

Wesley Dean and the Map That Tickles



Starring

Wesley Dean

DEDICATION

For the incredible

Wesley Dean

*May your imagination always be
bigger than any obstacle ahead,
and your heart more generous
than any treasure ever found.*



Wesley Dean jumped off the old wooden gate and landed with a big SQUELCH in the mud. His sturdy mud-proof boots held firm, and his yellow explorer's vest had every pocket ready for adventure. He pushed his messy hair out of his eyes and looked around with the widest grin you ever saw.

The Farm of Dancing Scarecrows was the most wonderful, wacky place **Wesley Dean** had ever visited. Colorful droplets rained softly from the sky — pink, orange, purple, and green — painting everything they touched in wild swirling patterns. The fence posts were striped like candy canes. The hay bales had polka dots. Even Jappy, **Wesley Dean's** round-bellied beagle, had a swirly blue patch on one floppy ear.

"Wow," said **Wesley Dean**, spinning in a slow circle with his arms out. Jappy sneezed as a yellow droplet landed on his tiny black nose. His long ears flipped up, then flopped right back down. **Wesley Dean** laughed so hard his red bandana slipped down his wrist. This farm was already the silliest, most colorful place in the whole wide world, and the adventure had barely even started.



Wesley Dean reached into his favorite pocket — the one right over his heart — and pulled out the Ticklish Map. It was old and golden and a little crinkled at the corners. But when he unfolded it and held it up, his face dropped. The map showed absolutely nothing. Not a single line. Not one dot. Just a big blank page.

Jappy trotted over and sniffed the map carefully. He let out a low grumble. **Wesley Dean** nodded seriously. "I know, I know. It's being stubborn again," he said. The colorful rain droplets kept falling, and one bright orange drop landed right in the middle of the blank map — and vanished without leaving a mark.

Wesley Dean tilted his head. He flipped the map upside down. Still nothing. He held it up to the swirling sky. Still nothing. But **Wesley Dean** was not worried. Not even a little bit. He knew exactly what a blank Ticklish Map needed. He curled his fingers, took a deep breath, and got ready to do the one thing that always worked. A giggle was already bubbling up inside his chest.



Wesley Dean wiggled his fingers and began to tickle the map right along its edges. At first nothing happened. Then a tiny giggle seemed to come from the paper itself. The map shivered. It shook. It let out a sound like a very small hiccup — and then burst open with a spectacular explosion of glowing lines and arrows and tiny pictures of treasure.

"There it is!" cheered **Wesley Dean**, jumping on the spot. Jappy barked one loud, joyful WOOF and his tail spun like a little helicopter. The map showed a winding path through the dancing scarecrow fields, past a pond that appeared to be full of bouncing rubber frogs, and all the way to a giant old barn with a star on its roof.

The colorful rain kept falling all around them, turning the path ahead into a sparkling ribbon of color. **Wesley Dean** tucked the Ticklish Map safely into his vest pocket, tied his red bandana tight for good luck, and pointed straight ahead. "The treasure is in that barn, Jappy. Let's go find it before anyone else does!" Jappy sneezed in agreement and tripped over his own ear, then bounced right back up with his tail wagging hard.



Wesley Dean and Jappy ran along the swirly colored path. On each side of them, the famous Dancing Scarecrows of the farm wiggled and jiggled in the soft breeze. Their patchy arms waved up and down, and their painted faces seemed to smile as **Wesley Dean** ran past. One scarecrow with a purple hat bowed so low its straw hat fell off.

Wesley Dean stopped and picked up the hat. He placed it gently back on the scarecrow's head. "There you go," he said kindly. The scarecrow's arms wiggled in what looked very much like a thank-you wave. Jappy woofed and wagged. **Wesley Dean** grinned and ran on.

