Diary of a lively Labrador

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MONDAY

Today was a boring day.
Well, to be truthful, my owner is really boring! I call her the Princess.
She calls me 'Boof-Head'. But there is nothing royal about her
and nothing of the 'Boof-Head' about me.

So bored

Well, it is no wonder I get bored...
All the Princess does all day is type – tap, tap, tap, at the old
word-processor. She's a writer, you see.

Today I was SO bored that I almost
ate my own tail. In the end,
I chewed up one of the Princess's
slippers and that definitely got
her attention!

delicious slipper!

In the afternoon we went for a walk.

I was SO excited to be doing something
at last, that I ran off with the ball she
was throwing and didn't come back.
Then, when she was really mad at me,
I came back.

We walked together for a while.

But just as she was beginning
to like me again, I bounced all over the
friends we met and put muddy footprints all
over their clothes.

That was not a popular move...!

We returned home in silence.
TUESDAY

Another boring day.
There sat the Princess, tap, tap, tap, and there was me, bored out of my skull.

To be fair, the Princess does always walk me first thing in the morning. But this particular morning, I was in disgrace for bouncing. First I jumped up at the postwoman — I like her!

Then I...

...up at the milkman — he broke a bottle!

Yawn!

And last of all, I jumped all over the next-door neighbour as she was taking her little son to school. Unfortunately, he fell over — not my fault!

That was when the Princess got mad at me and shut me in the toilet.

The walk this afternoon was BORING because the Princess kept me on the lead so I couldn’t run or jump.

She let me off just as we came towards the house and I ran over to say hello to my friend, Rover, and we ran round and round the street — which of course, annoyed the Princess a lot!

So I was firmly put back on my lead.
Wednesday

This morning I bounced all over the post-woman but NOT the milkman, so quite good really! But the Princess still put me on the lead this afternoon. Which annoyed me!

Moonboom
licking her claws

The Princess has a cat.

Her name is Moonboom, and mostly we live side-by-side and ignore each other. To tell you the truth, Moonboom is rather fierce and I am quite scared of her. I have often tried to get her to play and she always responds by hitting me on the nose with her paw – and believe me, she has sharp claws, that cat!

But today we had a real argument.

I was lying on my mat, my nose on my paws, when a little mouse came running along and stopped in front of me.

He was grey-brown, with long whiskers and a cheeky grin. We were enjoying each other’s company, chatting away and getting to know each other. All of a sudden, WHAM!

A massive paw, claws outstretched, narrowly missed my new friend.

He threw me a terrified glance, and scuttled back along the wall disappearing into a small hole under the skirting board.

I was NOT impressed with how Moonboom had treated my friend and I growled at her angrily. “Grrrr!” She hissed fiercely, arching her back and showing her claws so I decided to lie back down. I didn’t want a scratched nose – it hurts!
THURSDAY

Bounced all over the milkman but not the postwoman.
The Princess was not too cross, so I have not been put on the lead.

"Aaargh!"
A terrible scream rang out.
The Princess stood there horrified.
"A mouse!
Yuk!
Get rid of it!
Kill it!"

I was most offended.
How would she feel if I treated her friends like that? She moans enough if I jump up at them – which is, after all, just being friendly.
How could she scream at my new friend?

My friend the mouse came back. Happily, this time,
Moonboom was fast asleep in her favourite place on top of the fridge.
Mouse and I spent some time looking at each other.
He sat on the edge of my mat, and I wriggled my nose at him.
We were deep in conversation when....

I have to say, Mouse did not seem bothered.
He just sloped off along the edge of my mat and vanished along the side of the room and into his little hole in the corner.
Bounced all over the paper boy but not the postwoman OR the milkman.
The Princess said I am improving.
So today it became clear that Mouse and I have two problems. The first is the Princess, and the second, much more serious, is Moonboom.

Mouse likes to sit on my mat, just in front of my nose. We chat about this and that — and we have many things we agree about.

I think Moonboom is quite scary.

So today, we were chatting on my mat, when the Princess came through and saw us. She let out a yell, a mixture of fury and fear. "Aaargh! There’s that pesky mouse again!"

