

otherwise
known as sheila
the great



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AUTHOR

I'm glad there's only one more week of school before summer vacation. Today was so hot! My clothes stuck to me and my brain felt all tired out. I didn't even finish my math in school. So now I have to do it for homework.

I walked into the lobby of my apartment building thinking how good a big, cold drink would taste. I pushed the Up elevator button and waited. When the elevator got to the lobby Henry opened the gate and I stepped in. Just as he was about to take me upstairs Peter Hatcher and his dumb old dog came tearing down the hall.

"Wait up, Henry!" Peter called. "Here I come."

"Please don't wait, Henry," I said. "The elevator's too small for that dog."

But Henry opened the gate and waited. "This elevator can hold ten people or the equivalent," Henry said. "And I figure that dog is the equivalent of a person and a half. So with me and you and Peter and that dog we've still only got four and a half people."

Sometimes I wish Henry didn't spend so much time thinking.

"Hi, Henry," Peter said. "Thanks for waiting."

"Any time, Peter," Henry told him.

"Excuse me, please," I said, stepping out of the elevator. I held my nose. "I can't ride up with that dog. He stinks!"

My heart was beating so loud I was sure Henry and Peter could hear it. And I know Turtle, the dog, was laughing at me. He stuck out his tongue and licked the corners of his mouth. I'll bet he could taste me already! I walked down the hall with my head held high, saying, "P.U."

Henry called, "Ten flights up is a long walk, Sheila."

"I don't mind," I called back.

Henry was right. Ten flights up *is* a long walk. By the time I got to my floor I was huffing and puffing so hard I had to sit down on the landing and rest. Little

drips of sweat ran from my face down to my neck. Still, I think it's pretty smart of me to pretend that I hate Turtle because he smells. I always hold my nose when I see Peter coming with him. That way Peter will never know the truth!

After a few minutes I wiped my face with the back of my hand and walked down the hall to our apartment. Mrs. Reese is the only person on our floor with a dog. And I don't worry too much about her. Because her dog is so small she carries him around in her arms. She calls him Baby and knits him little sweaters to wear in the winter.

I pushed open our apartment door and went straight into the kitchen to get something to drink.

"Is that you, Sheila?" my mother called.

"Yes," I answered.

"Did you have fun at Laurie's?"

"Yes," I said, gulping down a whole can of apple juice.

"Is it still hot out?" Mom asked.

"Yes."

"Did you remember to bring home a quart of milk?"

Oh oh! I knew I forgot something.

"Sheila . . . did you bring home the milk?" Mom called again.

"No . . . I forgot."

Sheila can do no wrong.

Who is Sheila Tubman? Even Sheila isn't sure. Sometimes she feels like confident Sheila the Great and other times she's secret Sheila, who's afraid of spiders, swimming, and, most of all, dogs. When her family decides to leave the city for a summer in the country, Sheila will have to suffer everything from long-eared dogs to swimming lessons to creepy spiders. That's enough to drive any city girl nuts! If she survives at all, Sheila may be forced to admit that she's no supergirl.

"It's hard to imagine any child who wouldn't enjoy this absolute lark of a book. A truly appealing book in which the author makes her points without a single preachy word."

—*Publishers Weekly*



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