The colorful rain had stopped for a moment, but the whole farm still gleamed with fresh swirls of every shade. Purple puddles reflected the sky. Orange-striped rocks lined the path. **Wesley Dean** noticed that every scarecrow seemed to point its stuffed hand in the same direction — toward the old barn with the star on the roof. Even the farm itself seemed to be helping him find the way. He checked the Ticklish Map quickly. The glowing arrow matched perfectly. **Wesley Dean** was right on track.



Suddenly Jappy stopped dead still. His ears went flat. His little nose twitched rapidly and he let out a long, low grumble. **Wesley Dean** froze right behind him. He had learned to always listen to that grumble. He ducked behind a big polka-dotted hay bale and peeked out carefully.

There, crouching behind a purple fence post, was a figure in a dark jumpsuit covered in useless pockets. On his head sat a shiny black helmet so large it wobbled every time he breathed. He had a thin curly mustache he kept stroking proudly. **Wesley Dean** watched as the figure pulled out a crumpled piece of paper and squinted at it. It was a map — but a boring, ordinary one with no glowing lines at all.

"I, the MAGNIFICENT Black Helmet, shall have that treasure!" the figure announced to absolutely nobody. His voice was so loud a nearby scarecrow spun all the way around in surprise. **Wesley Dean** pressed closer to the hay bale. This was Black Helmet — the trickiest treasure thief on any farm in the world. **Wesley Dean** whispered to Jappy, "We have to get to that barn before he does." Jappy gave one silent, determined tail wag.



Wesley Dean needed a plan — and fast. He pulled out the Ticklish Map again and gave it a tiny tickle on the corner. The map giggled and a new dotted line appeared, showing a shortcut through the bouncing rubber frog pond. **Wesley Dean** looked at the pond. The rubber frogs were definitely bouncing. Some of them were bouncing very high indeed.

"We can go around the pond and beat him to the barn," whispered **Wesley Dean** to Jappy. But then he remembered the Crazy World Rule of this farm: on the Farm of Dancing Scarecrows, you could only cross a shortcut if you hopped on one foot. **Wesley Dean** looked at his mud-proof boots, looked at the hopping rubber frogs, and took a deep breath.

Jappy tilted his head. **Wesley Dean** shrugged cheerfully and said, "Well, hopping on one foot it is then!" He tucked the map safely away and began hopping along the edge of the pond on his left foot. The rubber frogs seemed to cheer, bouncing even higher as he passed. Jappy, not wanting to be left out, hopped along beside him on three legs, which made him wobble so comically that **Wesley Dean** nearly lost his balance laughing.



Wesley Dean made it across the shortcut just in time. He could hear Black Helmet's wobbling footsteps crunching along the longer path behind him. **Wesley Dean** reached the big old barn and pushed the heavy wooden door open with both hands. It creaked and groaned and swung wide. Inside, golden light spilled out from somewhere deep in the rafters.

Jappy bounded in first, nose working furiously. He ran in a circle — then another circle — then a third. Then he stopped, sneezed three times, and woofed very quietly at a particular corner where old wooden crates were stacked. **Wesley Dean** ran over and began moving the crates carefully, one at a time. His fingers tingled with excitement.

Behind the crates was a little wooden box with a carved star on the lid — just like the star on the barn roof. **Wesley Dean** knelt down and reached for it carefully. But just as his fingers touched the box, the colorful rain started again outside, sending patterns of light dancing through the gaps in the barn walls. Pink and green and purple light swirled across the walls and ceiling. The whole barn looked like the inside of a rainbow. **Wesley Dean** gasped. It was the most beautiful thing he had ever seen.



Wesley Dean lifted the lid of the little star box slowly. Inside, nestled in soft golden straw, was a glittering silver whistle on a long blue ribbon. It sparkled even in the rainbow-colored light. **Wesley Dean** picked it up gently and held it close to his eyes. Tiny stars were carved all around it. It was the most beautiful whistle he had ever seen.

