

TAKSI JA DOGI SUUR PÄEV



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Dachshund and Dane's Great Big Day

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Dachshund, Doggy, Greyhound, Boxer, Corgi, Bulldog, Saint Bernard and all the other dogs are used to spending their days cheerfully, doing whatever they enjoy most. Yet quite often, one of them comes up with a splendid idea for something even more extraordinary. The Mutt, for instance, dreams of founding a school; Dachshund wishes to teach a storm a lesson; Dane sets out to find himself; and Greyhound hopes to outrun his own shadow.

Whatever any of them may attempt, they always find encouragement and support among their friends. And so, with the best of companions by their side, even the simplest everyday moments turn into adventures. For the dogs, even an ordinary day is a great day.



Dachshund and Dane's Great Big Day: Excerpt

SCHOOL

Dachshund, Great Dane, Greyhound, Boxer, Corgi, Bulldog, St Bernard and the rest of dogkind were used to spending their days all year round quite carefree, each occupied with the activities they enjoyed most.

Greyhound loved running and could dash about from early morning until late evening with no particular purpose, stopping only now and then to drink and have a bite to eat. At full moon he even ran a few laps at night.

Basset's life, by contrast, was largely devoted to sleeping. He slept through more than one cheerful party, important meeting and often even his own dreams.

Boxer tirelessly threw a stick.

Bulldog studied insects.

Dachshund and Great Dane enjoyed one another's company. They went boating, collected spring scents into jars, exercised, went to the beach and picked berries. When Dachshund sometimes forgot himself and dug burrows or holes for hours on end, Great Dane amused himself by trying out new recipes, and occasionally crocheting.

Mutt, however, had been seized by a strange restlessness that autumn. The colder and windier the weather became, the more anxious he grew, until one day he summoned all his friends to the park for a grand meeting.

"My dear friends, this cannot go on any longer," he announced solemnly.

"Agreed!" yawned Basset, who had already been awake for a whole hour and felt that things truly could not continue like this. He flopped his big ears over his eyes and fell asleep with a snore.

"Could you explain more clearly what exactly must not continue how?" asked Labrador, unperturbed by Basset.

"Our cha-o-tic lives," declared Mutt. "We live lazily and comfortably, when in fact we should be growing wiser every day. We should be learning. Friends, we need a school!"

This was unexpected. Boxer dropped his stick he was chewing and Chihuahua began to tremble all over. Dachshund and Great Dane edged closer together, just in case.

"Agreed!" cried Labrador.

"Nonsense!" shouted Corgi.

"Is it edible?" asked St Bernard.

The others wisely remained silent.

"School is not edible. It is a place where one learns, and some even manage to become wiser there," said Mutt, boring his gaze into St Bernard's. "In life, sheer size and brute strength are not enough. One also needs brains."

"My quick legs have always helped me," Greyhound put in.

"Listen, friends, Mutt is right," said Labrador, eagerly supporting the new proposal. He was, in fact, the only one with an impressive bookcase at home, containing actual books rather than half-chewed bones, sticks, cones, stones or other random clutter like the rest of them.

"What would we learn at school?" demanded Dachshund.

"For example, addition, subtraction and multiplication," replied Mutt at once. "We could calculate how much three cats plus five cats make."

A disgruntled growl spread across the square. More than one coat bristled.

"We would only be imagining the cats," Mutt hurried to explain.

But St Bernard was already incensed.

"I am not going to imagine cats in your school. One cat is already one too many. There will be no adding or multiplying them," he declared gruffly.

On the question of multiplying cats, everyone agreed with St Bernard. As a compromise, Labrador suggested that perhaps cats could be subtracted and divided instead, so that there would be fewer and fewer of them until they disappeared altogether.

Even this failed to calm St Bernard.

It took some time before Mutt managed to restore silence. It was quickly agreed that cats would not feature in school. It would be far more fun to add and multiply dogs, foxes or sparrows.

“A school ought to have a teacher,” Labrador suddenly remembered. “And perhaps even a headmaster. Have you thought of that?”

“Of course. I shall be the headmaster,” announced Mutt, pricking up his ears.

“And the teacher?” asked Great Dane suspiciously.

