

Free storyThe Beginning.....Thistle is badly hurt in a tornado

First...A little about me, Grandpa, Grandma and the little fellow...Thistle....and Candy, the calico cat

Welcome to my 1000's of readers, teachers and youngsters that participated in my school author visits in five states. **Welcome newcomers**. I hope you enjoy the FREE *Thistle* stories as much as I enjoy writing them for you.” Author *Floyd P Knipe*

Read a new story, with word match at end, every other week**FREE**.....featuring

“THISTLE” *The funny snoodle dog*

“CANDY” *Grandpa's calico cat*

GRANDPA” (that's me) aaaaannd **GRANDMA** (the bestest wife in the world)

Thistle is a real dog and lives on a farm with Grandpa and Grandma Grandpa, and his fuzzy white pal are seen all over the Fayetteville Arkansas area either in the author's pickup, boat or exercising along a stream or in a field. Follow the comical and adventure packed stories with Thistle, Grandpa, Grandma, grandchildren and the animals around them.. Thistle will tickle, entertain and teach as his life intertwines with human and animal characters. Candy, the author's beloved calico cat actually saved the author's life one evening.

FINALLY....The beginning story of many

ThistleThe Funny Snoodle Dog

Dad held little 6 year old daughter Myllie against him as he sat back in his easy chair. She burrowed into his heavy shirt and wrapped her arms around her daddy. The loving daughter paid no attention to the sweat moistened texture of her dad's flannel shirt.

“Did you build a big building today Daddy?” Myllie asked her dad. The 6 year old knew her dad built buildings and wanted to get his attention away from the TV. Normally that would have been easy. Allan, like most dads, always gave into a tight hug and a question from his daughter. But tonight was different.

Her dad was watching the local weather and it didn't look good for that evening.

“We did get a garage started.” The father answered as the weatherman finished with the local report. Tornadoes were forming and warnings were out all around them.

“THIS IS AN EVENING THAT YOU MUST KEEP YOUR EYES ON THE WEATHER! THERE ARE MORE THAN ONE STORM BREWING ” The weatherman raised his voice as he spoke.

“Can we check the puppies now?” Myllie begged her dad.

Allan pushed down on the foot rest, pitched his daughter up onto his shoulder and went downstairs and walked toward a black cattle watering tub. Hay stuck out of the sides. A dog's ears popped up above the hay as they came near.

Maggie, the family poodle, had five 6 day old puppies snuggled in against her and the straw. They began to move and wiggle as their momma raised up to see if a treat was going to be offered. The father lowered his daughter and handed her a homemade dog cookie. Myllie held it out to the mother dog. Loud crunching overtook the thunder outside for a few seconds.

BOOOM CLAAAP BOOOM! The storm bellowed.

A frightening bright flash and loud clap of thunder brought the reality of the closeness of the dangerous storm to the tired father. Myllie jumped back into his arms. Her tightening grip pushed Allan's fear button up several notches.

The father counted 3 seconds and divide 3 by five in his head. "Man those strikes are less than a mile away. That's dangerously close." He said outloud.

KEEEECHEEEDzzzzzzzKEEEECHEEED CRAAAASH BOOOM!!!

Two green garbage cans and a heavy cart slammed into the outside of the basement garage door. The scrapping and banging scared Maggie and Myllie. Allan flinched and looked toward the rattling door.

"THAT'S IT. WE HAVE TO TAKE COVER!" He told Myllie .

"Jackie... you and **Shelbi** should get down here!" The father called for his wife and Myllie's big sister to come down to the basement. "We all need to get into the safe room and watch the storm warnings and radar on my phone."

Momma and Shelbinedeed very little coaxing. They were already running toward the basement before Allan said anything. The last thunder clap rattled dishes in the cabinets and glassware all through the upstairs making a believer out of the two family members that usually poo pood storms and even tornado warnings.

"WHHHOOOOOOOUUUUOOOOOOO!!!!!" The wind's swishing sound suddenly turned to a roar. **"RRRRRRROOOOOOOORRRRRROOOOORRRR !!!!"**

"THAT'S THE LOUDEST I HAVE EVER HEARD THE WIND ROAR!" The father's excited voice spoke out.

