

Seven

meets Blackie



Australian Government



Queensland Government





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Hi kids

I hope you like these books as much as I do. I had lots of dogs when I was a kid and my parents taught me to treat them as if they were part of the family. Dogs have feelings and they need to be looked after.

I used to take my dog down to the park when I'd practise kicking the footy. We spent heaps of time together and both got lots of exercise.

If you treat your dog right, it'll be happy and healthy, and you'll have lots of fun together.

Before you decide to get a dog, you need to make sure you can look after it properly. It's important to give your dog plenty of food and clean drinking water, exercise and a nice, safe and comfortable place to sleep. If you don't look after your dog, it can become sick.

I want to make sure I teach my two girls, Frankie and Charlie, to love and look after animals. When they are old enough, I'll read these books to them to teach them that dogs are an important part of our community, and they need to be treated with respect.

I hope you enjoy reading about the adventures of the dog 'Seven' in these books and remember to look after your dogs like they're your friends.

All the best.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, which appears to be 'Johnathan Thurston'.

Johnathan Thurston
Rugby league player and co-captain of the North Queensland Cowboys

Elder Stan had already told his grandchildren about Seven and the other town dogs—how they had no owners and had to struggle to find food and shelter.

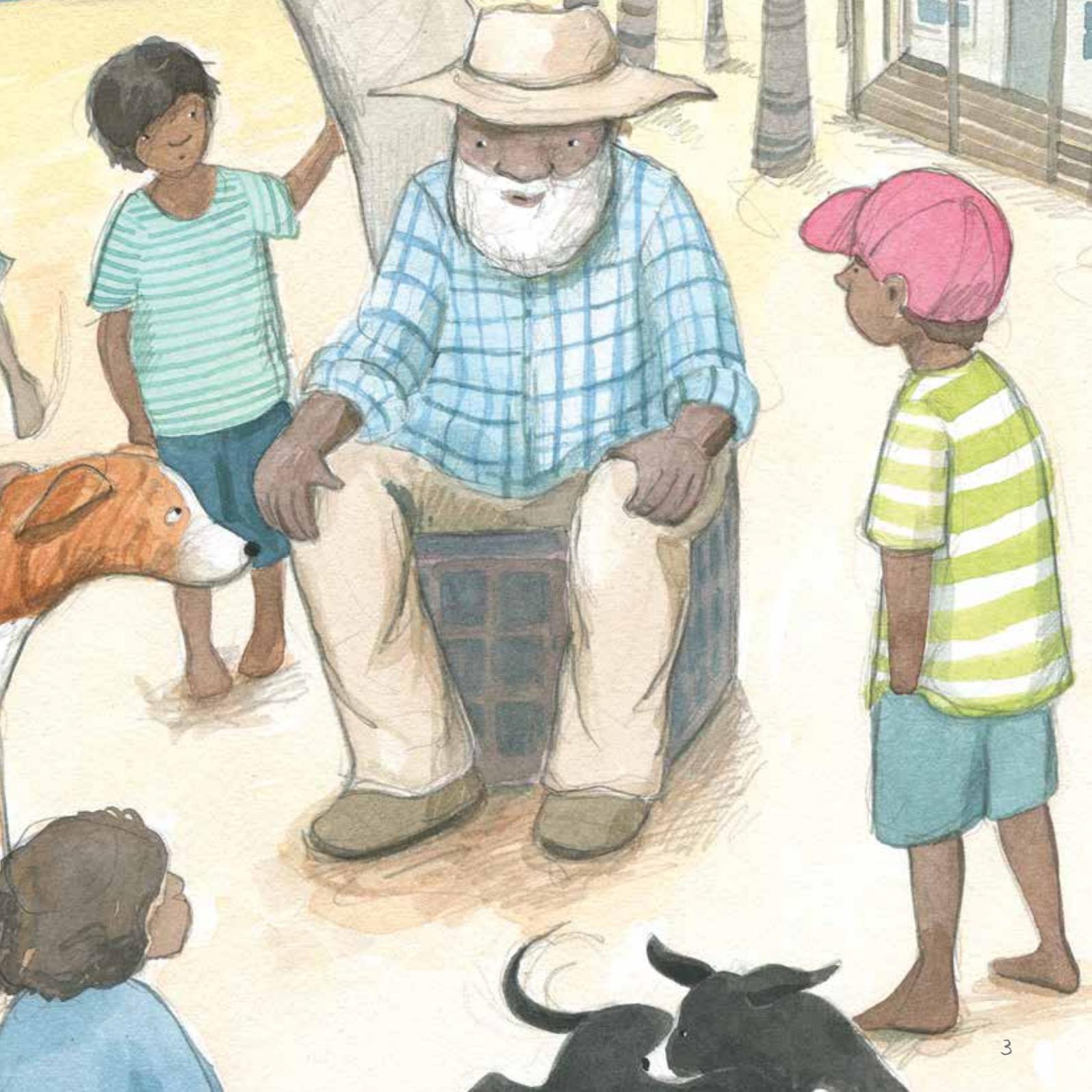
‘You can’t just play with a dog for a while and then forget about it’, he said to them. ‘Your dog is your responsibility.’

