

LAD, A DOG

## THE BAD PUPPY

Retold by MARGO LUNDELL

Lad was in love. A young female collie had come to live at the Place.

Her name was lady. Lad thought Lady was perfect in every way.

Before long, Lady was as important to Lad as the sun coming up in the morning. Lad was a powerful, purebred collie. But he was a gentle giant. The heart in Lad's mighty chest was huge.

He gave it gladly to Lady.

The place was a large estate in New Jersey. It was wonderful for two dogs. There were thick woods to roam in side by side. There were squirrels to chase and rabbits to trail. In the summer heat, the two dogs cooled off in the lake together.

Life was wonderful in the winter, too. There were long walks in the snow. There was a big, warm house. On cold nights the two collies laid in front of the living room fire. The master and mistress sat nearby. Lad was happy when he was close to them. He loved Lady. But he worshipped the master and mistress.

One year everything change. Lady had puppies early in the fall. There were three collies puppies, but two of them s oon died. No one knew why. The puppy that lived was a wild little ball of fluff. The mistress named him Wolf.

After Lady became a mother, Lad was lonely. Lady would not run in the woods with him anymore. She spent all her time with Wolf. Lad could not understand it. why did Lady care so much about the puppy?

One day in November, Lady looked sick. Her nose was hot and dry. The master asked the vet to come to the house.

"It looks like distemper," the vet said. "Of course, that's very bad."

The vet put Lady in his car. They were going to the animal hospital. Lady growled quietly. He didn't want Lady to go. The master held him back.

"It's all right, Laddie," the master said. "It's the only way to save her."

Then Lady was gone. Lad walked into the house and crawled under the piano. He did not come out for the rest of the day. The big collie was very unhappy.

The next morning Lad looked everywhere for Lady. He hoped she had come back during the night. But she hadn't.

Wolf found Lad that morning. The puppy wanted to play. He ran up to Lad and bit his ear. He chewed the big dog's nose. He tried to bite Lad's neck. Finally Wolf grew sleepy and curled up next to Lad. Lad stared down at Wolf. He remembers how Lady loved the puppy. She was gone-----maybe forever. Wolf

was alone and needed help. =2 OLad began to lick Wolf's furry head. Lad was going to take care of Lady's puppy.

Keeping up with wolf was not easy. The puppy was everywhere. He chased the mistress' chickens. He barked at every bird. He grew bigger and stronger every day.

Lad tried to teach Wolf how to behave. He taught the puppy not to eat everything he found. One day began chewing the mistress' hat. Lad picked up the puppy. He wouldn't put Wolf down until the puppy dropped the hat.

Lad was firm with Wolf, but he was good to the puppy, too. Lad ran with Wolf to the lake and taught him to swim.

Weeks went by. Lad was busy with Wolf, but he did not forget Lady. One day the vet stopped by to talk to the master about her. Lad knew that this was the man who had taken Lady away.

Lad was the best dog in the world. But that day he forgot everything the master had thought him. He ran across the room and attacked the vet. The vet threw up his arms. "Lad!" the master shouted. It was a sharp command. Lad dropped to the floor. "O Lad!" the master repeated. The great collie began to shake. Lad knew he had broken the law.

The master ordered Lad out of the house. "Don't beat him," the vet said. "He knows I took Lady away."

"He's lucky you understand," the master answered. "I won't beat him. But send me a bill for that torn coat."

When December came, Lady was still gone. The days were cold and snowy. Wolf loved the snow. He rolled in it.

He bit it. He barked at it.

December was cold the lake froze. The ice was strong. Wolf was surprised. He remembered swimming with Lad. He could not understand what had happened to the water.

But what fun to walk on it!

The puppy had never been happier. He spent hours at the lake, running and slipping on the ice.

Drip, Drip, Drip.

In January there was an early thaw. It was warm for three days. Snow melted. The ice on the lake grew slushy.

On the third day Lad and Wolf ran down to the lake together. The top of the lake looked wet. Wolf didn't mind.

He raced onto the watery ice.

When Lad reached the lake, he stopped at the edge.

He sniffed the air. Grrrrrr. Lad growled a warning to Wolf. Wolf turned and looked back. Then the eager puppy ran further out onto the ice.

CRAAAACK.

Wolf had jumped onto a thin patch of ice. It could not hold him. The ice around the puppy broke into chunks.

He floated for a moment on a cake of ice. Then he slid into the cold, dark water.

Wolf splashed in the freezing water. Then he tried to climb onto the ice again. He slipped and slid. He fell back into the water. The scared puppy began to bark, and howled for help.

The master and mistress were coming up the driveway in the car. They heard Wolf's cries. "He's in trouble!" the master said. They climbed out of the car and ran toward the lake. It was a long way to run. They couldn't reach the lake in time to save Wolf.

But Lad was already there. When Wolf began to howl, Lad had rushed onto the ice. He trotted close to the hole where Wolf was swimming.

Suddenly Lad could feel the ice breaking under his weight. Then he sank into the lake, too.

Brrrrrr.

The cold water took Lad's breath away. He began swimming towards the frozen puppy.

Lad reached Wolf and picked him up by the back of the neck. He swam with the puppy to the edge of the hole. Then Lad used all his strength and rose half out of the water.

He threw Wolf up onto solid ice.

Wolf sharp claws dug into the ice.

He found his footing and scrambled ashore.

Wolf was out of danger, but Lad was in trouble. The big collie had saved Wolf, but the effort was too much.

Lad fell back into the lake and sank under the water.

The current caught Lad and pulled him sideways. When Lad tried to come up again, the top of his head hit something. It was ice. Lad was trapped under the ice with now air to breathe.

Lad held his breath and swam. Finally he found the hole in the ice. His head burst out of the water. He sputtered and panted. He could breathe again. By then the master had reached the lake. He stretched out on the ice and crawled toward Lad.



"Here, Laddie! Come on, boy!"

Lad heard the master calling.

Lad tried to drag himself up onto the ice.

Twice Lad almost pulled himself out of the water. Each time the ice broke underneath him. Then the tired dog tried once more. This time the master was close by.

He reached out and grabbed. Lad's wet ruff.

"You can do it, Laddie!" he urged. The master pulled, and Lad struggled. "Come on, Lad!"

Finally the collie was out of the water and up on top of the ice.

Lad and the master crawled carefully back to shore.

Then the master sat on the ground and hugged the wet dog.

"You're all right, Lad!" he whispered.

Lad shook himself off. Then he turned toward the mistress. He wanted her to hug him, too. He wanted her kind words. But the mistress was not alone.

"Laddie, look who's back," she said.

Poor tired Lad was in a daze. He stared at the dog in his path.

Could it be?

Yes it was Lady.

"She's well again, Laddie," the mistress said. "We drove over this morning and picked her up."

But Lad did not hear all the words. Lady was biting his ear. She wanted him to run and play. Lad's world was right one more. Wolf was safe, and Lady was home at last.