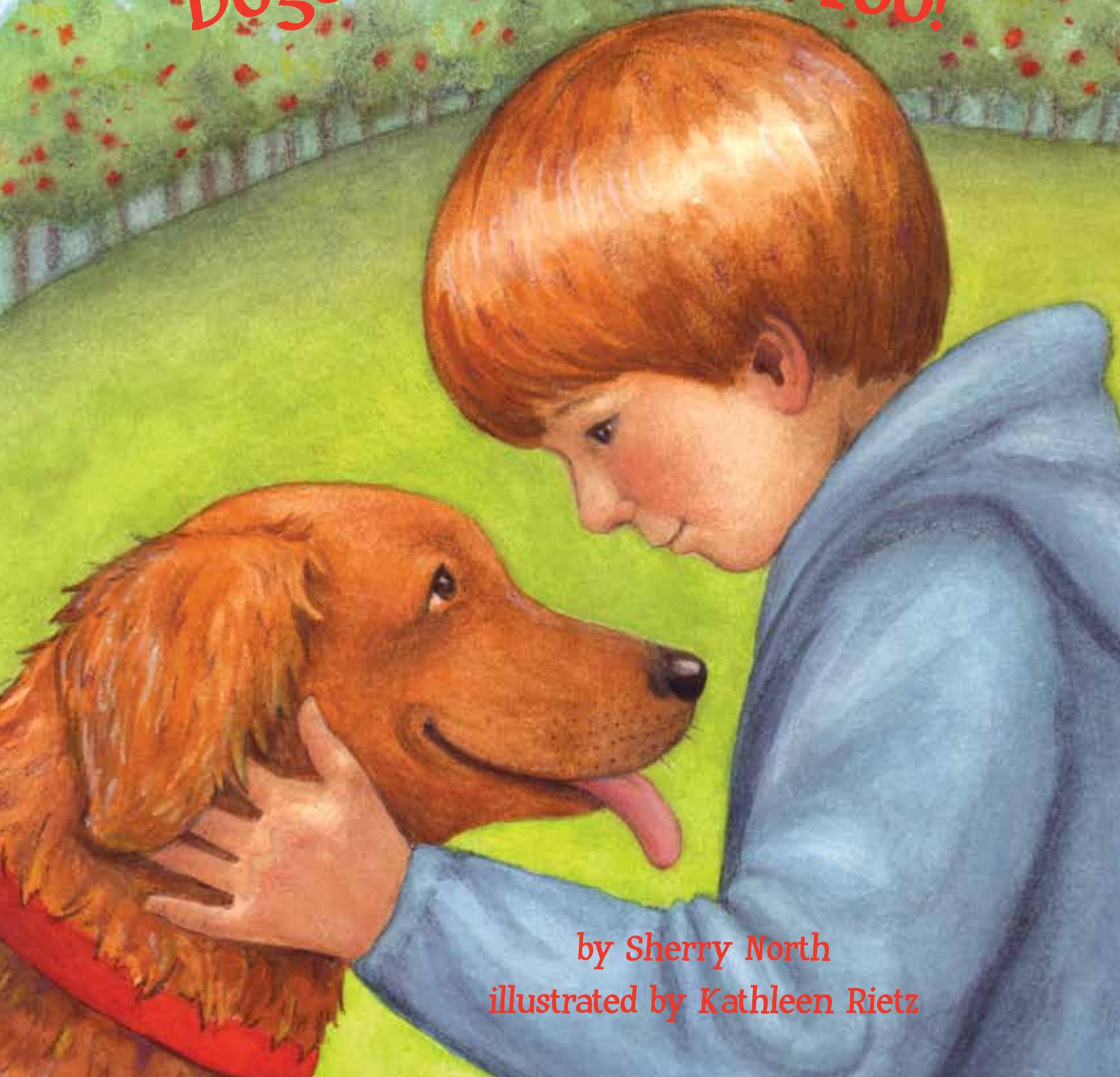


# Champ's Story: Dogs Get Cancer Too!



by Sherry North  
illustrated by Kathleen Rietz

# Champ's Story: Dogs Get Cancer Too!

Children facing cancer—whether their own, a family member's, a friend's, or even a pet's—will find help in understanding the disease through this book. A young boy discovers his dog's lump, which is then diagnosed with those dreaded words: "it's cancer." The boy becomes a loving caretaker to his dog, who undergoes the same types of treatments and many of the same reactions as a human under similar circumstances (transference). Medical writer and award-winning children's author Sherry North artfully weaves the serious subject into an empathetic story that even young children can understand.

