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All Aboard the OG Express

FEATURING **JOANIE™**

BY SUSAN HUGHES
ILLUSTRATED BY GÉRALDINE CHARETTE





our
generation.

This is Joanie's story.



JOANIE™

ALL ABOARD THE OG EXPRESS

BY

SUSAN HUGHES

ILLUSTRATED BY GÉRALDINE CHARETTE

An Our Generation® book

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EXTRA! EXTRA! READ ALL ABOUT IT!

*Big words, wacky words, powerful words, funny words...
what do they all mean? They are marked with this symbol *.
Look them up in the Glossary at the end of this book.*

Chapter One

SAYING GOODBYE

“I promise we can video call *and* I’ll write letters,” I said to my best friend, Portia.

“Me too, Joanie,” she replied.

“At least once a week,” I said.

“Me too,” Portia agreed.

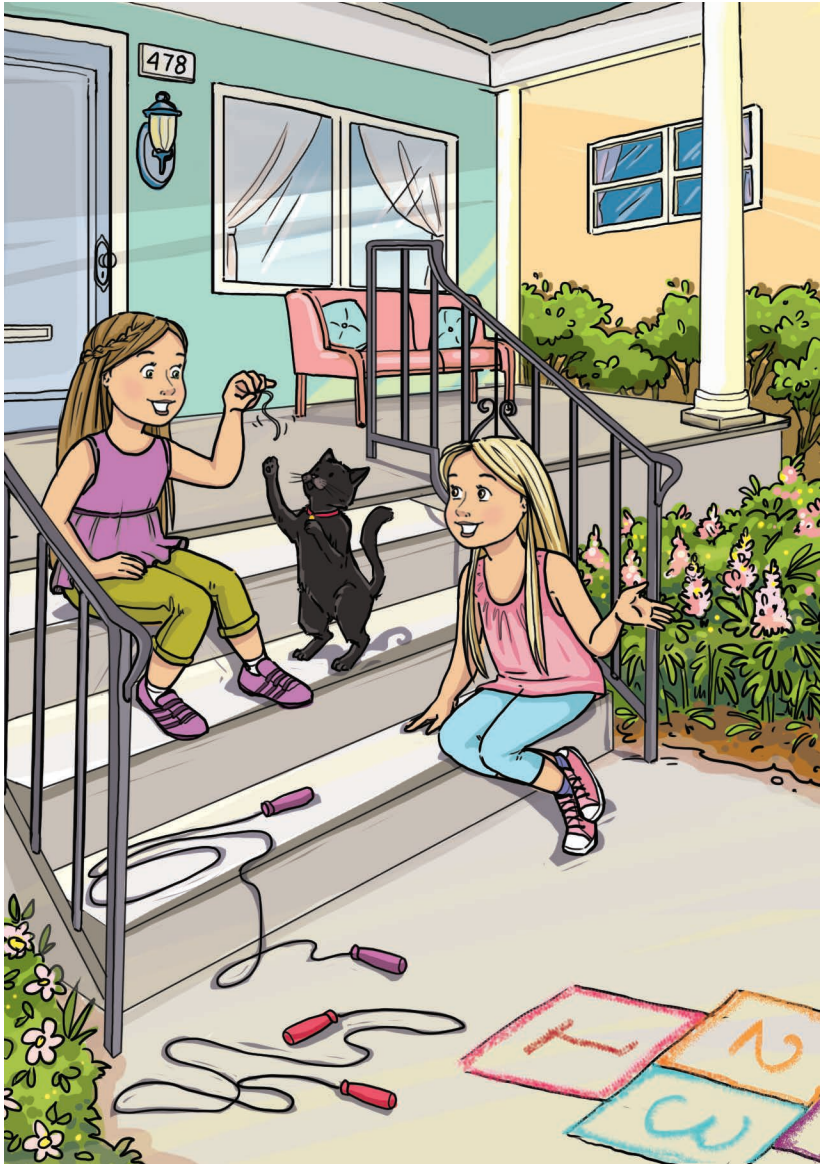
The two of us were sitting on the front steps of Portia’s house, playing with her cat, Noodles.

“But I’m really going to miss you no matter what I do, Portia,” I said.

I stroked her cat’s sleek black fur. “And you too, Noodles,” I added.

It was nice of Portia to let me spend so much time playing with Noodles whenever I came over, which was a lot. I’ve always desperately wanted a dog or a cat of my own, but I’ve never been allowed to have one because my parents and I move too often.





Which was about to happen again in seven days. Not ever getting to have a pet was hard. But the worst part of moving so often is saying goodbye to the good friends I make—and then trying to start all over again making new ones. In fact, I worried that one time we’d move—maybe this time—and I would plain run out of luck and wouldn’t meet *any* kids who wanted to be friends with me.

“Hey, maybe your parents will let you get a pet in London,” Portia said.

“Maybe, but I doubt it,” I told her. I frowned. “I can’t believe it’s already August and Mom and I are leaving for London in only one week.”

“Remind me why your dad isn’t going with you right away?” Portia asked.

“I start fourth grade, or whatever it’s called there, in early September, and Mom’s work starts then, too. Dad has to stay here for a few weeks to finish up some business, but then he’ll join us,” I sighed. “You know, out of all the places I’ve lived in the United States, I’ve liked it here the most.



You've been my best friend ever, Portia. And I'm not so sure about moving to a completely new country."

"It'll be OK," said Portia. "Hey, since our parents are going to let us do some video calls we can sort of see each other once in a while. And you can see Noodles, too." She nudged me and smiled. "It'll be fun!"

"Yeah." I blinked quickly a few times to stop myself from crying and tried to sound more cheerful.

"And you'll love England!" Portia cried. "Everyone will speak with a cool accent. And you'll meet kids from lots of different countries at your international school." She grinned. "I wish my parents had jobs like yours do, where we could live in different places—North America, South America, and Europe! It's really exciting!"

I tried to smile. "Yeah, it's sort of exciting, right?"

"Absolutely," Portia said firmly. "You'll make new friends—and you love history and



geography so much. You'll visit castles and palaces, dig up old coins, visit the English valleys and hills.... Bettina will still be living with you, and you know how she lets you talk her into doing so many fun things."

Bettina is from Germany. She has been my au pair* for about five years, while she learned English and went to college part-time.

Bettina helps look after me because both my parents work. Mom's a diplomat* and Dad's an executive* of a large railway company with trains on several continents.

When Bettina found out we were moving to London, she applied to a college there so she could finish her studies and continue living with us. That made me really happy.

"Bettina will go to museums with you, and tour all the historical houses—and maybe even introduce you to royalty!" Portia continued.

I laughed. "Royalty? It sounds like fun, but I'm not sure how that could ever happen, Portia!"

"Well, you just never know! And how cool



would that be?” said Portia. She’s an optimist*, which is one reason she’s my all-time best friend.

I gave Noodles a hug. Time to head home for dinner. Portia let her mother know that she was going to walk me to my house, which is only a block away.

“Well, listen, whatever you do, Joanie, you *have* to call me as soon as you get to London and tell me all about your spectacular train trip,” Portia said, as we cut across her front lawn.

“For sure,” I agreed. Dad had arranged a special trip for Mom, Bettina, and me on one of his company’s luxury trains, the OG Express. We were flying to Budapest, the capital of Hungary, and then we would board the OG Express for a seven-day journey through eight or nine countries.

“I want to know what it’s like to sleep on a train!” Portia said.

I’d explained to Portia that we would stop a few times for several hours in some of the cities to tour around, but we’d mostly be on the train, day and night—and Bettina and I were going to share



a sleeping compartment*. Mom would have a compartment to herself, right next to ours, because she'd need some time to work during the trip to prepare for her new post at the embassy*.

"I'm really excited about that, too," I said, as we reached my front gate. "But I'm not leaving for seven days. Want to spend all seven of them together?"

"OK!" Portia agreed. "We'll do something fun each day—your favorite things."

"And yours, too," I said. "So tomorrow, let's go to the playground *and* get ice cream."

"Perfect," said Portia. "Strawberry for you—"

"—and chocolate for you!" I said.

