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Published by South Pacific Press, P.O. Box 19088
 Wellington, New Zealand 6149
 www.csi-literacy.com

PL-6352
 ISBN: 978-1-60457-868-3
 Printed in the United States of America

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The Puppy

Whump! The front door flew open. Grandma burst in like the spring wind.

“Hellooooo!” she called. “Where are those kids? I’ve got a present for them.”

Trina and I rushed out of our bedroom, and Grandma handed us a cardboard box that wiggled and jumped around.

“Oh, you didn’t!” shouted Mom to Grandma. “We can’t afford...”

The rest of what Mom said was hidden by a scream from Trina and a yell from me.

“A puppy!”

Mom started unpacking the groceries.

“A jumbo bag of carrots is \$4 now,” she said to herself. She hurled some carrots onto the counter.

Grandma kissed each of us with a big “smooch,” planted a damp piece of paper in my hand, and rushed off. “Good-bye now, kids,” she said. “I just couldn’t stand the thought of that little pup without a good home.”

Whump! The door slammed. Off went Grandma into the spring day.





We rushed into our bedroom with Bella - I named her immediately - and got her as excited as we could, making a tent on the floor with the sheets.

When our dad came home, Mom exploded at him. We could hear her saying how Grandma never consulted with them about the puppy.

“Does she think we are *made* of money? Huh? Huh?”

We could hear Dad’s quiet voice in the gaps when Mom was taking big breaths.

“The children want a dog, honey. It won’t be any trouble.”

Mom just kept repeating, “But we can’t afford it!”

In our bedroom, under the sheet tent we’d made, we asked ourselves: “How much does a dog cost?” We didn’t know. So far, she hadn’t cost anything at all.

At dinnertime, I asked Mom how much a dog costs.

“Too much,” she said.

Dad said, “I made banana cream pie. Anyone want some?”

“Yes!” we all shouted.

“Glad I made a big one then. It was a good **investment**.”

Jared, our older brother, explained that Dad meant he thought we’d all be fighting over “the Bella problem,” so he’d made the pie to make everybody happy.

“That’s right, Jared,” Dad added. “I was thinking, what work can I do *now* to make something good happen in the future?”

“What good thing happened?” I asked.

“You all became happy.”

Cody smeared cream all over his face. Jared said he could never, ever invite his girlfriend to have dinner with us. We all groaned and laughed, then Trina asked, “Where’s Bella?”

We found Bella running down the hall with a roll of toilet paper unraveling behind her.

“See?” said Mom. “That roll cost about 60¢. Wasted. Money down the drain.”

Jared almost choked on his pie. “More like money NOT down the drain,” he laughed.