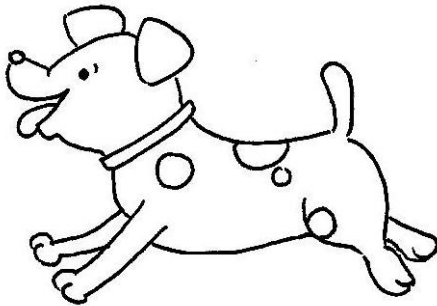


The Adventures of Furry and Friendly —Part 1—



Imaginary Story

The Adventures of Furry and Friendly -Part 1-



Written by:
Chariane Quille

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www.nurture-inspire-teach.com

Chapters:

Chapter 1—Kitty the Cat

Chapter 2—A Basket of Gifts

Chapter 3—Plotting Mice

Chapter 4—Furry the Kitten

Chapter 5—Rusty

Chapter 6—Ant Sized Helpers

Chapter 7—Birds and Seeds

Chapter 8—Messy Mud

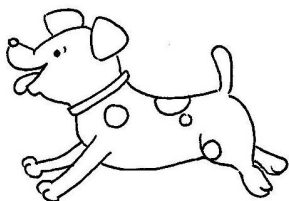
Chapter 9—Fences and Foxes

Chapter 10—Friendly the Puppy

Chapter 11—Mr. and Mrs. Dweller

Chapter 12—Barol and Shane

Chapter 1



Chapter 1—Kitty the Cat

“Come over here!” called out mother Mabel to her twin girls, Elesta and Sharina. “We are going now to welcome our newest neighbours, not too far from here.”

“The farm. With sheep and cattle,” Elesta confirmed, as she and her sister ran towards their mother.

“Maybe there will be children there we can play with!” Sharina said hopefully, as they climbed into the buggy.

“And a whole lot more, I’m sure,” said mother with a smile.

“Here, you girls help to hold on to the baskets and pots of food we are bringing. It’s always a tough thing getting started.

“So we are going to help them out with what we can,” Mother Mabel said.

The girls got good and comfy, as best as they could, while their daddy took control of the horses and soon they were off. Mother Mabel held the newest addition to their family, their baby brother.

At first they started off singing, one song and then the next, but after awhile they decided it would be great to be quiet and just listen to what was going on around them. It was a pleasant day indeed.

A bird flew low, it seemed to be trying to say hello to the horses, or perhaps to them.

“I wonder what kind of animals they have there?” said one girl to the other.

“I hope they have some we can play with. I guess we’ll just have to see,” her sister replied.

At last they made it to the new farm. They could tell it was a place of residence as the greeting noise of a barking dog made them realise this indeed was a place inhabited by a team of settlers.

“Well, well! Look at you!” said Mother Mabel to the greeting committee of one dog, a stray sheep that should have been led back to the flock by the dog, and a turkey.

“Why don’t you go and take that sheep home,” said Mr. Carpenter, “and let us come and visit without making such a fuss.”

At that, the dog seemed to forget that he was guarding, and started wagging his tail excitedly. There was company visiting. This was exciting.

He should be on his best behaviour. And so he calmed down and walked alongside of the family, with a tail that never stopped waving hello to them, or so it seemed.

When the family reached the door of the simple two room house—for they had only just started to set things up—they found no one was there.

Well, no one as in a person. But they weren't unnoticed.

Kitty the Cat was sitting on the front step, and wouldn't have budged so much as a whisker to let them in, if it wasn't for the helpful dog that told her a thing or two, and before too long

she was up in the nearest tree, feeling rather embarrassed.

“That’s no way to make a good impression,” she thought.

“Now where did I go wrong? I suppose sitting there like I own the place isn’t really the proper way to greet newcomers.

“I forgot my manners. I should have stepped aside and let them have the honour of stepping on my doorstep. Well, I guess it really isn’t my own, but it nearly is. After all, I use it the most.”

Such thoughts and self talk were going on in the mind of Kitty the Cat, all the while, the visitor were wondering where those were who they had come to see.

After a few minutes, Mr. Carpenter waved when he saw a horse drawing closer to the large enclosure around the small house.

A wave was sent back, and before too long some handshakes were exchanged.

“My! It’s it good to see you all here. How nice of you to come for a friendly visit. Oh, and your girls look so lovely. Would you like to see some of the animals?” Mr. Dweller asked the girls.

They both smiled and nodded, and off they went with their father and Mr. Dweller, while Mabel and the youngest were let into the house.

“Feel free to relax here. My wife is just on her way with the boys. She’ll be glad enough to see you.

“Women always have plenty they need to talk about, don’t they?”
Mr. Dweller said with a smile, then looked at the girls.

“Oh, and you didn’t know about the boys. One is a wee bit younger than you, and the other a bit older, but I think you can all have some fun looking around the place, and seeing how many animals you can spot.

“Some are welcome, but some are not. If you spot some of the kind that shouldn’t be around, just let me know so I and Rusty our trusty dog, can help with that. Okay?”

The girls nodded, and the four of them walked first of all to where Mrs. Dweller was making her way with the boys.

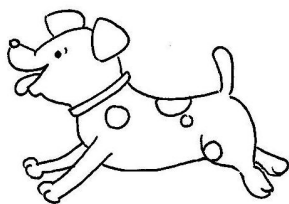
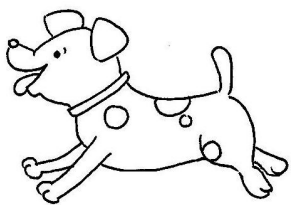
A hearty greeting was exchanged as they all got to know one another for the first time.

“Mabel, Mr. Carpenter’s wife is waiting for you in the house,” he told his wife.

To which she replied that she wouldn’t keep her waiting any longer.

Chapter

2



Chapter 2—A Basket of Gifts

The first thing Mrs. Dweller did was help to unload the food from the buggy that was in the baskets and pots.

“What have we here?” she said while exploring what was given. There was a basket filled with freshly picked produce from their little home garden, some eggs, a bit of cloth, and even a jar of honey, among other things.

“Why, this is just splendid and will get put right to good use. You can never go wrong when offering good hearty food to a family with growing boys to feed and a hard working husband,” Mrs. Dweller said, while thanking Mabel for the gifts.

“No trouble at all,” Mabel replied. “I’m glad to see it can be put to some good use and won’t go to waste.”

“Not one bit!” replied Mrs. Dweller. “Now,” she continued, “is there anything you need, in return. I don’t have much yet in the way of fresh produce, that is that I grew myself. — Unless wool counts for something!” she laughed.

It did grow, and it was harvested— or cut.

“I wouldn’t mind a bit of wool,” said Mabel. “I’d use it to make my baby something warmer for the winter. And a good time it would be starting to prepare it now.”

“A bag of wool then it will be,” Mrs. Dweller said, starting to stuff some into a smaller bag from a very big bag

in the corner of the room. The air smelled rather strongly of sheep wool, but that is the way it was, starting off as they were. New rooms could be added later, to accommodate things better.

“Thank you so much for coming,” Mrs. Dweller said to Mabel, after a long chat.

They best be going now, and so Mabel made her way out to find the playful children. They had a dinner to cook and must be on their way.

“Did you see her?” Furry, the kitten whispered to Friendly the puppy.

