

Guzzler

Does the Job

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Illustrations by Astrid Matijasevic



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© 2017 Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Education, Auckland, New Zealand

Published by Wendy Pye Publishing Limited for SPCA Education

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ISBN: 978-1-98-851091-0

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Distributed in New Zealand by The SPCA
50 Westney Road, Mangere, Auckland 2022

Printed in China through Colorcraft Ltd, Hong Kong.

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Guzzler Does the Job



Chapter 1

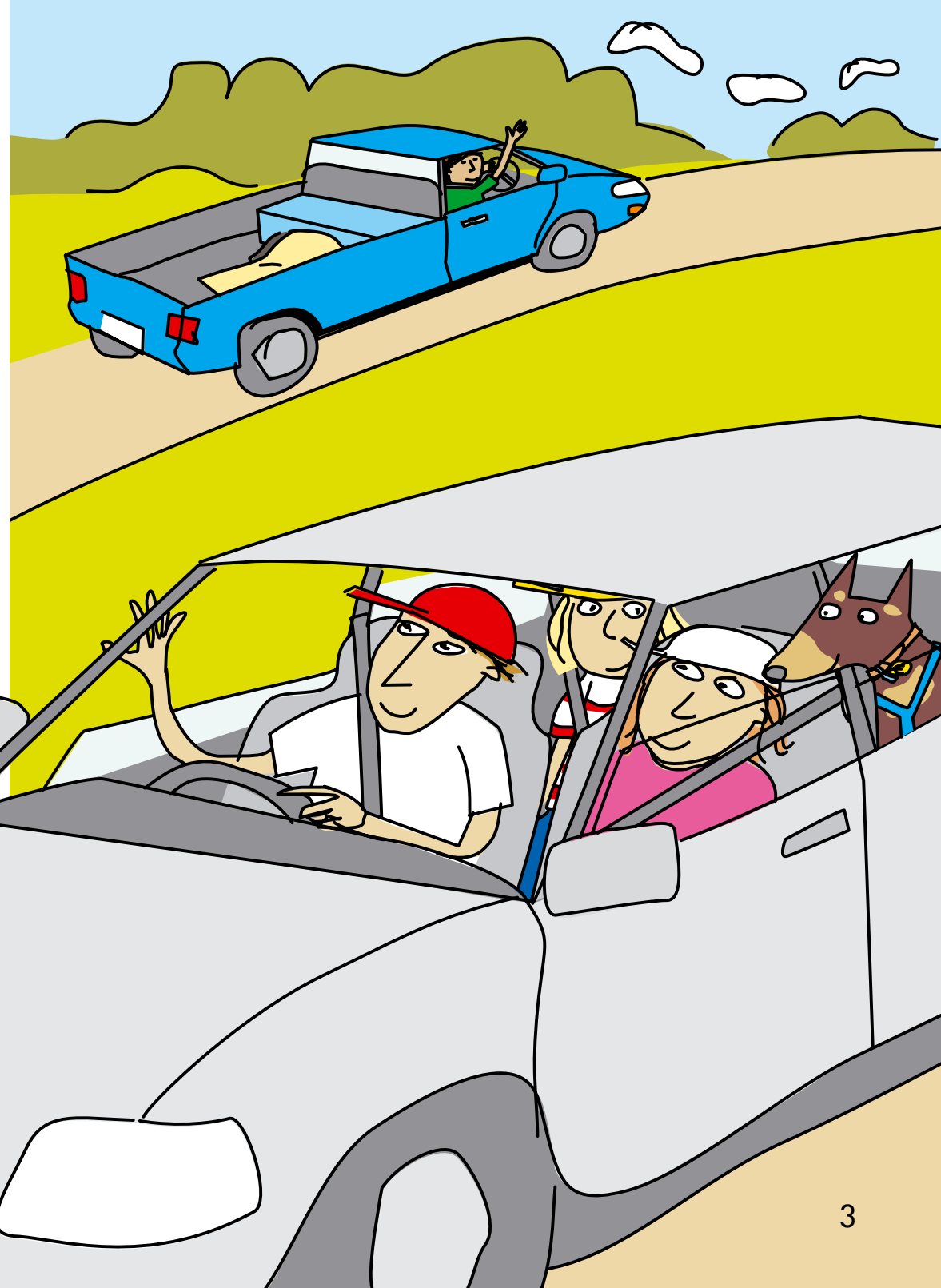
Dad tooted and waved at the driver of the blue ute as it passed us.

