

FREDDY

the DOGGED
RESCUER



SWAPNIL MISHRA

“Heartwarming and inspiring.
A delightful read for any dog lover.”

—Darren Lim, author of the *Ace Agent Spycat* series

FREDDY

the DOGGED
RESCUER



In the series

Freddy the Eager Fundraiser
Freddy the Dogged Rescuer

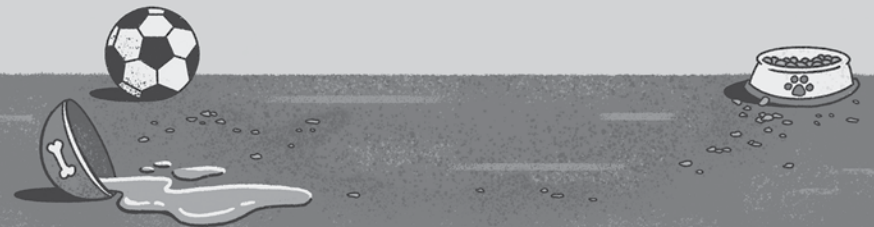
FREDDY *the* DOGGED RESCUER

SWAPNİL MİSHRA

ILLUSTRATED BY
QUEK YU QING



EPIGRAM



For Wally

Copyright © 2023 by Swapnil Mishra
Cover illustration by Quek Yu Qing

Published in Singapore by Epigram Books
www.epigram.sg

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying or otherwise without the prior written permission of the publisher.

National Library Board, Singapore
Cataloguing in Publication Data

Name(s): Mishra, Swapnil. | Quek, Yu Qing, illustrator.
Title: Freddy the dogged rescuer / Swapnil Mishra ;
illustrated by Quek Yu Qing.
Description: Singapore : Epigram Books, 2023.
Identifier(s): ISBN 978-981-49-8463-8 (paperback)
ISBN 978-981-49-8464-5 (ebook)
Subject(s): LCSH: Fund raising—Singapore—Juvenile fiction. |
Dog rescue—Singapore—Juvenile fiction.
Classification: DDC S823—dc23

This is a work of fiction. Names, characters, places, and incidents either are the product of the author's imagination or are used fictitiously. Any resemblance to actual persons, living or dead, events, or locales is entirely coincidental.

First edition, February 2023.



CHAPTER ONE

“We would like to welcome Freddy onstage to receive his award.”

The camera slowly pans the audience before it zooms in on the man...I mean, kid of the hour—yours truly!

I jump up excitedly from my seat as friends and family offer their congratulations and pat me on my back.

I begin walking towards the stage, and the spotlight is trailing my footsteps. I am almost blinded by the bright light but can make out my image on the gigantic screen. Next to my beaming

face are the words in a huge font,

**UNITED NATIONS AWARD FOR
GLOBAL YOUNG ACHIEVER
FREDDY**

I gratefully receive the award onstage and turn to the audience. I'm about to begin my speech with a famous quote, "With great power comes great responsibility", when I am rattled by shouts from the audience: *Freddy, Freddy!*

Hey! Who dares interrupt my awesome acceptance speech?

"Freddy."

It is too dark to see, but I recognise my mother's voice. I am on the stage holding an award, and Mum is yelling at me?

"Freddy, wake up."

And just like that, the entire fantasy comes crashing down. I sit up on my bed and look around.

No stage, no award and no United Nations. It was just a dream.

I glare at my alarm clock. It's only 7.30am! "Mum, it's Sunday! Why are you waking me so early?" I reach out for the blanket to cover my face, and then lie back down so I can sleep some more.

I want to go back to my dream and finish my awesome speech.

"Freddy, you asked me to, remember? You wanted to prepare for our trip today."

"Oh no!" I jump off the bed as if the mattress was a hot plate. "Why didn't you wake me up at seven?" I screech. I dash to the bathroom and shut the door with a bang.

"I have been trying to wake you since 7am. But we're only leaving for the dog shelter in the afternoon. Why are you panicking?" Mum asks from the other side of the bathroom door.

As I brush my teeth, I think about how this all started with my sleepyhead brother, Ray, bringing

home a crayfish for his science project...

Mr Pico the crayfish looked just like a lobster, except he was way smaller. Ray was delighted to finally get a real living, breathing creature for a pet after he lost Iggy the iguana. Iggy was made of plastic, but it still managed to be creepy somehow.