But before **Wesley Dean** could even try it, a dramatic booming voice rang through the barn. "HA! I have found it at last! The GREAT Black Helmet has located the treasure!" Black Helmet swept into the barn, his enormous helmet wobbling dangerously. He pointed at **Wesley Dean** and declared, "That whistle is MINE — I found this barn completely on my own without any help at all!"

The moment Black Helmet said that enormous lie, something extraordinary happened. His giant oversized bag — the one he used for carrying stolen things — suddenly shrank to the size of a sandwich. He looked down at it, blinked, and looked back up, pretending nothing had happened. **Wesley Dean** blinked too. He had heard about how lies worked on this strange and wonderful farm. He held the silver whistle carefully behind his back and thought very hard about what to do next.



Wesley Dean thought as fast as he could. Black Helmet was moving closer, mustache quivering, tiny bag dangling from one finger. Jappy pressed close to **Wesley Dean's** leg, grumbling softly. Then — Jappy's nose twitched. His tail started wagging. Not just wagging — it was spinning like a whirlwind.

"Jappy, what is it?" whispered **Wesley Dean**. Jappy bounded toward the far wall of the barn and began barking rapidly at a small round door near the floor that **Wesley Dean** had not noticed before. It was just big enough for a boy and a beagle to crawl through. The Ticklish Map in **Wesley Dean's** pocket began to giggle all on its own.

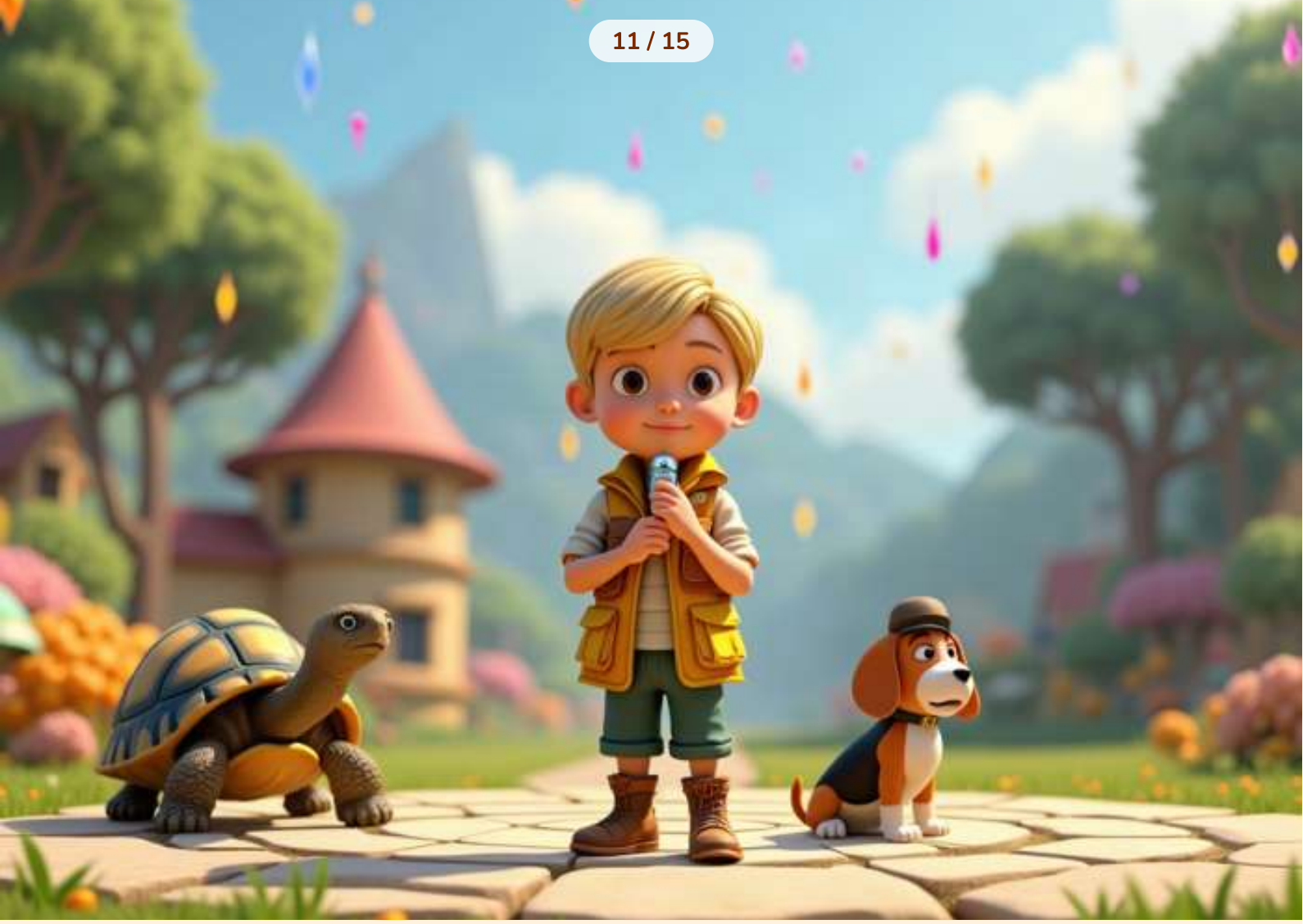
Wesley Dean pulled it out quickly. A bright glowing line had appeared on the map, pointing directly at that tiny round door. This was the escape! **Wesley Dean** scrambled forward on hands and knees, silver whistle safely looped over his neck. He had to hop on one foot once more as he reached the door — because of the Crazy World Rule — which meant he sort of tumbled through rather than crawled through, but he made it. Jappy squeezed through right behind him. The little door swung shut with a satisfying CLICK just as Black Helmet's wobbly helmet bonked loudly against the barn wall.



