

SUPER CHIEF

WRITTEN BY
ASHLEY BREITMAN

ILLUSTRATED BY
LEAH PATEL

I RUN OUTSIDE AND SNIFF, WAITING FOR THE OCEAN BREEZE AND SCENT OF FLOWERS, BUT SOMETHING'S OFF. THE SALT IS GONE FROM THE AIR, AND I SENSE NOTHING FLORAL. I COUGH. THE AIR IS MUSTY AND THICK.

WHAT IS IT, CHIEF?

WOOF!
WOOF!
WOOF!

I ALERT MY HUMAN.

WHEN MOM RUNS INSIDE. I FOLLOW HER, LIKE A SHADOW. SHE PACKS BAGS AND GATHERS MY KITTY SIBLINGS. WE MUST BE GOING SOMEWHERE!

I GRAB THE NEAREST TOY -- ALWAYS BEST TO BE PREPARED -- AND HURRY AFTER HER.

I HOPE--JUST MAYBE-- WE'RE VISITING MY FRIENDS...

WE DRIVE DOWN THE STREET, RIGHT PAST DAISY'S HOUSE. I DON'T KNOW WHY WE DON'T STOP. DAISY ALWAYS WANTS TO PLAY. IF YOU COULD ONLY SEE HER RUN, YOU'D THINK SHE HAS SUPER SPEED.



WE PASS PRINCESS'S HOUSE, TOO. I SPOT HER WHOLE FAMILY HURRYING OUTSIDE, BUT AGAIN WE DON'T STOP.

MAYBE WE'RE MEETING THEM AT THE BEACH?

PRINCESS AND I LOVE CRASHING THROUGH THE WAVES.

BUT THEN WHY CAN'T I SMELL MOM'S SUNSCREEN?
I ONLY SMELL...

SMOKE

... COMING FROM WHERE? WHY ARE ALL THE CARS TURNING AROUND?

THAT'S WHEN I SEE... THE REASON WE'RE NOT GOING TO SEE MY FRIENDS.

IN THE DISTANCE, I SEE FLASHING RED LIGHTS AND HUMANS IN BRIGHT UNIFORMS. I GROWL, BUT I CAN'T STOP ONE OF THE HUMANS FROM BOTHERING MOM. WHEN HE SAYS ONE OF MY FAVORITE WORDS...



...A TEAR STREAKS DOWN MOM'S CHEEK. I MUST PROTECT HER! I BARK AND BARK UNTIL THE MAN GOES AWAY, BUT -- OH, NO! DID I SCARE MOM? SHE EXITS THE CAR...

...AND GRABS THE CATS.

COME ON, CHIEF. LET'S WALK.

THE MOMENT I HOP OUT, THE HEAT SMACKS MY FACE. WIND AND SMOKE SWIRL AROUND ME, MAKING EVERYTHING THAT MUCH HOTTER.

LOOKING AROUND, I KNOW THIS ISN'T GOING TO BE A NORMAL WALK.

I LOVE OUR WALKS, BUT ALREADY THIS ONE HAS GONE ON FOR TOO LONG. MY LEGS ACHE, AND MY LUNGS BURN FROM ALL THE SMOKE. AS WE PASS THE PARK WHERE FRIO AND I PLAY, I GLANCE AT MOM.



I WISH FRIO WERE HERE. HE ALWAYS KNOWS WHERE THE BALL WILL GO WHEN MOM THROWS IT, AND HOW TO MAKE PEOPLE FEEL BETTER. I WISH I COULD BE LIKE FRIO AND UNDERSTAND WHAT MOM IS FEELING.

THAT'S WHEN I SMELL-- COULD IT BE...? TREATS!



WE MADE IT TO GRANDMA'S HOUSE! SHE GIVES ME BEEF, LIVER, AND... PEANUT BUTTER! AFTER CHOWING DOWN, I CURL UP NEXT TO MY KITTY SIBLINGS. MOM SCRATCHES BEHIND MY EARS. ALL IS GOOD, THE WAY IT SHOULD BE, UNTIL THE BLACK BOX STARTS UP...

THE PALISADES FIRE IS NOW OVER 1200 ACRES AND GROWING FAST. WHAT'S MAKING EVERYTHING WORSE IS THIS ONCE-IN-A-CENTURY WINDSTORM. THE SCOOPER PLANES THAT WOULD DROP WATER FROM ABOVE CAN'T FLY.

FIREFIIGHTERS BATTLING THESE 80 AND 100 MILE PER HOUR WINDS HAVE NO IDEA WHICH WAY THE FIRE WILL TURN NEXT.

WOOF! WOOF!

MEANWHILE, LOS ANGELES FACES YET ANOTHER FIRE. THIS ONE IS ACROSS TOWN IN ALTADENA...

SHHH. CHIEF, WE'RE OKAY.

WHEN THE BOX STOPS ITS NOISE, I FEEL MUCH BETTER. MOM RESTS HER HAND ON MY HEAD, AND MY EYES START TO FEEL HEAVY. I TRY TO STAY ALERT, FOR MOM, BUT I CAN'T. AS I DRIFT OFF, I DREAM OF RESCUING THE CITY THAT RESCUED ME.