“Well, I mostly had my eye on the little baby she was carrying. He spotted me right away, even though I

was hiding most of the time. He's a keen little one with great ears," Friendly replied with a gentle bark, and then settled down by Furry to continue discussing the visit.

Furry, a fluffy white kitten, and Friendly, the black shiny puppy were currently house residents.

They had to get bigger to be allowed to explore around the property on their own. Who knows what they'd encounter out in this forest!

Their favourite places to be were among the heap of bags of assorted items, or under the Dweller's bed.

They had observed the whole visit of Mabel and her little one, and were trying to figure out what was going on.

“Do you think we are to be sold as pets to a new family and will be taken far away,” Friendly was wondering. He rather liked it here and didn’t particularly wish to leave.

“Let’s make sure we behave ourselves well then, just in case. We don’t want to give the Dwellers any reason for moving us on,” replied Furry.

The both agreed, that from now on they were to have the best manners. Together they listed what they knew they should or shouldn’t do. Their verbal list went something like this:

--Don’t sleep on their master’s bed.

--Don’t chew up their shoes.

--Don’t chew on their children’s toys.

--When clean laundry is in a basket, don’t sleep in it.

--Eat all the food in the bowl before the bugs trail in to get it.

--Only make barking and meowing sounds in the daytime, be quiet at night.

--Don't scratch up the furniture.

--Come quickly when called.

--Don't run off far outside, into the dangerous woods.

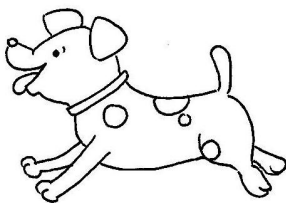
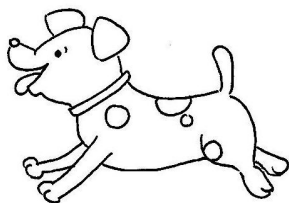
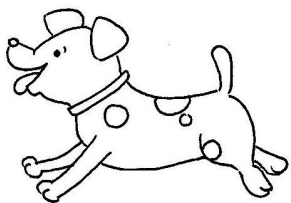
--And always be very gentle to the children.

These 10 rules they agreed would make them be the most loveable and enjoyable pets ever in existence.

“No master would ever want us to leave, if we keep these rules and be nice to visitors as well,” Furry said.

Chapter

3



Chapter 3—Plotting Mice

Someone was overhearing their conversation, and was trying to be as quiet as a mouse in order to not be detected. Well, it was easy to be as quiet as mouse, because it was a mouse who was trying to stealthily make its way to the new food supplies that just came in.

“Yea! Goodie! Food has come. We were just getting hungry, as we’d finished off the last bit of grain. Well, maybe it was for the people, but we need as much as we can get if we are to going to have a big and strong family of many mice. How else are we going to take over this place if we don’t get a good supply of food?” This had been whispered to another mouse while the ladies’ had been talking.

They made sure to keep their presence well hidden.

There was one obstacle however to reaching the goal of the new food, or more like two things in the way: Furry, a fast mice-grabbing kitten, and Friendly, who was anything but friendly to these dirty, stealing, intruders. They would not be welcome in this place, not while he was on duty.

But when the pets slept, that was the time for mice to munch and march and try to gather forces to take over the place.

“Maybe if there are too many of us, this will cause the guarding creatures to give up,” one of the two mice had said, while plotting their take over.

“But we’ll never grow to a big enough army if we don’t get sufficient food—that is, take enough of their food,” the other replied.

“You’re right,” the first one had nodded in agreement.

They just had to wait until the humans left, and the guarding creatures, that is Furry and Friendly, had gone to sleep, then bites could be taken of the new food that had just come in.

“Oh no! Do we have a mouse here?” Mrs. Dweller had said before, when noticing bites removed from food she kept in the house. But what could she do about it? There was a pile of stuff heaped up, and plenty of places to hide.

This had struck terror into the minds of the listening mice, that they might soon be detected and evicted, or worse. But a consoling thought came to mind.

Said one mouse in the quietest squeak of a whisper:

“Maybe the mistress will think it was that Fur Ball or Black Rascal, their dear own pets, that snuck a bite from her food bags.”

“Yes,” replied the other. “There is always a chance the blame can be placed on them, and we can keep getting away with it.”

However that last whisper was done a bit too loudly, and they were instantly detected.

While Mrs. Dweller was gone to say good-bye to the visiting team and to check on the animals, it was time for a bit of fun, or so Furry and Friendly called it.

“To the catch!” they both said. And in and out of bags and rushing under beds, and around the room they went. They were running, leaping, and grabbing most of all.

The chase was on. With two of them, and two mice to capture, they were a good match.

These intruders who were trying to take things over, and stay as unseen as possible, weren't going to get away with it; not if these little black and white guarding creatures could help it.

At last one was taken. Furry was taking it away. Out the little pet door she carted it off, but was soon back again for a bit more fun.

At last Friendly had made his catch as well, and off he went out the little pet door to deposit the unwanted intruder, who would no longer intrude.

“Now we can relax! We are worthy pets in deed. It’s not just about how many naps we can take, and the things we don’t do that would upset our master and mistress, but also about the good we do. –That we do what they need us to,” said Friendly, feeling very mature and worthy of being called a pet.

“Meow,” said little Furry. It was quite an exciting day. She was ready for a rest. “Now, where shall I sleep?”

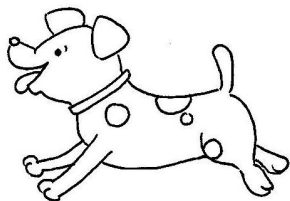
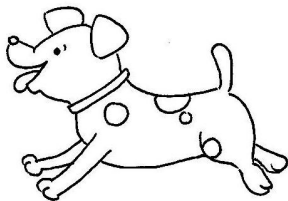
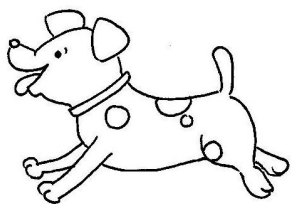
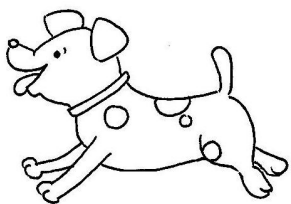
Of course there was her little bed, made of hay and cloth scraps. But she preferred to be a bit more creative.

“I’m in a tree-climbing mood,” and up she went. The master’s and mistress’ bed had branches for posts on all four sides. This supported a top level over the bed. This served both as a shelf, as well as a way to hang curtains around, to keep bugs as well as cold air out. –And perhaps a few pets as well.

So up one of the branch posts went Furry, and she perched herself above, snug beside a winter jacket, and soon fell asleep.

Chapter

4



Chapter 4—Furry the Kitten

Friendly didn't have such climbing tools as Furry had. He had different kinds of paws to help him run and walk, for long stretches of land comprised of rocks, mud, plants and such.

So for his nap he was quite content to settle down in his proper little bed inside a small dog house in the corner of the main room. After a drink of water, a stretch and yawn, he was settled for a wee nap.

But that nap was quite suddenly interrupted, when the two boys came bursting in the room.

