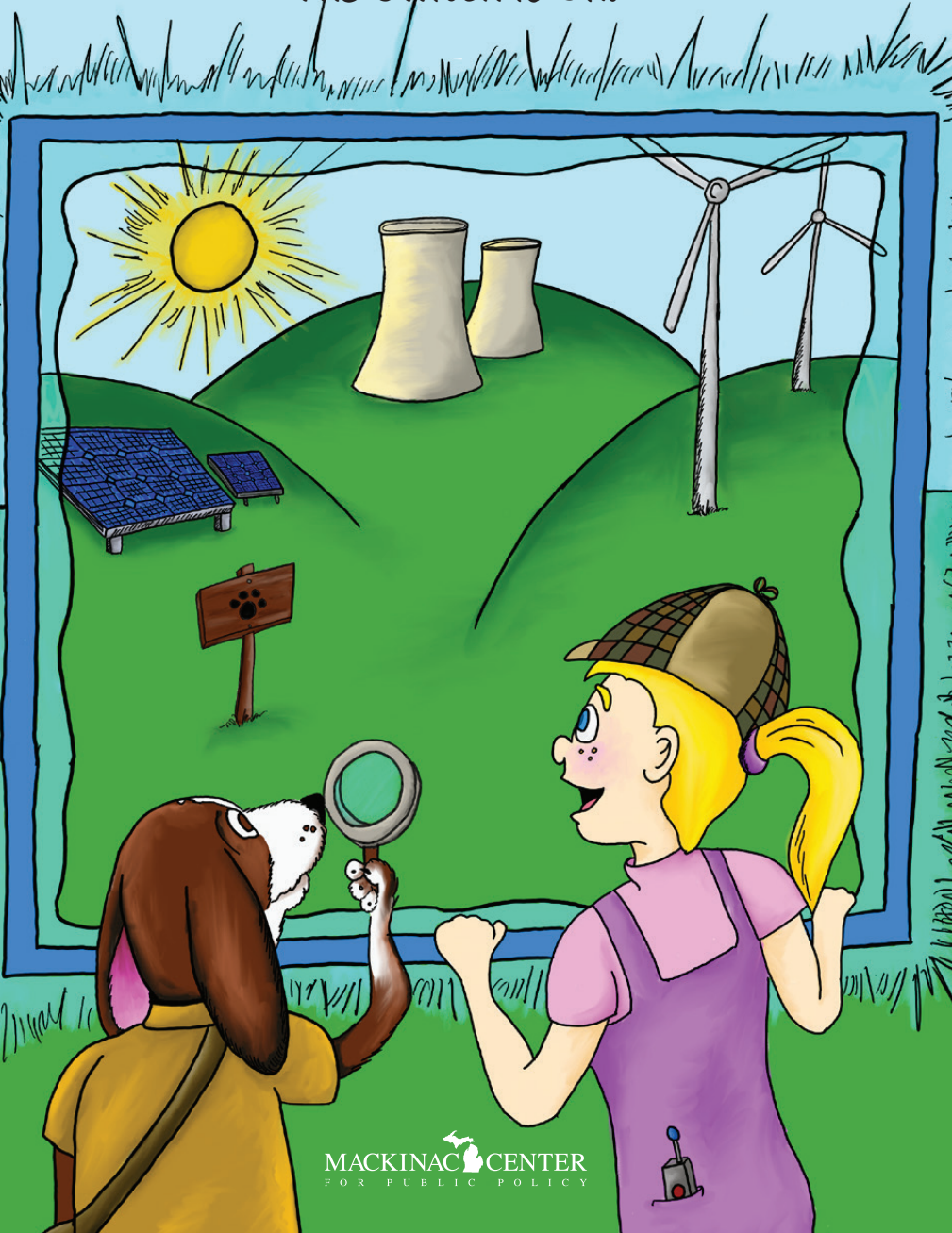


The Adventures of Penny & Paws

"The Switch is On!"



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The Adventures of Penny & Paws

"The Switch is On!"

“Hi Penny,” Paws said. “Are you having a good morning?”

“I was...until I went online,” Penny replied, looking up from her phone. “The world as we know it is coming to an end!”

Paws grinned. “Watching climate apocalypse videos again, huh? That always gets your temperature up!”

Penny sighed. “But there’s going to be a heat wave! We’re talking melted ice cream and sunburns galore! All of it is being caused by...”

“...fossil fuels,” Paws interrupted.

“How did you know?” Penny asked in awe.

“I wasn’t born yesterday,” Paws noted.

“I know that,” the girl laughed. “We picked you up at the pet store three years ago when you were a pup.”

Paws chuckled. “That’s right,” he remembered fondly. “But I’ve read enough bumper stickers while chasing cars around the block to know there’s probably more to this story.”



