



READ180™

Stage A

Animal E.R.

JORDAN BROWN



SCHOLASTIC

INTRODUCTION

Newton Veterinary Hospital

Saturday 12:07 A.M.

Dr. Luis Morales looked at the clock over his desk. It was after midnight. Most of the staff had gone home. Only five doctors and a few nurses were still at the N.V.H. That's short for Newton Veterinary Hospital. It's one of the best animal hospitals in the world.

During the day, the N.V.H. buzzes with action. The hallways are filled with animals, and there's always a mix of fur, feathers, beaks, and barks. Over 30 vets work there.

Now, at night, it was very, very quiet. Dr. Morales sipped a can of soda and read a magazine. There was an article about his favorite soccer team, the Green Tigers. Dr. Morales smiled and put his feet on his desk.

WOMP! WOMP! WOMP! The hospital alarm went off.

Dr. Morales thought, "Well, there are four other doctors here tonight. They won't need me. . . ."

A voice over the speaker said, "Dr. Morales! It's an emergency! Dr. Morales, we need you in the operating room. Come to the O.R. now!"

"I guess they *do* need me," Dr. Morales said. He put down his soda, grabbed his white coat, and ran down the hall. When Dr. Morales got to the O.R., he scrubbed his hands and put on rubber gloves. Next, he put a white mask over his mouth.

A cart was wheeled in by two people in light green shirts. They were veterinary technicians. They help vets do their job.

"What's up?" Dr. Morales asked.

One of the technicians pulled back a white sheet on the cart. There was a large dog with curly blond fur. It was bleeding and scared. "He was hit by a car about ten minutes ago," the technician said. "His name is Harpo."

Dr. Morales knew exactly what to do. He lifted up the dog's lip. Its gums were as white as the doctor's coat. Dr. Morales said, "Give him 500 cc's of blood and a shot of P.P.G. We have to operate NOW." Dr. Morales felt his heart pounding. He knew he would have to work quickly. Dr. Morales picked up a very sharp knife called a scalpel. "Let's cut him open," he said.

Then Dr. Morales heard a woman's voice. "Luis, Luis!" the voice shouted. "You'll be late."

"What?" Dr. Morales said. "I have to operate now or this dog will die!"

"Dog? What dog?" the woman said. "Wake up. You're dreaming."

Now he knew whose voice it was—his mother's. He got out of bed and shook his head. He was confused. Then he faced the truth. He wasn't really "Dr. Morales." He was just Luis Morales and he was in seventh grade. It wasn't just after midnight. The clock said 8:30 A.M.

"Aw, man," Luis said. "I can't believe that dream wasn't real!"

"I'm afraid it wasn't," Luis's mother said.

"But I was in the emergency room," Luis said. "I was about to operate on a dog named Harpo." Luis had to laugh.

His mother laughed, too. "Maybe someday, Luis. Maybe when you're older, you'll be a veterinarian. At least you get to watch some real vets today—if you get to the hospital on time. Hurry and get dressed. You don't want to be late."

"Don't worry, Mama. I'll run there," Luis said. He loved to run. If Luis couldn't be a vet when he grew up, then he wanted to run in the Olympics.

Even when he was awake, Luis had big dreams.