



Berry Beary Kind Series:  
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## Grump and Hearty

It was another cloudy and drizzly day—and a miserable one, Mr. Grump-and-Do-Little thought. “One troublesome spot after another!” he said, while picking his way slowly across the marshy field—that was usually used for outdoor games and town fun.

But it had been raining, nearly daily for almost a week. Not that the rain was a problem, for indeed the towns’ folks needed a good watering for their crops. The rain came at just the right season as was needed and expected. If it didn’t come, they would have been in for a small and sorry crop of food that year.

Every good hearted citizen took the time to catch up on all sorts of indoor—and some outdoor—related activities; things they didn’t have time to get around to when the weather was always sunny and compelled them to do so many other things.

However, for Mr. Grump-and-Do-Little, who didn’t appreciate the good that the light, daily rain was doing for the overall town and the good of those who lived there, it just seemed to mess things up.

“There’s mud on my carpet. The dog even got wet yesterday. And worst of all, I haven’t been able to sit for too long on my balcony sunning myself as I watch the town’s folk do their work. As I say, I love work—watching it that is.”

Mr. Grump-and-Do-Little was listing his troubles.

Well, if it just happened when a particularly rainy week occurred—which wasn't that often—it might be understandable. However, the week before, when it had been one sunny day after the other—and people were starting to wonder how their crops were going to survive-- Mr. Grump-and-Do-Little had other troubles to speak about:

“I had to even get up from my balcony chair to water the plants in the front yard, as the clouds just aren't doing the job they were created to do. I can't remember the last time I even saw a rainbow—just blue, and gold in the sky, day after day. I thought this was meant to be Earth, not some ethereal paradise where the sun always shines and rain never falls. At least with rain, we get to see some colour's splashed in the sky. And to top it all off, I missed two of my seven weekly sleep-ins this week, due to the fact that the birds were so cheery they all started singing far too early in the morning.”

But it wasn't just the weather that brought out the grumps, it was, well, so much else. Was there anything Mr. Grump-and-Do-Little enjoyed, or liked to do to help others. If you'd asked his neighbours, they would have had a hard time coming up with something. His daily priority list was real short. It simply said, “Me first, me second, and me last.”

What could be done?

Berry Beary Kind received a call one sunny Friday afternoon.

“Yes? Well, hello, how can I help you?” he kindly responded to the “emergency” call, or so it was said.

It didn't take long before Berry Beary Kind knew who was on the other end of the line.

"Is there something you need help with; something you'd like me to do?" Berry Beary Kind tried asking.

Though the call was posed as if it was a need, it became apparent that it was just one more way Mr. Grump-and-Do-Little had come up with being able to express his utter unhappiness about yet another trouble. It wasn't something Berry Beary Kind could do anything about—but it was something Mr. Grump-and-Do-Little could do something about.

Berry Beary Kind surprised Mr. Grump-and-Do-Little by saying, "I see it's a desperate need. Something must be done about it right away. And there's only one person I know of that is capable of tending to it. No, it's nothing I can help with, but I'll come over right now and introduce you to the one who can mend that problem in no time at all."

Mr. Grump-and-Do-Little wasn't expecting Berry Beary Kind to visit, in fact the attitude of doing something, of taking action, rather ruffled him. He was accustomed to merely sitting around and voicing one complaint after another, to the point that no one hardly took notice of his grumbles anymore—and for that matter rarely ever paid him a visit. It would just be too depressing to be there.

Berry Beary Kind was determined to do something about this. Just what could be done, he wasn't too sure, but he was on his way to take action.

The latest complaint, that had caused him to phone Berry Beary Kind was the trouble he was having when his dog would bark each time the ball was kicked into the goal and the children and parents cheered, while playing in the field right near Mr. Grump-and-Do-Little’s house.

It was disturbing his thoughts. Maybe a wall or tall fence should be put up, so games and joyful exclamations wouldn’t disturb his dog from one of its frequent naps—almost as often as Mr. Grump-and-Do-Little would doze off.

After the phone call, Berry Beary Kind stopped to pray;

“Lord, Mr. Grump-and-Do-Little obviously has a need—something that causes him to think that everything, no matter what it is, is a bad thing; something to feel sorry for himself about; something to spread discouragement to others about. He’s not interested in being part of the solution and being a “problem solver”, but rather a “problem detective”. However, most of the things he “detects” aren’t problems at all, when viewed from a different, and proper point of view. Please show me what to do.”