Thankfully, unlike the iguana who used to share the bed with Ray and me, Mr Pico had to stay in his tank filled with water and rocks.

Anyway, Mr Pico survived for a whole six months, which was twice as long as all the other crayfishes in Ray's class. Mr Pico died a peaceful death and planted the idea of a pet firmly in Ray's heart.

"Mum, can I *please* get a dog?" Ray had pleaded after Mr Pico's passing. Mum said no, and soon Ray was crying and throwing a tantrum.

It earned him a timeout.

The problem with Ray is he just doesn't know how to ask for things.

"Ray, you know I don't ask Mum and Dad for anything. But do you remember how badly I wanted the new season of Match Attax cards and those 100 Club cards? Did I just start crying for it?"

"No. And you even got the special Neymar 101 card!"

"Exactly, and I also got a Lego Space set," I bragged. "Let me show you how it's done."

I brought up the topic of a pet again during dinner.

"Mum and Dad, tell us what we need to do to get a pet dog," I started while the fried rice sat patiently on my plate.

"I think it will be a fine idea to start with an essay on the pros and cons of having a pet dog," Dad said.

Of course he would. Dad never lets slip an opportunity to convert a situation into a writing project for us.

"Owning a pet dog is a big responsibility. It's

like having a baby that never grows up, and right now, the two of you are more than enough for us. Let's wait till you're older," said Mum.

Mum was employing the classic manoeuvre that all parents use to avoid giving their kids what they want. We needed heavy ammunition to counter this, and so we pulled out the big guns. I looked at Ray and winked.

"Mum, puh-lease?" Ray pleaded like we'd planned. I could already see the magic of his puppy-dog face working.

"Aww." Mum turned to Dad. "I do remember saying we could get a puppy when they turn ten."

YES! I had turned ten six months ago. "So let's go and get a puppy tomorrow!" I quickly proposed.

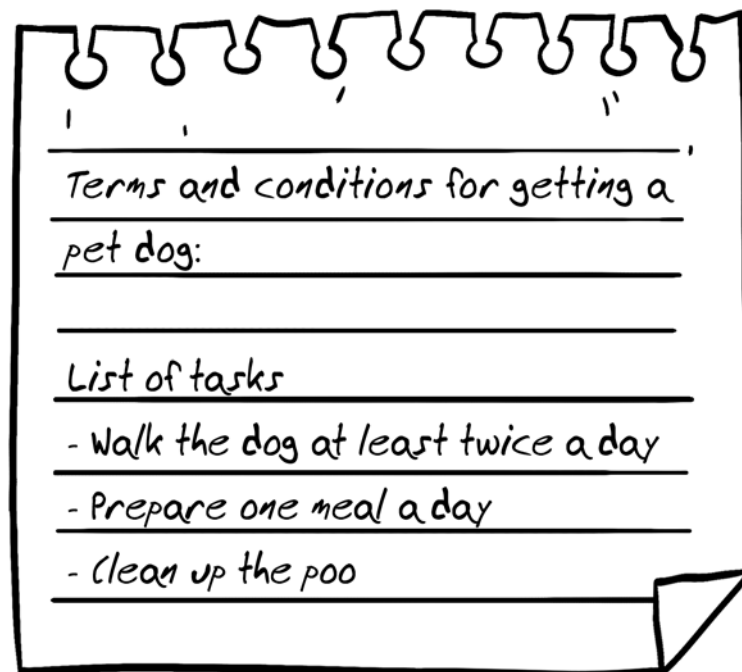
"No. Ray also has to turn ten. He's only eight," Mum countered. "Besides, it's not just about the age, Freddy. There is a lot of work involved in taking care of a dog."

"Mum, why don't you help us make a list of

tasks we'd have to do? I can put them in the terms and conditions, and then we can make a deal," I suggested.

"Hmm...I suppose it is important that you and Ray fully understand what it means to own a pet. I will help you with the list, and then we can decide after."

"And you and Ray will have to sign up for all the tasks," Dad chimed in.



“What! Clean the poo? Do we have to? Don’t dogs do that outside in the bushes? Won’t we just pick it up and put it in the bin?” I asked.

“When the dog is young—” Mum started.

“Oh, you mean a puppy! We just did a quiz in class about baby animal names. Guess what a baby kangaroo is called?” Ray asked.

“A calf?” Mum said.

“A joey!” Ray shouted.

I scowled. “Ray, can we please focus on the list!”