I gave my friend a big smile so she wouldn't know that inside I was worrying: *How will I find another friend even half as nice as Portia ever again?*



Chapter Two

ALL ABOARD!

I couldn't believe it was our final night in the United States.

"Did you have a good day with Portia?" Mom asked.

I nodded, but I couldn't answer. It had been hard to say a last goodbye to her and Noodles.

"Bettina is out for the evening with her friends," Dad said. "So it's just the three of us for dinner tonight."

"Our last dinner in our American home!" Mom said. She smiled, but when she looked at me, I couldn't smile back.

"Oh, honey. We know this is difficult for you," Dad said quickly. He put his hand over mine. "It's so hard to leave places even when wonderful things lie ahead."



“So,” Mom said, “your dad and I have one more surprise for you. Just a little something else to look forward to when we arrive in London.”

Another surprise?

“We’ve decided you can get a dog when we get settled into our new home,” Dad said.

I gasped. “But...a dog? Do you mean it?” I thought of Portia suggesting this might happen. “That’s great, but I can’t believe it. What if we have to move again? What will we do?”

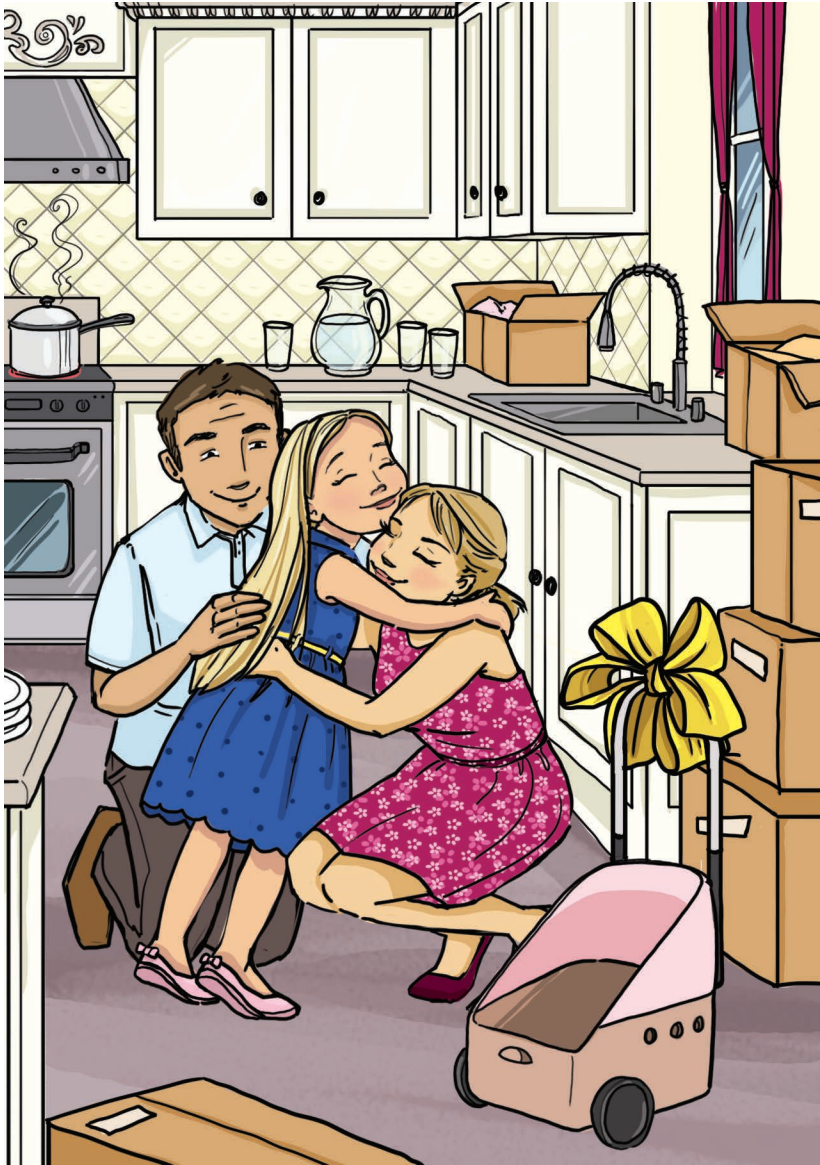
“We’ll just have to hope your dog likes to travel,” Mom said with a big grin.

Dad hurried into the living room. He returned pulling a carrier on wheels with a bow on top.

“Look!” Dad said. “We can bring your new dog along with us in this pet carrier wherever we go.”

“Oh, thank you!” I said. “Am I ever lucky! I’m going on a train ride around Europe—and getting a dog!”





The next day, it all began! I waved goodbye to Dad and our house as Mom, Bettina and I headed off in an airport cab loaded with our luggage, plus the pet carrier. Dad had offered to bring it on the airplane with him when he came, but Bettina said it would be useful for carrying all her magazines and our snacks.

Soon, the three of us were on an airplane, flying to Budapest. Then, tired but excited, we headed straight into the city. In the huge, crowded main train station, we easily found the right platform—number 16—because it had a big banner with gold trim announcing the OG Express. And there it was: our train, gleaming in the sunlight, and all ready for boarding.

We walked along, looking for our train car*, number 42.

“Oh, that must be the observation car*!” Bettina cried, pointing at number 22. It had big wide windows on the bottom and an extra upper level with windows all around, even across the roof.



When we reached Car 33, a young woman in a blue uniform came running toward us with a big smile on her face.

“Hello, hello!” she cried. “I am Ana, and it is so wonderful to meet you. I’m a junior sleeping-car attendant and I’ll be assisting you throughout the trip.” She turned to Mom. “Your husband arranged with the senior staff to have me take special care of your family for the whole week. I will make sure you are well looked after. I will check in with you several times a day, but if there is anything you need, you only have to ask.”

“Thank you, Ana,” Mom replied, with a smile. “That is so thoughtful.”

“Wow, isn’t this great, Joanie!” Bettina said to me, grinning. “And Ana looks about the same age as me. Maybe I’ll make a new friend!”

I nodded and yawned. It was still early in the morning, and we’d already come so far!

Ana called over another attendant and together they helped us along the platform with all our bags...Car 35, Car 37, Car 39.... People were



chatting and shouting, and climbing up into their cars, while others, already boarded, were looking out at us from the large windows on the cars.

Suddenly, I noticed one carriage* seemed different from the others. There was no one going in or coming out of it. In fact, it looked quite private. At each end of the carriage stood a fierce-looking guard, arms folded, wearing a red jacket with gold buttons down the front. Even the fancy curtains on the car sort of said “keep out”—they were closed tightly.

“Joanie! Come on, dear!” called Mom.

“Coming, Mom!” I called, hurrying to catch up to her and Bettina at Car 42.

Ana and the other attendant helped us aboard with our luggage and the pet carrier. They got Mom settled in her compartment first, and then they took Bettina and me to ours, right next to Mom’s.

“Wow!” I said. The room was really cozy. It had two very comfortable-looking seats and a big window. I opened a narrow door. There was



even a small bathroom! But hang on...

“I thought we were supposed to sleep in here, too,” I said. “Will we be sleeping in chairs for seven nights?”

“Just look!” Ana said, grinning. She showed us how the two seats turned into one bed, and how we could lower a second bed from the wall above when we needed it.

“Super!” Bettina said. “Thank you.”

“And now, why don’t you make yourselves comfortable—maybe even a short nap?” suggested Ana. “Your train journey will begin in 30 minutes.”

A nap? It seemed impossible when so much was new and exciting. But a few moments after I sank into one of the seats, I felt myself nodding off.



Chapter Three

WHO'S IN THERE?

Toot, toot!

The OG Express blew its whistle as we pulled out of the station. Bettina kept sleeping as the wheels went *chugga-chugga* and we picked up speed.

It was happening. I was actually traveling across Europe by train! Suddenly, all my worries vanished. I sat glued to the window as we traveled south from Budapest. We were on our way to Sarajevo in Bosnia and Herzegovina. From there, we would head to Rome, Italy.

