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1758 words

### A DOG IN AN ORANGE TREE

Elijah and his younger sister Kaitlyn knew they were the luckiest kids in the world. Why? Because their house was right next to a city park that had the best playground in the city. There was indeed an alley between their backyard and the playground but nobody every drove on that alley except for the garbage truck which came on Monday mornings and Thursday afternoons. All they had to do was leave through their back gate, look both ways before they crossed the alley and entered the back entrance of the playground.

Their next-door neighbor, Mrs. Stoval had a lot of fruit trees in her backyard, and she let Elijah and Kaitlyn pick the fruit whenever it was ripe. She had an apple tree, an orange tree, a cherry tree, a plum tree, a persimmons tree, and a pomegranate tree. It was more of a pomegranate bush than a tree really, but Mrs. Stoval called it a tree, so they did too. She even had a cocktail tree that grew four types of

fruit: peaches, plums, apricots, and nectarine. What a great tree! Mrs. Stoval explained to them that the tree bore these different sorts of fruit because they were all members of the rose family and the various other limbs were grafted on to it. When Mrs. Stoval explained how they grafted trees by taking a small cutting from one kind of tree and grafting into another type of tree, it sounded like PURE MAGIC.

Who knew that roses, peaches, plums, apricots, and nectarines were all cousins?

They loved pomegranates best as they were easy to pick, kind of sweet and sour at the same time. They were fun and messy to eat. You could chew the whole seedlike fruit, or you could suck off the fleshy part and spit out the hard seed part. Cherries were good too, but they were a bit more tart although you could spit their pits further. Spitting was fun!

Yessiree! They lived in the best place ever. No wonder their friends like Maria and Jamal liked to come over to play all of the time. When they were younger, their mother used to go with Elijah and Kaitlyn to the park with them, but as they got older; she allowed them to go by themselves as she could still keep an eye on them through her kitchen window.

The playground had two sets of swings, a merry-go-round, two kinds of jungle gyms (one for little kids and one for big kids), a see-saw, and there were rocking horse things on big springs; but actually, they looked like a duck and a turtle rather than a horse. The duck and the turtle were meant for the little kids, but they were kind of fun for the big kids too, mainly when nobody was around to see them acting silly. It was the best playground ever, far better than the one at their school.

They liked their jungle gym best of all because it was colorful as it was made of red, blue and yellow plastic. It had fun stuff to climb, fireman poles to slide down, curvy tubes to go down, rickety bridges to cross and warped metal mirrors to look into, some made you look fat and short, and others made you look tall and skinny. It was a great place to play pirate ship or even a spaceship. The other jungle gym for the little kids was kind of the same only smaller, but it was fun to play on it too as long as there wasn't anybody around to see you acting silly and having fun.

One day while they were in the crow's nest of their pirate ship, the tallest part of their jungle gym, Elijah said, "Kaitlyn look at that"!

"Look at what?" responded Kaitlyn.

"A dog is sitting in Mrs. Stoval's orange tree," said Elijah.

"You mean there is a cat in the tree," said Kaitlyn without even looking.

"No! It's a dog. I am sure of it. Look!" said Elijah.

So Kaitlyn finally turned in the direction of Mrs. Stoval's backyard and saw the dog in the orange tree.

"I think you are right, but dogs can't climb trees, how did he get up there? asked Kaitlyn.

"Well this one did, maybe he used a ladder or something." offered Elijah.

"Dogs don't climb trees, and they don't climb ladders either!" counted Kaitlyn.

"That's not true," said Elijah. "Remember, when we went to the circus last year, didn't we see dogs climb ladders, walk across narrow beams, and jump through hoops?", he continued with excitement.

"Elijah, those were specially trained circus dogs, and that little dog doesn't look like a circus dog to me. Besides, I don't think Mrs. Stoval even has a ladder, so how do you really think that a dog got up in that tree?", asked Kaitlyn.

Kaitlyn could see that Elijah had to think on that because he kind of wrinkled up his face and sort of stuck his tongue out. He always stuck his tongue out when he was thinking hard. Finally, he said, "I know he must have jumped up there."

Now it was Kaitlyn's turn to think hard as she studied the situation, but she didn't stick out her tongue because it wasn't ladylike. "I don't think so.", she said. "It looks like a mighty small dog, and I know it is a tall tree because we have to get Mrs. Stoval, to help us pick oranges with that particular fruit picker thing she has.

