



I ♥ DOGS

Scruff Speaks!

When Mia is walking on the moors, she finds a cold and frightened dog called Scruff. That night, Mia discovers something incredible: Scruff can talk! But Mia also discovers that Scruff escaped evil crooks and her other doggy friends are trapped. Can Mia and her best friend Zac stop the evil crooks and rescue all the dogs?



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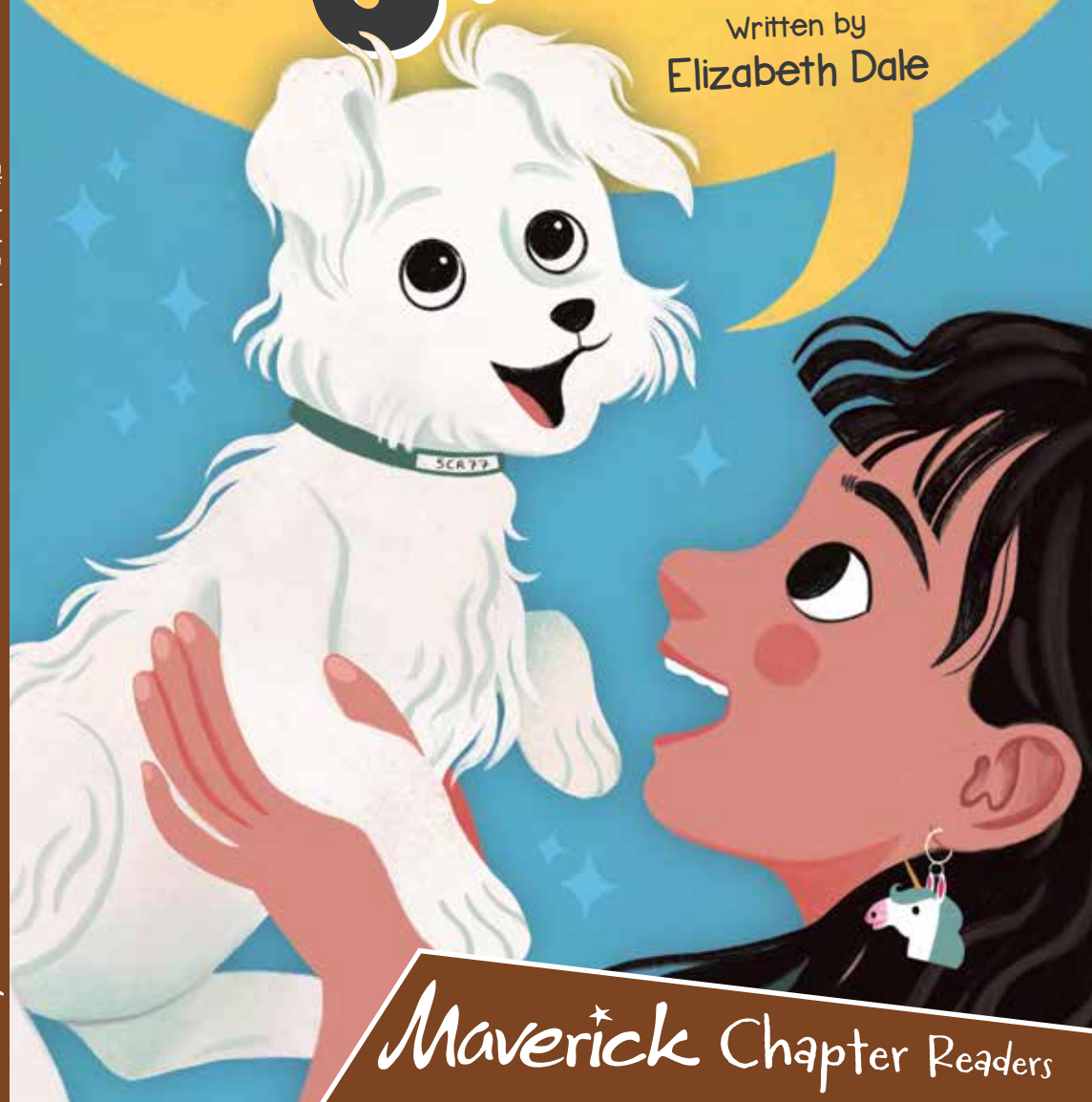
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Maverick

Scruff Speaks!

Illustrated by
Marta Dorado

Written by
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'Scruff Speaks!'

An original concept by Elizabeth Dale

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Chapter 1

Mia loved going for walks across the moors, especially on wild days like today. Her skin tingled as menacing dark clouds swept across the sky. A storm was coming!

Her dad saw it too.

“Mia!” he called. “We need to head back! Now!”

Mia frowned. What a shame.

It was a long way back to the car. Heavy rain started to fall and, as the wind blew harder, strands of Mia’s dark hair whipped across her face.

They were almost there when a lightning flash lit up something white and small racing towards Mia. It was a dog!



“Mia, come on!” called her mum.

But Mia couldn't move. She looked around. There was nobody rushing after the dog, who was all on her own. Mia crouched down, holding out her arms, and the little dog ran towards her, then stopped.

“Hey there,” Mia said, soothingly. “You poor thing. Come to me.”

Suddenly, there was a resounding crash of thunder overhead and with a yelp the little dog leapt into Mia's arms. Mia held her close and hurried after her parents.

“What have you got there?” her dad asked as Mia climbed into the car.

“A dog! Out on her own,” said Mia. The tiny animal cowered in her arms as though trying to hide.

“We can't take a dog home with us!” her dad cried.

“Well, we can't leave her here in this storm!” Mia said. “She's wet through and absolutely terrified.”



“Her owner's probably looking for her,” said her dad. He jumped out of the car, ran to the fence to look around and then rushed back, absolutely drenched.

“Nobody in sight!” he panted. “And we’re the last car here. Is there a name or phone number on her collar?”

Mia peered at the collar. “It’s a bit faint. I can just see something like 5...C...R...7...7. Maybe it’s Scruff?”

“Of course!” laughed her mum. “Scruff suits her perfectly!”

Scruff whimpered as though she understood.

Mia hugged her. “Poor Scruff!” she said. “Look, Dad, nobody’s around to claim her. We can come back early tomorrow and put up a poster to say we found her. Let’s go!”

Fortunately he agreed and they set off home, only stopping to buy dog food.

Scruff was starving! She could hardly wait for Mia to clean off all her mud before wolfing down her dinner. Afterwards, they played together in the lounge. Scruff was very shy, nervously hiding behind the settee when Mia’s parents walked in. So Mia took her up to her bedroom to play.

Mia’s mum came in at bedtime.

“Isn’t Scruff adorable?” Mia said, hugging her.

“Yes,” said her mum. “But don’t get too attached, darling. I’ve posted online about her tonight and we’ll put up that poster tomorrow. Hopefully her owner will claim her. If not, we’ll check if she’s chipped.”

Mia’s face fell. “But if we can’t trace her owner... can we keep her?”