"There's George," he said. "Looks like he's had a good day."

I knew exactly what Dad was talking about. George was one of his hunting mates and I had seen a black animal lying on the back of the ute.

"Not so lucky for the pig," said Penny. She didn't like pig hunting, and never missed a chance to remind Dad about it.

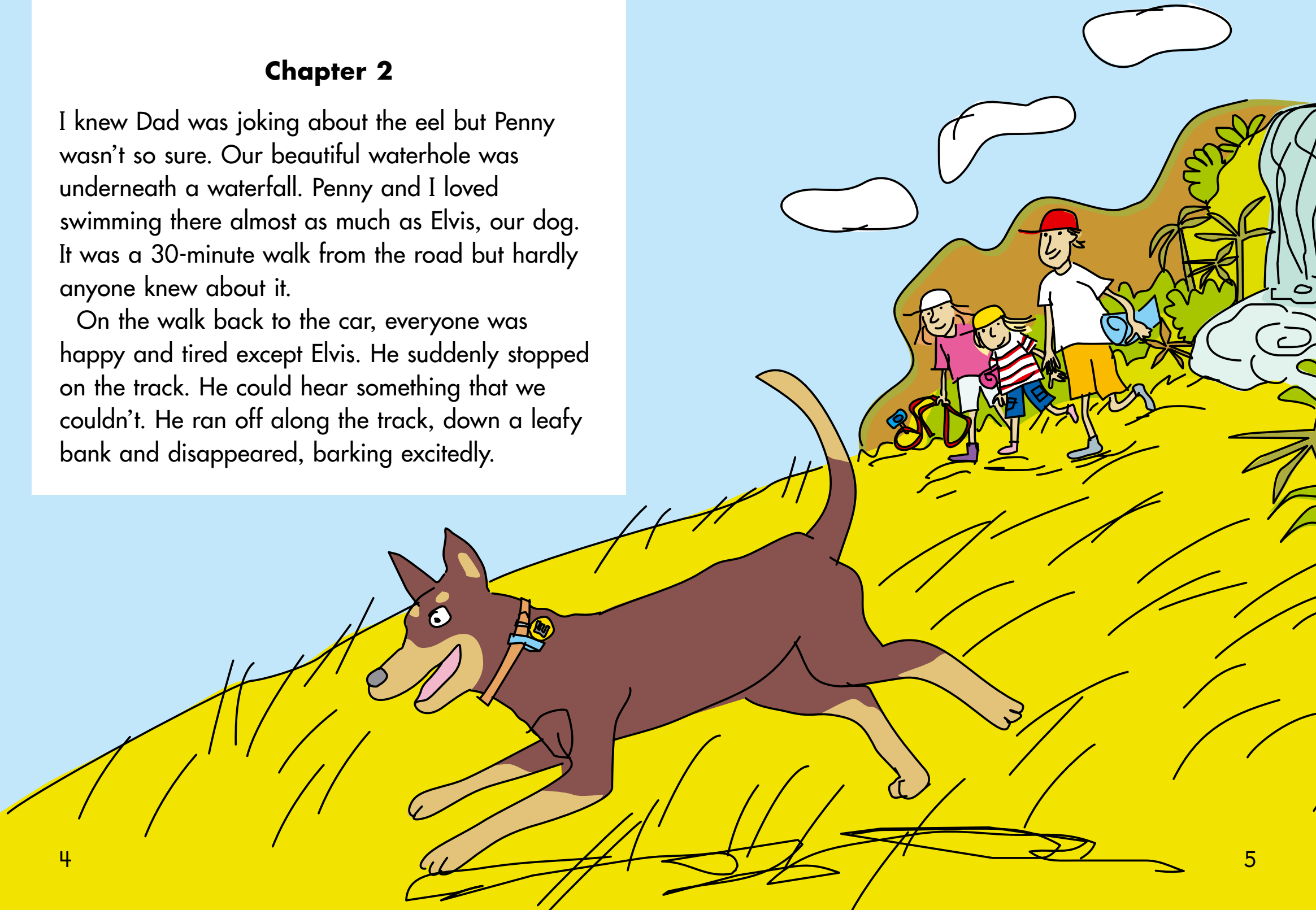
"Well I'm not hunting today," laughed Dad, "unless you want me to do something about that big eel at the bottom of the waterhole."



