

# Seven

finds a home



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 read 'Johnathan Thurston'. The signature is stylized and cursive, with a large loop at the end.

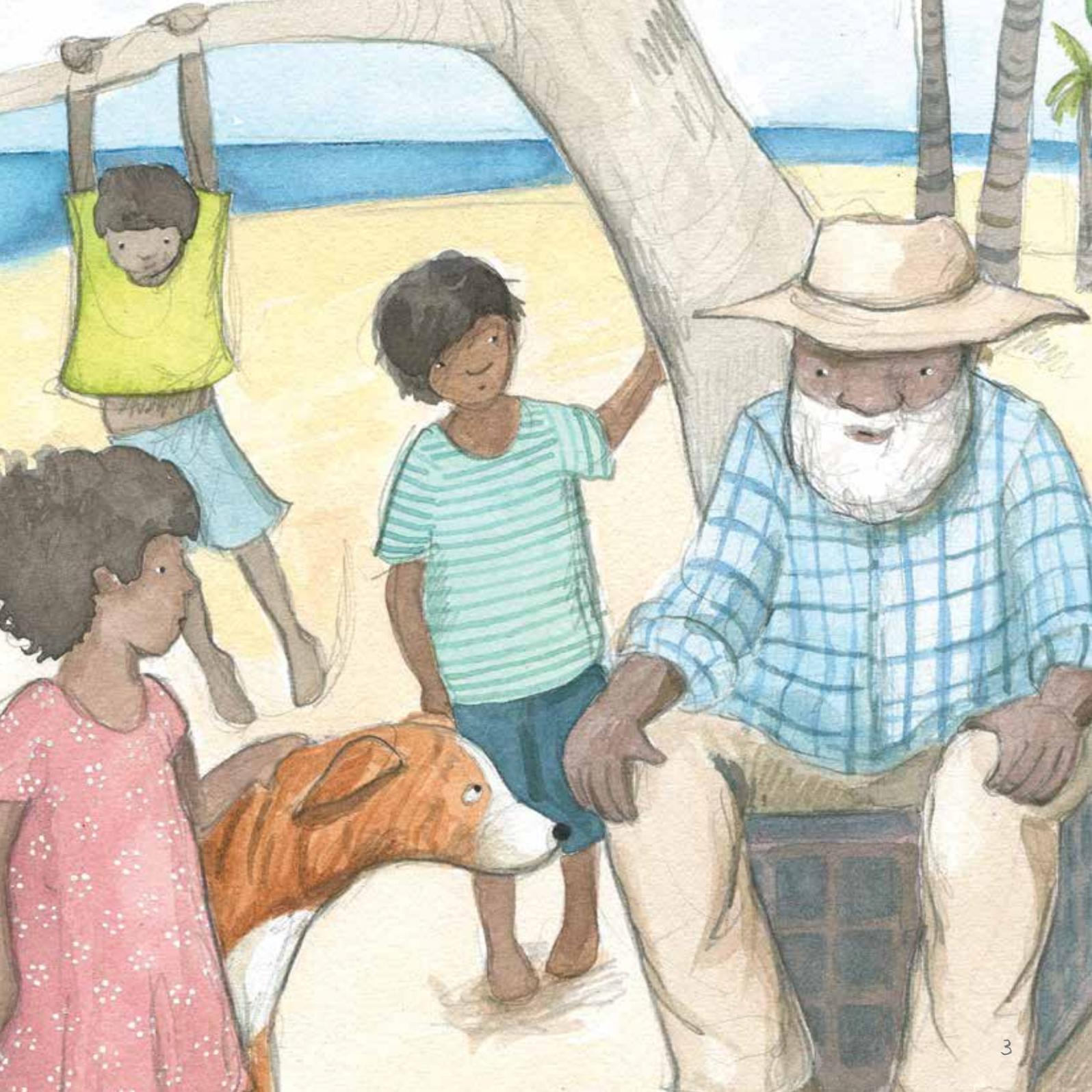
Johnathan Thurston  
Rugby league player and co-captain of the North Queensland Cowboys

Elder Stan's grandchildren had loved hearing the story of the dog Seven, the other town dogs and their friend Blackie. They urged Elder Stan to continue the story. After repeated calls to 'Go on, go on', he agreed.