“Well,” Penny said, “fossil fuels are made from dinosaurs, isn’t that gross!?”

“Dinosaurs are a thing of the past,” Paws laughed. “I don’t think they feel anything anymore.”

“That’s what I read online,” said Penny. “Fossil fuels should be a thing of the past, and we must save the planet by switching to green energy.”

Paws sniffed the air for a moment. “I don’t know, Penny,” he began. “Something smells fishy around here...”

The little girl held up a brown paper bag. “That would be the tuna fish sandwich mom packed for me.”

“No, no,” Paws sniffed. “What I smell is coming from your phone. Mind if I take a look?”

“As long as you don’t bury it again,” Penny said, handing the dog her device. “I was lucky I left the ringer on!”

“Sorry about that,” the dog mumbled. “Force of habit.”



Paws reached into his pocket, pulled out a magnifying glass, and held it over the phone. Penny watched in fascination as her dog examined the screen.

“Aha,” Paws stated. “I have discovered the fine print!”

“Great detective work, Paws! Nothing escapes you!” Penny claimed. “Well, except the neighbor’s cat.”

“Mr. Purrsnickety thinks he’s so clever,” Paws growled softly before regaining his composure.

“What does the fine print say?” the girl asked, looking over his shoulder.

“Legalese, mumbo-jumbo, and a dash of misdirection,” the dog sighed. “It’s hard to explain, so I’m thinking about just showing you.”

Penny could hardly contain her excitement. “You mean the Magic Window!?”

The dog pulled out a small device with a red button on it. “Yes,” he smiled. “I knew you’d like that. It’s time for some critical thinking!”

“Can I press the button?” she cheered. “I love this part!”



Paws handed the device to Penny, and she hit the button.

The crackling sound of electricity filled the air, then a whoosh, and finally a pop. Floating one foot above the ground in mid-air was the Magic Window. It was nearly as tall as Penny and surrounded by a blue glow.

“This is the coolest invention you ever made, Paws,” Penny said as they walked up to the window. “It’s so much better than the clue-detecting leash. That didn’t lead anywhere!”

“Hey, throw me a bone here,” Paws said, paws on hips. “I thought it was a great....”

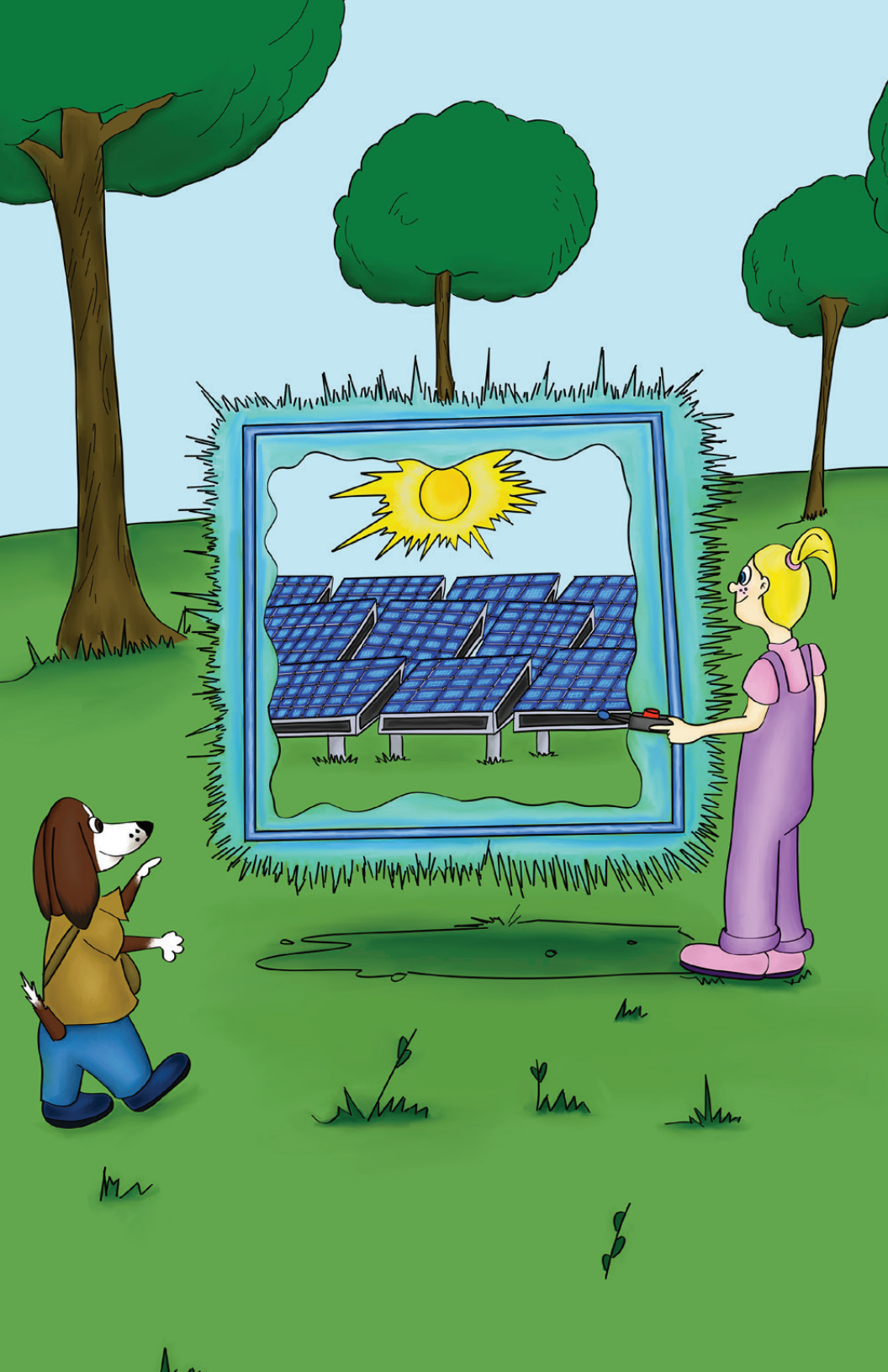
“Whoa!” Penny said. “Look at all those solar panels!”

