The European Badger meles meles is a member of the mustelidae family.

Since The Turnip is set in St. Petersburg, the badgers in my book are European Badgers. In Sweden, on my friend's farm, I saw a badger's den. I embellished it for my book.

The Dutch bantam is a very old breed found throughout Europe. The breed has many color varieties. He is a Light Brown Dutch bantam cockerel.

I am holding Rueben, the unlikely hero of my story.

“Vanya” the spotted horse is of a Danish breed called the Knabstrupper. The color pattern appeared in the early 1800's and is caused by the “leopard” gene. The breed was used in circuses but today they make excellent dressage horses and jumpers.

My friend Aza, who was born in Moscow, suggested the name “Vanya”, a man’s name typically heard in villages.