
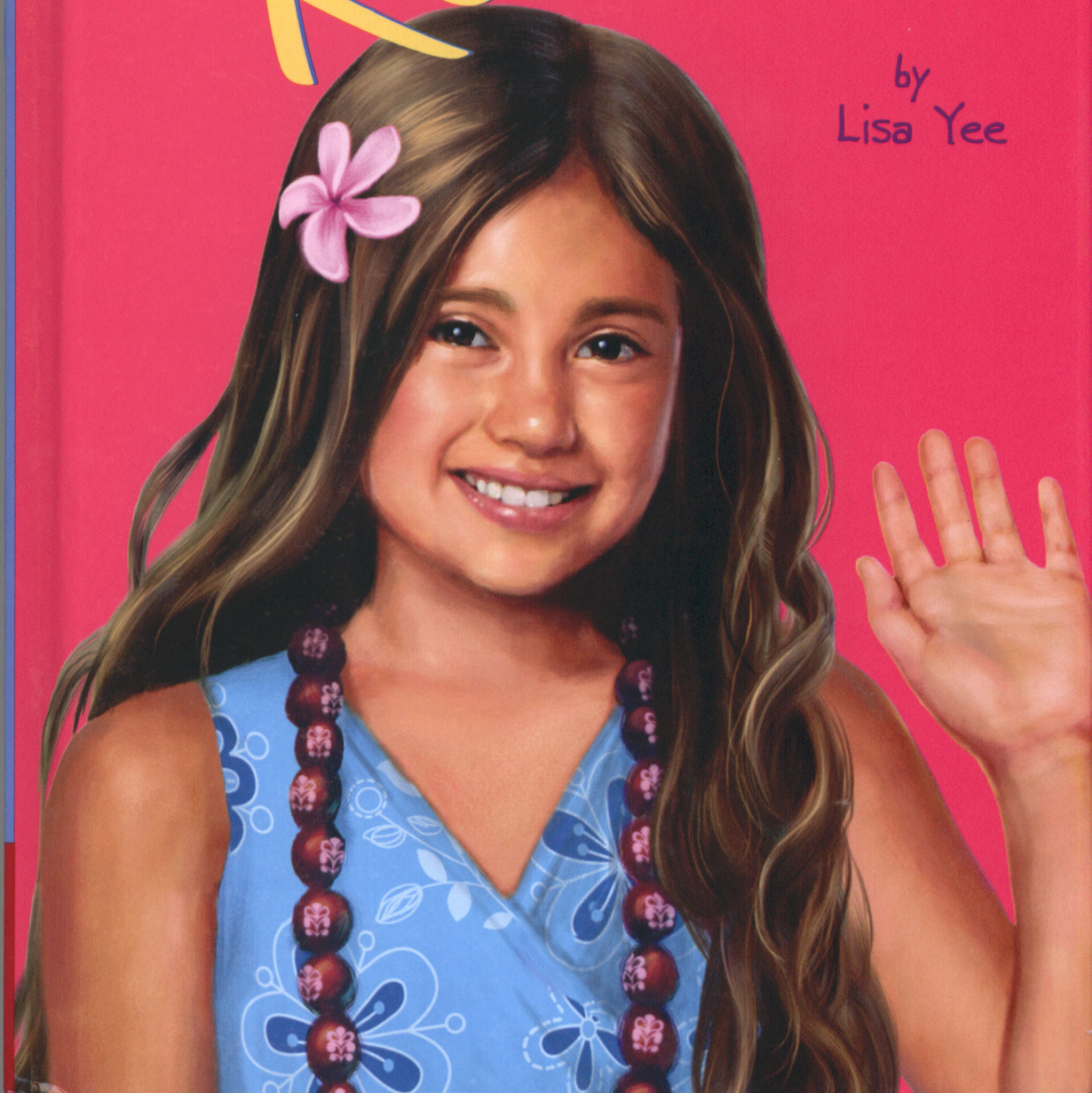


Aloha, 
Kanani

by
Lisa Yee



For Nicole and Jordan

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Letter from American Girl

Dear Readers,

Just as Kanani helped save a Hawaiian monk seal that she found struggling on the beach, girls everywhere are making a big difference in the lives of animals in need. Here are the true stories of five girls around the country who did just that, each in her own special way. One looks out for sea turtles. Another helped fix a problem in the environment that was killing swans. A third nursed an injured deer back to health before setting it free. And two work tirelessly to find loving families for homeless dogs and cats.