He didn't want to miss this bit of fun, and so crawled out to greet them. Waging his tail and running around, trying to stand up on his back legs—

and of course being told, “Down, Friendly. You mustn’t jump up on me. Down boy!”

He had lots to learn.

“Maybe I should add that to the list of rules. I’ll call it the eleventh rule: I must not put my paws up on the humans. They walk on two feet, I am to walk on four.

I need to keep leg count and remember. Dog—four; humans, two.”

Since the boys were with him, and there was a small enclosed area on the porch, the boys took Friendly out for a little play.

With sticks and a ball made of wrapped up cloth, they played various “fetch and get it” games.

Friendly always liked this play time with the boys. He felt very appreciated as a puppy.

Furry, back in the house, kept right on sleeping. What else was there to do? Besides, from her vantage point, if any more intruders of the mice type were to try creeping in, she could spot them easily. She had a view of the door and much of the floor.

She would be a watcher, and a sleeper in between. Just when she'd know to open her eyes, and when to keep them shut, well, she'd just need to go by her instinct, and hope she got it right.

“Meow, meow,” came a larger cat's sound in the room. This startled Furry.

It was Kitty the cat, her own mother.

“Meow,” replied Furry, and her mother saw where she was.

Soon Furry jumped down to greet Kitty the Cat. They had plenty to talk about. There was the mouse chase, the visitors, and most of all the question of why they were visiting the farm.

“Well, did they bring anything into the house?” Kitty asked Furry. This might give a clue as to why they came.

“The lady brought in some food,” Furry replied.

“Well, then I think the reason is clear. The humans are caring about each other. It’s not easy to be stationed here in the woods, trying to get a farm going.

They were just here for the purpose of carrying,” Kitty wisely explained.

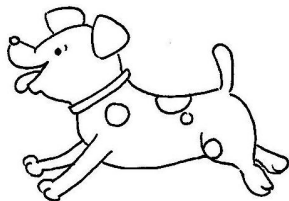
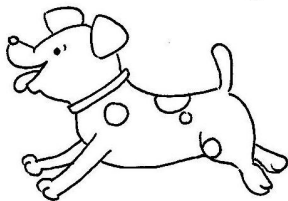
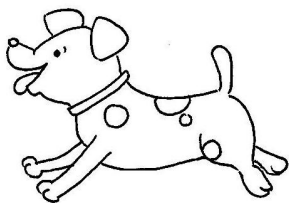
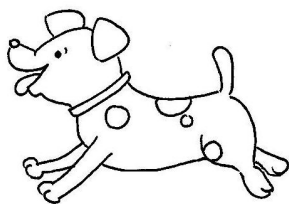
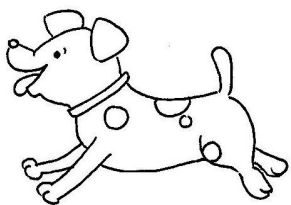
“Oh,” meowed a relieved Furry. She was glad for that.

“Now, I’m going to check around the area some more. I heard a new team of mice were making their way towards the fort here. You can get back to your nap. I’ll see you later,” Kitty told her little one, and off she went.

Furry was glad for a caring and understanding mother. Everything was going to be okay.

Chapter

5



Chapter 5—Rusty

One fine morning started out with the rising of the sun—as most fine mornings do; well, as every morning did, really. Anyway, the rising sun had the effect of getting just about everyone else to rise as well.

“Curious thing,” thought Furry, who had a way of seeing perfectly well even when it was very dark at night. “I don’t need the light to see my way around, but it seems humans do.

“I guess that’s why they have little ones like me around. I do have a purpose. And I am glad to be here to keep an eye out for anything unusual or suspicious during the night. Besides, then I can take nice long naps in the day time.

“I know they are up and around and will take care of things when it’s light.”

So just when the sun was rising, and the humans were stirring, Kitty the Cat and Furry the Kitten, were ready to find a place to nap, and so they did.

But not so with Friendly the puppy. He was eager for a new day to start. The first thing on the menu of his day was, “Whatever was on the menu.” And he hoped a good breakfast was planned. He was sure hungry and ready.

The two boy’s first active tasks of the day were to feed the pets. Barol, the older boy went off to feed the outdoor pets: Rusty and Kitty. Shane, the younger boy fed and brushed the young pets, Furry and Friendly. Water was given to all of them.

“We do have good caretakers,” Rusty said, after a hearty meal, as he lay down on the front porch.

Though he looked like he was resting, his eyes were never sleepy. He was watching very curiously what was happening in the paddock with the horses and Mr. Dweller.

He was giving them a bit of a run, and had even set up some hurdles for them to leap over. This was to give them as much exercise as possible in the corral.

But suddenly one of the horses stopped and neighed up on back legs, and then moved in a different direction.

Mr. Dweller knew something mustn't be right, and so went to check it out.

It was like a cue to Rusty, the trusty watcher and homestead helper. He leapt up from his semi rest and dashed over to see just what was going on.

Instinct told Mr. Dweller, rather than checking it out immediately, he should walk over to the fence of the corral and grab the shovel that was there.

Then together with Rusty he walked over to the place the horse had seen something that troubled him.

Sure enough it was as expected. A large snake was curled up there and ready to strike.

“Get back Rusty!” Mr. Dweller commanded. Rusty knew not to get too close, but did his best to bark, and hoped it would chase this danger away.

With a few moves of his heavy shovel, the danger was no longer that. The way was cleared, and running could resume.

A happy Rusty wagged his tail and walked over with Mr. Dweller, to reassure the horse that all was well again. With a few handfuls of grain, and a soothing voice, Mr. Dweller let the horse know things were safe again.

He made his way over to the second horse and did the same. Now they were ready to keep on with their exercise. But first Rusty took a good look around, running a few laps in the corral just to make sure it was safe, and perhaps to have a bit of fun also.

Or maybe he thought, “If I do a few laps, perhaps I’ll get fed a treat, and get a pat too!”

Well, if he thought that, he was right. For when he came back, Mr. Dweller did say a, “Good boy. You are a good-boy.” Gave him a pat, and pulled out a small corn cob that he’d saved for this moment. Rusty liked chewing on those.

When the horse run was done, Rusty made his way back over to the house. There was lots to be done today. The next job was to escort and safely guard the boys as they collected wood for the fire.

For a breakfast to be made, a fire needed to be well stocked up.

Mr. Dweller and his boys headed off. The young ones and Rusty made their way faster ahead, running and laughing, and barking too, as Rusty contributed to the joyful sounds.

When they spotted dry wood they motioned to their father who was catching up. “This one is good father,” Barol said. “It looks dry enough to be used today, I think.”

Shane began a stick throwing game with Rusty, while the axe was hard at work in the hands of Mr. Dweller, while Barol looked on, hoping to learn the skill. He’d need it if he was to survive in places like this. Then when the wood was cut, all of them carried as much as they could.

Now Rusty had his job too. On to his back was placed a dual sided sack, and some smaller kindling was placed into it. He liked feeling he was part of the action.

