

The Adventure of Spike & Fuzzy

By Joey Vega

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SAN DIEGO COUNTY

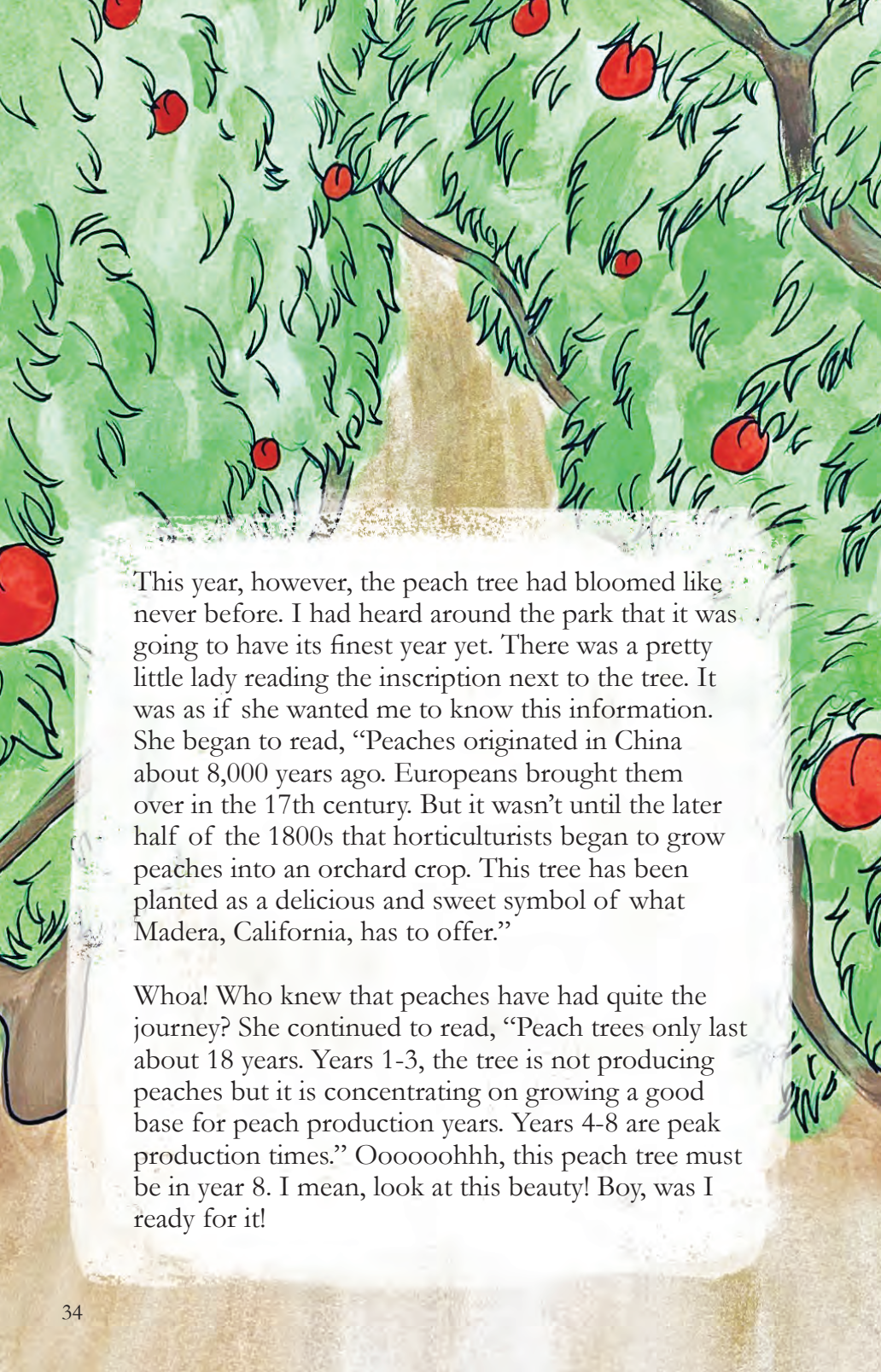
Illustrated by: Calvine High School

Hello, my name is Spike. Yes, I know what you're thinking and yes, I am a dog. A German Shepherd to be exact. And this is a story of how I met my best friend!