'Remember,' he said 'I am telling you this story as Seven would tell it so that you understand how dogs feel when they are not looked after. If you have animals, you need to care for them properly.'

He took a long, deep breath and continued.

When you see my  hat above a word, turn to **page 30**, where I explain what the word means.



# Seven

finds a home



The night drew in, clear and warm, as I lay with the other town dogs under the pier. For once, our stomachs were full, and this made us happy and sleepy. I hoped Little One had eaten a good meal too, wherever she was.

WELL-FED DOGS ARE HAPPY DOGS.

‘Hey, look who’s coming!’ Killer whispered suddenly. ‘Stay quiet and still. The camp dogs are heading our way.’

‘We could be in trouble’, he went on, looking worried. ‘There’s only one way out of here and that will bring us nose to nose with Diesel. We could all get ripped up.’

‘Bring it on—we’re as strong as them’, I said, feeling brave.

‘No, we’re not’, said Killer. ‘They always get what they want by fighting—I’ve seen them. We haven’t got a chance. And I told you before, keep quiet!’

‘You haven’t been alone as long as I have and you’re not  **street smart**’, he scolded. ‘If you don’t listen and pay attention, you won’t live long enough to learn.’

‘Oh no!’ Butch exclaimed. ‘Here comes Little One ... she must have escaped from animal control. She’s got a fish in her mouth and she hasn’t seen Diesel—she’ll lead the camp dogs straight to us.’





## DOGS that fight can get terrible injuries.

The camp dogs soon spotted Little One, and it was on. We watched in terror as she was set upon. We couldn't do anything to help her.

When it was over and the camp dogs had gone, Little One lay in the sand, not showing any sign of life. We stayed under the pier, shaking with fear and worried the camp dogs would return.

When he thought it was safe, Killer crept out to check on Little One. He gently sniffed her, then ran back to us.

'She's alive, but she needs help', Killer whispered, still worried that the camp dogs could return.

'What can we do?' Butch wanted to know.

'She needs an owner who could call a vet, but that's just dreaming', Killer said.

'Dreaming ... dreaming! That's the answer', said Butch. 'Dog dreaming is the answer.'

'What do you mean?' Killer asked.

'Dog dreaming ... we have to find someone who has a  dog totem, and they'll look after her. Help me pull her under the pier and let's start searching', Butch ordered.

'I think I know a family who have the dog as their totem', he said. 'Let's start there.'

Butch led us to the house where he thought the family lived. We sat and watched to see who lived there. It was one of the dog catchers!

KEEPING YOUR DOG SECURE AT HOME WILL HELP ANIMAL  
CONTROL KEEP THE STREETS SAFE.



'Think about it—it makes sense', said Killer. 'If this dog catcher wants to help a dog, he has to catch it first.'

'Not all dog catchers are dog dreaming people—but I know this one is and his job is to look after us', explained Butch.

'But how do we get him to come with us?' Killer asked.

'I've got an idea, but you'll have to do exactly as I say or it won't work', said Butch.

We all agreed and listened carefully as Butch laid out the plan.

As soon as the people of the town started heading off to work, we gathered under a big tree where the council workers parked their cars. Two men with yellow jackets on walked up to a truck that had a dog cage on the back.

'That's them', said Butch.

Butch barked at the men. Killer growled and, feeling brave, I joined in. It was working ... each man grabbed a  and moved towards Butch.

Roaming dogs can be dangerous and a nuisance. They will be caught and put in the pound.

Butch retreated just beyond the men's reach, and we all joined him, barking up a storm. We ran towards the pier and our injured friend. The dog catchers ran too—they were not going to let us get away.