"EVERYONE INTO THE SAFE ROOM...NOOW!" Excitement turning to fear showed on the father's face as he pushed against his wife's back to get her to hurry through the door leading into the steel tornado safe room.

"Maggie and the puppies!" Myllie turned to her dad and yelled as he closed the heavy steel door behind them.

EEEEEEK EEEEE SCREEETCH BOOOOM BOOOOM!

At that instant a stomach wrenching fear hit everyone. Unbelievable sounds of screeching, thumping and breaking boards followed by a loud roar even louder than Allan's big semi-truck filled their ears. The fierce storm outside the safe room took over all senses. Air pressed against everyone's ear drums. The horrendous sounds had everyone holding their breath.

"EVERYONE.....BREEEEATHE...BREEEEATHE!" Mother called out when she felt herself getting dizzy. "Breathe normally....as normal as you can." She added.

"Maggie. Maggie!" Cried Myllie but she knew nothing could be done when she saw her mom and dad look at each other as her dad slide the second big steel door latch down tight. Anything and anyone outside that room would have to "hunker down", as Grandpa would say, and weather the storm on their own.

"All we can do is hope Maggie and the puppies make it through. I can't open the door. We could all be sucked out." The dad softly explained to Myllie as her big sister

held onto her. Myllie began to cry and leaned against Shelbi as they sat down on the wooden bench in the corner of the safe room.

BOOOOM SCREEETCH BOOOOM ROOOAAARR!

Myllie and Shelbi screamed when something hit the steel door.

The storm roared and again objects hit the door. Dad's phone went blank. Allan tapped it on his leg but it stayed blank.

"It will come back when the storm blows over." He told Jackie when the mother gave him a worried look.

Outside, four neighbor's homes within sight of the Main's farm had been right in the path of the storm. The tornado took the roof of two. Rain was pouring in on floors, furniture, and even the homeowners as they "hunkered down" in their bath tubes.

The other two homes were totally destroyed. Lumber, roofing and furniture was scattered over miles of fields and neighboring farms. A scared, but alive, little pig was found a mile from his home pen the next day. Luckily, one of those two homes had a safe room and the other had a root cellar the homeowners got into just before the storm wiped out their family homes and all their belongings.

"They were left with only the shirts on their backs." Grandpa would have said.

Allen's hay barn and 300 bales of hay were smeared along the ground for a hundred yards, a football field. The Main home took a beating but luckily the storm turned after it passed the last neighbor's house and less destructive winds hit the Main's home. The roof was still on. Only one window was broken. But the basement garage was another thing.

Allan slid down onto the seat with Myllie and Shelbi. Mother joined them.

Allan's eyes squinted nearly shut as he heard another crash out in the basement. He could only wonder what had been destroyed. He too thought about the puppies and Maggie.

"Should I have gotten them into the safe room," he thought? But he reminded himself that he barely got his family to safety.

Family was his first and foremost charge. The home, animals and even his business trucks, tools and other equipment fall way short of seeing to the safety of his family. However his heart felt for Maggie. She was like family and the kids, his wife and himself would miss her should something bad happen. As a child he lost beloved pets and hated to see his daughters feel the way he did from the loose of a loved pet.

All of the sudden the storm was gone. Within a couple minutes ambulance and fire truck sirens filled the air. Allan pulled back the heavy storm door latches and took a peek outside. The three big garage doors in the basement were ripped off and gone. Tools, 4 wheeler, tennis table and other items were piled against the walls inside and some were scattered outside. He smell of oil and gasoline filled the air.

Dad didn't say anything out loud but thought, "Oh no! They must have been in their nest when the storm hit the tree." His eyes had caught the site of two motionless squirrels lying near the pile of hollow limbs blown from the old tree.

Allan's aluminum boat was wrapped half way around the big oak tree in the front yard. All of the leaves and many of the limbs were gone from the old, minutes ago, beautiful shade tree. The tree trunk was still standing and with a little help from Mother Nature leaves and limbs would grow back during the remainder of Spring and Summer.