Then she turned to look for Moonboom who was, as usual, curled up asleep on top of the fridge. She swept her up in her arms, and plonked her on the floor a centimetre from Mouse.

Mouse likes running up things.
I like jumping up.
Mouse likes skipping. I like bouncing.
Mouse is terrified of cats.

'Do something about it! For heaven's sake! You're a cat, aren't you?
Cats chase mice.... Go on, chase it!'
Moonboom, startled out of her sleep, lost a precious second in waking up.
Before she had time to pounce, Mouse had sprinted away. This time, he could not run toward his hole since Moonboom blocked his path.
So he ran the only way possible—
namely
under my paws and round between me and the wall.
Moonboom stalked slowly round to my tail end.

"Grrrr...," she let out a long, low growl, "move yourself, you stupid dog. Unless you want to feel my claws in your backside!"

I sat there, rigid with fear. I knew just how sharp Moonboom’s claws could be. And she was not afraid to use them! But I didn’t move. I could feel Mouse trembling behind me. But I stayed put.

Just as Moonboom was about to launch herself at me, claws open, the Princess took a hand.
"Move you stupid hound," she said, crossly, clearly thinking that I didn’t realise that the mouse had run behind me. She put her hand on my collar to pull me out.

Then Mouse took action.

He ran straight up along my body and jumped off my nose, ignoring the Princess’s shriek of panic. Then he hurled himself at his hole in the corner and vanished with a flick of his grey tail. So it is clear to me that Mouse and I have not one, but two problems....
SATURDAY

Bounced over the paper boy again, but this time he fell off his bike! I was in disgrace and the Princess shut me in the toilet as soon as we got home.

She even fed me in there.

"You have to learn not to BOUNCE on people," she yelled at me!
"You can jolly well stay in here and think about your behaviour!"

I was quite sad, and had just curled up in a corner when Mouse came to see me.

He found his way through the hole the pipes come through. I was well impressed.

The good thing was that he was safe from both Moonboom and the Princess and so we spent a lot of the morning talking.

We decided to meet round the back corner of the garden whenever we can. My time in the 'toilet-prison' today was not nearly as gloomy as usual.

head held high
me being very good

So when the Princess came to take me for a walk I was quite chilled. I even managed to walk without any jumping up on anyone!

So she was very pleased with me and Saturday ended well.
SUNDAY

Managed, through GREAT effort, not to bounce or jump up on anyone this morning.

Did lose the ball in the stream by running away with it when the Princess had told me to bring it back, but that's the sort of thing that could happen to anyone.

So today I met Mouse in the garden as planned and we sat and chatted.

Moonboom was also in the garden, lying fast asleep on top of a hat belonging to the Princess.

Perhaps because the Princess was herself out, Moonboom was obviously far too content and sleepy to be bothered chasing mice.

I told Mouse all about my problems with jumping up on people and how I was always getting into terrible trouble.

"I just can't help it! I get so excited!" I explained,

"I really LOVE to see people and then I bounce. Then the Princess gets mad..."
MONDAY

Not a good morning. Bounced on the postwoman and the milkman and then, when the paper boy skidded on his bike to avoid me, he ran into the hedge and I got the blame! How unfair is that?

So there I was back in the ‘toilet-prison’. Mouse came to see me, running along the pipes as usual.

“Yep,” he said, “but it has to be OUR secret!”
And then he started to whisper.

As I listened, I first started to smile and then to laugh, big, woofy dog laughs.

The Princess came and let me out of the toilet.

Perhaps she thought I was barking!

“I have had an idea,” he told me excitedly,
“about your bouncing problem.”

“Really?” I replied.

I was quite depressed about the whole thing and almost resigned to spending the rest of my life in the toilet!
TUESDAY

It was a terrible morning walk. Perhaps because I was so pleased about the PLAN that Mouse and I had concocted, I was too excited to behave.

I went running to say hello to my friend the postwoman and she dropped all the letters she was holding. She assured the Princess that she didn't mind, but I could see that the Princess was furious.

