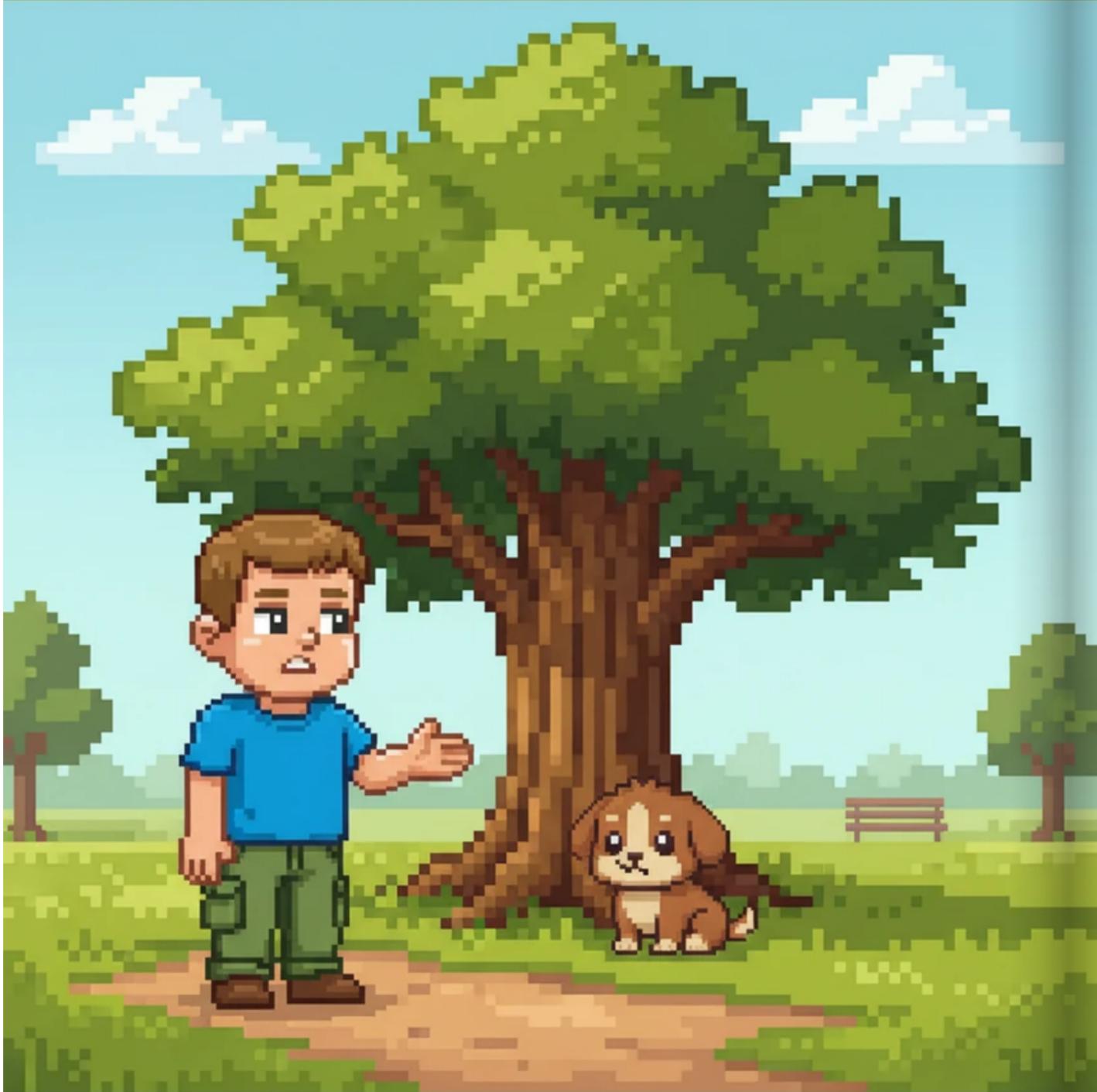


TOM AND THE LOST PUP



Tom and the Lost Puppy

Lodene Slabbert



Tom is playing in the park on a beautiful, sunny day. He sees a small brown puppy sitting all alone under a large oak tree. The puppy looks very worried and does not have a collar around its neck.

**TOM & COCO'S FIRST MEETING**

Tom walks slowly toward the puppy so he does not scare it away. He reaches out his hand and says, 'Hello there, little friend.' The puppy wags its short tail and happily licks Tom's fingers.



Tom looks around the busy park for an owner, but he only sees families having picnics far away. He decides to call the puppy Coco for now. Coco follows Tom closely as he starts to search for clues.



They find a bright, colorful ball near the playground equipment. Tom thinks the ball might belong to Coco's owner because it smells like the puppy. He puts the ball in his pocket and continues his search.



Tom sees a group of older children playing soccer and asks if they lost a dog. They shake their heads no, but one girl points toward the duck pond. Tom thanks them and walks quickly toward the water with Coco.



