

"What's Happening?" | A Gift from Chapter II 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!--from now until Christmas. Learn more about these gifts [here](#).

[Last night in the story](#) Missy and her Dear Friend Rocky discovered "a poor scrawny little fox hound, shaking and crouching over her pup."

She begged them, "Please, please. C-c-can me and my son crawl under your porch? Little Tommy is so wet and I'm afraid he'll c-c-catch his death if I can't get him outta the wind."

Instead, with Marica's and Tiger the Cat's help, they settled the homeless and nameless little hound and her pup, Little Tommy, on "a soft pallet of old blankets between bags of potting soil" in the shed.

Let's pick up the story the next morning, after Marica has checked in on Little Tommy and his mother.

Oh! First, that's Bebe, the little blue heeler collie dog, and the old hippy dog, Gilbert. Links to the pdf of this little story (so you can print it), and one that has the first three chapters in their entirety, are after the story.

Don't forget to share!



Soon enough the sun came up over the little shed and Missy, Rocky, and Tiger gathered around Marica as she examined Little Tommy and his mother. When Marica was done and had fed them a bit more kibble, they all lingered and watched mother and son fall fast asleep for a morning nap. Marica and the others walked back across the patio.

“How are they, Marica?” Missy whispered.

“Ruff?” Rocky asked quietly.

“Well, I don’t see anything too awfully bad— though I wouldn’t be surprised if they had worms. I think we can nurse them back to good health.”

“I’m prrretty sure you are corrrrect,” purred Tiger softly. “You saved me from my prrrevious prrrecarious prrredicament.” And each in his or her own way quietly recalled Tiger’s previous precarious predicament.

Their reflections were cut short by Bebe’s arrival on the scene.

“What’s happening? I know something’s happening! I know it. I know it. We heard a commotion last night. What’s going on? What? What? What? Tell! Tell! Tell!”

To say that Beatrix is an excitable little dog is something of an understatement. Bebe— as she prefers to be called— is a *very* excitable little heeler collie dog, sharp as a tack, quick as a lark, with a penchant for repeating herself unnecessarily.

“What’s happening? What, what, *what?*” Bebe asked again while simultaneously throwing a stick in the air and running circles around the potted tulips and chasing Tiger’s tail.

“Good morning, Gilbert!” Marica said to yet another dog who was slowly sauntering along the path that led from a cottage in the distance to the patio.

“As someone once said, ‘I bid you top o’ the mornin’,” Gilbert greeted each in turn. “Missy. Tiger. What’s up my man?” he asked, jutting his long chin in Rocky’s direction.

“What’s happening? What, what, what? I wanna know! I wanna know!”

“Beatrix! Chill out, sister,” Gilbert said sternly to Bebe.

“Rrruuuuffff,” warned Rocky.

“But I want to know what’s happening! Nobody ever tells me anything! *What is happening?* What? What? What?”

“Perrrrhaps if you would perrrambulate to my mat and calmly...” Tiger tried to suggest.

“I don’t wanna per-am-bu-whatever, I want to know what’s happening!”

“Bebe. If you don’t settle down I am going to go into the shed and get that old muzzle and shut your yappy little mouth,” Missy threatened. “Mind your manners, quiet down, and we’ll tell you what’s happening.”

“Okay, okay, okay. You don’t have to get be so mean, Missy. I just want to know what’s happening. You know, nobody ever tells me anything. I just want to know what’s hap....”

“Or I could put you inside,” Marica offered.

“Aww. That’s not fair! I just wanna know wha...”

“Bebe!”

“Bebe!”

“Beatrrrix!”

“Be-a-*trix*.”

“RRRRRRRRRuff!”

They all spoke at once and Bebe did indeed perambulate to the cat’s mat and started chewing on her stick and throwing it the air, and Missy and Rocky and Tiger commenced to telling Bebe and Gilbert what was happening.

When Gilbert said, “As someone once said, ‘I bid you top o’ the mornin’,” did you wonder who that someone was? Gilbert has a habit of quoting famous people, but he never tells us who said what. I looked up Gilbert’s quotes, found out a bit about the person who said what, and included that at the end of the chapters in which the quotes appear, under the heading...

As Someone Once Said

“I bid you top o’ the mornin’,” John Locke (1847-1889), Irish writer, active in the Irish independence movement. Because of his activism he was jailed, and later exiled to the United States. His most famous poem, from which this quote is taken, is “Dawn on the Irish Coast.” It is about an old Irishman who was also exiled, but after 30 years was able to return to the country he so dearly loved. The poem ends, “O, Ireland, up from my heart of hearts I bid you the top o’ the mornin’!” (Don’t confuse the poet with John Locke (1632-1704), the English philosopher who Thomas Jefferson considered to be one of the three greatest men who ever lived.)