The children loved animals and wanted to find out more about Seven and his friends. They asked Elder Stan to tell them what happened to the dogs.

‘OK’, he agreed. ‘I will tell you. I want you to understand what can happen to a dog if it is not looked after.’

Elder Stan took a deep breath and continued the story of Seven’s life, telling it as Seven would tell it.

When you see my  hat above a word, turn to **page 22**, where I explain what the word means.



Seven meets Blackie



I was glad that I had met up with my brother Killer and the other town dogs. They accepted me as one of the mob and I didn't feel alone anymore. But our lives were very hard—most of the time we felt like we hadn't had enough to eat and sometimes people were [🐶]cruel to us.

Every day we went out looking for food. Butch could push over a bin using all his strength, but he was the only one who could do it. Once a bin was down, we would pull out all of the rubbish and sort through it—but when we did this, papers, boxes, tins and bottles would be all over the place, turning a neat and tidy lawn into a mess.

DOGS SHOULD NOT BE ALLOWED TO ROAM [🐶]freely and [🐶]scavenge for food.

We worked quickly but not quietly, scoffing down half-eaten sandwiches, buns and bits of meat and vegetables. Sometimes we [🐛]squabbled over a piece of food. People didn't like cleaning up our mess and we were often hunted.

One day we were very hungry and were heading to the old people's home to find some food. Suddenly, Butch noticed that one of the mob was missing.

'Hey, where's Little One?' he asked.

No-one knew. Little One was an older black and white dog who had never grown very big. She had no owner and no name, so we called her 'Little One'.





On the way to the old people's home we passed the school, but something was wrong there—people and dogs were running around everywhere.

'That's the [👨]**animal control** people', said Killer.

'What are they doing?' I asked.

'They're picking up dogs like us that go into the school grounds', he replied.

'We're not allowed in there.'

'Why not?' I asked.

'We're just not allowed—it's people's rules', Butch explained.

Little One was with the dogs in the school grounds and the [👤]dog catchers were rounding them up. The last we saw of her, she was in a cage on the back of a truck, disappearing down the road and around the corner.

We ran away from the school as fast as we could.

Roaming dogs will be
caught and put in
the [👤]pound.



As soon as *we* were at the old people's home, *we* started sniffing around the bins, hoping to find something good. Then *we* heard a bark from under the bushes.

'Hey!' said a big, skinny, old black dog. 'You guys aren't allowed to do that.' Well, *we* knew that!

'Who says so?' I asked bravely. I *was* really hungry and the bins *were* full.

'I do—I live here', said the black dog.

'Sure you do', I scoffed.

'True, my new owner works here, and I'm allowed to stay here all day.'

'So—you have a name?' I asked.

'Yep, Blackie, that's what my owner calls me. Can you see my new  collar? It's got my name on it. I've had other names from other owners, but I like Blackie best, because my new owner is the best owner I've ever had. She looks after me and I do things for her, like keeping you fellas from getting into the bins and making a mess.'

A dog and a responsible owner will share a special  bond.





‘If you have such a good owner, why are you so thin?’ asked Butch.

‘Don’t be cheeky’, Blackie answered. ‘If you really must know, it’s because I’m ten years old—but don’t you just love my shiny coat?’

‘You got fleas?’ I asked.

‘Of course not’, said Blackie. ‘You fellas hungry? You could stay for tea.’

‘Yes please’, we replied. ‘What’s to eat?’

‘Whatever the old people don’t eat. I sit at their feet and they give me what they don’t want. I never have to raid bins. Copy what I do, but pick different verandahs—don’t look like a pack. And mind your manners or you’ll be hunted out.’