EVERYONE, LISTEN UP!

WE ONCE NEEDED RESCUING. NOW, WE ARE THE...

SUPER RESCUERS

LET'S BE THE HEROES OUR COMMUNITY NEEDS. PRINCESS, I WANT YOU TO USE YOUR INCREDIBLE AQUA POWERS. COLLECT AS MUCH WATER FROM THE OCEAN AS YOU CAN TO PUT OUT THE FLAMES.

DAISY, YOU ARE THE FASTEST DOG I KNOW. USE YOUR SPEED TO DIG FIRELINES. THE TRENCHES YOU BUILD WILL STOP THE FIRE FROM SPREADING THROUGH THE HILLS.

FRIO, USE YOUR TELEKINESIS TO CONTROL THE WINDS AND HELP GET THOSE SCOOPER PLANES BACK IN THE AIR! TOGETHER, WE CAN DO THIS!

WE RUN AND FLY OFF, EACH ON A MISSION. WHAT DO I DO? I USE MY SUPER SNIFFER TO LOCATE ANIMALS WHO NEED HELP, AND MY SUPER BARK TO ALERT FIREFIGHTERS, WHO COME TO THEIR AID. I WISH I COULD DO MORE, BUT THE FLAMES...

THEY'RE JUST TOO STRONG!

I'LL JUST HAVE TO TRY HARDER.

THIS TIME, MY SUPER SNIFFER DETECTS THOUSANDS OF ACRES OF BLACK MUSTARD -- ALL OF IT DRY FROM MONTHS OF NO RAIN. I TURN MY NOSE TO THE WIND.

I KNOW WHERE THE FIRE WILL GO NEXT.

DAISY, RUN! THE FLAMES ARE COMING TOWARDS US!

BUT--CHIEF, WE'VE GOT TO SAVE THE NEIGHBORHOOD! ALL THESE HOMES BELONG TO OUR FRIENDS--OUR FAMILIES!

REMEMBER, LIVES BEFORE STRUCTURES. SAVE YOURSELF!

IT'S TOO LATE, DAISY--LOOK!

MY HEART RACES AS I WATCH THE FLAMES OUTGROW EVEN THE TALLEST PINE TREES. WHAT IF WE CAN'T SAVE ANY OF THE PALISADES? THAT'S WHEN I SEE...

WE CAN STILL SAVE THE VILLAGE!

I CAN'T SEE! THERE'S TOO MUCH SMOKE!

HOW? WE'RE OUT OF WATER!

GUYS, LISTEN TO CHIEF! WE CAN DO THIS!

I TELL THEM, IF WE ALL COMBINE OUR POWERS, NOTHING IS IMPOSSIBLE.

WE JUMP INTO ACTION! I USE MY SUPER SNIFFER TO LOCATE PUDDLES. DAISY SPEEDS OFF WITH PRINCESS TO COLLECT EVERY LAST DROP OF WATER. FRIO WHIPS UP THE WINDS TO FORM A GIGANTIC WATER SHIELD THAT SURROUNDS THE VILLAGE.

WHAT IF... WE ACTUALLY SAVE THE DAY?

WHEN THE BLACK BOX STARTS UP AGAIN, ALL MY HOPE FADES. THE BRIGHT SCREEN ENCOURAGES ME TO OPEN MY EYES, BUT I WON'T. I REFUSE TO WAKE UP TO THIS.

ACROSS THE PALISADES, ENTIRE NEIGHBORHOODS ARE NOW GONE. THAT INCLUDES THE ALPHABET STREETS, WITH THE FIRE HEADING TOWARD MARQUEZ KNOLLS.

WATER SUPPLIES ARE TOO LOW, AND THE WINDS ARE TOO STRONG TO CONTINUE TO BATTLE THE FIRE BY AIR.

THIS CAN'T BE HAPPENING.

MY HOUSE IS GONE.

WE DID EVERYTHING WE COULD.

I'M SORRY, CHIEF, BUT YOUR HOUSE BURNED, TOO.

I WHIMPER BECAUSE I DON'T KNOW WHAT ELSE TO DO. I CRY BECAUSE I'LL MISS THE SQUISHY TOY MOM MADE FOR ME, MY BED BY THE FIREPLACE, AND THE COMMUNITY THE WAY IT WAS BEFORE THE FIRES.



MY FRIENDS HUG ME, ONE BY ONE, AND THEN ALL TOGETHER. THEIR LOVE FOR ME MAKES MY HEART FEEL FULL, AND IT HELPS ME REALIZE...

WE HAVEN'T LOST OUR COMMUNITY. WE LOST OUR STUFF AND OUR HOUSES, BUT THERE IS A DIFFERENCE BETWEEN A HOUSE AND A HOME.

