

WALKER

**THE MYSTERY OF THE
MISSING MILLIONS**

Shoo Rayner began his career as an illustrator in a garden shed near Machynlleth. He drew for Michael Morpurgo and Rose Impey, but editors kept encouraging him to write. Over 200 books later, Shoo, well known for his many fast-paced series for newly confident readers, has been building a worldwide following for his award winning how-to-draw videos on YouTube. Shoo lives in the Forest of Dean with his wife and their cat.

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*Also by Shoo Rayner
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Walker
And the Dragon Series:
Dragon Gold
Dragon White
Dragon Red

ShooRayner

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MISSING MILLIONS



Firefly

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For Abigail
A dog person, if ever there was one!

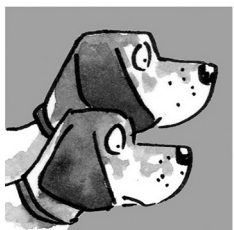
Welcome to Foxley!

This is Walker.

He can't have a dog because his mother is allergic,
so he walks other people's dogs in his village.



He walks Stella. Her owner is Jenny.



He used to walk Loki and Thor for
Arlington Wherewithal (until he caught Arlington
running a puppy farm and got him arrested!)

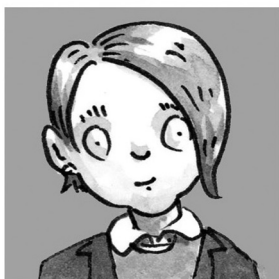
This is Arlington's wife,
Jazzaminta, and her dog, Camilla:



This is Walker's best friend, Anje, and her dog, Boss. This is her dad, Mr Bonus, who runs the village shop.



Here are the local police, Detective Inspector Triggs, Constable Krish Malik, and police dog Raffi.



And who are the people spying on everyone with their dog, Bolt? You'll have to read to find out...



‘Walker!’ Dad called upstairs from the front door. ‘It’s the police! They want to talk to you!’

Walker felt his stomach lurch, as if he was racing downhill on a rollercoaster. The police! What did they want? Warily, he descended the stairs into the hall.

‘This is Constable Malik,’ said Dad, looking concerned. ‘He wants a word with you.’

The police officer’s silhouette blocked the doorway. His protective vest bristled with camera and radio equipment. Walker’s eyes were drawn to the handcuffs on his belt. Was he going to be arrested? What had he done wrong?

‘Call me Krish.’ The police officer smiled. ‘And this is Raffi.’ Krish tugged a leash by his side. A German shepherd sidled out from behind him.

Deciding that Dad was not a threat, Raffi turned his attention to Walker, locking his wary, police-dog eyes on the boy. It took him only a moment to realise that Walker was different. Raffi’s ear’s pricked up, his head tilted to one side – questioning.

Walker gave him a tiny nod, too small for the adults to notice.

He dropped to his knees and offered his hands for Raffi to smell, before burying them in the dog's thick, furry neck.

'He's gorgeous!' Walker said, stroking Raffi's long, soft, pointed ears. Raffi thumped his tail on the mat and made whimpering noises, before rolling over to have his tummy scratched.



‘A fine police dog you are!’ Krish laughed. ‘I’ve never seen anybody make him do that before.’

‘Walker has a bit of a way with dogs,’ Dad said.

Krish nodded. ‘So it would appear.’

As Walker rose to his feet, Raffi leaned against him.

‘Have I done something wrong?’ Walker asked.

‘Goodness, no!’ Krish chuckled. ‘I’ve come with good news. We’ve found your phone.’

Walker’s mind raced back to the day he’d lost it: when he’d discovered a horrible puppy farm in the grounds of Foxley Manor. He’d only just started his dog-walking business and he’d been walking Stella, Jenny Little’s spaniel, and Thor and Loki, Arlington Wherewithal’s two pointers.

Deep in the woods, they’d found the illegal puppy farm Arlington Wherewithal, the millionaire owner of Foxley Manor, had been running in secret.

Walker had been filming all the evidence on his phone when Wherewithal’s creepy gamekeeper, Osmo, had caught him snooping around. The phone had fallen from his pocket as he and the dogs had run helter-skelter through the woods to escape. It had been very scary, but it was worth it.