We watched Blackie walk to a verandah, lie down with her back against the wall, and look like she was going to go to sleep.

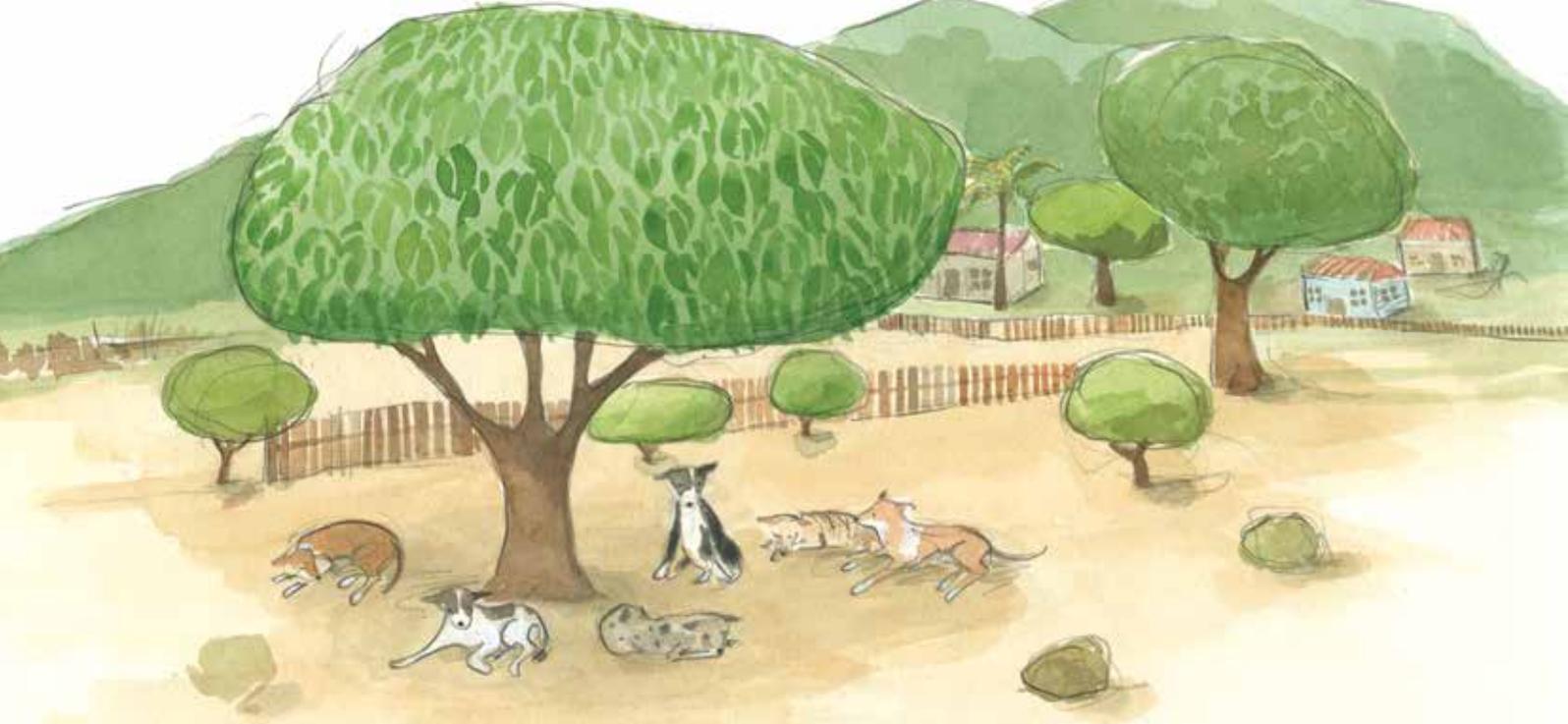
'She's joking', I scoffed. But we were amazed when an old lady dropped her hand off the armrest of her wheelchair, laid it on Blackie's head and started to pat her.

'I'll be in that', said Butch. Killer and I watched Butch walk slowly to a verandah and lie down. In no time, he got a pat from an old man.

'Ok, let's give it a try', I said, heading towards another verandah. I couldn't believe it—a grey-haired old man gave me sandwiches and milk. And although his hands shook, he patted me and smiled at me all through tea.



A dog can be
a friend and a
comfort to people.