Free online resources and support for the book at [www.ArbordalePublishing.com](http://www.ArbordalePublishing.com) include:

- For Creative Minds as seen in the book (in English & Spanish):
  - Understanding Cancer
  - Cancer True or False
  - Coping with Cancer and Chemo
  - Preventing Cancer When You Grow Up
  - Find the Healthy Habits
- Teaching Activities:
  - Reading Questions
  - Language Arts
  - Coloring Pages
  - Math
  - Science
- Interactive Quizzes: Reading Comprehension, For Creative Minds, and Math Word Problems
- English and Spanish Audiobooks
- Related Websites
- Aligned to State Standards (searchable database)
- Accelerated Reader and Reading Counts Quizzes
- Lexile and Fountas & Pinnell Reading Levels

eBooks with Auto-Flip, Auto-Read, and selectable English and Spanish text and audio available for purchase online.

Thanks to Michael W. Smith, MD, Chief Medical Editor at WebMD, for verifying the information in this book.

This book is the result of a partnership between Arbordale Publishing and the ASCEND Foundation, a 501(c)(3) registered non-profit with a track record of initiatives designed to make a measureable difference in the battle against cancer, one child at a time.

**Sherry North** is an award-winning children's author and medical journalist. A former medical producer for CNN Headline News, Sherry has written and produced a number of award-winning medical documentaries for public television, and she currently contributes to WebMD. In addition to *Champ's Story: Dogs Get Cancer Too!*, she has written *Because You Are My Baby* (Winner of a 2008 NAPPA Gold Award), *Because I Am Your Daddy*, *Sailing Days*, and *The School that Sank*. Sherry presents at many preschools, elementary schools, and libraries. She lives in South Florida with her husband, son, daughter, dog, and cat.

A lifelong artist and art lover, **Kathleen Rietz** received her formal training from the American Academy of Art in Chicago. For nearly two decades she has worked as an illustrator, designer, and product developer. In addition to *Champ's Story: Dogs Get Cancer Too!*, Kathleen's illustrated books include *Little Black Ant on Park Street*, *The ABC's of Yoga for Kids*, and *Prayers for Children*, as well as numerous Scholastic readers. She has taught art to children and adults at the Community School of the Arts at historic Wheaton College and through a home school program in her community. Kathleen lives in the Chicago suburbs.