While he carried the kindling, the boys and their dad carried the cut

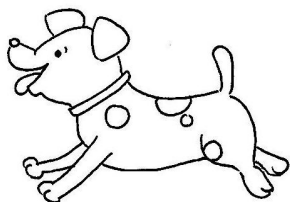
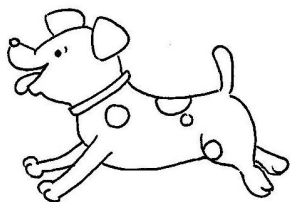
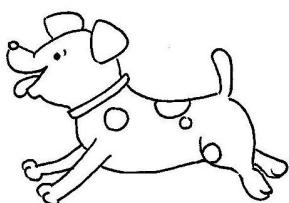
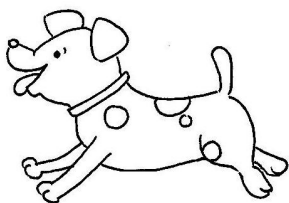
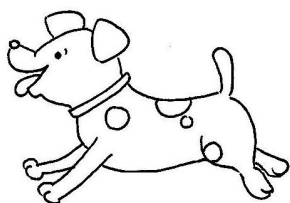
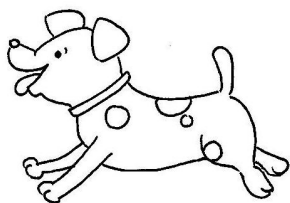
pieces of wood both in their arms, as well as some in the sack that father had on his back.

Before too long, the fire in the house was roaring and hot, and a pot of soup was boiling. A loaf of bread that had been cooked the day before, was added to the table. And today they had the special treat of honey to add to the bread, thanks to the visitors that came by yesterday.

The Dwellers thanked the One above who had helped them survive this far, and who they knew would continue to do so. Then not a moment more was waited as a hearty breakfast was enjoyed.

Chapter

6



Chapter 6—Ant Sized Helpers

“Oh good, there’s one!” a little ant called out to his friends. They waited, as close to the base of the kitchen table as possible.

“There’s another one!” another ant called out, each time a bread crumb fell to the floor.

“Not a crumb will go to waste! Let’s get on with the task of clean up,” the leading ant instructed.

These busy ants were ready on the job, nearly before the final word of the prayer for breakfast was spoken. They knew their post and kept patrolling the area, lest a crumble or nibble fall to them.

“There is not time to waste,” said the first ant.

He knew that the moment the table was cleared, the broom would be here cleaning things up.

“Or the ants will come...” they’d heard the mistress telling her boys, when they cleaned the place up.

“Why ever don’t they want us to be here?” one ant wondered. “Aren’t we cleaning things up well for them?”

“I think it’s when we do more than clean up that it becomes a problem for them,” another replied.

“Like when they got the honey yesterday, and some of us were already making our way to discover it. The mistress had to wipe them off and place the jar in a bowl of water. It was given for them, not for us.”

“Or when we start to think it’s our home, and we bite them as they

walked on the floor. I think that's a no no, as it's not even our house," a wise ant joined in to say.

"Well, let's get on with the task we were meant to do, and clean up these crumbs."

It was good these ants helped with that task, as if the food was left, things would be worse. Bigger bugs might come, like roaches, or mice also. It seemed food was the way to get the intruders to come.

"So we must remember not to be greedy, but just do our duty and help keep the place clean," one older ant instructed the younger ones, who together were trying to pick up a crumb that seemed too big for one to lift on their own.

“It’s good you can help each other, then the job will get done. Being greedy is like when some of us try to all climb into the honey jar, when there is a large roach on the floor that needs to be cleaned up instead.

“It might not be the funnest of jobs, that is not compared to the tasty honey. But we need to remember what our given duty is, and stick to it.”

“And not just get stuck on honey?” said a little ant.

“Well spoken,” the instructing ant replied. Then their voice took on a gave tone, as they told of the many ants that had gone missing, some months back.

“A whole team of us were sent out to scout out around the house and porch.

“There were old bugs to be cleared, and an apple core to be taken as well. But one had gone a bit too far in his search and had found a new jar of honey. He then told several others about it.

“Rather than finishing their tasks, each of the ants he told, left their patrol zones and headed straight for the honey, leaving things undone. It was a sad and sorry day.”

A little one listening to this story asked,

“But what is sad about that? I think honey is the best find to make! I think the whole team would have been very glad.”

“Well,” continued the instructor, “they were very glad at first. But just feeling happy doesn’t mean things

are going to go well, if you have left off your duty and are just being greedy for more nice things for yourself.”

“Well, then what happened?” another little one asked.

“They all rushed to the jar that was still partly open. –I suppose the humans learned to be careful for that, but anyway, the ants poured in. And they never did make it out again. That was the sorry end of their search for something better, better than doing what they were told to do, and were meant to be doing.”

“But why didn’t they just climb out again?” one young wondered.

“You see, honey is very sticky, and you have to be very careful if you are going to gather a bit.

“You have to make sure to get it, and not have it get you—that is get you stuck in it. These ants didn’t realise the danger, until they were too stuck. They didn’t go carefully and check it out slowly.

“They just saw and smelled what they thought was good, and then plunged in. But there is often danger lurking around something that appears to be very pleasant.

“So let that be a warning to you, little ants, if something seems extra nice, nearly too good to be true, if it’s different than what you are meant to be doing, there is a good chance that danger is mixed with it.

“And I’d be very cautious if I were you, before plunging into something else, no matter how tempting it is.

“It’s better to be struggling now to pick up some hearty bread crumbs, and to learn team working and getting stronger in the task, than to be drinking in some pleasure in a sticky jar, if that is the last thing you and your team ever do.

“We need each of you, so let’s stick together, stick to the task, and don’t get stuck on something somewhere you aren’t meant to be. –Like something made by a bee.”

That was the end of the lesson for that morning, and a team of wiser young ants were determined to stay faithful to their tasks, and then get out of there quickly before a broom came and swept them off.

They had to work fast and focused to get those crumbs back to their home, or close by at least, where

others could take them the rest of the way. It was hard being an ant, but at least there were lots of them to all pitch in and do the work together.

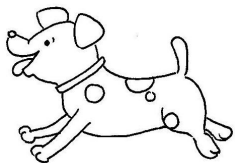
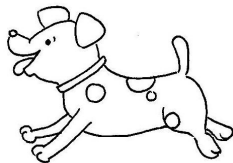
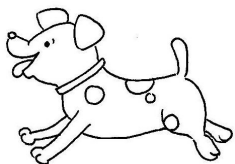
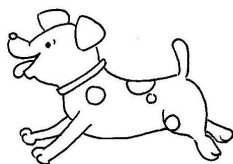
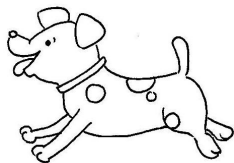
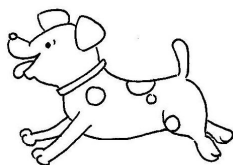
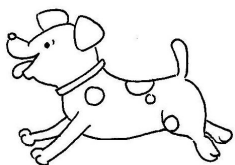
“At least there is not just four of us, setting up a home, like the humans have right now,” one ant was thinking positively, remembering that even when things seemed hard, there was often someone else or a team of others that had things even harder, in some ways.

“But at least they are sure bigger!” chimed in another little ant.

“Yes, that’s true,” said a wise ant. “Even if some things are harder for someone, there is something that does make it easier. I think all nature is balanced in this way. Our creator does know what to do to help each one make it, somehow.”