Afterwards we lay in the shade of a mango tree.

‘That was the best meal I ever had’, I sighed. The others agreed.

Blackie was the luckiest dog—she had always had owners. She moved from one family member to another, and they all loved her. The old people liked Blackie too, so her owner let her stay there while she worked.

Blackie explained that she had to be kept clean, have worm medicine and get **health checks**. Her health had to be spot on, because some of the old people were **frail**, and unhealthy dogs could make them very sick. We had never met anyone like Blackie before.

DOGS must be clean, 
wormed and vaccinated.



After a while I sat up and said, 'Hey Blackie, what time is breakfast?'

Poor old Blackie—she started to worry that her new mates would be at the old people's home all the time and get her in trouble! She frowned at me and said nothing.

'Just kidding', I said, but I wasn't really. I would have turned up for every meal if Blackie let me.

'So, what now?' Butch wanted to know.

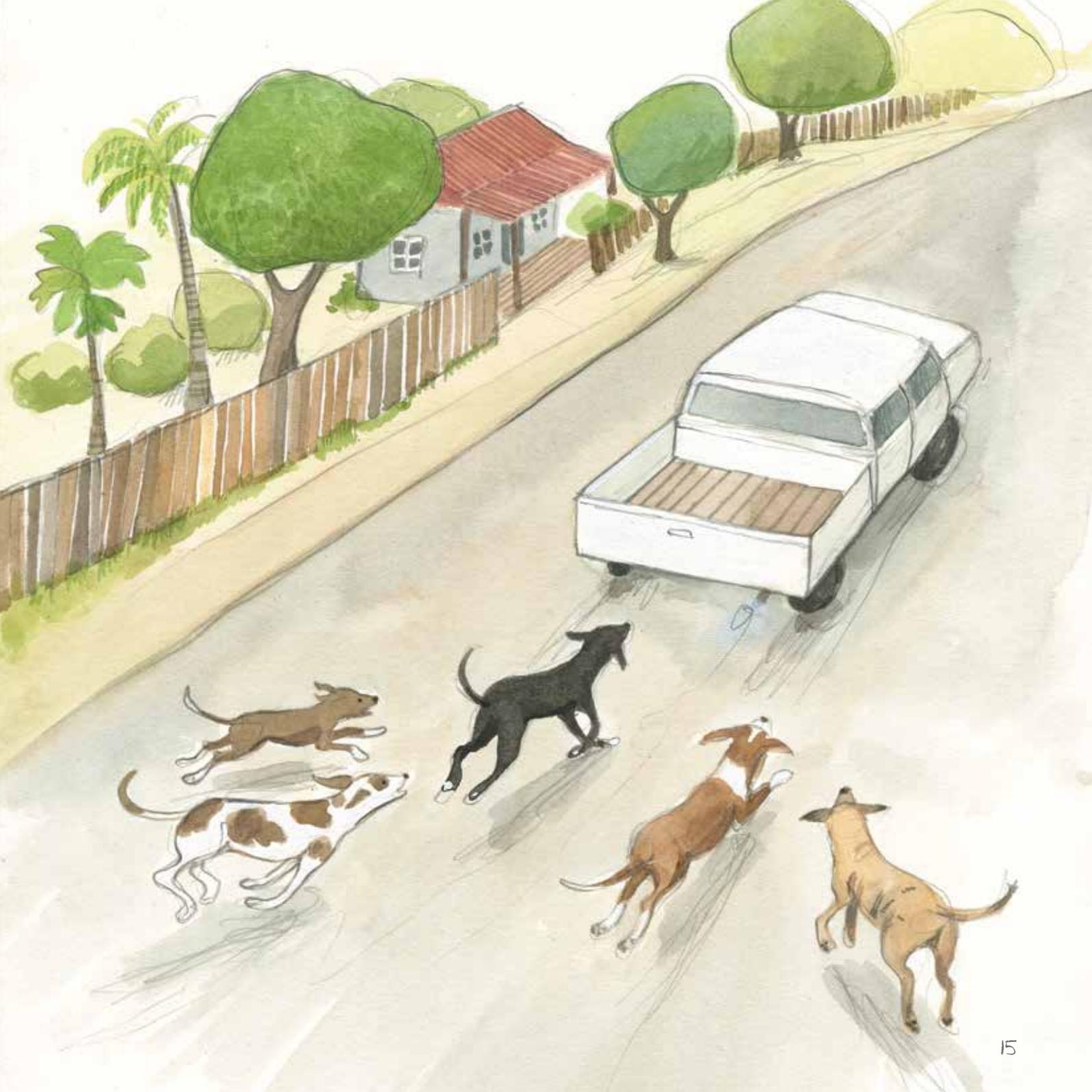
'We could go stir up a few horses and watch them run, or chase a car or two', said Killer.

