

THE SHEPHERDS

BY CATHERINE CHEN

ALTADENA, DAY 1 OF THE EATON FIRE

IT'S ALL UP TO ME NOW TO PUT OUT THE FIRE!

MAYBE THIS RUG CAN HELP COVER IT.

WAIT! AN EXIT! SHOULD I ESCAPE THROUGH IT?

NO... I HAVE TO BE A GOOD GIRL.

MY JOB IS TO PROTECT THE HOUSE!

BECAUSE ISSY WILL BE HOME ANY SECOND. I JUST KNOW IT!

AND THERE BETTER BE A HOME FOR HER TO COME BACK TO!

KRAAASSSH!!!

YOU HAVE TO EVACUATE NOW!

INTRUDER!

LISTEN, PUP. THIS IS AN EMERGENCY - IT'S A LIFE OR DEATH SITUATION.



I'VE LIVED HERE
MY WHOLE LIFE
WITH ISSY... AND I
WON'T LEAVE.



WATCH
OUT!



YOUR GUARDIAN
WOULDN'T WANT
YOU TO STAY
HERE.

TRUST ME.

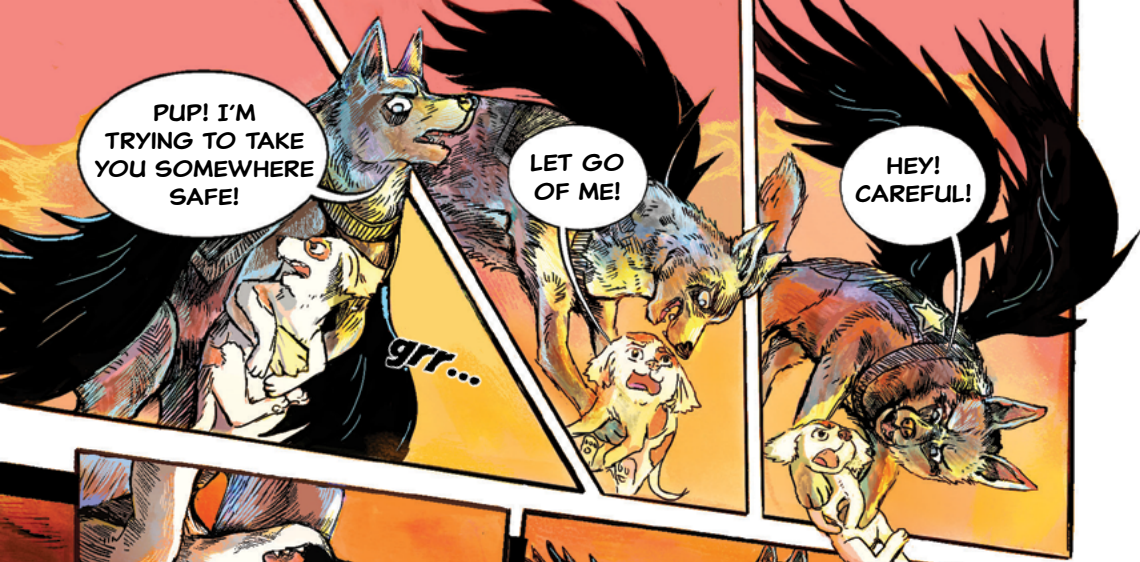


IT'S TIME TO
SAY GOODBYE.

BUT-

WHO AM I WITHOUT
MY HOME?

WHEREVER SHE
IS... I HOPE ISSY IS
ALRIGHT.



PUP! I'M TRYING TO TAKE YOU SOMEWHERE SAFE!

LET GO OF ME!

HEY! CAREFUL!

grr...



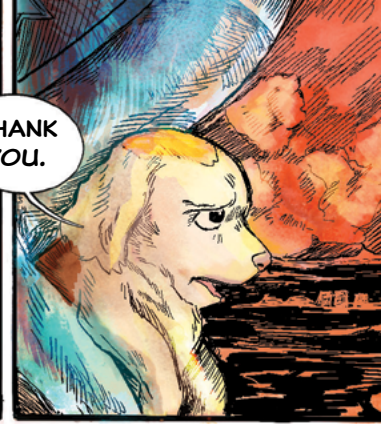
Gasp!



NO... IT CAN'T BE...



I'VE NEVER SEEN ANYTHING LIKE IT EITHER. THE WHOLE CITY ON FIRE.