Chapter

7



Chapter 7—Birds and Seeds

By the time midday came, the Dwellers were ready for some rest, and so was Rusty. But not before he stopped for a chat with Kitty the Cat.

Together they sat on the porch to speak about how things were going on the farm. A couple of birds came by as well, to give their report.

One of the birds had been perched on one of the horses for sometime while they nibbled grass in the paddock. She'd been able to get a good idea of how they saw things.

Rusty and Kitty stopped their chatter to listen to what she had to say.

“Well, the horse noticed the storm clouds as well. He said we were in for

a bit of a downpour before too long.

“I just hope it waits up a bit. The farmer was going to do a fair bit of planting this afternoon, I saw him getting the seeds ready... well, I tasted them, and they’ll be good for growing, I know.

“Anyway, after the horse had helped to pull the plough and was resting, we chatted about any way we could help things to go faster, so the work could be done in time,” the bird continued chatting.

“The rain falling on the planted crops will be perfect, the best timing. And he might have time to do it, but if something hinders or holds him up, then it might be a bit of a mess. We don’t want the bags of dry seeds to get all soggy and go to waste.”

Kitty and Rusty thought about it. They knew home life better than the birds or the horses did. So they thought it was good to think this through.

Kitty thought up the first idea.

“Maybe I’ll make sure that Furry doesn’t get into anything that she shouldn’t, like making something fall off a shelf and break. This will make more jobs to do, that don’t need to be done.”

Rusty caught on with some helpful suggestions.

“Perhaps I can keep the boys from going too far into the woods exploring. I know that would be a worry for the farmers. Also, I can make sure that Friendly puppy stays where he is meant to, as well.”

The bird added,
“And I’ll keep from eating too many of
the farmer’s seeds. Perhaps he
doesn’t need help with the eating part
yet. That can come later—after they
sprout and grow to make many more
seeds.”

And so the animals chose to each
help out when and where they could,
to save the farmer a bit of work.

When supper time came, and the
Dweller family sat to give thanks for
the humble meal of rice and eggs,
even the pets were silent, for a
moment. They had seen a special
occurrence that day. They knew
things were going to be fine.

Just when the farmer finished
planting the portion of seeds for the

day, and had safely brought any remaining seeds in under shelter, that is when the rain began to fall.

On the porch together, under the sheltering cover, they all watched the rainfall. Gratefulness was in each of their hearts.

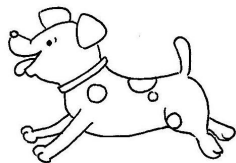
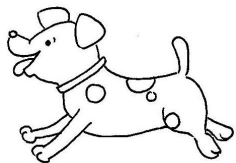
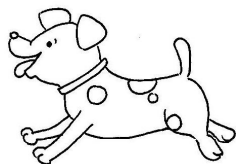
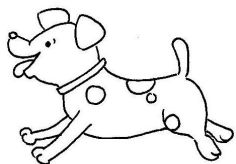
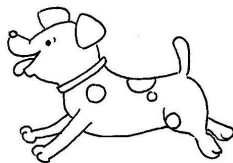
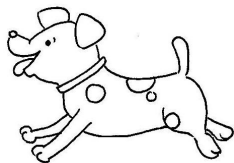
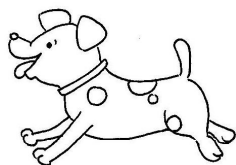
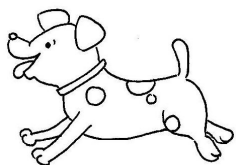
There was Rusty and Friendly the Puppy, there was Kitty along with Furry, there was Mr. and Mrs. Dweller, along with Barol and Shane, and there sat a couple of birds up on the eaves, and yes, even a few ants who wanted to be spared a muddy home for a while.

It was good to see the crops were planted, and even better to see the rain falling that would be very needed for the success of its growth.

The timing made everyone realise how important they all were to the creator who appreciated those who worked hard, did their duty, and helped each other to survive.

Chapter

8



Chapter 8—Messy Mud

The rain had left the land wet, muddy, but most of all a lot greener some days later. This was good for Mr. and Mrs. Dweller, and a whole lot of others. First of all the abundant green grass provided plenty of food for the horses.

Happy and healthy, well-fed horses meant a good means of transportation, plus the help of this team of horses to help plough the field. With more ploughed places to grow food, meant a happy and healthy family.

With a strong family, they could work together to care for the sheep, goats, cows, and all the other work that came along with it.

All because of rain, at the right time, and in the right amount.

Plus, the stream where they got water from was kept flowing, just enough and not too much. This meant people could be clean, houses could be clean, people could cook and be refreshed; and people and animals could quench their thirst.

They needed not only rain into the soil, but rain that had a place to be channelled to them.

A bit of mud on the floor of the house came with the joy of a good rainfall. They had to take the good with the messy, and just not fuss about things that weren't perfect.

Furry however, was having a hard time dealing with it. She sighed one day to her mother, Kitty the Cat.

“Mama Kitty, I just don’t like all this brown mud messing up the place. I like to be all white. Although I know it makes a lot of good to have the rain falling, and indeed we couldn’t survive without it, it’s hard for me. I just don’t like to get wet, so I certainly don’t like to get dirty.”

“Now, now dear. It won’t be like this always, you know. Some days have different struggles, and other days have new ones. Cheer up. At least you still have a roof over your head.

“I have to spend much of my time out of doors. You should be very glad that you have as much as you do.

“Just think, I have a whole floor of mud to walk on most of the time, you just have a bit of mud on the house floor.

Try to look at the good, the bigger good, than just the small things that aren't pleasant for you," Mama Kitty tried to encourage Furry.

"You're right, Mama Kitty. I'll try to notice the good things, rather than fuss about what I don't like," Furry responded, determined to try.

Because there was one thing worse than having something bothersome, and that was behaving bothersome because of it, for that troubled everyone around as well.

"It's better to be cheerful about the little things you don't like, than to make a big deal about it, complaining, and then you start to become the problem that others have to fix," Mama Kitty had told her before.

Mama Kitty meowed and got the attention of Mrs. Dweller, who brought a nice bowl of milk for the two cats to share. Then Furry was tucked into her little bed of straw and cloth, for a rest, while Mama Kitty went back outside, tending to her duty around the barn.

She followed Mrs. Dweller back out of the house as she went to milk the next nanny goat. Kitty the Cat had two good reasons for going with her at that time. “Firstly,” she thought, “I maybe be right on time to catch some rascal creepers who like to steal the grains out there. And secondly, I can help with any extra milk that might be there. I’m sure there will be enough for me to have a little extra snack. Mmm.”

She was already looking forward to it. But before she could get as far as

the barn, Mr. Dweller was coming out of it with a basket of eggs and a very concerned look on his face.

