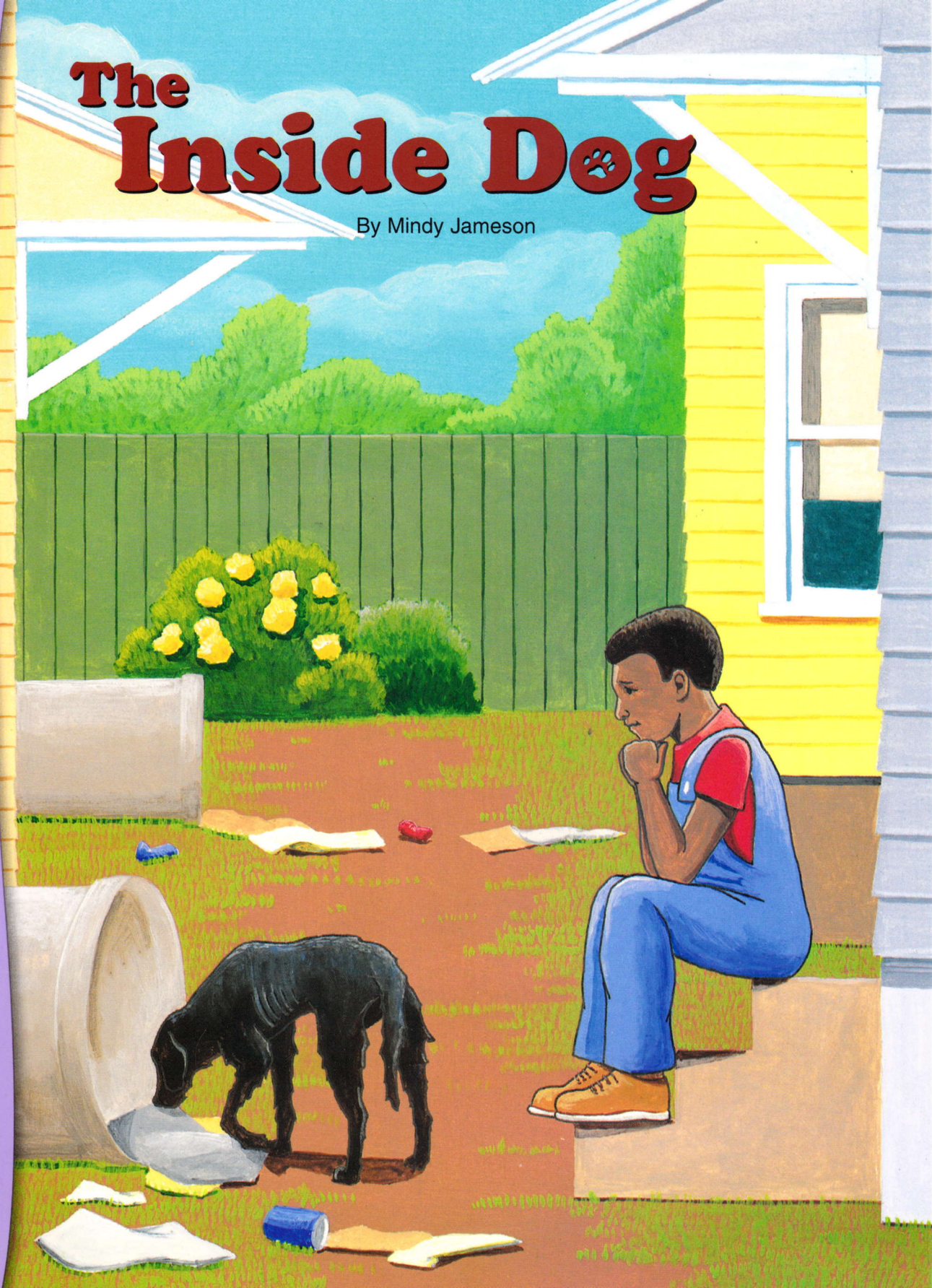


The Inside Dog

By Mindy Jameson

10 Violet 1c
Power Builder



- 1 The skittish black stray had been working the garbage cans in the alley behind our house for more than a month when I decided he needed some help. I'd watched him topple the cans and root through the trash cans long enough, and I knew he was hungry. "Ma," I said, "We need to feed that dog."
- 2 "You feed that dog and he'll never go away," was Ma's constant reply. However, she never said, "No." I like it when Ma gives me answers like that. She always says I've got common sense, so every now and then I like to prove her right. Ma thinks our little house and tiny yard are no place for a big dog like Black, but neither is an alley, that's for sure.
- 3 The sun was just tickling the clouds in the early morning sky when I went outside the next day and sat in the alley by the trash cans to wait for Black to show up. He was as regular as the hands on my wind-up alarm clock and it wasn't long before I saw him turn the corner. He saw me and stopped. I could count his ribs, and his fur was tattered and scruffy. "It's okay, Black," I said in my quietest voice, "I won't hurt you."
- 4 Black sniffed the air and turned to run away with his long, skinny tail tucked between his legs. I left a dish of dog food from the brand new bag I'd bought and went back inside to watch the alley from my bedroom window. Sure enough, it wasn't long before Black came back. He looked around cautiously and then gobbled up the food.
- 5 Day after day, rain or shine, Black and I went through this early morning ritual. He looked better and better. His ribs didn't show anymore, and his coat had a nice shine to it. Black was becoming a beautiful dog, and even though Ma didn't think Black would make a good inside dog, she agreed.
- 6 Summer turned to fall, and the smell of crisp leaves filled the air. Black and I had become friends, but Ma still didn't want him in the house. It made me sad, but what could I do? At least she let me feed Black on the back stoop. I stretched a plastic tablecloth across our old picnic table and put rocks on top of it to hold it tight. When it rained, Black stayed dry underneath, but I doubted that he was warm.
- 7 The days grew shorter and shorter, and winter blew in with a force worthy of a record-setting blizzard. I worried about Black and tried to figure out some way to help him stay warm. One day as the first snowstorm of the year began, Ma came home from work with a bale of hay. "I stopped by a farm stand and bought this for Black," she said.
- 8 One night I was lying sleeplessly in my bed when I heard Black barking like there was no tomorrow. It wasn't like his usual *hello* bark, either; it was piercing and frantic. Ma and I almost collided in the hallway as we raced downstairs. "At least he's stopped barking," Ma said as she opened the door. "What's that in his mouth?"
- 9 Black was holding a kitten that was wet and barely breathing. "Ma! We have to help it!" I cried. "Don't just stand there," Ma said, "Let them inside." Trust me, I didn't ask twice what *them* meant because I already knew. Black trotted into our house like he'd lived there forever and dropped the shivering kitten on the floor. Ma warmed the kitten by the stove. "Guess you've got yourself an inside dog," Ma said, "and a cat."
- 10 For the first time since I'd seen Black working the trash cans in the alley, I knew he was really and truly where he belonged.

COMPREHENSION

A Choose the best ending for each sentence. Write *a*, *b*, or *c*.

