



## It's NOT Just A Dog!

*Pam Torres*

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School's out for the summer and straight-talking Madison and her friend Cooper have big plans for the summer: working at the kennel, training service dogs and creating a dog-walking business—besides writing her dog-blog. Her stepdad has agreed to make Lilly, Madison's foster puppy, a permanent member of the Morgan family, and Madison wants to make the adoption special.

When an injured dog is abandoned, Madison's determined to discover the truth about the orphaned dog. To crack this crime she'll have to sneak around some shady characters. It'll be tricky since her dad isn't happy about her animal detective activities. Her promise not to get into trouble won't be easy. Madison convinces Cooper to strike out on their own, but finds herself locked in a shed with no way out and Lilly is dognapped. She regrets her crime-fighting obsession and realizes her snooping has endangered everyone she cares about. Cooper rallies an unlikely group of rescuers to bust her out.

In the end Madison learns she can depend on her friends and her stepfather. And when it comes to people and dogs, relationships are never simple, and a dog is never—JUST a dog!

## **It's NOT Just A Dog! Details**

Date : Published April 2014 by Legacy Media Press (first published 2014)

ISBN : 9780615858326

Author : Pam Torres

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## From Reader Review It's NOT Just A Dog! for online ebook

### Courtney Whisenant says

This book picks up right where the first book left off. I really liked the story but the book wasn't as well written as the first book. There were several places in the book when something would happen and it wouldn't make sense--like it had already happened or the person was discovering something they already knew. It was strange. I think those inconsistencies distracted from the overall reading experience. The content was a little harder to read as well--dog fighting vs. general animal cruelty. As an animal lover it's always hard to read about animal cruelty but dog fighting was hard core. I loved the Native American twist in this book and loved Uncle William

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### Alex (not a dude) Baugh says

Blurb: School's out for the summer and straight-talking Madison and her friend Cooper have big plans for the summer: working at the kennel, training service dogs and creating a dog-walking business—besides writing her dog-blog. Her step dad has agreed to make Lilly, Madison's foster puppy, a permanent member of the Morgan family, and Madison wants to make the adoption special.

When an injured dog is abandoned, Madison's determined to discover the truth about the orphaned dog. To crack this crime she'll have to sneak around some shady characters. It'll be tricky since her dad isn't happy about her animal detective activities. Her promise not to get into trouble won't be easy. Madison convinces Cooper to strike out on their own, but Lilly is dognapped and Madison finds herself locked in a shed with no way out. She regrets her crime-fighting obsession and realizes her snooping has endangered everyone she cares about. Cooper rallies an unlikely group of rescuers to bust her out.

In the end Madison learns she can depend on her friends and her stepfather. And when it comes to people and dogs, relationships are never simple, and a dog is never—JUST a dog!

If you are a dog lover and are looking for a good book about dogs, look no further than Pam Torres' new novel *It's NOT Just a Dog!*, the second look in the Project Madison series. It is summer vacation for Madison Morgan and her friend Cooper. Madison's best friend Paige has moved away and she is really dreading the moment when new people move into her house. But luckily, the new neighbors have a son her age who also happens to be Native American.

Madison also gets to know Ben, an elderly man who appears to be neglecting Millie, his listless greyhound dog. But once Madison realizes Ben isn't abusing Millie, she finds she has made a new friend.

But now Madison needs to find out who has abused the dog that was left at the dog shelter run by her friend Netta, Cooper's guardian. She suspects that her smirky, bullying schoolmate Donald may be mixed up in whatever happened to the dog, but sometimes things just aren't what they seem.

Running the risk of clashing with some pretty rough characters who don't seem to care about the dogs they use, Madison and her friends could be getting in over their heads. Can a couple of kids solve the case and rescue the abused dogs?

There are a lot of things to like about this book, beginning with Madison, a very passionate dog lover (and I would venture to guess that she has that in common with the author). I like the way things unfolded in the novel, just as they would day by day when on summer vacation, things like setting up the dog walking business, helping out at Netta's Second Chance Dog Shelter, learning how to train service dogs at the Red Rock Training Facility, keeping up with her blog about dogs.

