

# PLAYMATES

KEYWORD: Loyalty.

Billy and his dog Cuffee had such happy times playing together! Cuffee was a fine playmate, for he was always ready for a bit of fun. He learned things very quickly. He was so interested in everything that Billy tried to teach him that he learned without knowing how it was done. He would cock up his ears and put his head sideways as though he were listening very carefully to what was said. Don't you think that was because he was so fond of Billy?

He gave up the game of chasing his own tail, because there were so many things that he liked better, for instance, playing ball with Billy. He got so clever at it that he not only ran to fetch the ball, but he could catch it on the bounce, not missing it more than once out of every six times.

That was pretty smart of a puppy, don't you think? But how he hated to give up the ball! He would hold it in his mouth so tight that it was a wonder that his teeth did not make holes in it. Then he would look up at Billy with his big brown eyes as much as to say, "Please, Billy, won't you let me keep it? It's mine now, for I caught it." But when Billy took it from him he was very good-natured about it and would bark as though saying, "It's all right, Billy. I don't mind in the least." And wasn't that much nicer than getting cross or sulky about it?

Of course Cuffee got into many scrapes. One day he had a nice big bone given to him, and after hunting around a bit he found a good place to bury it in the ground. Have you ever watched a dog bury a bone? He digs a hole with his paws and drops the bone into the hole. Then he uses his nose as a shovel, and covers the bone all up with dirt. When Father went into the garden to see how his beans were growing, he found several of the little plants dug up or broken or covered with dirt. But he didn't scold Cuffee, because Cuffee didn't know any better.

As the months went by Cuffee grew bigger and stronger and actually so handsome that everyone admired him. He grew less and less mischievous too, until even Mickey the cat became quite friendly with him and forgave him for his past misdeeds.

Billy and his father made a harness for Cuffee so that he could be taught to pull a little wagon. Cuffee did not think much of the idea at first because he got tangled up in the harness when he sat down, and when he ran it was quite annoying to have a wagon rolling along after him making such a noise and clatter. But he soon got used to it, and Billy and Eileen had many a nice ride. When Mother saw how strong Cuffee was and how willing he was to pull the wagon, she asked Father if he thought Cuffee could help

churn the cream into butter. Father fixed up a treadwheel so that as Cuffee walked on the belt attached to the wheel, the churn would go round and round. Cuffee came quite willing to be hitched to the churn, but when he found that he could not run away with it, he did not like it at all, for it was such tiresome work — no fun in it at all! But he had learned to be obedient, and though it was unpleasant he did his duty, churning the cream into butter every week.

It was no wonder that Billy loved Cuffee, was it? We would all love a dog like that. So let us remember that being kind and loving helps dogs as well as people to be noble, loyal, and good.

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