CHAPTER 1

The Short Walk

Anne sat in the living room, reading a book. Spike slept on the floor beside her.

SWISH, SWOOSH, the wind groaned outside.

Spike lifted his head and stared out of the window. He imagined himself running outside chasing cats.

Anne saw the wishful look in Spike’s eyes and knew that he wanted to go for a walk.

"Mom, please can I take Spike for a walk?" Anne said.

"Yes, sure you can, but only across the street because it looks like it's going to rain soon," Wendy replied. "See those grey clouds in the distance, they're going to bring rain."

"Okay, Mom. We'll go down the street and then come right back," Anne said.

As soon as Anne held the leash in her hands, Spike began to jump up and down. He knew that he was going for a walk.

"Come on, Spike. Let’s go for a short walk," Anne said.

Outside on the street, Anne saw their neighbor, Mrs. Adams, taking a walk too.

"Hello, Mrs. Adams. Mom said that a storm is coming, so we're taking a short walk," Anne said.

"Hello, Anne and Spike. Yes, I'm going for a short stroll too. I can smell the rain. Can you smell it?" Mrs. Adams asked.

"Um, what does rain smell like?" Anne asked. She had never smelled the rain before it came pouring down.

"It's an earthy smell. Like water mixed with dry sand," Mrs. Adams replied.

SNIFF, SNIFF, Anne went. She breathed in the air around her.

"Yes, I smell it. I smell the rain," Anne giggled.

"I'd better get home before it comes down. So, should you, Anne," Mrs. Adams warned.

Anne and Spike walked up the street. They saw Lisa walking Jason and baby Jill. She pushed them in a stroller.

"Hello," Anne said to them.

"Hello, Anne and Spike. Are you enjoying your walk?" Lisa asked.

"Yes, we are. It's only a short walk because Mom said it's going to rain soon. Mrs. Adam said she smelled the rain. Do you like rain?" Anne said.

"Yes, we all like rain, especially Jill and Jason. The sound and smell of the rain makes them sleep. We'll be going indoors soon, and so should you and Spike," Lisa replied.

Anne smiled at the dozing children in the stroller. "We're going home soon," she said.

Spike whined. He walked ahead and pulled Anne behind him.

"Bye," Anne said to Lisa.

Lisa waved and said good-bye.

"Wait for me, Spike," Anne cried. She held onto the leash as tight as she could.

Spike pressed his nose to the ground. He smelled something strange. He began to walk faster and faster, pulling Anne.

"Slow down Spike or else we're going home right now," Anne cried.

But Spike did not hear Anne. He ran so fast that Anne couldn't keep up. Then she tripped on a stone that was on the sidewalk.

The leash slipped out of her hand, and Spike sprinted off.

"Spike, come back, boy," Anne yelled.

CHAPTER 2

Spike Runs Away

*Oh no, the rain is coming, and Spike is loose. We need to get home soon.* *How will I get him back?* Anne thought.

Anne heard a familiar sound. She turned around and saw the ice cream truck in the street.

"Hi, Charlie. Can you help me please?" Anne cried as she ran up to the man in the ice cream truck.

"What's happened, Anne? Are you alright?" Charlie asked.

"Yes, I'm okay, but Spike has gotten away, and it's going to rain soon. Please, can you help me to get him back," Anne cried?

"Which way did he go?" Charlie asked.

Anne pointed the way that Spike ran.

"Come on, get in. Let's go and get Spike back," Charlie said, opening the truck door.

Charlie drove his ice-cream truck up and down the street looking for Spike.

"Over there. Look, I see Spike," Anne shouted.

Charlie parked his truck and ran towards Spike, who was digging a hole in the sand.

Spike saw Charlie running towards him. Spike looked scared. He began to run away again.

"Noooo, don't go, Spike. Come back," Charlie cried.

Charlie ran back to his truck. They drove after Spike.

Grey clouds darkened the sky. The whistling wind blew dry leaves up into the air. The storm was almost there.

"There he is. I'll go and get him," Anne said.

"Okay, but I have an idea," Charlie said.

Charlie parked the truck and then gave Anne a small tub of ice-cream.

"Give this to Spike. While he's eating the ice-cream, grab the leash," Charlie suggested.

Anne strolled towards Spike.

'Hello, boy. See what I have? It's your favorite," Anne said and placed the tub of ice-cream onto the ground.

Spike smiled and walked towards her. As soon as he began to lick the delicious treat, Anne grabbed hold of the leash. She held onto it as tight as she could.

“You’re not getting away from me again,” Anne cried.

PITTER, PATTER. Small drops of rain began to fall gently around them.

"Come on, Anne and Spike. I'll give you a ride back home. But we must hurry before the storm breaks," Charlie announced.

Anne and Spike sat in the ice-cream truck, while Charlie drove them home.

Wendy stood outside their house. She paced up and down and had a frown on her face. She saw Mrs. Adams walking home.

“Hello, Wendy. I saw Anne and Spike just now. They will be home before the storm,” Mrs. Adams advised.

“Thank you, Mrs. Adams,” Wendy replied.

Wendy saw Lisa taking her children for a walk. Wendy waved at her.

“Hello, Wendy. Are you waiting for Anne and Spike? They will be home before the storm,” Lisa said.

“Thank you, Lisa. Jill and Jason are almost asleep. They must love the rain,” Wendy beamed.

“Yes, they do. Bye Wendy,” Lisa waved.

After a few minutes Anne and Spike had still not returned home.

"WHERE are Anne and Spike?" she said out loud.

Surprise showed on her face when the ice-cream truck stopped right outside of her house.

*I don't want ice-cream right now*, Wendy thought.

Her face turned into a huge smile when she saw Anne and Spike jump out of the truck.

"Why did you take so long? I was beginning to worry. Why are you in the ice-cream truck anyway?" Wendy cried.

"Spike ran away, and Charlie helped me to get him back," Anne replied.

By this time the raindrops had become bigger and small puddles began to form around them.

"Mrs. Adams taught me how to smell the rain and Lisa said the rain makes Jill and Jason fall asleep," Anne smiled.

"Thank you, Charlie, for bringing Anne and Spike home. But we all need to get out of the rain," Wendy said.

"No problem. I'm always happy to help out," Charlie replied.

“Bye, Charlie. Thank you for helping me,” Anne sang.

Spike barked at Charlie as if to say *thank you for the ice-cream*.

Charlie blew his horn and drove away.

Wendy, Anne and Spike ran into the house.

Rain began to fall in the Jolly neighborhood, and everyone was safe indoors.