her cousin Shawn said.

Jina grabbed his arm. "I'm making a list of animals to visit at the zoo tomorrow," she said, pulling him toward the computer.

“As long as we go to the reptile house, I’m happy,” Shawn said.

“I’ll add it to the list,” Jina said. She wrote “reptiles” on a piece of paper.

“Of course we have to see the pandas,” Jina said.

“Look, there’s a walrus. Let’s visit it too,” Shawn said, pointing at a photo of the big animal. Jina added “walrus” to the list.

“But where are the pandas?” Jina asked, searching through the list of animals.

Uncle Greg walked over. “I’m afraid there aren’t any,” he said.

“No, look! There it is,” Shawn said, pointing at the screen. “See? Oh, wait. That’s a red panda.”

