

Rescue & Jessica

A Life-Changing Friendship




Jessica Kensky *and* Patrick Downes

illustrated by Scott Magoon



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On a special farm in the countryside, a pup named Rescue was in training. He was learning to help people who could not see. But he was worried.

His trainer had just said, "You aren't meant to be a Seeing Eye dog."

That was hard for Rescue to hear. Helping people who can't see was the family business.

"The service dog team is better for you," his trainer said. "Service dogs work *beside* their partners, instead of in front of them."

Will I be a good service dog? Rescue wondered.

What will my new partner be like?

Will she like me?

Rescue didn't want to let anyone down.



In a hospital in the city, a girl named Jessica was worried.

Both of her legs were badly hurt. Everyone hoped her right leg would heal, but the doctors had to remove part of her left leg so she could be healthy again.

“You’re an amputee now, Jessica,” the doctor explained. “You have to wear a prosthetic leg or use a wheelchair for the rest of your life.”

That was hard to hear. She had only ever walked on her own two legs.

How will I do things on my own? Jessica wondered.

When will I be able to walk again?

What will my life be like?

Her whole family was worried about her, and she didn’t want to let anyone down.







Back in the country, Rescue was learning how to be a service dog.

When he wore his blue cape, that meant he was in training.

He had to stay by his partner's side.



He fetched all kinds of things.



He even learned how to open doors.

“Rescue, you’re a natural!” said his trainer.

At the hospital, Jessica was learning new ways to do things that used to come easily.

She used a wheelchair to get around.



She practiced getting out of bed differently.



She put on a prosthetic leg so she could stand.





She was learning how to walk again, even though her right leg was still hurt.

“Jessica, you are becoming strong,” said her doctors.

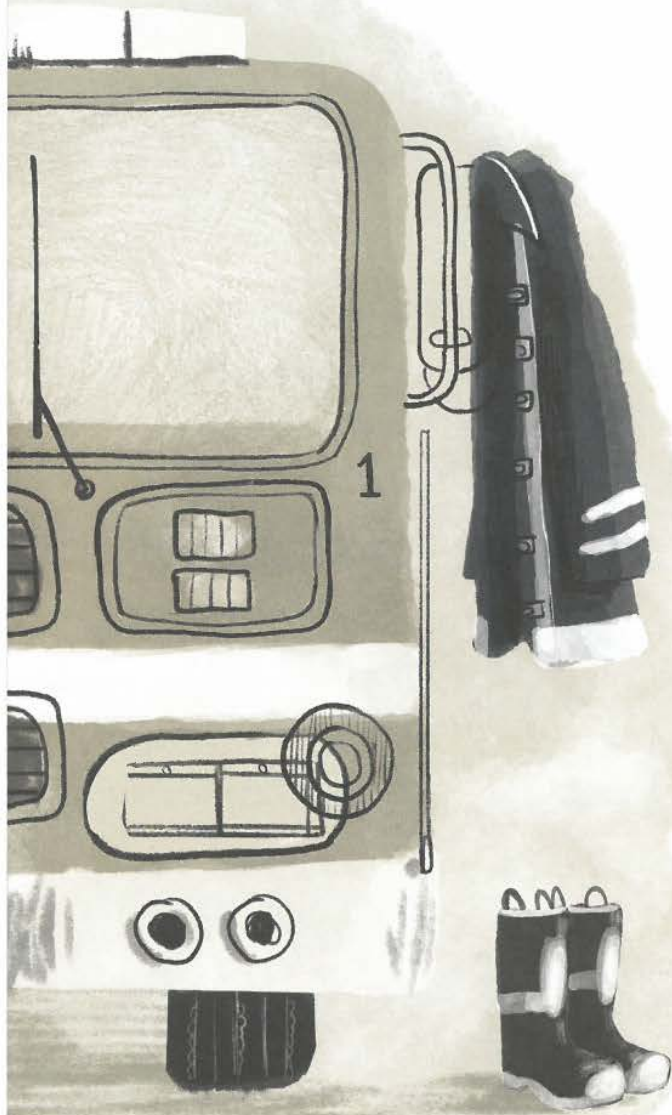


Rescue was proud of all he had accomplished,
but he still worried.

He was named in honor of a brave firefighter.

He had big shoes to fill.

Rescue wanted to help people, just like his
namesake.