Sherry North

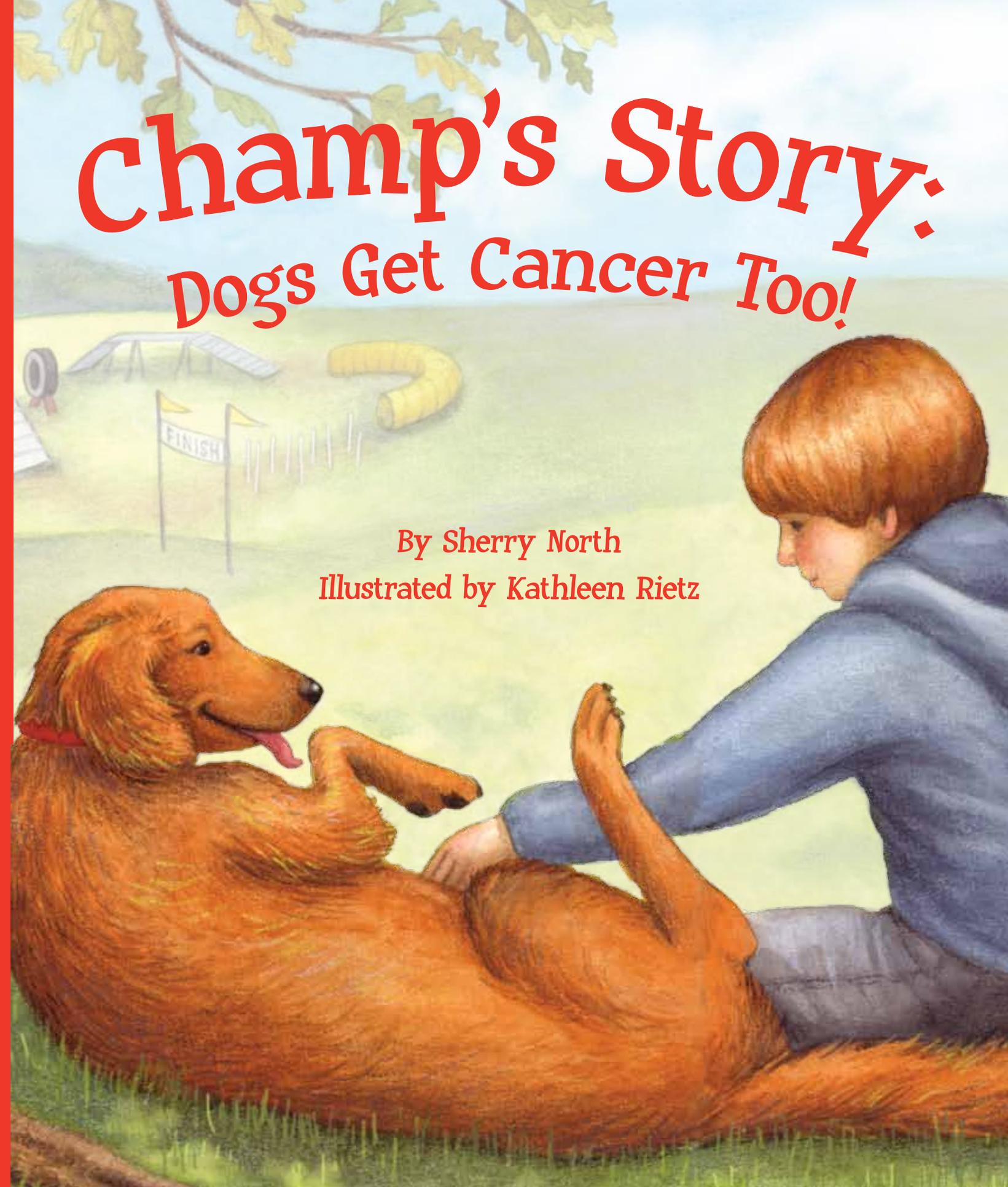


Kathleen Rietz

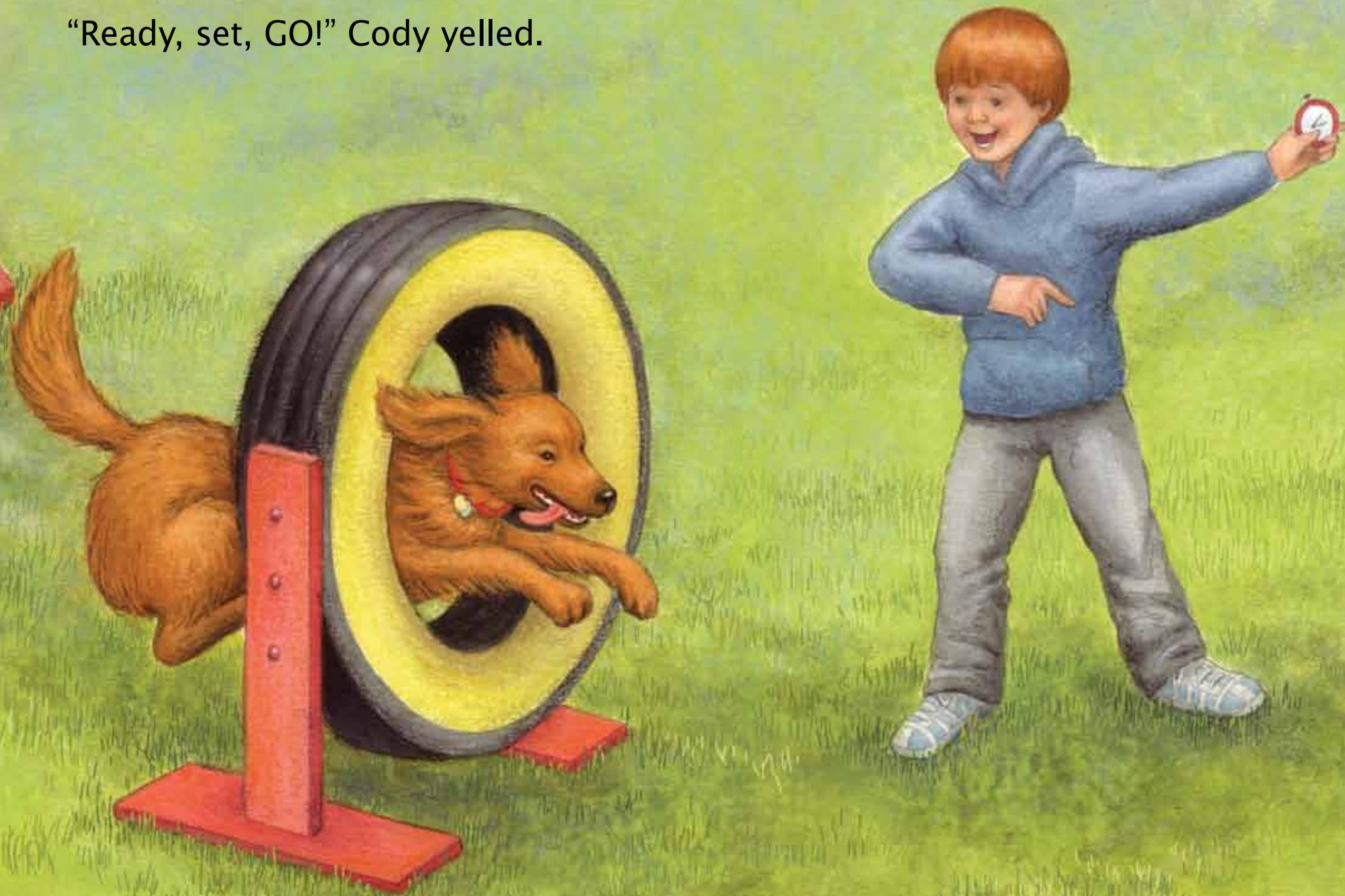