Bettina gave a big yawn and stretched her arms up high. “Oh, we’re moving!” she cried.

“There’s lots to see out our window, Betts,” I said. “But how about we check out the observation car? I bet the views from up there are really great.”



“Sure!” she said.

We quickly headed out into the passageway. Bettina poked her head into Mom’s compartment to tell her our plan. Then off we went, going safely from carriage to carriage through the vestibules*.

Some of the carriages didn’t have private compartments. Instead they had rows of seats facing each other. I guess those passengers wouldn’t be staying aboard overnight or maybe they would have to sleep sitting up!

Soon we came to the carriage that had the fancy curtains on the windows. One of the stern-looking guards that I had noticed earlier watched us closely as we walked past him. We moved down the passageway, decorated with fancy gold trim. It had a thick carpet and there were even paintings hanging on the walls. There was only one door in the whole car.

“Must be one huge private room,” Bettina said. “Who do you think is in there?”

“No idea,” I replied. “But I’d love to know.”

We were quickly out of that carriage and



through the next ones, and then we were in the observation car. Bettina and I climbed up the spiral staircase and I grabbed a couple of seats.

“Wow!” I said, under my breath. The whole top level was encircled in glass, including a sunroof. The sunlight poured in. I could see in all directions.

The scenery was beautiful. It was mainly flat, with some hills in the distance, and a wide blue river flowed beside the railway track. We went past lots of forests. It was really pretty because the leaves on some of the trees were changing color and many of the farms had fields of golden wheat.

Bettina took out a book at one point and began reading, but I couldn’t stop staring out the window. A little while later, our railway tour guide popped up. He introduced himself as Dante, and then gave a brief history of Hungary.

Wow, if I didn’t already love history, I would love it now! Dante told us so many details about what we were seeing outside and such interesting stories about the country that, when he was done, everyone asked for more.





Later, the train crossed into Bosnia and Herzegovina. Dante told us tidbits about the history of this complicated country, including the castle we saw up on a hill in the distance. He reminded us that we would continue on through the night on our way to Rome.



When it got dark, Bettina and I ate together in the dining car while Mom made some work calls in her compartment.

While we ate, I noticed a waiter carrying meals on china dishes in and out of the car.

“Look at that,” I said to Bettina. “I bet those are being delivered to the person in the luxurious* carriage. Who *do* you think is in that carriage?”

Bettina grinned. “Maybe a movie star.”

“Or a rock star!” I said.

“Maybe a sports star...” said Bettina.

“Or maybe J.K. Rowling*?” I suggested, hopefully.

We played the guessing game all the way



back to our compartment.

That night, after Mom had to come in to say good night, Bettina and I changed into our pajamas and snuggled into bed. I fell asleep wondering who was in the train carriage—and then wondering about what kind of dog I might get, and what color...



Suddenly, I woke up and pulled off my sleep mask. Where was I? Oh yes. As my eyes adjusted, I remembered I was on the OG Express, crossing Europe. With Mom and Bettina.

I peered into the bed below. Bettina was sound asleep. What had wakened me? Suddenly I heard it. *Wooooooooo-woooooooooo...*

Howling!

I shivered.

Wooooooooo-woooooooooo...

Is there a ghost on the train? Dad hadn't mentioned that. No one had! Should I waken Bettina? But wait...was the howling coming in



through the window? Maybe it wasn't coming from the train; maybe it was something outside, off in the distance...

But as I tried to make up my mind, I yawned once, twice. The howling stopped. And then before I knew it, I must have drifted back to sleep.



Chapter Four

BELLA ROMA

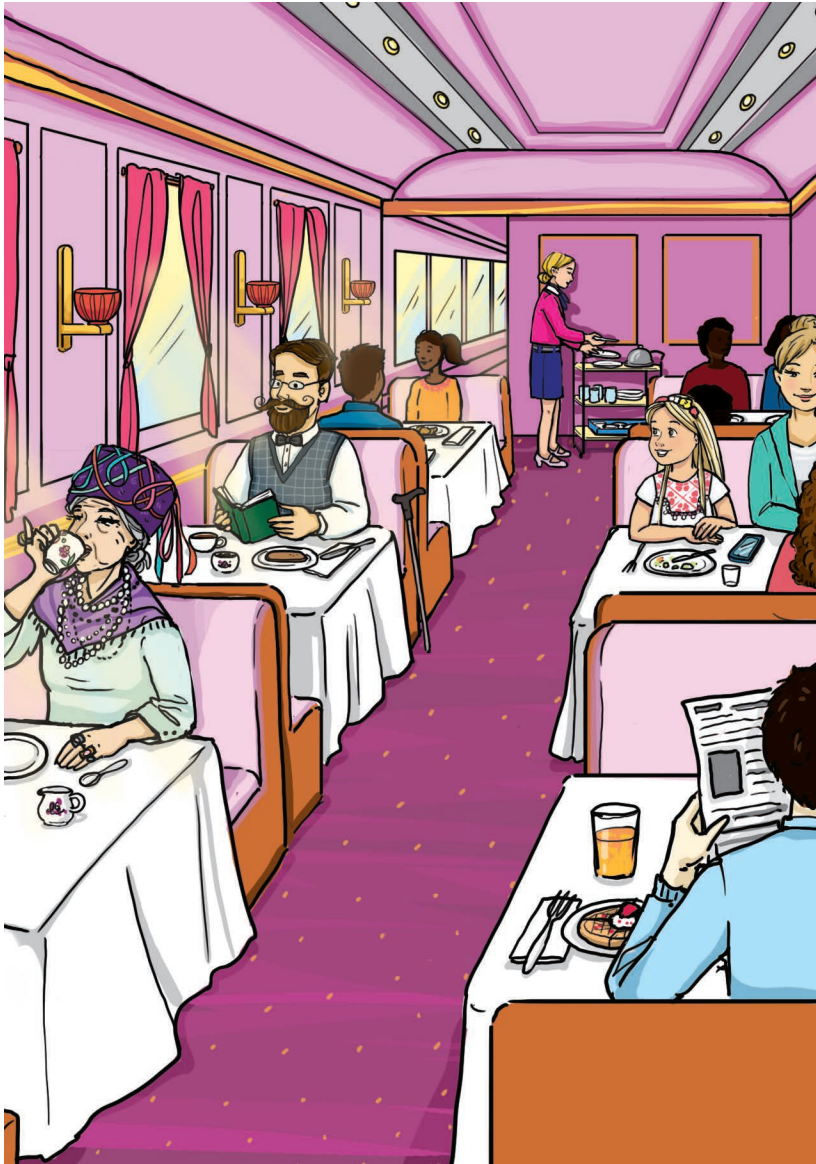
I was having breakfast the next morning in the dining car with Bettina and Mom when I remembered the howling. Neither Mom nor Bettina had mentioned it. *Had I really heard it?* I wondered. Sitting here, in the daylight, it seemed unlikely. Maybe I'd imagined it.

In any case, I decided not to say anything. I didn't want to begin the trip by making Mom think I was scared of every little noise!

Mom, Bettina, and I sat there happily for ages, looking out at the Italian countryside. I also had fun looking at the other passengers. Two of them were especially unusual.

One woman had on a tall hat with loopy ribbons dangling from it. She also wore a necklace of several strings of pearls and glittering gems and





had a large ring on each finger.

A thin man with a thick black moustache that curled up at each end sat with his back as stiff as a board. He wore a black bow tie, had a black walking cane, and wore shiny black shoes.

Ana came by to remind us about the tour that afternoon, so Mom, Bettina, and I went back to our compartments to get ready. Soon after, our train pulled into the central train station in Rome, right on schedule. Along with others from our train, the three of us gathered on the platform, and soon a smiling man, holding a red flag on a long pole, met up with us.

“*Ciao!*” he cried. “Hello to you all. And now, we will go on a wonderful tour of the main sights of Rome. We will travel by bus, hopping on and off to get a closer look at some places. We’ll move quickly, so watch for the flag.” He waved it above us. “We will see only a tiny portion of all this ancient city has to offer, but you will be wowed!”