Jessica knew she had made a lot of progress, but she was frustrated and sad about the things she still couldn't do.

She wondered if she would ever be happy again.

She felt like the changes were too big, too much.





One day, a visitor came to see Jessica and she brought her service dog, Currahee. Jessica saw how a smart dog like Currahee could help her. That very day, she started filling out the application to ask for a dog of her own.



RY

COLOGY

EXIT





After a while, Jessica got some very exciting news.

Rescue got exciting news, too. He also got a new red cape.



NEADS



Finally, the big day arrived.

“It’s nice to meet you, Rescue,” said Jessica.

She looks so nice and so pretty, Rescue thought.

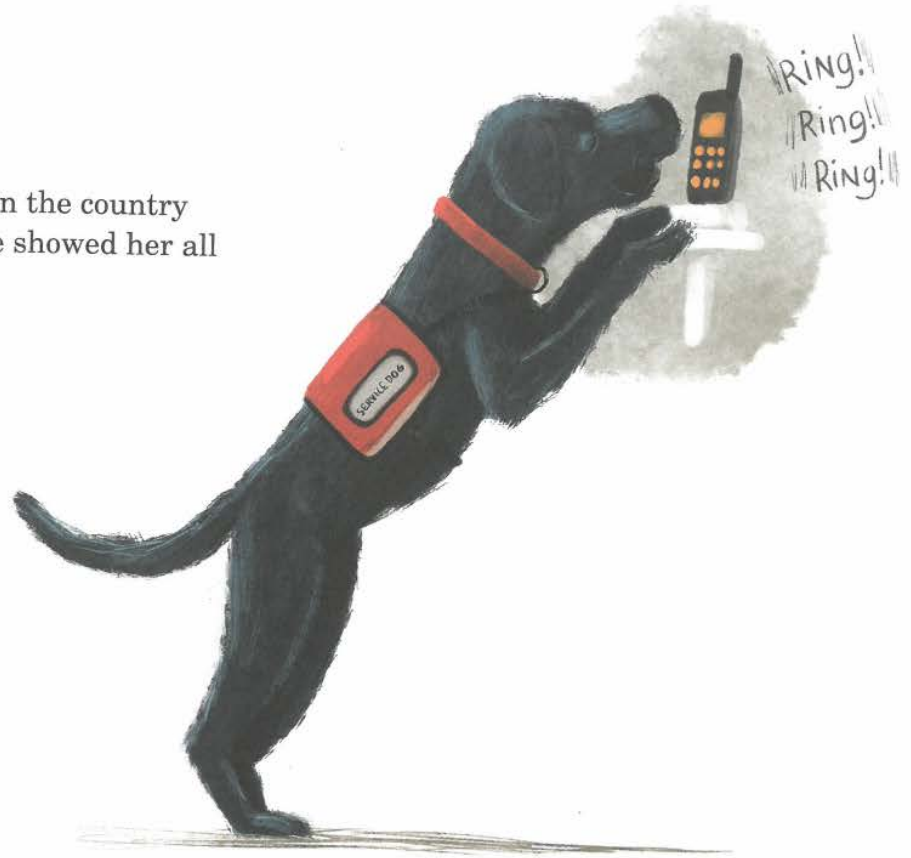


Rescue stood up very tall. He hoped she didn't notice his legs were trembling.

But his wagging tail gave him away.

Jessica smiled a big smile and laughed a big laugh for the first time in a long time.

Jessica and Rescue stayed in the country for a few weeks, and Rescue showed her all the things he could do.



"You're amazing!" Jessica told Rescue.

*You think I'm amazing? Rescue thought.
I think you're amazing!*

Back in the city, Rescue and Jessica got used to working together.

Rescue brought her the things she needed.



He opened things that were hard for her to reach.

Rescue barked if Jessica needed someone.

If she tripped, he would hold steady so she could get back up.





Rescue and Jessica were always together, but when she didn't need his help, Rescue *really* liked to sleep.