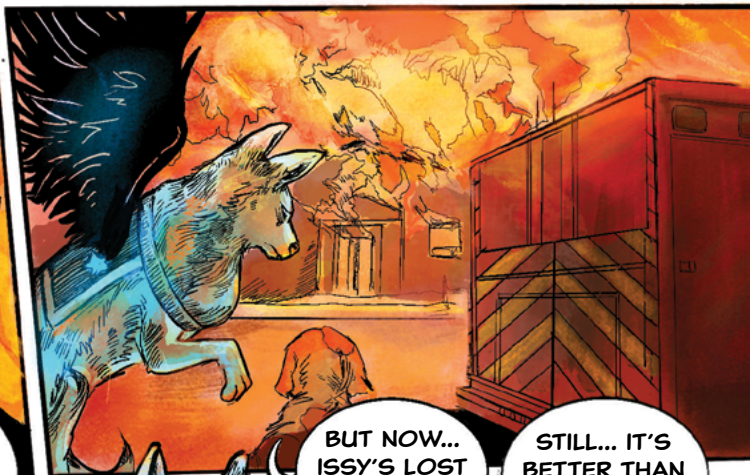


THANK YOU.



IT'S JUST PART OF THE JOB. OR... WAS MY JOB.

SOMETIMES THE BRAVEST THING TO DO IS TO GET OUT.



BUT NOW... ISSY'S LOST EVERYTHING.

STILL... IT'S BETTER THAN LOSING YOU.



TAKE IT FROM A PROFESSIONAL. THE NAME'S EARL GREY, FORMER FIRE DOG.



PATCHES, ISABELLA'S BEST FRIEND.



WAIT, FORMER? WHO IS THIS GUY? A GHOST?

HEY!



WHO ARE YA RESCUIN' NOW, EARL GREY?

RESCUING? I CAN STAND MY OWN GROUND, THANK YOU VERY MUCH.

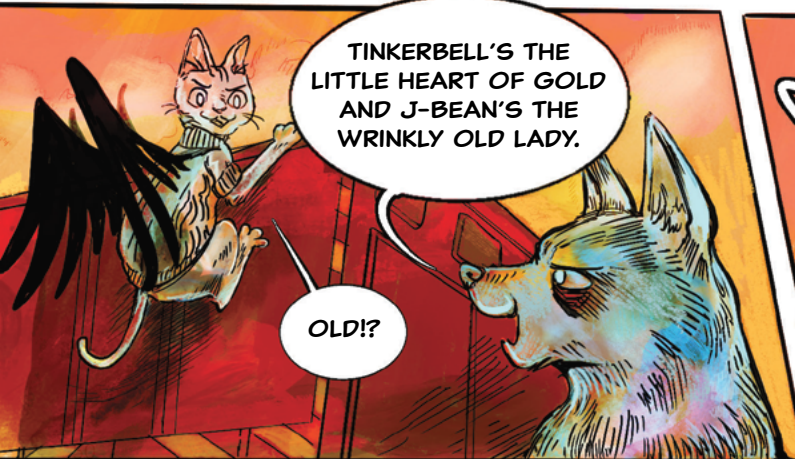
PATCHES, MEET THE SHEPHERDS. WE USED TO BE PETS LIKE YOU. NOW WE PROTECT THE WORLD.

WE STILL WATCH OVER THE PEOPLE WE LEFT BEHIND.



SO... LIKE GUARDIAN ANGELS?

KIND OF!



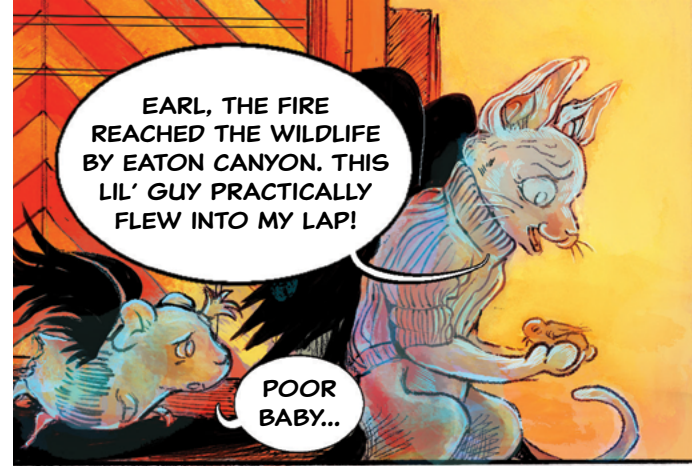
TINKERBELL'S THE LITTLE HEART OF GOLD AND J-BEAN'S THE WRINKLY OLD LADY.

OLD!?



