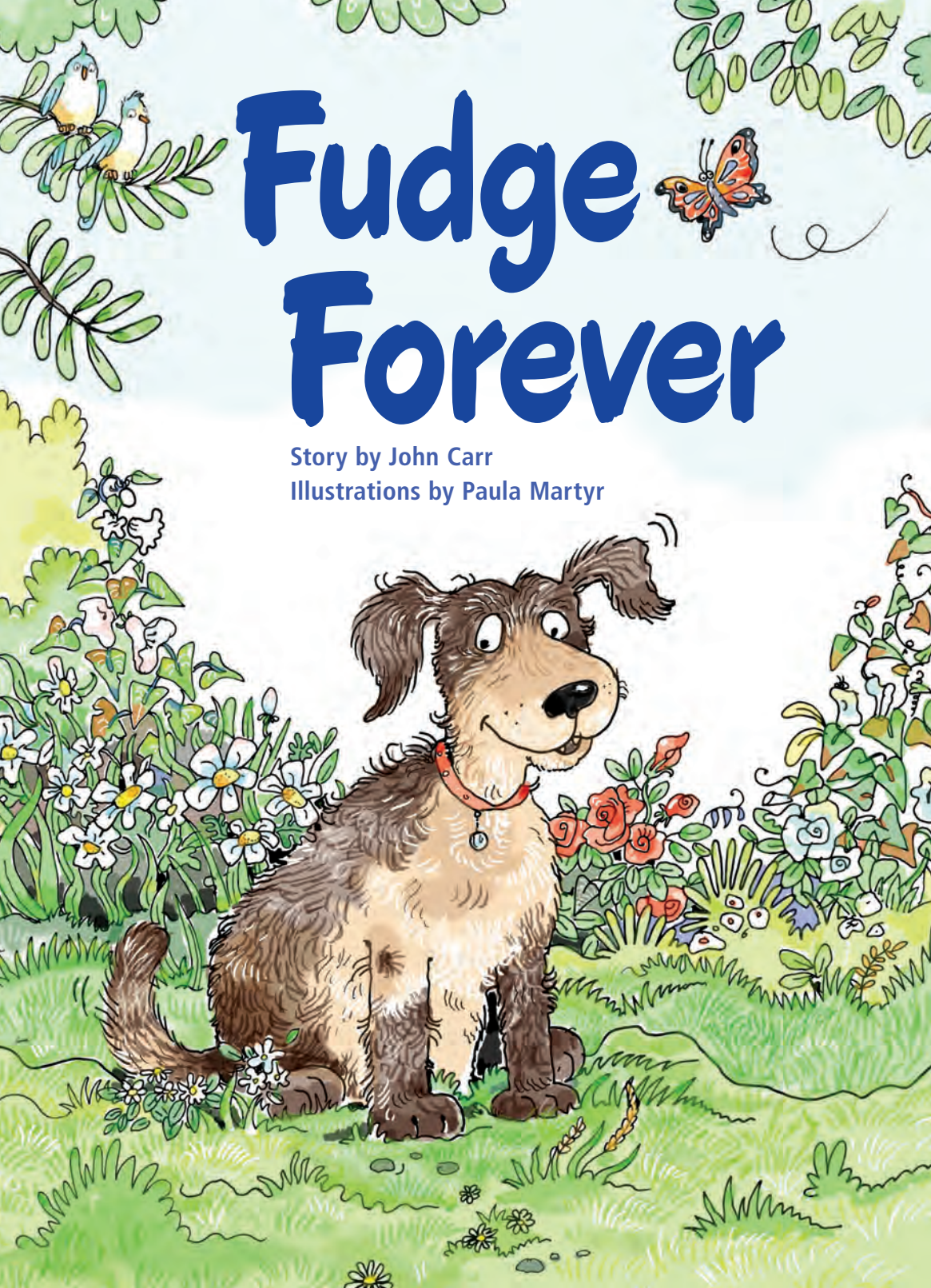


Fudge Forever

Story by John Carr

Illustrations by Paula Martyr



Teacher support material and reader response activities are available at: spca.nz/schools

Fudge Forever

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Chapter 1

Dad had been back home only a few days when the twins launched into a “get-a-foster” campaign.