I also liked the fact that a Native American character is introduced into the series and the way it ties into explaining Madison's ability to feel an animal's pains and understand their feelings.

Although this is a 2nd book in a series, It's NOT Just a Dog! works very well as a stand alone novel. Middle grade readers, especially those who already care about animals, are sure to enjoy this dog mystery story and find a new favorite character in Madison. And if you liked reading It's NOT Just a Dog!, you can find a Project Madison short story by Pam Torres [HERE](#)

The review was originally posted at Randomly Reading

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### **Taylor Clark says**

I really enjoyed reading this book! I am in love with dogs so this book really interested me.

The book is about this girl Madison, who has this superpower where she can see a dog's past or present. And she sets off on an adventure to try and take down an underground dogfighting ring.

She finds herself caught in the middle when she gets trapped in an abandoned shed, with her dog, Lily, being kidnapped. Will she ever recover Lily? You'll just have to read " It's NOT Just A Dog" by Pam Torres.

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### **Pam Torres says**

It's hard to believe that it's finally here. I've enjoyed writing it and hope you enjoy Madison as a character. While it is written for middle grade readers I've had others read and enjoy it. I hope you do! Please contact me and tell me what you think. The one thing I hope everyone takes away is that we have a responsibility to the animals around us who don't have a voice. In addition, Project Madison is dedicated to the education and support for animal rescue and care. 10% of proceeds are donated to the ASPCA and other organizations that aid this important work.

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### **Susan says**

Madison and Cooper have plans for their summer. They are going to have a dog walking business, will have help at the dog rescue center and train service dogs. Madison and Cooper will be doing much more than that when one of the rescue dogs die. Madison discovers a new friend when people move into her former girlfriend's home. His name is Jonah. Madison realized that her gift of being able to know what the dogs think and feel and at times it is difficult for her to experience. When she visits Jonah at his home, she meets Jonah's uncle who is connected to his heritage (Native American). He tells Jonah that her spirit is strong.

This book teaches a very important lesson about animal cruelty. I enjoyed the introduction of Native American culture. The author writes the characters in such a way, that they are believable. This is a terrific book that can be read and enjoyed by all.

Disclaimer: I received a digital galley of this book free from the publisher from NetGalley. I was not obliged to write a favourable review, or even any review at all. The opinions expressed are strictly my own.

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### **Kathy says**

I reviewed the first book in Pam's series *Madison Morgan When Dogs Blog* back in October 2012 (click on the link to read the review) so when Pam asked me to join this blog tour I jumped at the chance. I don't get a chance to review very many children's books so it's nice to be able to add some different content and I believe in what Pam is teaching through her stories. Animals are a big part of our family life here in our house, and it sounds corny to some but my dog American Cocker Spaniel Austin aka Aussi is my best friend, my partner in crime, my writing buddy and constant companion. Madison has her dog walking business, her job at Netta's shelter and a mystery to unravel, all the while Madison is at that strange age caught between being a kid and being a teenager. Madison is learning that there is no such thing as a simple explanation and even the simplest thing could actually be quite complicated. I don't want to ruin the story by adding a lot of details in here, there is actually a lot going on in this book, the characters are interesting and engaging; and the story flows very well I think author Pam Torres did a great job and leaves you with a lot of information without being in your face or preachy about it. I really liked this book I think there are a lot of great messages for kids in this book along with a great story and would recommend it for the 10-14 age group. #readthisbook

I gave this book a 4 out of 5 star rating.

I was gifted a reviewer's copy of this book in exchange for an unbiased review as part of the *It's NOT just a dog* blog tour

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### **Bames says**

I received a copy of the book courtesy of NetGalley in exchange for my unbiased and honest review.

There are times when I feel the need to do some light reading -- which for me seems to be reading books meant for really young readers. I also love dogs and this book put those two things together so I decided to give this book a read.

The story revolves around a young girl named Madison who loves dogs. Aside from being a fan of canines, Madison also has a very special gift -- she is able to feel dogs' feelings and read their thoughts. Because she has a very close affinity for canines, she convinces her friend Cooper to have a special party on her birthday -- a puppy adoption party.