We headed down to the sand and dashed under the pier, followed by the dog catchers. Then we ran out the other side and into the long grass. But the dog catchers didn't follow us. They saw Little One, stopped, gently picked her up and carefully carried her to their truck. We watched them drive away.

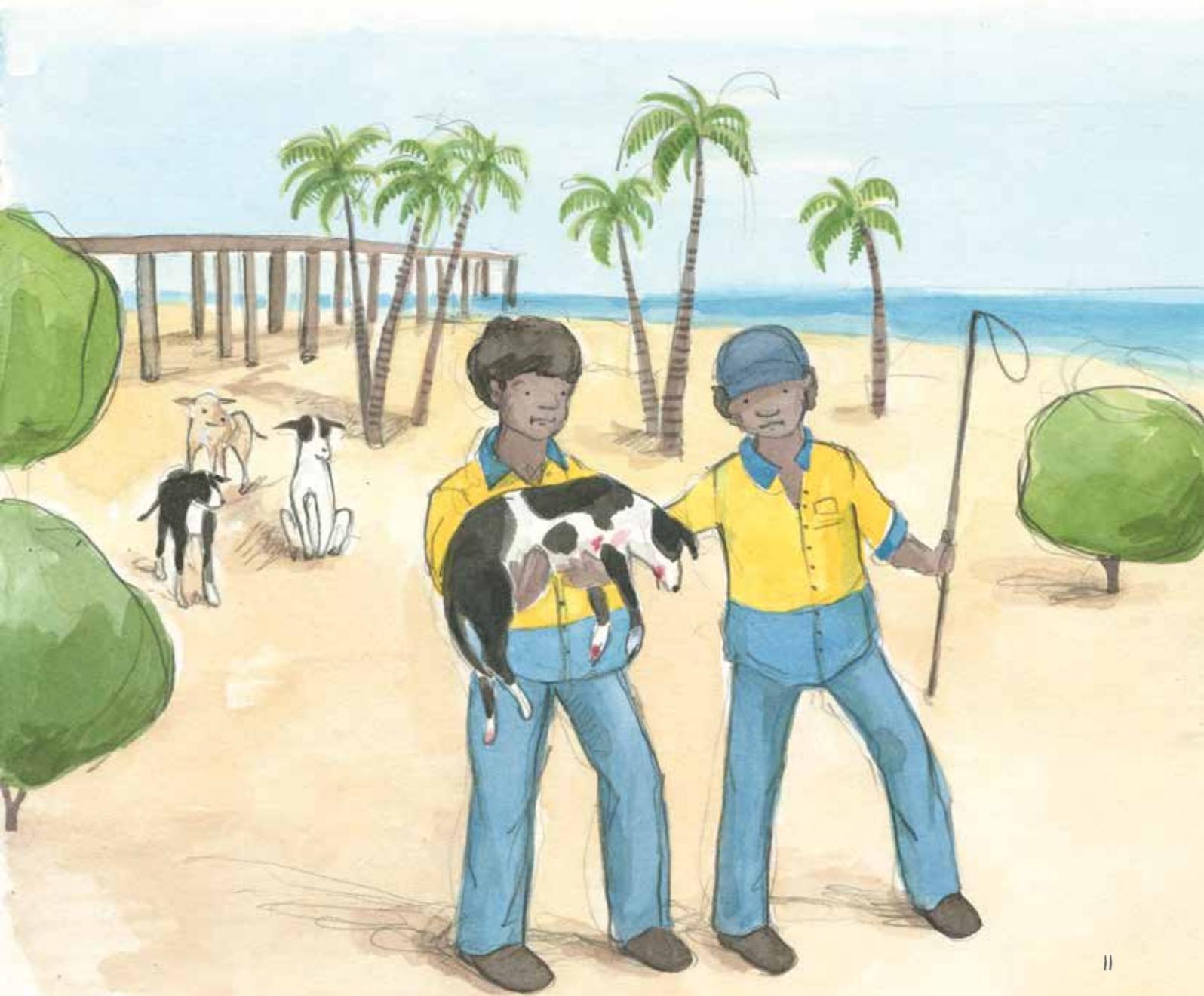
'How can you be sure that they'll help?' I asked.