Wesley Dean tumbled out the other side of the tiny round door and landed with a soft THUMP in the fresh colorful grass. He sat up, laughing and catching his breath. Jappy burst out right after him and immediately began running in a delighted circle, ears flopping wildly. The colorful rain was falling gently again, painting little rainbow spots across **Wesley Dean's** yellow vest.

Then something completely unexpected happened. From behind a round toadstool sat a very small, very old tortoise wearing a tiny explorer's hat remarkably similar to **Wesley Dean's** vest. The tortoise raised one slow wrinkled foot in greeting. "About time," said the tortoise in a deep, unhurried voice. "I have been waiting here to help for quite a while."

Wesley Dean stared. Then grinned. "You can talk?" he said. "Of course," said the tortoise calmly. "My name is Tempo. I know every path and secret on this farm. I can show you where to use that whistle, **Wesley Dean**. But we must hurry — Black Helmet will find another way out of that barn very soon." Jappy sniffed Tempo carefully, wagged twice, and barked one enthusiastic YES bark. **Wesley Dean** stood up straight, brushed the grass off his mud-proof boots, and said, "Lead the way, Tempo!"



Tempo led **Wesley Dean** and Jappy along a hidden path between two rows of dancing scarecrows. The scarecrows waved as they passed, and **Wesley Dean** waved back cheerfully. The colorful rain picked up again, and now whole sections of the farm turned brilliant shades of gold and turquoise wherever the drops fell. It was extraordinary.

Tempo stopped at the very center of the farm, where a wide flat stone circle sat in the middle of the most colorful patch of grass **Wesley Dean** had ever stood on. "This is the Listening Stone," said Tempo slowly. "When the silver whistle is played here, it calls the whole farm together — the scarecrows, the frogs, the rain, everyone. It will also reveal the true guardian of the farm's greatest secret."

Wesley Dean looked at the silver whistle hanging around his neck. His heart was beating fast. This was the moment. He climbed carefully onto the Listening Stone — hopping onto it on one foot, because the Crazy World Rule made that necessary — and held the whistle to his lips. Jappy sat at the edge of the stone, tail completely still for the first time all day, ears raised. Even the colorful rain seemed to pause. **Wesley Dean** took a deep breath, and blew.



