

And Away We Go

Ruby Lewis

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And Away We Go is a fun middle grade story of pets on the move.

In Ruby Lewis's lighthearted middle grade adventure *And Away We Go*, the focus is on three pets and their unpredictable keeper.

Told through the perspective of Mr. Theo Blair, a sophisticated Spitz-Maltese, the story follows an unexpected twist in the lives of a cat and two dogs who live with Mr. Theo Blair's human's sister. Unlike Mr. Theo Blair, the three pets have a less-than-normal life.

It all starts one morning when one of the dogs overhears their human's conversation on the phone and the environment around them starts changing. They get a pet sitter, LeAnn, on days when their human isn't home; they are led into kennels while everything is packed; and they are forced to move from their home with no idea where they are going.

Every member of the quirky cast is distinct. Kiki the cat is the most mature of the group, and is proud and the least concerned with all of the changes. Dog Isabelle is fussy and inquisitive, while the other dog, Sebastian, is gentle and plays the role of a peacemaker for Isabelle and Kiki. Their differences result in captivating conversations.

The pets' opinions of human behavior add humor to the work, as when Mr. Theo Blair wonders why a human would live with three different pets at the same time, or when Kiki expresses that putting up Christmas decorations is a complete waste of time.

Mr. Theo Blair's narration is intimate in tone, particularly when the dog inserts his thoughts on different incidents. In a story focused on pets, Mr. Theo Blair's perspective magnifies the animals' opinions of events well.

The incorporation of entertaining twists moves the story forward, as when Isabelle, Sebastian, and their human cannot find Kiki following an angry argument between Isabelle and Kiki. Isabelle is beside herself with worry; she cannot imagine losing Kiki, despite Kiki's domineering nature. Still, the family's constant traveling and stops are repetitive. As they settle down for the night at different places, they remain anxious about their final destination and what awaits them in the future.

Straightforward illustrations are incorporated throughout, but are sparse. They portray the characters in different scenarios well, but the focus here is on the text.

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EDITH WAIRIMU (July 10, 2019)

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