As Mr. and Mrs. Dweller chatted, all Kitty the Cat heard was:

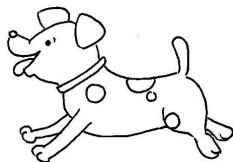
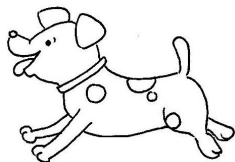
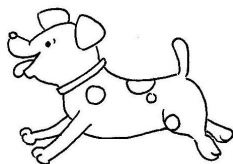
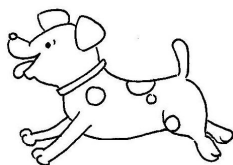
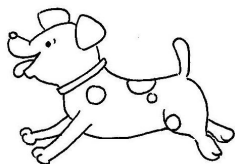
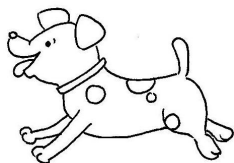
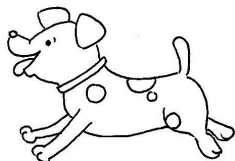
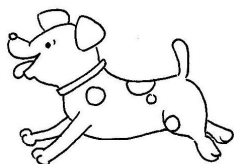
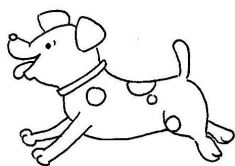
“Sumtinzbintaykinsumaygz—
andachikkenzgonmissn” (Something’s
been taking some eggs, and a
chicken’s gone missing.)

Kitty the Cat wondered what she needed to be concerned about. For a moment the two humans talked together about some problem, and before too long Rusty was called for.

Now Rusty and Kitty the Cat felt very needed. There was something important for them to do. Just what exactly they weren’t sure, but they knew they’d find out soon enough.

Chapter

9



Chapter 9—Fences and Foxes

Together, rather soberly, Rusty and Kitty the Cat both followed Mrs. Dweller into the barn. She picked up a shovel too, and seemed to walk more cautiously.

“Bark! Bark! Bark!” started Rusty. He was the first to sense danger.

Kitty the Cat immediately leapt up on a high beam above the chicken’s coop to get a good look, yet away from danger.

She spotted what they all had suspected. A very large snake began moving out from under a small pile of straw.

“Hey, where’d all the eggs go? I was as hoping for thirds on my meal...” the snake thought as it hissed its way and slowly slithered.

The chickens went into a clucking panic.

All at once, with precision, down went the shovel, and down leapt Kitty with well planned pounce, and off went Rusty to cart off the intruder he grabbed with his strong teeth. He seemed to call, in his own way, for those of the winged type who would take the job from there. They'd clean it up, leaving little to be remembered. The ants and other bugs would finish off whatever the crows did not.

Kitty the Cat climbed on to the hay and settled down comfortably, to show the chickens that all was now safe.

Even a few sparrows fluttered in and landed on the floor of the barn to nibble some of the seeds sprinkled for the chickens.

This was a clear sign that all was at peace, and pecking could now safely resume.

It wasn't too long before the chickens were at their pecking task, both in the barn, as well as around the vegetable garden.

They were great for helping to remove the critters that tried to munch the food growing before it could be harvested. They played a great role in keeping this farm going.

Meanwhile, Rusty, who, although he knew the snake was a danger and a suspect for the missing eggs, still knew something else wasn't quite right. His nose told him so.

He began sniffing all around, and around, trying to pick up a scent.

“What’cha smelling now?” said Kitty the Cat to Rusty, while on her way out.

“Hmmm. I counted and, if I am right, there is one less chicken than there ought to be,” replied Rusty.

“You just might be right. But I’ll have a look around. They tend to go in funny places at times,” Kitty said, and was soon off climbing and searching all over the barn and garden area, and up in the hay loft above.

“Can’t find it anywhere,” Kitty said to Rusty, who was very alarmed. If what he suspected was the case, there was still a big job to do—one that would take daily vigilance. And he would most likely be the one called on to do the task.

Sombrely he walked away slowly over to the house.

Friendly the Puppy was there, as chipper as ever, and ready for a game of rough and tumble, in a playful dog sort of way.

Friendly was on the fenced in porch, pushing the rag ball, and very glad to see that Rusty was approaching. He was too eager to play that he didn't notice how very pensive Rusty was.

“Come on and play! Come on and play, please!” he was yapping to Rusty.

Slowly, yet with a smile slowing starting to return to his face, he agreed to a time of play. Of course, there was work to be done and problems to solve, but time for play

was important too, especially time taken with the young ones. Play was in some ways their work, for they learned much that way.

They rumbled and tumbled, play growled, and moved the ball around, grabbing it and then finally ending in a heap of fur in the dog bed at the end of the porch.

Rusty was glad that there was fun as well as work that he was needed for. Both helped to make his day a good one.

“Well,” Rusty said to Friendly the Puppy. “If you’d like to rest a bit here in my bed, that’s fine. You can even have some of my water there if you like. But I think I’m going to go and see what Mr. Dweller is up to. I see him starting on a project with his boys. I’ll see what I can do to help.”

So he said a temporary good-bye and made his way over to where the chickens, the farmer, and the boys were.

They were discussing the need.

Mr. Dweller told his sons, “It seems there’s a fox, or more than one, perhaps, that has found our happy chicken’s abode. The best we can do about it for now is to build a better fenced in area. And...”

Then as if on cue, that is when Rusty walked up, just in time to hear Mr. Dweller say what he said next:

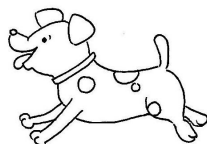
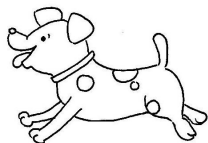
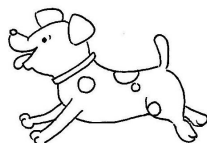
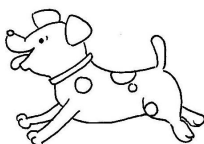
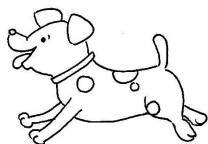
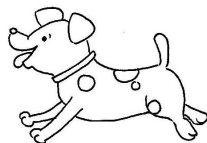
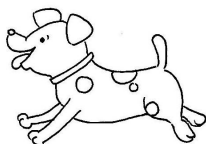
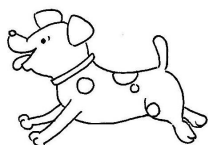
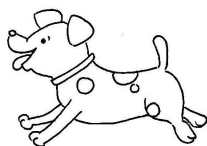
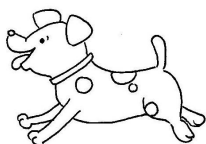
“And, yes, you, Rusty, can be stationed here some of the time, to be the guard. You won’t let any foxes get nearby our chickens, will you?”

“No, sir I won’t!” Rusty barked out in his own way.

“Good then,” Mr. Dweller continued. “So let’s get on with the fence building, shall we?”

And on they worked, until they were sure it was as safe as they could make it, for the time being, with the materials that they had on hand.

Chapter 10



Chapter 10—Friendly the Puppy

When Rusty got back to see Friendly the Puppy, he told him the whole story of what was the latest news around the farm.

Furry the Kitten heard some dog talk going on, and being able to make out, for the most part what was being said, she climbed out through the pet door and sat on the mat to listen.

Friendly Puppy, for that was what he was, walked over to say hello and to welcome her to the conversation.

Soon Kitty the Cat showed up as well, and shared the mat. The four of them had time to speak of the news.

Rusty began telling the young ones about the excitement in the barn, the missing eggs, and how that was dealt with.

Kitty the Cat added in her parts of the story too.

