

## On Dogs, Dinosaurs, and Pink Crayons

or

### The Boy Who Wanted to Write

Once upon a time there was a boy who loved to tell stories, but didn't know how to write. Whenever Charlie wanted to tell a story, he had to beg and beg his mom or beg and beg his dad to write it down for him. His older sister Eli was in kindergarten, and *she* knew how to write. But Charlie knew he was smarter than her; after all, Eli didn't know how to build a fort out of the encyclopedia set like Charlie could, and Charlie was the one who had taught his dog, Monty, how to sit. All Eli ever did was color, and everyone can do that.

So Charlie decided that he would learn how to write. He went to his dad first.

“Daddy, can you teach me how to write?”

“Charlie, what is this?”

“That's a computer, Daddy.”

“And what am I doing with it?”

“You're pushing the buttons, Daddy.”

“I'm working, Charlie. Go ask your mother.”

Charlie went to his mother.

“Momma, can you teach me how to write?”

“I'm cooking right now, honey. Maybe tomorrow.”

But Charlie couldn't wait. He bugged his eyes out at Monty, then went to go find his last resort: Eli. He trudged up the stairs, knocked on her bedroom door, and waited. And waited. And knocked again. And then Charlie opened the door and walked in.

Eli was coloring.

“Why didn’t you answer the door?”

“I’m coloring, you twit.”

“*You’re* a twit.”

Charlie looked at Eli’s paper. He couldn’t tell what she was drawing. It was pink. Maybe, if he squinted, it could be a dinosaur. But Charlie had never heard of a pink dinosaur, and —

“What do you want, you twit?”

“You’re a twit. Can you teach me how to write?”

Eli bugged her eyes out at him. She turned her paper over, and wrote C-H-A-R-L-I-E on the back in pink crayon.

“I know how to read, Eli.”

“It’s the same thing as writing! You think of the word you want to write and you copy the letters down. So, for your name you would write a “C” and a “H” and—”

“Lemme try!”

Charlie grabbed the crayon from his sister’s hand. Kneeling in front of her table, he tried to copy his name under what Eli had written.

“It...doesn’t look the same.” And it didn’t. Charlie’s name was barely legible; it was crooked, the letters were uneven and different sizes, and the whole thing just looked...messy. And much too pink.

“You’re right, it looks bad.”

“I didn’t say that!”

But it did look bad, and he knew it.

“Charlie...it looks bad.”

“But why? Yours look good, and you’re not even that smart.”

“Cause I write all the time, that’s why.”

So Charlie, being the smart little boy that he was, started to write all the time. He wrote the alphabet ten hundred million thousand billion gazillion times, he painstakingly copied his old stories his parents had written for him, he wrote his name on everything he owned, he copied down recipes his mom used for dinner, until finally he was satisfied. It wasn’t as nice as his mother’s, but it was definitely as good as Eli’s. Charlie decided it was probably even better than his dad’s, since there was no way his dad had practiced as much as Charlie had.

And now, finally, at last, Charlie could write his stories.

And write he did.

His first story went something like this:

Monty was a brave dog. Monty was a smart dog. But most of all Monty was a good dog. He fought the bad guys. He fought all the bad guys. The biggest baddest bad guy he fought was a giant ugly pink dinosaur. The dinosaur was mean. It ate crans and little boys. But Monty did not let it eat boys. Only crans. People were happy that the dinosaur didnt eat boys. But one person was sad that it ate crans. A girl who liked to color. So Monty had to save the day. The girl gave Monty a kiss for luck. Monty wiped the kiss off and went to find the big pink dinosaur. Monty found him. He hit him on the nose and took all of the crans away. The dinosaur couldnt do anything. Because he was bad. And Monty was good.

The end

Charlie thought it was a rather good story. One of his best, even. He went to go show Eli first. She took a long time reading it.

“So you like it?”

“I’m not done reading it.”

“...Are you done *now*?”

“Twit! Twit twit twit! Go away!”

Charlie went away. A hundred hours later, he came back.

“Are you...done now?”

“Yeah. It was good.”

“Really? How good?”

“You know, good. But, Charlie, why would I be sad if a dinosaur ate crayons?”

“The story’s not about you!”

“Oh really? And it’s not about our dog, either?”

“Monty is *my* dog, and of course it’s about him. His name’s in it.”

“Whatever.”

A disheartened Charlie went to show his story to his mother.

“Wow, Charlie, that’s really original. Now, let Mommy finish these dishes.”

Charlie took his story back from his mother. The paper was a little soggy around the edges, and it made Charlie feel a little soggy around the edges, too. Charlie left the kitchen.

He found Monty in the living room.

“You like my story, don’t you, Monty?”

But Monty just bugged his eyes at him.

So Charlie, downtrodden, soggy, and defeated, trudged into his father's office to show him his story, Monty at his heels.

His father took Charlie on his lap and read the story to Charlie and his dog. Somehow, as his father's deep, rumbling voice filled the room, his story didn't sound soggy at all. It sounded better than when he first wrote it.

"Amazing story, Charlie." And Charlie got a kiss on the cheek, a pat on the back, and ran out of the room. He had just thought of his next story.