

# Shep the Sheepdog



Illustration by Josiene Saibrosa da Silva

By

Mrs Sproule and Mr Sproule

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One day Farmer Flynn was out walking with his dog Shep. Shep was a sheepdog with long, fluffy hair like woollen threads. He was very frisky, not a very good sheepdog and not very obedient. So Farmer Flynn had been wondering for awhile whether he should give Shep away and get another dog.

He was thinking about this as he walked through the woods when suddenly he fell into a deep muddy ditch. The sides were steep and slippery and Farmer Flynn was struggling to get out. The more he struggled, the deeper he slid. Shep was running back and forth, whining and looking confused.

“Get help, Shep!” shouted his master. “Go! Get someone to help me!”

Shep ran off, barking excitedly. He raced up the path until he found two children walking along exploring. Billy and Lisa had just decided to turn back and get home in time for lunch when Shep ran up, barking furiously. He jumped up and started pulling at Billy’s jumper.

“Get off me, you crazy dog!” Billy shouted. He tried pushing Shep away but the dog just kept jumping up, whining and barking, trying to pull the boy along.

“I think there’s something wrong,” said Lisa. “He seems really worried!”

“He’s just bonkers,” said Billy, waving Shep away.

“No, he’s not. Let’s go with him and see where he leads.” And Lisa followed Shep as he turned back, still barking.

Billy reluctantly did the same. Soon they heard shouting coming from up ahead. As they approached they saw arms waving out of

the ground. Shep had run ahead and was looking down, whining at whoever was down there.

“Hello!” came a voice from out of the deep. “Is anybody there?”

“Yes!” said Lisa and Billy together. “We can help you. How did you fall in there?”

“Oh thank goodness! I’m Farmer Flynn. I slipped, it was so muddy. And every time I try to climb out, I just slide back in.” Shep was panting now and running back and forth along the ditch.

“Don’t worry,” said Billy. “We’ll get you out. There should be some wood around here.” Luckily the woods were full of fallen branches.

The children gathered up as many big pieces of wood as they could. Shep helped, clamping his mouth around the larger bits and dragging them back.

Slowly, slowly Billy and Lisa managed to lay the pieces down the slope of the muddy, slimy ditch. Very carefully Farmer Flynn climbed up the thick branches and pieces of wood until he reached the top.

“Oh, thank you so much! You children are wonderful! And you too, Shep. Good dog!”

“You have an amazing dog,” said Billy.

“If it weren’t for him, you would still be at the bottom of that hole,” said Lisa.

Farmer Flynn looked down at Shep looking up at him. “I’m beginning to realise that,” he said. “Well, thank you again children. But Shep and I have got to get back to herding our sheep.”

The children watched as he gave his dog a pat on the head. Then farmer and sheepdog walked off together.