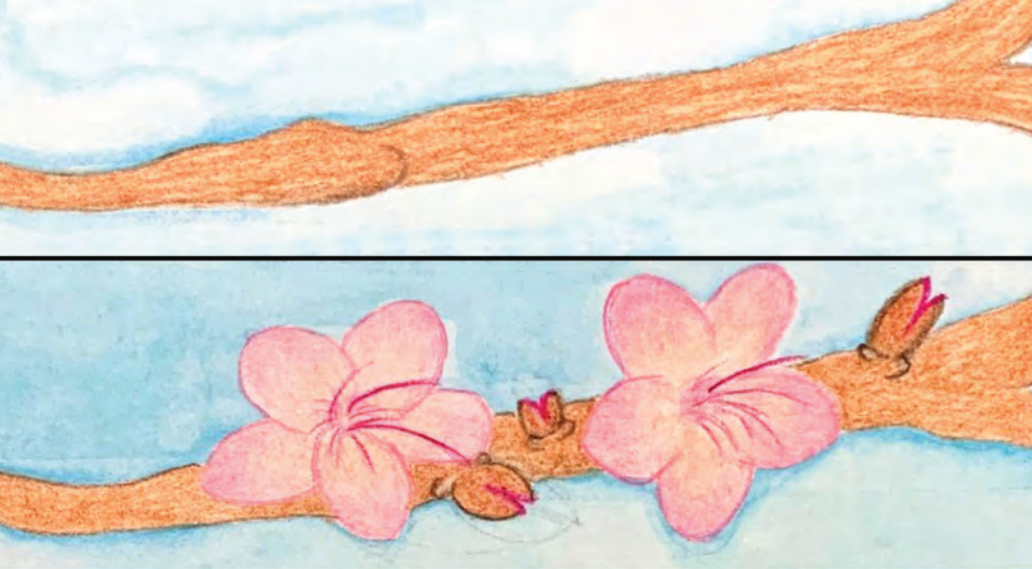


It was a bright and sunny day at Lion's Town Park. I remember it like it was yesterday. There I was, having the time of my life with my brand new toy, an irresistible squeaky bone. Ah, yes! It is the best of both worlds, squeaky and bony. To top it all off, I was chillin' at my throne. The spot where every dog wants to be but nobody dares to take from me, because I am Spike! It is my usual spot, right underneath the one, the only, the peach tree. It was a very hot August day.



This year, however, the peach tree had bloomed like never before. I had heard around the park that it was going to have its finest year yet. There was a pretty little lady reading the inscription next to the tree. It was as if she wanted me to know this information. She began to read, "Peaches originated in China about 8,000 years ago. Europeans brought them over in the 17th century. But it wasn't until the later half of the 1800s that horticulturists began to grow peaches into an orchard crop. This tree has been planted as a delicious and sweet symbol of what Madera, California, has to offer."

Whoa! Who knew that peaches have had quite the journey? She continued to read, "Peach trees only last about 18 years. Years 1-3, the tree is not producing peaches but it is concentrating on growing a good base for peach production years. Years 4-8 are peak production times." Oooooohhh, this peach tree must be in year 8. I mean, look at this beauty! Boy, was I ready for it!



She read on, “There are four phases of the peach tree, in this order. The dormant phase is where there are no physical signs of growth. In the flowering phase the tree produces beautiful, pink flowers. In the fruit phase the fruit begins to grow rapidly, in about 30 days. And finally, the harvest phase! The time when peaches are ready to eat, fuzz and all.”

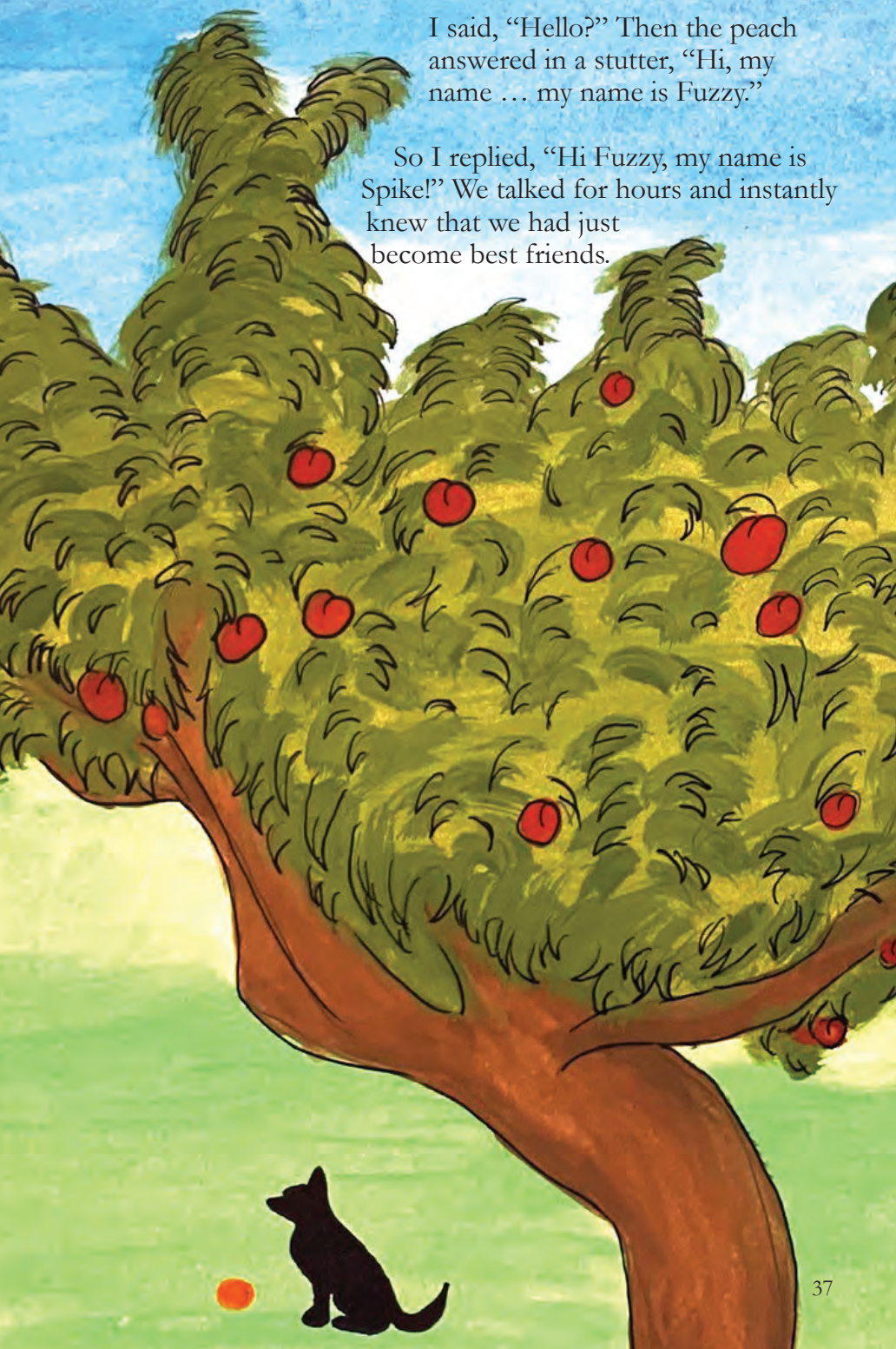
As I sat there listening, one of the peaches had dropped and landed on my head. Kapow!