The puppies had been rescued and Wherewithal sent to jail.

Walker realised that Krish was talking to him.

‘D.I. Triggs would like you to come to the police station to pick up your phone.’ Krish handed Walker a card. ‘Here’s her number. You can call ahead to arrange the best time.’

Walker turned the card over. A message was written in neat handwriting on the back.



*I have some questions I think you may
be able to help me answer.*

What did that mean? Walker wondered. Had his secret been found out?





At the same time, at Foxley Manor, Jazzaminta Wherewithal dumped her shopping bag and a pink straw basket on the huge kitchen table. She slumped into a chair and sighed for the umpteenth time that day.

The pink basket rustled. A miniature Yorkshire terrier jumped out of it, trotted across the table, tilted its head and looked at her mistress in that impossibly cute way that only little dogs with pink ribbons in their hair can.

Her mistress was so sad these days, Camilla thought. Everything had changed.

Jazzaminta swept the little dog off the table and hugged her tightly. 'At least I still have you, Camilla!' she said, kissing the bow on the top of Camilla's soft, silky head.

Wearily, Jazzaminta got to her feet and filled Camilla's bowl. Thankfully, they had a lifetime's supply of Arlington's Precious Princess Pouches, in both gravy and jelly flavours stacked in the cellar. Arlington, her jailbird husband, owned a dog-food company, so at least feeding Camilla was not a problem.



But everything else was. How could Arlington have been so stupid or so cruel? How could she not have known that he and Osmo had been running a puppy farm just a short walk from where she was sitting now? What else didn't she know about her husband?

She'd been to visit Arlington in prison that afternoon. She'd hardly recognised him. He was no longer the funny, handsome man she'd married. He was different – angry and bitter.

He'd left her rattling around their huge house alone. Mrs Stryke, her housekeeper, had disappeared when Osmo ran away. There was hardly any money left in her bank account. She was tired, confused and angry.

Jazzaminta had no one left, except Camilla, her horse, Apollo, and the guard dogs, Thor and Loki, out in the stable yard. They were Arlington's dogs. She tried not to forget them, but she felt so wretched that she sometimes did.

She took a cup of tea into the sitting room and collapsed onto the huge, over-stuffed sofa.

Camilla followed, jumped up and licked her face, breathing Precious Princess Pouch breath all over her, then nestled down on her lap. She was only little, but she would do anything to try and help her mistress get back to being her old, happy self.





Stella heard the gate click. She ran to the sofa and leapt onto the windowsill. Walker was here! The boy gave her a wave as he ran up the path.

Stella jumped down, spun round three times on the carpet, picked up her lead in the hall, and skidded across the shiny kitchen floor. She sat up like a good dog should, with the lead ready in her mouth, waiting for Walker to open the back door.



‘You just love that boy, don’t you, Stella?’ Jenny Little chuckled, as she broke an egg into a bowl.

Walker’s mother was allergic to dog hair, so he wasn’t allowed a dog of his own. Jenny Little was getting old and couldn’t walk very far. So now, every day after school, Walker came to Jenny’s house to take Stella out for some exercise in Foxley Fields.

‘I’m baking a Victoria sponge cake,’ Jenny said. ‘There’ll be a slice ready for you when you get back.’

Jenny’s cakes were awesome. She won the best cake prize at the village show every year. Not only did



Walker get cake, he also got paid for running about and having fun with Stella. Walker loved Stella so much he would have happily paid for the privilege!

At the bottom of Jenny's beautiful garden, a gate took them through a strip of woods, before opening out into Foxley Fields. This was their special place. They could stop pretending once they were through the gate.

Walker had a secret: something that was too difficult to explain; something no one would believe, anyway. Walker could talk to dogs, and dogs could talk to him!

Stella had been the first dog to recognise his special talent and speak to him, right here in Foxley Fields.

'I've got to go to the police station,' said Walker.

Stella looked surprised. 'Have you done something wrong? They're not going to take you away, are they?'

'I don't think so.' Walker furrowed his eyebrows. 'They found my phone. Remember I lost it when we found the puppy farm? I don't know why they can't just give it back. A detective says she wants to ask me some questions. We're going to the police station when Dad gets back from work.'