I enjoyed reading this book because it is light as well as very enjoyable reading. Readers will be able to learn a lot about dogs which is pretty useful even when they may not have canine pets. A great thing about the book is that Madison is not portrayed as some unbelievable super-person. She is independent, smart, and also

very able to understand when she needs help. That in itself is a refreshing change.

A good read for young readers and grown-up ones, too.

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### **Stacie says**

It's NOT Just a Dog is the journey of a young girl named Madison who seeks to discover the true purpose of the remarkable gift she possesses.

It's summertime and Madison and her friend Cooper have started a dog walking business. They also spend a lot of time helping Netta at her animal shelter and have taken on the task of training puppies to become service dogs. Things seem to be going well until Madison notices someone is moving into her friend's old house. Madison wastes no time in meeting her new neighbors. She soon learns that they are Native American and their Uncle William can sense her gift. Now she's even more curious, but that may have to wait as injured dogs continue to surface and Cooper and Madison suspect dog fighting. They vow to find out whose behind the animal cruelty, but they have to be careful or they will endanger the lives of everyone around them.

It's NOT Just a Dog! is a well written, face-paced story that captivates readers from beginning to end. Animal cruelty is a hard topic to cover with children because of the horrific nature of it, but it's important they become aware of the signs. Pam Torres does an excellent job of discussing this difficult topic and teaches children the importance of seeking help from an adult. The mystery and intrigue add to the story making it an all around good read.

I highly recommend picking up a copy.

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### **Chris Meads says**

This is the second book in the series and continues with Madison and Cooper. It's now summer and they are training a couple of new therapy dogs, starting a new business of walking dogs and working at the kennel with Netta.

Someone new has moved into Paige's house now that she has moved away. Jonah, a Native American becomes friends with Madison and Cooper doesn't like it.

When a mysterious hurt dog comes to the kennel, Madison starts questioning who could hurt a dog like that. Connor, Jonah and she with the aid of BBD, Donald, she does some sleuthing and finds out someone is having dog fights. Then Lilly ends up missing. Will the kids save her and find the culprits?

This is another great story. I really like the characters and the animals. A nice bonus is the addition of the Native Americans and the spirit animals. Pam did a great job showing the reader what dog fighting is all about. I can't wait for what she comes up with next.

I won this book at a goodreads giveaway.

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### **Carol MacInnis says**

I won this book from a contest on Goodreads.

Madison Morgan is a young girl, not yet in her teens who has been brought up by her stepdad since her mother passed away when Madison was only 3 years old. Madison inherited a unique ability from her mother where she hears and actually feels dogs pain and hunger. Her buddy Cooper lives with Madison's mom's best friend who also runs the 'Second Chance Dog Shelter' and she is Cooper's legal guardian. When a large dog was dropped off at the shelter anonymously it was obvious this poor dog had been in a dog fight and Madison could feel the animal's fear and horrific pain from it's injuries before it's last breath. Madison swore to find out who, how and why would someone put this defenseless animal in harm's way. So with Cooper's help and the aide of others, they set out to crack this case in the hopes of saving other dogs' lives.

A terrific story for both young and old who are animal lovers.

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### **Carolyn Injoy says**

It's Not Just a Dog It's NOT Just A Dog! (Project Madison #2)by Pam Torres (Goodreads Author) I received a free e-copy of this book from NetGalley for a fair review.

This is a cute little story about Madison, a teenage girl who helps at a dog kennel, the Second Chance Dog Shelter which is owned by Netta, her mother's best friend. Her mother died from cancer. Her friend Cooper lives with Netta.

After naming her puppy there is a discussion with Cooper. "'At least my mother didn't leave me like an abandoned puppy.' The words fell from my mouth, thick & black, spreading across the room like slimy oil." She & Cooper glared at each other & Netta told them to sweep the barn so hopefully they could be friends again.

Paige, her next door neighbor & friend had moved out. Before she left she'd gotten boy crazy & that created a distance between them. After a month, finally there is a "Sold" sign at the house. She's eager to see who will move in so walks her dog past it while a truck is being unloaded.