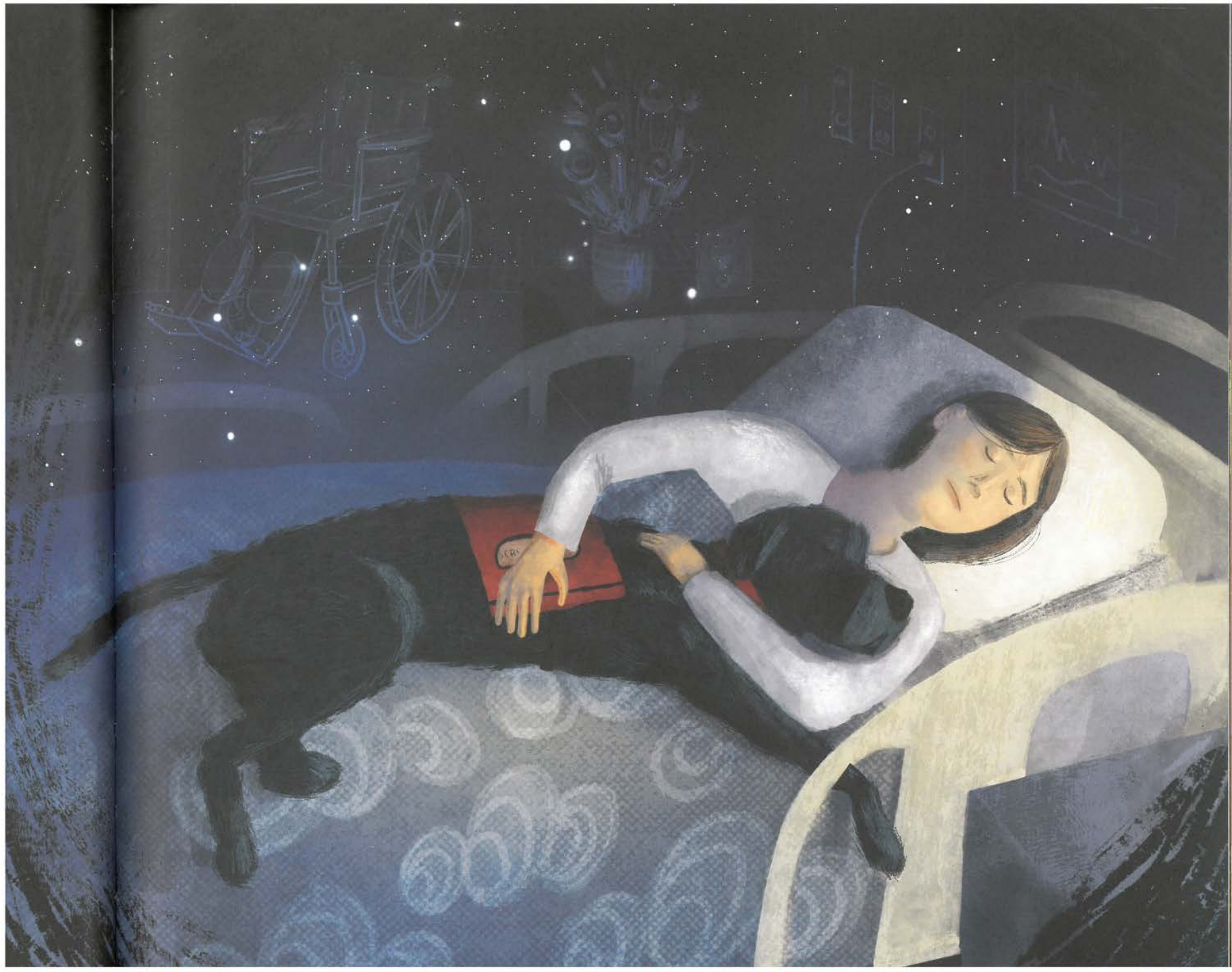
Jessica knew that even though Rescue was special, he was a regular dog, too. She made sure that Rescue had playtime every day.



But Jessica still wasn't completely healthy. One day, her doctor told her that her right leg would have to be removed, too. She would need to wear two prosthetic legs. This didn't get any easier for Jessica to hear.

The night after the doctor removed her right leg, Rescue knew just what to do to help Jessica, all on his own.