That evening, Mom, Bettina, and I had a late dinner in the dining car—a steak, vegetables, and a baked potato for each of us.

When we were done, I convinced Mom to let me use her cell phone to call Portia. I wanted to fill her in on everything that had happened so far.

“And today, we went into Rome! We walked down the Spanish Steps, and we each threw a coin in Trevi fountain. We went inside the Pantheon and saw the tiny opening in the roof. We only had a short visit inside the Colosseum, but I could imagine the gladiators fighting wild animals there in ancient times. We did a quick walk through the ruins of the Forum while the sun began to go down.” I took a breath. “Oh, Portia. So much history! I loved it all.”

“It sounds amazing, Joanie!” said Portia. “Please call again when you get to London.”

Soon after, Mom, Bettina, and I headed from the dining car back toward our carriage, and then there we were, in the passageway of the fancy carriage. Mom and Bettina were walking



on ahead, talking happily about the paintings that lined the walls. I followed behind. Suddenly, I heard a *click* right beside me. The door to the big compartment—it was opening!

I stared through the widening gap and caught a glimpse of a deep green carpet, a velvet sofa, fancy gold curtains, and gold trim on the walls. Just then, I heard a small sound—like *oh!* and the door snapped closed.

Mom had paused beside the guard at the far end of the carriage. “Joanie, come along!” she called.

“Coming, Mom!” I called back, and I hurried along again. But I was so curious!

Who is in there? What’s the big secret?

It was a mystery—one I was determined to solve before the end of this trip.



Chapter Five

A GHOST OR NOT A GHOST?

Wooooooooo-woooooooooo!

There it was again, the howling. But this time, I was certain I was hearing it. It wasn't my imagination. It was real. And this time, I knew it must be coming from somewhere on the train. If it was coming in through the window in our carriage, then it must be coming from another carriage on the train that also had an open window....

Wooooooooo-woooooooooo!

A ghost on the *OG Express*? Maybe. But oh, such a sad ghost.



I thought again about telling Mom and Bettina about the ghost the next morning, at breakfast. But it had sounded so unhappy that I



actually wasn't scared. No, I almost felt sorry for it!

Mom blew us kisses as she rushed off to a video conference with several other embassy staff members. Just then Ana came by.

"Hello, Joanie! Hello, Bettina!" she said with a smile. "As you may know, we're going north now from Rome to Milan, which is also in Italy." She pulled out a map and showed us. "We will arrive around lunchtime. After a stop, we'll head down through the lower part of France toward Spain."

Bettina and Ana began chatting. Bettina had told me earlier that they were becoming good pals. I could hear Ana telling Bettina that she decided to be a junior attendant on the OG Express for a year before she went to college because she couldn't wait any longer to travel.

"This is a super way to earn money and see the sights!" Ana said.

She and Bettina compared notes of all the places they both wanted to see one day, and then



they began talking about what Bettina would be studying in London and what Ana wanted to study.

“Hey, Betts,” I said, after a while. “I think I’ll go up to the observation car, if that’s OK.

“Sure. I’ll come, too,” Bettina said. She is so conscientious*. She never treats me like a little kid, but she always keeps an eye on me.

“Ana, maybe you can come, too?” Bettina asked.

“Thank you. I’d like to, and it’s time for my break,” Ana said.

As the three of us headed off, I had an idea. “Ana,” I said, trying to sound casual, “are there any stories about ghosts haunting this train?”

She looked at me with wide eyes. “Ghosts?”

“Yeah,” I said. “I don’t believe in them,” I added quickly, “but sometimes something bad happens on a trip, and then a legend begins....”

Ana shook her head, doubtfully. “No, I don’t think so. I’ve never heard any stories about ghosts on the OG Express. But if you’re worried,



or if you saw something....”

Bettina looked at me with concern, too.

“No, no,” I said, quickly. I didn’t want to raise their suspicions. “Not at all. Really. I was just wondering. I thought it might be fun—historical!”

I hadn’t convinced them. So, to distract them, I said, “There’s a carriage just down from ours. It’s private and has its own guards. And it looks very fancy! Do you happen to know who is traveling in there? And why it’s so top secret?”

Bettina’s eyes lit up. “Yeah, Ana,” she said. “Any hints?”

Ana smiled and shook her head. “Even if I knew, I couldn’t tell, but no, I don’t know.”

And then we were at the spiral staircase to the observation car. The two of them began to chat again about something else, and I breathed a sigh of relief.

They dropped down into some seats by the window, and now was my chance. I’d do a little investigating! I looked around and noticed the thin man with the mustache. Today, his bow tie



was red. He looked like a veteran train passenger. Maybe he'd have some answers. The seat beside him was free, so I casually wandered over and sat down.

"Hello, I'm Joanie," I said, politely.

"*Bonjour**," he said, with a tiny nod. "I am Jacques." He twirled one end of his mustache.

I tried to remember everything Mom had taught me about being polite to adults, asking him if he was enjoying the journey and where he was from. And he asked me the same. I saw Bettina watching me, so I gave her a smile to show her everything was fine.

"Um, I'm wondering if you've seen the mysterious fancy carriage," I said. "We walk through it on the way from here to our own carriage," I explained.

He nodded. "Yes, I have seen it," he said. "I am quite intrigued to learn who might be occupying* this carriage. Someone famous, perhaps," he said. "A great artist, a great painter, *peut-être*?*"



“Maybe,” I agreed.

“So no, I don’t know this, although I would like to,” he said, and then he leaned close to me and said quietly, “However, one thing I do know is that there is a ghost on this train!”

“A ghost?” I echoed.

“Yes, *mon ami**. I have been traveling on trains for many years. This particular ghost used to live on one of the older trains. But when the OG Express was built, this ghost decided to transfer over, perhaps to enjoy some new scenery!” he said.

I laughed because it was funny and I was sure he wasn’t serious.

We talked together for a while longer. I was very entertained by Jacques’ amazing imagination.



When Bettina and I set up our beds that night, we were in France. We weren’t stopping in France *this* time, but we’d be back. Right now, we’d continue through France and south to Spain. We’d wake up in Barcelona and spend all the next





day there, exploring the city with my Auntie Sarah, who had moved there a few years ago. I could hardly wait!

Once again, I was worried that I was too excited to sleep, but several hours later, when I woke up, I realized I'd had no trouble snoozing.

Had I wakened because the train had stopped? Were we in Barcelona?

No, the OG Express was swaying and rocking, and the *chugga-chugga* was still our lullaby.

Wooooooooo-woooooooooo...

OK, now I definitely had two mysteries to solve. Who was traveling in the luxurious carriage—and what was making this incredibly gloomy noise, and why!



Chapter Six

BE CAREFUL!

“¡*Buenos días!* Good morning!” Bettina greeted me in Spanish the next morning.

“We’re in Spain, Betts?” I asked, jumping out of bed to get dressed.

“Yes, in Barcelona.” said Bettina. “We’re meeting your mother for a quick breakfast in the dining car and then we’ll head into the city with your aunt.”

Mom waved at us when we entered the crowded dining car. She was already seated at a table that was full, but she pointed toward another table where people seemed to be leaving.

When we reached it, one woman remained seated. She was the one I had seen the other day wearing a tall hat with ribbons.

“May we sit with you?” Bettina asked her.



“Our names are Bettina and Joanie.”

“Of course,” the woman said, graciously, with a heavy accent. “I am Puica.”

I couldn’t help staring. Today, the woman wore a tiara*, three necklaces, and several bracelets. Her fingers were, once again, loaded with rings.

Bettina and I were served our breakfast, and we began chatting with the woman. After a few minutes, I couldn’t help it. It was all I could think about, so I asked, “Have you noticed the fancy train carriage? Do you happen to know who is in it?”

The woman took a sip of tea and set down her teacup. “No, my dear,” she replied. “However I can tell you one thing.” She put one hand on her necklace, and leaned in. “You must be careful of your precious jewelry. Very careful.”

Bettina and I exchanged looks. Neither of us had precious jewelry, of course!

“I make it a habit to travel first class,” she said, “and so I speak from experience. There is *always* a thief on a train of this high caliber*.



