



The Fast and the Furriest

Andy Behrens

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Meet Kevin Pugh, 12-year-old couch potato. Now meet Cromwell, his part beagle, part potato chip dog. Kevin's looking forward to spending his summer doing as little as possible. Unfortunately, Kevin's father, former Chicago Bears star player/super-sports fanatic, Howie Pugh, feels differently. So does Cromwell, who has suddenly and mysteriously developed a fascination with agility competitions: running up seesaws, leaping over hurdles, soaring through hoops (sometimes). If he has to do anything, Kevin would rather do something for newly obsessed Cromwell, but dog agility lessons do not constitute a sport in his father's mind, so football camp it is. Until some well-timed events collide, literally, and soon Kevin's found a way for he and Cromwell to take classes, and the upstart Team Cromwell is born.

Andy Behrens has written a hilarious novel with a dry-as-dirt protagonist who's constantly tortured by the goings-on around him. It's also a charming story about a boy and his dog, as well as a meaningful and heartfelt look at a relationship between a boy and his father who don't always see eye-to-eye.

The Fast and the Furriest Details

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Author : Andy Behrens

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From Reader Review The Fast and the Furriest for online ebook

Christine says

Good ending. Getting tired of stories written for children with lousy parents. Ten- and twelve-year-olds shouldn't have to fight their parents over things they don't want or are not comfortable doing. All turns out well in the end but only because clueless parents finally wake up and grow up.

Christine says

Loved the Chicago references. Though predictable, still a really good story about not giving up and having confidence even when you are the underdog.

Jami says

This was a cute young adult book. I found myself really rooting for Cromwell and Kevin and was engaged in the outcome of the agility contests. It was a bit hokey and predictable in spots, but that didn't detract from the story for me. I thought the author did a good job developing the family relationships. And come on, who can't like a book about a beagle!?!?!?

Beth says

When Kevin Pugh's dog, Cromwell, watches a dog agility competition on tv and discovers a new passion, couch potato Kevin also has to develop his skills as an athlete. Kevin's former football star father adds humor and family dynamics to the story. Fun for sports and animal fans alike.

Lorelei Ponto says

I honestly loved reading this book. I could really connect with the book, I used to do agility with my dog a lot and this book shows how Kevin gets involved in agility with his dog Cromwell. I really found my self cheering on Cromwell and Kevin in the adventures and obstacles that they went through.

Most of this story starts of in Kevin's home, where Kevin would always lay around and be lazy. There were also my parts in this book where the setting took places in dog agility competitions, they were spread out a long ways across the state.

Kevin is one of the main characters in this book, he is very lazy and does not want to get off the couch most days. Even if Kevin found the ambition to get off the couch he was not very good at sports, which was frowned on by his father. Kevin's father was a former Chicago player and his sister a very successful soccer player. Kevin however just enjoys playing video games with his dog Cromwell, until one day a commercial

came on for dog agility. Kevin was automatically hooked, he suddenly wanted to go for walks and jump over things. As you can guess going from sitting on the couch to being active wasn't easy for him and he wasn't very good at it. The two get help from a local trainer that believes in them and is willing to help them out. Kevin and Cromwell get very serious about the sport and become very good at it.

This book takes place in modern times. It tells in parts of this book that Kevin uses the internet and watches TV, also that dog agility competitions were not very advertised or did not exist in older times. The main place that this book was in Chicago, and in Chicago it took place mostly was in Kevin's house, and occasionally the football field, and in dog agility competitions.

I would recommend this book to multiple people. I believe this would be very good for younger kids to read, but also adults. While it is a pretty easy read it still captures the interest of people that are older also.

Jekka says

This was a quick, enjoyable read right up to the end. The ending knocked a couple stars off what could have been a 5 star book for my dog-loving son and daughter.

The story was fast paced, simple, a bit over-the-top, and light humored, but for a children's book these are not bad qualities.

I didn't mind the characters, the story-arch, or the absolutely unbelievable pace at which these two couch potatoes became champions. What I did mind was the complete character shift that happened in Kevin the second he won the competition. He went from insecure adolescent who was rightly frustrated with his father's constant one track sports mindedness to an over the top jerk in half a second flat.

