

When Ben Silverstein is sent to the rundown town of Buttonville to spend the summer with his grandfather, he's certain it will be the most boring vacation ever. Then his grandfather's cat brings home . . . a baby dragon? Amazed, Ben enlists the help of Pearl Petal, a local girl with an eye for adventure. They take the wounded dragon to the only vet's office in town: Dr. Woo's Worm Hospital. But as Ben and Pearl soon discover, Dr. Woo's isn't for worms at all—it's actually a secret hospital for imaginary creatures. And a big, *hairy* surprise awaits them inside.

COLLECT THEM ALL



Visit us at LBYR.com

Also available from  **hachette**
AUDIO

PJ OUR WAY™

www.pjourway.org

Cover art by Dan Santat
Cover design by Sasha Illingworth
Cover © 2013 Hachette Book Group, Inc.
Printed in the U.S.A. • AR: 4.2 F&P: Q

THE SASQUATCH ESCAPE

THE IMAGINARY VETERINARY: BOOK 1



BY SUZANNE SELFORS
ILLUSTRATIONS BY DAN SANTAT



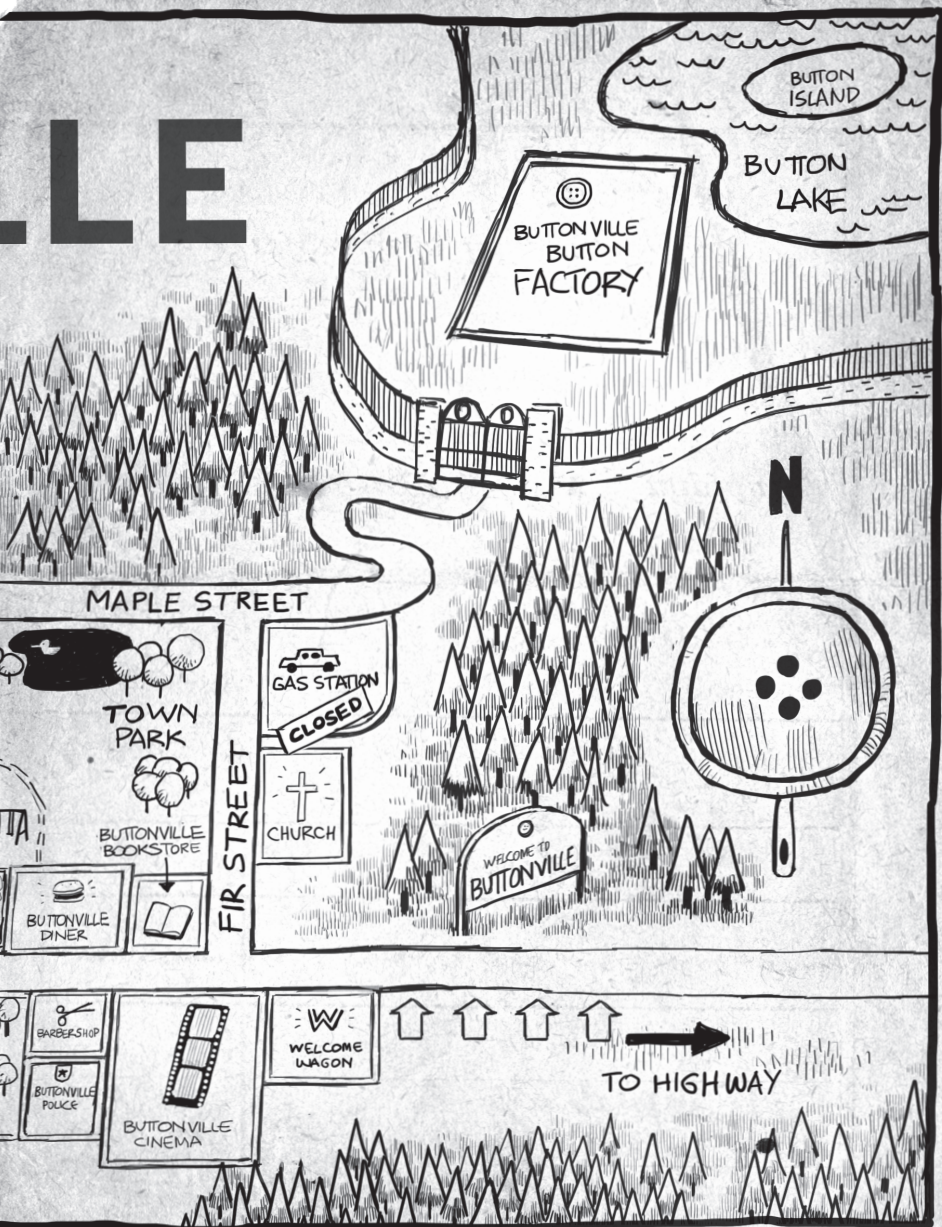
Little, Brown and Company
New York Boston

WELCOME TO

BUTTONVILLE



LE



ALSO BY SUZANNE SELFORS:

The Imaginary Veterinary Series
The Sasquatch Escape
The Lonely Lake Monster
The Rain Dragon Rescue

The Smells Like Dog Series
Smells Like Dog
Smells Like Treasure
Smells Like Pirates

To Catch a Mermaid
Fortune's Magic Farm

This book is a work of fiction. Names, characters, places, and incidents are the product of the author's imagination or are used fictitiously. Any resemblance to actual events, locales, or persons, living or dead, is coincidental.

