



Hello My Friends,

Today is the day! A story made up while telling bedtime stories to my kids in 1997, [A Night in Lacey Manor](#), is published today. One of you will be the winner of a free copy! All you have to do is read the first chapter that is included in this newsletter, and let me know if you like it. That's it. Your name will be entered into a drawing to win a signed copy of the book.



## What Happens Next?

*A write your own ending story.*



### Chasing Leprechauns

The tall grass in the back yard makes it hard to find her toys and the squirrels are almost invisible. But Jazzy watches the grass jiggle and she pounces.

“Gotcha!”

“Ach! Let me go, you big, goofy dog!”

Jazzy didn't let go. She stared at the tiny little man. She'd never seen a human this small before. He smelled like cookies. “Ruff, who are you?”

“My name is Shawn O'Leary and I've lost my pot of gold. Let me go and I'll share it with you.”

Jazzy tilted her head. “What would I do with a pot of gold?”

“You might buy a new ball, or...” Shawn saw the drool in Jazzy's jaw, “or you might buy some treats.”

Her tail wagged at the mention of treats. “Oh boy, okay. I'll let you go.”

As soon as Jazzy took her paws off him, Shawn O'Leary jumped into the air and over the fence. Two days later while hunting for more squirrels in the tall grass, Jazzy accidentally pounced on Shawn O'Leary, again. “Oh, It's you. What false promises are you going to give me today?”

“Miss Jazzy, my apologies for leaving in such a hurry last time. I heard my...” Shawn paused a moment then continued, “I heard my son calling my name. I thought he was in trouble and I had to go. Please let me go again, and I will share my pot of gold.”

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What do you think? Will Jazzy let him go again? Will Shawn O'Leary make good on his promises? If he does share the gold, what will Jazzy buy?

## A Night in Lacey Manor

### Chapter 1

The week before Halloween, when pumpkins lined the sidewalks, Todd made up his sneaky plan. Somehow, he had to get Louise to the old, empty, and creepy Lacey Manor.

He found her in her usual place in the library, with her elbows on the table and her chin resting on her hands as she read a book.

Todd crouched behind a bookshelf. All you could see was the top of his hair sticking out above the stacks. He snuck up behind her, lightly touched the back of her neck and whispered, "Boo!"

Louise's arms flopped onto the table. Books scattered to the floor. "Agh!" The scream came out of her mouth and she quickly slapped her hand in front of her mouth to keep from making more noise.

But it was too late. The librarian put her finger to her lips. Her whispered, "Quiet please," sounded like a hissing snake.

Louise nodded and said, "Sorry," then turned to Todd. She pointed her finger at him and whispered, "What did you do that for?"

"C'mon, tell me what are you going to be?"

"For what?"

"You know, for Halloween?"

"I'm not telling."

"I am going to dress like a ghost and go to the third floor of Lacey Manor, light a few candles, and scare everyone in the neighborhood!"

"No, you won't!"

"I am, too, but I need your help!"

"Nope!" her voice squeaked. "Not doing it."

"But I sort of bet that you would."

"I don't know why you did that, but I will not change my mind."

"But you promised, a pinky-promise even, that you'd always have my back."

"What will you lose if you don't go?"

"My signed baseball." Todd took her hand and begged, "Please, don't let me lose it! You promised that if I needed it, you'd help me. I need you now."

Louise looked at the ceiling and rolled her eyes. "Why did I ever do that? Okay, fine, I'll go with you, but on one condition."

Todd waited.

"We get in and get out. No playing around. I don't like that house. It's haunted."

Todd shook his head. "Nope. If I want to win, we have to go all the way to the top. That's what the dare is."

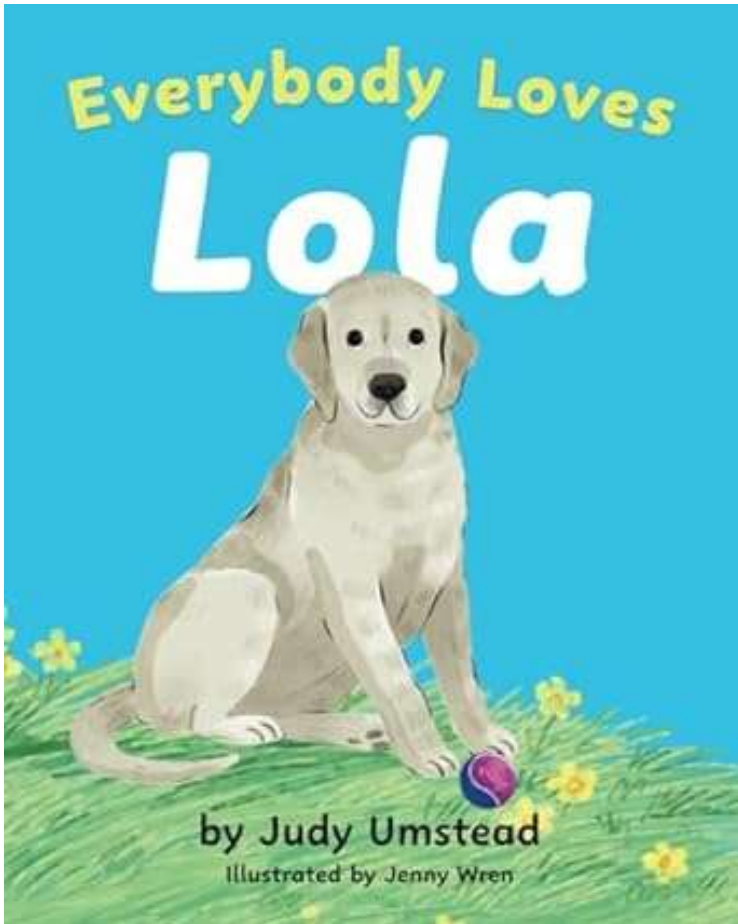
"Urgh! Why do you do this to me? Okay, We'll go to the attic and then leave right away."