“I’m so glad you are safe, Mama Kitty,” said Furry.

“Me too. But more than just being safe, myself, it’s my job to also look after others, and sometimes that means doing things that don’t seem so safe. But then in the end we can all be happy. It’s not always easy being older and bigger. It means more work, and sometimes doing things that aren’t that pleasant. But that is what real growing up is all about,” Mama Kitty said.

Furry nodded. She hoped that she too would be as brave as her Mama, if she too had a kitten and a home to protect. Friendly thought it was all rather fun—not fully realising the danger or the hard work involved.

“Just think! I could go anywhere on the property. I could chase the chickens and have a bit of fun. Then I could explore the woods and see all I wish to see, and...” his thoughts, silly and unwise ones in deed, would have gone on, if they weren’t stopped by what Rusty said next.

He really respected old Rusty, and knew that it was important to learn all he could.

He noticed that even though Rusty did have the opportunity to go and run anywhere, and visit any of the animals, he didn’t use that chance to just do whatever funny thing a dog might think up.

He tried to use his freedom to be a help to the farmer, and to always be within hearing of the whistle or a calling out of his name.

He was primarily to be a help, not just to live life trying to have only fun. And that is what the farmers liked about him. They knew he was loyal.

Whereas Friendly, though a fun little puppy, still had a lot to learn before he could be trusted with more freedom, because there were real dangers around, and he wouldn't want to be part of a new problem either, by doing some silly thing.

Rusty began to tell about the foxes that were starting to come.

“They are a big danger right now,” he said soberly. “They take chickens, eggs, eat our food, and well, let's just say, they might not been too friendly with you, either, young pup.”

“But I can bark!” Friendly said, and then demonstrated it as loudly as he could, with all his might.

Rusty smiled a bit at his big and brave efforts.

“What a great bark that is indeed. And I’m glad you have that. It will come in need one day for sure. For example if something tries to come near to hurt little Furry, when you and her are alone in the house, that is good time to warn the farmers of the trouble.

“But, you know, just a bark won’t chase a fox a way... or a bear either; you’ll need to grow a bit bigger too. As big as your bark is, a big body is needed too. So do your best to sleep well, eat good food, and work on being a faithful dog, one that obeys when the humans ask you to do something. That’s what it will take to grow in body, and grow to be dependable. Okay?”

Friendly smiled. He was glad that one day he would be able to do the work of a bigger dog. But just as he was snuggling down to sleep, suddenly his eyes popped open, real bright and big.

“Bears?!” he all of a sudden recalled what Rusty had said. “Are there bears around here too?”

“I wouldn’t be surprised if there was,” Rusty replied. “But you won’t have a thing to worry about—that is if you obey the farmers, and stay put in this part of the property. Running off deep into the woods, though it might seem like a whole lot of fun, will be pretty short lived if you met with a big bear or some other large prowling creature, don’t you think?”

Friendly wanted to sleep, but the thought of bears and foxes as well

was making him feel a bit uneasy. There was too much to think about.

He walked over to Furry, who also was ready to get up. The two of them went back inside the house and sat on the mat by the fireplace.

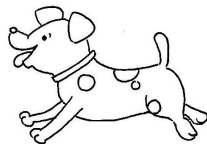
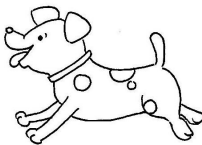
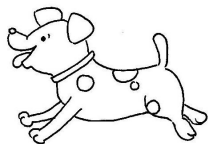
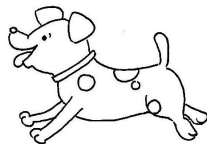
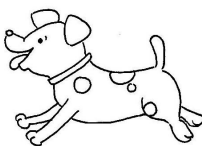
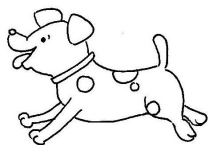
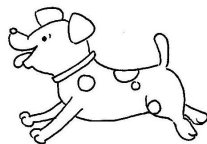
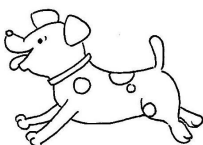
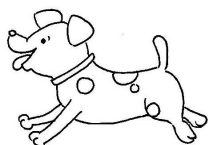
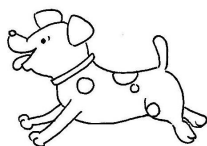
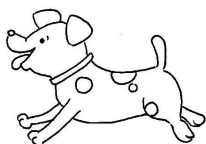
They had big thoughts to think about, and big things to discuss. But perhaps they would do it after a nap. For some reason they did feel more safe inside the house.

Soon sleep overcame their eyes and they drifted off into a peaceful nap, dreaming of running through vast fields.

Dreaming was a safe way to live out wishes and dreams, at least until they were bigger and could do so responsibly.

Chapter

11



Chapter 11—Mr. and Mrs. Dweller

Kitty the Cat soon went out to find Mrs. Dweller, who was fixing a lunch outside for her boys. They were sitting there reading while they waited. She took turns going to one and then the other, and got plenty of pats that way.

When she was done that, she spent time walking between the legs, especially the ones belonging to Mrs. Dweller, while she walked here and there, getting things ready.

She liked the feeling of brushing up against her leg, even though Mrs. Dweller wasn't too keen on it, and kept thinking she was about to trip.

Finally, Kitty got the point that it would be safer, when Mrs. Dweller was cooking, to give her some space

to work. Because if Mrs. Dweller did take a tumble, Kitty herself would get the brunt of the fall. Even though she thought she was a bigger and wiser cat than she used to be, she still had things to learn also, and had to keep reminding herself to make things easy for others, and not just do what felt fun or nice at the time.

“Lunch is ready,” Mrs. Dwell called to the boys, then rang the bell for Mr. Dweller to hear. He was glad to hear it indeed, and was soon over to wash his hands along with the boys and settle down for a meal.

Of course the bell was also music to the ears of a certain loyal pet, and before too long Rusty was seated right near the table. He was on watch duty—to watch in case any food were to fall to the ground.

Mrs. Dweller saw these eager and faithful pets, and had prepared something special for them as well.

“Over here!” she called, and gave them each a dish of food, slightly away from the table. It was cleaner that way. She didn’t like flies and whatnots that especially outdoor pets carried around, to be anywhere near their own food.

Mr. Dweller folded his hands and gave a prayer of thanks for the meal, and for the work that was done that day. And all joined in the prayer of thanks.

Rusty and Kitty the Cat showed their thanks, rather than speaking of it, by the eager way they got going on their food portions, but of course added a bark and meow as an extra token of appreciation.

After the meal Rusty was taken by Barol, the older boy, to guard the chickens' area. Barol was also to feed them. Kitty helped to teach Furry a few new tricks and cleaning tips.

Friendly played a game of stick catching with young Shane who needed a friend and some exercise, while Mr. and Mrs. Dweller took a ride on the horses around the property.

This was a way to relax, keep their friendship and training going with the horses, and also have at private time to talk. It was important to have this time.

After about an hour it was time to come back and tend to the other needs of the farm.

While Furry was sleeping happily, perched on the top of the farmer's bed, "Boom!" a loud clap of thunder suddenly woke her, and she leapt down.

"Boom!" a second one came, followed by a new flash of lightning.