'Well, I figure if they are dog dreaming people, they will want to look after us. We'll soon see', Butch said.

Tired and hungry, we headed off to the mall to find breakfast. There wasn't much happening at the mall, and there weren't many people around.

'I know one more place we can try', Killer announced. 'The hospital. But you have to be careful—they don't like us there, so keep your eyes open fellas.'

Adults such as animal control workers and vets can help an injured dog get better.





Animal control  
patrols  
the whole  
community for  
stray dogs.

But at the hospital we were so hungry and so busy looking for food that we forgot about the warning Killer gave us. None of us saw the two dog catchers hiding behind the bushes, poles in hand and yellow jackets on.

Killer, Butch and two others were caught before they knew what was happening. They were locked in cages on the truck, which drove down the road and pulled into a big building.

The rest of us watched silently and wondered how we would survive without our friends.

A few weeks later, still missing our friends, we visited Blackie at the old people's home. She told us that animal control were looking for the airport mob and were using traps to catch them.

'Why are they making such an effort?' I asked.

'Those dogs are really sick and need to be treated', said Blackie. 'They're full of worms and  **mange** too, which can make people itchy. Animal control won't stop until they catch all of them.'

Mange is a serious disease caused by  **mites**. It can make a dog very sick.





Very sick or dangerous dogs can be taken away to protect the community from disease and injuries.

The next day, we went out near the airport and hid behind some buildings. We could see about 20 dogs caught in traps—most of them had <sup>gunk</sup>**gunky** eyes, drool hanging from their mouths and hardly any hair.

The dog catchers arrived, put all the dogs on their trucks and drove away. We never saw the airport dogs again.

Later that day, we went to the mall and who do you think we saw? Little One, with a shiny coat and a brand new collar and lead, walking with her new family. The father tied her to a seat and told one of the children to watch her and to not let any of the  riffraff dogs near her.

‘We don’t want their fleas or diseases’, he said, then went into a shop.

We snuck up behind the seat, just close enough for Little One to hear us.



'Get you! You look deadly', I whispered. 'What happened?'

'Hey guys, great to see you', she replied. 'The dog catchers took me to the pound. They put me in a small room and a woman they called "the vet" looked at me and wrote things down. I was pretty scared, because I was hurting all over and she kept sighing and shaking her head.'

'What happened then?' I asked.

'She looked in my eyes, ears and mouth, listened to my heart and ran her hands all over me. Then she gave me some needles and put some cream on my sores and covered them with bandages. Another lady took me to a little yard and put me on a soft bed. I slept for a long time. When I woke up, do you know who was there?'

A vet will check a dog for diseases and injuries, treat any problems and  desex the dog.



'Butch and Killer?' I guessed.

'How did you know!' Little One exclaimed. 'They were in yards near mine. We could see each other through the wire fences. We each had our own bed, food and water.'

'How were they?' I asked. 'Are they still there?'

I really wanted to see my brother and friend again and to know they were OK.

'Like me, they were a bit shocked at first', she replied. 'A man took us one at a time to have a bath to kill the fleas. He gave us worm medicine as well. Killer had a needle because he had mange. The needle hurt him a bit, but he needed it to stop the mange getting worse. He was lucky the vet got it early.'

GIVING YOUR DOG A BATH WITH SPECIAL SHAMPOO WILL HELP TO KEEP FLEAS AWAY. THIS HELPS YOUR DOG STAY HEALTHY.





'Well, what happened then?' I asked impatiently.

'We rested most of that day, but had a short play time with one of the dog catchers', she replied. 'Then they gave us some more food and water.'

'The next day some families came to look at us and one family said they would take me', she went on, wagging her tail. 'They said I was cute and wouldn't take too much to feed, and they could afford the vet bills. So I finally had owners!'

'I couldn't go with them straight away', she explained. 'Animal control check all the families before they  adopt a dog. They have to be able to provide food, water and shelter and take the dog to the vet if it gets sick.'