The whistle sang out a clear, sweet note that spread across the entire Farm of Dancing Scarecrows like a wave. The scarecrows stopped dancing and turned to face the stone. The rubber frogs stopped bouncing and lined up neatly beside the pond. The colorful rain swirled upward in a beautiful spiral before settling into a soft golden glow all around the farm.

Then — and this is the part that surprised even **Wesley Dean** — the Ticklish Map flew out of his pocket all by itself. It unfolded in mid-air, spinning slowly, and on it appeared not directions, but words: THANK YOU FOR BEING BRAVE AND KIND. THE SECRET OF THIS FARM BELONGS TO THOSE WHO LAUGH AND SHARE IT.

At that exact moment, Black Helmet came stumbling out from around the barn, his helmet now so small it perched on top of his head like a thimble, his curly mustache now just the tiniest little squiggle above his lip. Every lie he had told had made his things shrink smaller and smaller. He looked so ridiculous that **Wesley Dean** could not help but laugh — a kind laugh, not a mean one. Jappy woofed warmly. Even Tempo made a slow, rumbling chuckle. Black Helmet looked down at his thimble helmet, and for the first time, he looked a tiny bit



Wesley Dean jumped down from the Listening Stone and walked over to Black Helmet. He stopped right in front of him and looked up at the tiny thimble helmet. "You know," said **Wesley Dean** cheerfully, "if you had just asked to come along, there was plenty of adventure for everyone." Black Helmet's mustache squiggled. His face turned pink.

"I — I suppose I was rather rude," said Black Helmet, very quietly for once. Then he straightened up and cleared his throat. "I, the MAGNI—" he started, then stopped himself. His tiny helmet wobbled. "I mean... I am... sorry." The moment he said something true and kind, there was a soft POP, and his helmet grew back to its regular size. His bag expanded back to normal. His mustache returned to its full curly splendor.

Black Helmet touched his mustache in amazement. **Wesley Dean** grinned and held out his hand. "Deal?" he said. "No more stealing?" Black Helmet shook **Wesley Dean's** hand carefully, as if he had not done that sort of thing very often. Jappy barked once — YES — and Tempo nodded slowly from near the stone. The colorful rain began to fall again, painting happy swirls on everyone's shoulders, including Black Helmet's purple jumpsuit. The farm felt lighter and warmer than it had all day.



Wesley Dean pulled out the Ticklish Map one last time. He gave it a gentle little tickle. It giggled softly — a comfortable, satisfied giggle, like a story that knows it ended just right. The glowing lines on the map slowly faded and were replaced by a single warm picture: **Wesley Dean**, Jappy, Tempo, and even Black Helmet, all standing together on the Farm of Dancing Scarecrows.

The silver whistle still hung around **Wesley Dean**'s neck, cool and bright. Tempo had explained that the whistle was not just a treasure to take home — it was a treasure to leave behind, so the farm could call its friends together whenever it needed to. **Wesley Dean** placed the whistle carefully back on the Listening Stone. That felt exactly right. Some treasures are better when they stay where they belong.

The colorful rain fell one final gentle shower, painting everyone in a soft rainbow glow. The Dancing Scarecrows waved their arms in a slow, happy farewell. Jappy let out one long, musical howl — his happiest sound of all. **Wesley Dean** put his hands in his yellow vest pockets, smiled his enormous smile, and said quietly, "Best farm ever." Then he and Jappy walked back through the sparkling gate together, the Ticklish Map tucked safely over his

MORAL OF THE STORY

Wesley Dean wants you to know that being curious and kind is the greatest adventure of all. When you laugh, share, and tell the truth, amazing things happen — even maps giggle and farms glow. And the best treasures are the ones you share with others.



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Congratulations, Wesley Dean!

You lived an incredible adventure, full of
courage, imagination and special moments
that only you could experience!

You are incredible!

SPECIAL MESSAGE

”

Wesley Dean is our beloved hero.

”



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