“When are you going to ring SPCA?” asked Keysha. “We haven’t had any foster animals for six weeks.”

Dad smiled. “I thought you might be happy just having me home,” he said. “You could look after me for a change.”

“We’re always glad to have a dad lying around the place,” said Brodie. “It’s also nice to have someone who is easier to train. Can we foster a dog this time, please?”

“Yes,” added Keysha. “Andy was fun but he couldn’t fetch tennis balls.”

Andy, the guinea pig, was the last animal the family had fostered. He had stayed for five weeks before SPCA found a forever home for him.



Everyone in the family, except Nana, loved animals. They had fostered many SPCA animals. Fostering meant they could enjoy caring for animals when Dad was working at home. Then they could be without an animal when Nana came to look after the twins when Dad was out of town.

Nana loved grandchildren more than animals. She was allergic to cats and scared of rats and mice. She thought guinea pigs were too shy. She thought budgies were too noisy. She thought rabbits dug too much and roosters woke her too early. That's why Dad didn't foster animals when Nana came to stay.



Every animal the family fostered had different needs. They did enjoy the challenge of meeting those needs. They had fostered playful pups and weepy-eyed kittens with cat flu. They had fostered overweight guinea pigs and nervous rabbits. They once fostered a noisy rooster named Roger. There was also a cockatoo with a sore leg and a rude vocabulary.

The hardest part of fostering animals was the goodbyes when the animals went to their forever homes. Keysha and Brodie never got used to that. At least they knew that the animals were going to a permanent, safe and loving home.



Brodie tried another tactic.

“Dad, would you like some fudge?” he asked.
Dad fell for it.

“You know I would,” he said. “Nothing’s better than fudge!”

“Because there’s a very sweet fudge at SPCA who needs to be fostered.”

Dad looked very confused! Brodie passed his tablet with the photo of the sweet puppy to his father.

“Look at her eyes,” Keysha said. “Don’t they look sad.”

Dad clicked.

“Alright, let’s look into it,” he chuckled.



Chapter 2

Before going to SPCA, Dad reminded Keysha and Brodie how important it was for them to look and listen to what dogs were saying to them. The twins knew that dogs tell you how they are feeling with their bodies and sometimes with sounds. It was really important to pay attention and respect what dogs were telling them.

When Dad brought Fudge home, she was very thin. She was nervous of everything and everyone in the world. She was a medium size, mixed-breed dog, about six months old. She had never lived inside a house. She had never been taken for walks. She had never seen dog toys or had a loving family that properly cared for her.

Fudge walked through the front door with Dad. She held her ears back, cowered her small bony body and tucked her tail between her back legs. Keysha and Brodie knew by her body language that she was scared and nervous.



The children took note. They sat on the sofa to give Fudge more space. They knew that now wasn't the right time for them to meet Fudge. She was too nervous to meet anyone else new today. She would meet the twins when she was ready.

Dad had set up a crate for Fudge in a corner of the lounge. She had her own place to go – her safe spot. The children knew that they were to leave her alone whenever she went there. Fudge went straight into the crate. She curled up as small as she could, and stayed there for the rest of the day.



Chapter 3

The next day Fudge was a little more relaxed. She gobbled up her breakfast and explored the backyard. Then she decided she was ready to meet the twins.

Brodie was first. He was sitting on the sofa when Fudge came towards him. She sniffed his leg. She nudged his hand, meaning she was happy being close to him. Brodie gave her a gentle pat and her tail began to wag. He stopped to check if she had had enough. She moved closer and jumped up onto the sofa. This was her telling him it was okay and to keep going with the pats!

