

The Puppy Who Lost Her Wag

by RV Staff Writer J.C.

Cookie loved to play with her seven brothers and sisters. They would play and wrestle with each other until they were too tired to play anymore. Then the puppies would cuddle up and take naps together. It was nice to always have someone to be with, and Cookie's tail was always wagging with happiness.

One day, the puppies were out in the backyard. It was bath time. The man who lived in the house was going to sell the puppies, and he wanted them to be nice and clean. Gently he would pick up one puppy at a time and put in in the plastic tub. Then he washed the pup until it was covered in soft white bubbles. Some of the puppies wiggled and squirmed, trying to get away. Some enjoyed it and let their pink tongues hang out, smiling. Cookie wasn't too sure about the bathwater and the soapy bubbles, so she stayed back and watched from a distance.

As she was waiting for her turn, she noticed a beautiful orange butterfly float past. Her grey ears perked up and she snapped playfully at it. She missed, but her tail kept wagging. This was fun! Cookie followed the pretty bug as it fluttered through the air, to the fence at the end of the yard, and then over it. Cookie was not big enough to climb over it, but her sharp eyes spotted a hole in the fence where the wood had broken off. It wasn't a very big hole, but Cookie wasn't a very big pup, so she scooted underneath it. She found the butterfly again and bounced along behind it, her tail wagging happily behind her. She didn't realize she was heading into the small woods behind her neighborhood.

By the time she discovered she was lost, it was too late. The little pup walked in circles, but didn't know which way was home. She tried sniffing the air, but it all smelled the same, like pine trees and lavender. Nothing seemed familiar. Her tail slowly stopped wagging.

Cookie took a deep breath and tried to be brave. She put her nose to the ground and sniffed. She thought she smelled an animal. It did not smell like her brothers and sisters, but maybe this animal might be able to help. She followed the scent trail and soon found a rabbit.

"Hello," said Cookie. "I am lost. Do you know where I live?"

The rabbit's nose twitched. "Do you live here in the forest? I have not seen you before."

"No. I lived in a house with my brothers and sisters. Then I followed a butterfly past the fence, and now I am quite lost." Her tail hung low and did not wag. Cookie tried not to cry.

The rabbit's ears moved while it was thinking. "At the edge of the woods there are many houses with fences. I do not know which one is yours. If you like, I can take you to one."

"Yes, please," replied the sad pup.

“I’ll take you to the one with the nicest garden. It has the best carrots!” said the rabbit. It hopped away, and the little grey pup followed closely. They travelled through the woods for a while, and Cookie tried not to be distracted by the pretty flowers and birds she saw. It was all very interesting, but the puppy’s tail still would not wag.

After some time, they came out of the woods. Cookie could see a long wooden fence and the tops of some houses. The fence looked a little like her own, but she was not sure. The rabbit urged her forward. They ducked under the fence where the rabbit had dug a hole in order to visit this garden.

The puppy looked around. She shook her head sadly at the rabbit. “This is not my backyard. I am still lost.”

The rabbit shrugged. “Well, at least have a carrot with me. These are really the sweetest.” He pulled two out of the ground and gave one to Cookie. After a few hesitant licks, the pup took a bite and found it quite tasty. She ate the whole thing and licked her lips.

“Thank you. That was very good. But I think I need to keep looking. My tail has lost its wag, and I am still feeling sad and alone. Goodbye.” Cookie left the rabbit in the garden and walked over to the house next door.

In the front yard was a gray striped cat. It did not look friendly, but Cookie tried anyway. “Hello, I’m lost and –”

“MEOW!” the cat arched its back and hissed at the pup. Cookie ran away, her tail tucked under her legs.

She wandered down the sidewalk, passing several houses. None of them looked right. The pup began to cry. Then she heard something. It sounded like little hiccups. There, sitting on the front steps of a house was a young girl. She was crying softly into some tissues. There were big boxes piled up around her and a large truck in the driveway. Curious, Cookie walked over to her.

“Why are you crying?” asked Cookie. She didn’t know if the girl would understand her. The girl looked up, surprised to see the little grey pup barking softly at her. She could tell the pup was kind and seemed concerned.

“We just moved here, and I don’t know anybody. I don’t have any friends, and I’m so lonely!” The girl wailed, wiping her nose with her tissues. Looking at the pup more carefully, the girl saw the sad look in the pup’s eyes.

“Why are you crying?” asked the girl.

“I was going to have a bath but then I followed a butterfly. I got lost in the woods and then there was a nice rabbit and a mean cat. I’m still lost, and I don’t have a home. I’m so lonely too!” Cookie tried to explain in barks and yips. The girl didn’t know what the dog said, so Cookie simply moved closer and sat down on the step beside her.

The girl reached out her hand and stroked the dog's soft fur. Then she scratched Cookie behind the ear, exactly where the pup liked it. Cookie moved even closer and rested her head on the girl's knee. The girl blew her nose into the tissues once more.

"We could be friends," suggested the girl. "That way, we would not be so lonely." Cookie let her tongue hang out and smiled at her. "Maybe my parents would even let you live here with us. Then you would have a home again."

Cookie got excited thinking about it. A feeling of happiness began to spread across her body. As it spread, the pup felt something moving behind her. Her tail began to wag. It wagged faster and faster and would not stop!

"What do you think?" asked the girl. "Would you like to live with me and be best friends?"

"YES!" barked Cookie, and she licked the girl on the cheek.

Questions

1. How did the puppy get lost?
2. What emotion does the pup's wagging tail represent?
3. What does "lost her wag" mean?
4. Do you think the dog and the girl could understand each other? Explain why you think this.