“I shall be the teacher as well,” added Mutt, as if it were self-evident.

Labrador’s face grew long.

“I hereby announce that the first day of school is tomorrow. Please be present by midday. Absence is permitted only for good reason,” Mutt declared importantly.

With his tail proudly aloft, he walked away. He loved chairing meetings, making speeches, assigning tasks and endlessly organising things.

The dogs left the square thoughtful and uneasy. Only Basset continued sleeping peacefully in the shade of the lilac bush. Not a single word of the discussion had reached him.

The next day, solemnly declared the first day of school, the square remained empty. It turned out that even without lessons everyone was clever enough to come up with one, or even several, good reasons for staying away.

Greyhound absolutely had to run a marathon. Corgi wanted to repaint the garden furniture. Labrador immersed himself in an especially thick book. Bulldog went off to stalk butterflies. Dachshund and Great Dane dashed to the seaside to see what interesting things the waves had brought ashore.

Mutt, too, found a few urgent matters to attend to. First, he tried to wheedle an old bone from a raccoon. Second, he attempted to train perch to swim backwards in the river. Third, he cooked a huge bowl of brawn, and fourth, he was obliged to feed St Bernard, who arrived like lightning at the delicious smell.

School occurred to Mutt only in the evening as he was going to bed, but by then it was far too late for arithmetic.

“Well, we can deal with this school business some other day. Perhaps it was not the best idea after all,” Mutt licked the brawn from his lips and flopped down, groaning contentedly.

Chihuahua was the only one whose sense of duty brought him to the park at the appointed time. He trembled beneath a chestnut leaf for a while with terrible school fright, but when he saw that no one else was coming, he fled back home.

THE STORM

School idea was therefore not a success. In the following weeks it was no longer mentioned, for the autumn storms had started. Constant downpours drove the dogs indoors.

Dachshund spent his time at Great Dane’s. It was more cheerful to pass the long, dark evenings together. They played board games, chewed a slipper for fun, roasted little sausages in the fireplace. Although the warm room was cosy enough, Dachshund gradually began to gaze out of the window with increasing longing.

“This storm really is strong,” he sighed one afternoon, after spending hours shifting about on the windowsill, watching the wind tear leaves from the trees and snap branches.

“Terrible indeed,” agreed Great Dane.

“There must be magnificent waves at sea!” Dachshund guessed.

“Uh!” Great Dane tucked his tail between his legs.

“I wonder whether someone like me could even make it to the seaside in weather like this?” Dachshund doubted.

“I don’t think so,” said Great Dane. “The storm would carry you off halfway there.”

“But I feel such a powerful urge to try,” Dachshund insisted.

"That is really not a good idea. Let's have some sandwiches instead. I'll go and put the kettle on," said Great Dane, heading for the kitchen. "I'll call when the table is laid."

The moment Dachshund was alone, he flung the window open and was outside in a single leap.

"I'll show this storm yet," he snorted angrily, flattening his ears. "Does it think I'm afraid of it? I'll pop down to the sea as easy as anything!"

When Great Dane called Dachshund to eat a little later and no one came scurrying in with the familiar sound of claws, he went to the sitting room to check whether his friend had fallen asleep. At the sight of the open window, it was instantly clear to him that Dachshund was anything but asleep. He was out there. Alone. In the raging storm.

That was enough for Great Dane to leap straight out of the window into the darkness.

He tried to follow Dachshund's fresh scent through the garden, but the heavy rain had already washed it away. Great Dane barked and called, growled and howled, but there was not a peep from Dachshund.

"He hasn't gone to the seaside, has he? The wind will shove him into the waves like a herring. He'll never fight his way out of there!" Great Dane worried.

He raced towards the sea, making only one quick detour to enlist the help of the neighbouring Husky. Now every nose, ear, tail and pair of paws was needed.

Husky swiftly harnessed himself to a small cart and dashed off to summon further help. Soon everyone was searching for Dachshund except tiny Chihuahua, who longed to help but whom Labrador firmly locked in the cellar so that he would not be lost in the storm as well.

"It's better to look for Dachshund than for Dachshund and Chihuahua," he reasoned.

In Labrador's opinion, Poodle, Bulldog and Corgi were also dangerously small, so they were strictly instructed to move only as a group of three and keep an eye on one another.