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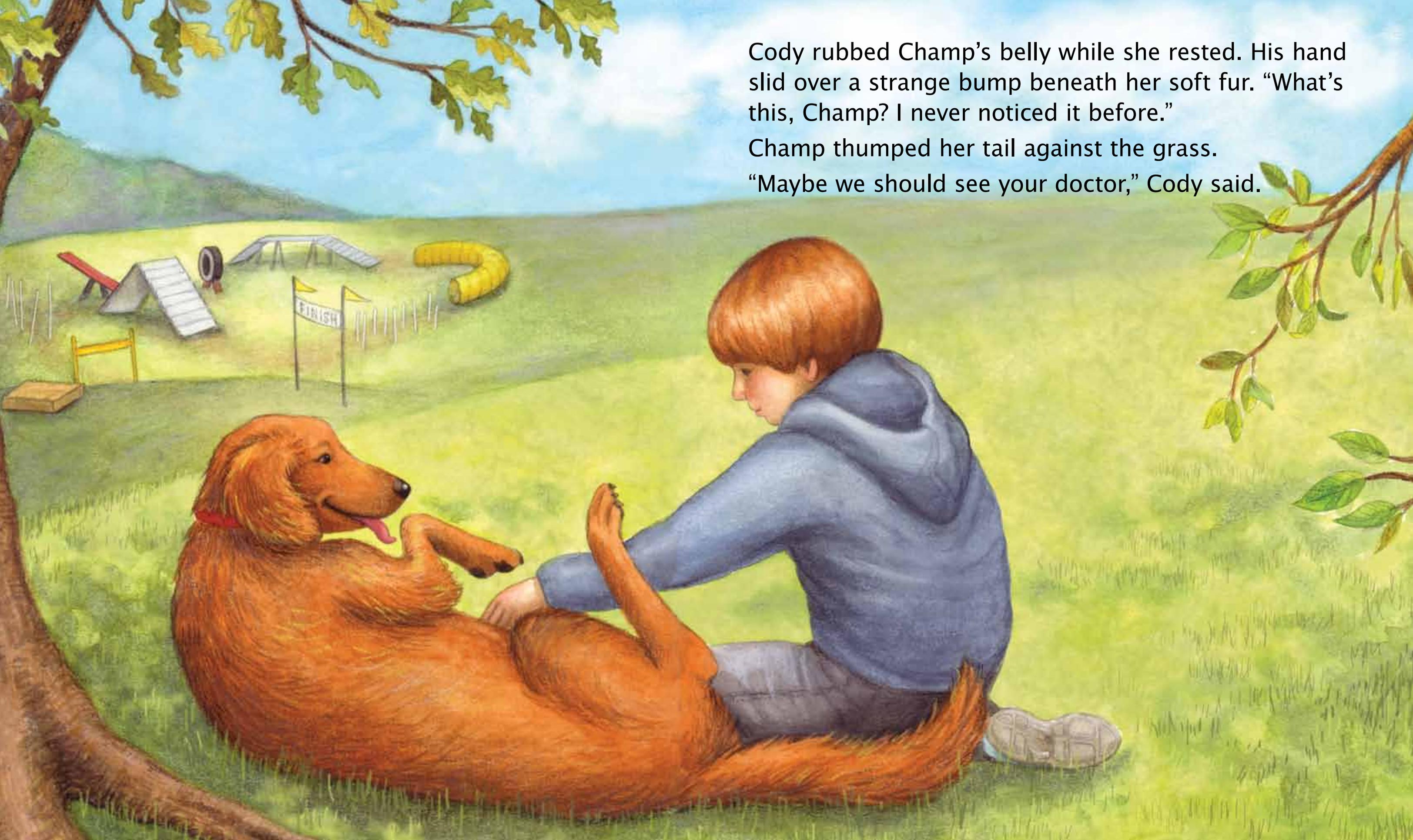


“Ready, set, GO!” Cody yelled.



