

A CREEK STORY

CINDER'S PAW BAND



WREN MARLOWE

PUDDLEBEND



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For the friends who help us look again.



Cinder's Paw Band

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In the friendly town of Puddle Bend,
different species lived together peacefully.
They were good friends, with only the
occasional bit of strife happening now
and then.



One afternoon, Tuck the Echidna was out for a walk.

He was feeling a little glum and didn't feel like doing much around the house.

Then, he remembered his friend Bramble's advice:

“When your feet feel so heavy and nothing is fun, just step out the door and go chase down the sun!”

He laced up his shoes and walked right out the door. In his opinion, this was the best piece of advice he had ever gotten—chasing the sun or the moon was always a good idea!





The more steps he took, the better he felt. Just as Tuck started humming to himself, he spotted Cinder the Coatimundi coming up the street. He waved at Cinder, but Cinder didn't respond.



“That is very unlike Cinder not to wave back,” thought Tuck. He was about to shout out Cinder’s name when he noticed that Cinder had tears in her eyes. “What happened, Cinder? Why are you crying?” asked Tuck gently.

“It is a sad, sad day, Tuck,”
answered Cinder.

“I lost the Paw Band that my grandmother
gave me. I have been looking all over for it,
but I cannot find it.”

“Oh no! Do you remember the last time you
noticed it?” asked Tuck.





“I had it on when I took a nap yesterday. After that, I didn’t notice when I lost it. I have searched all the places I went to after my nap, but I did not find it anywhere.” More tears welled up in her eyes.



“My grandmother knit the Paw Band herself with yarn she bought on her travels. I am never going to find it!” wailed Cinder.

“Now, now, gather yourself, Cinder. I will help you with your search. Another pair of eyes is always helpful when trying to find something.”
“Do you think more eyes help?” asked Cinder hopefully.





“Why, yes, they do. Let’s retrace your steps. What was the last place you went to yesterday?” “The Creek Park,” answered Cinder. “We will start our search from there.”



And off went the two friends to search for the Paw Band. They searched high and low, checking all the spots Cinder had visited the day before, but they found no success.



With each passing minute, Cinder grew sadder and sadder. Soon, it was getting late, and they both had to head back home. “Let me walk you to your house, Cinder.”



“You are a good friend, Tuck,” sniffed Cinder. They walked quietly together toward Cinder’s house. Tuck was deep in thought, trying to figure out where the Paw Band could have gone. It was nowhere to be found.



Cinder hadn't gone close to the water yesterday, so it couldn't have washed away up the stream. It hadn't been windy either, so it couldn't have flown away. Where could it be? It seemed to have just vanished during the nap!

The nap! Suddenly, Tuck had a brilliant idea. “Cinder, where did you take your nap?” “Here,” Cinder pointed toward the living room sofa. Tuck walked over to the sofa. First, he searched underneath it, then he removed all the cushions.





Still, there was no sign of the Paw Band. Finally, he checked the deep cracks between the sofa seats. He reached in and pulled out a bottle opener, a bouncy ball, two dice, and... a Paw Band!



Cinder screamed with joy and gave Tuck a huge hug! “Oh, thank you, thank you for finding it! I would have never thought to look there!”



Tuck laughed warmly.
“Sometimes, we miss the things right under
our noses.”



With a cheerful wave, Tuck said goodbye and walked back toward his house. He felt light and happy. He had helped a friend—it was a day truly well spent!



“Next time I meet Bramble, I will have some advice for him too!” Tuck thought with a smile.

“When a friend needs a hand and you help them right through, your heart fills with sunshine and feels happy too!”

EVERYONE AT THE CREEK



Bramble

COMMON
WOMBAT

The steady big-
kid guardian



Skip

MUDSKIPPER

The tiny little
brother who
cannot wait his
turn



Cinder

COATIMUNDI

The nosy
neighborhood
explorer



Sora

SANDHILL
CRANE

The tall
watchful big-
sister neighbor



Hush

TAWNY
FROGMOUTH

The tall
nervous big
cousin who
thinks nobody
can see him



Tuck

SHORT-BEAKED
ECHIDNA

The littlest
cousin who is
always a bit too
close



Nix

SUGAR GLIDER

The littlest
rocket sibling

ABOUT THE CREEK

Puddlebend is a slow bend in a warm creek where the water is shallow enough to stand in and the mud is soft enough to sit down in. Everyone who lives there is small. Everyone who lives there is working something out.

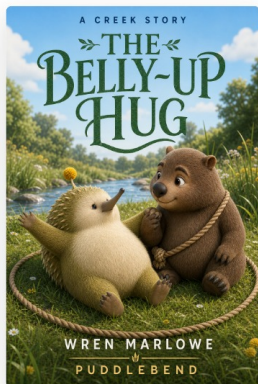
These stories are about the ordinary, difficult business of being a friend: waiting your turn, going back for what you dropped, letting someone hold you when you are all spikes.

WREN MARLOWE

Wren Marlowe makes quiet, funny picture books at the water's edge: small creatures working out how to be together.



ALSO IN A CREEK STORY



The Belly-Up Hug



The Clacking Lid



Cinder and the Missing Moon



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CINDER'S PAW BAND

A treasured Paw Band turns
a worried walk into a bright
search with a friend.



WREN MARLOWE



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