'Then Butch and Killer were excited about getting owners too', she continued.

'By the time I left, they were getting ready to go home with new owners.'

'Get out!' I said. 'I have to get myself adopted.'

A dog needs to be cared for properly. If you can't look after a dog properly, you shouldn't get one.



Then the man came out of the shop. He untied Little One and said to the children 'Let's go'. Little One wagged her tail and they walked home.

That afternoon I lay alone under a seat in the mall, dozing and feeling lazy. Then everything went dark! I looked up to find a big man sitting on the seat.

'It's all right fella', he said, patting my head. It was so long since I had been patted, and it felt good. Without thinking, I licked his foot. He laughed and said 'Good boy', patted me again and talked to me for a while. Soon he said it was time to go, and he got up and walked down the road. I followed, keeping my distance.



I watched him go inside a house, then I hid in the yard under some bushes.

I could hear the family talking and laughing as they ate dinner.

After dinner, they went down to the pier to fish. Again, I followed. I sat at the end of the pier while they fished.

Finally I got the courage to move closer.

'Hello', the man said. 'You again! Don't you have a home to go to?'

This time I licked his hand, and the two kids came over to give me a pat.

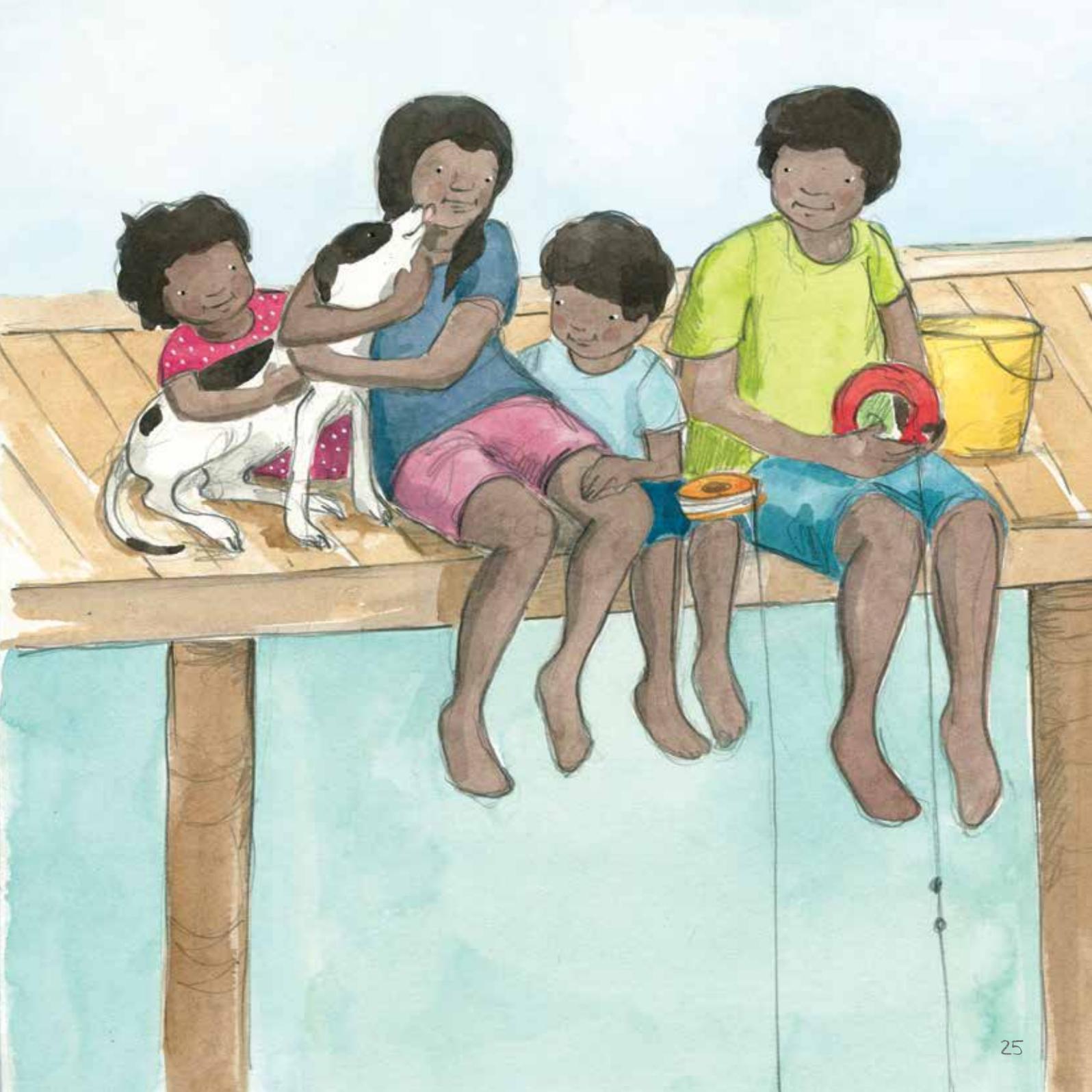
'Mum, Dad, can we keep him?' asked the boy. 'No-one owns him. I've seen him around, but he never came this close before.'