The others spread out. The beach, riverbanks, park, groves and bushes were searched.

Spaniel dived into the park pond, and Greyhound ran so far that he did not return until the day after next.

It was Boxer who discovered Dachshund towards morning at the bottom of a large hole into which the storm had flung him. The hole, as it happened, was one Dachshund himself had dug with his own paws in summer, delighted by how wonderfully deep it was.

Boxer called the others, and together they hauled the battered, shivering Dachshund out.

Husky took him home on his cart. Great Dane stayed to dry him, warm him and comfort him. "I did say that going out in a storm was not a good idea," Great Dane remarked, rubbing his friend's injured paw.

"There was still a little sense in it all," Dachshund replied after some thought. "Now I know how many friends I have who will come to help in trouble."

Great Dane merely sighed, pulled woollen socks onto Dachshund's paws and covered him with a thick blanket. Dachshund needed a few days to recover, regain his strength and reflect on his life as a dog.

When the storm finally subsided and Dachshund was able to go outside again, he hurried straight to the deep hole and filled it with heaps of sand. Just in case.

LOST AND FOUND

Dachshund was full of life, always ready for adventure and action, while Great Dane sometimes grew pensive and withdrew into himself. When Dachshund asked about the reason for his sadness, Great Dane replied, "Sometimes I feel as if I am lost. Do you understand?"

Dachshund tried to think. "Not really."

"It's as if I don't know who I am or what I want."

"But you're Great Dane."

"Generally, yes, but sometimes it feels as though I've lost myself," Great Dane tried to explain.

"Oh?"

"It can happen quite unexpectedly, usually at night or around the time of the first snowfall." With winter approaching, which also meant the possibility of the first snowfall, Dachshund grew worried. He did not want Great Dane to lose himself.

"What might help against this losing?" he asked.

Great Dane shrugged, rested his muzzle on his paws and stared sadly into the distance. Dachshund raced to Labrador for advice. If anyone among dogkind knew how to help with troubles of the soul, it was Labrador. Everyone turned to him with their worries.

Labrador listened to the panting Dachshund, asked a few clarifying questions and said, "Perhaps Great Dane should be left alone at such times."

"Left alone how?"

"In the sense that you don't constantly drag him off to play ball, dig out mouse holes and jump into piles of leaves."

Dachshund's eyes grew wide. "But that's fun!"

"Perhaps. But not always. For Great Dane. Let him be alone. He will find something he enjoys. But if he calls you, then run to him at once. Do not delay for a second."

This advice did not seem very sensible to Dachshund, but he decided to do as Labrador suggested.

"I'll leave you alone for a while," he called sadly beneath Great Dane's window. "But I'll come immediately if you call. Perhaps already this evening?"

He said the last sentence so quietly that it certainly did not reach indoors. Then he trudged home, head down, ears drooping. No scent along the way caught his attention, nor did the teasing sparrows.

The following days stretched for Dachshund like an endless rubber band, without a proper beginning, end or middle. He had no appetite, no sleep and no desire to play. Until one particularly bleak afternoon, Great Dane burst through Dachshund's front door. Under his leg he carried an enormous stack of papers. When he excitedly spread them on the table, they turned out to be drawings.

"Well?" Great Dane asked, eyes shining. "What do you think?"

"Did you draw these?"

"Yes."

Dachshund looked at the pictures for a long time. He walked around the table, examined them from near and far, sniffed some and patted others with his paw. They were quite unusual. The sun was square, the cat had three heads, the apples were triangular. But most touching of all was that Dachshund appeared in almost every picture. True, he too was strange: in one drawing he was like a bridge across a river, in another like a ladder to the clouds, in a third like a ship at sea. But in every case, it was Dachshund.

Dachshund leapt up, wagging, and flung his paws around Great Dane. "These are the most wonderful drawings! First-rate! Magnificent! Splendid!"

Their joy, too, was first-rate. Dachshund instantly decided that the pictures must be hung up in the park so that everyone could share their beauty. Although Great Dane protested a little, Dachshund insisted this time, and by nightfall the drawings were hanging from tree trunks. It was a happy evening.