"Then someone must have put the dog in the tree.", Elijah concluded.

"Why would anybody, put a dog in an orange tree? Kaitlyn asked seriously.

"I don't know, maybe just to be mean or something," explained Elijah.

"Why don't we ask Mrs. Stoval, maybe she knows," said Kaitlyn.

"That is a good idea but let's tell Mom where we are going, so she won't worry," Elijah said thoughtfully.

They slid down the fireman pole, opened the back gate, looked both ways before crossing the alley, and ran into their backdoor.

"Mom, Mom we are going to visit Mrs. Stoval and ask her about the dog sitting in her orange tree!" they explained excitedly.

"You mean there is a cat in her tree?" their mother asked.

"No no, it's a dog really," they answered.

"I have to see this." said their mother. So the three of them visited Mrs. Stoval. When she came to the front door after they rang the doorbell, Kaitlyn asked her directly, "Why is there a dog, sitting in your orange tree?"

Mrs. Stoval smiled as she was always smiling. "You mean a cat don't you?" she asked.

"No no it is a dog, really. Go take a look, if you don't believe my sister or me," said Elijah.

"Oh, I believe you sweetheart but let's go look anyway," said Mr. Stoval. So the four of them went out the back door to take a good close look at the dog.

"My oh my," said Mrs. Stoval. "I don't remember ever seeing a dog in a tree before," she added.

The dog looked quite happy and not at all upset as you might suspect because his tail was wagging, he was barking, he was panting, and his tongue was hanging. Maybe he was thirsty. He sure looked excited to be the center of attention.

"How are we going to get him down?" asked the mother. "Because he is up there quite a way" she added.

"I don't know," said Mrs. Stoval. "I don't have a ladder, do you?" she asked.

"See, I told you she didn't have a ladder," Kaitlyn told her brother.

The mother said, "We have a small step ladder, but I don't think it is going to be tall enough." then

suggested "Why don't you call the fire department?" she suggested.

"Good idea!" said Mrs. Stoval and went inside to fetch her cell phone. When she came back outside, she called information at 411 and asked for the number for the fire department.

Kaitlyn asked, "Why don't you just dial 911?"

Her mother explained that 911 was only to be used for emergencies and a dog in an orange tree was not a real emergency. After Mrs. Stoval dialed the fire department, she put her cell phone in speaker mode so they all could hear.

"Good Morning. This is the Fire Department, how can we help you?" asked the speaker. After Mrs. Stoval, gave her name and address, she told the fireman that she had a dog stuck in a tree in her backyard and she needed their help to rescue it, if they weren't too busy.

"You mean you have a cat stuck in a tree, don't you?" asked the voice on the speaker.

"No, it barks," answered Mrs. Stoval.

"Lady, is this some kind of joke? Are telling you me that you have a barking cat stuck in a tree in your backyard?" the voice asked somewhat irately.

The four of them all started laughing which didn't help matters at all. Mrs. Stoval quieted them all down and then said, "I know this sounds ridiculous, but this is no joke. I really have a dog stuck in an orange tree in my backyard."

"Lady, did you say orange tree? Really?" the voice asked incredulously and then added that they would be there in ten minutes.

"Mrs. Stoval, does your cell phone have a camera in it?" asked Kaitlyn.

"Of course it does," responded Mrs. Stoval.

"Please take a picture of the dog in the tree otherwise I am afraid my friend Maria may not believe me." pleaded Kaitlyn.

"Neither will Jamal!" said Elijah. So Mrs. Stoval took the picture, and in a few minutes the fire department arrived but without blaring sirens to the disappointment of the children. After all, a dog stuck in an orange tree is not a real emergency no matter how exciting the situation. Mrs. Stoval also took pictures of the firemen when they got to her backyard and photos of the children with the firemen in full regalia.

Unfortunately, when the fireman managed to get the dog down safely, it scampered swiftly under Mrs.

Stoval's split rail fence before anyone could catch him.

Unless you saw the pictures would you have believed any part of this story?

Why do you think there was a dog in an orange tree?

How do you think he got up there?

Do you think magic was involved?

Where do you think the dog went?