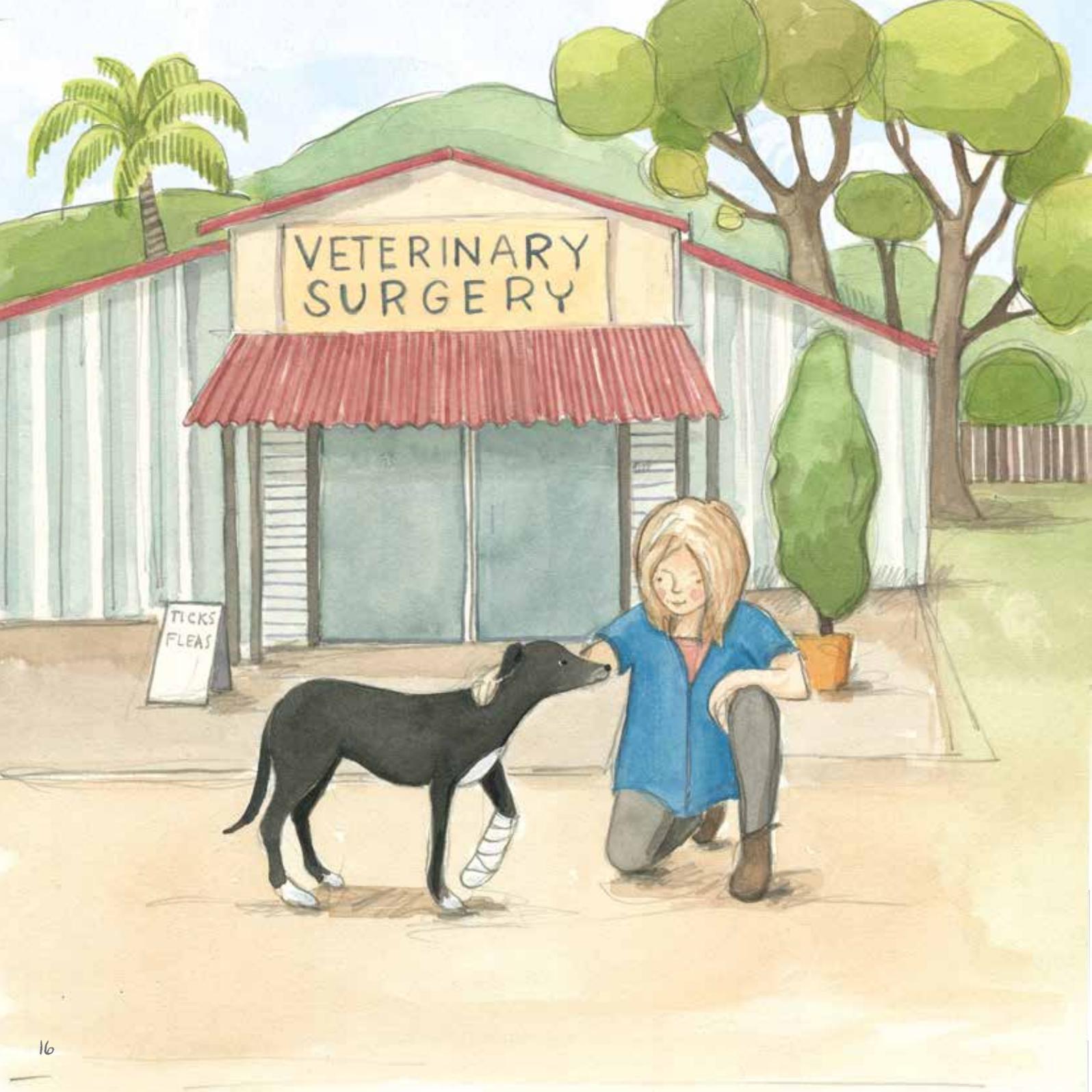
'I once caused an accident when I was chasing a car', said Blackie. 'Four people were injured and had to go to hospital.'

