



A Puppy is for Loving

Mary Labatt

illustrated by Renata Liwska

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About the Book

Every summer Elizabeth stays with her grandmother on the old family farm. Elizabeth wanders the farm with Grandma's collie, Elsie, but this summer is different. Elsie is having puppies and Elizabeth has to help Grandma find the right home for each puppy. Then she has an idea.

About the Author

Mary Labatt, an award-winning education editor, is the author of twenty-eight trade and educational books. Her popular series of novels, *Dog Detective Sam* (Kids Can Press), feature spooky mysteries for ages eight to ten. Her ten early readers about *Puppy Sam* (Kids Can Press), available in both French and English, are for young children who are learning to read. Beginning in spring 2009, Mary's eight graphic novels, the *Sam and Friends Mysteries* (Kids Can Press) are being released. Her graphic novels are for ages seven to ten. Her books have been translated into French and Chinese.

About the Writing

Mary breeds collies with her daughter Elizabeth. They love having puppies around and work hard to find each one the perfect home. *A Puppy is for Loving* is about family, the joy of raising puppies and the love that puppies give.

Teaching Ideas—Curriculum Connections**Prereading Ideas**

Have you ever had a pet?

List all the things you liked about your pet.

Imagine that you have a dog and give your imaginary dog a name.

List all the things you like about your imaginary dog.

How do dogs help people who are lonely?

Do you have a lonely grandmother or grandfather? Why are they lonely? What can you do to help?

Classroom Discussion Questions

What kinds of things do dogs like to do?

List all the reasons you think people like dogs so much.

Brainstorm all the things dogs can do for people.

Consider this statement: Dogs and elderly people belong together. Talk about all the reasons you think that is true.

What do you know about dogs having puppies?

What other animals have their babies the same way?

What other ways do animals have babies? Make a list.

Make a list of how you would take care of new puppies.

Suggested Activities

Your dog is having puppies. Make a shopping list of all the things you will need to buy to get ready.

Write *Taking Care of New Puppies* in the middle of a page. Make a web diagram of all the things you will have to do to take care of new puppies.

Make list of four different kinds of people. Beside each person write down the kind of dog you think they need.

Work in partners. Role-play the conversation with Grandma where you try to prove you are the right person for that puppy.

Find a book about collies and make a presentation to the class about all the things you learned about collies.

Make a chart of how animals have their babies. Sort the animals into groups that have their babies the same way.

Find a video of an old *Lassie* movie or *Lassie* TV episode. Show your video to the class.

Pretend you are Grandma. Explain why you won't leave the farm.

Other Titles and Websites of Interest

Look at the website www.mypuppy.ca and try the following activities:

Find out how to get ready for new puppy.

Find out how you will train your new puppy.

Find out what your puppy can learn at each age.

Click on Puppy Nursery Gallery and look at photos of puppies. Choose one for yourself. Print your puppy's picture.

Make a book about your puppy. In your book, tell how you got ready for the puppy, how you trained the puppy and all the things you do with your puppy.

Animals and Their Young by Pamela Hickman and Pat Stephens (Kids Can Press). You can find out how animals have their babies and how they take care of them. Make a chart. Read this book to the whole class.

Puppy Sam series by Mary Labatt (Kids Can Press). Ten easy readers about a curious little puppy, available in French or English. Use these books as a model and write an easy-to-read story about a little puppy who gets a surprise. Make lists of all the things that might surprise a little puppy.

Dracula Madness and *Lake Monster Mix-Up* by Mary Labatt (Kids Can Press). Two graphic novels about a very funny dog (reading level—grade 2). Read one of these graphic novels and act out the story for the class with three friends. (One person can be Sam, one can be Jennie and one can be Beth)

The Sam Dog Detective series by Mary Labatt (Kids Can Press). A series of eight mystery novels solved by a dog with a lot of personality (reading level—grade 3).

Read one of the mysteries. Pretend you are Sam. Write a report to the class about the mystery and how you solved it.

This website has pictures of all the different breeds of dogs. Look at pictures of all the different breeds and print their pictures. Make a scrapbook of the pictures and label them. <http://www.dogbreedz.com/breeds/index.cfm>

Find an old copy of *Lassie Come Home* in the library and read it aloud to the class.

Reviews

“A Puppy is for Loving is a genuine, charming, sweet—but not saccharine—story about Elizabeth’s summer visit with her grandmother and the birth of Elsie’s puppies...Renata Liwksa’s illustrations reinforce the warmth and gentleness of the story and provide the right amount of encouragement for the young reader...A very strong book....Mary Labatt’s intimate knowledge of raising puppies is evident in the text and the passion with which she tells this story. Highly recommended.”

—*CM Magazine*