Some of the things Berry Beary Kind had to tend to each day were fun and easy, but others were tough and challenging. Such as this situation that had been going on for far too long.

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“Knock-knock” Berry Beary Kind was at the door. “Hi, I’ve brought you a special gift—one that is sure to help you out with the trouble you are having today.”

Mr. Grump-and-Do-Little stuttered a little, and half invited Berry Beary Kind into his scruffy apartment. Well, the apartment was nice, but it was so rarely cleaned and fixed up—due to lack of time, and the strength to do so, Mr. Grump-and-Do-Little tried to explain.

“Well, never mind about that now,” Berry Beary Kind said. “Let’s focus on the matter at hand. On the way here I stopped by the Animal care shop set up by Farmer Beary’s oldest son. And this should be the perfect solution for your dog!”

Mr. Grump-and-Do-Little opened the bag and saw that it contained a cool contraption for tossing a ball, and a ball included, just the size and type for dogs to run and grab.

The ball could be thrown while even sitting in a fold out chair—and the owner wouldn’t even need to touch the ball. The dog could run and retrieve the ball, bring it back, and the owner could grab it from off the ground, give it a good fling, and watch his dog run to get it—again and again.

The only effort involved was to take the one minute walk to the park, and fold out one’s chair, and yes, move one’s arm a bit to get the ball to fling out.

It was made in such a way that little effort had to be used by the arm and hand, but the ball would be carried far. —The farther it went, the better, as it meant the dog would take longer to run and get it, meaning all the less frequently would the next ball need to be sent out.

It was the perfect gift and solution to such a situation.

Mr. Grump-and-Do-Little was a bit puzzled as to how this would make his dog settle down and go back to sleep when games were being played. But Berry Beary Kind explained.

“Your dog is excited about the game and the ball, because he so wishes to be there and part of the action. If you instead take him to the park, a few times each day, and let him run and run and get some good play time, you’ll be pleased to see how well he’ll sleep later on. When a dog is tired, he is dog tired. I think you’ll find it a great solution. Come, let’s put it to the test right now.”

Mr. Grump-and-Do-Little tried to mumble out an excuse, why he was too busy to do it just yet, however, the dog eagerly leapt up and was at the door wagging his tail and ready for a run.

Mr. Grump-and-Do-Little seeing that he was out voted, followed out too, grabbing his hat as he went out.

As soon as he put on his hat and looked in the mirror beside the door, a new feeling came over him. Something that hadn’t happened in a long while. He instinctively smiled, and seeing the reflection in the mirror of himself smiling, made him feel just a tinge of actual happiness. Maybe not a wave of it, but a spark, as if something fun was about to happen. He was reminded of his childhood when his father used to take him and their dog then to the park.

Maybe that is what his problem was. He was missing his father, and the childhood he had. Now that he was old and didn’t have any children or grandchildren, he had too much time to think about himself, and a life only centred around itself gets pretty mundane and dull.

Within moments they were at the park, and boy did Hearty the dog, enjoy the exhilarating and exhausting game.

More than once he had to just stop for a while, and drink from a pan of water that Berry Beary Kind had brought along; but not for long. Mr. Grump-and-Do-Little had gotten the hang of how to send the ball far, and the clever dog would always find it.

After awhile another visitor showed up at the park: Mr. Logen, with Boger his dog. He had not only the newest Dog-Ball-Flinger, but a whole bag of fun. He was training Boger to jump through loops, to grab frizz bees while they flew, to chase and grab a rubber bone attached to a rope that Mr. Logen would pull while running.

Mr. Logen was getting nearly as much exercise as Boger his dog. Maybe not as much, but plenty. He looked fit and happy, and so was his dog.

Before too long Mr. Grump-and-Do-Little and Mr. Logen started chatting about the thing they had in common now: taking their dog to the park for some good running around time.

“I come here just about every day,” Mr. Logen said. “I hope I’ll see you around. You’ll see that you can teach an old dog new tricks! At least it’ll be fun to try.”

Mr. Grump-and-Do-Little pondered and said, “What time will you and Boger be here tomorrow? Maybe Hearty and I will come along for the fun.”

Mr. Grump-and-Do-Little could hardly believe he’d just said that word he hadn’t heard come out of his own mouth in so long: fun. But it seemed right. Maybe there was some fun around the corner.