Brodie wanted to yell to Dad and Keysha to come and see, but he didn't want to scare Fudge. So he just sat there, happy that Fudge was enjoying being close. Before long she fell asleep.





When Keysha and Dad came in, Fudge woke up. She wagged her tail and looked at Keysha. Keysha patted her leg and called Fudge's name. Fudge immediately ran to Keysha, before flopping on to her back for tummy rubs.

From then on, the twins carried Fudge's special training treats in their pockets all day, every day. Whenever Fudge did something good, they would reward her with a treat. After a week, being with the twins became the treat Fudge most wanted.

Every morning when the twins got out of bed, Fudge would greet them. Her body was soft and wiggly and her ears were up. Her tongue was hanging out of her mouth and her tail was wagging. She'd do the same when they arrived home from school.



Chapter 4

Even though Fudge thought life was all fun and games, that wasn't always the case for Dad and the twins. As Fudge's confidence grew, so did her playful puppy side!

Fudge chewed the washing basket. She chewed Dad's jandals. She chewed the deck chair. She dug holes in the garden. She pooped on the door mat. She dragged an entire shrub from the garden through the house!

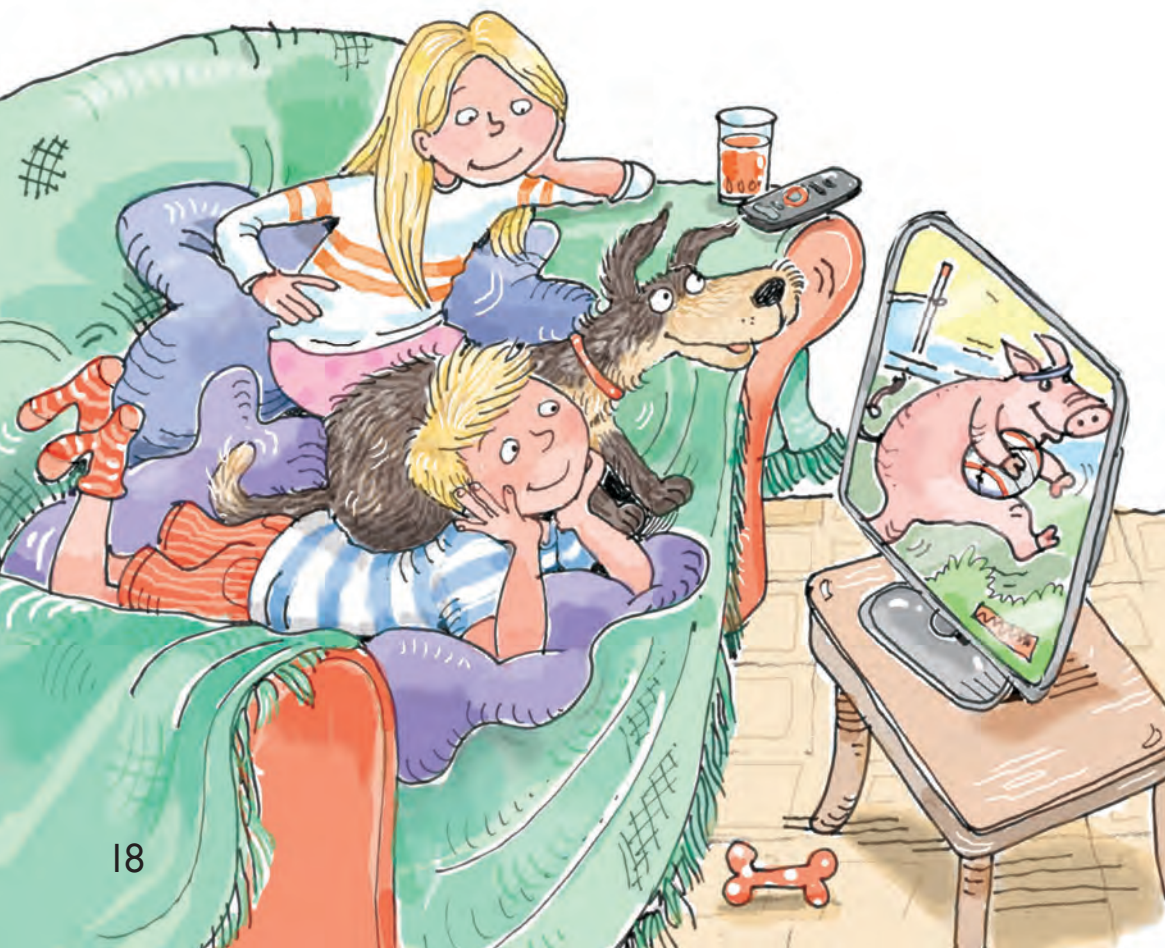


Keysha and Brodie knew that puppies aren't born knowing what is right and wrong. They knew that caring for a puppy takes time and training! They knew it was their job to teach Fudge to grow up being a safe, happy and well behaved dog.



After ten weeks, Fudge had come a long way. She had learnt to come when she was called. She had learnt to sit, lie down, wait, drop and leave. She could walk nicely on a leash without having a game of tug-of-war with it!

Fudge loved to lie between the twins when they watched movies. She loved playing fetch with Keysha. She loved swimming with Brodie, car rides with Dad and bush walks with the family.



The family knew that Fudge was ready for adoption. She would be perfect for the right person or family.

One day, Dad received a call from SPCA to let him know that a couple had asked to adopt Fudge. They wanted to arrange a meet-and-greet session with Fudge and Dad.

When Dad brought Fudge back from the meet-and-greet, Fudge bounded up to the children.

“How did it go?” Keysha asked.

Dad smiled, “It went very well. They liked Fudge, but sadly she’s not a good fit for their family. She’s too small and too young.”