Then I forgot myself and bounded all over the milkman, who dropped a milk bottle.

The Princess put me on the lead.

So then, when I was trying to say hello to the paper-boy, I pulled her over.

I licked her face and did tell her that it was a mistake, but she was still very upset.

She didn't put me in the toilet-prison but I think that was because she was too depressed.

I was depressed too.

I like the Princess and I don't want her to be mad at me.

I could only hope that Mouse's plan was going well.
WEDNESDAY

Much better walk this morning.

The Princess kept me on the lead, and I managed not to pull her over even when I forgot myself and jumped up at a gentleman walking his horribly well-behaved spaniel.

I hate 'goodie-goodie' dogs.

They are so smug!

Anyhow, I went down the garden in the afternoon and met Mouse. We had to be very careful because Moonboom was on the prowl.

It was a grey day and there was no sun for her to sleep in so she was out hunting.

Talking together in a corner near the pond – the safest place we could think of – Mouse showed me what he had found.

It was a tiny, brown leather pouch, which looked as if it had once held a set of keys.

Mouse showed me a small loop on it through which a belt – or a dog collar! – could be threaded. I was very impressed with Mouse's cleverness in finding it.

This was the 1st stage of the plan!
WEDNESDAY

CONTINUED...

Now all I had to do was get my collar off.
It took me over an hour of scratching and rubbing against the garden fence to make sure my collar was turned completely inside out.

This was the 2nd stage of the plan.

Mouse carefully put the pouch on the floor with the loop upwards. We waited together for the Princess.

“What have you done to your collar, you stupid dog?” she laughed, and, not realising that she was doing exactly what Mouse and I had so carefully planned, she undid my collar and took it off.

This was the 3rd stage of the plan.

hours of scratching

Success!

When she came over to hang up the washing, she saw my collar all twisted and inside out!
Just as she bent over me to fasten my collar back on, she saw Mouse. He was standing there, bold as brass, sticking his tongue out at her!

I doubt that the Princess noticed his tongue, but she was certainly scared enough to drop the collar and scream.

Mouse sprang, like a small grey ballerina, high in the air and into the pond.

Once there, he swam for all he was worth away from the edge and well out of reach of Moonboom's extended paw.

This was the 4th stage of the plan.

Quick as a flash, three things happened at once.

Moonboom, who had been sitting watching a squirrel digging a hole under a large bush, came charging toward us.

Seeing Mouse, she leapt, claws outstretched.

I reached down and using my teeth ever-so carefully, drew the end of the collar through the loop of the tiny, brown pouch.

This was the 5th stage of the plan.
The Princess was much too busy watching the mouse vanishing under a large lily-pad to pay attention to what she was doing.

Moonboom was now circling the pond and growling menacingly.

But there was no way Moonboom was going swimming!

Oh no, not even for the Princess!

Not looking at all at my collar as she picked it up, the Princess fastened it back on me, muttering about the dratted mouse.

The little brown pouch was now firmly attached to the collar round my neck!
THURSDAY

I was more than usually ready for my morning walk when the Princess came down, tousled and sleepy-headed as normal.

Fortunately, she did not bother to put me on the lead.

Or perhaps some unrecognised instinct warned her that there was a mouse on my collar!

From his safe hiding place in the little brown pouch hanging hidden in the fur below my neck, Mouse could see everything.

The postwoman came towards us, swinging her bag and carrying a great bundle of letters.

"Don't you dare jump up at her," hissed Mouse fiercely,
The next person we met was the milkman. Once again, Mouse whispered a warning. "Don't even think about bouncing! Remember I am on your collar!"

I did manage to wag my tail at the milkman, but firmly kept all four feet on the ground.

I have to say that the Princess was astounded!

"Well, extra breakfast for you this morning, Boof-Head," she smiled as she ladled out my food back in the kitchen.

"You are just the best dog ever!"

This was the 7th and final stage of the plan.

The paper boy, the friend with the small son, and the old gentleman with the smug spaniel, all came and went.

Not only did I not jump up or bounce, I even nodded at them politely and wagged my tail.
THE BEST
DOG EVER!