



*This book belongs to ...*



Wonderful things are possible  
when you dream big  
and use your imagination.

# Finding Fuzzy

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A You-Decide Tale of a Lost Friend



Written by Cat Michaels

Illustrated by Irene A. Jahns

Finding Fuzzy:  
A You-Decide Tale of a Lost Friend  
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To four generations of beach-going family vacations  
on the Carolina coast:  
Thanks for the love, memories, laughter,  
and all that sand in my shorts.

Love you twice as much.  
Always!



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# 1 A Cozy Yellow Cottage



“Almost there!” said Daddy as he turned the car onto the great, gray bridge leading to the island. Jenna clutched Fuzzy, her blue plush rabbit friend, and pressed their noses to the window. She wanted to catch her first glimpse of the ocean. And she wanted Fuzzy to see it, too.

Fuzzy and Jenna were always together, though he learned to stay at home when Jenna started school. Mama thought Fuzzy should even stay home instead of going on the family vacation, but Jenna knew he wanted to be with her. “He’s her BFF,” explained big sister Tara, or Sweet T, as her family often called her. “They don’t like to be apart.”

And so it was on this warm spring evening that five people and one blue rabbit in an SUV were ready for a long drive to end. They had been on the road before sun-up, and now it was nearly bedtime. It was hard to sit still any more. Jenna’s sisters, Kristen and T, passed time by reading

and watching movies on their tablet. Jenna enjoyed telling stories to Fuzzy and combing his fur into blue-streaked snarls, but even that was becoming tiresome.

The bridge connecting the mainland to the Crystal Coast rose before them, arching into the air like a cat stretching after a nap. Higher and higher, their SUV climbed to the top, over boats drifting on the river below.



“Let’s hold our breath, so we don’t slide back down,” winked Mama.

The bridge dropped low and leveled off as they crossed green salt marshes and drove onto the island. They passed a gas station and a fresh seafood stand before turning onto Coast Guard Road. There was barely enough daylight left to make out shapes of houses lining the street. “I can’t see the ocean,” said Jenna.

“It’s just beyond those sand dunes,” said Daddy, pulling into the driveway of the cozy yellow cottage that would be their home for the week. The cottage was tucked between humps of dunes covered with sea grasses taller than Jenna. Though it was growing dark, they could still make out the grasses bobbing in the breeze, the cream-colored tassels looking like a giant parade of marching cat whiskers.



Daddy turned off the engine and unlocked the doors. Jenna quickly tucked Fuzzy into her open backpack and wriggled in the seat to unlatch her seatbelt. The girls spilled out in a tumble, happy to stretch at last. A gentle breeze lifted Jenna's brown, corkscrew-curly hair, feeling soft and warm against her face. It carried a whiff of something clean and fresh. She didn't know what it was, but she liked the way it tickled her nose and made her feel happy.

"Nothing refreshes like salt air and ocean breezes," said Mama, who was also stretching and enjoying the soft evening air.

"Grab your suitcases," said Daddy. "Let's move everything inside before it gets too dark."

The girls scrambled to fetch their backpacks. "Last one upstairs is a smelly fish!" shouted Kristen.

They made trip after trip until everything was unloaded. By now, it was too dark to see anything outdoors, so they explored the cottage. On the first floor, a big kitchen and sitting room snuggled against a porch that wrapped around the cottage. The porch sat high over a path that wound between the dunes, down to the ocean and into the night.

And the cottage had three big bedrooms on the top floor! Jenna took the small red one with a single bed and rocking chair so she could sit and read with Fuzzy. Tara and Kristen shared twin beds in the large blue room decorated with seashells and dolphin pictures. Mama and Daddy took the one overlooking the twisty beach path.

Too excited to sleep, the girls changed into their PJs and joined Mama and Daddy on the big porch. Standing on tiptoes to peek over the railing, Jenna spotted twinkling lights from houses along the beach. But it was too dark to see much more. They stayed on the porch anyway, enjoying a bedtime snack and listening to distant waves lapping against the shore. Sleepy eyes drooped and heads nodded against comfy porch chairs plumped with soft cushions.



“Time to say goodnight. We’ll meet the ocean in the morning,” Daddy promised. Even oldest sister Tara was too tired to disagree.

And with that, they made a wish on a twinkling star for the best beach vacation ever and tumbled into bed.