The next day, however, brought a new shock. When Dachshund and Great Dane went to admire the pictures again, they found Mutt in front of one of them, busily turning the square sun round with greasy crayons.

"I thought I'd make a few improvements," Mutt stammered as Dachshund growled and leapt at him.

Dachshund made it very clear that Great Dane's drawings were to remain exactly as they were, and that Mutt should scribble somewhere else with his crayons. End of story.

Dachshund and Great Dane treated themselves to an especially festive lunch and celebrated Great Dane's finding of himself.

AN UNEXPECTED VISITOR

Because Chihuahua was extraordinarily tiny, he often fell between other dogs' two eyes and minds. He was accidentally stepped on or forgotten somewhere. For this reason, no one had ever visited him, which made Chihuahua very sad.

"Of course, on the one hand it's perfectly clear that not everyone would fit into my house," he comforted himself one lonely afternoon. "St Bernard, Great Dane or Greyhound, for example. They wouldn't even get through the door, and I'm certainly not going to chop it larger for them. Boxer would get bored at once, because there's nowhere to throw a stick, and I don't have enough water for Spaniel to swim in. But Husky could come."

Chihuahua poured a drop of pea soup into his favourite beetle-patterned bowl and licked it up for supper.

"Oh, but Husky's sledge wouldn't fit in here either, and he doesn't go anywhere without it," Chihuahua dismissed the idea sadly. "And if Corgi came, the visit might turn awkward, because you never know what he really means by what he says."

He licked the bowl clean and put it back on the shelf, his gaze drifting over the row of tiny cups and pots.

"Another problem is what I would offer guests, if anyone ever did happen to come in," he continued helplessly. "I love peas, but others certainly don't. Besides, I don't have a pot large enough to cook for everyone."

Rain had begun to patter against the window, and Chihuahua settled down to watch outside. "Or perhaps I could hold a reception in the garden?" he brightened briefly, then shook his head at once. "Definitely not. Dachshund would get cold, and Poodle would complain that his hairstyle would be ruined by the wind. And Basset would be no company at all. He would just sleep."

Sleep began to creep up on Chihuahua too. He was just about to climb into bed when there came a knock at the door. It was so unexpected that Chihuahua's first reaction was to hide under the cupboard. When the faint knock was repeated, he asked in a squeaky voice, "Who is it?"

"It's me, Collie," came the reply.

"Collie?"

Chihuahua vaguely remembered Collie from earlier times as a friendly, attentive companion, who had suddenly gone his own way. He cautiously opened the door and peeped out. It really was Collie.

"May I come in?" Collie asked.

"If you fit," Chihuahua retreated into the kitchen corner.

Collie lay flat and squeezed himself through the doorway. His head reached the ceiling, but when he curled himself up properly, he did manage to fit into the sitting room.

"Where have you come from like this?" asked Chihuahua.

"From the mountains. I was looking after my flock of sheep there, but I've set them free now," Collie replied. "Or rather, the humans built a fence around them and I was no longer needed. So I came back."

Chihuahua had never heard of sheep or humans.

"Do such things really exist?" he asked, breathless with astonishment.

"Oh yes. Somewhere there is even an elephant with a trunk so long it can wrap it around itself. And there are cats bigger than I am. They're called tigers. And there are also—"

Collie got no further, for a soft thud came from the corner and Chihuahua lay unconscious on the floor.

He regained consciousness in bed, where Collie had laid him.

"How do you feel?" Collie asked kindly. "Shall I wrap another blanket around you?"

"No, take some away instead," groaned Chihuahua from beneath the heavy pile of blankets and rugs Collie had heaped on him. "This weight will squash me flat."

Collie removed five rugs, and Chihuahua emerged.

“What do you think, may I stay here for tonight?” Collie asked, adjusting Chihuahua’s pillow.

“I’m not used to being completely alone yet. There was always the flock for company.”

“Will I be enough for you?”

“Entirely. You are just the right amount.”

When Dachshund and Great Dane came to Chihuahua’s house the next morning to surprise their smallest friend, they peered through the windows and found Chihuahua and Collie sleeping sweetly, curled up together. Dachshund and Great Dane left the pea cutlets they had brought as a gift on the doorstep and rejoiced that Collie was back again.