

JUSTINE McKEEN

WALK the TALK



Sigmund Brouwer
illustrated by **Dave Whamond**



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ORCA BOOK PUBLISHERS

Savannah—this one is especially for you.

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Library and Archives Canada Cataloguing in Publication

Brouwer, Sigmund, 1959-
Justine McKeen, walk the talk [electronic resource] / Sigmund Brouwer ;
illustrated by Dave Whamond.

(Orca echoes)
Electronic monograph in PDF format.
Issued also in print format.
ISBN 978-1-55469-930-8

I. Whamond, Dave II. Title. III. Series: Orca echoes (Online)
P8553.868467J884 2012 J6813.54 C2011-907544-X

First published in the United States, 2012
Library of Congress Control Number: 2011942591

Summary: Justine has plans to start a walking school bus at her school to help create a greener environment, but not everyone trusts her ideas.

Orca Book Publishers gratefully acknowledges the support for its publishing programs provided by the following agencies: the Government of Canada through the Canada Book Fund and the Canada Council for the Arts, and the Province of British Columbia through the BC Arts Council and the Book Publishing Tax Credit.



Orca Book Publishers is dedicated to preserving the environment and has printed this book on paper certified by the Forest Stewardship Council®.

Cover artwork and interior illustrations by Dave Whamond
Author photo by Reba Baskett

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Victoria, BC Canada
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ORCA BOOK PUBLISHERS
PO Box 468
Custer, WA USA
98240-0468

www.orcabook.com
Printed and bound in Canada.



Chapter Seven

Justine's first stop for a parent volunteer was at the home of Sydney Martin, a girl in her class.

Sydney's house was down the street from Justine's. It had a fenced yard and a gate. Justine opened the gate and saw Sydney's little brother Adam sitting on the grass with a cat in his arms.

"Hey, Adam," Justine said.

"Hey, Justine," Adam said. "Can you hold Snuggles for me?"

Justine sat beside Adam. "Sure. I like cats."

"Thank you." Adam gave the cat to Justine.

Snuggles began to purr in Justine's arms. Adam lifted the cat's tail.

“What are you doing?” Justine asked.

“Snuggles is chapped,” Adam said. “Just like how my mom’s lips are dry.”

Adam held the cat’s tail high. He took a tube of lip balm and rubbed it on the cat’s behind.

“Oh!” Justine said. “I don’t know if that’s a good idea.”

“I do it all the time,” Adam said. “Snuggles likes it.”

The door to the house opened. “There you are, Adam. I’ve been looking everywhere for you,” said Mrs. Martin. She walked down the steps.

Justine handed the cat to Adam and stood.

“Hello, Mrs. Martin,” Justine said. “Did you get the information about a walking school bus? I wanted to save paper, so I emailed it to you. I am looking for parent helpers. It will be good for the planet.”

“I can’t remember,” Mrs. Martin said. “I am very busy.” Mrs. Martin looked at Adam. “That’s where my lip balm went. Give it back, please.”

Adam stood and handed Mrs. Martin the lip balm.

“What is a walking school bus?” Mrs. Martin asked Justine. She took the lid off the lip balm. Then she raised it to her lips.

“Don’t do that!” Justine said.

Too late. Mrs. Martin smeared the lip balm across her lips.

“The lip balm,” Justine said. “Adam just used it on Snuggles.”

“Ew,” Mrs. Martin said. “He put it on Snuggles’s mouth?”

“No,” Justine said. “The other end.”

“What!” Mrs. Martin said.

“Under Snuggles’s tail,” Adam said proudly. “Where it is all dry. Snuggles likes it.”

Mrs. Martin wiped her lips with the back of her hand. She spat and spat and spat. When she was finished, her face was very red.

Mrs. Martin glared at Justine. “I saw you holding Snuggles. You helped Adam do that!”



“No,” Justine said. “I didn’t—”

“I know all about you, Miss Queen of Green. I suppose you think helping little boys put lip balm on a cat’s behind is good for the planet too?”

“No. I—”

“You are a weird girl,” said Mrs. Martin. “Please go away and don’t come back.”