"Maggie! There's Maggie! But where are the puppies?" Myllie ran over to the mother dog. Maggie wasted no time in getting loose from storage boxes she had been

thrown in against. She frantically sniffed the air and paced the garage. She finally began to scratch furiously at a pile of rubble in one corner of the garage.

The white poodle had patches of red on her fur where she had been cut by flying debris. She paid no attention to her own injuries as she scratched frantically to free her babies from the pile of shredded paper, feed bags and boxes. Suddenly a puppy appeared, then another, then another, and another. That was four. Another one whined and Maggie retrieved its trapped body from under a garden tiller handle. Five of the little fellows seemed to be ok.

Where was the one Myllie called Thistle? He had a patch of hair that stood up on his head like a thistle weed in their cow pasture? **“THISTLE IS HIS NAME.”** She announced one day.

Myllie pulled away from her mom and ran over to the puppies. She looked close as if counting. Myllie couldn't count the terrified and wiggling puppies very well but she could tell the puppy count was short one.

“Thistle!! Thistle!!” Myllie called out to her favorite little puppy. The puppy with the topnotch of ruffled hair just wasn't there and there was no answer.

When she didn't see Thistle she began to cry again. Dad, Shelbi and Mom called out and looked around the garage for ten minute or so with no results. They just about gave up and headed outside to see more of the storm's damage.

“Do you hear that?” Dad said. A light whimper came from the farthest away side of the garage. Mom and Dad looked at each other. They knew this meant Thistle had been blown around a lot in the garage and could be in bad shape. They were right.

Mom held Myllie back while Dad pulled debris out of the corner the weak whimpering was coming from. After removal of a weed eater, hoes, shovels and lots of hay and leaves, Thistle was uncovered.

Dad immediately saw a metal dust pan was against little Thistle's side. When he reached for the dust pan he saw that the corner of it was stuck deep into Thistle's right back leg and he was bleeding. He removed the dust pan leaving a deep cut in the puppy's leg.

The father looked over toward Jackie, Mom, and shook his head a little sideways for her to take Myllie out of the garage. Allan took out his soft handkerchief and laid the injured puppy on it. The dust pan cut wasn't the only injury Thistle had. His right front foot was crushed and cut and probably had broken bones.

The puppy should have been yelping and whining at the top of his lungs from another slash of scooped out skin and flesh on his side but he was only whimpering. Allan knew the puppy was in shock and nearly gone. He gently rubbed two fingers across the little dog's back thinking that his gentle strokes may be the last thing the puppy would ever feel.

“IS EVERYONE OK?” A loud familiar voice filled the garage.

“Pa Pa.....Pa Pa.” Millie ran to the man standing where a garage door had been.

“Well you won't need a garage door opener for awhile.” Grandpa kidded a little after seeing everyone was up, walking and ok.

“Pa Pa..... Thistle is hurt!” Myllie wasted no time in telling her Grandpa about the puppy. She watched her dad and grandpa give a sad look at each other as they

examined Thistle. She was only 6 but she had spent those 6 years on the farm and saw that look before when a calf or colt was in bad shape and sometimes didn't make it.

"No, Pa Pa. You can save Thistle. Please Pa Pa." She pleaded

Grandpa, a very kind but realistic man, swallowed hard before answering his little granddaughter.

"Your dad is going to have his hands full in getting the house and farm cleaned up and repaired from the storm's damage. Annd he will, I am sure, pitch in to help the harder hit neighbors get their homes and farms back to normal. That's what farm folks do. Someday it may your family that needs the help." Grandpa drew a deep breath before saying his next thoughts.

"This little puppy is going to take a lot of care even if he makes it through tonight." Myllie's grandpa could tell the puppy was badly hurt and was trying to soften the blow of the pup not surviving his injuries.

"Pa Payou can take him and save him. You can give him back when he is ok. I know you can save Thistle. Please Pa Pa please." That plea did it. Grandpa's big hands made Thistle look like a baby mouse as the gentle man cradled the puppy in his big palms. Mom handed Grandpa, her daddy, the first aid kit from the tornado shelter. He opened it up and went to work on Thistle.

