

THE INFAMOUS RATSO'S

Project Fluffy



Kara LaReau

illustrated by Matt Myers

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GO CRITTERS

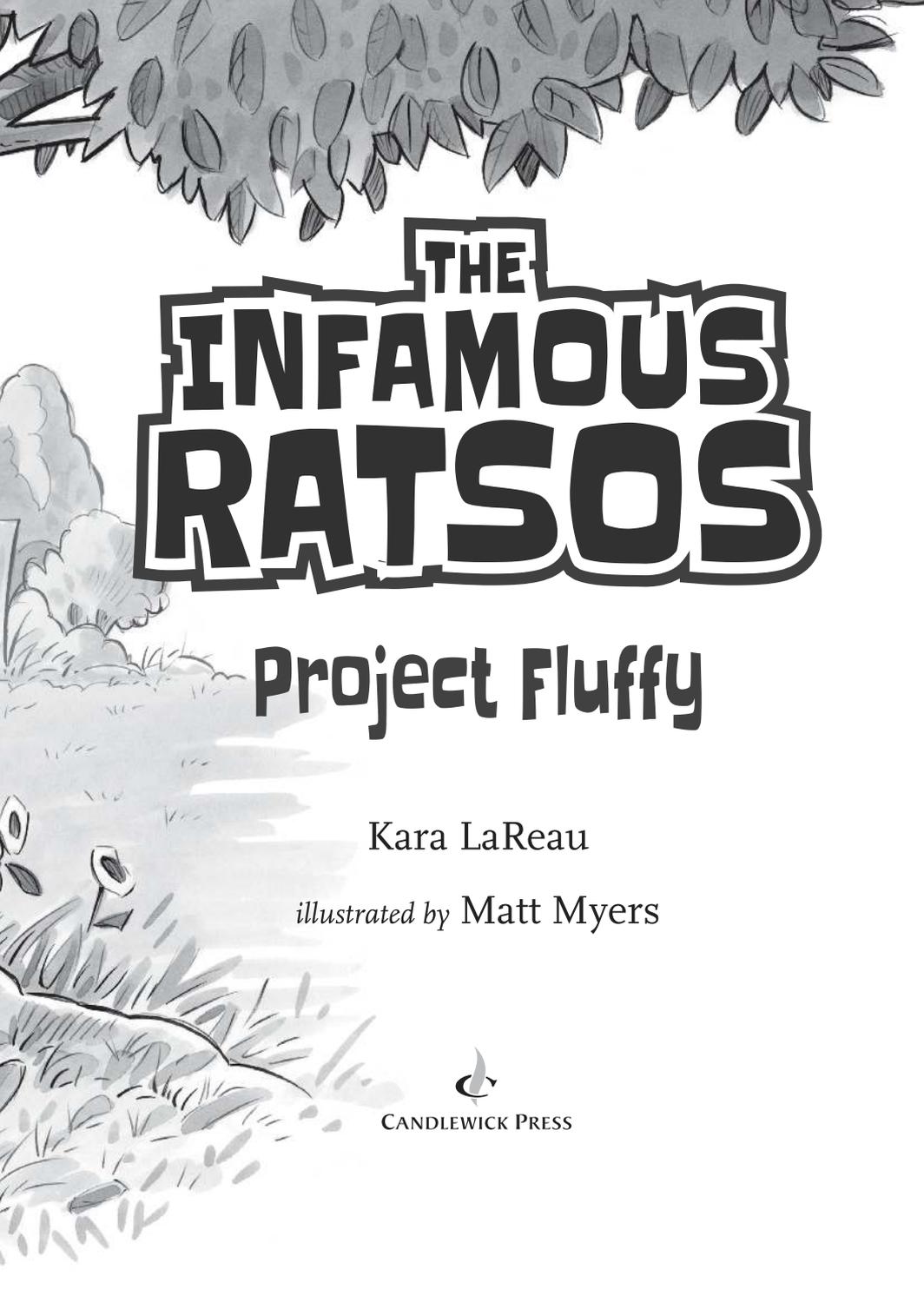
FROM YOUR PALS
AT BEAUMONT



SANDY LOAM'S GARDEN SUPPLIES

- TOPSOIL 5 M3/CK
- GARDENING TOOLS
- STRAWBERRY SEEDS





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For Scott, who is the dreamiest

K. L.

For Darrell, my lifelong and true friend

M. M.





NUTS AND BERRIES ARE GOOD!

NUT-RITION



GROW UP STRONG, LIKE ME!
Max Bear

Studies show
EATING PROMOTES HEALTH



- 1 -

EVERYONE LOVES CHUCK

ATTENTION, STUDENTS!” Principal Otteriguez announces to the lunchroom. “In honor of Poetry Month, Peter Rabbit Elementary will be holding its first annual poetry contest!”

“Poetry?” says Chad Badgerton.

“Bo-ring,” says Ralphie.

“Shh,” says Louie. “I can’t hear what he’s saying.”

“First, second, and third prize will be gift certificates to Clawmart!” Mr. Otteriguez announces. “The contest ends on Thursday after school, and we’ll reveal the winners next Friday!”

“Poetry is so . . . sappy,” says Chad.

“Not all of it. Miss Beavers has been showing us some really funny poems,” says Tiny.

“Mr. Ferretti says that poetry is about *feelings*,” says Chad. “*Blech.*”

“All art is about feelings,”
Millicent informs him.

“And about connecting through
feelings,” Tiny adds. “Love, anger,
joy, sadness . . .”

“Like I said,” says Chad. “*Blech.*”

“Well, I’m going to use *my*
feelings to win that contest. In
fact, I already have a plan,” Louie
says. He looks at Ralphie. “We’ll
write a poem together, and then
we’ll use the first-prize Clawmart
gift certificate to buy ourselves
skateboards!”

“Oh, boy! We’ve been talking about getting skateboards forever,” says Ralphie. “No more walking to school. We can ride in style!”

“Are you gonna eat that?” Chad asks, pointing at Tiny’s brownie.

“Go for it,” says Tiny.

“I love chocolate,” says Chad.

“If you love it so much, why don’t you write a poem about it?” asks Ralphie.

“I don’t love it *that* much,” says Chad through a mouthful of brownie.

“Speaking of love . . .” says Millicent.

She looks over at Chuck Wood in the hot lunch line and bats her eyelashes.

“Isn’t he *dreamy*?”

“I wish I were friends with Chuck,” says Tiny. “Everyone does. He’s the coolest.”



“Don’t you think he’s dreamy, Fluffy?” Millicent asks.

But Fluffy isn’t listening. She’s writing in her green notebook. She’s been writing in it and looking through a stack of library books all through lunch.



“What are you scribbling in that thing?” Millicent asks. “Are you already working on a poem?”

“No, it’s plans for my garden,” Fluffy says.

“You have your own garden?” Millicent asks.

“I have my own plot in the community garden, at the Big City Park,” Fluffy explains. “I want to make sure I have room for all my favorite fruits and vegetables.”

“I do *not* love fruits and vegetables,” says Chad.

“You’re missing out,” says Fluffy.
“You can’t just eat junk food all day.”

“I can try,” Chad says, licking
brownie crumbs off his fingers.

Fluffy’s gardening books fall off
the lunch table. Chuck Wood picks
them up.

“Thank you,” says Fluffy.

“Gardening, huh?” says Chuck.
“My grandma likes to garden.”

“Gardening is not just for
grandmas,” Fluffy informs him.

“OK,” says Chuck. “See you
around.”