Champ sprang off the platform and raced through the agility course. She jumped over hurdles, bounded through tunnels, climbed a ladder, and zipped down a slide. *Woof!* she called as she crossed the finish line.

“Fifteen seconds,” Cody said. “That’s your best time ever. You’re going to ace the agility show.”

A young boy with short reddish-brown hair, wearing a blue hoodie and grey pants, sits on the grass. He is petting a large golden retriever dog that is lying on its back with its tongue out. The dog has a red collar. In the background, there is a grassy field with a dog agility course featuring a ramp, a tunnel, and a sign that says "FINISH". A tree with green leaves is on the left, and another tree branch is on the right. The sky is blue with light clouds.

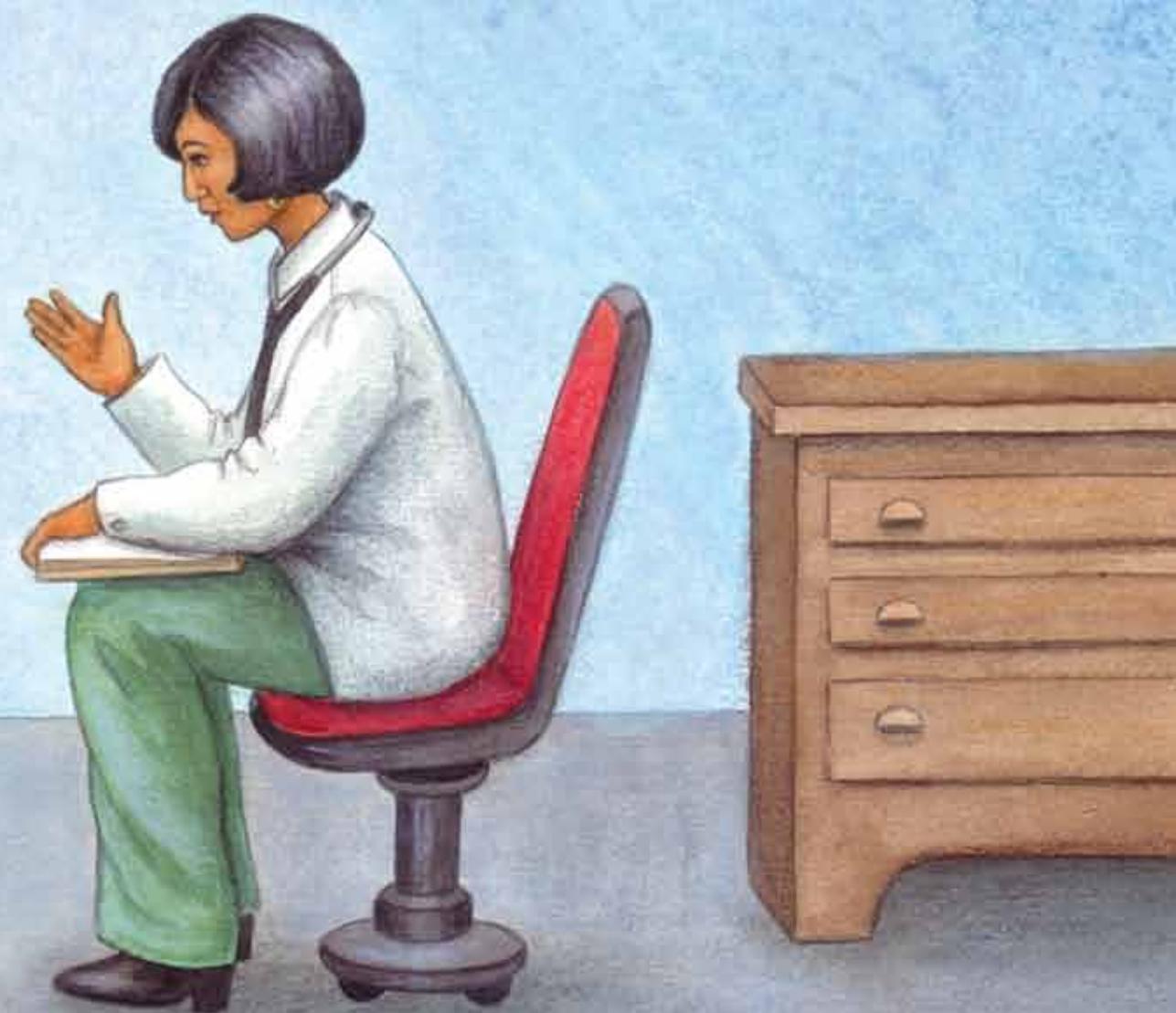
Cody rubbed Champ's belly while she rested. His hand slid over a strange bump beneath her soft fur. "What's this, Champ? I never noticed it before."

