

The
ADVENTURES
of
LIL' STEVIE

BOOK 1: CANINES, CAMPOUTS, AND COUSINS

by:
Steve Fitzhugh



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To schedule Steve Fitzhugh to bring a high-energy, engaging, passionate message to your next event, contact him through his website: www.PowerMoves.org

This book is dedicated to Charles “Chucky” Fitzhugh.
You brought priceless memories and loads of laughter
to my childhood. Every child deserves to have a big
brother like you. Thank you!

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Introduction

Little Stevie Fitzhugh - *that's fits-you, fits-me, fits-everybody* - was the fourth-born child to Eva and Ray Fitzhugh. Stevie came along on January 28, 1963. Since his father Ray was the baby of *his* family, Lil' Stevie was often referred to as the "baby's baby." He knew this because when his grandma on his father's side visited, she'd wrap her large, loving arms around him and affectionately say, "You are the baby's baby." She had a soft spot for Stevie that was obvious to everyone. You could even say she spoiled him (though all of her grand-babies were special).

She always told Stevie, "One day I'm gonna take you wherever you wanna go!"

Lil' Stevie dreamed about that promised day. He would remember the names of interesting places he saw on television, or that he read about in books, so he could tell Grandma Angeline where he wanted to go, if and when that special day came. It was her promise that made Lil' Stevie want to explore the world, and that desire stayed with him for his entire life.

Stevie lived with his mom, his sister, and two

brothers. His sister's name was Greta; she was the oldest. As a teenager, Greta had lots of friends, a huge afro, and was very pretty.

Raymond, the next oldest, was a terrific athlete and did well in school, too. One day, while sitting at the kitchen table, Stevie looked on in awe while Raymond took a wristwatch completely apart and then put it all back together! Stevie thought Raymond could do anything.

Chucky was three years older than Stevie, and because of how close they were in age, Stevie and Chucky hung out together the most.

Stevie saw his parents' marriage end in divorce before he was seven. Even though things were difficult for Stevie, he had many memorable childhood events. Some of these events led to life-long lessons, others made long-time memories, and yet others can just be chalked up as weird and wacky things that happened.

Stevie's mom had a great sense of humor and was a practical joker. Chucky took after her, and he was the funniest brother ever. He made everyone laugh out loud until their sides hurt. Chucky could make you laugh the kind of laugh that ended up with you begging him to stop being funny so you could catch your breath. It was what Stevie appreciated the most about Chucky. Stevie needed that kind of laughter to break up the sad times. No one wants to see his or her parents get divorced. It was painful.

His parents originally planned for Lil' Stevie's

dad to go to college while his mom stayed home. Then, after he earned his degree, Mom would go to college while Dad worked. Instead, Dad went to college while Mom had one, then two, then three, and then four babies. After that, she had to stay at home while Dad continued in school. He earned another degree, but their relationship fell apart as they grew in separate directions. Their split came with arguments that Stevie didn't understand, and with uninvited pain that hung around Stevie's heart for much too long.

All families have problems. The ones that have the tools and resources to solve those problems succeed. The families that don't know how to solve their problems become what the professionals call: dysfunctional. Lil' Stevie grew up with a lot of dysfunction that he learned to parade as normal in order to move along and get along.

This is the backdrop for *The Adventures of Lil' Stevie*. These are indeed adventures because life itself is an adventure filled with unique experiences, interesting characters, and strange places. Did you know your life is an adventure? It is an adventure which includes highs and lows, joys and sorrows, tears and laughter, all of which provide the tapestry for a story that can only be told by you. You are your life's main character! And in these particular adventures, you'll experience the true stories of Lil' Stevie Fitzhugh - that's *fits-you, fits-me, fits-everybody!*

The Adventures of Lil' Stevie



The Mighty Invasion of the Squirrels

Growing up on the West Side of Akron, Ohio was a good thing. No, really, it was! Someone else might not think so, but when what you have is all you've known, you are not aware that it could be better.

Stevie's house was special for two reasons. First, there was a hill in the backyard which was great for sledding in the winter. Second, it not only had a cherry tree, it also had three huge apple trees. The big apple trees were excellent for providing both a handy summer snack when one had been playing outside all day, and ample ammunition for apple fights with friends.

Although Stevie had friends who lived on his street and on the next street over, Stevie often played alone. He had a great imagination, which is a must-have if you are playing by yourself and you want to enjoy it! The backyard was the scene of many great adventures.

One perfect summer day, the backyard was host to one such great adventure for Stevie. On that day, the backyard transformed into a kingdom that could only be

protected by its champion: Lil' Stevie. The squirrels were on a mission to overtake the kingdom. They filled the trees, ran along branches, trampled the broken swing, and even used the high electric wires to access the rooftops of the royal house and garage. The entire kingdom depended on Stevie, its champion, to thwart the invasion.

A warrior of few weapons, Stevie depended entirely upon apples to defend the Fitzhugh Kingdom Matriarch, the Honorable Queen Eva. Stevie knew that to stop the advance of the troops, he couldn't just hit any squirrel with his apples, he had to hit the *captain* squirrel. If Stevie could get into position, hit the captain with an apple, and escape to the front yard without being attacked by the other squirrels, the kingdom would be saved.

Stevie entered the backyard quietly from the side of the house closest to The Ferrells (his next-door neighbors). The squirrels quickly noticed Mighty Champion Stevie. His reputation preceded him. He was well-known throughout the land as a fearsome conqueror. His apple-throwing skills were unmatched. He was quick and agile. He could hide behind any tree, step out, and, in a split-second, zip an apple twenty feet toward a target with remarkable accuracy.

Lil' Stevie prepared for the epic battle. He loaded up with apples, dashing around the backyard to gather them and returning to the patio to store his ammunition. Looking into the trees, it was clear why he had been

summoned. Squirrels were EVERYWHERE! The kingdom was most definitely under attack. Stevie began to hurl apples into the trees in an attempt to identify the captain squirrel. The captain squirrel would be easy to find, he was always the squirrel that went the highest into the trees when under attack.

Zip! Went one apple into the trees.

Zip, Zip! Went two more.

Lil' Stevie was on fire! He hurled apple after apple, non-stop. Squirrels scrambled everywhere trying to evade the young champion appointed to defend the kingdom.

The patio provided Stevie with excellent position. He could see the entire backyard *and* throw downhill at the squirrels on the ground, or straight ahead to squirrels in the trees.

Then it happened! The captain squirrel emerged above the other squirrels in the highest tree, on the highest branch. His thick, bushy tail curled waaaaay upward and seemed as large as a fox's tail! He stared down at Stevie, and Stevie stared back. Then, as quickly as he was identified, he took off down the branch, leaping out of sight, bouncing from one branch to the next.

Zip, Zip! Stevie launched apples into the air. *Zip, Zip!* He didn't quit. The battle waged on. Stevie continued to reposition himself to get a better angle at the captain squirrel. He could feel his heart pumping hard. It was thrilling.