





When **CYNTHIA LORD** sat down to write her first children's book, she knew it would be a middle-grade novel. As she recalls, "I grew up next to a lake in New Hampshire and I remember being ten years old, lying on our pier, listening to the seagulls calling, and daydreaming about *Borrowers* and *Chocolate Factories* and *Secret Gardens*."

Cynthia Lord is the author of a host of award-winning books. These include *A Handful of Stars* (2015); *Half a Chance* (2014), Junior Library Guild Selection and Book Page Top Pick in Children's Books; *Touch Blue* (2012), winner of the 2011 Lupine Award, Maine Library Association; and many others.

Visit Cynthia's website: [HTTP://WWW.CYNTHIALORD.COM](http://www.cynthialord.com)

Shelter Pet Squad

LET'S TALK

1. Why does Suzannah have so many stuffed animals? What would she love to have more than anything?
2. Suzannah hides Whiskers, her stuffed mouse, in her pocket before going to the pet shelter the first day. Why does she feel she needs to have Whiskers with her? Do you have a favorite thing that you carry at all times?
3. Why does Suzannah feel so responsible for Jelly Bean? Have you ever made a promise that was hard to keep?
4. Why does the pet shelter lady, Ms. Flores tell the kids she feels sad when the pets get adopted. Do you remember a time when you had mixed emotions about something? What did you do?

LET'S CREATE

Interview a pet shelter employee to find out about one of the animals that needs to be adopted. Make a poster about that pet add information about breed and personality and add a photo or drawing of the pet. (Idea credited to Lubec Elementary read our blog: <https://islandreadersandwriters.org/blog/cynthia-lord-in-washington-county-one-of-her-favorite-places/>)

VOLUNTEER AT A SHELTER

List of shelters in Downeast Maine

- The Ark Cherryfield <http://thearkpets.org>
- Paws Brave Hearts Calais <https://www.paws-calais.com>
- SPCA Trenton <https://www.spcahancockcounty.org>
- Cottontail Cottage Lamoine <https://www.cottontailcottage.org>

Grow catnip or wheat grass for your cat: <https://www.gardeningknowhow.com/edible/herbs/catnip/growing-catnip.htm/?print=1&loc=bot>

Make pet toys and treats for a cat or a dog;

Take a toilet paper roll, add appropriate treats and fold in the ends. See how long it takes them to get to their snack!

Check out the back of the book for more ideas!