

# RELATIVELY NORMAL SECRETS

by C.W. Allen

## EXCERPT

"It will only be for a couple of days. You and Tuesday are going to stay next door with Mrs. Alvarez until we get back. You'll be at school most of the time anyway—you'll hardly notice we're gone."

Zed doubted that. For one thing, unless Nyx was also invited along on this trip (unlikely), the dog was bound to spend the next two days pacing and whining incessantly. Nyx was rarely more than a few steps away from his mother, and any time they had to be separated for even a few minutes the dog fretted as if Mrs. Furst had been kidnapped by pirates or something. Two whole days might cause her a complete meltdown, which would be hard to ignore. It wasn't so much that Zed minded his parents leaving—after all, Mrs. Alvarez was a sweet old lady who had been their neighbor his entire life, and had been delighted to watch them for shorter periods of time on many occasions. She'd probably spend the whole time insisting they eat third helpings of empanadas and hot chocolate. And his mother was right, they would be at school most of the time anyway. It was just...something didn't seem right.

If Zed had expected his sister to share his misgivings, he was wrong. When Tuesday stepped off the middle school bus twenty minutes later and Zed informed her they'd be spending the next two days with Mrs. Alvarez, she acted like Christmas had come early. "Yes!" she gushed, punching the air in celebration. "Empanada time!"