

## Book review: "First Dog"

Written by Terri Schlichenmeyer

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What do you do when you've lost something and you need to find it quick?

The first thing you probably do is holler for your Mom. She usually knows where everything is.

Then you start looking in your room, beneath your bed, in your closet, in your toybox, under the table, between the sofa cushions and anywhere you think you might have lost whatever it is you're looking for. Eventually, you find it in the perfect hiding place for things like that.

In the new book "First Dog" by J. Patrick Lewis and Beth Zappitello, illustrated by Tim Bowers, a young puppy is searching for something, too. You may be surprised at where he looks.

Once upon a time, small black Dog was looking for a home. He didn't want just any old home, though. He wanted the perfect home, so he decided to go in search for one. Maybe, he thought, if he looked all over the world, he might find the best place in the world to live.

So he took a bus, hitched a ride, rode the train, hopped aboard a boat, and started in Newfoundland. There, he found a Newfoundland dog who loved to rescue people. Dog knew he wouldn't be any good at rescuing, so he moved on.

In England, he found a slobbering English bulldog. Nope, the perfect home wouldn't be with such a snort-nosed dog like that!

In France, he found a dog with foofy hair and no pants! In Croatia, Dog met a spotted pooch who refused to play tic-tac-paw. There was an elegant borzoi in Russia and a wrinkly Shar-pei in China but none of those dogs had the perfect home.

Dog met a wild dog in Australia, but the dingo wore him out. In South Africa, he found a Rhodesian Ridgeback. There was a Peruvian Hairless dog in South America, and a Chihuahua in Mexico.

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But there was no home in any of these countries for a small, black dog like Dog. But then, after he got back, he saw another newspaper that gave him another idea. Someone in a big White House was looking for a puppy...

When “First Dog” crossed my desk, I was instantly in love with the cover. The front of this book is so irresistibly adorable that you’ll want to bring this book home for your kids, just based on first impressions.

Fortunately, the same colorful artwork continues inside this book.

Unfortunately, the story that goes along with the artwork has zero to do with the story of the real First Dog, Beau.

By itself, “First Dog” is delightful: the illustrations are appealing to adults and kids alike. The story is instructive and interesting. But based on the title and the cover of the book, I expected a kid-friendly tale about Beau. Because I didn’t find it, I felt charmed but cheated.

If you’ve got a 4-to-7-year-old who loves dogs wholeheartedly, they’ll love this book. You’ll love the artwork. Just be ready to howl a little in adult-sensibility-based disappointment.

**“First Dog” by J. Patrick Lewis and Beth Zappitello, illustrated by Tim Bowers**  
**c.2009, Sleeping Bear Press**  
**\$15.95 / \$18.95 Canada**  
**32 pages**