Champ thumped her tail against the grass.

"Maybe we should see your doctor," Cody said.

When they walked into the vet's office, Champ whined and put her tail between her legs. "I know you don't like coming here," Cody said, "but we'll be done soon." When the tests were finished, the doctor had some bad news. "Champ has cancer," she explained. "Like people, a dog's body is made of tiny blobs called cells. Sometimes these cells grow the wrong way and make the body sick."

Cody looked into Champ's eyes. "She doesn't seem sick." "That's the strange thing about cancer," the doctor said. "Patients can seem fine even though they're sick inside." Cody's throat felt tight. "Will she be all right?" he asked. "We have strong medicines to fight the cancer," the vet answered. "But she will have to come here every week, and she won't like it."



At home, Cody set out Champ's food and a fresh bowl of water. Then he had a terrible thought. What if this was his fault? Maybe he should never have fed Champ his peanut butter and jelly crusts. Maybe he shouldn't have given her that old sneaker to chew.

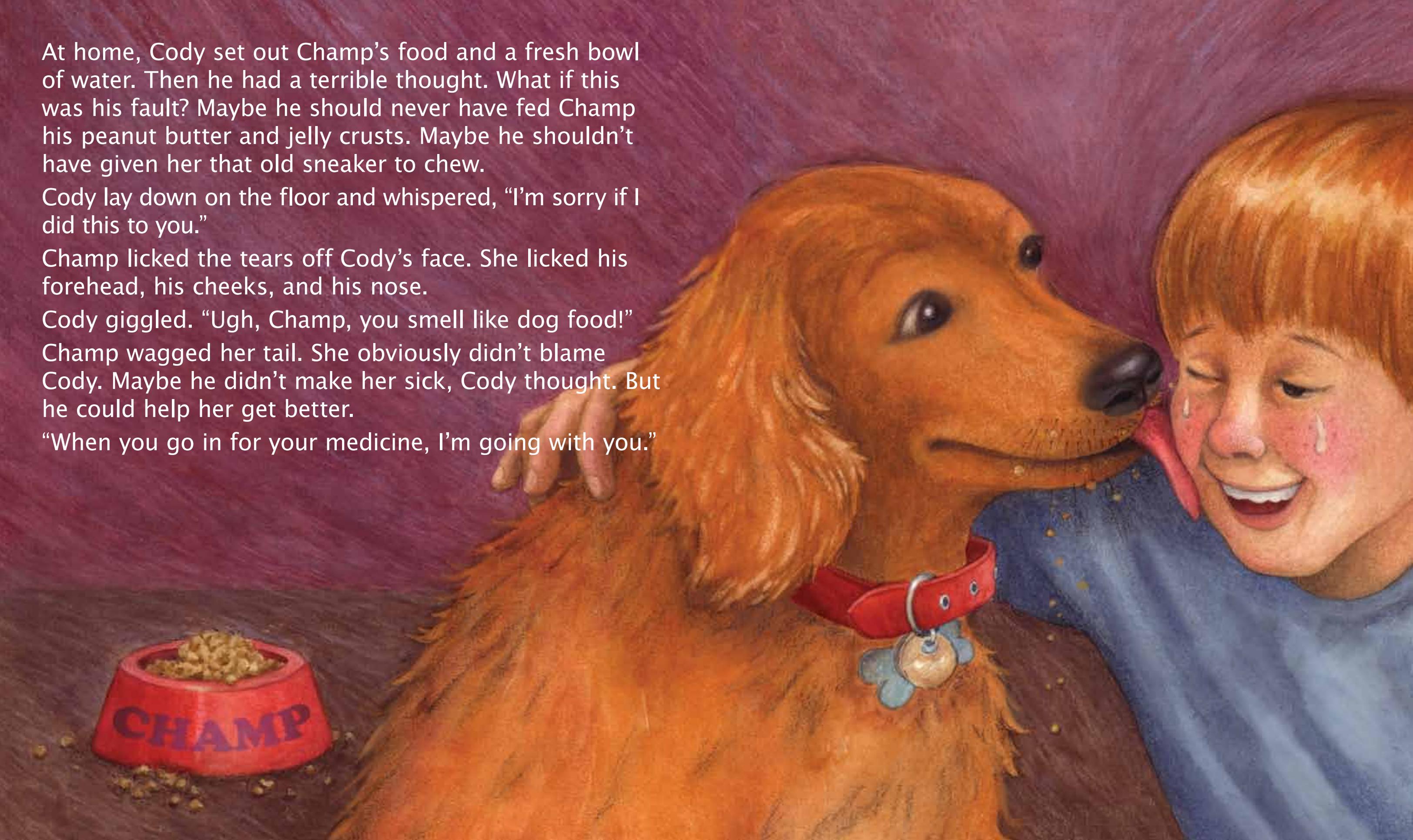
Cody lay down on the floor and whispered, "I'm sorry if I did this to you."