Well, well, well, who was this little guy? I grabbed the peach and as I went in to take a bite, I heard a voice and looked around to see who was talking to me. Surely it wasn't the lovely lady that was reading to me. But there was no one around. I didn't think anything of it. So I went back to dig in and I heard the voice again, but this time it was much clearer. The voice yelled, "Nooo, don't eat me!!" I looked around and finally noticed that the voice was actually coming from my peach.



I said, "Hello?" Then the peach answered in a stutter, "Hi, my name ... my name is Fuzzy."

So I replied, "Hi Fuzzy, my name is Spike!" We talked for hours and instantly knew that we had just become best friends.





Later that day, a boy playfully picked up my squeaky bone and threw it across the grass. I tried my best to sit still because I didn't want to leave my best friend alone. But I could not resist. So I ran after it! We played a few rounds and then as I looked back for Fuzzy, I noticed he was in danger.



An army of insects had surrounded Fuzzy and they were going in for the kill. Fuzzy was so scared and alone when the insects came rushing towards him.

“Uh oh,” thought Fuzzy. Fuzzy began to yell, “SPIIIIIIKE!” as he noticed the insects trying to attack. Fuzzy closed his eyes and prayed for the best. As he opened his eyes, he saw the army of insects running in the opposite direction.

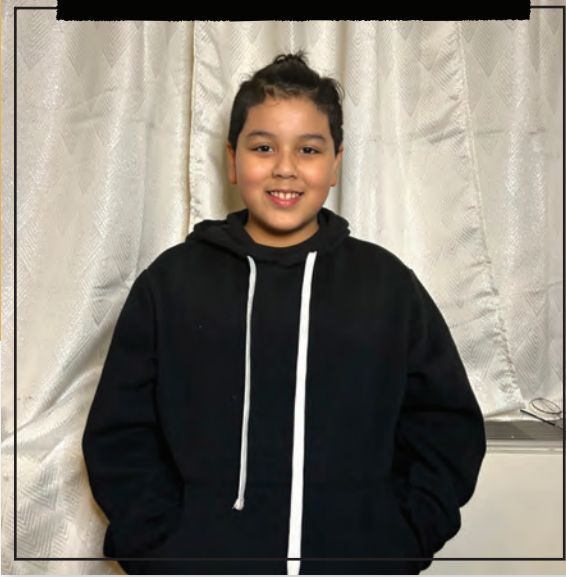


Just then, Fuzzy remembered that his tiny little hairs irritated the insects, which was his secret weapon to staying safe! His peach fuzz had saved him!

When Spike came back with his squeaky bone, Fuzzy explained what had happened. That day, Fuzzy learned a very important lesson: Everyone has their own natural source of protection. His was his fuzz. All hail to the peach fuzz!



ABOUT the AUTHOR



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Joey's story started with list-making. The San Diego County fifth grader initiated the writing process by brainstorming possible characters and the stone fruit story (starring a peach and a dog) slowly developed. Joey learned that nothing is impossible if you believe in yourself. He hopes readers learn new facts about California-grown peaches.

ABOUT the ILLUSTRATORS



Drea Soto, Julianna Reyna & Amanda Kelly

Calvine High School
Corrie Soderlund, Art Teacher

These illustrators got a history lesson in peaches! The high school seniors learned about the origin of the fruit and the different phases of a peach tree (dormant, flower and fruit). The team divided the illustrations between those who were confident in drawing scenes or characters, then created the page breaks and communicated with each other to problem solve challenges. They enjoyed researching peach blossom and German Shepherd imagery, and used watercolor, colored pencil, and ink to create their illustrations.