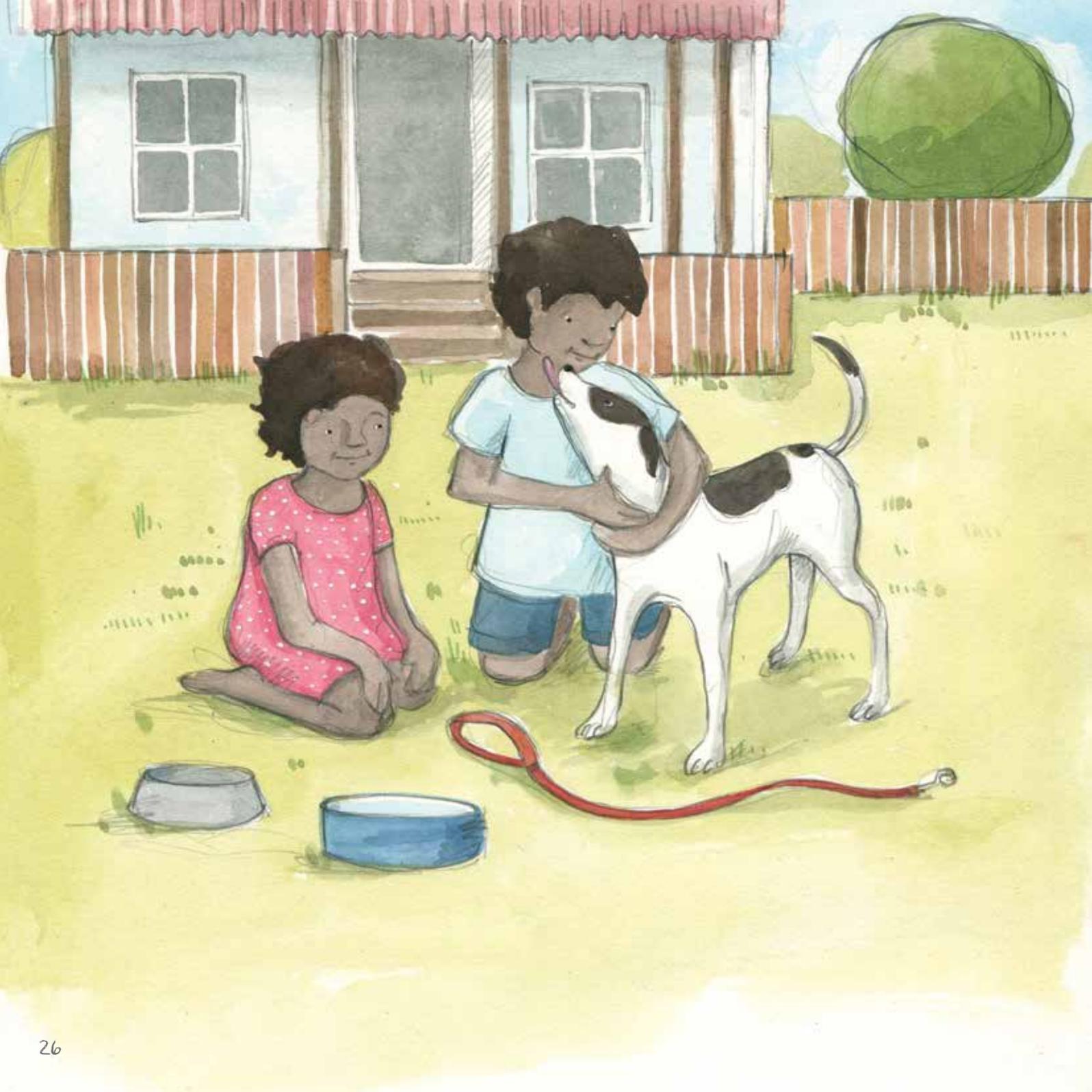
'We'll think about it', his father answered. 'If he follows us home, we can keep him until someone claims him.'