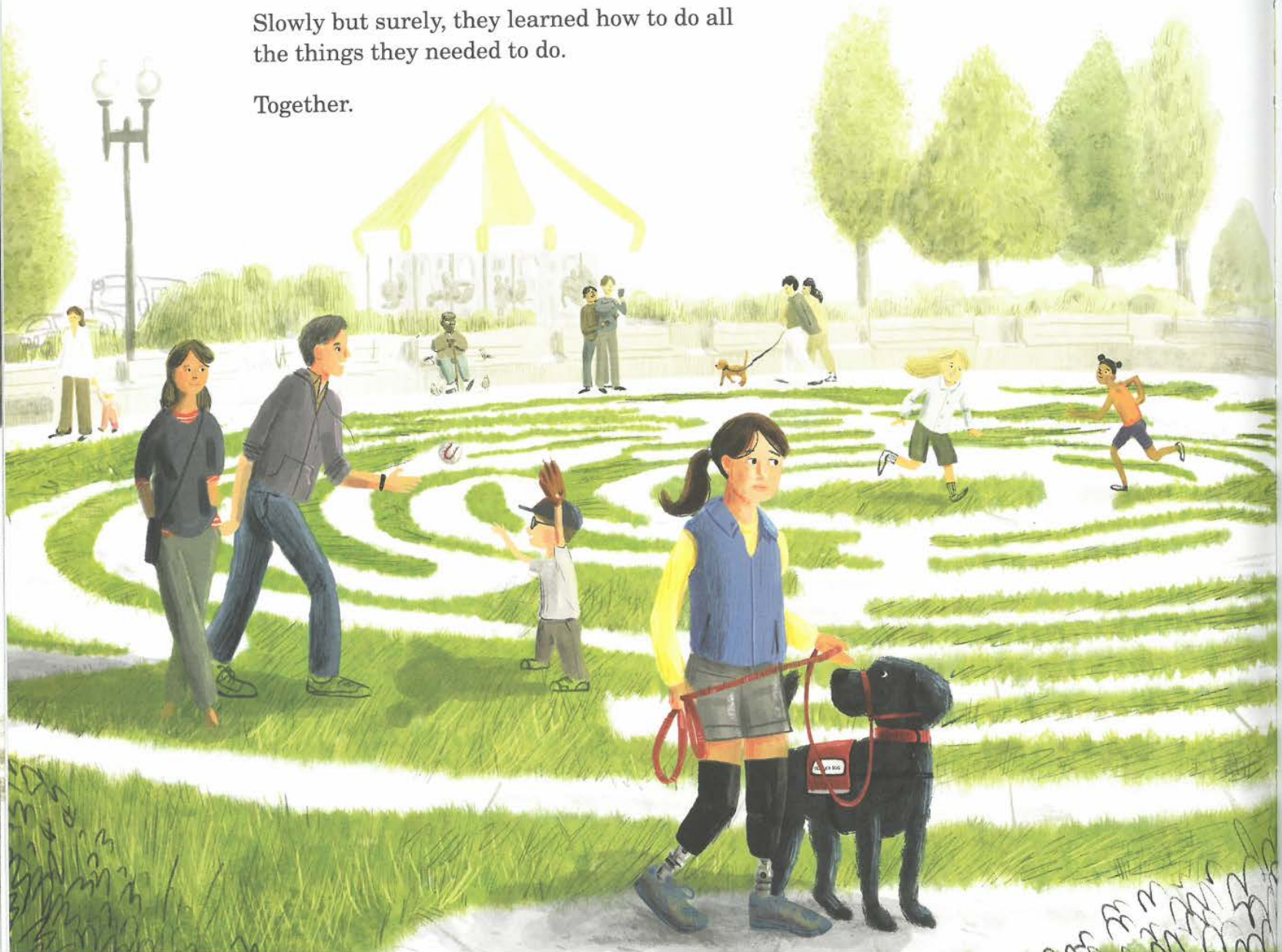




Rescue and Jessica had to start all over again.

Slowly but surely, they learned how to do all
the things they needed to do.

Together.





They did chores together,

played together,



and snuggled together.

For the first time in a long time, Jessica felt happy.

And that made Rescue happy, too.