Champ licked the tears off Cody's face. She licked his forehead, his cheeks, and his nose.

Cody giggled. "Ugh, Champ, you smell like dog food!"

Champ wagged her tail. She obviously didn't blame Cody. Maybe he didn't make her sick, Cody thought. But he could help her get better.

"When you go in for your medicine, I'm going with you."



# For Creative Minds

The For Creative Minds educational section may be photocopied or printed from our website by the owner of this book for educational, non-commercial uses. Cross-curricular teaching activities, interactive quizzes, and more are available online. Go to [www.ArbordalePublishing.com](http://www.ArbordalePublishing.com) and click on the book's cover to explore all the links.



## Understanding Cancer

### Cancer Cells

Whether you are a person or a puppy, your body is made up of trillions of tiny cells, the body's building blocks. Sometimes, a few cells take on the wrong shape or size and grow out of control. These abnormal cells are known as cancer.

### Who Gets Cancer?

Cancer is common in older people (and dogs), but it is not common in children. It's normal for kids with cancer to wonder, "Why me?" No one knows why some kids get cancer, but one thing is certain—it is not because the child did anything wrong.

### Chemotherapy (Chemo)

Chemotherapy is a medicine that targets and kills those misbehaving cancer cells. It is usually given through a clear tube called an IV. Chemo sometimes hurts healthy cells, too. This can make patients feel sick to their stomach or lose their hair.

### Radiation Therapy

Radiation therapy uses high-energy rays (like strong X-rays) to target and kill the cancer cells. Like chemo, it can sometimes make patients feel worse before they get better. Radiation therapy may be used to treat cancer by itself or along with other treatments, like chemo.

### Cancer Research

Medical researchers are doctors who find and test new medications. Thanks to their efforts, cancer treatments are becoming tougher on cancer and easier on the patient. Many groups hold walk-a-thons and other events to raise money for this research.

## Cancer True or False

Do you think the following statements are true or false? Answers are upside down on the bottom of the page.

1 You cannot catch cancer from another child, no matter how much you play together.

2 People who need chemotherapy will lose their hair forever.

3 Animals that live in the ocean do not get cancer.

4 Most children with cancer will get better.

5 When dogs get chemotherapy, they lose their fur.



1. TRUE. Cancer is not like a cold or flu. It does not spread from one person to another. 2. FALSE. Chemotherapy can damage the cells that make hair grow. These cells get better when treatment is over, and hair starts to grow again. Children who lose their hair may choose to wear a hat, wig or bandana until it grows back. 3. FALSE. Sea lions, beluga whales, and green sea turtles get cancer. Sharks get cancer too, but not very often. 4. TRUE. Treatments for cancer may not be any fun, but they work. Most children get better and go on to have normal lives. 5. FALSE. A dog's fur grows differently than a person's hair. Most breeds do not lose their fur during chemotherapy (with the exception of poodles and some kinds of terriers). Unfortunately, most people do lose hair during chemo treatments.

## Coping with Cancer & Chemo

Children with cancer not only have to deal with being sick, but they also have to cope with some pretty tough treatments. Chemotherapy means sitting in a hospital room for hours, missing school, sports, dance or other hobbies. It can also make kids feel tired and crummy. Here are a few things that can help:

The body needs its strength during chemo, so be sure to eat nutritious foods. If you don't feel like eating, try breaking up meals into small high-protein, high-calorie snacks (like peanut butter, cheese, or yogurt) throughout the day.



Tell close family members how you feel about cancer and chemotherapy. It's normal to feel angry, frustrated, sad, or scared. Child Life Specialists are people who help children and their families deal with a serious medical illness. They can share tips for coping with the challenges that many young cancer patients experience.

Keeping up with homework is important during cancer treatment. It's a reminder that there is life beyond cancer. Doing homework can provide a sense of accomplishment and make it easier to start school again when the time is right.

Take favorite books, books on CD, movies, video games or magazines with you to chemotherapy. Doing an activity you enjoy will take your mind off the treatment and pass the time more quickly.