Chapter 2

I knew Dad was joking about the eel but Penny wasn't so sure. Our beautiful waterhole was underneath a waterfall. Penny and I loved swimming there almost as much as Elvis, our dog. It was a 30-minute walk from the road but hardly anyone knew about it.

On the walk back to the car, everyone was happy and tired except Elvis. He suddenly stopped on the track. He could hear something that we couldn't. He ran off along the track, down a leafy bank and disappeared, barking excitedly.



Dad told Penny and me to stay on the track. He ran down the bank and disappeared into the bush. In the distance we could hear the sound of Elvis barking and Dad shouting. Penny and I shuddered when the noise suddenly stopped. Instead we heard a high-pitched squealing coming closer and closer. "Run!" shouted Penny. "Sounds like a wild pig!"



Chapter 3

Penny was half right. It wasn't a wild pig. It was a frightened piglet in Dad's arms.

"It's OK," Dad smiled. "He's not hurt, just cold and hungry."

The piglet calmed down as Dad carried him to the car and wrapped him in his towel.

"We need to get some milk," he said.

"But what about his mother," I asked. "What happened to her?"

"I think I know," said Dad and he didn't say any more. He didn't need to.



Chapter 4

On the way home we bought some milk for the piglet. Penny didn't know whether to get a bottle of goat's milk or a bag of powdered milk so she got both.

Dad laughed. "It doesn't matter," he said, "He'll make a pig of himself on both," and he did.

When we got home Mum warmed the milk and put it in a water bottle with a teat. Penny and I took turns to feed him. He made so much noise guzzling down his milk that Mum called him Guzzler and the name stuck.

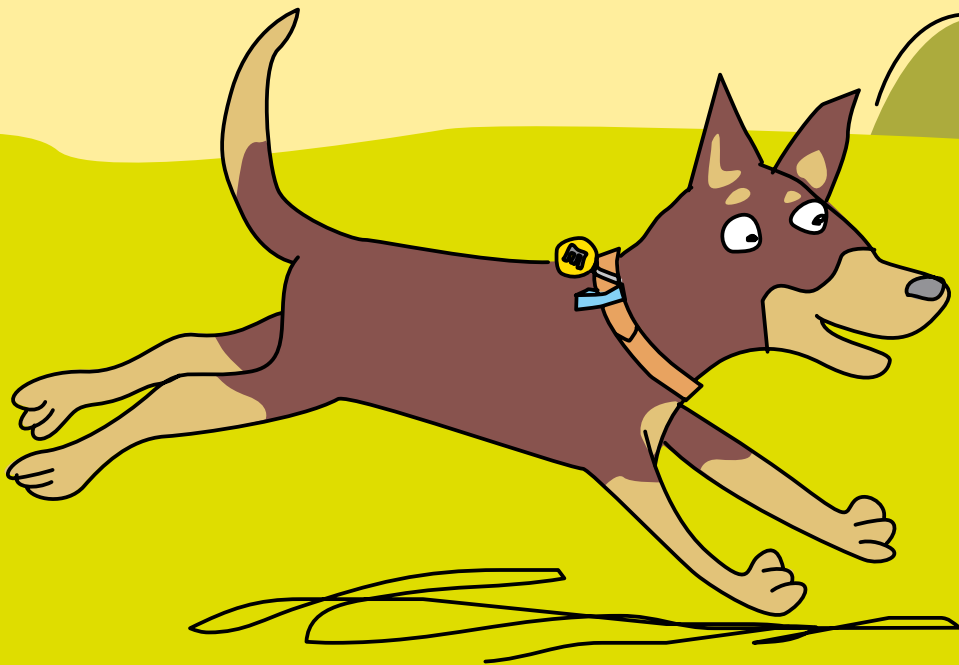


The next day, when Bruce, the vet, visited the neighbour's dairy farm, Penny went over and asked Bruce to check out Guzzler for us.