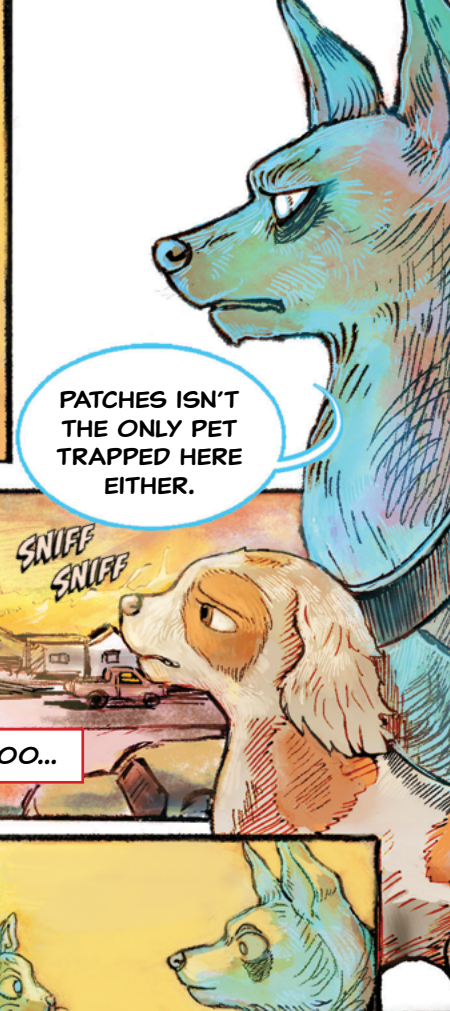
I'M ONLY SEVEN...TY-FOUR IF YOU COUNT THE GHOST YEARS...

CRACK!!!



EARL, THE FIRE REACHED THE WILDLIFE BY EATON CANYON. THIS LIL' GUY PRACTICALLY FLEW INTO MY LAP!

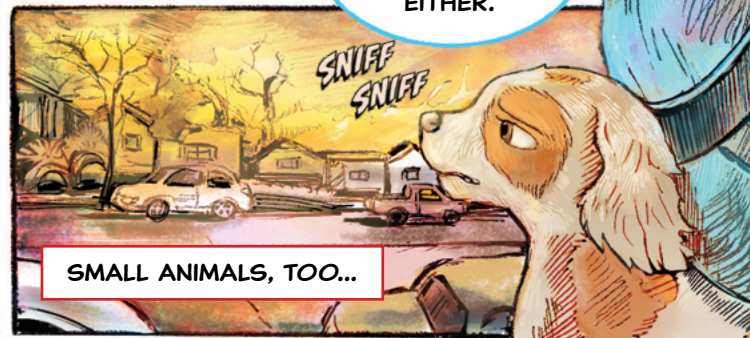
POOR BABY...



PATCHES ISN'T THE ONLY PET TRAPPED HERE EITHER.



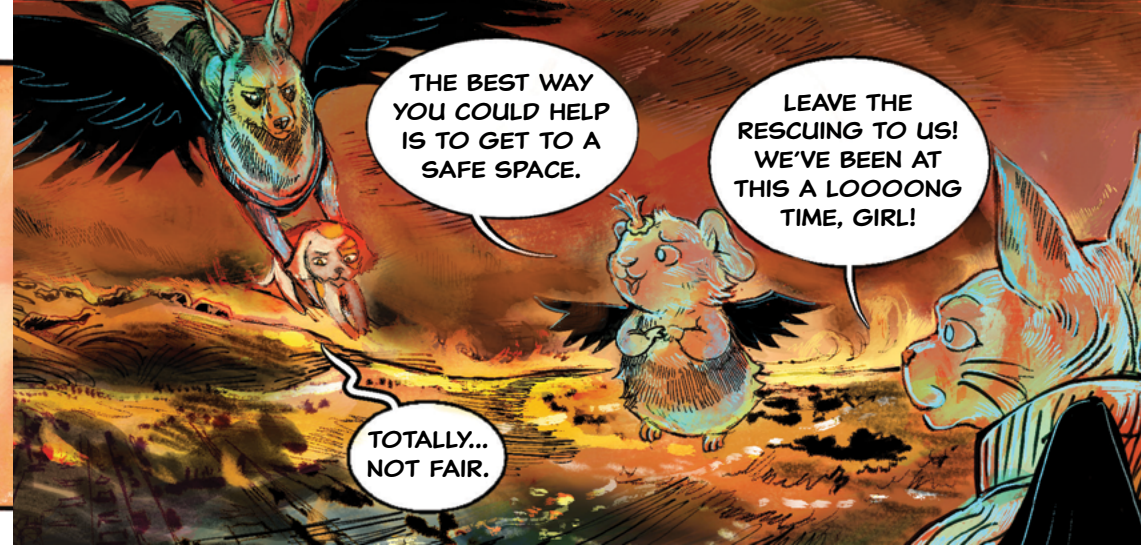
I SNIFFED OUT A FEW CATS...



SMALL ANIMALS, TOO...



