

W. BRUCE CAMERON

LILY

TO THE rescue

THE
THREE BEARS

Illustrations by

JAMES BERNARDIN



A TOM DOHERTY ASSOCIATES BOOK

NEW YORK

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LILY TO THE RESCUE: THE THREE BEARS

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1



Everyone knows that Maggie Rose is my girl, and I am her dog. Even squirrels know, because they see me coming at the end of my leash, and they scamper quickly up a tree and then stare down at me.

I always let those squirrels know with a stern look that I could have caught them if I had wanted to, but when I am walking with my girl I need to be careful not to lunge forward because it might pull her over, which I

would never do, except for the few times it's happened.

I was with my girl, ignoring a squirrel scolding me from a branch. (A squirrel has no business chattering at a dog, but sometimes they are very rude.) We were crossing the big field that separates Home from Work. Home is where we all sleep and, most importantly, eat. Work is where Mom spends most of her time taking care of animals.

When we are at Work, my girl and I take care of animals, too, mainly by playing with them.

“You get to see Freddy today, Lily!” Maggie Rose sang to me. I wagged because she was happy and because I recognized the name “Freddy.” Freddy is a sleek ferret who sometimes sits in a cage at Work. Freddy is my best ferret friend. Actually, I don't know any other ferrets, but if I did, Freddy would be my favorite.

I was still wagging when we walked in the door at Work. Instantly I could smell that Maggie Rose's two brothers were already here, along with Brewster.

Brewster is a dog who lives with us and sleeps on Bryan's bed. He was napping on a dog blanket near the door and raised his head as we came in. I gave him a polite sniff.

"Hey, Maggie Rose," Craig said. He was lugging a heavy bag that smelled of wonderful dog food. "Bryan's outside in the back, playing with two puppies we just rescued."

"Puppies!" Maggie Rose said.

Craig nodded. "I'm almost done stacking dog food, and then I'll come out, too."

My girl ran to the back door and I dashed after her. I didn't know what we were doing, but I was excited to be doing it. It seemed that we were not going into the room of cages where Freddy was waiting for me. That was

too bad. But whatever we were doing must be more important.

It wasn't important enough to wake Brewster from his nap, though. Almost nothing can do that.

We burst out into the sunshine and I smelled Bryan and two puppies.

"So cute!" Maggie Rose exclaimed.

One puppy was covered with shaggy dark fur, and one was white with big dark spots. Of course, they were impressed and amazed to see a good dog and her girl.

They ran to me, tripping over themselves. I let them jump on me and chew at my face until Shaggy bit down too hard. Then I flipped him over on his back.

It's the job of older dogs to teach younger dogs how to play properly.

"I've named them Biker and Slam," Bryan told my girl.

Maggie Rose sat on the lawn and the puppies broke away from me and climbed into her lap. She giggled and picked up the spotted one, kissing him on the nose. I trotted over and shoved my face into my girl's face for my own kiss.

Craig came out the back door. There was still no sign of Brewster.

"Those are the worst names ever, Bryan," Maggie Rose told him.

"What are?" Craig asked, falling to his knees and reaching out to the shaggy puppy. Shaggy began chewing Craig's fingers.

"Slime and Blinker," Maggie Rose answered.

Craig hooted.

"That's not what I said!" Bryan responded. "Biker and Slam."

"What? Are you crazy?" Craig answered. "Slacker and Bam?"

“I’m not talking to either of you,” Bryan muttered. I saw he was trying not to grin.

I looked up and wagged as Mom came out to see us. She smells different every day. Today she carried the odor of cats.

Craig rose to his feet. “What’s wrong, Mom?”

“Your dad just called,” Mom said. “He’s on his way here with an injured bear. Maggie Rose, can you bring the puppies inside and put them in a kennel? I have to prepare for surgery.”

Maggie Rose and Bryan stood and the puppies stared up at them, amazed at how tall the people were. “What happened to the bear?” my girl asked.

“A poacher shot it,” Mom replied.

“*What?*” Maggie Rose gasped.

I looked at my girl, sensing her alarm.

“Your dad tracked it down and used a dart

gun to put it into a deep sleep,” Mom said. “We’ll know more when he gets here.”

I followed the humans back into the building. My girl was carrying a puppy in each hand. “What’s a poacher?” she asked.

“Somebody who hunts illegally,” Craig told her.

“Bet you Dad arrested him,” Bryan said.

“Will the bear be okay?” my girl asked. She sounded worried.

“I won’t know until I have a chance to examine it,” Mom replied.

The two puppies stared at each other. I could tell they were astonished to be so far above the ground. My girl put them in a kennel. They gazed at me, confused. Why were they in there, when I was not?

I followed my nose to where Freddy lurked in a cage. He came to the bars and poked



his snout out to sniff me, and I wagged and sniffed back.

“Come on, Lily!” Maggie Rose told me, turning away.

