

Bee Thankful

by

Vixxy Fox



It all began with a bee sting; which just happened to take place the night bee-fore Be Thankful Day; and that was very unfortunate.

“Ain’t no bees about this time of year,” Miss Buns told Duroc, “So it must be something else caus’n ya such discomfort.” She poked a finger at his swollen lips causing him to squeal and back up a step.

“Dun tuck,” he told her; or more correctly tried to tell her. He covered his snout with both paws. “E hur a bunch. Wha ma gonna do?”

“Looks like you’re gonna have to miss the feast planned for tomorrow and that’s a pity because I’m making a butternut squash casserole stuffed with onions and walnuts. That’s the one you like so much. It’s a pity you won’t be able to eat it,” she teased. “Not to mention there’s going to be corn on the cob with lots of drizzly butter and sweet potatoes and white potatoes...”

“‘N seben layer salad. Ahhhh so lub seben layer salad. Is carrots and lettuce and beats and...”

“That’s right,” the Hare told him putting her paws on his shoulders and smiling even bigger, “And finished off with gallons of coffee and some of Bella Skunks world famous pies. I don’t even try to compete with her abilities in pie making.”

The ex-boxer groaned. “Ah so lub her pies. What am Ah gonna do? Ah can’t eat like dis. I never ever swelled up so; not even after a boxing match.”

“Welllll...” she told him, giving enough time for ponderance of the situation, “You could go to Marvin Fieldmouse’s store and get some of his Mouse Salve.”

“Yeahhhh?” His look of hope changed as he realized the late hour. “I could do that... but it’s late and he won’t bee there.”

“Well, maybe you could go down to Granma Stutter’s place and she could work her magic on ya. There’s a lot to be said for what she can do so long as you’re not scared of her methods.”

“No no no bad ‘dea... badddd ‘dea. Member ma sore tooth?”

“She got it out for you didn’t she?”

“‘N’ the old Badger took two others wif it and laughed,” he told her, “She’s got a real mean streak.”

By now the Pig’s lips looked like small platters and the tears were freely flowing from his eyes from a pain he wouldn’t openly admit to. After his time in the boxing ring, pain was simply something you had to endure. He had no idea what he’d done to deserve this malady exactly the night before such a fantastic feast. As if on cue his stomach growled.

“How baaad do Ah look?”

Taking him by the arm, Buns led him to a kitchen chair where she gently pried his paws away from his face. “It’s bad enough. You sit here and let me see if I can get the stinger out. My grandmother taught me about bee stings when I was just a little Bunny. Bee’s, she told me, won’t bother you normally but they will protect their hives. You didn’t bother their hive none did you?”

“Mae-bee a little,” he confessed. “Ah wanted ta surprise ya wif honey for yur oatmeal tomorrow morning.”

Kneeling down, the cook placed her paws on his knees and looked at him. “That was so very sweet of you, Dee; but what happened to you shows why you need a Bear to do Bee work less’n you have the equipment and the knowhow. They don’t mind getting stung.” She peered close at his lips and then gently reached out and plucked three separate stingers from them. There... Now it’s just a matter of time and your face will return to its natural bee-uty.” To this she giggled.

“Not funny,” he grumped. “Ah just wanted a little honey and then Ah waz a’salted by hundreds ‘o’ bees.”

“Speaking of salt,” she told him, “That was one of the things my grandmother told me about. Salt will pull out swelling. I have an idea, and since you went to such lengths to surprise me, I will use my precious supply of salt towards your cure.”

Taking out her bag of salt, she poured a good helping of it into a bowl and instructed the Pig to press his lips into it and keep them there until she got back. Removing his Bowler he placed it upon the table and then circled the bowl with his arms. He then put his head down as instructed using them as a pillow. In this way he was able to keep just his lips in the salt.

“How long?” the Pig asked his voice muffled by the bowl. He immediately coughed and a cloud of salt flew up from the bowl. His head jerked up and his eyes blinked just before he sneezed loudly.

“I have no idea,” the cook replied, lighting her kitchen lamp against the coming evening. “But I think you can see you shouldn’t try talking while you have your face in that bowl.” Reaching over she gently pushed his head back towards the salt. “I have to go take care of Bunny

business,” she told him, “In the mean time you keep your lips buried; otherwise the salt won’t be able to work.”

The Hare was gone no more than a minute when Miss Bering came in looking for hot water with which to make a fresh cup of tea. Seeing the prostrate Pig at the table she felt both concern and compassion. The poor creature obviously was so tired from his day of work he’d fallen asleep in the bowl of whatever it was Miss Buns had prepared for him. With a clunk of iron on iron she moved the tea kettle to the working side of the stove and then asked softly, “Mister Duroc are you all right?”

The Porcine handyman made no response, but the fingers of his right paw drummed a slow rhythm on the table.

“If you’re all right,” she told him, placing her tea cup on the table, “Tap your fingers once. If you are not all right, tap them twice.”

