

# The X Factor



By Heather Price-Wright  
Illustrated by James Rey Sanchez

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## Chapter One



# New in Town

“Did you hear?”

It was the first thing Two said to Mayor One when she arrived at Digitville Town Hall. The mayor had arrived early. But the handyman was always earlier. He was fixing a doorknob that had come loose.

“Hear what?” Mayor One asked. Usually, *she* was the first in town to hear any exciting news! She wondered what she had missed.



“Someone moved into the gigantic old house on Math Hill! Five and Six, the fire chief’s kids, saw the moving truck. It sounds like she had a lot of strange stuff!”

“Strange? What do you mean?” The mayor was curious. Digitville was a small town. They didn’t have new neighbors very often.



“Like a chandelier!” Two exclaimed. “With hundreds of tiny light bulbs. I wonder how long it would take to change all those!” He looked excited at the thought of changing that many bulbs. “She has a funny name too,” he added. “She goes by X.”



## Chapter Two



# Out to Lunch

Mayor One had to learn more about this mysterious X. She didn't like being out of the loop. Later that morning, she called the house on Math Hill. A woman with a low, musical voice answered. "Hello?"

"This is Mayor One. Am I speaking with X?"

"You are," came the answer.

"Welcome to Digitville! We are glad to have you as a neighbor," Mayor One said.



“Thank you,” X said.

“As the leader of this town, I would love to learn more about you. Will you meet me for lunch?” Mayor One asked.

They agreed to meet at Lucky Seven’s Diner at noon.

Mayor One arrived and looked around the restaurant. She didn’t see any mysterious guests. It was the regular lunch crowd.

*She may be intriguing, but she’s also late,* thought the mayor.

Just then, Lucky Seven stuck his head out from the kitchen. He owned the diner and loved to cook. He was cheerful and had a bushy mustache.

“Hello, Mayor!” he said in his booming voice. “Come join us! X was showing us her trick for perfect hash browns.”

Surprised, Mayor One followed him into the kitchen. X was holding a spatula in one hand. She slowly flipped the crispiest, yummiest hash browns the mayor had ever seen.

“Wow!” said Lucky Seven.

“It’s just a simple trick I picked up in France,” X said.

Lucky Seven looked impressed. He stuck a fork into the hash browns and took a bite. “Delicious!” he exclaimed.

The mayor had a taste as well. She had to admit they were yummy.

“This calls for a special treat,” said Lucky Seven. “I’m going to make a batch of my specialty. Triple chocolate strawberry pancakes for everyone!”



## Chapter Three



# On Patrol

A week later, X was exploring her new neighborhood with her little dog, Y. It was a beautiful fall afternoon. They walked down Math Hill. But at the bottom of the hill, they found a great commotion.

Fire Chief Four was standing beside his fire engine, looking up into a high tree. His ladder was raised, but it only reached halfway up the trunk. A crowd had gathered to watch. They all gazed upward. Fire Chief Four's two children, Five and Six, both looked scared.



“What’s all this excitement?” X asked. The fire chief turned to look at her, surprised to see an unfamiliar face. “I’m X,” she said. “Can I help?”

“I don’t think so,” Fire Chief Four sighed. “There’s a kitten up there. He climbed to the very top, though we can’t figure out how. Our ladder won’t reach, and there’s no way to get him down.”



X smiled. She handed Y's leash to Five.  
“Look after him,” she told the boy. Then, she  
began to climb the high ladder.

“Wait!” Fire Chief Four called. “It's  
not safe!”





But X kept climbing. When she got to the top of the ladder, she stopped for a minute, steadying herself. Then, she flipped straight up into the air like an acrobat. She caught a branch, swung herself around, and began to climb. Soon, the townspeople lost sight of her.

“Look!” cried Five, pointing up.

X had reappeared, a tiny striped kitten in her arms. She hopped lightly back onto the ladder. She looked weightless. She climbed down quickly and handed the kitten to Five. Y growled and yapped at the little thing. Everyone laughed, relieved.