'OK', agreed his mother, as she gave me a scrap of bread. Yum!

'What will we call him, Dad?' asked the girl.

'Fred. I think we will call him Fred. He looks like a Fred', the man said.





Well, that night was heaven. For dinner I had leftovers, some stale bread and a big piece of meat. Lastly, the kids gave me the next morning's milk.

The lady of the family said that if I was going to stay, I had to have dog food, not people food, and definitely not tomorrow morning's milk. That was fine with me.

Most of my friends from under the pier have new homes now. Life is so much better when you have loving owners. I repay them by being a faithful friend. I watch over the house, and if the kids need someone to protect them, I'm there.

BEING LOVED AND CARED FOR BY A FAMILY  
MAKES A DOG HAPPY.

Elder Stan sat quietly for a while, looking at his grandchildren.

‘Do you think you look after your animals properly?’ he asked them.

‘Sort of’, said the eldest one. ‘They have a place to sleep and plenty of water ... but sometimes we forget to feed them and Mum and Dad have to remind us. I think we need to make sure we always spend time with them, and we should take them to the vet for health checks and vaccinations.’

‘Good’, said Elder Stan. ‘I can help you with that.’

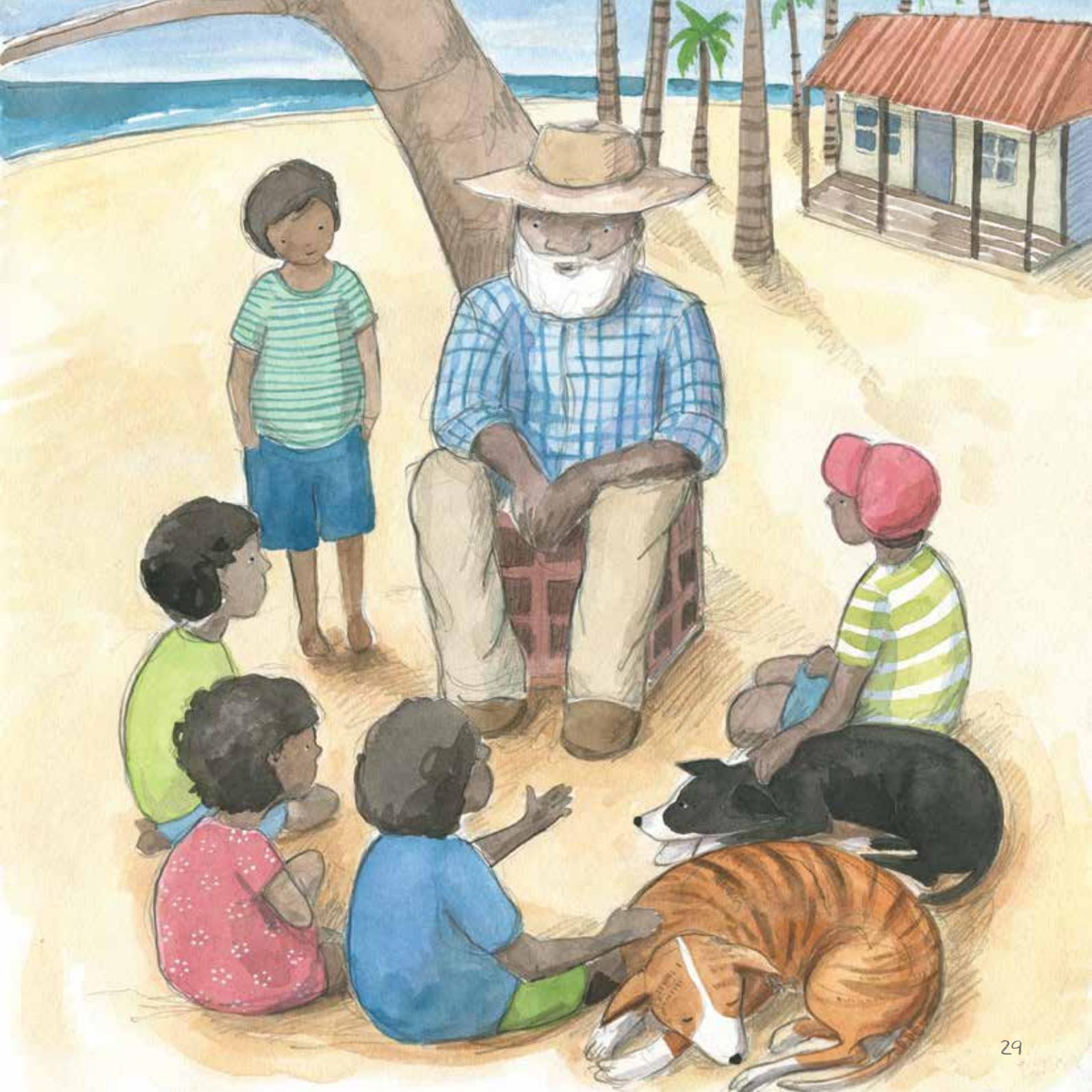