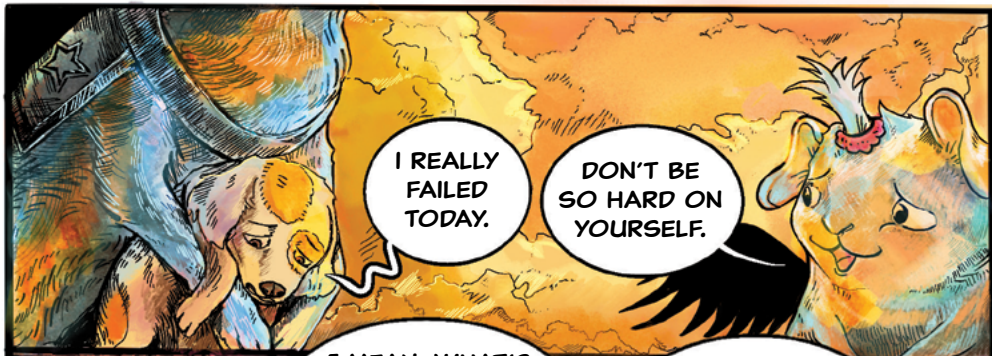
HOW DO I HELP?



THE BEST WAY YOU COULD HELP IS TO GET TO A SAFE SPACE.

LEAVE THE RESCUING TO US! WE'VE BEEN AT THIS A LOOOONG TIME, GIRL!

TOTALLY... NOT FAIR.



I REALLY FAILED TODAY.

DON'T BE SO HARD ON YOURSELF.



I MEAN, WHAT'S THE POINT OF A DOG IF NOT TO PROTECT THEIR FAMILY?

I DON'T EVEN KNOW WHERE MINE IS RIGHT NOW.



HOW WILL I EVER FIND ISSY?

IT JUST... ALL FEELS SO HOPELESS...



PUP, YOU'RE GOING THROUGH A LOT. BUT DON'T GIVE UP.



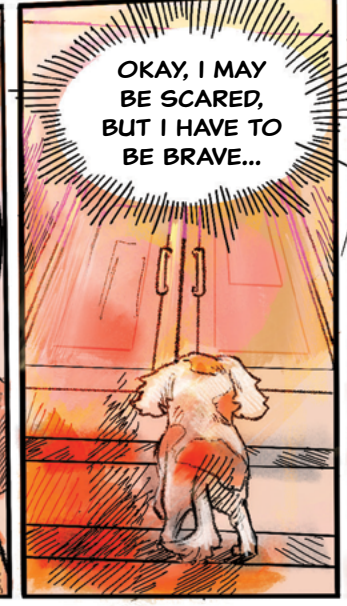
THERE'S STILL A CHANCE YOU CAN BE REUNITED. MAYBE THE PEOPLE HERE CAN HELP YOU FIND ISSY.

I KNOW BEING SOMEWHERE NEW CAN BE SCARY, BUT THEY HAVE FOOD, SHELTER, AND PLENTY OF WATER!

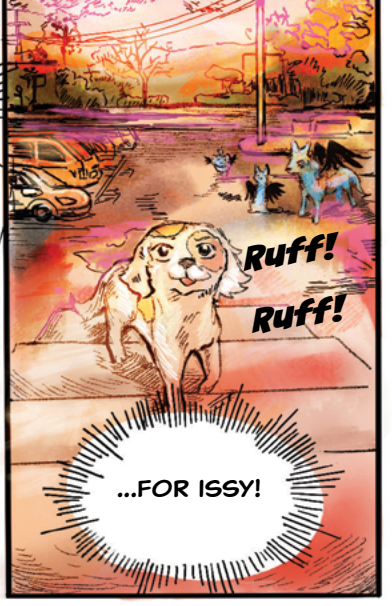
DO YOU THINK THEY'LL ACCEPT WILDLIFE? OR... GHOSTS?



YEAH, SOME WATER WOULD BE NICE.



OKAY, I MAY BE SCARED, BUT I HAVE TO BE BRAVE...



...FOR ISSY!

NONPROFIT SPOTLIGHT

For each of our free eBooks, the storytellers select a local Los Angeles nonprofit to highlight. The creator of "The Shepherds" chose Pasadena Humane Society.



FROM THE CREATOR

"I would like to help the Pasadena Humane Society because shelters are often underfunded, and I would like to help misplaced animals get the support and the vital care that they need."

--Catherine Chen, Creator of "The Shepherds"

You can read about and donate to [Pasadena Humane Society here.](https://www.pasadenahumane.org)

DEBUTING JANUARY 2027!

Preorder the physical book:

[OAKTREECOMICS.COM](https://www.oaktreecomics.com)

