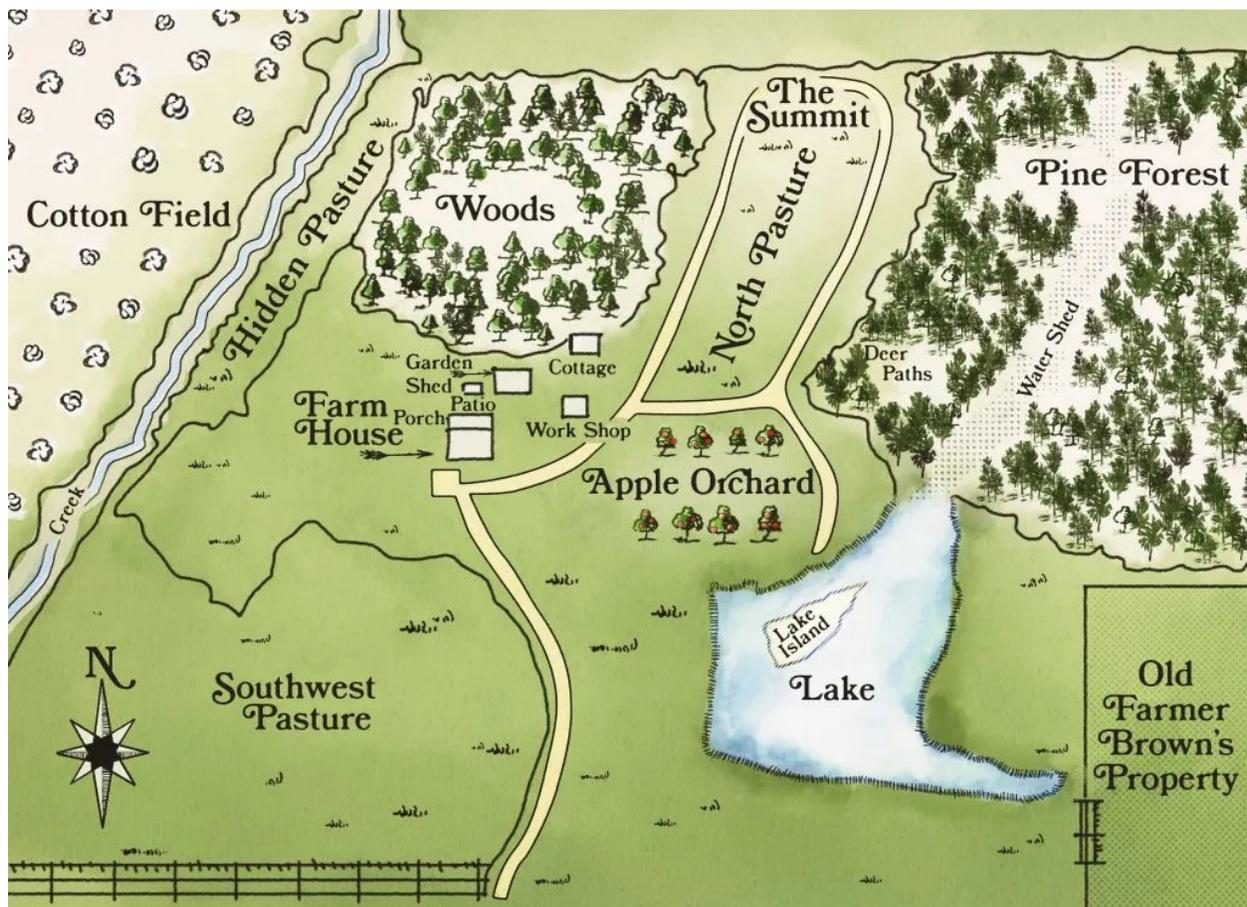


"Zero-One-Two" | A Gift from Chapter X [10] of Miss Missy's School

Dear Readers and Their Grownups,

We're continuing on with short story gifts from *Miss Missy's School Book I: A Pack of Farm Dogs Starts a School*. We'll be posting these family reading excerpts--from almost the whole book!--now until Christmas. We started by sharing our idea for these [family reading night gifts](#), and the letter Missy wrote to readers telling them [a bit about the book](#).

Then we gave you [Chapter I: Rescue](#), in which Missy and her Dear Friend Rocky discovered "a poor scrawny little fox hound, shaking and crouching over her pup," and together with Marica and Tiger the Cat they got the poor dear and her son, Little Tommy, settled in the shed. We followed up with a short story from [Chapter II: What's Happening?](#) where we met Bebe and Gilbert.



We're going to jump way ahead to Chapter X: Zero-One-Two. But first, we need to tell you a few things that happened between Chapters II and X.

Chapter III: Farther Along Farm acquaints readers with where Miss and her pack--including Tiger the Cat--live, and some of the the exciting adventures they had in the past. (When Bebe was a puppy she got lost and was found in the creek!) Just so you know who everyone is, Marica and her husband, John are Missy and Rocky's people. They live in the Farm House. Marica and John's daughter, Caroline, and her husband, Jordan, are Gilbert and Bebe's people. They live in the cottage. Caroline "is an artist and she painted the little cottage inside and out as if it were a castle in a fairy tale."

Remember when Missy asked the poor homeless hound, "What did you say your name was?" The little dog shivered and replied, "Don't have no p-p-proper name, Miss." In Chapter IV: The Nominal Problem, Missy and her pack try to help her find a name. Finally she does! She says, "I do like 'Aubrey'. Could I name myself Aubrey?"