“So, as I was about to say, puppies aren’t toilet-trained,” Mum continued. “For the first weeks or months, they may poop and pee anywhere in the house. You two will have to be responsible for all the cleaning.”

Eew! We would need to cross this item from the list as soon as possible.

But my plan had worked! After some final edits to the terms and conditions, I had successfully argued and won the verdict in favour of my client:

we were getting a dog!

“Do you know Tanya is getting a Golden Retriever, Coco?” Ray said. “It is coming all the way from Tasmania. The pup will be on a ten-hour flight to Singapore.”

Coco is Ray’s nickname for me. We used to live next door to an aunty who referred to me as Ray’s “kor kor”, which means older brother in Cantonese. He has called me Coco ever since.

“You mean this puppy is coming to Singapore in an aircraft? Wow, some dogs are so lucky to become international travellers at such a young age,” I said. “I wonder if they have pet passports.”

“Mum, can we also get a cute puppy from the factory in Australia?” Ray asked.

“It’s not a factory, Ray,” I said.

Mum stepped in to explain. “There are dog breeders around the world who you can buy a puppy from. But we can adopt one from an animal shelter right here in Singapore.”

“You mean there are dogs put up for adoption?”
Ray asked.

“Yes. There are all kinds of dogs: strays, those that have been abandoned, even retired police dogs. They can be adopted and given a home.”

“Ooh, let’s get a retired police dog!” I screamed in excitement. “It’ll be our guard dog and scare away bad guys. Nobody will dare mess with us.”

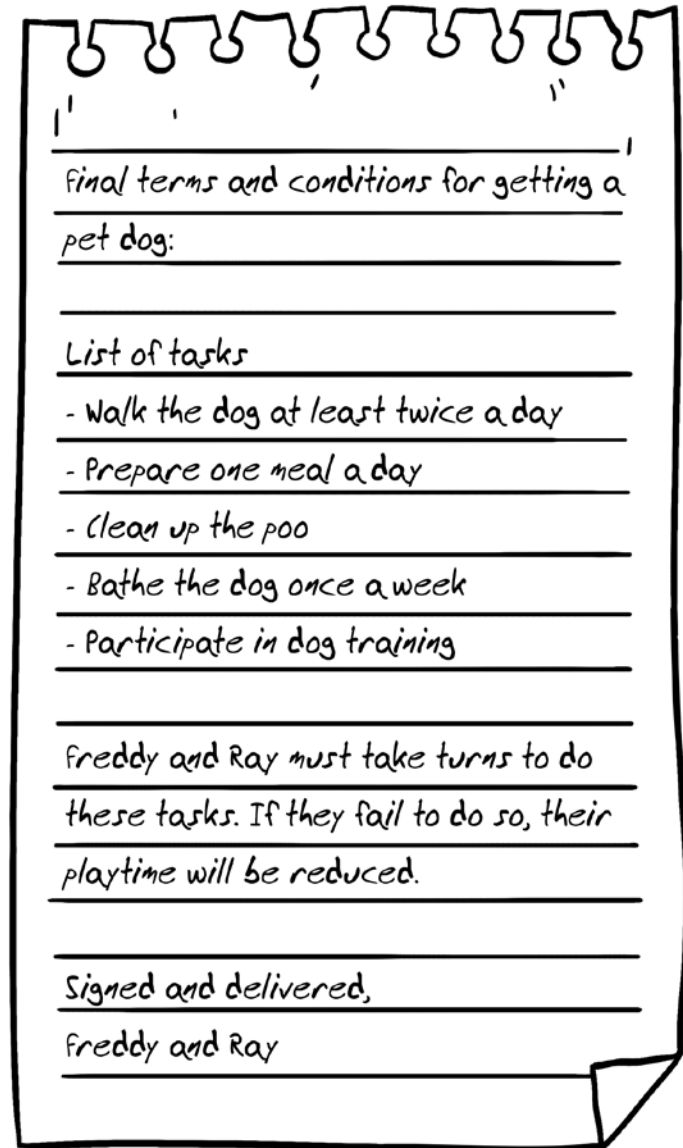
“Or maybe it can help us sniff out all the hidden snacks in the kitchen!” Ray added helpfully.

“You know, Aunt Winnie adopted her dog Lego from the Home for Paws shelter in Pasir Ris. Shall we pay the shelter a visit and find out more?”
Mum asked.

We nodded our heads vigorously.

“But remember—we are just going to visit. There is a lot of planning involved before we bring home a pet.”