Paws wagged his tail. “Yeah, there sure are a lot of them!”

“Let’s hop through and investigate,” Penny suggested.

“Don’t forget your hat!” Paws said, pulling out a detective cap for her. “We’ve got to find some answers!”

On the other side of the Magic Window, Penny and Paws stood before a massive field of shiny solar panels. “These are so cool,” Paws explained. “They take rays from the sun and use them to create electricity.”



“I knew that,” Penny replied. “We’ll need a lot more of these if we want to save the planet from overheating!”

“I wouldn’t bet the doghouse on it,” Paws said. “Solar power isn’t quite the solution you may have been told.”

“What do you mean?” Penny asked. “It’s power from the sun; you can’t get more down to earth than that.”

“But remember what we say...” said Paws.

“There ain’t no such thing as a free lunch,” Penny sighed. “Which I don’t understand, because mom says not to say ‘ain’t’ and always gives me my lunches for free.”

“It’s just another way of saying there are costs to everything,” Paws said. “We call these trade-offs. So let’s think: Did you know that to make a solar farm like this one, they need to dig up thousands of tons of rare earth metals? These resources need to be mined, refined, processed and then manufactured. It’s quite an undertaking!”

“But what about all the energy they create?” Penny replied. “Isn’t it worth it?”

“Only sometimes, when the sun is shining just right,” responded Paws. “The amount of energy produced by all those panels is quite low compared to using a power plant.”



“Hmm,” Penny began. “So the solution would be to make more! Problem solved!”

“I hate to rain on your parade, Penny,” the dog said. “But a cloudy day can put a damper on a solar farm, whether it has 100 panels or 1,000! Remember, the sun doesn’t always shine, so there are times when solar power provides next to nothing. Solar power needs to be backed up by other fuels to keep the lights on (and phones charged).”

“I never thought of that!” Penny replied, looking sad.

Then a sudden smile crossed her face, and she pulled out a colorful hand windmill toy from her pocket. “But I do know something that is clean and will work on cloudy days!”

Paws sighed. “I figured you’d scratch at that door sooner or later. So, hit that button, and we’ll take a look!”

Once again, Penny pressed the button on the device, and the Magic Window appeared in front of them.

“There they are, Paws! Look at the windmills!” Penny cheered. “These will help save the planet!”

“Actually,” Paws chuckled. “They are wind turbines. They don’t really mill anything.”



“I stand corrected,” Penny stood at attention, saluting her canine pal.

“Well...” Paws started to say with a sigh. “As with solar panels, our ability to turn wind into power has improved. But wind turbines have some downsides, too.”

“Like lack of wind?” Penny guessed.

“Excellent deduction, Detective Penny!” Paws stated. “And, like solar panels, they’re made with lots of other expensive materials. Not to mention that they don’t do much for the view.”

“I guess this is more complicated than I thought,” Penny said.

“Let’s find out more. It’s time to sniff out the truth!” Paws replied while pointing to his nose.

With that said, they climbed through the window once again.

“Wow,” Penny exclaimed as she climbed out into the field of wind turbines. “There must be thousands of these here! These are awesome! People must be so happy that these are here!”



“Not me,” said an eagle who came limping by. “Trying to navigate through these things gives me a headache!”

The eagle looked miserable. He had a wing in a sling and an ice pack tied to his head. “Does anyone have an aspirin?”