In the rest of the chapters we get to know Missy and her pack and people. Aubrey tells us a little bit about her story and where she came from. Everyone has a few adventures and a lot of fun. And of course, time passes. It's Fall now.

Don't forget to pass this gift along to you families and friends! And please tell us what you think of the story in the comments. Thank you!

If you'd rather not look at your screen on family reading nights, the full pdf preview of Chapters I through III (including front matter) is [here](#). This post in pdf format here. Click here for pdfs of previous gift posts.

X: Zero-One-Two

"HEY BEBE!" hollered Jordan coming out of the little cottage. "Go get two sticks, girl. We'll play stick for a few minutes. Go get two sticks!"

"Yea! Yea! Okay! Okay! Two sticks are on the way!" sang Bebe as she ran off to fetch two sticks from under the old oak tree.

"Here's a stick! Here's a stick!" she said as she ran off to get another. "Here's a stick! Here's a stick!" she said as she dropped another stick at Jordan's feet and turned to run off again.

"Hey! Where are you going?" Jordan called after her.

"You said to get two sticks! Two sticks! I'm getting two sticks!" Bebe yelled as she ran off and came back with another.

"Bebe...?" Jordan was puzzled.

“You said to get two sticks. Zero-one-two,” Bebe tapped each with her paw. “I can count you know, Jordan. Zero-one-two. Two sticks. I even know negative numbers! Minus zero...”

“That’s three sticks, Bebe,” Jordan asserted.

“No it’s not. No it’s not. Zero-one-two. Two sticks right there! I can count. I can count. I can count. Zero-one-two. See?” Every time Bebe counted the sticks she slapped each with her paw and sometimes a stick would bounce away and she’d have to chase it and then would return and say, “Two sticks. Zero-one-two. Two sticks!”

Jordan sighed. “Bebe, how many toes do you have on your right front paw?”

“Four. See?” Bebe held up her left paw and counted, “Zero-one-two-three-four. Four toes on my right paw. See? See? I can count. I can count you know.”

“Well, first of all, that’s your left paw but whatever,” said Jordan. “Zero doesn’t count when you are counting.”

“What are you talking about? Zero, one, two...” Bebe began again.

“Okay, Bebe,” Jordan started. “Let’s think this through. How many noses do you have?”

“Zero!” shouted Bebe. “Look! Zero! Look! Zero! Look! Zero,” she yelled, each time smacking herself in the nose with her right paw. “I have zero noses!”

At just that moment, Caroline opened the door to the little cottage and came to stand beside Jordan. “Bebe!” she gasped, “What’s wrong with your nose?”

Jordan explained to Caroline what had transpired and when Caroline asked Bebe how many noses she had, Bebe said, “Zero! Look! Zero! Look! Zero! Look!” hitting herself again and again and again.

“Bebe! Stop it! You’ll hurt yourself!” Caroline warned as she turned to go back into the warm little cottage.

“Bebe. ‘Zero’ means none, the absence of something. An empty set. Nothing. You have one nose and five toes,” Jordan patiently explained.

“No, no, no. I don’t think that’s right. I...”

“Well, it is,” said Jordan.

“Is not. Is not. Is not.”

“Okay. I don’t have time to explain it any better right now. I have papers to grade,” Jordan said as he began walking away. “Why don’t you ask Rocky to explain it to you? He’s good at math.”

“Well, okay!” Bebe huffed. “I didn’t want to play stick anyway. Stick is for puppies. I’m not a puppy. I can count. I didn’t want to play stick anyway. Stick is for puppies,” Bebe sulked. “Hey Tommy!” she yelled. “Wanna go swimming? Come on let’s go swimming. Swimming’s not for puppies. Let’s go swimming!”

“May I mother?” asked Tommy.

“Of course, you may. Just don’t go in too deep,” Aubrey cautioned him. “You’ll catch your death if you go too deep this time of year.”

“Oh, thank you!” Little Tommy gave his mother a little lick and was on his way. “Hey! Bebe wait for me!”

“Stick is for puppies. I can count. I can count. I know I can count. I know it,” Bebe sputtered as she and Tommy trotted toward the lake. “Those Big Dogs don’t know as much as they think they know. Sitting on the porch all day reading when they could be swimming and doing fun stuff.”

Back on the porch, the Big Dogs— including Tiger the Cat— had overheard the zero-one-two episode (as it came to be called) and Bebe’s mutterings.

“Ruff?!? Ruff.” said Rocky shaking his head in disbelief.

“The imperrrtinence of youth. A perrreniel prrroblem,” purred Tiger shrugging his shoulders.

“Right on. As someone once said, ‘It isn’t what we don’t know that gives us trouble, it’s what we know that ain’t so,’” quoted Gilbert raising his brow.

“Quite right, Gil,” said Missy rolling her eyes. “Bebe is something of a know-it-all, without really knowing much at all!”

“Don’t be too hard on her,” Aubrey began. “It can’t be easy for Bebe, what with y’all knowin’ so much more than her. Poor thing.”

As Someone Once Said

“It isn’t what we don’t know that gives us trouble, it’s what we know that ain’t so,” Will Rogers (1879-1935) popular American entertainer, essayist, cowboy, and social commentator. Rogers was well known, in his stage and movie roles, and in his newspaper columns, for his dry sense of humor, homespun personality, and keen observations. Here’s something he observed, “Everything is funny as long as it is happening to somebody else!”