We hope you are inspired by these real girls and their stories. As they show, there are as many ways for girls to help as there are animals who need them. The effort can be as big as starting an organization or as simple as comforting a homeless pet. Any girl can make a difference—including you!

Your friends at American Girl



Hero of the Honu

Meimei N. is a budding marine biologist from Hawai'i. The 13-year-old works with the state's green sea turtles, called *honu*, as part of a school program to help save the endangered reptiles. "I collect data at the honu pond at one of the study sites," she says. "Eight baby turtles—four boys and four girls—live in the pond."

On a typical day at the site, Meimei's first task is to pick up each turtle using a soft rubber net. She weighs it, measures its length and width, and records the numbers in her turtle data book. "Sometimes I find them basking on a sunny rock in the pond or resting under a little waterfall," she says. "I love measuring the turtles and watching them grow."

The turtles are tagged so that scientists can monitor them and understand what they need to survive. "We get to snorkel in the ocean to look for turtles," Meimei says. "They swim so fast!" When she



brings a turtle back to the beach, she helps the scientists gently tag it, measure it, and check its condition before releasing it back into the water.

"It is exciting to be so close to the turtles," she says. "I feel really good knowing that I'm helping to save them."

Swan Support

Trumpeter swans are the largest swans in the world. One day 14-year-old Nicole H. saw one lying in the snow near her Wyoming home and realized it was not alive. It turned out that the majestic birds were dying when they flew into overhead power lines by a creek where they liked to spend the winter.

Nicole was determined to help get the power lines buried. By soliciting donations at her parents' business and giving media interviews, she raised public awareness—along with \$12,000 of the \$160,000 needed to bury the lines and save the swans. “I’m glad I did it,” says Nicole. “It made my community a little bit stronger. I’m glad that I helped the birds, because they mean a lot to me and also to a lot of people in my hometown.”



Dear to a Deer

Nichole S. and her mom brought home Bucky, a fawn that had been hit by a combine near their Ohio home and had a broken leg. Nichole's aunt works with animals and came to tend Bucky's leg, while 12-year-old Nichole and her family bottle-fed the fawn in their mudroom.

The fawn healed and grew, and eventually moved outside to the fields around Nichole's house. “Bucky came to visit us sometimes,” Nichole says. “It was sad to let him go after being with him for so long, but we think he made some friends out in the field.” Bucky did make friends and even started a family. One day the deer everyone thought was a boy brought *her* new twin fawns home to visit Nichole!



Dogs' Best Friend

Brook B. has a more hectic morning schedule than most girls. Before school starts, she feeds and exercises 25 dogs! The Ohio 13-year-old founded Heroes of Animals, an organization that cares for dogs without homes. She knew she had to do something when she visited a shelter that had space for only 14 pets but was trying to manage 70.

While working at pet adoption fairs, Brook met an elderly man who fostered more than two dozen dogs on his land. When he died, his house and grounds were donated to Heroes of Animals for use as a sanctuary—a place where dogs can live until they have real homes. Brook says that all her hard work is worth it when she receives letters and photos from people who have adopted her dogs—50 of them so far. “Now they’re sleeping in nice beds and getting lots of attention!” she says.



Cat Crusader

“Holding a cat makes you feel warm on the inside,” says 14-year-old Vanja G. After she saved an abandoned kitten from a sewer, she was inspired to help other homeless cats. Vanja took care of Panther, a lovable stray cat in her neighborhood. She volunteered at cat adoption fairs and worked at other events for a feline rescue group in her

Virginia community. With Vanja’s help, the rescue group saves the lives of more than 500 cats a year. “I love all animals and would do anything I could to help them if they were hurt or hungry,” she says. “Just knowing a cat makes you feel good.”