

The background of the cover is a soft, painterly illustration of a boy with brown hair, wearing a blue and white striped shirt and light blue shorts, sitting in a grassy yard. He is petting a small, scruffy dog with grey and white fur. In the background, there is a house with a brown roof and a window, a tree, and a swing set. The overall tone is warm and gentle.

A YARD FOR JOHN

ELEANOR CLYMER



THE GOOD AND THE BEAUTIFUL LIBRARY

A YARD FOR JOHN

"I wish I had some mud," said John.

"Mud!" said his mother, staring at him.

"Yes," said John. "I like to dig in mud. And I wish I had a swing. I would like to swing and swing all day."

His father and mother looked at each other, and then his father said, "Do you know what he needs? He needs a backyard."

When John Taylor and his parents move from their apartment in the big city to a house in the suburbs, the adventure has just begun. With a big backyard and woods to explore, he quickly finds that there is a whole exciting world to discover with his new friend, Jim. As the boys search for answers to the mystery that they uncover, they learn that treasured friendships can be found in the most unexpected of places.



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The title 'A YARD FOR JOHN' is presented within a white, cloud-like shape with a grey drop shadow. 'A' is in a small, dark grey font. 'YARD' is in a large, blue, rounded font. 'FOR' is in a smaller, dark grey font. 'JOHN' is in a large, green, rounded font. Three green paw prints are positioned above the word 'FOR'.

A YARD FOR
JOHN

by
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Chapter 1

John Lives in the City

John and his father and mother lived in a big apartment house in the city. They lived on the fifteenth floor, and from their windows they could see far away over the rooftops of many other houses. In one direction they could see the river, with boats on it, and if they looked the other way, they could see the park, where John went to play.

Every morning, after his father had gone to work, John said to his mother, “Now, let’s go to the park.” It was too far for him to go by himself. But his mother couldn’t go right away. She always had a lot of work to do first. She had to clean up the house, and get the dinner started, and then she had to get dressed up in her going-out clothes. It took a long time, and John had to wait.

Of course, he helped—he dried the dishes, and emptied the waste-paper baskets, and tidied his room. And at last his mother was ready to go out. John took his dump truck and his shovel, and they went down in the elevator.

When they got to the park, John looked around for some mud to dig, to fill his truck. But there wasn't any mud. There was grass, and a lot of gravel, and there was a sandbox, which was full of babies. The park gardener didn't like boys to dig up the grass, and John couldn't get at the sand because the babies were in the way.

So John went and sat on the bench beside his mother, who was knitting a sweater. "I don't know what to dooooo!" he said in a very discontented voice.

His mother stopped knitting and looked all around. "Goodness," she said, "can't you find anything to do in this whole park? Go and have a swing."

John went and found a swing and swung



himself for a while. But then he had to let another boy have a turn. He got off the swing and walked around for a while until he found his friend David. David was a boy he sometimes met in the park. They took turns on David's tricycle, but then David's mother had to go home, so of course David had to go, too.

"Now what can I doooooo?" said John, sitting down beside his mother again.

"I don't know, dear," said his mother. "Don't you see anybody you know?"

"No," said John. "Only a lot of babies."

Sometimes John did meet people he knew, but on this day there wasn't anybody. It was late spring, and some of the children had gone away to the country, and others were in school.

"Next fall you'll be old enough to go to school," said his mother. "Then you'll have plenty of people to play with."

"I wish I could go now," said John.

"Well, it's too late in the spring to start now,"

said his mother.

“Let’s go see if we can find anybody in some other part of the park,” said John.

But now it was time to go home to dinner, so they walked back to their apartment house and went up in the elevator again. When they got to their apartment, John went to the window and looked out. There was the river and the park, and there were all the rooftops of the city. And far, far down in the street, there were people and automobiles, looking as tiny as the people and cars in his toy village because they were so far away.

In the evening, when John’s father had come home and they were having supper, John said, “Do you know what I wish?”

“What do you wish?” said his father.

“I wish I had some mud,” said John.

“Mud!” said his mother, staring at him.

“Yes,” said John. “I like to dig in mud. And I wish I had a swing. I would like to swing and swing all day.”





