

Ellie the  
Homesick  
Puppy

For Tom, Robin  
and William

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# Chapter One



“Megan, you’re meant to be packing those books, not reading them!”

Megan looked up guiltily at her mum.

“Sorry! I found this one down the side of my bed, and I’d forgotten I’d even got it. I haven’t read it for ages.” Megan reluctantly put the book inside a box and sighed.

Mum smiled. “Oh, go on, you can keep it out – we’ve got a couple more days till we go anyway. You’ll go mad without a book to read.”

Megan nodded and laid the book on her pillow as Mum headed back downstairs. She sat down on her bed and shook her head disbelievingly.

“A couple more days, Ellie. Only two more nights sleeping in this bedroom,” she murmured.

Ellie clambered up on to Megan’s knee, wagging her tail, and then licked her hand lovingly. She didn’t know why Megan sounded worried, but she wanted to help.

“You’re excited too, aren’t you?” Megan said, smiling. “You haven’t got to go to a new school though, lucky Ellie.”

She stroked Ellie’s golden ears, and the little puppy shivered with delight. Then she curled up on the duvet again, working herself into a little yellow furry ball.



Moving house was exciting and scary at the same time. Megan's bedroom in the new house was much bigger than this one, which would be great – but then she was really going to miss her best friend Bella, and all her mates from school. They had broken up for the Easter holidays the day before, and everyone in her class had got together to make her a huge card, with all their photos on it and a message from each of them. She'd almost cried when they gave it to her, thinking how they'd all tried so hard to make it special. It was sitting on her desk now, so she could pack it very carefully at the top of one of the boxes, last thing. Megan looked at it and sighed.

It wasn't as if they were actually

moving all that far – only about ten miles; it wasn't the other side of the country, or anything like that. But it meant a new school, of course, and a whole load of new people. *New friends*, Megan told herself firmly.

The best thing was that in two days' time, Megan and Ellie would be able to step out of their back door and ramble wherever they wanted. Here they only had the park, and Megan wasn't allowed to walk Ellie on her own. She knew she was going to have to be very careful going for walks in the countryside near their new house, and every time she mentioned it, Mum kept reminding her about being responsible and not going too far. But all the same, she was practically going to have a

wood at the end of her garden! It was going to be brilliant! She'd be able to take Ellie over to her gran's house, too, as Gran lived just about in walking distance from their new house.

Megan gently stroked Ellie's soft golden back, and the little dog gave a sleepy whine and half rolled over, inviting Megan to stroke her tummy. She yawned hugely, showing her very white teeth, and opened her eyes, blinking lovingly up at Megan.

Megan smiled back at her. "I just can't wait to take you for walks in those woods," she whispered happily. "It's going to be the best thing ever!"

Ellie sprang up and gave an excited, hopeful little bark.

Megan laughed. "You heard me say

the W word, didn't you, Ellie-pie? I can't believe you want to go out again, we've only been back home an hour!"

Ellie was wagging her tail madly now, staring up at Megan, but Megan shook her head.

"I'm sorry, Ellie. Mum says I have to pack."

Ellie didn't understand exactly what Megan was saying, but she knew what that tone of voice meant. No walk. She lay back down on the bed, her head resting mournfully on her paws. She knew they'd had a long walk, but now she'd had a little sleep, she felt just like another run.

Megan laughed at her. "You're such an actress, Ellie! You're behaving like I never take you for walks. And it's

not fair, because you know I'd love to. But we have to get everything into boxes." She sighed. "And Mum's only given me these ones. She says if I can't get all my stuff in here, I'm going to have to sort some of it out and get rid of it." She looked round her room worriedly. It seemed an awful lot to fit into such a small stack of boxes.

Megan went over to the window sill and started to pack her collection of toy dogs into a box. She had loads, all different breeds, but more than half of them were Labradors, like Ellie. Officially, she was a Yellow Labrador, but Megan thought yellow wasn't the right word at all. Ellie was really a rich honey-golden colour, with pale cream fur on her tummy. Her ears were a

shade darker than everywhere else, and super-silky. Mum reckoned that Ellie might get darker as she got older, to match her ears, but Megan wasn't sure. She would be growing for ages, anyway; she was just four months old at the moment. But even though Ellie was only a puppy, she was always bursting with energy.

Ellie stared soulfully at Megan, watching her tape up the box. It looked fun. Her ears twitched, and her tail wagged a little. Perhaps she could jump at that tape? She was never quite sure what was naughty, and sometimes jumping at things got her told off...

Suddenly, Ellie's ears pricked up. She could hear someone coming down

the path. Tail wagging, she stood up on the bed to look out of the window, and gave Megan a little warning bark. It was Bella!

Before Bella even had the chance to ring the bell, Megan and Ellie raced out of the room and down the stairs, making for the front door. Ellie won easily. She always did. She was amazingly fast. She scabbled at the front door with her paws, barking excitedly, until Megan caught up.

“Sssh! Ellie, sssh! Come back, look, I can’t open the door when you’ve got your paws on it, can I?”

Ellie scampered back, panting excitedly. She knew Megan’s friend Bella, and she hoped this meant a walk after all. She was used to walking

with Bella, as Megan and her mum usually picked Bella up on the way to school. Ellie and Megan often walked round the corner to Bella’s house when they went to the park too, as Megan’s parents didn’t like her going on her own, even when she had Ellie with her.

“Hi, Megan! Mum said I could come round and help you pack, if that’s OK with your mum and dad?” Bella looked hopefully at Megan’s dad, who was struggling into the hall carrying a massive box of china from the kitchen.

“Umph! Fine by me,” Dad said, putting down the box carefully. “But make sure you *do* pack, girls, OK? Not just chatting.”