Madison has a special gift. She hears dogs thoughts & can 'feel' the emotions of dogs. She also physically feels their injuries. One injured dog was abandoned & hurt so seriously it had to be put down. She is determined to find out who did it.

Also while walking her dogs Lilly & Aura she hears a whine & a single bark. There is a paint can for her to stand on so she can see over the fence. A scrawny, neglected dog is chained without good water or food. A grumpy old man yells it's private property & for her to get away. Things are not always what they seem.

Cooper & Madison go to a dog behavior class. She feels impatient with Aura. They are training the puppies to be service dogs. One of her goals is to put an end to dog fighting & puppy mills.

The next day she meets Charlene & Jonah Johnson, her new neighbors who are Native American. She feels awkward & tongue tied around Jonah & is surprised because she's never felt that way around Cooper.

The characters are well developed & her adventures are described clearly enough they seem real. Their investigation into a dog fighting ring is a potentially dangerous situation. Unfortunately, they did not tell an adult. It is a fast-paced, fun read for pre-teen or teen, or anyone who enjoys an animal story.

The only drawback for me was the use of #hashtags# to express silent feelings. I found it distracting. I still gave it an almost five star rating.

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### **Margo says**

Dog-lovers and kids will love this wholesome, heartstring-tugging book about a young girl named Madison, who has a special gift, an affinity with dogs, and the ability to feel their pain and their feelings, which is believably explained to her by a Native American character in the book. Madison's adventures are sure to appeal to youngsters of all ages, and there are many, different, engaging characters that young readers can empathize with. The dogs each have their own personalities and readers will learn a lot about dogs and their emotions and dog training, as well. Torres's style is lighthearted, with a lovely sense of humor, and the references to internet and social media (her hashtags explaining her feelings were whimsical) will resonate with young readers, as well. There are also some interesting insights on the "noise" that all of these distractions create, resulting in a barrier between humans and animals, which is expressed in a believable fashion by one of the Native American characters. Torres's descriptions are vivid and help put the reader right into the scenes. Once in a while, Madison's voice seemed a bit more adult than her age, but that could have been because she is more mature than the kids around her. Good plot threads include being kind to those less fortunate than you, always a good reminder for middle grade readers, and being aware of others' feelings. Plenty of drama is provided by the dogfighting subplot and the bullying, all current topics of interest to young readers, and the mystery involved in these plot threads was well-described with appropriate tension. If you like middle-grade mysteries and dogs and feel that people can learn a lot about how to live life from dogs, I recommend this book for a fun and entertaining read.

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### **Ian Wood says**

This is the complete review as it appears at my blog dedicated to reading, writing (no 'rithmatic!), movies, & TV. Blog reviews often contain links which are not reproduced here, nor will updates or modifications to the blog review be replicated here. Graphic and children's novels reviewed on the blog will generally have some images from the book's interior, which are not reproduced here.

Note that I don't really do stars. To me a novel is either worth reading or it isn't. I can't rate a novel three-fifths worth reading! The only reason I've relented and started putting stars up there is to credit the good ones, which were being unfairly uncredited. So, all you'll ever see from me is a five-star or a one-star (since no stars isn't a rating, unfortunately).

I rated this novel worthy!

**WARNING! UNHIDDEN SPOILERS! PROCEED AT YOUR OWN RISK!**

Tomorrow! Russ Ryan, author of It's Just a Dog goes paw to paw with with Pam Torres, author of It's NOT Just a Dog!

The first thing I noticed about this novel is how poorly formatted it is for the Kindle; indeed, it's not formatted at all, at least for my rather antiquated model. There are words which run together (which any spell-checker ought to catch), and lines which are broken half-way along. Periodically the author's name appeared, presumably snatched from the page header, but in the Kindle, it was randomly appearing in the text at various places on the screen. Hopefully those issues will not be a problem in the final version of this novel.

For some reason, perhaps to try and connect with the youth generation, the author decided to post hash-tagged comments randomly in the text, as a short-hand indicating the narrator's state of mind, but these were a fail for me, especially in the Kindle where they ran into the rest of the text. They seemed out of place, and much more like a gimmick than an integral part of the story.