Dad said we could keep Guzzler until he decided what to do with him. The piglet would definitely not be staying long.

When I asked Dad if Guzzler would be staying long enough for us to take him to the school pet day, he laughed.

"No way!" he said. "That's a month away and I'll eat my gumboots if he's still around then."



Chapter 5

Penny and I had two jobs. The job that Dad gave us was to look after Guzzler. The job that we gave ourselves was to change Dad's mind about letting Guzzler stay. We didn't tell Dad about that plan.

We didn't have to work too hard on our plan because Guzzler was very good at it himself. He followed Dad around the house, wiggling his tiny tail. Before long he was nuzzling Dad's face with his wet snout whenever Dad was reading the newspaper on the floor.

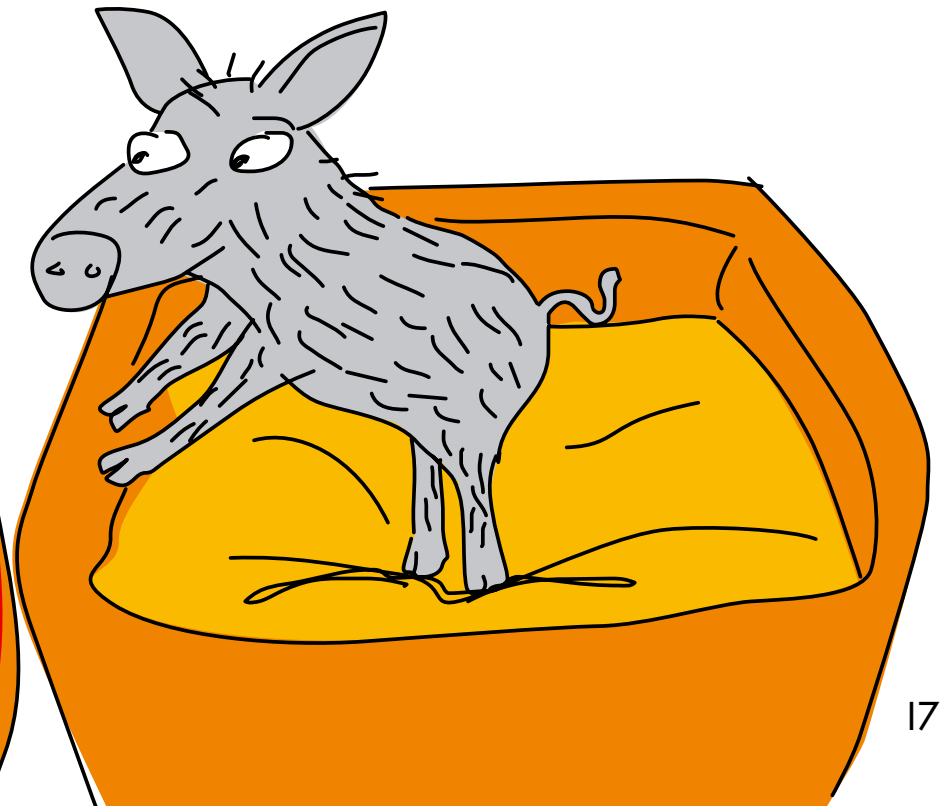
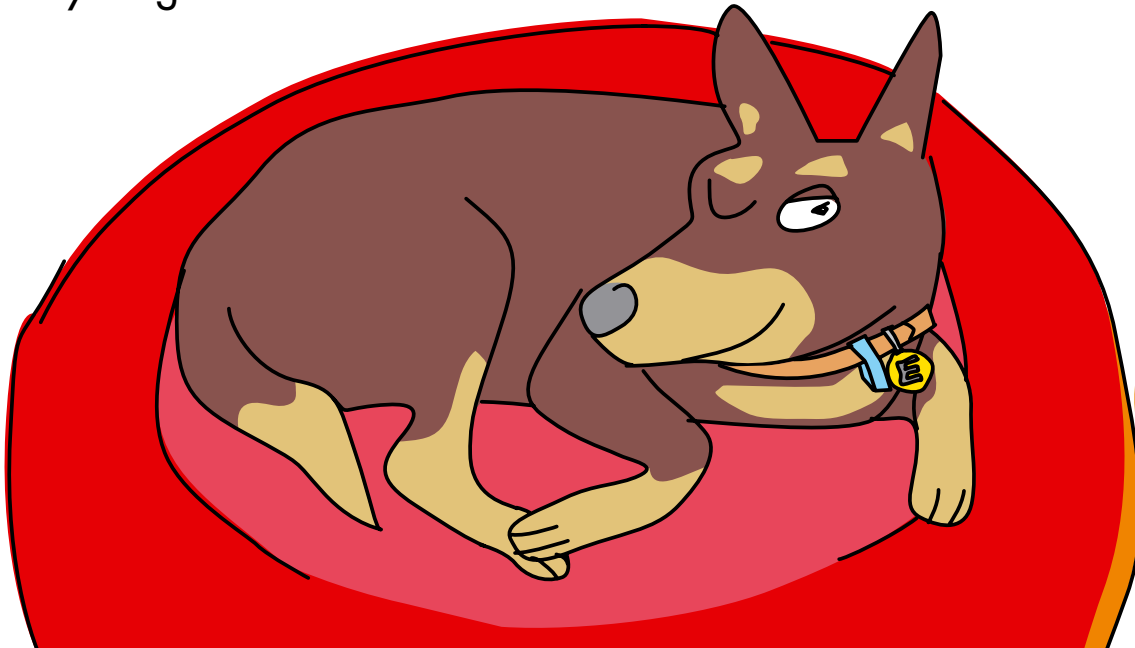
Dad tried to look stern when Guzzler begged for his bottle, but he couldn't help smiling when Guzzler toilet trained himself in five days.