‘I really thought we were going to get caught that day!’ Stella looked anxious as she remembered those poor puppies. She and Walker had rescued them, with the help of Thor and Loki and the neighbourhood dogs.

‘I miss Thor and Loki,’ she said. ‘They were such fun!’

‘I miss them too,’ Walker said, wistfully. ‘I hope they’re all right.’

‘Maybe we could sneak up and...?’

‘Not a good idea. Mrs Wherewithal probably wouldn’t be pleased to see us,’ Walker said. ‘But it would be nice to see them again.’

Walker fitted a tennis ball into a throwing stick and launched it high across Foxley Fields. Stella leapt into action, racing up the hill after it. She never took her eyes off the ball and snatched it out of the air after one bounce.

‘Well caught!’ Walker called. He watched her trot back with the ball. A huge feeling of love swelled up inside him. Stella was more than a dog – she was his best friend. He could tell her anything and she would understand.





Nearby, in the grounds of Foxley Manor, shadows skulked through the woods. A startled wren exploded out of the undergrowth; its ear-piercing alarm call incredibly loud for such a small bird.

A Jack Russell terrier growled.

‘Shush!’

The dog obeyed its master, but stayed alert, every muscle tense, looking for trouble, itching for a fight.

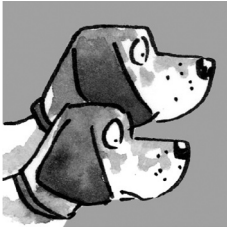
The man wore camouflage clothes, like a hunter. No one could see him, hidden in the brambles. Like a birdwatcher scanning the landscape for a rare species, he stared through a pair of binoculars. But he wasn’t looking for birds.

The dog growled again, low and eager. It had caught sight of another dog. A silly little dog with a pink bow on its head. And there were the other two, in their fancy kennel. Gun dogs! They thought they were so special – so high and mighty!

‘There she is!’ the man muttered under his breath. ‘Looks like she’s all alone too!’

Quietly, the man and his dog slipped away

through the undergrowth to the lane where their van was parked.



‘She’s coming,’ Camilla yapped, running excitedly back and forth in the stable yard.

Thor and Loki paced up and down in their kennel, straining to see Jazzaminta as she emerged from the back door of Foxley Manor. They were hungry!

The supply of Arlington’s Chumpkin Chunks in the tack room had run out, so Jazzaminta had brought a couple of packs of Arlington’s Precious Princess Pouches with her.

Amidst all the riding equipment in the tack room – saddles, reins and halters – she found Thor and Loki’s bowls and emptied out the pouches. She shoved the bowls into their kennel and went off to feed and water Apollo, her handsome grey gelding.

Thor and Loki stared at their bowls.

‘What is this?’ Thor was indignant. Tiny pellets of something that looked like meat floated in puddles of clear, straw-coloured jelly at the bottom of their bowls.

‘They look like tadpoles!’ Loki hesitated. ‘What is it?’

Thor and Loki had been Arlington Wherewithal’s pride and joy. But with Arlington in jail, and Osmo vanished, they were looking thin and unloved.



Camilla poked her nose through the chain-link wall of the kennel.

‘They’re Arlington’s Precious Princess Pouches,’ she explained. ‘They’re delicious!’

‘But we’re not princesses!’ Thor growled. ‘We need proper food! And we need to run around and get some exercise. We’re going stir crazy in here!’

‘Just try them,’ Camilla sighed.

Loki sniffed his bowl and gave a tentative lick. ‘It tastes alright!’ he reassured his brother.

Jazzaminta returned, carrying a net full of hay, as Thor and Loki wolfed down their food in one gulp. She sighed. She knew she wasn’t caring for the animals properly. Maybe she’d take them all out for a run tomorrow – if she didn’t feel too tired.

‘What are we going to do?’ she wailed.

‘If only Walker was here. He’d sort things out for us,’ Loki mused.

Thor nodded in silent agreement. Camilla didn’t know Walker but, from what Thor and Loki had told her, she thought that maybe the boy could help them. Perhaps he was the only one who could?

