

## Harvey Holds His Own

**Colleen Nelson**

**Tara Anderson, Illustrator**

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Colleen Nelson's heartwarming novel *Harvey Holds His Own* is about friendship, loyalty, and the importance of staying true to oneself, no matter the obstacles.

For twelve-year-old Maggie, seventh grade at St. Ambrose Academy includes twenty hours of mandatory volunteer work. Maggie decides to spend her hours at the Brayside Retirement Villa, where Austin—who found Harvey, Maggie's spirited terrier, when he got lost the previous fall—works with his grandfather. Though Maggie resents Austin for not trying to return Harvey, Brayside is familiar and seems like a nice place.

The story alternates between the perspectives of Maggie, Austin, and Harvey. Maggie allows Austin to take care of Harvey for her while she gets to know a new resident, Mrs. Fradette. While Austin and Harvey spend time with the other residents, worrying over the fate of Austin's grandfather's job and finding an abandoned puppy behind a dumpster, Mrs. Fradette tells Maggie stories of a great flood and about learning to be a woman mechanic in 1950. These stories teach Maggie about perseverance in the face of adversity and about living an authentic life. They also help her to deal with her difficulties with her two best friends, whose interests seem to be going in different directions than her own.

Harvey's love for his people, his desire to protect his territory, and his curiosity for the world around him are authentic reflections of canine personalities. The memories that Mrs. Fradette shares are interesting for their glimpses into the past, and Maggie and Austin both navigate difficult situations with maturity and consideration for those around them.

*Harvey Holds His Own* is a charming novel whose important life lessons are bettered by the love of a good dog.

CATHERINE THURESON (July / August 2020)

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