

THE MAGIC BONE

(a dog's dream)

Give a dog a bone and he'll be good as gold.

No woofs, no whimpers, just **CRUNCH, CRUNCH, CRUNCH** – the sound of a contented hound.

But all good things must come to an end.

Soon your dog will lick the bone clean, gnaw it away to almost nothing, and it's gone. Disappeared into thin air.

Before very long, he's dreaming of the next bone. A bigger, better bone. The biggest, hardest, juiciest, tastiest bone in the world.

Take your dog for a walk and, as you pass the Butcher's Shop, he sniffs, sniffs, sniffs with his cold wet nose, licks his lips, wags his tail, as if to say

*– Remember to get my weekly bone.
I'm a good dog, really I am.*

But, as you know, sometimes he can be a naughty dog. He runs away from you and won't come back when you call. He's decided to go for a walk on his own.

Where do you think is the first place he goes? It won't take three guesses to get the right answer.

Yes, he heads straight for the Butcher's Shop. Very careful not to get caught, he sneaks round the back like a cunning thief.

His nose guides him forward till he finds the bin. He knocks it over with a flick of his paw. **CLANG, CLATTER!**

What a feast is spread before him. Such a lot of lovely, smelly rubbish to

put his nose into. And right in the middle is a brand new bone.

Quick, grab it and escape and run back home.

He takes it to his hideaway, under the table. This is the bone he's been looking for, all his life. This is a Magic Bone.

Any old ordinary bone will only last an hour or so. It wears out fast, loses its flavour, and your dog gets bored.

But this one is different.

However much he chews it, it never gets smaller, it always stays juicy-fresh. Because this is an Everlasting Bone.

He doesn't want to let it out of his sight – it looks so good.

He doesn't want to let it out of his smell – it smells so good.

He doesn't want to let it out of his taste – it tastes so good.

He doesn't want to let it out of his touch – it feels so good.

He doesn't want to let it out of his hearing – because this bone makes a specially loud sound when he crunches it. **KKKRRRKKK! CRACK! CRUNCH!** It's music to his pointed ears.

All the other dogs will be so envious. How they would like to chew it too! He's not going to let them, if he can help it. He'll guard it fiercely, against all comers. But it's not easy growling **GRRR** with a rather large bone in your mouth.

He takes it everywhere he goes: round the house, and round and round the garden, even out on a walk. He's lost all interest in chasing sticks. Who needs sticks, when you've got a Magic Bone?

He carries it about with him till his jaws ache. The bone is as heavy as a pair of dumb-bells, but he doesn't want to let it go.

It gets tiring, chewing, gnawing, crunching, carrying his bone all day and in the end, like every dog, he needs a catnap. He curls up like a baby and falls asleep with the bone in his mouth.

He must make sure he doesn't lose it. Where's the safest place to hide a bone?

Underneath the cushion? NO.

Behind the television? NO.

It must be somewhere no-one will find it. He has an idea. He's not called a clever dog for nothing. Don't tell anyone what he does.

He sneaks out at the dead of night. Takes the Magic Bone to a secret place in the corner of the park and, while no-one's looking, he buries it. Deep in the ground like some strange seed. He covers it with earth, with his strong hind legs.

Everyday he visits the spot and sniffs to check that the bone's still there. Yes. No need to worry, it's safe underground.

Don't forget this bone is Magic. Then you'll understand what happens next. One sunny-wet day, with a rainbow in the sky...

ABRACADABRA!

HEY PRESTO!

Out of the ground where it's buried, a tree springs up. **WHOOSH! WOOF! BARK BARK!**

Your dog thinks this is only natural.

From then on, every time he passes the tree, he pauses, cocks his leg and waters it. The water is a golden stream against the tree's dark bark.

That's his doggy way of saying Thank-you to the Magic Bone for all the hours of fun it's given him. He doesn't mind too much that it's turned into a tree. It's just one of those things that happen in life.

Day by day, the tree gets bigger.

And bigger.

And **BIGGER.**

Till it's a gigantic tree.

Your dog feels proud that he's watered it so well.

When Autumn comes, instead of berries, under its leaves, it grows red bones! They drop in the wind and lie higgledy-piggledy on the ground beneath.

Now there will be more than enough bones for every dog in the neighbourhood. No fights over them anymore.

Plenty of bones to last all winter.

Your dog's stretched out in front of the fire. He looks like a hearth-rug, warm and snug.

- Look, he's wagging his tail in his sleep, says Dad.

- He must be dreaming, says Mum.
- Yes, dreaming of bones, you say.

DAYY KING