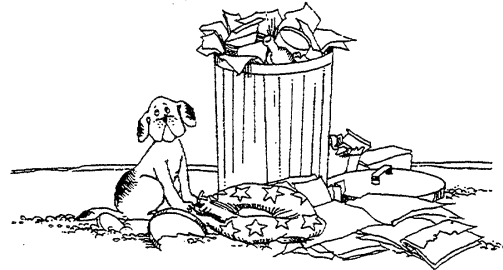
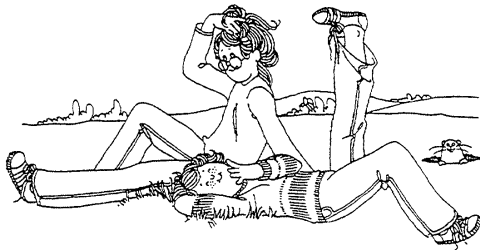

Greg's Dilemma

by Lizette Chanock

Greg raced down the stairway, three steps at a time. It was after ten o'clock and his friends would be waiting at the playground. He banged open the kitchen door, grabbed a roll and was about to dash out of the house. Suddenly, he remembered Dad's warning words and he stopped. "I won't allow any more mischief," his father had said, after Greg had been caught sliding down the banister. "If you can't stay out of trouble, you'll play in your room, by yourself, until Christmas."

"Until Christmas!" Greg thought, horrified. So he quickly straightened his clothes and sat down properly at the breakfast table. Just then, Greg's mother came into the kitchen.

"Good morning, dear," she said. "It's such a pretty day, why don't you take Jessa to the park with you?"



"Sure," said Greg. Jessa was the family's dog, and Greg loved her very much. He also loved to show her off to his friends. He was certain she was the prettiest dog in the world. Greg put Jessa on a bright blue leash and off they went.

"Remember not to let Jessa loose," Mom called after them. "It's dangerous."

"I'll remember," Greg promised.

When Greg got to the playground, John, Mary and Bobby were waiting for him.

"Wow! Look at Greg's dog! She's beautiful," Mary cried out. Jessa wagged her tail and wiggled with delight.

"I bet she can run very fast," said John.

"As fast as the wind," Greg boasted.

"How fast is that?"

"Faster than a train or an airplane." Greg figured that sounded about right.

"Come on, that's impossible!" Everyone shouted at the same time.

"It's true," Greg insisted, becoming red in the face.

"Then prove it!" Bobby said.

Greg knew Jessa could run fast. She was his champion after all. For a moment, Greg remembered his mother's words about keeping Jessa on a leash. He also remembered his father's warning about staying out of mischief. However, if Jessa ran free for only a few minutes, he was sure his parents would never find out. So, without hesitating further, he unfastened her leash.

Jessa took off so quickly that one might have thought a herd of buffalo was chasing after her. Across the field she galloped. Her feet barely touched the ground. Around and around she went, while the children watched and cheered her on.

"She IS fast!" they said, and Greg beamed with joy.

Suddenly, Jessa stopped. "What smells so delicious?" she was wondering. She took a deep breath and followed the scent. Beside the sandbox there was a most tempting treat. Jessa forgot all about her cheering audience.

"Hey, look at your dog, she's in the garbage!" John exclaimed.

The children ran towards Jessa. Greg tugged her face out of an old, rusted tin can.

"Do you think there is poison in there?" Bobby asked, pointing to the pinkish-green color of the garbage.

"Oh, look at Jessa's tongue!" Mary cried out. "It's all yellow." Greg

looked first at the garbage and then at his beloved dog. His heart pounded loudly from fright.

That evening at dinner, Jessa dragged herself to the dining room. Her usually proud head was held low and she was trembling.

"Poor Jessa doesn't seem too well," Dad remarked.

"That new brand of dog food I gave her must not have agreed with her," Mom said.

"You must be right," Dad agreed. "We'll just let her rest and by morning she'll be fine."

Greg stared unhappily at his food. He was afraid to tell his parents about what had happened at the park. He would be punished for certain. Besides, Jessa might only have an upset stomach. On the other hand, Greg was afraid that there might really have been poison in the garbage. If so, Jessa might die.

What would YOU do if you were Greg?

