

TWENTY

“...and that is how I began my journey to become an Elder.” Elder teacher finished typing and his flatpanel spoke in Biggenspeak for him. He whirled his tail in the air, so proud to have used Biggenspeak writing to tell his story to the pups in the classroom.

“That was wonderful, Elder Teacher,” Butternut praised in Common. “What do you think, pups?”

The pups in the room wigwagged their tails up and down multiple times. Some typed on their flatpanels to have them praise Teacher with “It was wonderful!” or “You brave to speak that.” And many other comments. Butternut allowed them to speak over each other as it showed they were learning Common.

Elder Teacher bowed in thanks. He typed into his flatpanel and it spoke, “Thank you.”

Hidget’s flatpanel vibrated. She looked at Butternut who nodded. Hidget went out into the hallway and answered the call. Her face looked downfallen as she spoke quietly to whomever was at the other end. After the call ended, she made her way back to Butternut.

“We’ve got a problem,” Hidget spoke quietly to Butternut. “Can we end the morning session a little early?”

Butternut looked at her for a moment, nodded and turned to the class. “We’re going to end it there for today. Don’t forget your homework for tomorrow. You each will need to speak a short tale in Biggenspeak.”

“Yeah!”

“Elder Teacher, please stay,” Hidget requested.

After the pups had stacked their seat cushions and departed, Hidget turned to both of them. “Snow Valley Village has filed a complaint with the education board.” She started to repeat it in chitterspeak, but Teacher stopped her, typing on his flatpanel for the practice.

It spoke in Common for him. “I will ask you to repeat in chitterspeak if I do not understand. Please continue. What has upset the elders of the local Biggen colony?”

“They are upset that you have two teachers, Butternut and me. They have been asking for a teacher for years but have never met the minimum ten students needed. They currently have eight.”

Teacher typed into his flatpanel and it spoke in Common. “Let me gather the Elder Council together. We will go speak to the village elders. We’ll offer to share resources.”

“What?”

“It’s just eight Biggen pups, right?” He raised his tail briefly in a curl. “Maybe, you could work them into the classes?”

“Biggens pups learn more slowly than your smart squirrel pups,” Hidget responded.

“I’m sure we can work something out,” Butternut replied.

Teacher flicked his tail up and down once as he continued to type. “We need to keep on good terms with our neighbors. And it would be good for both our and their pups to get to know each other better.”

“Alternatively, we could ask some of our pups to join them so they can get a teacher,” Butternut suggested.

“I’ll need to let the education board know of your proposal.”

Teacher flicked his tail up and down once and departed.