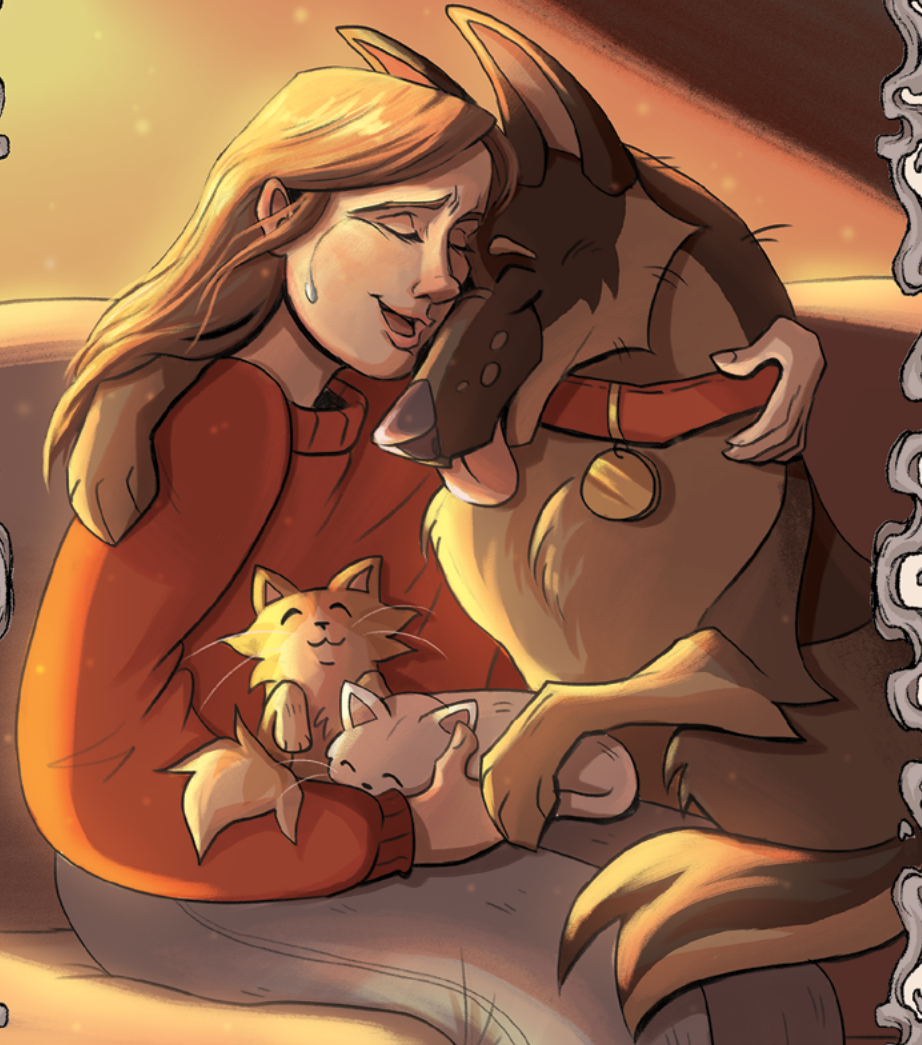
OUR THINGS CAN BE REPLACED. EVEN FOR THE SENTIMENTAL STUFF, WE CAN STILL SHARE ALL THE MEMORIES, RIGHT?

RIGHT! AND RIGHT NOW, OUR PEOPLE NEED US!

A HOUSE IS A STRUCTURE, BUT A HOME IS WHERE OUR FAMILIES ARE, AND MY FAMILY IS RIGHT HERE WITH ME.

MY FRIENDS REMIND ME OF MY REAL SUPER POWER...

WHEN I WAKE UP, I SEE MOM IS EVEN SADDER THAN I AM. GRANDMA HOLDS HER. SEEING THEM, I KNOW IN MY HEART THAT THIS IS NOT A DREAM. WE HAVE LOST OUR HOME. BUT I HAVE NOT LOST MY FAMILY. I KNOW WHAT I NEED TO DO. I HAVE THE BEST SUPER POWERS IN THE WORLD, AND I USE THEM.



FOR ANY AND ALL SUPER RESCUERS OUT THERE, TOGETHER, WE WILL GET THROUGH THIS. SPREAD LOVE TO YOUR FAMILY. HELP YOUR COMMUNITY. IF YOU DO THAT, YOU WILL FEEL MORE AND MORE HOPE EVERY DAY, AND, SLOWLY, WE WILL REBUILD. TOGETHER, WE CAN BE...

PALISADES STRONG!

NONPROFIT SPOTLIGHT

For each of our free eBooks, the storytellers select a local Los Angeles nonprofit to highlight. The creators of "Super Chief" chose Pali LTRG.



FROM THE CREATORS

"Pacific Palisades Long Term Recovery Group (Pali LTRG) is a non-profit working with multiple charities to help fire victims through the rebuild process, mental support, and legal assistance. It works with the elderly and low income residents affected by the Palisades fire. I chose this non profit because it is based in my hometown and has done wonders for my community."

--Ashley Breitman, Writer of "Super Chief"

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