

## HENRY AND MUDGE AND THE Careful Cousin Watching for Annie

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One day Henry and his big dog Mudge were standing on their front porch, watching the road. They were watching for Henry s cousin. Her name is Annie, Henry told Mudge, and she's s spending the night.

Mudge scratched an ear. I've never met her, Henry said. Mudge chewed a foot. I sure hope she s fun, Henry said. Mudge stretched some bones. While they waited for the cousin Henry gave Mudge a brushing. Mudge loved brushings. He rolled onto his back. He hung his paws in the air. He closed his eyes and made little dog grunts.

Mudge loved brushings. And they made him look very nice for company. Suddenly a car pulled into Henry's driveway. Up, Mudge, said Henry. She's here. Mudge jumped up. He wagged his tail. He barked a little bark. He danced a little dance. Mudge loved company. A tall man got out of the car. Hello, Henry! he called. Hello, Uncle Ed! Henry called back. A girl got out of the car. Hello, Henry! she called. Hello, Annie! Henry called back. She sure looks dressed up, Henry thought. She sure looks clean he thought. Annie stood in the yard. Her dress was frilly. Her shoes were shiny. Her face was worried. Does he bite? Annie asked pointing to Mudge. Oh, no said Henry. Mudge wagged his tail. Does he jump on people? Not anymore, said Henry. Mudge kept wagging. Does he drool? Annie asked. Henry

looked at Mudge. Mudge looked at Henry. Well... Henry said. He looked at Annie's nice frilly dress. He looked at Annie's nice shiny shoes. Henry looked at the drool on his front porch. oh, he thought. It was The visit of the Careful Cousin.

Annie Turns Pink

Henry made Mudge sit while Annie went into the house. Mudge

he wagged his tail and drooled on the porch as she walked by. Then he followed Henry inside. Annie was on the couch. Before Henry could say no, Mudge went over and kissed Annie on the face. Annie turned pink. She opened her shiny purse and pulled out a hanky. She wiped the dog drool from her cheeks. She did not look happy. No more kisses, Mudge' Annie said. No more kisses, Mudge' Henry said, even though Henry could not

believe a person would not like dog kisses. He could not believe this girl was really his cousin. He could not believe she would be here a whole day and night.' Want to see my fish? he asked her. Maybe she likes fish, He thought. Fish don't drool. Annie picked up her purse. She followed Henry, and Mudge followed her. Henry had forgotten about the baseball cards. And the empty cracker boxes. And the dirty socks. At the door Henry's room, Annie's eyes got wide, and her mouth hung open. thought Henry. But suddenly Annie smiled. "Fish!" she said. She waded over to the fish tank. She put her head near the water. She grabbed her nose. she said. It smells. Fish always smell, said Henry. They smell like fish. He wondered what Annie would do if she ever smelled Mudge mouth. Annie sat on Henry's

bed. What do you do for fun? she asked Henry. I play with Mudge Henry said. What do you do? I play the piano, said Annie. Henry wondered why someone would want to play with a piano instead of a dog. Do you like fudge cookies? Henry asked. He thought maybe hey could just eat whole annie visited. I love fudge cookies, said Annie. Great! said Henry. Mudge was wagging. He loved fudge cookies, too. Henry felt around his bed. He pulled out a brown paper bag. It had some dust balls on it and an old piece of hard gum stuck under it. Henry pulled out a cookie and handed it to Annie. She turned pink again. Uh no, thought Henry. This was going to be a very long visit. Henry and Annie were eating lunch with Uncle Ed and Henry parents. So, Annie, did you see Henry s room? asked Uncle Ed. Annie nodded. Did you pet his

dog? Annie nodded again. Did you watch his fish? Annie nodded one more time. Henry worried. What if Annie talked about the dog drool and the smelly tank and the dusty cookies? Henry's parents would feel bad. Especially Henry's dad. He was even messier than Henry. His car had a million hamburger wrappers on the floor. But Annie didn't say anything bad. She didn't say anything at all. She just cut up her hot dog into tiny pieces and ate quietly. Henry had not given up. There must be something they could do together. Do you play Frisbee? he asked Annie. No. Annie shook her head. Want to try? Henry asked. Annie thought for a minute. She nodded her head. Great! said Henry. Outside, Henry stood on one side of the yard and Annie stood on the other. Mudge stayed in the middle

so he could run both ways. He was pretty good at Frisbee except that he got the Frisbee all wet. Henry told Annie how to make the Frisbee spin. He told her not to owrry . He told her it take a while to get good at Frisbee. Then he told her to throw the Frisbee to him. ZAM! The Frisbee whizzed across the yard and into Henry s hands like a rocket. Wow! said Henry. Wow! said Annie. She lookd at her hand as if she didn t believe it belonged to her. Henry whizzed a slow one back. Annies shot it back to Henry. ZAM! Wow! they both said again. They played Frisbee all afternoon. Annie was really good. At first she stopped a lot to dry off the Frisbee after Mudge got it. But pretty soon she got used to dog drool and threw the wet Frisbee anyway. After supper Henry and Mudge and Annie played Frisbee again

until dark. Then they went inside to Henry's room. There were sweaty and dirty and tired. They were hungry too. There said he would go to the kitchen for a bag of cookies. Oh no, said Annie. She pulled the brown paper bag from under Henry's bed. I think I like these better, she said. She threw one to Mudge and she threw one to Henry and she threw one into her own mouth. Sometime you'll have to visit me, said Annie. Sure, said Henry. Be sure to bring the Frisbee, Annie said. She looked at Mudge drooping on the bed. And be sure to bring Mudge. The next day Henry and Mudge said good bye to Annie. Mudge gave her another kiss. This time Annie didn't turn pink. Henry and Mudge watched Cousin Annie ride away. They both couldn't wait to see her again.