Near the duck pond, Tom notices a 'Lost Dog' poster taped to a wooden bench. The picture on the poster looks exactly like the puppy he found! It says the owner is looking for a puppy named Coco.



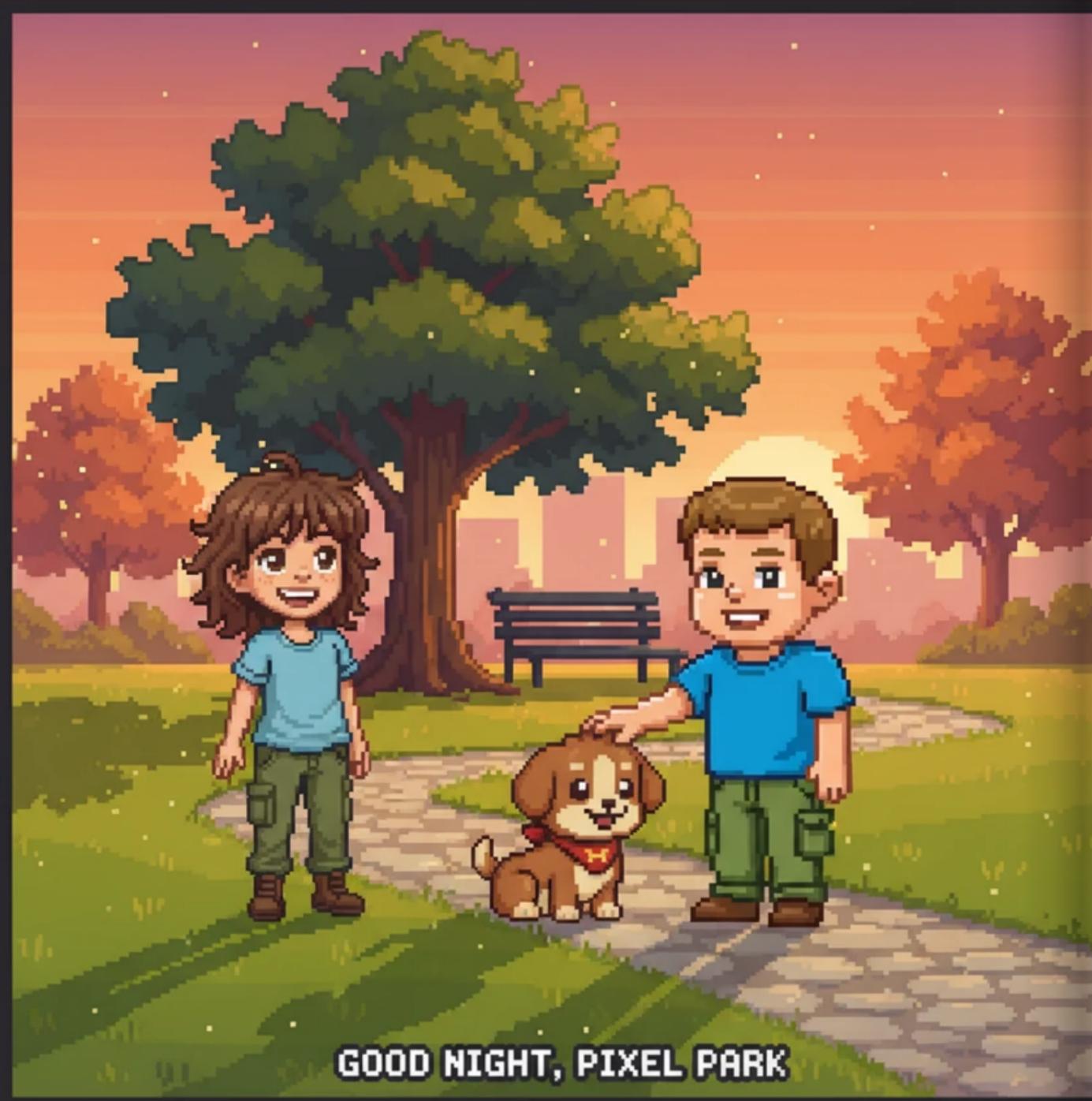
Tom reads the phone number on the poster and asks a friendly gardener for help. The kind gardener lets Tom use his phone to call the worried owner. A girl's voice answers and sounds very excited to hear the news.



A few minutes later, a young girl runs across the green grass toward them. She looks very tired from searching but starts to smile when she sees the puppy. Coco barks happily and jumps right into her arms.



The girl thanks Tom many times for being such a helpful and kind boy. She explains that Coco escaped from her backyard early this morning. Tom feels very proud and happy that he could help his new friend.



GOOD NIGHT, PIXEL PARK

The girl and Coco wave goodbye as they walk home together safely. Tom watches them go, knowing he did the right thing today. It was a wonderful day at the park for everyone involved.