They know that people with beautiful, expensive watches, necklaces, and rings love to travel in the luxury of the OG Express.”

A thief! My eyes opened wide. I had so many more questions to ask, but just then Mom stopped by.

“Girls, can you finish up quickly?” she said. “I’ve told my sister that we’ll meet her outside the train station in half an hour.”

“We’ll be ready,” Bettina said, and we both stopped chatting and concentrated on gobbling down our boiled eggs and Danish pastries. I was looking forward to seeing my aunt.

Bettina finished first. “I want to send a few messages to my family before we go. Can I meet you back at our compartment?” she asked.

I agreed. When I finished up several minutes later, I said a polite goodbye to Puica, who was pouring herself another cup of tea, and headed back through the adjoining train carriages toward our cabin. They were all emptying quickly. I guess everyone wanted to spend the day in Barcelona!



As I passed through the fancy carriage, I was disappointed when I didn't "accidentally-on-purpose" run into the mystery person. Hurrying through the next car, which was completely empty, I saw something sparkling on the carpet, just against the wall. I stopped short, bent down, and picked it up. Oh my goodness! It was a diamond bracelet!

I caught my breath. Maybe Puica was right. Maybe there was a thief onboard, a thief who had tried to make away with the bracelet, been startled, and dropped it right here! Could it be?

I knew I would have to turn this in to the train officials—but I didn't have time right now. We were meeting Auntie Sarah in five minutes!

I stuffed the bracelet in my sweater pocket and raced on toward our compartment. I'd sort out the bracelet when we got back from our adventure in Barcelona.





Chapter Seven

BIENVENIDAS A BARCELONA

“Welcome to Barcelona!” cried Auntie Sarah. “We’re going to have a marvelous day!”

And we did! Auntie Sarah met us outside the train station as planned. She took us for a wonderful tour all around the city in her car, pointing out some of the spectacular architecture*.

“Taking the cable car up Montjuïc Mountain is my favorite thing to do in Barcelona,” Auntie Sarah said.

Soon, as our cable car rose higher and higher, I told my aunt that it was now my favorite thing to do in Barcelona, too. “Look! We can see the whole city and the harbor from up here.”

After we made the return trip, the four of us had lunch together. Mom and Auntie Sarah had salads with cod*, tomatoes, peppers, and olives.





Betts and I shared a typical and very tasty Spanish rice and seafood dish called “paella.”

Next Auntie Sarah took us to a beautiful park created by the famous architect Gaudí. While Mom and Bettina took photos, Auntie Sarah asked how I was enjoying the train journey. I told her about everything we’d seen so far, and then—I couldn’t resist. I told her about the mystery train car.

Auntie Sarah grinned. “Oh, I love a good puzzle!” she said. “Do you have any clues at all?”

“Not really,” I confessed.

“Hmmm...who could the special passenger in that car be?” she pondered. She began suggesting names of actors and athletes, inventors and scientists, and so on. “Or a very shy billionaire!”

I giggled at her excitement. “And there’s something else, Auntie Sarah!” I explained about the ghostly howling I’d heard every night and about the diamond bracelet I’d found that very morning, and she clapped her hands together.

“My, my, Joanie,” she said. “You are really



having quite the delightful experience, you lucky girl! So many mysteries to solve!” She threw her arms around me and gave me a big hug, and I hugged her back.

The afternoon had flown by, and after a yummy meal at an outdoor bistro*, Auntie Sarah drove us back to the train station.

“I promise I’ll come and visit you all in a few months in London,” she said. “But I want to hear from *you* before then,” she added, giving me a wink.

As I snuggled into my bed that night, and later, when I again woke up to ghostly noises, I wondered whether I’d have discovered answers to *any* of the mysteries on this train by the end of the trip. There were only three days left!



Chapter Eight

DO SOMETHING—AND FAST!

“Are you sure you don’t mind if I have a quick cup of tea in the dining car with Ana, Joanie?” Bettina asked. “Your mom is right next door.”

I nodded, sleepily. We’d spent most of the day in the observation car, watching the landscape go by. We’d had dinner, and I was reading for a few minutes before I put my pajamas on.

I glanced out the window as Betts headed off. Our train was on its way to Amsterdam, in the Netherlands, tonight but it had pulled up at a station platform in Belgium.

Suddenly, I saw a boy rush off our train and frantically begin peering under one bench, and then another. He wore sunglasses—strange, because it was getting dark—a weird hat with ear



flaps, and a jacket with the collar turned up.

He looked so upset! He was clearly looking for something, but what? He couldn't have lost anything on the platform. He'd only now just stepped out, though passengers were not supposed to get off the train at this station.

As I watched, one of the OG Express attendants jumped off the train and raced toward the boy. The attendant said something to the boy, put his arm around his shoulders, and hurried him back onto the train. The boy obeyed, reluctantly, glancing back and biting his lip.

I watched for a few minutes more, giving my hair a quick brush, when all of a sudden, I saw a tiny little head poke out from behind one of the trash bins on the platform. Was it a...? Yes, it was. It was a little puppy! I couldn't believe it.

The puppy took one step forward, then two. She looked this way and that, somewhat bewildered*.

Of course—the boy must have been searching for *her*!



I heard the train whistle once, twice. We were about to depart. I had to do something—and fast!

I ran from our room along the corridor to the exit, pushed open the door, scooted down the steps, and sprinted over to the puppy. The puppy looked up at me hopefully with her big brown eyes and wagged her tail, and I scooped her up.

Toot-toot!

“All aboard!” called the conductor.

I ran back to the train with the puppy and climbed back up the steps. Stuffing her under my shirt so no one would see her, I hurried down the corridor and sneaked her into our room.

I sat down, breathing hard, and unwrapped the puppy. What now?

Then I had to laugh. The cutie gave me a gentle lick with her tiny tongue, yawned, closed her eyes—and fell asleep right on my lap!

I sat back and thought. Dogs aren’t allowed on this train, but there was no way I was going to turn this puppy in to the train crew. I couldn’t





abandon her. I had to reunite her with her boy, who must've somehow managed to sneak her aboard. First, I'd have to convince Bettina to help me. But I couldn't leave the puppy here on her own while I went to get Betts. What if someone happened to open the door to our carriage and she ran out again?

A-ha! The pet carrier! It was leaning against the wall. I lifted out Bettina's magazines, folded up a blanket and placed it inside, and then set the sleepy puppy on top. She flopped with a happy sigh. She didn't even open her eyes.

With a feeling of relief, I moved the carrier into the corner, and then quietly left the room, closing the door behind me. But I had taken no more than a few steps down the corridor when...

Wooooooooo-woooooooooo...

I grinned. One mystery was solved. The puppy was the ghost!

I rushed back to the cabin. The puppy was sitting up, looking forlorn*, but as soon as she saw me, she stopped howling and wagged her tail.



“I thought you were asleep!” I told her,
reaching in to pat her. “Don’t worry. You’re OK.”

Knock, knock, knock!

I froze. Discovered already! Now I’d have to
hand her over for sure.



Chapter Nine

TRUST

Slowly, I opened the door. Oh, it was *him*—the boy I'd seen on the platform!

“Can I come in?” he asked urgently. I stared at him, and he took off his sunglasses. He had beautiful blue eyes. When I didn't say no, he stepped in and closed the door behind him. “I am so sorry,” he went on, giving me a little bow. “I cannot stand out there in the passageway. Anyone could see me. But I had to come. I heard the howling. I know you must have my puppy!”

At that moment, he saw the puppy in the carrier. He hurried over and scooped her up. “Oh, Ceci—here you are, and you are safe!” He turned to me. “Thank you so much!” he said. “I cannot believe you rescued her!”

The boy stood there cuddling her and my





heart melted. He had been so distressed, and now he was grinning from ear to ear.

I explained what had happened—that I’d seen him and then the puppy from my window, and how I’d run off the train to bring her aboard—and he thanked me again.

“I’m Joanie,” I told him. “Who are you?”