'Good fun?' asked Butch.

'Oh no, the driver didn't swerve', said Blackie.

'So the car hit you?' I asked.





VETERINARY
SURGERY

TICKS
FLEAS

'Sure did', said Blackie sadly. 'I broke a leg. It hurt so much I had to go to the  **vet**, and she had to  **operate** on me. She gave me a  **needle** and then, nothing.'

'What do you mean "then, nothing"?' I asked.

'I mean, I went to sleep, and while I was asleep they fixed my broken leg. When I woke up, the vet said I could go home. My leg was in a bandage made of plaster and I felt no pain, no nothing.'

'What's a vet?' I asked. There was so much I didn't know.

'A vet is an animal doctor. Vets use medicine to help make animals better when we're sick and can fix us if we break something, like my leg', Blackie explained.

'They also help us stay healthy.'

'How do they do that?' we all asked at the same time.

Blackie told us that vets give animals needles to stop them catching dangerous  **diseases**. 'They call them  **vaccinations** and you should start getting them when you're just a puppy.'

DOGS need to stay healthy. Take your dog to a vet for treatment, worming and yearly vaccinations.

'All of this talk is starting to give me a headache', Butch complained. 'Let's go down to the sandbar and play tag before the tide comes in. Then we'll be close to the pier so we can get an early night.'

'Not me', said Blackie. 'I have to stay here until my owner finishes work.'

'What for?' we wanted to know.

'Because we go home and have dinner, and then I keep her company while she watches television.'

'But you've already eaten!'

'Yeah. You get that! When you have an owner and they love you, they feed you regularly. It's so good. Sometimes she gives me a big bone that is almost as big as me. She says it keeps my teeth clean.'

We headed back to the pier. It was nice and safe there. Our mob played tag until it grew dark, then we curled up together to go to sleep.

I felt content until I looked at the empty space where Little One usually slept.

I wondered where she had gone after the dog catchers took her away.



Elder Stan paused and his grandchildren sat quietly.

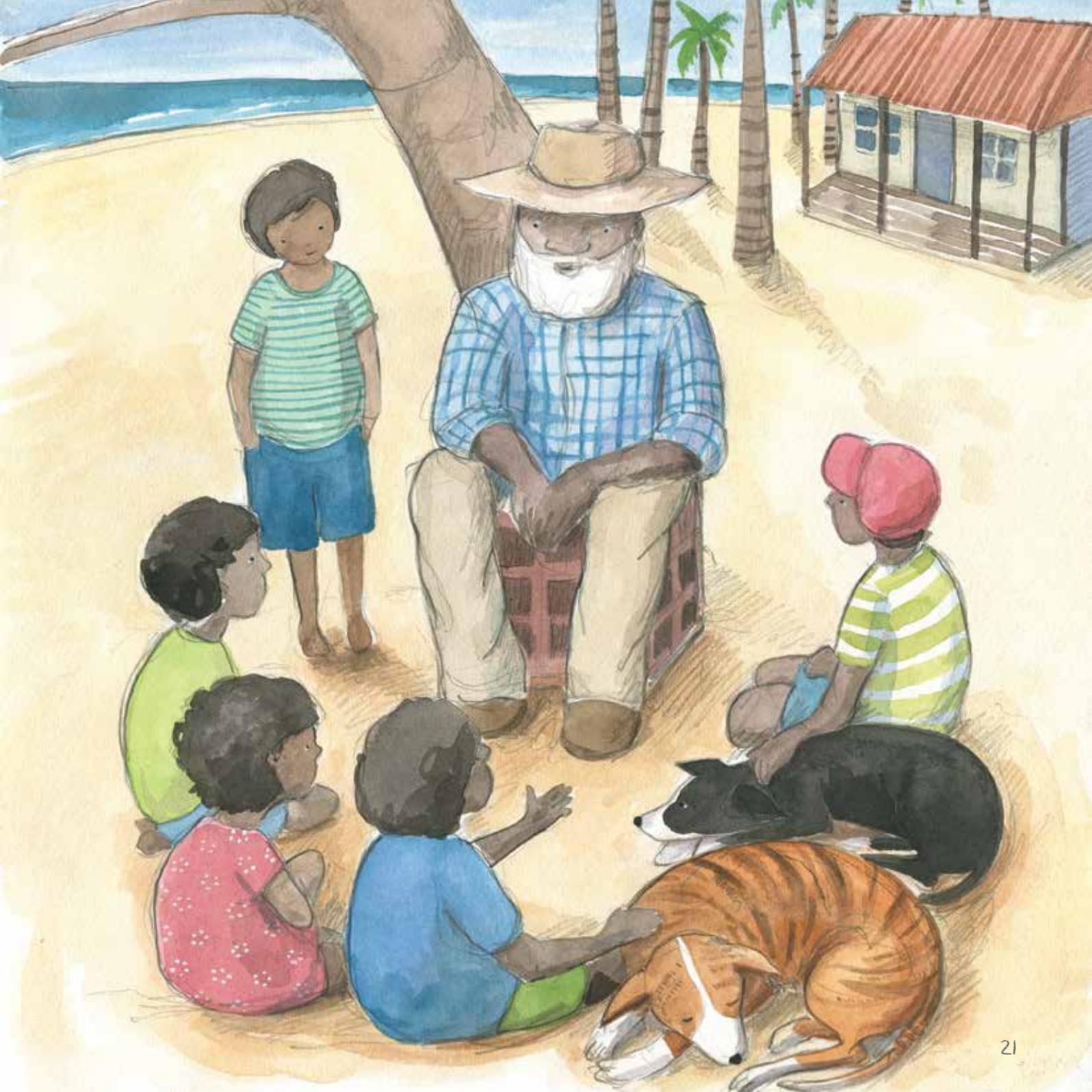
‘There’s a lot to do to look after a dog’, one of them said. ‘I didn’t think there was so much.’