YIPPEE!



“Are you working on a new world record for brushing teeth, Freddy?”

Mum’s words bring me back to the present. I must have been brushing for over three minutes, which is not a world record but definitely a personal one.

A few hours later, Mum, Dad, Ray and I are in a taxi on our way to the shelter. It seems like forever before the taxi lurches off the expressway onto a deserted road that weaves through the surrounding greenery.

We are dropped off at the entrance gate, and we walk towards the main office. It is eerily quiet, with two-storey buildings all around, no humans and only distant barking sounds coming from different directions. I stay close to my mum.

A young man with short, cropped hair steps out of the office and greets us all with a fist bump. I notice the callouses on his hands and knuckles. How hard do they make him work at the shelter? I wonder.

“Hello, I’m Colin. And you must be Ray and Freddy.”

“Thanks for making time to see us at such short notice, Colin. Winnie told us you are doing really great work here,” Dad says.

We do our SafeEntry check-in formalities as the grown-ups continue talking.

“I am only a volunteer, but I try to help out as much as I can. I wish I could do more, but work keeps me busy.”

“What do you do, Colin?” Dad asks.

“I am a firefighter stationed at the Pasir Ris Fire Post,” Colin replies.

What? That is so cool!

“Wow! Like, a real firefighter? Have you jumped into an actual fire?” I butt in. This is fast becoming the best day of my life! “Have you climbed high-rise buildings? Have you...” I run out of breath.

“Relax, buddy, and catch a breath. I will answer all your questions later. But right now we don’t have

a lot of time, as each appointment is only 30 minutes. Should we start our tour?" Colin says.

"Of course, let's do that. Freddy, this place is full of dogs, so please hold your horses." Dad tries to be funny.



Colin starts by sharing the shelter's dos and don'ts, and one rule stays with me: don't put your hand or any part of the body close to a cage or a dog, as they may get scared, react and injure you. I am walking behind Colin and not taking any chances. I don't want to go home with only nine fingers!

Colin tells us there are around 60 dogs at the shelter. A few live there permanently due to health and other issues, but the rest are waiting to find a good home. We learn that some abandoned pets are sheltering here but most of the dogs are strays. They all live in large kennels with their nametags hanging outside.

There is a huge sign on the wall that says "no treats allowed".

"This is where we keep our larger and older dogs as they need the space," Colin says.

"Why aren't they allowed any treats?" I ask Colin as we walk past a kennel with a big white dog. It gives a short *woof*. I think it has the same question.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The idea for this book came from my son Aarya. My wife, Ferzin, encouraged me to start work on the manuscript. Edmund and Priti from Epigram also pushed me to write a sequel to *Freddy the Eager Fundraiser*. Thank you to my editor, Lynette, for her patience when I wanted to change the entire plot mid-way. Thanks to Yu Qing for her terrific illustrations.

A special mention goes to my son Reyhan, or Ray, who probably loves animals more than humans and was a big help in the script development.

Finally, thank you to all the dogs in the world for being the most loyal friends and constant companions.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



A banker by profession and teacher by choice, Swapnil Mishra holds the confluence of enterprise and social goals close to his heart. He is the founder of a wealth-tech company and wants to help everyone get access to sound financial advice through the use of innovative technology. He is an Adjunct Teaching Mentor at the Singapore Management University, working on projects in partnership with social service agencies like Aidha, MINDS, WE CARE, Trybe and SHINE. Swapnil searches for challenges that help him venture into uncharted territories like running a marathon or hiking the remote Tasmanian marshlands. He plays the bass in a band and lives in Singapore with his wife, two growing boys and their pet Wally.


ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR



Quek Yu Qing is an illustrator and stop-motion animator from Singapore. She received her BFA in Media Art from the School of Art, Design and Media, Nanyang Technological University, in 2021. Yu Qing is excited by sincere, emotive works that engage with and respond to a source material. She loves exploring different illustration styles and finding the one that best embodies her intention, and takes pride in the materiality and imperfections in her stop-motion creations.

“Heartwarming and inspiring.”

—Darren Lim, author of the
Ace Agent Spycat series



Oh no! Freddy's just heard that his beloved Home for Paws dog shelter has been forced out of its old location. But with Covid restrictions in place, Freddy has to come up with clever and new ways to help raise money or the shelter's canine inhabitants will be left in the cold.

MIDDLE GRADE

ISBN 978-981-49-8463-8



9 789814 984638

www.epigram.sg