“This is my puppy, Ceci,” he said. He paused and seemed to think hard. Then he continued, “My identity is secret, but I feel I can trust you. I am Prince Pavel.”

I gasped. “You’re a prince?”

“Yes,” he said, casually. “I am traveling from my country of Moldova to London in a private train carriage.”

Another mystery solved! This was the mysterious passenger in the luxurious carriage!

“My family is usually followed everywhere by journalists, reporters, and photographers,” Prince Pavel explained. “It is horrible. They will not leave us alone. They are always asking questions and taking photos. They are the reason we do not



go out much in our own city and why I have never traveled outside my country.”

I shuddered. Imagine being followed and photographed all the time!

“My parents allowed me to come on this sightseeing tour to learn more about Europe—but I have only been able to see the world through the window. I am supposed to keep my identity a secret so none of the media realizes I am here,” he confided. “Two men, Florin and Pasha, are guarding me. When the train is stopped, they stand at either end of the carriage, overseeing who comes and goes.”

“Yes, I saw them,” I said.

“When the train is in motion, Pasha is with me in my rooms,” the prince continued. “I cannot leave my carriage unless in an emergency, and even then I must wear this silly disguise. Just in case someone discovers who I really am! I can tell no one.”

“But...but you just told *me* who you are!” I pointed out.



“Oh, yes,” he agreed, with a grin, “but I had to! You just saved my puppy—my beloved puppy.” He sighed. “It will be difficult to keep my secret at my new school. When my trip is done, I will be attending a school in London so that I can improve my English.”

“Your English is already very good,” I said.

“Thank you,” he said. “But I mostly speak other languages: French, Italian, and Romanian. I am just learning English.” He looked down. “I am not looking forward to a new school.”

“Because you’ll miss all your friends?” I asked gently.

“No.” Prince Pavel shook his head and looked sad. When he didn’t say anything more, I reached out to pat Ceci.

“Prince Pavel, can you tell me more about your puppy?” I asked, trying to cheer him up.

It worked. The prince grinned again. “I was not supposed to have her with me. My parents insisted I leave her at home. They did not want her to distract me here and at school. But I sneaked



her aboard. Then when Pasha and Florin were consulting about something, and the doors were standing open, she slipped out of my cabin and disappeared onto the platform. I snuck out after her but..." He kissed Ceci on the head and pulled her close. "I thought I had lost you forever!" he told her.

He frowned, thinking. "But how can I keep her hidden now? The train attendant who found me on the train platform might be suspicious. If he came to search my carriage he might find Ceci!"

He bit his lip. "And sometimes Ceci howls at night when she wakes up and thinks she is alone. Someone might notice."

I grinned to myself. *Yes, I had noticed!*

Pavel continued. "When we first got on the train, I managed to sneak Ceci aboard without Pasha and Florin knowing, but once the train had pulled out of the station, I told them that I had brought my puppy along. They have been helping me keep her concealed!

"Joanie, this is a lot to ask..." Prince Pavel



said. He hesitated. “But could you keep Ceci for me here, the rest of today and tomorrow, until we arrive in London? Just in case the train attendant does decide to come and look for her in our carriage?”

How could I say no? The puppy was so sweet, and I loved the idea of spending a little more time with her.

“My au pair, Bettina, shares this room with me, so I’ll need to convince her,” I explained. “I’ll have to tell her about you being a prince as well, because I don’t keep any secrets from her. But if that’s OK with you, and Betts agrees.... Yes. I’ll do it.”

“Thank you so much!” the prince said. He gave Ceci another little cuddle and handed her to me. “Now, I must go. But may I see you again soon—and Ceci? Tomorrow?”

“Mom, Betts, and I are going to explore Amsterdam all morning, but in the afternoon, for certain, Prince Pavel,” I said.

“Excellent,” he said. “But please, Joanie.



Just call me Pavel!” He made another little polite bow and was gone.



Chapter Ten

PINS AND NEEDLES

Bettina was so wonderful! Before we went to sleep that night, I showed her Ceci and explained everything to her—how I found the puppy, how the owner was the mysterious passenger in the private carriage, and why he wanted me to hide the puppy for two more days.

Betts asked me a few questions, and then she said, “I’ll have to tell your mother about the puppy tomorrow and get her permission to hide her. If it’s OK with her, it’s alright with me.”

Betts went to have breakfast alone with Mom the next morning while I waited with Ceci on pins and needles*. What would Mom say? Also, I realized I wouldn’t be able to see Amsterdam. I couldn’t leave the puppy by herself all morning—but would Mom let me stay here alone?



Betts returned with a grin on her face and some toast and fruit for me.

“Before I could finish telling your mother about the puppy, she stopped me. She said, ‘It might be better if I don’t know more. If any rules are being broken, I would feel obliged* to tell the senior attendant,’” Betts explained. “Then I told her I had some things to do and was planning to stay behind while you and she explore Amsterdam together. She said she understood. And she winked at me!”

“Oh, Betts, you’re the best!” I said, throwing my arms around her.



Mom and I had a totally amazing morning in the city. It was gorgeous. I loved seeing the people biking everywhere!

We went to a museum to see paintings by a famous Dutch painter, Vincent van Gogh. There are canals* all through the city. We went on a boat tour along one and then explored the



Floating Flower Market on another one. It's the only floating flower market in the world and has flower stalls set up on houseboat after houseboat. Mom and I bought some tulip bulbs to plant in the garden at our new home.

All morning long, I thought about sweet little Ceci. As soon as Mom and I arrived back at the train after lunch, I hurried to my compartment. I had just stepped inside and said hello to Betts when Pavel knocked at our door.

"Hello, Joanie. I was watching for you!" he admitted. He gave a little wave to someone standing at the end of the hallway. I poked my head out. It was one of his guards, looking alert and watchful.

"Come in and meet Bettina," I said, smiling. I introduced Betts and Prince Pavel to each other. Then Pavel and I quickly greeted Ceci. She was so happy to see us both!

Pavel made a little bow. "Joanie, Bettina, may I invite you to come to see my train carriage?" he asked. "Pasha, my bodyguard, has agreed it is



alright.”

Oh, wow! Visit the fancy-schmancy train carriage?* Betts and I grinned at each other. “We’d love to see it. Thank you,” she said politely.

Ceci had fallen asleep in Pavel’s arms, so he placed her gently in the pet carrier. “She should be fine on her own for a while,” he said. “Now please, come with me.”

When we reached the end of the hallway, Pavel introduced us to his guard, Florin. The guard looked a little fearsome in his uniform, but he smiled at Bettina and me. He followed us to Pavel’s carriage and stopped just inside the vestibule door.

Pavel led us down the hallway.

“This is Pasha,” he said, introducing us to his other bodyguard. He greeted us and opened the door to Pavel’s rooms.

We went in, and then Betts and I both stood there, speechless.

What a fantastic room—and so big! The walls were covered in beautiful wallpaper, and decorated with framed paintings and mirrors.





The windows were draped in gold velvet curtains.

Behind one door was a small private bathroom with a bathtub! Behind the other door was a small bedroom with two beds for Florin and Pasha. Pavel had his own bedroom. It was large with a canopy bed.

“Come!” said Prince Pavel, leading us up a spiral staircase. I couldn’t believe it. His carriage had its own upper deck for sightseeing!

For a few minutes, the three of us gazed out at the beautiful landscape of Belgium and northern France. Our train was on the way to Paris, France.

When Bettina and I suggested that Prince Pavel come to our room to play with Ceci, he agreed right away. Pasha gave him permission—but insisted the prince wear his disguise of a cap pulled down low over his face, dark sunglasses, and a jacket.

We walked with the prince to our cabin, and Florin trailed us. He would stand guard in our hallway until it was time for the prince to return to his carriage.



Prince Pavel and I spent the rest of the afternoon playing with the puppy, looking out at the scenery, and getting to know more about each other. At one point, I found myself thinking about Portia, and I must have looked sad, because the prince asked me what was wrong. When I told him how much I missed my best friend, he told me I was lucky.

“I don’t spend much time with other children because my parents are so worried about my privacy. So I don’t have any real friends,” he said.