‘Yes, there is a lot’, said Elder Stan. ‘Dogs need health checks and vaccinations, and you need to stop them from roaming so they don’t cause a nuisance or get hurt. But a dog can be a special friend and will love having good owners and a good home.’

He sat back and looked at his grandchildren. They all seemed a bit sad.

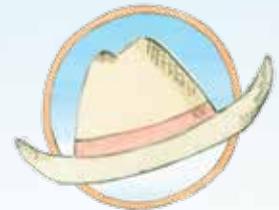
‘What happens to dogs when they are taken to the pound?’ one of them asked.

‘It’s late and time to sleep now’, said Elder Stan. ‘But I promise to tell you about that another day.’



Elder Stan's new words

animal control	part of the local council that helps look after animals in the community
bond	a close and trusting relationship
collar	a band around an animal's neck
cruel	unkind and causing pain
diseases	illnesses
dog catchers	people who work for animal control and have the job of rounding up stray dogs
frail	weak or in poor health
freely	without any limits
health checks	visits to the vet to check for disease
needle	a very sharp instrument used to inject medicine into skin



operate

perform surgery

pound

the place where lost and homeless dogs are kept until they are returned to their owners or find new owners

scavenge

search in rubbish bins and on the ground

squabbled

fought or argued

vaccinated

given medicine to prevent disease

vaccinations

medicines that prevent disease

vet

a doctor for animals



Seven

Story inspired by Rae-Jon Bunting

Rae-Jon has spent most of her life as a farmer, livestock dealer, horse breeder and trainer. Now retired, she works harder than ever as a voluntary educator and animal welfare crusader in Indigenous communities. She is in regular contact with Indigenous communities, helping children learn how to look after their animals and assisting the community generally with animal welfare and management.

Rae-Jon's original story was the inspiration for this book.

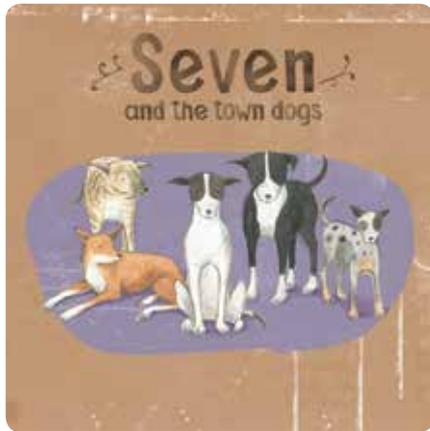
Special thanks

To the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries production team: Ian Rodger and Chris Hollingdrake (coordinators); Matt Hopewell (manager); Samantha Castano (graphic designer); Tamsin Ainslie (illustrator); Amanda J Morgan and Robyn Wilkie (editors).

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Book series



Book 1



Book 2



Book 3