When you're feeling well enough, invite friends to visit you. Spending time with friends can help life feel normal again.



## Preventing Cancer When You Grow Up

No one knows how to prevent childhood cancer, but there are ways to try to protect against cancer when you grow up. While anyone can get cancer, people with a healthy lifestyle are less likely to get it as they get older. This lifestyle includes eating healthy foods, watching your weight, and getting plenty of exercise. Children who make healthy choices are more likely to have healthy habits when they grow up.



Eat lots of brightly colored fruits and vegetables, especially those that are high in antioxidants: berries, broccoli, tomatoes, red grapes, spinach, carrots, oranges, cherries, beets, red bell peppers.



Eat more whole-grains: whole-wheat bread instead of white; brown rice and pastas; oatmeal and other whole-grain cereals.



Eat less red meat, such as hamburgers and eat more chicken and fish.

Exercise for about an hour on most days of the week: bike riding, playing games outside, walking, running, and sports of all kinds.

### Find the Healthy Habits

Look for foods and activities that can be part of a healthy lifestyle. Select the healthy habit from each of the two choices. Then use the first letter of each healthy habit and unscramble the letters to find out what healthy habits make you.

Swimming or  
Watching TV

Eating a Cookie or a  
Tomato

Eating Oatmeal or a  
Donut for breakfast

Eating a Lollipop or a  
Nectarine

Eating Green beans  
or a Brownie

Riding a bike or  
Playing a video game

For Amy B.—SN

For Sunshine—KR

Thanks to Michael W. Smith, MD, Chief Medical Editor at WebMD, for verifying the information in this book.

A portion of the profits of this book are contributed to the ASCEND Foundation. In addition, the author is donating a portion of her royalties to children's charities.

**Champ's Story** and an accompanying stuffed animal golden retriever are an educational and awareness initiative of the ASCEND Foundation, a non-profit organization, partnered with Arbordale Publishing. It is ASCEND's vision to introduce the cancer book with cancer-related teaching activities for children into school systems. By utilizing the fun, fictional book, along with the stuffed version of its main character, Champ; teachers, parents, and caregivers will be able to educate children on social concerns and treatment protocols for cancer in a way to which young children can relate.

The ASCEND Foundation is a volunteer 501(c)(3) registered non-profit with a track record of initiatives designed to make a measureable difference in the battle against cancer. Its most recent initiative, "Gabe's Chemo Duck" provided a similar educational companion, free of charge to child oncology facilities across the country, as well as several oncology facilities in Europe. ASCEND will use all donations to fund "Champ the Cancer Companion" initiative with a vision to "Change the future of Cancer One Child at a Time."

If you or your organization would like to sponsor a "Cancer Companion" package for a child, a school, or for children's cancer centers in your area, please go to <http://www.ascendfoundation.org> or contact the office directly at 843-225-4055.

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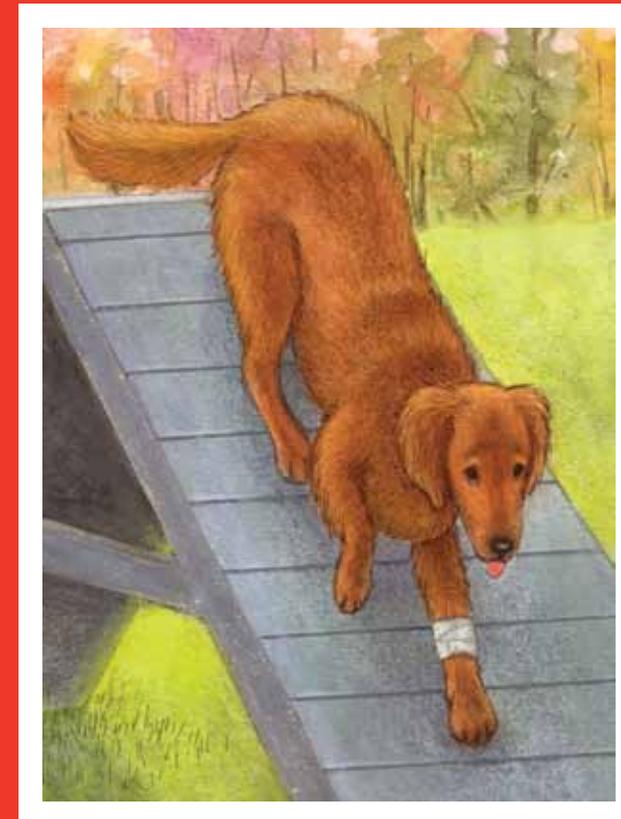
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