Mrs. Dweller woke up and got out of the covers. She went to stoke up the fire, and get a coat down from a storage area.

"Where are you going, dear?" Mr. Dweller spoke, just as she opened the door to head out into the near darkness.

"I thought I heard some disturbance coming from the stable. The horses might be frightened. I'll check to see how they are doing," she replied.

“Good idea,” he said, rolling over to sleep again. Just then a thought struck him awake.

“The sheep!” he’d forgotten that their pen had a leak in the roof, that he was planning to fix the next day. If rain was falling, they were getting wet. He too would need to climb out of that warm and dry bed to ensure his animals were alright.

On went his coat, and out he went.

Friendly Puppy perked up. He remembered what Rusty had said about how to practice being responsible and grown up.

Furry the kitten was indeed rather disturbed by the storm, and Friendly the puppy knew it was his job to look out for her and to guard this house, now that the farmers had both left.

With the fire going well now, thanks to the log Mrs. Dweller had placed there, the mat beside it was a very inviting place to be.

“Drip, drip, drip,” came a sound. Perhaps the house wasn’t as dry as it seemed, and perhaps there was work even for him to do on this dark and stormy night.

“Come over here, Furry,” he said in his most friendly voice, that came naturally for Friendly.

Together they sat on the mat beside the fire. When Friendly saw that Furry had stopped trembling and was relaxed, Friendly the Puppy got up for a moment.

“Something must be done about the leak,” Friendly thought. Though there wasn’t really much he could do, he did

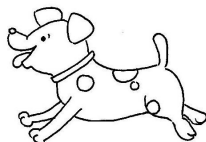
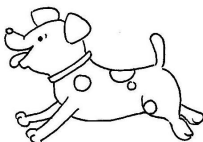
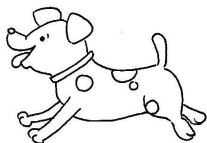
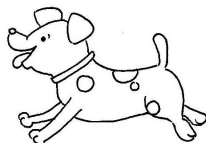
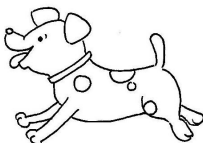
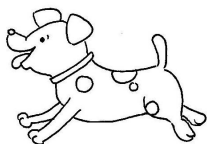
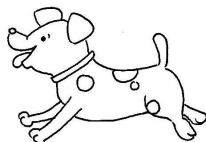
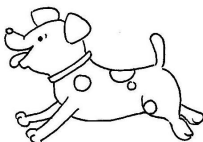
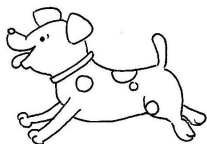
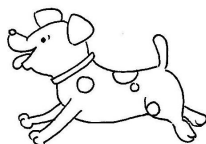
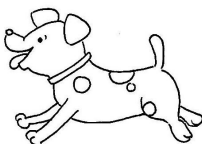
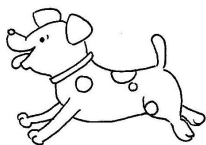
remember something he had seen Mrs. Dweller do. A pile of rags in the corner of the room, used for all sorts of purposes might be a help right now. She had often used one of them when the floor was too wet.

So Friendly, using a clever mind, grabbed a rag or two in his mouth and placed them on the puddle that was forming. He then returned to keep Furry company.

They were too relaxed—that is between the claps of thunder—to notice a few others that were enjoying a shelter from the storm.

Chapter

12



Chapter 12—Barol and Shane

When morning light started, and the farmers had come back, a new little sound greeted them. Mrs. Dweller was in a set of clean warm clothes, had washed her hands and face, and was climbing back into bed. Mr. Dweller was cooking a warm pot of soup, and the boys were getting up and ready for the day.

They all heard it, but didn't realise right away what it was.

Then it came again, "Tweet, cheep! Tweedlie!"

A bird! Right there in the corner of their house, on a beam of wood. It was, of course, out of the reach of any crawling, climbing, pouncing, and perhaps a bit furry creatures. But there it sat, warm and dry.

Mrs. Dweller didn't mind having new company. The bird's morning song was rather enjoyable. Since she needed some rest, and wouldn't hear the songs of the birds while outside today, the song was on the inside.

The little bird could go out if it wished to, as there was a small gap on that side between the roof and the walls. But for some reason it preferred to nestled down there for a bit.

"Here darling," Mr. Dweller said, bringing over a bowl of warm soup to his wife who was sitting up in bed.

"Oh, thank you," she replied. "I'll feel much better soon. That was quite a night."

In came the boys to sit at the table near the fireplace. There they would eat with their father. But before doing

so, they made sure to fill Furry and Friendly's dishes with some food and milk—fresh milk that their mother had just brought in. After they washed their hands, they sat to say a prayer of thanksgiving, and enjoyed the meal served up.

“How did the chicken's do last night?” the boys asked their father, after he had finished reading the passage for the day from the family's Bible.

“Well, I counted the same as there was last night; and Rusty stayed their all night too. I think they are alright,” Mr. Dweller replied.

As soon as breakfast was over, the boys were up to help around the farm. Shane would help to collect eggs, feed the chickens, Rusty and Kitty the Cat. Barol would help his father to

clean out the horse stalls, and lead the sheep out to the grassy area.

Mrs. Dweller had already milked the cows and goats while she was out there in the stormy early morning. When she rose she would take care of the milk, preserving it, or making butter and cheese and yogurt, and all the things that must be done to provide for her family.

Later, the boys would help their mother in the garden, and help to prepare the meal for the evening with the all the fresh produce.

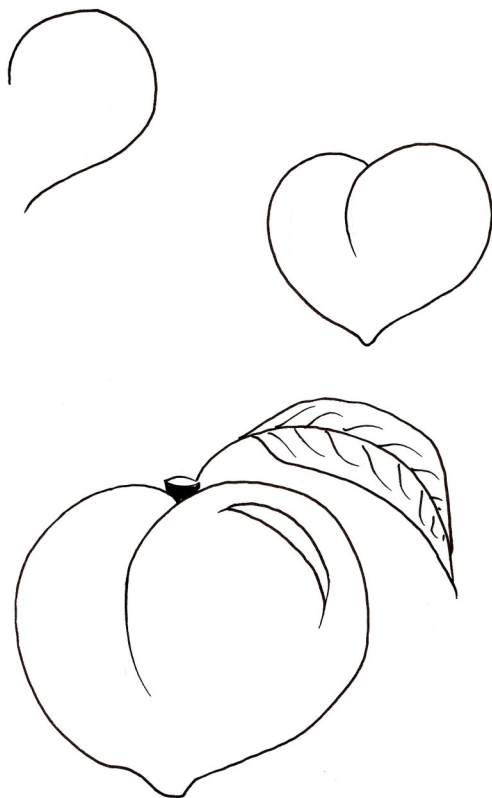
It was starting to get easier, as they all worked to get their little farm going. More food was growing, less bugs and weeds were taking them, more food was being preserved for the winter months, and the animals seemed to have what they needed.

When the dinner bell rang in the humble house, Mr. Dweller came back from fixing up the sheep's pen.

It could withstand the rain better now. It was hard work keeping up with all the needs, but he was glad to be here, even though it was a bit rough and wild.

(Continued in part 2)

How to draw a peach:





I



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