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# **1 The Big Winner**

I won Dribble at Jimmy Fargo's birthday party. All the other guys got to take home goldfish in little plastic bags. I won him because I guessed there were three hundred and forty-eight jelly beans in Mrs. Fargo's jar. Really, there were four hundred and twenty-three, she told us later. Still, my guess was closest. "Peter Warren Hatcher is the big winner!" Mrs. Fargo announced.

At first I felt bad that I didn't get a goldfish too. Then Jimmy handed me a glass bowl. Inside there was some water and three rocks. A tiny green turtle was sleeping on the biggest rock. All the other guys looked at their goldfish. I knew what they were



thinking. They wished they could have tiny green turtles too.

I named my turtle Dribble while I was walking home from Jimmy's party. I live at 25 West 68th Street. It's an old apartment building. But it's got one of the best elevators in New York City. There are mirrors all around. You can see yourself from every angle. There's a soft, cushioned bench to sit on if you're too tired to stand. The elevator operator's name is Henry Bevelheimer. He lets us call him Henry because Bevelheimer's very hard to say.

Our apartment's on the twelfth floor. But I don't have to tell Henry. He already knows. He knows everybody in the building. He's that smart! He even knows I'm nine and in fourth grade.

I showed him Dribble right away. "I won him at a birthday party," I said.

Henry smiled. "Your mother's going to be surprised."

Henry was right. My mother was really surprised. Her mouth opened when I said, "Just look at what I won at Jimmy Fargo's birthday party." I held up my tiny green turtle. "I've already named him . . . Dribble! Isn't that a great name for a turtle?"

My mother made a face. "I don't like the way he smells," she said.

"What do you mean?" I asked. I put my nose right down close to him. I didn't smell anything but turtle. *So Dribble smells like turtle*, I thought. *Well, he's supposed to. That's what he is!*

"And I'm not going to take care of him either," my mother added.

"Of course you're not," I told her. "He's my turtle. And I'm the one who's going to take care of him."

"You're going to change his water and clean out his bowl and feed him and all of that?" she asked.

"Yes," I said. "And even more. I'm going to see to it that he's happy!"

This time my mother made a funny noise. Like a groan.

I went into my bedroom. I put Dribble on top of my dresser. I tried to pet him and tell him he would be happy living with me. But it isn't easy to pet a turtle. They aren't soft and furry and they don't lick you or anything. Still, I had my very own pet at last.

Later, when I sat down at the dinner table, my mother said, "I smell turtle. Peter, go and *scrub* your hands!"

Some people might think that my mother is my biggest problem. She doesn't like turtles and she's always telling me to scrub my hands. That doesn't mean just run them under the water. *Scrub* means I'm



# This Fudge isn't so sweet.

**T**wo is a crowd when Peter and his little brother, Fudge, are in the same room. Grown-ups think Fudge is absolutely adorable, but Peter and his pet turtle, Dribble, know the truth. From throwing temper tantrums to smearing mashed potatoes on the wall, Fudge causes mischief wherever he goes. What will the tiny terror do next?

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