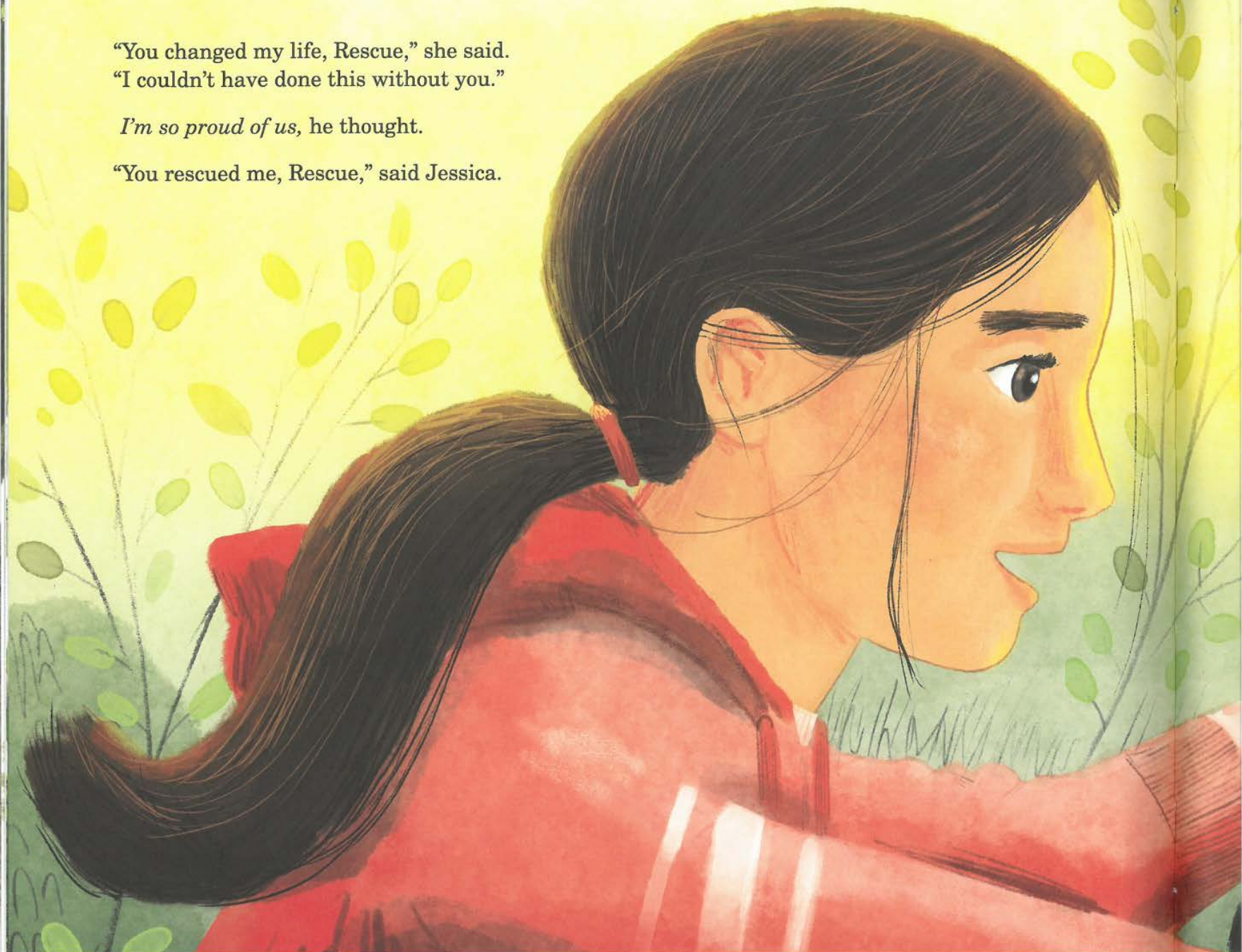


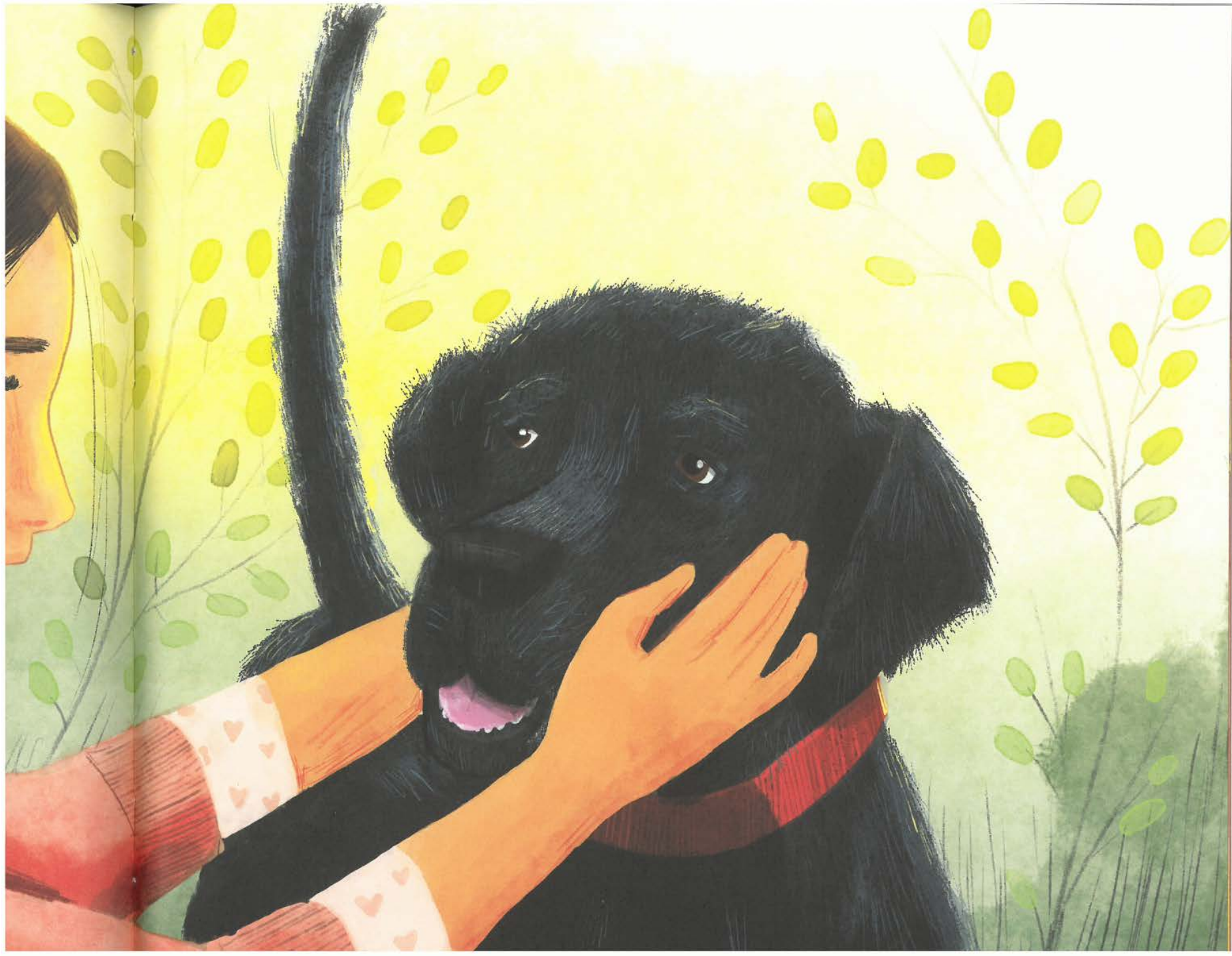


“You changed my life, Rescue,” she said.
“I couldn’t have done this without you.”

I’m so proud of us, he thought.

“You rescued me, Rescue,” said Jessica.







But the truth was, they had rescued each other.



AUTHORS' NOTE

Rescue and Jessica's story is based on a real-life friendship. Jessica Kensky was injured in the 2013 Boston Marathon bombing, and she eventually became a double amputee. She received a black Labrador named Rescue to help her learn how to live her new life. Rescue was named in honor of Worcester, Massachusetts, firefighter Jon Davies, who rode on the truck known as Rescue 1. He gave his life in the line of duty on December 8, 2011. Jessica and her husband, Patrick Downes, who is also an amputee from the bombing, consider Rescue their best friend and couldn't imagine their lives without him. Though Jessica was an adult when she met Rescue, much of this story is true.

Rescue is a Service Dog who was trained by NEADS. NEADS/World Class Service Dogs is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization located in Princeton, Massachusetts. Established in 1976, NEADS is accredited by Assistance Dogs International, the governing body that establishes industry standards and practices.

NEADS offers a wide spectrum of assistance dog services, including Service Dogs for adults and children with a physical disability, Service Dogs for veterans, Hearing Dogs, and Social Dogs for children on the autism spectrum. Their dogs are also partnered with professionals in classroom, therapy, hospital, ministry, and courthouse settings.



To learn more about NEADS, please visit www.neads.org.



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“This true story shows the major role dogs like Rescue play in the lives of people with disabilities. Heartwarming and compelling, this book makes it clear why dogs truly are man’s best friend.” —*Dr. Jane Goodall*



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