"Ok...that should keep the deep cuts from bleeding and infecting. Let me put on a bandage and tape around his broken leg." Grandpa talked to Myllie and Thistle as he doctored the little patient. Thistle yelped when Grandpa straightened the broken foot and taped it in place.

"Now he has got to eat and I don't think he can with that big tear in his lip." Allan and Grandpa gave another sad look at each other as Grandpa moved the skin hanging loose from the torn lip back into place. When he turned it loose it just sagged down around Thistle's teeth and mouth.

"Feed him like you did Billy." Myllie was talking about an orphaned baby goat a neighbor gave them last summer. Billy had to be fed with a little tube from a bottle.

"The girl is going to be a Veterinarian." Myllie's mom spoke up as she hugged her daughter. Everyone in the room turned to look at the youngster and laughed.

"Ok Dr. Myllie I have Billy's tube and bottle at home. I can use them to feed this little pup. But listen my little Veterinarian, even REAL doctors don't save everyone. I will do my best but Thistle may be hurt too bad. He may have injuries inside that you and I can't see." Grandpa lowered his voice and leaned over as he finished talking to his granddaughter.

"You understand what I am saying don't you Wallie." Her Pa Pa called her Wallie sometimes. He nicknamed her Wallie after he and her watched a movie about a robot named Wallie that talked all the time like grandpa says she does sometimes.

"I know Pa Pa. Thistle looks really bad. But you take him and if you save him he can be YOUR DOG. **I'll give him to you. Just save him Pa Pa.....PLEASE.** "

"Ok Wallie. Me and the little fella are headed home now. Old Candy and I will give him the intensive care unit treatment...I promise." Candy, Grandpa's calico cat, had sat beside him many times while he treated a sick or injured animal

Grandpa kept the soft handkerchief and small towel around Thistle as he gently laid him on his pick up seat. They headed for home, only ten minutes away.

It would be a tough night for Grandpa. He did all he could to save the little puppy. Myllie had officially given him Thistle knowing he would give his all to save such a beloved present from her. Myllie knew how to talk her grandpa into doing most anything for her. The 6 day old, still sightless puppy was very lucky to have her on his side.

Candy was awakened several times that first night as Grandpa checked on, fed and held the little injured puppy until he whimpered himself back to sleep. Life as Candy, Grandpa and Grandma had known was about to change. A new companion, a very smart, curious and lovable one was entering into their life.

Candy was ok with that. She could use a companion to keep her busy. In the middle of the third night or early morning she carried her favorite toy over to the little white puppy. He was nestled in against his towel in the shoe box bed but somehow knew his new friend brought him a present. The toy was a string ball made by Grandma from knitting yarn discards. She gave it to Candy so the cat would play with it rather than the new yarn.

“Now, that’s a friendly gesture my colorful friend but Thistle has got to make it through the next few days before he can play with your toy.” Grandpa gave his cat a good firm ear scratching and carried her and the string ball back to his easy chair for a couple hours sleep before his patient would need milk and his special life saving nourishing mix.

Four days passed and daylight the fifth morning Grandpa scooped the little puppy up to feed him and noticed a shine showing between Thistle’s eye lids. His eyes were opening.

“**THISTLE.....YOU CAN SEE!**” Grandpa said out loud.

Now the exciting stories begin. Thistle has adventures with a frog, a squirrel, a raccoon, a mouse, even a clothes washing machine he has many, many other funny and exciting adventures to enjoy and learn from.

Can you can match the words with their short definitions? I’ll bet you can with a little help from Mom or Dad.