“How...how did you do that?” stammered the fire chief.

“Just a couple of tricks from my days in the circus,” X said. “I was best at the tightrope.” She took Y’s leash and continued on her way.

## Chapter Four



### A Cure

The next week, X visited Dr. Three for a checkup.

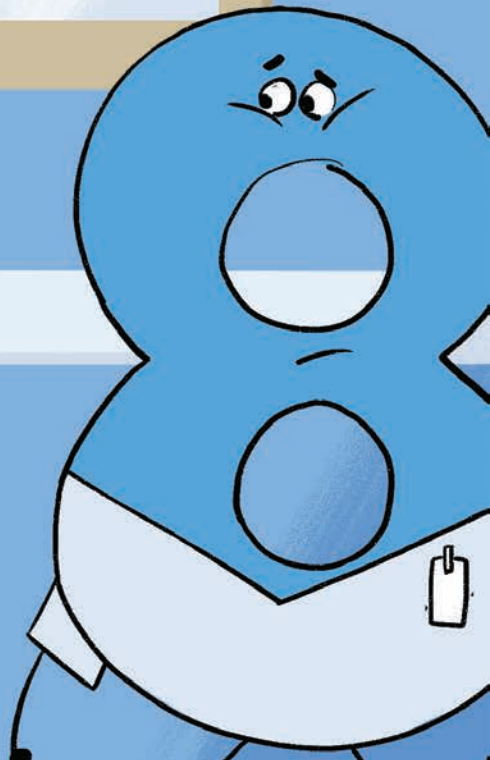
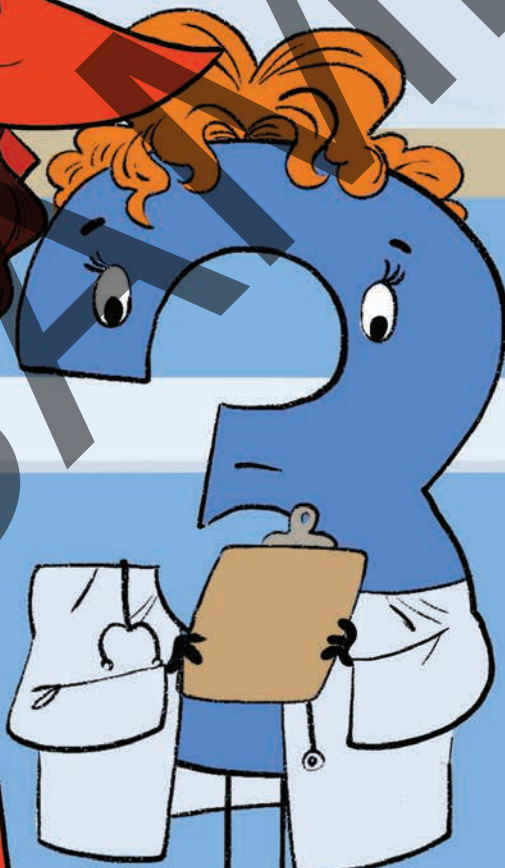
“Miss X?” Receptionist Nine called into the waiting room. X stood and followed her into a small white exam room. “You can wait here for the doc—*HICcup!*”

The sound startled X.

“I’m so sorry,” said Receptionist Nine. “It’s these pesky hiccups! We’ve all got—*HICcup!*” She blushed and hurried out of the room.



$$2 + 2 = 4$$



Soon, Nurse Eight came in. “I’m going to take your temperature,” she told X. “Open your—*HICCup!*” She had them, too!

“Does everyone have a case of the hiccups today?” X asked.

“Every last one of us,” the nurse said. “We can’t explain it, and Dr. Three tried everything. But even she can’t stop—*HICCup!*”

“Right, let’s get you all out in the hallway,” X commanded. “Everyone with hiccups, I know what to do.” They all gathered, letting out a chorus of hiccups.