I had hoped Freddy would be allowed to come out. My girl had let him out once and



we'd had a marvelous game of Chase. But it's never happened again.

It didn't happen this time, either. My girl had other plans. People get to decide which animals are allowed to play and which have to remain inside the kennels.

The puppies were back to wrestling in their own cage.

That's just how puppies are.

"Lily!" my girl called again. She was standing in an open doorway. "The bear's here. Hurry!"

2



My girl was tense. I thought she must be expecting something exciting to happen. She pulled me over to a bench and sat down with Bryan and Craig. Brewster had already moved his nap to this new location.

I watched, bewildered, as Dad and a woman dressed like Dad trundled a rolling bed into the front room at Work. Lying on that bed, sound asleep, was the biggest, furriest, *smelliest* creature I had ever seen. I did

not know how the large animal managed to sleep while being pushed around like that. I was amazed that its own stink didn't wake it up!

“Whoa!” Bryan said. “It's huge!”

Dad and his helper rolled the bed right out of the room again, through a different door. The kids rose to their feet, so I did, too. All Brewster did was open one eye for a moment.

“Here, Maggie Rose,” Craig said. He reached down and picked her up in his arms. A moment later Bryan did the same with me, as if my girl and I were a couple of puppies.

At Work there's a room that smells like chemicals, and because Craig and his brother were holding us up high, we could see through a window into that room. Mom was wearing gloves and paper over her mouth. Dad and his friend wheeled the huge animal past the window, and the thing still didn't open its eyes!



Brewster is an expert at napping, but even he would wake up if he were wheeled on a rolling bed into a smelly room.

After a few moments, Dad and his friend came back into the room where we were waiting. His friend left out the front door, but Dad stayed. Bryan and Craig put Maggie Rose and me on the floor and I sniffed Dad

curiously. He smelled like trees and dirt and also the napping creature he had just taken for a car ride in a bed.

“Hi, boys; Maggie Rose. Hi, Lily,” Dad said. He put his hand down so I could get a better whiff of the creature’s smell. I licked his palm and was not particularly happy with the taste.

“Will the bear be okay, Dad?” Maggie Rose asked.

Dad nodded. “I think so. Your mom agrees it’s a shallow wound. The bullet just grazed the bear’s shoulder.”

“Will the poacher go to jail?” Craig wanted to know.

Dad shrugged. “That’s up to the judge. All we can do is put the cuffs on them.”

“It’s so cool you get to arrest people!” Bryan said.

Craig looked at his brother. “We keep hoping he’ll arrest *you*.”

“You smell, Dad,” my girl said, wrinkling her nose.

Dad grinned. “Some bears have a pretty strong odor. That’s so if you ever go into a cave and you smell a bear, you’ll know to turn right around and run out.”

My girl stared at him. “Really?”

Dad laughed. “Well, I doubt that’s the reason, but it’s something good to keep in mind.”

“I’d make Craig go into the cave to check for the bear,” Bryan said.

“Like you could make me do anything.”
Craig snorted.

“When will we find out if the bear is okay?”
my girl wanted to know.

Dad held up his hand and looked at it. “Probably at least an hour,” he answered. “Your mom said I should tell you to clean out the cat cages.”

Bryan groaned.

“Come on, Lily, let’s go see kitties,” my girl said.

We walked down the back hall to where all the cats lived. Brewster eased to his feet and padded after us.

Soon my girl was moving armfuls of cats from one cage to another. The boys swept out cages and squirted a stinky liquid into each. Brewster decided this was more than he could take and circled up for a snooze. I joined him. I like cats, but not if all they are going to do is sit in their cages and stare at me.

Brewster moved over to make room for me. I might not be as good at sleeping as the huge stinky creature, but I’m not bad, either. Napping is one of my main skills.

A short time later, the door to the hallway opened. I was instantly awake.

“Kids, can you come out here, please?” Mom said.

There was something very tense in the way the children glanced at each other. Silently, they followed Mom out into the front room.

Our nails clicking, Brewster and I brought up the rear. We could smell that Mom had gotten some of the stinky creature's odors on her clothing.

"What's wrong, Mom?" my girl asked. "Did something bad happen with the bear?"

"Where's Dad?" Craig wanted to know.

Mom pursed her lips. "The bear's fine. I cleaned the wound and stitched it up. But when I examined her, I realized that she's got cubs. She gave birth this winter. I can't tell how many, but she's had at least one. Your dad left to change his uniform and go back up into the mountains."

"Babies?" Maggie Rose replied. I nosed her hand because she seemed worried, and needed to know she had a good dog by her side.

“How come Dad didn’t see the cubs when he found the bear?” Bryan asked.

Mom shrugged. “They might have been hiding. Dad didn’t know to look for them, but he knows now, and he’s getting some people from his department to try to find them. Hopefully before nightfall.”

Craig stood up straight. “I’d like to help search.”

“Me, too,” Bryan said.

“And me,” my girl added.

Mom gazed at us thoughtfully.