

**EMMA BURNS**  
**AND**  
**THE CASE OF THE MISSING**  
**CAT**



Book #1 in the Emma Burns Mystery Series

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## **For Gwen**

*Life is made up of a series of mysteries and adventures...never stop looking...*

# One

**M**y name is Emma Riley Burns and I am 10 years old. I have long straight red hair that I like to wear tied back in a tight ponytail.

During the summer months, a collection of small brown freckles will often appear on the end of my nose if I forget to wear my hat. My mom tells

me they look like tiny coloured pebbles on a white sandy beach.



I live at 42 Perry Street, in a beautiful brown brick house, with bright blue shutters, and a long stone pathway that splits our front lawn like a thick yellow line that divides two sides of a busy street.

In our backyard stands a very large and very old oak tree that my dad tells me is over one hundred years old.

# Two

When I was six, I decided to name our oak tree Chester.

My parents couldn't understand why I wanted to name the tree in our backyard. I said that if we could name our goldfish Freddy, and our dog Rusty, why couldn't we also name our tree?



Like all of our pets, Chester is very important to me, and I believe he is also a special part of our family, so he should have a proper name as well.

My dad thought Chester was a name better suited for a Chestnut tree, rather than an Oak tree. I have a friend at school named Chester and I have always liked his name.

I suggested to my dad that since I was the first person in our family to

come up with the idea to name our special tree, that I could also be the one to choose his name. My parents agreed and we have called him Chester ever since.

One day at school last year, my teacher Ms. Flanagan told our class how she likes to talk to her plants every day, because she believes it helps them to grow and stay healthy, and that showing love and attention are important for all living things.



Like Ms. Flanagan's plants, I want Chester to stay big and strong as well, so I try to talk to him each and every day if I can remember.

Most days my parents forget to talk to Chester, so I always make sure to say hi to him three times each morning, so that he knows how much he means to our family. I will usually say, "Hi, hello, how are you today, Chester? See you when I get home from school."

Even though I don't like it when Chester loses all of his leaves in the fall, and I have to help my parents rake the backyard, I love the hideout his leaves provide during the summer months.



You see, within his complicated maze of branches lies my secret hiding spot; probably my favourite place in the whole wide world, in fact.

Two summers ago, my dad built me my very own tree house for my eighth birthday. He built it when my brother and I were spending a week at my grandparents' house, so that it would be a surprise when we arrived home.

My parents bought my brother Charlie a new hockey stick for his birthday that year. I think I received the better gift.

Today I have decided that I will begin working on solving my next

mystery - the case of the missing cat. I know it's going to be a very difficult mystery to solve but I am confident if I work hard enough, I will be able to succeed in the end.

Before I start working on my new case however, I want to tell you a little more about my wonderful tree house because it's usually where my detective work begins.

**Three**

As you have probably learned by now, I love to solve mysteries, and there is no better place I can think of to piece together important clues, than inside my tree wonderful house. I also like to do my homework high up in my favourite tree, even though homework is usually not as much fun as solving mysteries.



My parents have let me borrow some of their old furniture that we used to store in our basement, to decorate my treehouse. I have a small desk, two chairs and a wooden bookcase where I like to keep most of my precious detective books.

My parents won't let me keep a real computer in my treehouse, so instead they have allowed me to display our old one that doesn't work anymore so that it looks more like a real detective office. I look forward to having a real computer to take its place one day soon.

So instead of using a computer to help me solve my mysteries, I rely on my wonderful detective's kit that I have assembled over the past three years, even before my dad built my tree house. Most people don't know this, but I actually started solving mysteries when I was only six.

Currently my detective kit contains a magnifying glass, a handy pencil, a notepad, a tape measure, two walkie-talkies, a flashlight, a sneaky disguise, as well as a few other important items I have collected over the last few years.



My mom thinks I should be saving my allowance for other more important things like books, or even toys, but I know that every good detective needs to have a great detective kit. I wonder what items from my detective kit I will use today to help with my new mystery.

I also believe that every great detective should own their own proper detective hat. Even though Christmas is

still six months away, I have already decided that a proper detective hat will be at the top of my Christmas list this year.



Sherlock Holmes, the most famous detective of all time always wore his detective hat, so I want to be able to wear one like he did, when I am trying to solve my own mysteries. One day I hope to solve more mysteries than even the great Sherlock Holmes.

Sometimes, my mom will let me borrow her camera when I am trying to keep track of important clues, but only when I am inside our house. So instead, I usually prefer to draw my own pictures, so I can keep an accurate record of important details and clues.



Drawing pictures is one of the other fun things I like to do when I am not trying to solve a new mystery.

A few months ago, I asked my parents if I could put a small bed inside my tree house, so that I could wake up bright and early and get back to working on my mysteries as soon as I woke up. They told me that only birds and owls sleep in trees.