‘Can you help us fix the fence so they can’t get out?’ asked one of the other children.

‘Of course’, Elder Stan replied. ‘We don’t want your dogs to roam and be a nuisance or get hurt.’

The children all nodded. They all sat quietly for a bit longer.

‘Well,’ said Elder Stan, ‘I think if you can do all those things, we can think about getting another puppy. Maybe there is one at the pound that needs a home.’

They all smiled.



# Elder Stan's new words

**adopt**

agree to take care of and to have as part of the family

**catch pole**

a long pole with a large loop on the end used to round up dogs

**desex**

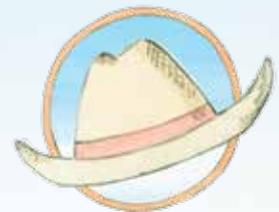
operate on a dog to stop it having puppies

**dog totem**

a symbol for a family or clan showing that they feel a close relationship with dogs

**gunky**

weeping pus



**mange**

a disease that makes a dog's hair fall out and its skin become scabby

**mites**

very small insects that can cause skin diseases such as mange

**riffraff**

animals who are not liked because they are seen as dirty or bad in some way

**street smart**

used to dealing with bad situations



# 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.

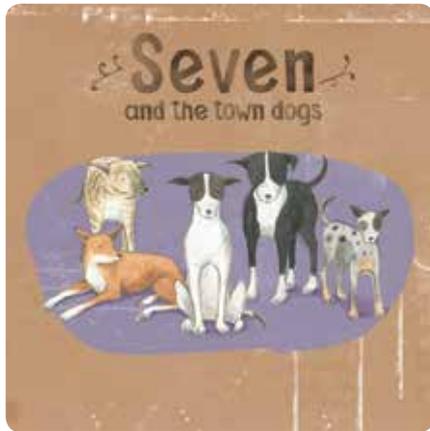
## Special thanks

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





