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Strudel's Forever Home

by Martha Freeman

Grades 8–12



About the Book

An irrepressible dachshund narrates this touching story of a dog who needs a family, and a struggling family who needs a dog.

Strudel, a homeless dachshund, loves listening to Jake read from *Chief, Dog of the Old West* at the animal shelter. When Jake decides to adopt him, Strudel vows to be as brave and loyal as Chief. Only, trying to fend off danger in his new home leads to trouble when Strudel makes some errors in judgment. But despite Strudel's humorous miscalculations, his instincts are mostly correct. He knows who is really a member of his pack, and that Mom's boyfriend Arnie can't be trusted.

SUGGESTED CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

Literature/Language Arts

Vocabulary—Students should be encouraged to consult print or online dictionaries to clarify the definitions of the following possibly unfamiliar words, found on the page numbers noted: *apocalypse* (p. 58), *barbarians* (p. 36), *calamity* (p. 1), *cogitated* (p. 67), *eclectic* (p. 86), *excelsior* (p. 20), *idyllic* (p. 113), *inferior* (p. 2), *irresistible* (p. 9), *mien* (p. 12), *miscreants* (p. 66), *muzzle* (p. 2), *ominous* (p. 7), *staccato* (p. 69), *sympathetic* (p. 2). **CCSS RL.3-6.4; L.3-6.4**

Point of View—Ask students how an author can get into the mind of a dog, and discuss the concept of point of view with them. Have students choose any incident in the story and rewrite it from the point of view of one of the following human characters: Jake, Mutanski or one of the less sympathetic characters, Arnie or Anthony. They can share their writing with each other or with the class. **RL.3-6.6** They could use the example on p. 87 as a prompt. **CCSS 4-5.W.7**

Questions for Discussion

Students may discuss the following questions as a class or in small groups, or choose one or more as prompts for writing: **L.3-6.1; SL.3-6.1; W.3-6.2, 3.**

- Strudel and Jake formed a bond that was very important in the story. How have you bonded with a pet or friend?
- Jake read to Strudel from a book, *Chief, Dog of the Old West*. How did you feel about the fact that the author interspersed stories about Chief throughout the text? Did you like it? Explain your feelings about this. (Note: This is a fictitious book.)
- Strudel made friends with a bird, Johanna, and a rat, Oscar, in a joint effort to squelch the Pier 67 Gang. Explain experiences in your own life where people who were usually enemies banded together for a common cause. **W.3-5.8**
- Anthony, Richie and Capo, the cat, were bullies. What could Jake have done differently as he related/reacted to Anthony? Have you ever been bullied? Why do you think bullies act the way they do? Did you find any examples in the story to explain this? How can people avoid being bullied?

Research

Philadelphia—Several references are made to things related to this city: Independence Hall, Old Swede’s Church, row houses, Quakers and the Mummers Parade are a few. Students can find photos and information about these to enhance their understanding and enjoyment of the story.

Dog Breeds—Students may be unfamiliar with many of the breeds mentioned in the text: cockapoo, beagle, Doberman pinscher, Chihuahua, Staffordshire terrier, Pekingese, Maltese. They can search the Internet to learn more about these and other breeds they may not know.

Online Resources

Mummers Parade—en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mummers_Parade presents an overview of the history of the Mummers and their parades since 1901, along with several photos.

Adopting Shelter Dogs—www.aspca.org/adopt/adoptable-dogs-your-local-shelter provides a wealth of information and an ability to search by zip codes to locate shelters where there are dogs that can be adopted. Some students may be interested in exploring this avenue.

Bullying—www.stopbullying.gov/what-you-can-do/educators/index.html presents a wealth of resources educators can use to address this important issue.



About the Author

Martha Freeman has been a journalist, college instructor and substitute teacher as well as an author. Her books for children and young adults include chapter books, mysteries, humor and easy readers. Her most recent novels are *The Orphan and the Mouse* and *Who Stole New Years Eve?: A Chickadee Court Mystery*. A native of California, she now lives in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

Visit Martha online at www.marthafreeman.com.

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