I felt so bad for him. “I’m sure this will change once you start your new school,” I told him.

“I hope so,” he said.

Then I had an idea. “Have dinner with Bettina, Mom, and me tonight!” I suggested.

“I will check with Pasha.” Pavel smiled. Just then Florin tapped on the door, and Pavel jumped up. “And I will try to persuade him to allow me to reveal my identity to your mother. Thank you, Joanie.” He quickly put on his disguise and hurried



away.

About ten minutes later, Betts and I couldn't believe our eyes. A beautiful cream-colored envelope was slipped under our door. Inside was a note from Pavel telling us it was OK for me to tell Mom who he really was—and there was an invitation written in fancy loopy handwriting for all three of us to dine in the prince's carriage!

The meal was the best we'd had on the whole trip. With linen napkins on our laps, we ate at a pull-out dining room table using gleaming silverware and plates with a delicate gold pattern. Even Ceci came, tucked into the pet carrier.

We all had a great time. We talked and talked. Because Mom was a diplomat, she'd met many royal figures before, and it turned out she'd even met Prince Pavel's parents!

"Pasha, Prince Pavel's parents have told me lots about him. The girls and I would be thrilled if you and the prince would join us for a tour of Paris tomorrow morning," she said to the bodyguard.

"Ah, Madame, you are so kind," Pasha



replied. “The Prince may go, in his disguise, and I myself will accompany him, of course.”

“But what about Ceci?” I asked. “We can’t leave the puppy alone for the day.”

“It will not be a problem,” Pasha said. “Florin adores dogs.” He actually cracked a little smile. “I am sure he will look after Ceci for the day.”

“Excellent,” said Pavel.

“Yay!” I cried. “So we can *all* spend the last day of our journey together—in Paris!”



Chapter Eleven

PAINTINGS, PUPPETS AND PASTRIES IN PARIS

Our day in Paris flew by. It was always fun being with Mom and Betts, but being with Pavel, too? That made it extra special. Since he'd never been to Paris either, he was as excited as Betts and I. And Pasha said the prince only had to wear a hat and sunglasses as his disguise today.

Mom, who had been to Paris many times, was our tour guide. She said we would get a general idea of the city today, and then we'd return for a longer visit during a school vacation. She led us to a special bus that drove us in a big loop past many of the main city sights. We went all over Paris, up and down the main avenues and on bridges over the Seine, the river that runs through Paris. It was so pretty!

The bus drove around a big traffic circle. In



the middle is a famous monument called the Arc de Triomphe. We headed down one wide street, called the Champs-Élysées, to the Place de la Concorde, which is the largest square in Paris.

Then we rode past the Pompidou Centre. Mom said it has a huge modern art collection and a public library. But it looks like an inside-out building with lots of bright colors.

Next we visited the biggest art gallery in the world—the Louvre Museum. Mom and Betts looked at the paintings, and Pavel and I got to go on a fun scavenger hunt that had clues for kids to follow, just like real detectives. It was perfect for me during this train journey of so many mysteries!

In the afternoon, we had lunch at an outdoor café and then walked through a beautiful park called Luxembourg Gardens. Little kids were sailing wooden boats in the fountain pond, and people were playing chess under the trees. We even saw a funny marionette show. The puppets talked in French and Pavel translated for me.

We were walking back to the train station





when Mom said we could get a treat at a *pâtisserie*, which is a bakery. There are so many *pâtisseries* along the Paris streets! All of them have incredible pastries and sweets displayed in the windows.

Mom, Betts and Pasha each asked for a croissant, but Pavel and I had a hard time deciding. We finally decided that I'd get a chocolate éclair and he'd get a madeleine, and we'd share. Oh, yum!

We had just enjoyed the last crumb when Mom looked at her watch.

“Ooh, la-la! The train!” she cried. “We must get to the train!” We jumped up and the five of us raced back to the station just in time to board the OG Express.



Chapter Twelve

THE FINAL MYSTERY

I sat in the observation car, squeezing in one last view before dinner. Soon we'd be leaving the mainland of Europe and heading under the English Channel through the Eurotunnel.

I said goodbye and thank you to Dante, the guide who had taught me so much about the history and geography of Europe in such a short time. Then I hurried down the stairs to the prince's carriage. In a few hours, we'd be in London, and I wanted to spend some time with Pavel and Ceci before I had to say goodbye to them both.

Florin opened the door to Pavel's rooms when I arrived. "Joanie is here," he announced.

"Woof, woof!" cried Pavel. He was making funny dog sounds, tumbling around on the rug with the puppy! When he barked to me again, of



course I barked back, and then plopped myself down on the rug with Ceci and him.

Too soon, the door opened again and Betts was in the doorway. “Time to come and pack up, Joanie,” she called. “We arrive in London in two hours.”

“OK. I’ll be right there,” I told her, as I got to my feet. “Pavel, why don’t you keep the pet carrier for now. I can get it from you on the platform.” Then suddenly, I remembered. “Pavel,” I said. “I’ve been meaning to ask you. What’s the name of the school you’ll be going to in London?”

His smile vanished. “Manor International School,” he said, standing up as well.

“What?” I stared at him. “No.”

“Yes,” he said. He picked up Ceci and hugged her.

“That’s *my* new school!” I cried. “You and I will be there together!”

Pavel’s blue eyes lit up. “Oh, that is really great news,” he said. “So we will see each other every day!”



“Yes, and maybe on weekends, too!” I agreed.

“If only we could see Ceci, as well,” Pavel sighed. “But I cannot keep her when I am at school. I will be living in one of the school’s boarding houses, and they do not let students have pets.”

“Not even student princes?” I asked.

“No,” he said. As he stroked Ceci’s head, the puppy closed her eyes and wagged her tail. “My mother says she will send one of her staff to bring Ceci home to Moldova, and they will care for her until I return. But I will miss her so much while I am at school.”

“Me too,” I said, with a sigh.

“See you on the platform?” he asked.

“Yes. See you there,” I said, as I headed out. But I didn’t go to my cabin to pack. Instead I told Betts I needed to stop in to see Mom first.

I’d just had the most amazing idea!



“We’re here. We’re in London,” Betts sang out, as the train came to a halt. She zipped up her suitcase. “Done. All packed.”

I looked out at the busy London train station with so many tracks and platforms. People were coming and going, some pulling suitcases, rushing to board trains, and others were greeting passengers as they disembarked.

“Betts? Joanie?” Ana poked her head into our compartment. “Your mother asked me to tell you she’d meet you both on the platform. I’m here to help you with your luggage.”

“Thanks, Ana,” said Betts.

But as I hurried to make sure I’d packed everything, Ana frowned. “Wasn’t there a pet carrier in your room?” she asked. “It’s gone.”

“Yes,” I said, “but a friend in another cabin has it. He’s borrowing it for a bit,” I added, quickly.

What if she asks me more questions? I can’t tell her there’s a prince on the train who needs the pet carrier for his puppy!



But Betts was saying, “I’m ready, Ana! Can you give me a hand? And I want to give you our new address and my phone number so we can keep in touch. Joanie, can you manage?”

“Yes, I’ll be right behind you,” I told her.

Slipping on my sweater, I was about to follow, when I felt something in the pocket and pulled it out. The diamond bracelet! *Oh wow! I’d forgotten all about it!*

What should I do with it? Maybe I could ask Pavel for his advice. So I stuffed it back into my sweater pocket and hurried after Betts.

I was relieved when I saw Pavel, in his full weird disguise, on the platform with Pasha and Florin. The prince came hurrying over.

“Pavel,” I said, quickly. “I found something on the train a few days ago, and I forgot to turn it in. I feel so dumb. Will it make me look like a thief if I hand it over to the train officials now? Look.” I showed him the diamond bracelet, hiding it from anyone else’s view.

I was surprised when he started laughing.



“You found it!” he cried. “This is Ceci’s collar! I had risked playing with her in the train passageway really late one night, and when we came back to the room, it was gone!”

I giggled as I handed him the collar. *So there wasn’t a jewel thief on our train after all! And another mystery solved!*

I was about to explain all this to Pavel, but it was almost time to say goodbye and I had something much more important to tell him.