"Terrific! I'll stop by your house and we'll walk there together." Todd rubbed his hands together like they were cold. "I can't wait to win this bet. You're the best friend ever, Louise!" Todd clapped her on her back and then skipped out of the library.

Louise picked her books up off the floor and then tried to read. Images of ghosts and goblins danced her brain. She couldn't focus on the words. She sighed. "Why did I just agree to do that?"

# Guest Author! Judy Umstead

<https://www.judyumsteadauthor.com/>

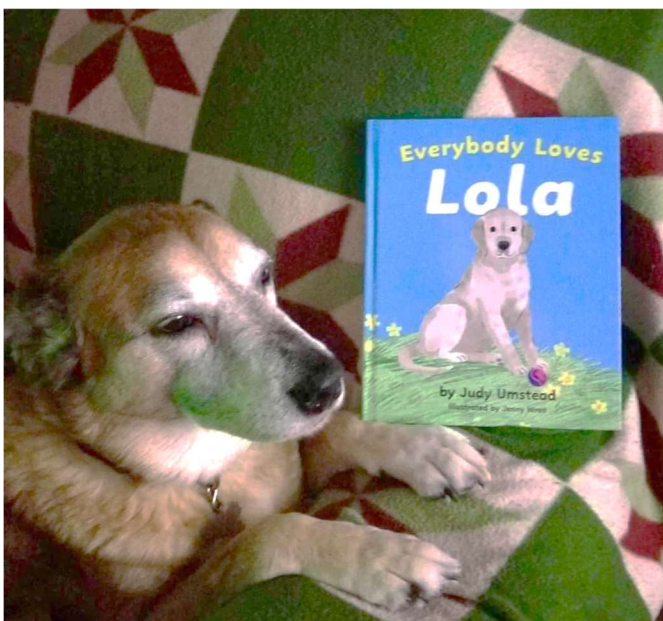


Judy's remarkable journey is intertwined with the heartwarming tale of Lola, a once mischievous puppy she rescued and transformed into a comfort dog. With a lifelong dedication to animals, Judy's 20-year career as a Connecticut Animal Control Officer reflects her compassion and commitment. In 2015, she was honored as Connecticut's Animal Control Officer of the Year.

Judy's love and patience transformed Lola into a certified comfort dog. Together, they embark on uplifting missions, visiting schools, senior centers, libraries, police stations, and more.

Lola's presence brings joy and comfort to all she encounters, a testament to Judy's enduring dedication to making a positive impact through the unwavering bond between people and their animal companions.

When Judy was faced with a cancer diagnosis last year, it ignited a spark within her to revisit the dream of writing a children's book—a dream that has now blossomed into a heartwarming reality.



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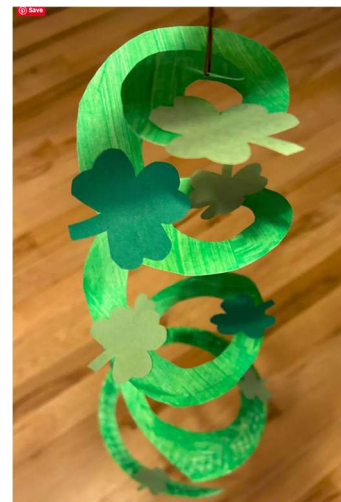
**Crafts that you can make just by looking at the picture!  
(But I included the link for you too!)**



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<https://www.thebestideasforkids.com/leprechaun-handprint/>



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**Fun Facts About Saint Patrick's Day**

- It was named the "Friendliest Day of the Year" by the Guinness Book of World Records.
- Legend has it that St. Patrick stood on a hill in [Ireland](#) and banished all the snakes from the island.
- The fountain in front of the White House is sometimes dyed green in honor of the day.
- Other names for the holiday include the Feast of St. Patrick, St. Paddy's Day, and St. Patty's Day.
- In 1991 March was proclaimed Irish-American Heritage Month in the United States.
- Around 150,000 people participate in the New York City parade.
- The streets of downtown Rolla, Missouri are painted green for the day.
- According to the 2003 census, there are 34 million Irish-Americans. Nineteen [presidents of the United States](#) claim to have some Irish heritage.

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**Reviews!**

Please take a moment and review one of my books. Click the link below, find the book you read, and leave a review. You do not have to purchase the book to leave a review. Just mention how you read it. Maybe it was from the library or it was a gift. Thank you.

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of gold!**