“At least we get to be with Fudge for a bit longer,” said Keysha happily.

Dad realised that Fudge had become an important part of the family.

“I thought we could drive to Nana’s for the weekend and have some fun,” he said.

“But who will look after Fudge?” asked Brodie.

“Don’t worry,” said Dad. “She’s coming with us.” Brodie and Keysha both knew that Dad was planning something.



Chapter 5

On the drive to Nana's place, there were stops for Fudge to have a drink and get some exercise.

"We don't want her to have too much energy when she meets Nana," said Dad. "She has to be on her best behaviour."

They needn't have worried. On the beach, Fudge was so well behaved that Nana was impressed.



When Dad and the twins drove home, Fudge slept. She had behaved perfectly.

"Nana is happy to look after Fudge and you two when I go away on my next trip," said Dad.

"Does that mean we can adopt Fudge and become her forever family?" asked Keysha.

"It sure does," said Dad. "And we can still foster other animals whenever I'm not travelling."

"Yay!" the twins shouted. "We've got Fudge forever!"



Fostering Animals Facts and Tips

- Many animals that come into SPCA centres need additional care and time before they are ready for adoption. They may be too small or young to be adopted, recovering from illness or surgery, undergoing rehabilitation and training or even just finding an animal shelter environment too stressful to be in.
- Foster families provide temporary homes for SPCA animals to receive this care.
- Animal foster families not only help the animals that they take into their home, they also help other animals, by freeing up space in SPCA centres so that SPCA can rescue more animals in need.
- SPCA provides animal foster families with food, bedding, toys, medicine and everything else they need to keep their foster animals safe, happy and comfortable while staying in their home.
- Once a foster animal has made a full recovery and they are ready for their forever home, their adoption profile is added to SPCA's website.
- If you're unable to adopt an animal, fostering is a great way to help SPCA and the animals in their care. If you and your whānau would like to become an SPCA Foster Whānau, please visit [SPCA.NZ](https://www.spcanew Zealand.org.nz) to find out more.

Visit [spca.nz/kids](https://www.spcanew Zealand.org.nz/kids) to learn more about SPCA and caring for animals

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