By the end of the second week Guzzler had more tricks than Elvis. He came when we whistled, rolled over for belly rubs and by the end of the third week he could even answer the phone!

We noticed that Guzzler didn't like the ringing noise of the phone. If no one answered it, he would stop the noise by knocking the phone onto the ground and grunting into the receiver. This made Dad laugh out loud, especially when Guzzler answered calls from people trying to sell heat pumps.

One day Dad brought home a large dog bed for Guzzler to lie on next to Elvis. Penny and I knew then that Guzzler was here to stay, but we didn't say anything.

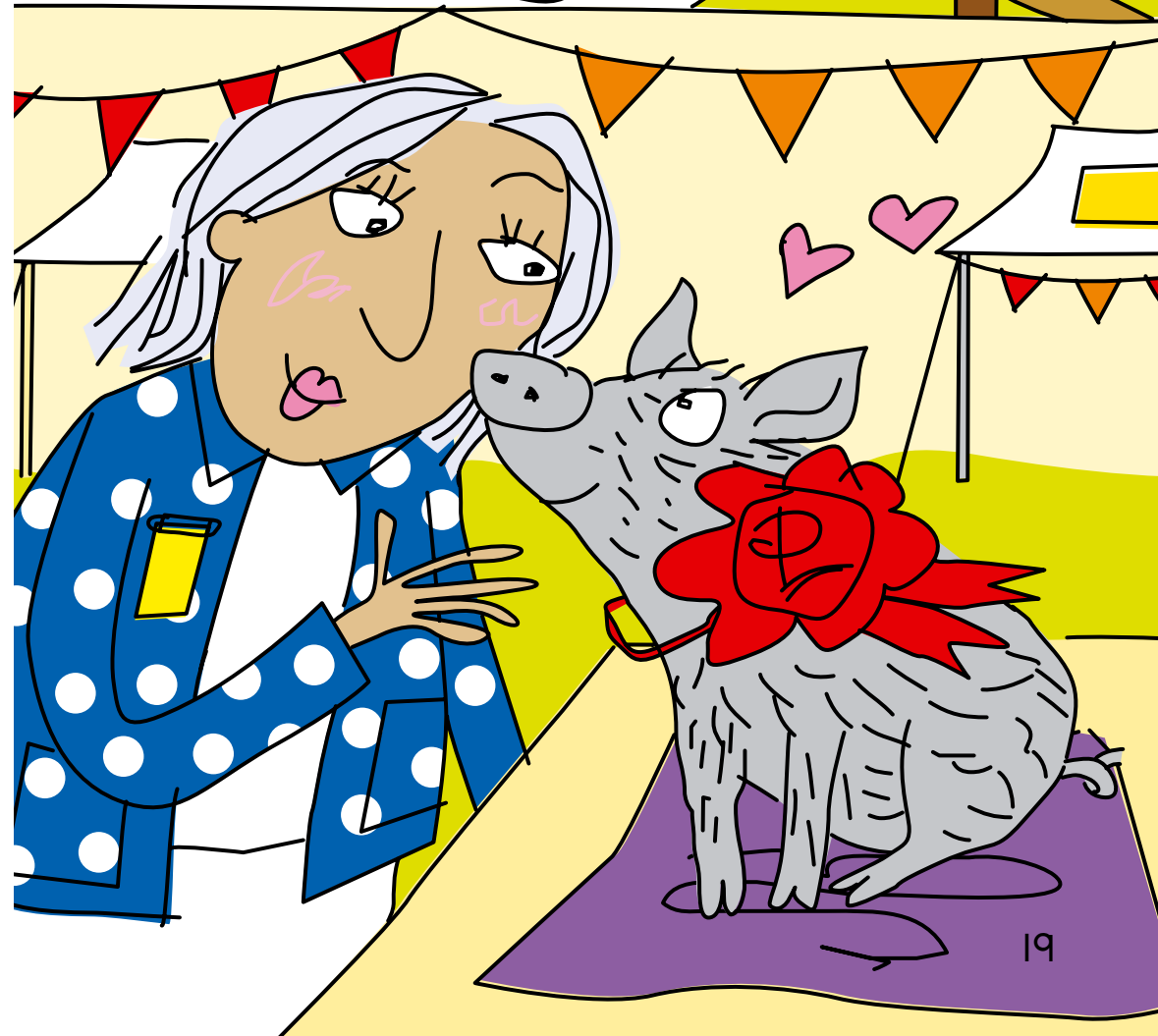
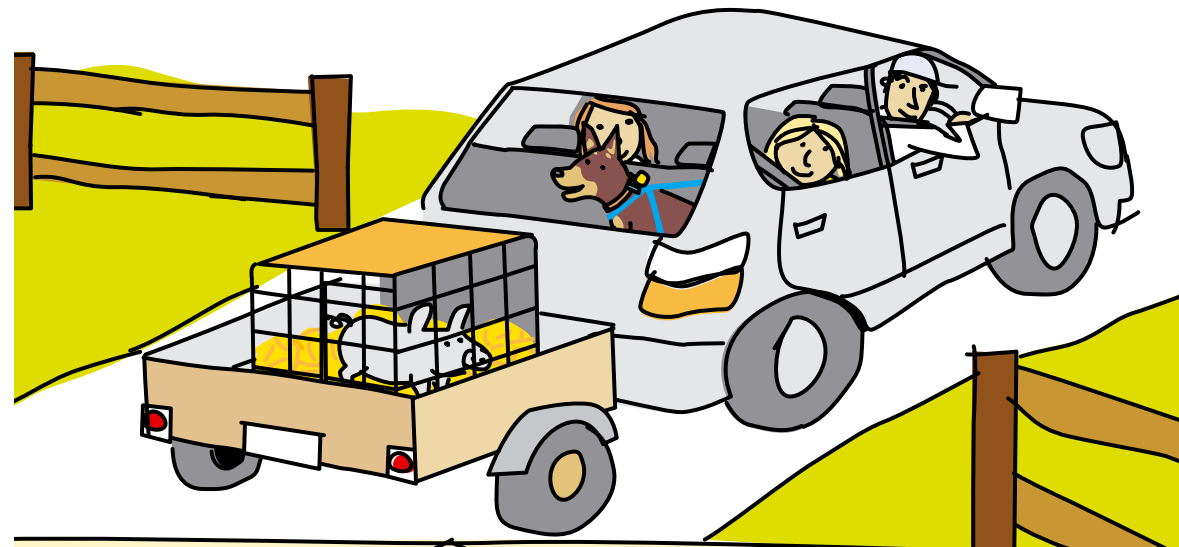


Chapter 6

When pet day came around, we were allowed to take Guzzler, and Dad helped us wash him. We went to school with Guzzler on the trailer.

