

By C. J. Gudmundson

(Based on a true story)

Thou shalt love thy neighbour (Mark 12:31).

Dad, I don't want to go," Spencer said.
"You promised Grandpa you would help him today," Dad said.

"I don't want to go to the dump," Spencer said. "Why doesn't Grandpa put his garbage can on the curb like everyone else?"

"You promised you would go, so you need to go," Dad said.

"This is silly," Spencer thought. Why did he have to waste a day of his vacation at the dump?

A few minutes later, Grandpa drove up in his pickup truck. Two garbage cans were loaded in the back.

Spencer climbed into the passenger's seat.

"We have just a few stops to make before we go to the dump," Grandpa said.

"This is going to take forever,"

Spencer thought as he stared out the window.

Grandpa pulled into his neighbors' driveway. The couple who lived there had been his grandparents' neighbors for almost 50 years. Arlo and Wanda were always nice to Spencer when he came to visit. The front door opened and Wanda walked out.

"I wish you wouldn't trouble yourself with this," she said to Grandpa as he hauled her garbage can into the truck.

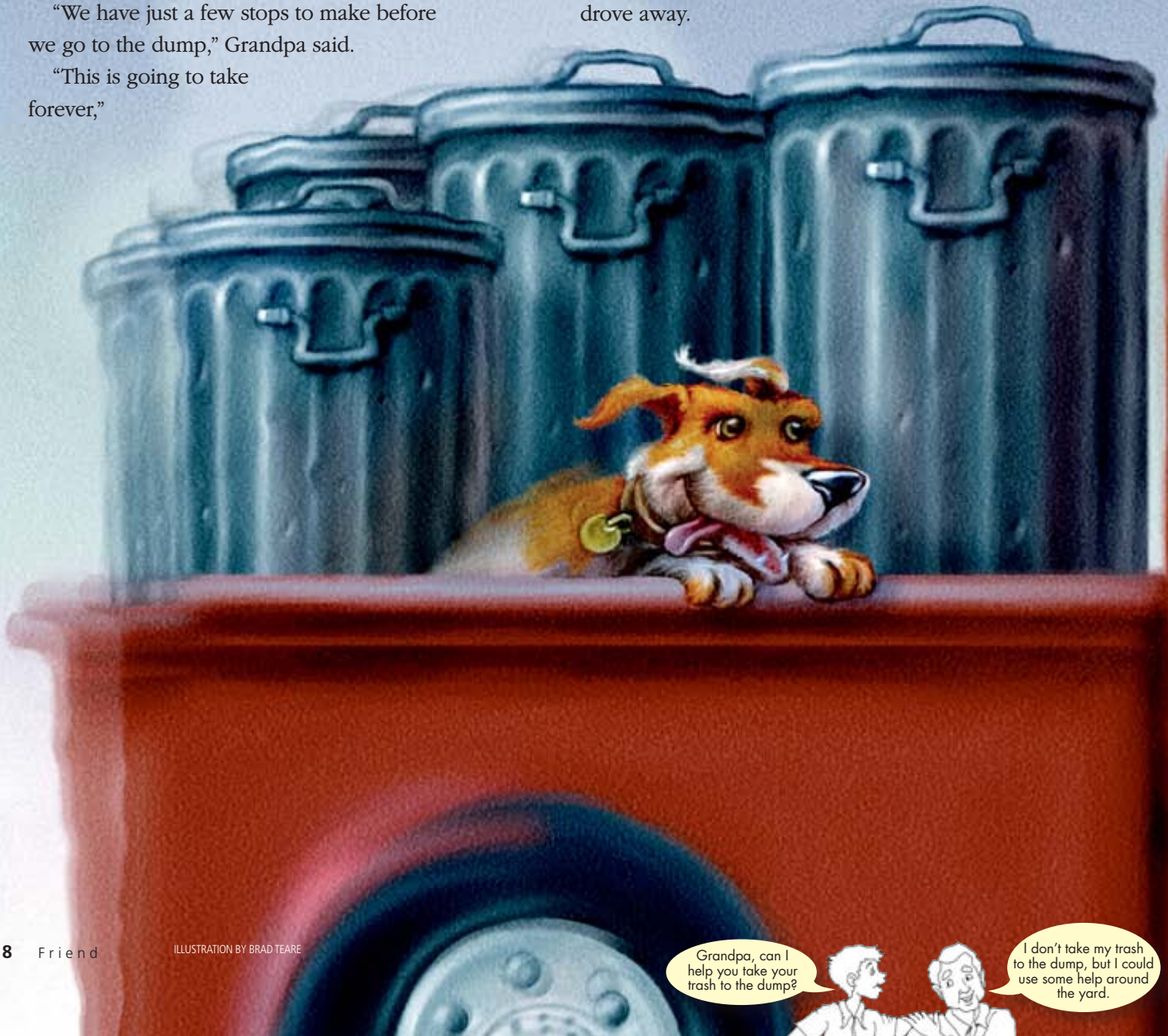
"No trouble at all," Grandpa said.

"You have the kindest grandpa in the world," Wanda said to Spencer.

"Give Arlo my best," Grandpa said.

"I will. Thank you," Wanda said. A tear fell down her cheek.

"What's wrong with Arlo?" Spencer asked as they drove away.



Grandpa, can I help you take your trash to the dump?

I don't take my trash to the dump, but I could use some help around the yard.

"He's really sick. Wanda has to do everything for him now. It's a lot of hard work, but she doesn't complain."

A few minutes later they pulled into another driveway. A small woman was struggling to keep a garbage can from tipping over as she tried to move it from the garage.

"Minnie!" Grandpa jumped out of the truck. "What are you doing?"

"I'm just trying to help," she said.

Minnie was another one of Grandpa's neighbors.

Grandpa took the garbage can from her.

"I think you've grown a foot since last summer, Spencer," Minnie said, smiling at Spencer. "I'm sorry I haven't brought over any waffles, but these old hands don't do much cooking anymore."

Minnie was an excellent cook and used to bring over a batch of waffles when Spencer and his family

came to visit Grandma and Grandpa.

"That's OK, Minnie," Spencer said.

"I don't know what I would do without your grandpa and grandma, Spencer," Minnie said. "This world needs more people like them."

Grandpa loaded Minnie's can into the back of the truck, and soon they were driving down a long, dusty road outside of town. "This is our last stop," Grandpa said.

"Who lives here?" Spencer asked.

"A new family that moved in a few months ago. They are having a hard time. I told them I would haul their trash for them so they wouldn't have to pay for garbage service. At first they told me I didn't need to."

"Then why do it?" Spencer asked.

Grandpa smiled at Spencer. "Because I can," he said.

Spencer stared out the window, thinking about what Grandpa had just said. He realized that Grandpa didn't help people because he had to do it. He helped people because that's the kind of person he was.

Grandpa parked the truck, but before he could get out, Spencer said, "You stay in the truck, Grandpa. I'll get these cans for you." ♦

