

Picture Books

The Perfect Pet

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Greg Holfeld, illustrator

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“Hamlet, Pygmalion, and Podge wanted a dog more than anything else in the world. More than ice cream, more than chocolate. Even more than wallowing in mud on a hot summer’s day.” Wallowing in mud? Yes, these cleverly named characters are three little pigs who are searching for the ideal pet. This story, filled with humor, longing, hope, disappointment, and love, will charm and delight even the most recalcitrant readers!

Mr. Pinkerton agrees to help the pigs in their quest. First the piglets try Goliath, but he knocks Hamlet down with his slobbery kisses, stands on Pygmalion’s cricket bat, and sleeps in Podge’s bed. (“It was AWFUL!” cries one of the pigs.) The second dog, Baxter, is a barker. (“It was DREADFUL!”) Digby does nothing but dig. (“It was TERRIBLE!”) Matilda tugs on Hamlet’s sweater, Woodrow drools, Buster rummages through the garbage, Rover runs away, Dotty licks Podge’s face, and Howler, of course, howls. (“It was DISASTROUS!”) Will they ever find the perfect pet, one that is “small, clever, playful, friendly, warm, gentle, loving AND guaranteed not to bark, dig, howl, or chew?”

Children ages four to eight will cheer on the three pigs as they try to find their dream dog. The illustrations by Canadian artist Holfeld are priceless. The animals’ faces, gestures, and stances are expressive and endearing. The watercolors beg to be revisited again and again for newly discovered disarming details, like the white mouse peeping out from the back of Mr. Pinkerton’s shirt, the penguin on an ice block, and the frog on a ball.

This is the first published picture book by the author, who hails from Australia. Readers of all ages can only hope that she and Holfeld will team up for many more.