“You’ll have to do exactly as I say, no matter how silly it seems,” X told them. “Follow my instructions exactly, and we’ll have those hiccups gone in a flash.”

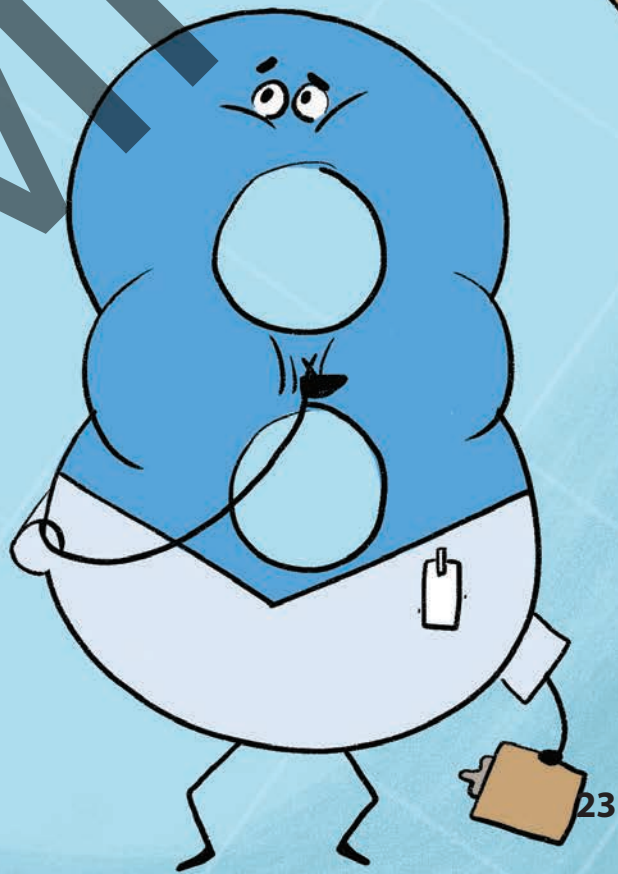
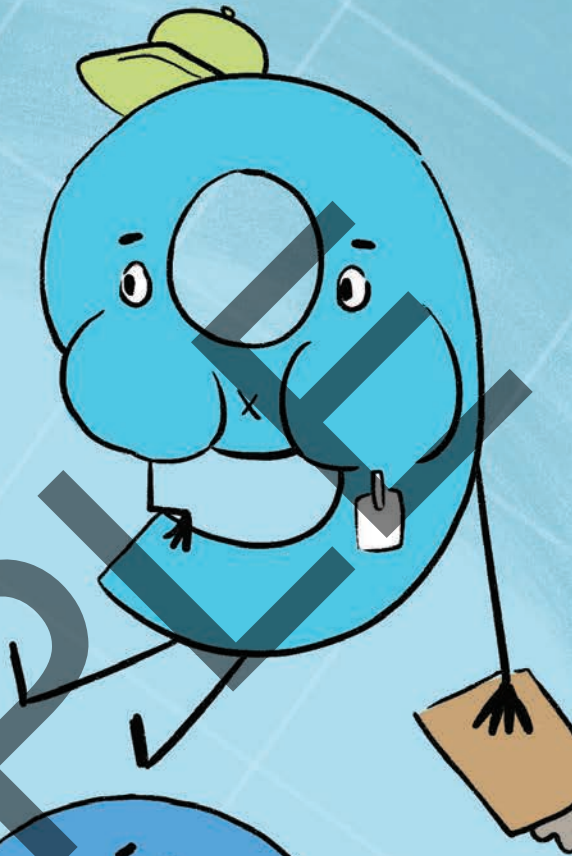
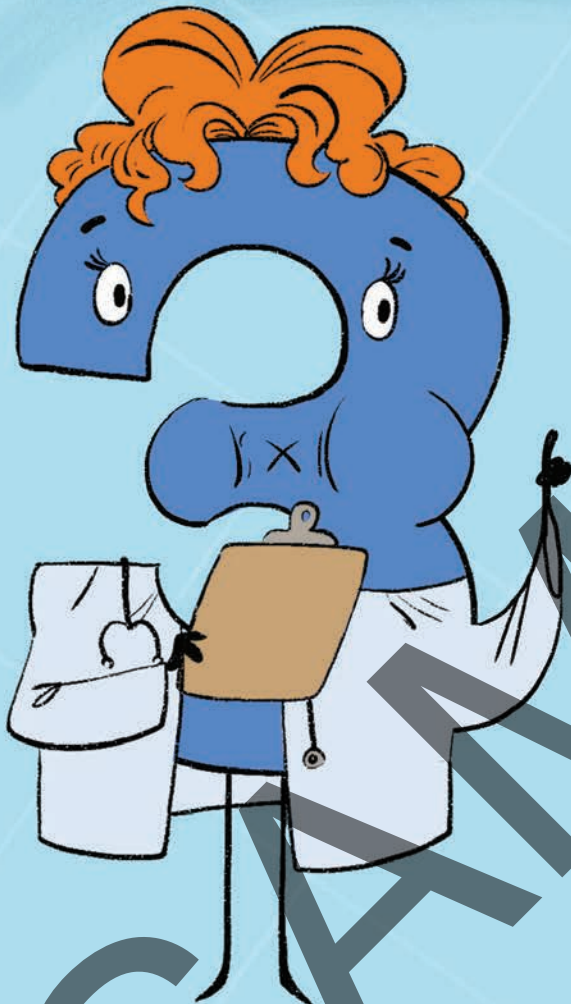
She led them through a strange and silly routine. Together, they walked backward 10 steps holding their breath. Then, they turned in two quick circles, breathing out. Next, they all touched their toes while taking five deep breaths.

