

Ben & Blue

THE CASE OF THE NASTY NOTES

by **Ellen Melissa Cohen**
with illustrations by **Donald Wu**

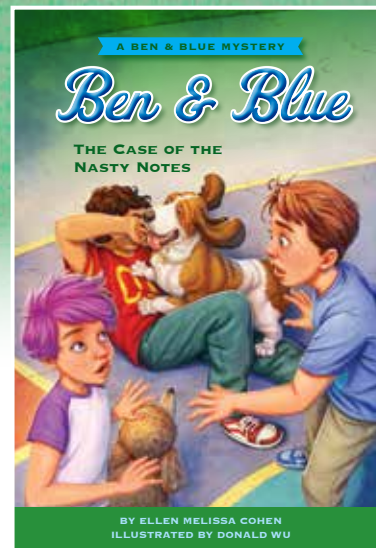
Ben's best friend Cooper is getting nasty notes from an unknown bully. On top of that, her dad is keeping his new girlfriend a secret. It's up to Ben and his Basset Hound, Blue, to help Cooper unravel these mysteries. As they "doggedly" pursue answers, the case takes surprising twists—and what they uncover turns their assumptions upside down.

A story of kindness, love, and inclusion—not to mention a harrowing day at the zoo—this second book in the Ben & Blue Mystery series will resonate deeply with children from LGBTQ+ families and to children who have feelings of low self-esteem hidden deep inside, afraid of what others may think. But isn't that most of us? And couldn't sharing those feelings with someone you trust be the most transformative feeling of all?



About the Author: Ellen Melissa Cohen M.D. is a psychiatrist on faculty at Harvard Medical School, and a board member of the New England Society of Clinical Hypnosis. She graduated Barnard College as a creative writing major before going to medical school. Ellen lives with her husband near Boston, Massachusetts.

FALL 2025



YOUNG READERS FICTION

HC ISBN: 978-1-64371-479-0

208 pages 5.25" x 7.75" Ages 8-12

Hardcover: \$17.99 (List) / \$13.49 (S&L)

E-book editions available

On-Sale Date: October 7, 2025 BISAC:

JUV039140, JUV039230, JUV039060

Marketing

National Publicity and Review National Advertising

Regional Advertising

Author Presentations & Signings

Discussion & Resource Guide

Distributed by

Lerner Publisher Services

800-328-4929



Red Chair Press Books
for Young Readers

PO Box 333

South Egremont, MA 01258

www.redchairpress.com

As if there wasn't enough creepiness, Cooper handed me a piece of paper. Her hair, spiked green and yellow to match our Raptor uniforms, had started to wilt. And her eyes looked as glassy as that dead deer's.

"Another one?" I asked.

She nodded. "I found it in my soccer bag."



26

Chapter 7

Boy was I glad I had Blue to sleep with that night. I had called it. I dreamed about that dead deer with the glassy eyes. Sprawled out on the roof rack of the Trip family car.

Every time I woke up from a nightmare about those big brown eyes staring at me, I scrunched up even closer to Blue. And petted his floppy Basset Hound ears. All three of them. I was too old for a teddy bear. But a kid could never be too old to sleep with his dog.

By the sound of Blue's snuffling and the way he scrunched up against me, I could tell he liked sleeping next to me, too. Maybe I saved *him* from nightmares about *dogsnappers*. Who knows?

When it was finally morning, I was happy to see the sun streaming in my window. To feel Blue nudge me with his cold nose. And greet me with his usual

27

personal information private. Not snooping on someone's secrets unless they wanted to share them. So, though I was tempted, I wasn't going to flip over the ears to see what people had written. I was just hoping that writing down their feelings would help them feel better.

But apparently, Blue had another idea. He hadn't bought into the concept of confidentiality. Or didn't know the meaning of privacy. Because when Cooper and I came back to my room after brushing our teeth, the little ears were scattered all over the floor. And Blue was sitting in the middle of them, wagging his white-tipped Basset Hound tail.

I tried to scoop up the ears, intending to tape them back on the poster. But Blue seemed to shake his head and took my hand gently in his mouth, stopping me.

"He wants you to read them," Cooper said.

Blue lay his head in her lap.

I stared at the little pieces of paper, wondering where my next act would fall on that List of Kid Crimes.

And then I turned over the ears, one by one. And Cooper and I started reading.

170



171

With illustrations by award-winning artist Donald Wu