- | | |
|--------------------|---|
| Debris ____ | A. a spotted colored cat.....black, yellow,brown and white. |
| Bellowed ____ | B. to get out of the way of a storm or dangerous happening |
| Brewing ____ | C. trash and items thrown around where they should not be |
| Horrendous ____ | D. loud noise like a cow or monster on tv might make |
| Charge ____ | E. mixing and leading up to |
| Flenching ____ | F. describes a horrible scary happening |
| Palm ____ | G. to jerk , pull back your hands or tighten yourself up |
| “Hunker down” ____ | H. your job or duty to take care of something or someone |
| Calico ____ | I. the widest part of your hands |

FOLLOW THISTLE , CANDY
AND GRANDPA’S ADVENTURES
STORIES COMING UP

He Can See and The Walking Pan

Candy Looks Like a Fruit Cake

Thistle Saves Grandpa and Grandma

A Tick, A Tub And A Skunk

“If not my books, please read someone’s books to your children.”

Floyd P Knipe (author, teacher and “youthful” grandpa)

See all our books at our website; www.naturesnestpublishing.com

Inspect my logo; The little girl looking in on a nest of blue birds.

Grandpa’s tips and hints:

The author’s ideas are just that, his own ideas from experience and research. “I hope one or more will be helpful to my readers.”

Homemade dog treats; I make these because they do not have the preservatives and additives the store bought treats have in them. It is believed by many that the store bought treats fed regularly could cause epilepsy and other illnesses in our so much loved pets. There are many recipes for the treats. You can find many on the internet. I just make mine and Thistle’s sort of like I would make biscuits per below.

3 CUPS FLOUR (less or more for the size of batch you want)

1 SMALL CAN BEEF BROTH (or your own homemade broth)

3 OR 4 DASHES GARLIC POWDER (most dogs love this)

I make this into a dough, adding flour or water as needed, roll out to about ¼” thick on cookie sheets and cook at 300 degrees for about 20 minutes.

I then take the pan or pans out of the oven and cut the dough like a pizza cook cuts pizza, with a big knife, but into about ½” to ¾” squares. These are the size the treats will be when the dough is done. You can cut the grids smaller or larger depending on your dog size. Some folks make small round cookies and break them up as they feed them. I then put the pans back into the oven for another 10 to 15 minutes. This crisps them up. Watch the cooking times and adjust to your oven and you needs.

After the dough cools I finish breaking it all up into the small bits. I freeze most of the batch in a freezer bag. I take out a little at a time to give the dogs. Don’t take a lot out. Like every other food, it will mold etc.

If I can keep Grandma out of it the batches last 3-6 weeks or more. Just kidding, they last a long time.

I hope your favorite buddy enjoys these natural as well as less expensive treats. The cost might only be one dollar for weeks of treats.

“Enjoy the excitement of reading and the companionship of a loyal pet.”

Good Luck.

Floyd P Knipe

Author of *Forest The Huggable Dog* series and *The Trackers* series.

Forest is a real dog also.

Garth the search and rescue, tracker, bloodhound was a real dog as well.

We’re hoping my *Willie The Rodeo Clown* story will soon be made into a movie.

Watch for *Smillee*, *Comic Of The Grand Canyon* and *Rainy Rainbow and Freta Frog*

“Again, Thanks to all my readers and please return bi-weekly for a new Thistle/Candy story....free from me to you.” Aaaaannd

**Enjoy the great art drawn by my good friend and artist..... Mechelle Hill
And the great web site work by another friend Alez Kennedy**

My life's work has been in teaching, design and building homes and writing. The above friends are much better with computer and art work than I could ever be.

I want to give my wonderful wife a big thanks here too. I am a workaholic. I leave early and come in late. She has kept the family, home life and appointments etc together for nearing 30 years. We were both raised on farms in the country and enjoy our current little farm and home in the “BOONIES” as some would say.

We can talk about milking cows, feeding chickens, riding horses and grabbing a snake when gathering eggs from a hen's nest. Our ken folk were teachers, farmers, Walmart and grocery store people. Her grandpa and my grandpa both raised cattle and loved to fish. I inherited the love for fishing. Robbie loves to scrapbook with her friends more than fishing.....**imagine that .**

I want to say with teary eyes, “It's been a great 30 years with “Grandma”. I am looking forward to 30 more.”

I hope everyone has the good fortune I have had in finding my “soul mate”.

Please.....ENJOY.....your life and my stories and books.

Floyd P Knipe