“Now, stand up, everyone!” X commanded.

They were amazed. No more hiccups! Dr. Three rushed forward and hugged X.

“I thought we would hiccup forever!” she cried. “You’ve helped nearly everyone in this town, X. It’s time we thank you. We want to throw a party! Will you come? We’ll have it this Saturday at Town Hall.”

X nodded. “Thank you, Dr. Three,” she said. “It would be an honor. I’ll see you there.”



SKYLINE

## Chapter Five



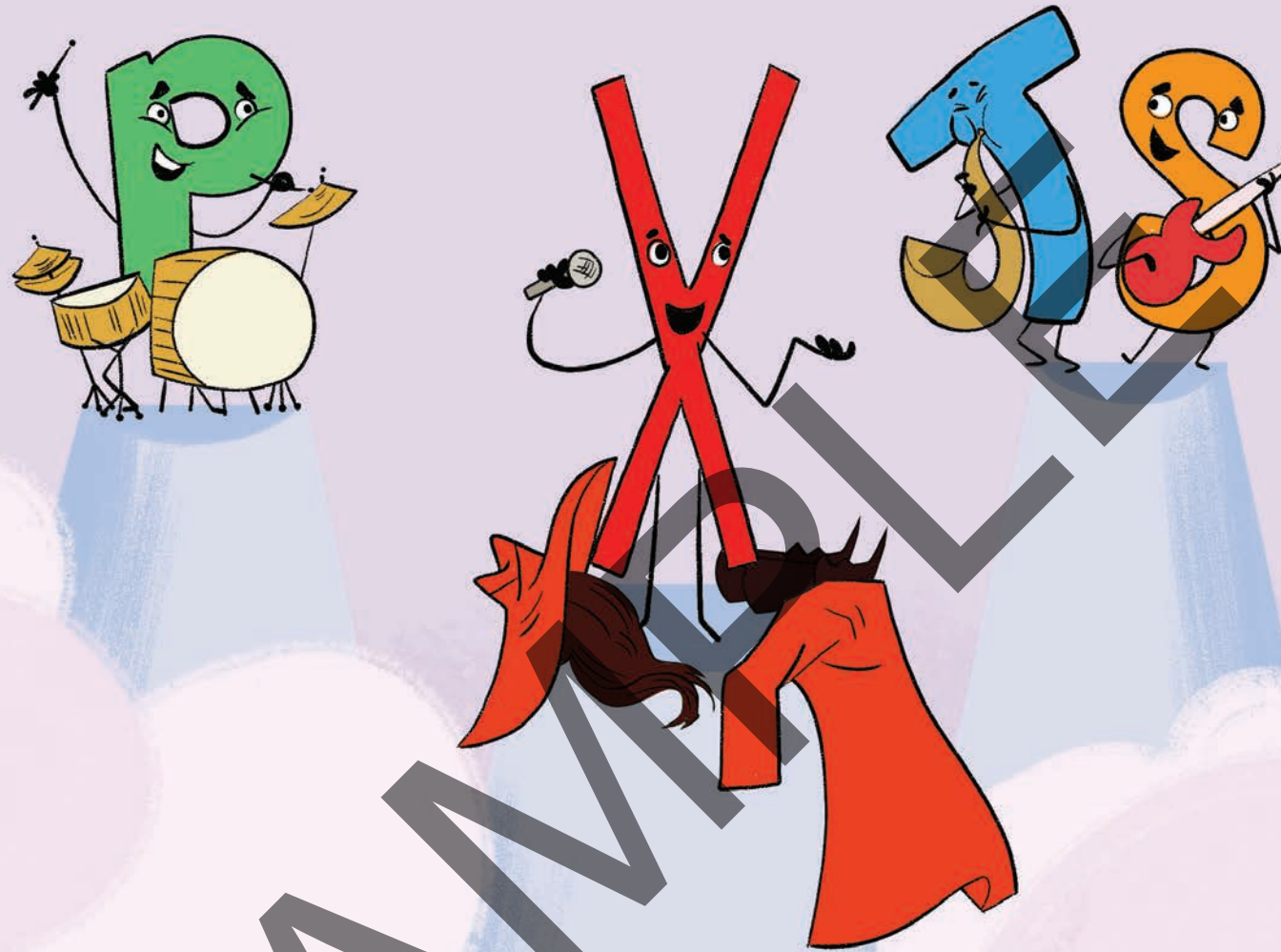
# Celebration!

The whole town gathered for X's big party. Dr. Three and Fire Chief Four were there with their children. Five and Six even brought their new kitten. They had named him Little X.

Two had spent all day polishing the floors in Town Hall. Now, he was waiting with everyone else. Lucky Seven brought his famous apple pie to share. Mayor One was ready to greet the guest of honor.

The only person missing was X.





Soon, people started to whisper. Everyone wanted to know whether she would show up. Then, all at once, the room went dark. A spotlight lit up the grand staircase. Someone stood at the top with their back to the crowd. Music that they all recognized began to play. It was their favorite band, The Variables! Lights moved onto the guitarist, the drummer, and the saxophonist. The music grew louder. Then, the person in the spotlight turned around.

It was X! Her mysterious hat and coat were gone. And she was singing! They all knew the song.

“She’s got that X factor!” The town sang the chorus together. They were proud to have the famous and fabulous X call their town home.

# About Us

## The Author

Heather Price-Wright has always loved to read and write. She has worked as a news reporter and editor. She grew up in Arizona. Now, she lives and works in New York City.

## The Illustrator

James Rey Sanchez's love of art came from countless hours of reading comics, playing video games, and watching Saturday morning cartoons. He looks forward to showing the world what he can do with a fluid and unique style, expressive characters, and beautiful colors.

## Book Club Questions

1. What do Two and Mayor One think of *X* at first? How does that change throughout the story?
2. How does *X* moving to the town change Digitville?
3. Which character in the story is most like you? Why?
4. How do the setting and plot of the story relate?

# The X Factor

All is calm in Digitville until a new neighbor comes to town. Who is the mysterious X, and is there anything she can't do?

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