“Pavel,” I said, “I’ve come up with an amazing plan.” I explained the whole thing, and finished with “So, what do you think?”

The prince grinned. “Are you sure?” he asked. “It would be a lot of work for you.”

“I don’t mind at all. I’d love to look after your puppy for you at our house during the school year,” I said. “Mom has even called your parents and worked it out with them. And she said I could still get my new puppy, too, once Ceci is used to being with us.”

“Maybe Ceci and your new puppy will be



playmates!” Prince Pavel said.

“And you can visit after school and play with Ceci as often as you want,” I suggested.

“I would be very grateful,” Pavel said, quite formally. “Thank you.”

“Joanie!” It was Dad. He had come to meet us at the train station!

I waved to him, excitedly.

“I have to go, Pavel,” I told the prince. “But Mom wrote out our new address and phone number for you.” I handed him the slip of paper. “And if you want, why not come by tomorrow to see Ceci?”

Pavel nodded. “I will, Joanie. Thank you again. So much.”

He reached into the pet carrier and told Ceci he would see her tomorrow. Then he turned to go.

“Pavel!” I called.

Soon Pasha and Florin would be dropping him off at his new school residence, and he’d be all on his own. I hoped he wouldn’t feel lonely.

“Promise?” I asked. “Promise you’ll come





by and see us tomorrow?”

“I promise,” he said, with a grin and a wave.

I smiled. All the mysteries were solved. I had a puppy to look after and would soon have a new puppy of my very own. And I had even found my first new friend in England.



Glossary

*Many words have more than one meaning. Here are the definitions of words marked with this symbol * (an asterisk) as they are used in this story.*

architecture: *the style in which a building is designed and built*

au pair: *a young person from another country who lives with a family to learn a new language and helps with childcare or housework in return for room and board*

bewildered: *feeling confused or mixed up*

bistro: *a small restaurant or café*

bonjour: *a French word meaning “hello”*

canals: *waterways created as passageways for boats*

car/carriage: *a long, separate section of a train that carries passengers*

cod: *a type of fish, often salted, used in some traditional Spanish recipes*

compartment: *a separate space in a train carriage*

conscientious: *careful of doing something correctly*

diplomat: *a person who represents one country's government and works to keep good relationships with other countries*



embassy: *the building where a group of diplomats work in a foreign country*

executive: *a person who helps decide how a company should be run and makes sure it is being run the right way*

fancy-schmancy: *very fancy*

forlorn: *sad and alone*

“high caliber”: *extremely good quality*

J.K. Rowling: *the British author of the well-known series of books about Harry Potter*

luxurious: *very comfortable and expensive*

mon ami: *a French phrase meaning “my friend”*

obliged: *feel like you must do something*

observation car: *train car with large windows or a glass dome so that passengers can have great views of the scenery*

occupying: *using or living in*

“on pins and needles”: *nervously or in anxious suspense*

optimist: *someone who usually believes good things will happen*



peut-être: *a French phrase meaning “maybe”*

tiara: *a dressy headband decorated with jewels
to look like a small crown*

vestibules: *enclosed areas between train carriages*



these are **my** favorite places I have
been to (or would like to go to) on a train:





The Power of a Girl

For every *Our Generation*® product you buy, a portion of sales goes to WE Charity's Power of a Girl Initiative to help provide girls in developing countries an education—the most powerful tool in the world for escaping poverty.

Did you know that out of the millions of children who aren't in school, 70% of them are girls? In developing communities around the world, many girls can't go to school. Usually it's because there's no school available or because their responsibilities to family (farming, earning an income, walking hours each day for water) prevent it.

WE Charity has had incredible success in its first 20 years. Together, we've built more than 1,000 school rooms, empowering more than 200,000 children with an education. As WE Charity continues to deepen its programming, it's focusing on creating sustainable communities through its holistic development model built on the five Pillars of Impact: Education, Water, Health, Food and Opportunity.

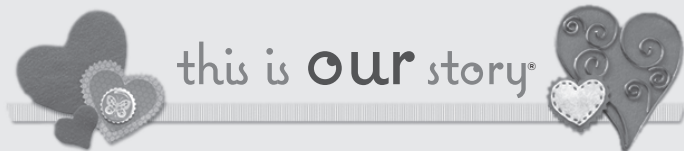
The most incredible part about this model is that roughly a quarter of WE Charity's funding comes from kids just like you, who have lemonade stands, bake sales, penny drives, walkathons and more.

Just by buying an *Our Generation* product you have helped change the world, and you are powerful (beyond belief!) to help even more.



Together we change the world.

WE Charity provided the factual information pertaining to their organization.
WE Charity is a 501c3 organization.



We are an extraordinary generation of girls.
And have we got a story to tell.

Our Generation® is unlike any that has come before.
We're helping our families learn to recycle, holding
bake sales to support charities, and holding penny
drives to build homes for orphaned children in Haiti.
We're helping our little sisters learn to read and even
making sure the new kid at school has a place to sit
in the cafeteria.

All that and we still find time to play hopscotch and
hockey. To climb trees, do cartwheels all the way
down the block and laugh with our friends until milk
comes out of our noses. You know, to be kids.

Will we have a big impact on the world? We already
have. What's ahead for us? What's ahead for the
world? We have no idea. We're too busy grabbing
and holding on to the joy that is today.

Yep. This is our time. This is our story.

www.ogdolls.com



About the Author

Susan Hughes is an award-winning author of more than 30 children's books, including picture books, chapter books, young adult novels, nonfiction books for all ages, and even a graphic nonfiction book.

Susan is also a freelance editor and writer. She helps coach and guide other writers in revising and polishing their own manuscripts.

About the Illustrator

Passionate about drawing from an early age, Géraldine Charette decided to pursue her studies in computer multimedia in order to further develop her style and technique. Her favorite themes to explore in her illustrations are fashion and urban life. In her free time, Géraldine loves to paint and travel. She is passionate about horses and loves spending time at the stable. It's where she feels most at peace and gives her time to think and fuel her creativity.



All Aboard the OG Express became the book that you are holding in your hands with the assistance of the talented people at Maison Battat Inc., including Joe Battat, Dany Battat, Sandy Jacinto, Loredana Ramacieri, Laurie Gaudreau-Levesque, Ananda Guarany, Cynthia Lopez, Véronique Casavant, Jenny Gambino, Arlee Stewart, Natalie Cohen, Karen Erlichman, Zeynep Yasar, Joanne Burke Casey and Pamela Shrimpton.



A dense, black and white pattern of various heart shapes and symbols. The hearts are of different sizes and styles, some with internal patterns like swirls, dots, or stripes. Some hearts contain text: 'Love' in a cursive font, 'XOXO' in a bold font, and 'this is our story' in a simple font. There are also symbols like a butterfly, a ladybug, a heart with a face, and a heart with a cross. The pattern is set against a background of small, dark dots.

All Aboard the OG Express

When Joanie™ finds out she's moving to London, England with her parents and her au pair, Bettina, she's a bit apprehensive. She'll be leaving behind her best friend, Portia, and going to a new school. But Joanie is excited when her dad arranges a special cross-Europe trip for Mom, Bettina and her on the luxury train, the OG Express. After all, she loves history and geography. Not only will she get to travel through several countries, but the train has a special observation car with its own tour guide!

However, when Joanie boards the train in Budapest, Hungary, she discovers that more intrigue lies inside the train than beyond. Who is the secret passenger? What is making the spooky night noise? And who dropped the diamond bracelet? Can she solve all three mysteries in only seven days?

It's impossible to separate **Our Generation®** characters from the generation of girls who read about and play with them, for they are one and the same.

They're changing the world by making their households greener. They're baking cupcakes to help charities. They're writing in their journals, practicing for recitals, doing cartwheels down the block and giggling with their friends until they can hardly breathe. **Our Generation** is about girls growing up together. "This is our story" reflects the community of these amazing girls as they laugh, learn and create the narrative of their own generation.

Ages 7 and up

Maison Battat Inc. Publisher

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