

It was two weeks before Christmas,
on a cold winter's night.

A stray dog wandered the streets alone.

She didn't yet have a name, but she would soon be called Suzy.



The snowflakes blew in circles. The ground froze beneath her paws.
Her stomach growled. Suzy looked up and down the street,
but all she saw was a blanket of snow.



I need somewhere warm to spend the night, Suzy thought with a shiver.



So she walked

and walked...

and walked.

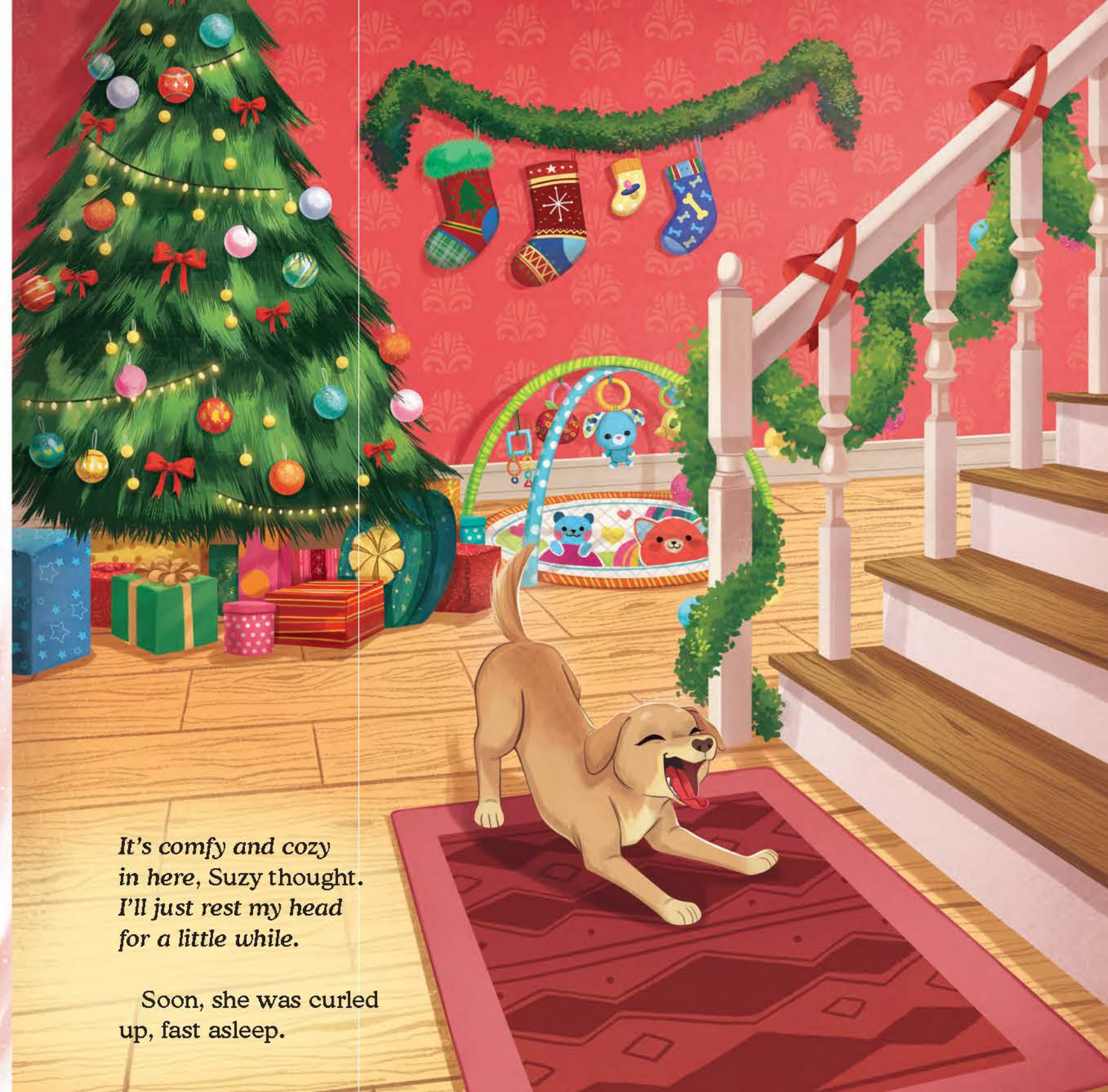


Finally, Suzy saw a light.
A soft, welcoming light.

It shined through an open
door to a lovely house.

Her little heart skipped a beat.
She snuck up the stairs and peeked inside.

The house smelled like cinnamon and pinecones. Warm air wrapped around her face, tickling her whiskers and inviting her in.



It's comfy and cozy in here, Suzy thought. I'll just rest my head for a little while.