Paws reached into his briefcase and handed the ailing bird a tablet. “Is it a common thing for birds to get hurt around these things?” the dog asked.

“Sadly, yes,” the eagle explained. “Sometimes they don’t turn. That’s why we think it’s safe to fly around them. Other times they go so fast we can’t see the blades!”

“They don’t always turn?” Penny asked, looking over at Paws. “Then how can we cool our home in the summer, and more importantly, charge our phones?”

“There’s a lot of hot air blowing around these things, alright,” Paws stated. “It can take 1,000 of these turbines to equal the power of a single power plant. It’s just too bad they can’t run on online jibber jabber!”



“So then, what are we supposed to do?” Penny and the eagle said at the same time.

Paws smiled and turned to the girl. “Go ahead and press the button again. I want to show you something.”

The girl wasted no time; pressing buttons was her favorite thing to do, especially when beating her older brothers at video games.

With a quick click, the Magic Window was before them once again. The building on the other side of the window looked scary to Penny. “Oh, no!” Penny exclaimed. “Is that a nuclear power plant?! Should we hide in a shelter or something?”

“Don’t worry, it’s safe,” Paws said, waving her and their eagle friend closer. “And, believe it or not, this can help save the planet too!”

“I think you may be right,” the eagle said. “I see some of my cousins flocking by it now. I’m going to run over there and say hi!”

“I don’t get it,” Penny said, watching the eagle limp away. “I’ve heard nuclear power is dangerous.”



“Nuclear power is safe, it produces more reliable energy, and it is better for the environment,” Paws explained.

Penny responded. “That’s mind-blowing!”

“You see, whenever wind turbine blades or solar panels are damaged, they are hauled off by trucks and dumped in areas where they stay around forever,” said Paws.

“Nuclear power plants work almost all of the time and are not dependent on the weather. While there is some waste, it is small compared to the turbine blade and solar panel dumps, which grow larger by the day.”

Penny crossed her arms and scrunched her nose. Paws knew she was coming up with a rebuttal. “Did you know that when bad guys fall into nuclear waste, they turn into monsters!”

Paws chuckled. “That’s only in the movies, Penny. Nuclear power is one of the cheapest and safest forms of making the electricity we rely on 24 hours a day.”

“Things sure are starting to clear up,” Penny said, spinning in a circle before lowering herself to the ground. “Now I know that there are downsides to solar and wind and an upside to nuclear.”

Paws sat down beside her. “All types of energy sources are worth looking into. We need reliable and affordable energy that doesn’t ruin the environment. Solar and wind can be a part of that, but we shouldn’t put all of our eggs in one basket.”



“I suppose you’re right, Paws,” the girl sighed. “I just want to do what’s right and protect nature.”

“Me, too,” Paws agreed. “We all want to keep our environment clean. But we need reliable energy to power hospitals, grocery stores and schools. Could you imagine sweating in a hot classroom during an energy outage?”

Penny got a big smile on her face and immediately started typing on her phone. “What are you doing?” Paws asked.

“Maybe we can convince my school to use only solar panels,” Penny grinned. “Then I could have cloudy days off as well as snow days!”



Paws Joke Kennel

Q: What happened when the dog went to the flea circus?

A: He stole the show!

Q: Why do dogs make terrible dance partners?

A: They've got two left feet!

Q: Why didn't the dog want to play baseball?

A: He was a boxer.

Q: What kind of dog doesn't bark?

A: A hush puppy.

Q: What do dogs have that other animals don't?

A: Puppies.

Q: What do you get when you cross a dog with a computer?

A: A laptop with lots of bytes!

Q: Why did the dog do so well in school?

A: He was the teacher's pet!

Q: What do you get when you cross a dog with a phone?

A: A Golden Receiver.

Q: Why must you be careful if it starts to rain cats and dogs?

A: You might step in a poodle!



Penny & Paws Word Search

R I N P G H L V P O W E R V S
P H H G R R E L I A B L E G O
P A C A I F I S S I O N D W L
T M N S D D G R G S T E A M A
U E L E C T R I C I T Y M U R
R B V P L A N T C L E A N T Z
B W H Y D R O E L E C T R I C
I P H O T O V O L T A I C L N
N R E N V I R O N M E N T I A
E K C A K R G A M F C B N T T
A G C E N E R G Y A O K H Y U
I Q H R A H P P W D A S D Z R
W I N D D C D I A Z L A S R E
E M K K N U C L E A R X S I Z
G D N G E N E R A T O R I E L

clean

coal

dam

electricity

energy

environment

fusion

fossil

gas

generator

grid

hydroelectric

nature

nuclear

panel

photovoltaic

plant

power

reliable

solar

steam

turbine

utility

wind



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