- 1 This story was about a
 - a woman who didn't like dogs.
 - b boy's love and compassion for a stray dog.
 - c boy who had common sense.
- 2 At first when the boy sat in the alley and waited for the stray dog, the dog
 - a came running to him.
 - b was afraid and ran away.
 - c stood still and quiet.
- 3 The boy's main problem was that he
 - a worried about the dog.
 - b didn't get along with his mother.
 - c had a small house and yard.

- 4 When it rained Black stayed dry because
 - a he hid under cars.
 - b the boy put a plastic tablecloth over a picnic table.
 - c he ate on the back stoop.
- 5 The boy finally knew Black was where he belonged because Black
 - a wasn't hungry anymore.
 - b acted like he lived in the house.
 - c brought a kitten to the boy.

LEARN ABOUT WORDS

B Often you can find out the meaning of a word by seeing how it is used in a story. The other words in the story give you clues.

Find the word in the story that best fits each meaning. (A paragraph number tells you where to look.) Write the word.

- 1 excitable or nervous (1)
- 2 a narrow street or passageway behind buildings or houses (2)
- 3 shaggy; unkempt (3)
- 4 carefully (4)
- 5 routine; a schedule carefully followed (5)
- 6 very excited with fear or anxiety (8)
- 7 shaking or trembling with cold (9)

C **too** = also

two = the number after *one*

Words that sound alike but have different spellings are called homophones.

Too and *two* are homophones.

Look at each word in **bold type** below. Note the paragraph number. Look at the paragraph and find the homophone. Which of the two words fits in the blank in the sentence? Write the word.

8 **kneaded** (1)

The boy thought the stray dog _____ help.

9 **know** (2)

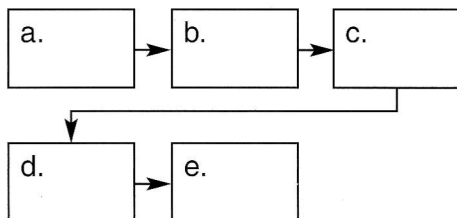
I knew there was _____ way my mom would let me keep the stray dog.

10 **two** (4)

Now we had _____ pets.

THINK ABOUT IT

- D** Look at the story map below. Complete the story map by writing the letter that tells in what order each event happened.



- 1 Black would topple the garbage cans looking for food.
 - 2 Black barked like there was no tomorrow.
 - 3 Black slept underneath the picnic table.
 - 4 Black brought the kitten into the house.
 - 5 Black gobbled up the dog food.
- E** A fact is something that can be proved. It is a true statement. An opinion is what someone thinks. It cannot be proved.

Fact: Black is a stray dog.

Opinion: Black is the best dog.

Read each sentence. If it can be proved, write *Fact*. If it cannot be proved, write *Opinion*.

- 6 Black was a great dog.
- 7 Ma did not want the dog in the house.
- 8 Black's fur was tattered and scruffy.
- 9 Black liked to sleep underneath the picnic table.
- 10 Black brought a kitten into the house.

- F** The words *a*, *an*, and *the* are called articles. You use *a* if the next word tells about one thing and begins with a consonant.

Was Black *a* stray dog?

You use *an* if the next word tells about one thing and begins with a vowel.

Mom wanted *an* answer.

You use *the* if the next word names a particular person, place, or thing. You also use *the* if the next word tells about more than one.

Black made *the* best pet.

Read the sentences. Which article in parentheses () fits each sentence? Write the word.

- 11 The boy acted very friendly to (a, the) stray dog.
- 12 Black gladly ate (an, the) dog food.
- 13 Would Black like (a, an) treat?
- 14 Black would like (a, an) orange toy.
- 15 Black's coat shone brightly after he ate (a, the) dog food.