

**HUNTER  
MORAN  
HANGS  
OUT**



ALSO BY PATRICIA REILLY GIFF

*Hunter Moran Saves  
the Universe*



# HUNTER MORAN HANGS OUT

Patricia Reilly Giff



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Summary: When neighbor Sarah Yulefski tells Zack and Hunter that she overheard someone talking about plans to kidnap someone in their town, the twins use the last four days of summer vacation to investigate.

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*To James Matthew Giff,  
(and nobody else)  
with love*



***DOOMSDAY ...  
MINUS FOUR***



*And right now we're trying to escape...*



# Chapter 1

...from Linny, who's screaming like a hyena. "Get back here, you two."

Just because she's the oldest, she thinks she's the alpha dog of the family.

"Arf, arf," I bark, pulling open the back door.

Linny's best friend, Becca, is standing right there. "How come Linny wants you?" she asks.

We don't bother to answer. Becca's the nosiest kid in the world, with a beak to match.

Mary bangs spoons on her high chair and gives us a toothless smile. "Bye-bye."

I wave at her and speed outside. Zack speeds with me.

"You left those disgusting things all over the kitchen," Linny goes on.

"Can't even leave one worm around," Zack mutters.

It's not quite one worm. We actually have a farm with about forty of them in the bottom drawer of the cabinet.

Terrific creatures. Highly intelligent. We're teaching

them to climb the table legs. Give them a boost and they're right up there, heading for the tabletop.

Unfortunately, two or three have wandered away. We're on a mission to find replacements.

"Hunter!" Linny screams. "Zack!"

Any minute she'll alert poor Mom. Without thinking, we take a shortcut across the front lawn, our feet sinking in a little.

We stop at the edge, realizing what we've done. It's a moment of horror. Our footprints zigzag across Pop's newly seeded lawn; it's as if something has chewed up the whole thing. Somehow we'll have to deal with it before Pop gets home from work.

In the living room window, our dog, Fred, with the skunk breath and nasty disposition, is doing somersaults on the back of the couch and yowling at the top of his lungs. They probably can hear him in Fiji.

Zack and I hit the sidewalk and keep going. It's a crucial getaway. We trot past the school; our classroom is on the second floor. That's Doomsday staring us right in the face. Four more days and we're prisoners again! Summer is disappearing fast.

Upstairs, Sister Appolonia is pasting moldy leaves on the window. In a flash, it comes to me that we're supposed to bring in last June's report cards. Impossible.

We buried Zack's with its horrific music mark in a pile

of garbage. Last time I saw mine, it was clamped between Fred's jaws. We told Mom the school is going green, saving paper, doing away with report cards. We'll tell Sister that Mom framed the cards over the living room couch.

Sister Appolonia spots us and sticks out her head. "How about a little help up here?"

"Sheesh," I mumble, but we maintain our speed. At the same time, I point up at a cloud. Let her think we've become deaf over the summer and we've taken up sky-watching.

We're about to cross Murdock Avenue when a head pops out from behind the telephone pole.

What next?

"It's Sarah Yulefski," Zack whispers. "Head for the woods."

He's right. There she is, Sarah Yulefski with her braces festooned with Rice Chex, and her knotty hair down to her waist. Sarah Yulefski, who told the whole class I'm in love with her.

I shudder, thinking about it.

"Stop right there, Hunter." She sounds like Alpha Dog Linny.

We dive out onto Murdock Avenue, but a truck barrels toward us, horn blaring, gravel spitting. We jump back, barely escaping with our lives.

"One of these days you're going to kill yourselves," Yulefski says.

If it happened four days later, it wouldn't be so bad. School would be closed on the first day for our funeral. We'd be heroes.

"Listen, guys," Yulefski says. "I have news."

Sure. She's playing in another concert. She has a new brown outfit for school that matches her teeth.

"Sorry," Zack says. "We can't stop. We're on our way to..."

"...help Sister Appolonia," I put in.

Sarah Yulefski screws up her face. "You're going the wrong way."

I sigh. "All right, what news?"

She leans closer. "It's really bad. Terrible, as a matter of fact."

"I'm bracing myself," I say, and Zack tries not to laugh.

She takes her time, running her tongue over her teeth, dislodging a Rice Chex, twirling around to see if anyone's listening.

As if anyone in the whole world would be interested in what Sarah Yulefski has to say.

Wrong.

She leans forward. Whispers one word.

Zack's eyes are as big as pizzas and I can hardly swallow.