Mum wanted to put Dad's gumboots on a plate for breakfast but we wouldn't let her in case Dad changed his mind. He was never going to change his mind. He loved Guzzler as much as we did.

As we got Guzzler off the trailer, some of the kids teased us about our pet being a wild pig, but Guzzler soon won them over. They laughed and clapped when he scampered over and nuzzled Ms Plumstone, the principal, who was the chief judge. They cheered at ring-time when Guzzler performed some of his tricks and they went almost as wild as Guzzler when Ms Plumstone awarded him the red ribbon for "Pig Performance Perfection".

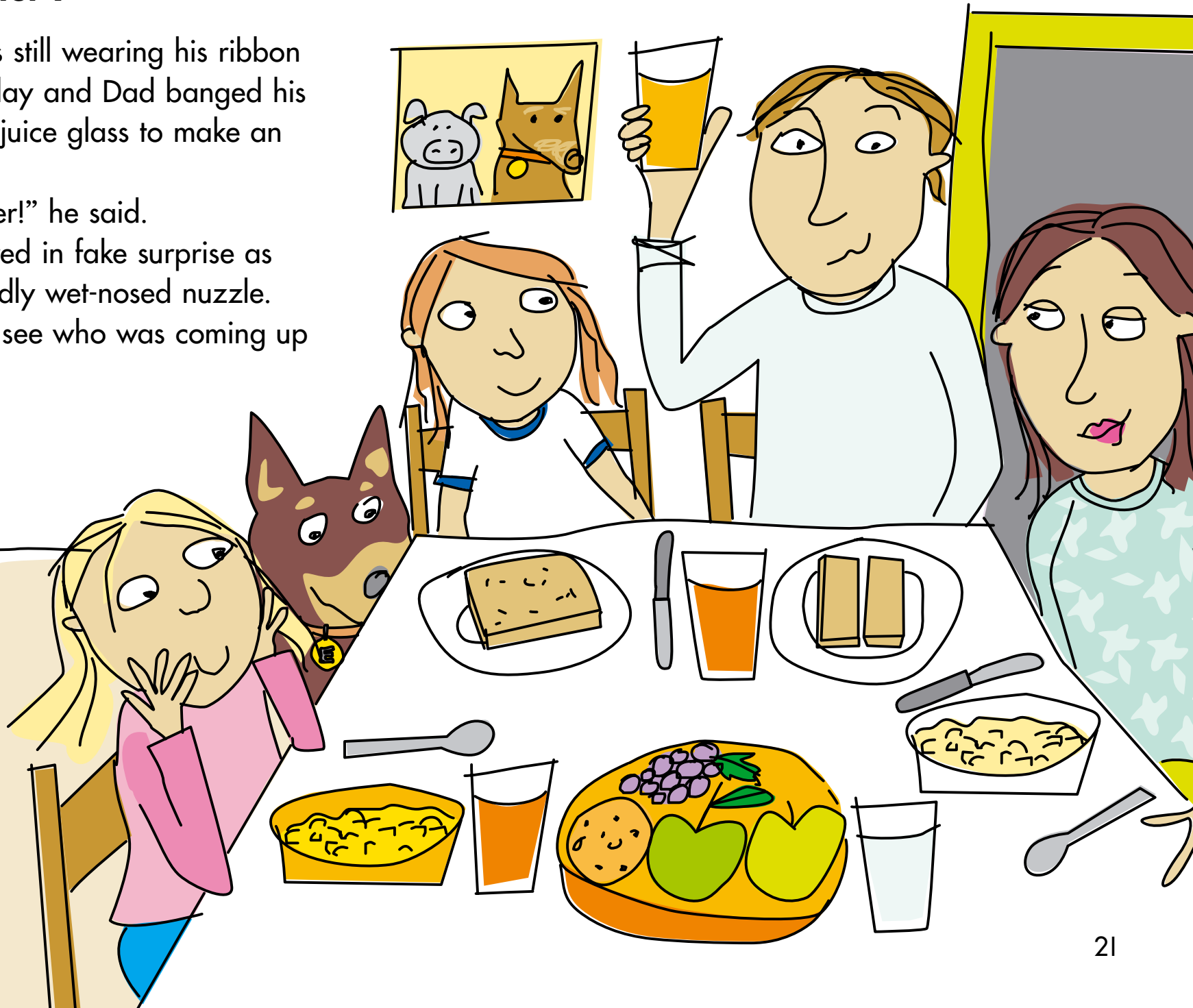
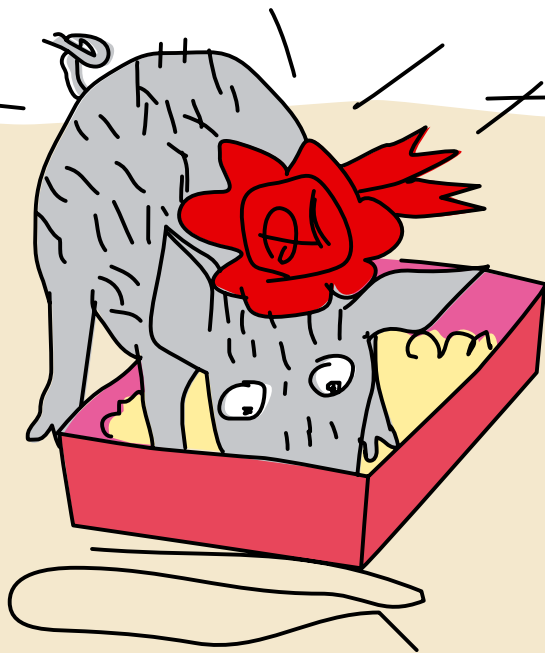
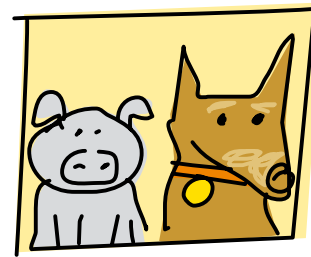


