

Clarice Bean, Scram! The Story of How We Got Our Dog

Lauren Child

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Spirited Clarice returns in Lauren Child's chapter book *Clarice Bean, Scram!*, encountering a stray dog whose arrival inspires warm capers.

Clarice—a curious, naïve, and high-strung girl—wants nothing quite so much as her older sister Marcie's rainbow roller skates. Their parents left for a wedding; the summer days are sweltering; and, in a fit of one-upmanship, Clarice told a neighbor that she was getting a dog. When a dog follows her home, she has to find creative ways to keep its presence a secret—and to take care of it. She draws upon her admiration for a sleuth whose advice she tries to incorporate, as when she's conscientious about paying adults back for items that she's used, and when she uses creative means to prove that she's responsible enough to keep her new pet. Still, one comes to wonder whether she wished the situation into being.

The story is told in a breathless manner, and it's jazzed up by swerving typographical experiments. Clarice's relationships with her family members, though marked by love, also include some rivalry; they get silly over some uninspired canned food. Her everyday adventures are further enlivened by the book's expressive black-and-white sketches, which portray city living alongside her family members and the dog—the naming of whom is delayed until a sweet bonding moment. Judicious pops of color are used to highlight key details, as of a lavish kimono and a rainbow leash. Some two-page spreads depict joyful moments among the members of the Bean family.

Clarice learns to make sacrifices for the sake of others in the endearing series entry *Clarice Bean, Scram!*, in which her idle wish for a dog turns into a rambunctious reality.

KAREN RIGBY (March / April 2023)

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