The ending ruined the enjoyment of the book for both me and my children. I liked that he was bonding with his father at the end, but this story would have been 100% better if he had given it his best and fell on his face during the tournament - with his dad there to encourage him, support him in continuing, and show him that he really did matter even if he wasn't the best at something after a month of training. As is, winning is great and turns mild mannered, likeable children into monsters whose parents are now proud of their athleticism is about all we got in the end.

Cinnamon says

Kevin has always been absolutely horrible at sports. He can't catch, kick, or run to save his life. And, in his family, not playing sports is almost a sin. His father is a former Chicago Bear and his sister is the best young soccer player in Chicago, maybe even Illinois. Kevin prefers his sedentary lifestyle. He and his dog, Cromwell, are just fine on the couch playing video games. Until one when a commercial comes on for a dog agility competition. Cromwell sees the commercial and he is hooked. Suddenly, he wants to go for walks and runs and jump over things. Of course, he is so chubby, that he is more likely to fall down and run into things. But Cromwell doesn't care; he just loves to go. Kevin isn't as enthusiastic at first, but as Cromwell leads him farther from home, he starts to see the beauty in the sport. Eventually, the pair make their way to an agility trainer in their neighborhood. Elka is strange but she believes in the pair. Now if only Kevin can get others to believe in them. But his toughest critic turns out to be himself.

Nice story, good characters, great- if far-fetched- ending.

Another great sports underdog story:

Barbara says

This book was recommended to me by my Goodreads friend Banny Kirsten Marie, who knows I like books about dogs. Though the story is written for kids from 9 to 12, it can be enjoyed by dog lovers of any age. ?

As the story opens, it's summer break for Chicago schools, and 12-year-old Kevin Pugh is looking forward to lazy days in his basement - playing video games, watching television, munching cheesy snacks, and hanging out with his beagle-mix Cromwell, a dog so lazy he could be mistaken for a dog-shaped throw pillow.

Kevin's getting started on his torpid summer.....channel surfing.....when he comes across The Animal Channel's broadcast of 'The Purina Incredible Dog Challenge' - a canine agility competition. Amazingly, Cromwell is galvanized by the program. He sits up, stares at the television, and starts blinking, shaking, and panting with excitement.

Kevin is shocked that Cromwell moved, then flabbergasted when the chubby beagle-mix leaps off the couch and dashes around the room, knocking things down and leaving chaos in his wake. After Kevin cleans up, Cromwell presents his leash for a walk - an unheard of occurrence.

Cromwell proceeds to run, jump, and bounce through the backyard, ending with a jump into the tire swing....where he gets stuck. Impressed with Cromwell's newfound energy, Kevin decides to email a canine training school he saw advertised on TV - 'Paw Patch, Inc. - Obedience Training and Dog Agility' - on Cromwell's behalf.

The facility's owner, Elka Brandt - who looks like a pirate on her TV commercials - emails back immediately.....addressing Cromwell. Elka congratulates Cromwell for leading Kevin to Paw Patch and informs the dog that sessions cost \$200.

Kevin asks his parents if they'll fund Cromwell's agility classes, but this presents a problem. Kevin's dad is Howie Pugh, a former Chicago Bears linebacker who's now a football analyst, local sports hero, and the most competitive creature on Earth. Howie's a good father, but he wants his kids to be athletes.

Kevin's 10-year-old sister Izzy fits the bill, being a soccer superstar. Kevin, however - who's chunky and uncoordinated - doesn't want to do sports. Howie doesn't seem to get this, though, and makes a deal with his son: if Kevin goes to summer football camp Howie will CONSIDER paying for Cromwell's agility lessons.

Football camp doesn't go too well and it looks like Cromwell won't be going to Paw Patch. Then Kevin's best friend Zach - who's very impressed with the beagle-mix - makes an offer. He'll pony up the \$200 for dog school and become Cromwell's 'manager' - recouping his money when Cromwell becomes famous. Zach even has 'Team Cromwell' shirts made - for himself, Kevin, and the dog.

So.....Cromwell goes to agility classes, with Elka Brandt as his dog whisperer (literally) and Kevin as his trainer/handler. Kevin and Cromwell spend a lot of time running, exercising, and practicing on the doggie obstacle course, which includes: running up and down an A-frame ramp; jumping over three hurdles; racing through a fabric cylinder; leaping over three more hurdles; dashing up an incline, across a plank, then down an incline; racing through a U-shaped tunnel; jumping onto a table; weaving through a series of poles; running up and down a seesaw; then.....for the final obstacle.....jumping through a hoop.