Chapter 7

The next day Guzzler was still wearing his ribbon at breakfast. It was Saturday and Dad banged his spoon against his orange juice glass to make an announcement.

“Guzzler can stay forever!” he said.

Mum, Penny and I cheered in fake surprise as Guzzler gave Dad a friendly wet-nosed nuzzle. Then he trotted outside to see who was coming up the drive.



The blue ute stopped outside the house and George got out.

“Great day!” he said to Dad. “Thought you might like to go pig hunting.”

“No thanks,” said Dad. “I have to build a permanent enclosure for this nosey monster today.”

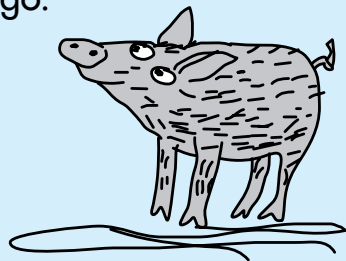
George looked at Guzzler and smiled.

“OK, maybe I’ll stick around and give you a hand,” he said.



Care of Pigs

- Pigs are strong so they need strong fences to keep them in. They are also smart. Once they have learned a trick like opening a door or a gate, they won't forget it. Pigs can even be house trained!
- Pigs are social animals and need to have at least one friend living with them to feel safe and happy. They do like the attention and company of people.
- Pigs are very clean. They like a separate toilet area, far from their living and eating areas.
- Pigs need a dry, sheltered sleeping spot that is cleaned often. They like to sleep on dry hay or straw.
- Pigs don't like being hot so they will wallow in a wet and muddy place to cool down.
- Pigs need a variety of food including fruit, vegetables and pig feed or grain. They need plenty of fresh water every day. Pigs also root around in the soil looking for food, tearing up the grass as they go.



**Visit kids.spcaeducation.org.nz to learn more
about caring for pigs**