I am neither a bird nor an owl, so I will have to spend my nights sleeping in my own bed, inside my own bedroom, which is far less fun and far less exciting than my wonderful tree house.

# Four

The case of the missing cat, involves my best friend Sierra Walker, who lives directly across the street.

Yesterday while we were walking home from school together, Sierra told me that it had been three days since she had last seen her cat Mr. Whiskers. I told Sierra that I had not seen Mr. Whiskers since I was at her house five days ago.

While my mom and I were walking Rusty this morning, I noticed that Sierra's family had posted pictures of Mr. Whiskers on lamp posts and mailboxes around our neighborhood.



I have concluded that this means that Sierra must still not have found Mr. Whiskers, and that he has now been

missing for four days. I am sure Sierra must be missing Mr. Whiskers very much so I want to help her find him.

Since today is Saturday, and I don't have to go to school, I have decided that I am going to dedicate my day to solve the mystery of Sierra's missing cat.



Whenever we take Rusty for a walk, I am always paying close attention for different clues, like the famous detective Sherlock Holmes. I think that every great detective always needs to be on the lookout for clues, even if they are not working on solving a mystery.

The sign for Mr. Whiskers read:

*Our family cat is missing. His name is Mr. Whiskers and he is very friendly. We miss him very much. A \$50 reward is being offered for his safe return.*

I am not interested in collecting the reward. Sierra is my best friend and I want to help her find her cat. Each

poster has a very nice photo of Mr. Whiskers which I think is a very smart idea.

Mr. Whiskers looks very happy in that photo. I hope we can find him very soon.

The first thing I like to do when I am starting a new mystery is to talk with people who might be able to provide me with important clues. The first person I am going to talk to today is my younger brother Charlie.

I thought about speaking with mom and dad, but they are always telling me I am always asking too many questions

about too many different mysteries that I am trying to solve.



My teacher Ms. Flanagan however likes that I ask a lot of questions in class, so I have decided that I will keep asking a lot of questions, both while I

am at school and while I am trying to solve my mysteries.

I want to talk to Charlie because he is always outside playing, so there is a good chance he might have seen what happened to Mr. Whiskers while he was playing with his friends.

Charlie loves to watch cartoons while he enjoys his bowl of cereal on Saturday mornings, so I know finding him won't be a mystery. The only thing Charlie loves more than cartoons are superheroes. I think he secretly wants to be one when he grows up. I have told him that superheroes only live in the pages of comic books and in the movies but I don't think he believes me.



Both Charlie and I are only allowed to watch two hours of television on weekends, unless we are watching television with our parents. Charlie almost always uses up both his two hours of television privileges by lunch time. I rarely watch television unless it is raining outside.

Just as I thought, when I walk downstairs into the basement, I find Charlie finishing his bowl of cereal while he watches his favourite cartoon. “Hi Charlie,” I say. “I am working on a new mystery. Can you help me? Sierra has lost her cat and I want to help her find him. Do you mind if I ask you a few questions?”

Charlie just turned eight years old last month, so he is not as grown up as I am, but I know he loves animals, so I am sure he will want to help me find Mr. Whiskers.

Our family doesn't have a cat but we do have a guinea pig named Herman. A guinea pig is smaller and rounder than a cat.

Herman looks a lot like my piggy bank where I keep my allowance that I save each week.



Charlie looks at me and stands up and yells, "Mom! Emma wants me to



help her with her latest mystery and wants to ask me questions. I am not watching TV anymore. This doesn't count towards my two hours of TV time.”

My mom responds, “Okay, honey.”

I assume this means Charlie is ready to help me solve my latest mystery, so

I reach for my detective kit and pull out my trusty pencil and notepad, so that I can keep an accurate record of my brother's answers.



“Hmmm,” I say to myself, as I think about the first question I should ask him. “Do you remember the last time you saw Mr. Whiskers, Charlie?”

Charlie makes a funny face while he tries to think of an answer to my question. “A few days ago,” he

responds. “We were playing street hockey after school, and I remember seeing Mr. Whiskers across the street. He was chasing a squirrel.”

I think this is a very good answer but I realize I need to ask him another question to find out more information. “Do you remember what day that was, Charlie?” I asked.

“The day dad made hotdogs on the BBQ.” Charlie replies.



Charlie really likes food and always remembers what he eats each and every day. I remember my dad made hotdogs for us on the BBQ on Wednesday. I realize this is one day later than Sierra had said she had last seen Mr. Whiskers, so I now know

Sierra's cat has in fact only been missing for three days.

I think his answers are very helpful for my investigation. "Thank you Charlie for trying to help me find for Mr. Whiskers."

To read more of this book or other Emma Burns books, please email [jasonmeller@hotmail.com](mailto:jasonmeller@hotmail.com)