His fingers complied tapping once. After a pause they tapped again, but twice.

“Oh my...” the Arctic Fox exclaimed. Leaning over him she tried to peer into the bowl, sniffing as she did so. “Salt?”

His fingers tapped once.

“But why on earth would you have your face pressed into a bowl of salt?”

“Here now,” Wirewolf said, coming in through the back door. “Who was assaulted? I dare say I’m old enough to be thought past my prime but I won’t have that sort of thing happening at the Whackadoodle Inn.”

“I do believe Mr. Duroc must surely have been assaulted,” the Fox told him.

“That right D? You tell me who did it and I’ll go get my cutlass. I won’t strike ’em with it but it does add emphasis to m’words when I’m talk’n stern like.”

“No.” The Pig managed. His voice was kept soft so to keep the salt from again filling his nose and the pair could hardly hear him.

“No what?” the Wolf and the Fox said in the same voice.

“No a’salt,” he managed. “Nose a’salt. Lips big.”

The young Fox looked quizzically at the old Wolf, who explained as best as his understanding allowed. “Says he wasn’t assaulted but he’s got his nose to the salt because his lips are big.”

“That makes no sense a’tall,” Bering remarked.

Duroc lifted his head and she screamed. Backing a step she almost placed a paw on the hot stove. Wirewolf’s quick thinking prevented this as he grabbed her by the wrist just as the tea kettle began to whistle. “Easy girl,” he told her, “Keeping your head when all others have lost theirs saves the ship.” Looking to his friend he asked, “What happened?”

“Bee sting.”

The old sailor chuckled and then turned to take the tea kettle off the hot side of the stove.

“Messing with the hive behind the barn, eh?”

Duroc’s swollen lips opened slightly in surprise. “You knew ‘bout that?”

The Inn’s gardener gave him a humorous look. “Of course I did. You have a garden you better have bees. I was getting ready to move it inside the building for the winter. I take it you was gonna thief some honey?”

The ex-boxer put his face back down in the bowl of salt. “A l’ill.” His voice sounded hollow and a puff of white came up from the salt being spoken into; after which he raised his head again and began a coughing fit.

“Mr. Duroc,” Bering told him, “A proper remedy for a bee sting that I learned at my grandmother’s knee, is garlic crushed into tea leaves. You apply it as a compress and it takes the sting away. It also helps with the swelling.”

The Pig, unable to yet speak slapped his paw on the table twice indicating ‘no’.

“We had us a fat cook on the ship once,” the old sailor added for his part, “And he told me an onion was the trick. You cut it in half and hold it upon the sting.”

Duroc raised his head up and looked at the Wolf, thought he covered his snout from all his coughing. “Really?” he asked when it was under control again.

“Don’t truly know for sure; there ain’t no bees in the middle of the ocean less’n your transport’n’em; and what’s the point of that when they’re already all over the world.”

The Pig tenderly touched his lips which were still quite swollen. “Get me an onion,” he said, “And cut it in half. That’s easiest I guess. I don’t know how much longer I can take the salt.”

“Shall I prep the garlic tea mix?” Bering asked him.

“Yes please. If the onion doesn’t do it... I mean... tomorrow is Be Thankful Day and all the food...”

“I understand,” Wirewolf told him with a nod. “You know, old buddy, since these are compresses it would probably be better if you was lying in bed on your back.”

“I know,” he said looking at the bowl, “But Buns said I should keep my lips in the salt.”

“I’ll clear it with her,” the desk clerk said in her sweet sounding accent.

An hour later there came a soft knock on Duroc’s door. Miss Buns was sitting in a rocker next to his bed and the one lamp in the room. There was a book in her paws as she’d been reading aloud for her friend’s benefit in an attempt to take his mind off of the predicament he’d come into. The

tea leaves and garlic were now in place so to work their cure. When she bid the person enter, the door opened and yet Wirewolf remained at the entrance within the shadows.

“There was one sure fire cure handed down to me by my own grandmother,” he told them, “Before I left for the sea. I only remembered it when going back out to the barn to see how much damage was done to the hive because I swear she was a’walk’n with me in the moonlight. It was like I could hear her tell’n me, ‘Soak the wound in honey,’.”

He held out a brick of honeycomb to the cook. “I left one on a plate in the kitchen for your morning oats like Dee was trying to do so you can consider it from him I guess.”

Duroc sat up on his bed, placing the smelly concoction of garlic and tea leaves back to the plate on which it had been brought for him. “Ah am touched,” he managed, still not quite able to speak. “You thin it’ll work?”

The old sailor stepped into the room. One eye was swollen shut and there were lumps all over his face and arms. “I sure hope so.”

The next day as everyone sat around the table in the Inn’s large dining room, each and every person was asked to say what they were most thankful for. The unanimous proclamation by everyone present was but one simple word.

‘Friends.’