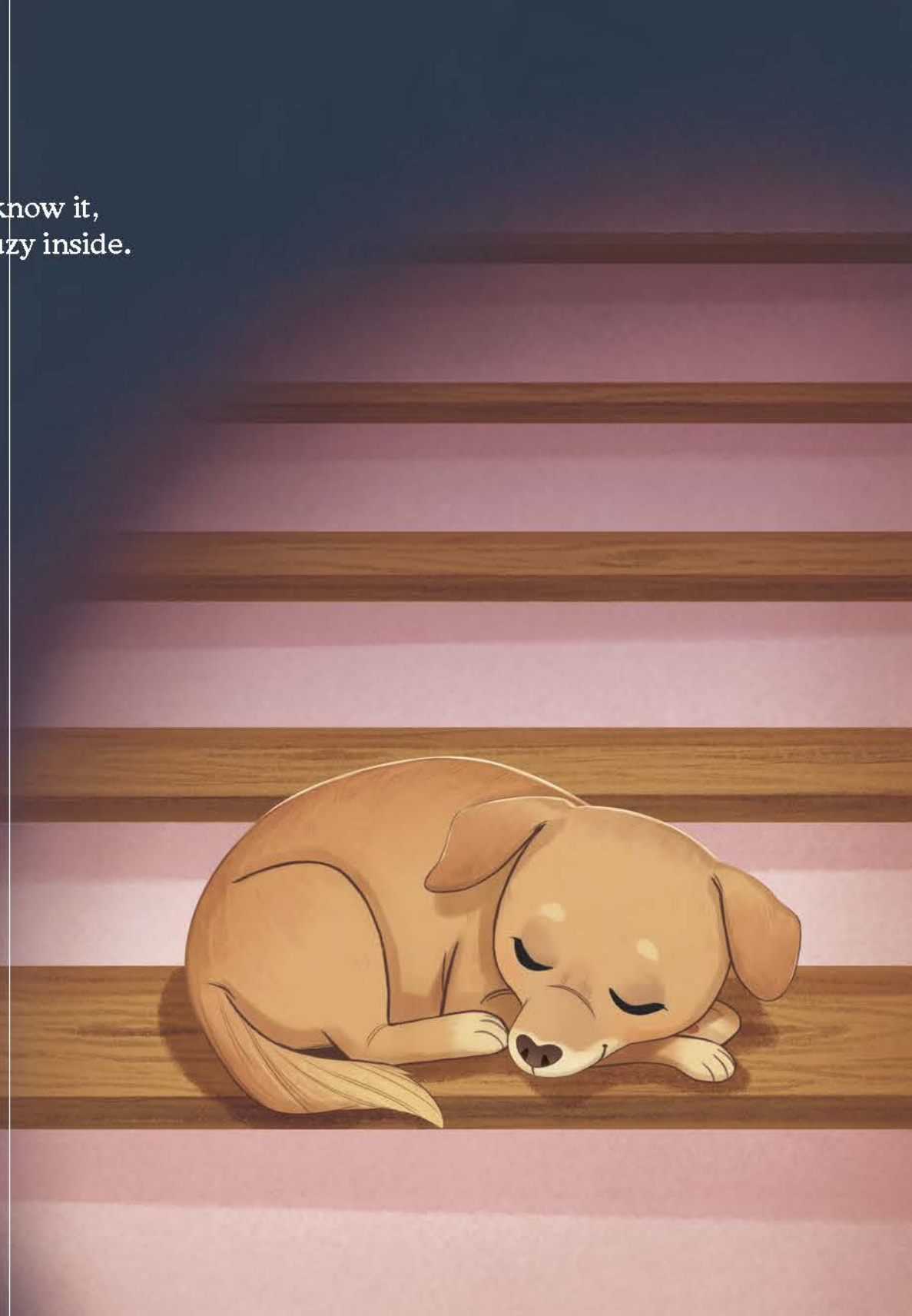
Soon, she was curled up, fast asleep.

Outside, a neighbor noticed
the open front door.

“How strange,” he said
before closing it.



The neighbor did not know it,
but he was shutting Suzy inside.



Author's Note

When Suzy came through our door in December 2019, another dog was the last thing our family needed. With a one-month-old baby and a dog already, we could have dropped Suzy off at a shelter and hoped she would find a loving home. But that would've been the easy decision. The right thing is not always the easy thing, and I've always prided myself on doing what is right. When I looked down at Suzy's sweet face, I knew the only choice was to welcome her as a part of our family. She may not have survived in a shelter, and I couldn't stand the thought of that if we could help her. So we did.

As Suzy settled into our home, there were countless vet appointments, several accidents in the house, and multiple pairs of chewed-up sneakers. It has taken a lot of love and patience to care for her, but seeing Suzy get a new shot at life, and watching our daughters Johanna and Layla (we've had another baby girl!) grow up with her has made it all worth it.

Also, thanks to our story going viral, many people decided to help us with Suzy's medical bills. The donations poured in, far exceeding the amount we needed for Suzy. As her health improved, we were faced with other tough questions: What do we do with the excess money? Do we keep it for Suzy? Do we give it away, and if so, where to? We decided to sponsor animal adoptions, offering \$100 to help offset the cost of an adoption fee if someone rescued a dog instead of buying one. The results were incredible. During Suzy's first year with us, we sponsored three hundred and sixty-six adoptions, saving a life a day for the whole year!

It would have been the easy thing to simply give the excess donations to an organization, or even easier to keep the money for ourselves. But the right thing was to keep spreading Suzy's story to help other stray dogs like her find their forever homes.

When my two beautiful daughters grow up, I hope they look back on their childhood and are proud of their parents' choices. I hope this story inspires others to take the road less traveled and, when at a crossroads, choose to do what is right instead of what is easy. I hope you can do that too! It is so much more rewarding in the end.

Adopt, don't shop!



Before



& After

