

MARY MARGARET AND THE PERFECT PET PLAN

by Christine Kole MacLean

Mary Margaret will do *anything* to get a pet, including:

1. Sing a song about it over and over until her mom gets the message
2. Do the baddest chore of all (cleaning the toilet!)
3. Earn money by selling handmade poop purses (or Number Two Totes, as her mother prefers her to call them) to neighborhood dog walkers

The problem is, Mary Margaret's mother isn't listening. She's too busy thinking about what it will be like to have a new baby at her age. Another problem is that Mary Margaret's father is allergic to anything with dander (whatever that is). As for her brother, J.T., he's got his own problems (with his weird friend Duff), so he's not much help at all. It's enough to make a girl want to go back to her kiki!

If you've ever been desperate for a pet—or you just like a good laugh—you'll love reading about the irrepressible Mary Margaret and her crazy schemes to get something furry to love.



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ACROSS THE CURRICULUM

Verbal/ Linguistic

Mary Margaret and her brother sometimes speak in code by dropping all the letters off words except the first one. (For example: KWIM for “know what I mean.”) Create a code like this for your most common phrases and make a handbook so people can understand you. IWBF! (It will be fun!)

Mary Margaret loves to write little poems about what is going on around her. Write three poems inspired by this spunky character about what is happening around you.

Write a pamphlet about your dream pet. Find out everything there is to know about owning such an animal like food requirements, training, vet costs, housing needs, exercise and where you can find one.

Visual/Spatial

Design a bedroom for Mary Margaret. Choose colors, tell what her comforter would look like, what posters she might have—even the toys and books that would be sitting on her shelf. A really fun way to do this project is to cut out pictures from ads and magazines. Or, use a shoebox and make a miniature diorama of her room with found objects.

Interpersonal

Write a letter from Mary Margaret to her grandpa after the birthday incident. Pretend they didn't resolve things while they were still at the farm.

Intrapersonal

Draw an emotional timeline for Mary Margaret. Show the ups and downs in her emotions and make a note as to what causes them. (The chart should look similar to a heart monitor chart!)

Body/ Kinesthetic

Play charades, acting out these scenes from the book (without talking!):

- Losing the rat
- Camping in the backyard
- Selling #2 Totes
- Capture of the rabbit
- Snooping on the computer
- Doing unnecessary chores
- Losing her temper in the parking lot

Mathematics

If it costs Mary Margaret \$17.00 to buy the fabric to make #2 Totes, how many will she have to sell at \$5.00 each to make a profit? Explain how you got your answer.

What if JT decides that because he sews the bags for her that he should get a cut of the profits? So, if JT wants \$2.00 for every bag sold, and it costs \$2.00 for the materials for each bag, how many bags will she have to sell to make a profit?

Mrs. Fufetti has decided that she simply must buy ten leopard print #2 Totes for all her friends in the gardening club. It takes half a yard of fabric to make five totes. One yard of fabric costs \$4.95 per yard. How much will it cost Mary Margaret to make Mrs. Fufetti's totes?

Mary Margaret wants a new bowl set for her pet. It costs \$13.99 at the pet store. How many totes will she have to sell to go buy it?



READER'S GUIDES

PREDICTION

Readers should answer these questions at the end of each chapter to help build comprehension.

Pre-reading:

What do you think the main problem will be in this story? Why do you think so? What do you think will happen in the end?

Chapter 1

1. What will Mary Margaret's mother say about Lester?
2. Will Mary Margaret be able to find Lester?

Chapter 2

1. Will Andy and Mary Margaret become best friends? Why or why not?
2. What type of pet do you think Mary Margaret wants most? Why?

Chapter 3

1. Will JT help Mary Margaret get a pet?
2. Why do you think her mom doesn't want a pet?

Chapter 4

1. Will her dad get sick from Lester?
2. Will her mom be less crabby after the baby comes?
3. What is going on between JT and Duff?

Chapter 5

1. Will JT tell on Mary Margaret?
2. What will he make her do so he doesn't?

Chapter 6

1. What could the secret be?
2. Will JT figure out that Mary Margaret snooped? How?

Chapter 7

1. Will Duff and JT stay friends?
2. What is Mary Margaret's idea?

Chapter 8

1. Will Andy keep being Mary Margaret's friend? Why?
2. Will Mary Margaret blab that JT is sewing for her?

Chapter 9

1. Will Mary Margaret sell a lot of #2 Totes?
2. What will she name the baby?

Chapter 10

1. Will Mary Margaret ever snoop again?
2. What do you think the last sentences of the chapter mean: "Which is a fib. Because he actually says quite a bit about JT."

Chapter 11

1. What will they do with the rest of the summer?
2. Will they continue to make and sell #2 Totes?



Chapter 12

1. What do you think she's getting for her birthday?
2. Will Mary Margaret ever get a pet she really wants? When?

Chapter 13

1. Will Mary Margaret accept the baby?
2. Will she lose her temper again or will she be better now that she has said how she feels to her mom?

Chapter 14

1. Why won't they get to sleep outside in the tent?
2. What kinds of things will Mary Margaret get away with after the baby comes?

Chapter 15

1. Will JT save the rabbit?
2. Will JT and Duff ever be friends again?

Chapter 16

1. Will Duff go back to Mike and Kevin?
2. Will Mary Margaret like the baby more in a year?

Chapter 17

1. What do you think the title of this chapter means?
2. Will Eliza ever get over her colic?

Chapter 18

1. Do you think Mary Margaret will get a dog too? Why?
2. Will she like her sister more and more?



COMPREHENSION

Knowledge

- Describe Mary Margaret in your own words.
- Make a chart with each character's name and a description of them from the book.

Comprehension

- List five key events from the story in the order they appear.
- Explain what is going on in JT's life.

Application

- Write five interview questions you would like to ask Mary Margaret.
- Draw a picture of your favorite scene.

Analyze

- Compare JT and Mary Margaret.
- Predict what Mary Margaret will be when she grows up.

Synthesize

- What would happen if you (like Mary Margaret):
 - Told your grandpa that you didn't like his birthday gift?
 - Brought a rat home without asking?
 - Logged into your brother's journal without permission?

Evaluation

- Decide what happens after the book closes.
- What is your favorite part of the story? Why?