Maybe others will like them, but I have to wonder how many people of this age (11) are actually involved in Twitter. I don't use it myself. Twitter is for twits! I liked the take on it in the Doctor Who Episode The Bells of Saint John where the Doctor says, "This whole world is swimming in wi-fi; we're living in a wi-fi soup. Suppose something got inside it? Suppose there was something living in the wi-fi, harvesting human minds; extracting! Imagine that: human souls trapped like flies in the World Wide Web, stuck forever, crying out for help!" whereupon his companion, Clara responds immediately: "Isn't that basically Twitter?". I laughed my patootie off at that one.

But I digress. As usual. You know, if I were to tally-up the number of times I digressed...but I digress again! So, having said all that, and with some reservations about eleven-year-olds becoming involved in directly investigating dangerous men who are training dogs to fight, I actually enjoyed the story rather a lot, and thought that it was a perfectly fine and interesting yarn. There was lots going on, interesting and gripping situations arising, and there was a significant educational content.

The basic story is that of Madison, an 11 year old who lives with her dad and her pet dog Lilly, and who, with her friend Cooper (what's with all this last name as first name stuff?!) is trying to set up their dog-walking "business". Madison works as a volunteer at a pet shelter run by a family friend, which is evidently falling on hard times. In place of a regular birthday party, which Madison really didn't want, she holds a fund-raiser for the shelter, but the collection box (and all the money in it) is stolen. I don't recall reading where that was ever resolved, which is odd. Maybe I missed it.

As the story progresses, we learn more and more about a local dog-fighting ring, where brutal men train-up brutal dogs to fight each other and the men wager a lot of money on outcomes. Madison gets more involved in investigating this than I felt comfortable with, but at least when she gets out of the scrape she was in, she has the smarts to put this into the hands of the law, where it belongs, so while I had a few uncomfortable moments reading this, her heart was in the right place, and she made some smart decisions, which is commendable.

Indeed, there were portions of this novel where Madison seemed a lot older than 11, but the issue isn't whether it's believable and realistic to me, so much as whether it's something an eleven-year-old can read,

enjoy, and learn from, and I think I would have loved this novel at that age. Not only does it offer a fun and thrilling adventure with some unnervingly dangerous situations, it also educates about pet issues: dogs are not to be taken lightly, and are living, feeling beings who need love and care, so I'd give it five stars for that.

In short, I recommend this novel for appropriate age levels (chronological or developmental!)

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### **Kim says**

I received a copy of this book from NetGalley for review- with many thanks.

This was a lovely little book for animal lovers. Madison and Cooper help out at a local animal shelter that is always looking for fund raising ideas.

She and Cooper offer a local dog walking business and when she sees a neglected dog on their journeys they want to investigate- but all isn't what it seems. Alongside this they are investigating a possible dog fighting ring when they discover an abandoned dog in a very poorly state.

They get into some scrapes but it's a nice story to follow. A really charming part of the story was when Madison organised a puppy adoption party as her birthday treat. It is a heartwarming story of some children who choose to spend their free time with animal welfare on their minds.

I can see my daughter enjoying further books in this series.

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### **Erik This Kid Reviews Books says**

I read the first book in the Project Madison Series, "When Dogs Blog". I enjoyed the great message in the book and was happy to see that Ms. Torres wrote a second book. I enjoyed this story very much too. I think that the idea of Madison having a special power of sometimes being able to see into the memory of dogs is a cool thing to write the books around. I love the cover of this book and there are illustrations scattered in the book that are a nice addition. I like Madison's character. She takes matters into her own hands but also realizes when she needs help. She seems like a believable, independent kid. It is also nice that she has a good relationship with her step-dad (her legal guardian because her mom passed away). It's nice to see a step-parent shown in a nice way in a story. There are some not so nice topics in the story – dog fights (like the kind where people make dogs fight), putting shelter dogs to sleep, etc., – but I think Ms. Torres handles the topics well for kids. Personally, it's sad for me to think this stuff goes on. All together Ms. Torres wrote a great story with an even better message – It's NOT Just a Dog! :)

\*NOTE I got a free copy of this book in exchange for an honest review.

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