All this - and a proper diet - shapes up both Cromwell and Kevin, and the beagle-mix is entered in the 'Paw Patch Invitational' agility competition.....whose winner goes on to the 'Midwest Kennel Club Championship.' To find out what happens, you'll have to read the book.

This is a charming story filled with engaging characters, lots of humor, and a heartwarming finale. It's a great book for kids.....and adults who want a light frothy read. Highly recommended.

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Emmaleigh says

When I first got the list of the Sunshine State books and researched the books I was really excited about this one. It proved itself to be more disappointing to me. I started this book well over a week ago and I am surprised it took me over a week to read it since it's a mere 250 pages and written for fourth grade reading levels. I had a difficult time getting into the book first of all because it wasn't my style of book, perhaps if I was an elementary school boy I might enjoy it but it was so slow. I am concerned my students are going to want to stick with this book either because of the slow start. It's also quite predictable at every turn, which was to be expected. However, even though a book could very well be predictable, the writing style could still keep you engaged but Behrens did not do that. I read other reviews of how humorous the book was and didn't find myself amused. Once I finally decided to stick with this book and finish it out for the sake of my students I would still recommend it to them because it fits their lives perfectly and it has a good moral story that they can connect to. However, I was really displeased with the father figure in the book and was hoping for more supportive parents. It was cute but I am glad I am done reading it.

Alexis R says

Awesome book of two couch potatoes becoming stars!

Josh Newhouse says

Very cute, unconventional underdog sports story... Didn't really buy the dads story arc but overall a fun, funny, fast, furry read!

Sophia Whitney says

Cormwell is a very lazy dog. But one day he was watching dog agility on TV and started going crazy, jumping hoops, going on many walks with his owner Kevin, and running. Kevin finds dog agility classes for Cormwell and begs his parents to pay for them. But his dad wants Kevin to do “real” sports like football, not dog agility. Kevin is not very good at sports but him and his dog are amazing at dog agility. Will Cormwell and Kevin keep winning without his parents finding out?

Of course Cormwell changes from a couch potato to a dog agility champion. But Kevin also changes in the book too. One way is he was not very confident that him and Cormwell might do really good at the courses. Then after they won their first competition he was very excited and confident. Another way he changed was how he started exercise. He started running everyday to keep up with Cormwell on the course.

I liked a lot of things about this book. How it was about trying new things and being a good sport. I also liked how they never gave up even if Cormwell was not doing the best at the courses. And because they did that they won a lot of times. One thing that I didn't like was how from being a very lazy dog to wanting to go on walks and running all the time. But I still really liked this book.

Cherie says

I thought it was a good story. Some pretty funny 13 year olds. A strange dog trainer lady and a couple of parents - a little over the top.

The young boy that the story is about is, Kevin, who's father is a famous Chicago Bears football player. His father does not believe a sport is a REAL sport unless it involves some kind of a ball. Kevin has a younger sister who is a soccer jock.

Kevin and his dog, Cromwell, a beagle mixed breed, are basically couch potatoes until they happen to catch the last few minutes of an Dog Agility Contest on the Animal Planet. Cromwell comes to life and is glued to the screen as he watches the winning dog go through the course. It changes their lives.

Besides the picture on the cover - who could resist, right? I chose this book for the title. My 13 year old grandson has talked about "The Fast and the Furious" movie, since he saw it when he was 6.

Ellen says

Funny, plot driven, Chicago connections, animal story, sports story, perseverance

Narrator does a good job with the Chicago accents; lots of laugh out loud moments but probably would not appeal to someone who didn't love sports.

JoJo says

Part 2 of my 2018 Kick-Off Reread-athon: "The Fast and the Furriest," one of the best and most inspiring underdog stories with more heart than Cromwell has fat. It'll have you cheering, guffawing, and fired up to turn your own lazy dogs into dog agility champions (or the other way around). I absolutely loved Zach's character and all of his hilarious commentary, as well as Izzy, whose bubblegum-talk could never mask the sheer amount of her love and support for her brother and their dog. While a quick read, it is a rollercoaster ride of a book, complete with training montages, epic fails, and miraculous transformations.
