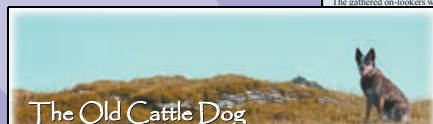


# 2012 Year 7 — Literacy preparation

## Reading magazine

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### The Old Cattle Dog

"There's nothing else for it. You'll have to go up and get him." Dad was cross. His old cattle dog, Brek, was sitting at the top of the hill. The hill was high and steep. Brek wouldn't come down until he heard Dad's whistle. But Old Brek was deaf.

Brek is 18, which makes him 126 if you change human years into dog years. No one believes Brek is so old. But Dad knows. Dad says Brek has lived a hard life. Brek has had lots of kicks from strong cattle hoves. Dad says Brek always stares the cattle down. He always makes the cattle do what Dad wants them to do. Brek never shows the cattle he's scared of them.

Brek sleeps in the woolshed on a mattress. He eats only soft food; his teeth are worn down from years of gnawing on bones. Brek needs exercise every day, to keep his joints from getting too stiff.

Dad has a sore leg and can't climb the hills any more. He says he knows what it feels like to get old and he worries about Brek. Dad says he and Brek are very much alike, neither of them can move as easily as they used to. Dad says that if you've been proud to have a dog walking behind you for 18 years, the least you can do is look after him in his old age.

We had been moving cattle from one paddock to another. Brek was a good cattle dog. Good cattle dogs always check for stragglers — those that stay behind after the others have been moved out. Old Brek had never left a straggler; he always checked, then waited for Dad's whistle. Brek didn't know that he was deaf. So there he sat on top of a steep, high hill, waiting.

Dad stuck his head out of the truck window and whistled again. Old Brek stood, watching and checking the back paddock for stragglers. Dad turned to me and said "You'll have to go up for him. He can't hear me so he won't move. Be careful now. I'll wait right here."

"No problems Dad," I called as I started off, straight up the hill.

"Heel, Brek! Heel!" I yelled as I came to the crest of the hill. Faithfully, Brek heeled, and with one last look towards the back paddock, he headed down the hill to Dad.

From The old cattle dog by P. Kessler

### Annie's story: a thriller or a tragedy?

On October 24, 1901, dragged by the rapid currents of the Niagara River, a small oak barrel sped toward the very brink of Niagara Falls. Thousands of on-lookers held their breath. Inside was a 63 year old school teacher. Annie Edson Taylor could hear the roar of the falls become louder and louder.

Why would a quiet widow risk her life in such an extraordinary stunt?

Annie had no savings and no real home. She needed money to retire. She wanted to make that money — a fortune — by being the first person to survive the "Falls". No one had done it before and survived. With little financial support, some clever planning, and a great deal of determination, Annie executed her plan. She climbed into a barrel lined with only a thin mattress, the lid was screwed down, and the barrel filled with air. The barrel was towed out into the eddying current. Her fate was sealed.

The gathered on-lookers were positive the stunt would fail. The barrel did not smash. It would surely kill the old lady survive such an

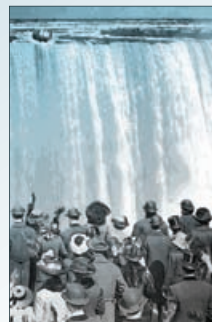
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#### Successful 'Barrel Riders'

- 1901: Annie Edson Taylor
- 1911: Bobby Leach
- 1928: Jean Lussier
- 1961: William Fitzgerald (a.k.a. Nathan Boya)
- 1984: Karel Soucek
- 1985: Steven Trotter
- 1985 and 1993: John Munday
- 1989: Peter De Bernardi and Jeffrey Petovich (together)
- 1995: Steven Trotter and Lori Martin (together)



### Project Guardian Angel

#### 8000 animals need a home this Christmas

##### Will you be their Guardian Angel?

This is Buzz. He is one of 106 badly neglected dogs seized from a puppy factory. His long hair was matted, he was infested with fleas and his skin was badly inflamed. When he arrived at the RSPCA, Buzz was barely recognisable as a dog, let alone a poodle.

Poor Buzz was in so much pain he had to be sedated before treatment could even begin. After clipping and a medicated bath, his red-raw skin was treated. Even with his scrawny body, the newly cleaned Buzz began to look like the handsome fellow he really was.

Buzz was placed in foster care where he received medication, a healthy diet and love — basic necessities that he had yearned for, but was so cruelly denied. Little by little a poodle started to emerge.



**Buzz**

of thousands shared by abandoned and neglected animals. As many as 8000 'orphans' will rely on the RSPCA to help heal them and find them homes. Each one of these animals will cost \$110 a week to care for them.

Provide this vital care we're asking for your support by donating and sending your donation to the Guardian Angel Project.

Providing animals like Buzz what it feels like to be loved at a time when your gift is small or large, it will make a difference to many lives.

#### Angel Ambassadors

Read Paul's story or tales of many other animals cared for by the RSPCA.



[click here >](#)



# The Old Cattle Dog

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The gathered on-lookers were positive the stunt would end in tragedy. Even if the flimsy barrel did not smash into pieces, the force of the fall would surely kill the strongest man. How could an old lady survive such an impact?

The barrel paused, teetered and dropped. Inside Annie became weightless as she plunged over the edge, falling fifty metres into the turbulent waters below.

Onlookers held their breath. Seconds ticked past. Nothing could be seen in the churning waters below the falls. Finally the barrel bobbed to the surface. It had survived and was dragged to shore. But surely no human could have survived the fall.

As the barrel was opened, a by-stander cried out “My God, she's alive!” With little more than a cut on her forehead, Annie climbed from the barrel.

For a short time after her death-defying stunt, Annie made money selling photos of herself and signing autographs. However the fortune she sought did not eventuate. Annie appeared far too old and frail to have survived the falls. People doubted her story. Annie gave up trying to make money from her daring feat. She died penniless 20 years after her history-making ride.

Few others ever attempted this dangerous stunt. Fewer still survived. While not rewarded while she lived, Annie Edson Taylor remains the only woman to go over the falls alone. Her name goes down in history as the first in the list of daredevils who have survived Niagara falls.



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Poor Buzz was in so much pain he had to be sedated before treatment could even begin. After clipping and a medicated bath, his red-raw skin was treated. Even with his scrawny body, the newly cleaned Buzz began to look like the handsome fellow he really was.

Buzz was placed in foster care where he received medication, a healthy diet and love – basic necessities that he had yearned for, but was so cruelly denied. Little by little a poodle started to emerge, and so too did his personality.

Sadly, Buzz's story is one of thousands shared by abandoned and neglected animals across the state. This Christmas over 8000 'orphans' will rely on the RSPCA to help heal their wounds, fill their tummies and find them homes. Each one of these animals will cost the RSPCA approximately \$110 a week to care for them.

To help us to continue to provide this vital care we're asking for your support by becoming a Guardian Angel and sending your donation to the Guardian Angel Project appeal.

By donating, you will be showing animals like Buzz what it feels like to be loved at a time when they need it most. Whether your gift is small or large, it will make a difference to animals just like Buzz.



Buzz



Donate online



Or call  
1300 RSPCA1

## Angel Ambassadors

Read Pauly's story or tales of many other animals cared for by the RSPCA.

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## **Acknowledgments**

Kessler, P 2005, *The old cattle dog*, Reed, New Zealand, used by permission of Penguin Group, NZ.

RSPCA, accessed 25 June 2011, <<http://rspca.org.au>>