Text copyright © 2013 by Suzanne Selfors

Illustrations copyright © 2013 by Dan Santat

Text in excerpt from *The Lonely Lake Monster* copyright © 2013 by Suzanne Selfors

Illustrations in excerpt from *The Lonely Lake Monster* copyright © 2013 by Dan Santat

All rights reserved. In accordance with the U.S. Copyright Act of 1976, the scanning, uploading, and electronic sharing of any part of this book without the permission of the publisher is unlawful piracy and theft of the author's intellectual property. If you would like to use material from the book (other than for review purposes), prior written permission must be obtained by contacting the publisher at permissions@hbgusa.com.

Thank you for your support of the author's rights.

Little, Brown and Company

Hachette Book Group
237 Park Avenue, New York, NY 10017
Visit our website at lb-kids.com

Little, Brown and Company is a division of Hachette Book Group, Inc.
The Little, Brown name and logo are trademarks of Hachette Book Group, Inc.

The publisher is not responsible for websites
(or their content) that are not owned by the publisher.

First Paperback Edition: January 2014

First published in hardcover in April 2013 by Little, Brown and Company

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Selfors, Suzanne.

The sasquatch escape / by Suzanne Selfors ; illustrated by Dan Santat.—First edition.

pages cm.—(The imaginary veterinary ; 1)

Summary: Spending the summer in his grandfather's rundown town, ten-year-old Ben meets an adventurous local girl, and together they learn that the town's veterinarian runs a secret hospital for Imaginary Creatures.

ISBN 978-0-316-20934-2 (hc) / ISBN 978-0-316-22569-4 (pb)

[1. Imaginary creatures—Fiction. 2. Veterinarians—Fiction.] I. Santat, Dan, illustrator. II. Title.

PZ7.S456922Sas 2013

[Fic]—dc23

2012032531

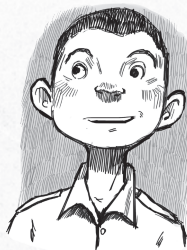
10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

RRD-C

Printed in the United States of America

1

STORY BIRD



The weird shadow swept across the sky. Ben blinked once, twice, three times, just in case an eyelash had drifted onto his eyeball. But it wasn't an eyelash. Something was moving between the clouds—something with an enormous wingspan and a long tail. Ben pressed his nose to the passenger window. “Grandpa? Did you see that?”

“So, you’ve got a voice after all,” his grandfather said. “I was beginning to think you’d swallowed your tongue.”

Benjamin Silverstein, age ten, had not swallowed his tongue. But it was true that he hadn't spoken since being picked up at the airport. He'd shrugged when his grandfather had asked, "How was your flight?" He'd nodded when his grandfather had asked, "Are you hungry?" He'd looked away when his grandfather had said, "I bet you miss your parents." But not a single word had come out of Ben. After a while, his grandfather had stopped talking, and they'd driven down the lonely two-lane highway in silence. There'd been nothing interesting to look at, no houses or gas stations or billboards. Just trees. Lots and lots of trees.

But then the shape had appeared, circling and swooping like a wind-kissed kite. "I've never seen a bird that big. It's got a tail like a rope."

Grandpa Abe slowed the car, then pulled to the side of the highway onto the gravel shoulder. "All right, already. Where is this bird?" he asked after the car came to a stop.

"It darted behind that cloud," Ben said. They

waited a few minutes, but the bird didn't reappear. The fluffy cloud drifted, revealing nothing but twilight sky.

"How big was it?"

Ben shrugged. "Big. Maybe as big as a helicopter."

"As big as a helicopter? And a tail like a rope?"

"Uh-huh."



“Hmmm. That doesn’t sound right.” Grandpa Abe scratched one of his overgrown gray eyebrows. “I’ve never seen a bird like that.”

“Well, I saw it.”

They waited another minute, but nothing flew out of the cloud. “Is the helicopter bird one of your *stories*?” Grandpa Abe’s eyes narrowed with suspicion.

“What do you mean?”

“Your mother said you’ve been making up stories.”

“I don’t know what you’re talking about,” Ben grumbled. But he did know. That very morning, he’d made up a story that the pilot had called the house to cancel Ben’s flight because he’d lost the keys to the plane. Then Ben had made up a story about losing his suitcase so he wouldn’t have to go on this trip. Neither of those stories had worked. His parents had gone ahead with their plans and had sent Ben away.

Sometimes, Ben’s stories worked to his advantage,



like the time he'd claimed that a California condor had snatched his math homework, when actually he'd forgotten to finish it. After his teacher pointed out that California condors don't usually do such things, Ben changed the bird to a pelican. Because pelicans are known troublemakers, the math teacher gave Ben an extra week to make up the assignment.

The way Ben saw it, stories were always more exciting than the truth.

Grandpa Abe sighed. "I should live so long to see a bird the size of a helicopter." He set his crinkled hands on the steering wheel and merged back onto the highway.

Ben sank into his seat and hugged his hamster cage to his chest. The hamster, a Chinese striped variety named Snooze, lay curled beneath a pile of chewed-up newspaper. The pile expanded and contracted with the hamster's deep, slumbering breaths. Ben wished at that very moment that he could be a hamster. Life would certainly



be easier if the entire world were a simple plastic rectangle. It didn't matter if the rectangle was set on a windowsill in Los Angeles or in the backseat of an old Cadillac driving down a highway in the middle of nowhere. The world inside the rectangle always stayed the same—stuff to chew, stuff to eat and drink, a wheel to

waddle around in. No worries, no troubles, no changes.

“My grandson, the storyteller,” Grandpa Abe mumbled.

“The bird wasn’t a *story*,” Ben said. “It was real.”