

Will and His Dog and the Robbers

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Will and His Dog and the Robbers

Will often spent his Saturday afternoons at the market in town. He wasn't interested in wandering around looking at the different stalls or buying things – Will was there to help Alex. When she was home from university, Alex looked after the stall which was owned by her boyfriend, James. Alex was eighteen years old and was Will's next door neighbour. James ran his dad's farm and the stall sold their produce such as jams, pickles, vegetables, eggs and bottled beer.

Will sat with Alex to keep her company, he bagged up vegetables for customers and helped pack everything into the van at the end of the day. He enjoyed working on the stall because it was always busy and he liked helping Alex because she was his friend. Clive would often go with Will to the market but he had to be tied to Alex's chair to stop him from running around trying to steal sausages from the stalls selling meat.

It had been a very busy afternoon and by four o'clock the market was beginning to quieten down. Some traders were beginning to sell their stock at reduced prices to get rid of it while others were starting to close their stalls and pack up. Alex was talking to an old lady who always came to buy her vegetables from the stall. The lady had paid for the vegetables and Alex had put them into a large brown paper bag. Alex wore a bag around her waist with a zip on it. She used the bag to keep the money from the stall in and it was this that she was searching through to find the correct change for the old lady.

Will noticed two rather fat men approach the stall. They looked shifty to Will and they were trying not to be seen among the other shoppers. Alex was concentrating on finding the change for the lady and had her back to Will and the approaching men. She didn't notice as the two men stole four large wooden crates of beer from the opposite end of the stall. Each wooden crate contained twelve bottles of beer. The two men turned, walked away back in the direction from which they had come and moved quickly through the crowds of shoppers each carrying two crates of beer.

Will couldn't believe what he had just seen. Nobody seemed to have noticed what had happened except him. He quickly untied Clive and set off through the crowds of shoppers to follow the men.

Will soon reached the exit of the market and saw the two men placing the crates of beer into the back of a beaten-up old blue van. They slammed the doors of the van shut and made to walk around to the front of the van. One of the men suddenly saw Will and recognised him as the boy who had been sat at the stall.

"What you looking at?" said the man in a gruff voice that Will didn't like one bit. The man had cruel eyes and thick black hair. He was very large and wore a scruffy overcoat.

"That was stealing," said Will bravely – he didn't feel brave.

"You never saw nothing!" shouted the other man. He was older than other man and looked twice as nasty. He had long grey hair and his jacket had stains on it.

The younger man rushed at Will and pushed him over. Clive growled but the man just laughed and kicked him in the face. The men laughed and got into the van. The van's exhaust gave off a large cloud of smoke as the engine spluttered to life and the battered old van drove away.

Will got up, brushed himself down and looked at the number plate of the van. He only had time to read the first three letters but he knew that he would remember that they were 'MJG.'

Clive was whimpering and Will cuddled him. Neither of them were hurt – just a bit shaken up.

Suddenly, and without any warning, Clive ran off in the direction that the van had just gone.

“Clive, come back!” shouted Will several times. Clive carried on running. Will couldn’t believe that Clive had run off – he always did as he was told and this kind of behaviour was most unusual.

Will ran back inside the market to Alex’s stall. She had already realised that the beer had been taken and she looked shocked.

“Where have you been?” she asked as Will returned.

“Two men stole some of our beer. I followed them but they pushed me over and kicked Clive. They put the beer into the back of their van. Now Clive has run off somewhere and I don’t know where he’s gone or what to do.”

“Calm down Will,” said Alex. “Clive won’t have gone far. Let’s pack up as fast as we can and get to the farm. I’m sure that Clive will be outside waiting for you.”

There wasn’t much produce left on the stall to put in James’s van because Alex had sold most of it. There were some jars of jam, two boxes of mushrooms and a dozen eggs. Alex shut up the stall and locked it securely.

“Don’t worry about the beer,” said Alex as they walked out to the van. “James will be cross but we have sold so much produce today that we have made a good amount of money.”

Will wasn’t worrying about the beer – he was worrying about Clive.

Alex and Will called out for Clive outside the market for several minutes but he was nowhere to be seen.

“Has he ever run off before?” asked Alex.

“Never,” replied Will.

“Clive is a clever dog Will, he will either find his way home or someone will find him.”

Will hoped that she was right. Will’s mum had had their telephone number engraved onto a metal tag that was attached to Clive’s collar. Will hoped that would be enough to get Clive home if he was found by somebody.

Will hopped into the van and Alex started the engine. She pulled off and started to drive along the road that led away from the town and to James’s farm.

“Look, there’s Clive!” shouted Will pointing to Clive bounding towards them. Sure enough, Clive was racing along the pavement back in the direction of the town. Alex hit the brakes hard and the van screeched to a halt. Will jumped out of the van.

“Where have you been?” shouted Will. “Come on, get in the van.”

Clive stayed on the pavement barking as if he was trying to tell Will something. He did not move and it quickly became clear that he was not going to get into the van with Will and Alex. Clive ran a short distance back from where he had just come from, stopped, turned around and started barking again.

“He wants us to follow him,” said Will.

Alex sighed and started the engine again. Will jumped back into the van and they followed Clive who ran on ahead.

They followed the road out of the town and down the lane that led to James’s farm. Shortly before they would have arrived at the farm, Clive stopped running and started barking again. He had stopped at what looked like the entrance to a farm on the right hand side. The hedge was overgrown but Will could see a farm house and some barns set back from the road behind a small orchard.

The orchard was overgrown and the farmhouse looked like it needed several coats of paint. Will looked down the drive as they slowly drove past and saw the van from the market parked up by one of the barns.

“Slow down,” said Will as he tried to read the number plate of the van. The first three letters read ‘MJG’ – the van that the men who stole the beer had driven.

“That’s the van,” said Will.

“Are you sure?” replied Alex.

“Yes, I recognise the number plate.”

“Right,” said Alex decisively, “I’m going to get the beer back. You wait here in the van. Here is my phone. Ring James if there is any trouble and he can come down here and sort it out himself.”

Before Will could argue, Alex had jumped out of the van and had made her way through the hedge and into the orchard. Will decided that he was not going to let Alex face the two men alone. He got out of the van, Clive followed him, and they made their way slowly to the hedge.

The lights were on in the farmhouse but Will could not see either of the men. He watched Alex make her way through the orchard and up to where the van was parked at the far end of the drive.

One of the men, the older one, suddenly came out of the house and approached Alex. She didn’t run away but started talking to the man. They were too far away from Will for him to hear what was being said but it was obviously an argument because Alex was waving her arms about and pointing at the van.

The younger man appeared from behind the van and tried to hit Alex. She was too quick for him and tried to kick him back. The older man grabbed Alex from behind but she bit his hand and he immediately let her go. He screamed with pain and looked down at his hand which was bleeding. The younger man hit Alex across her face so hard that she fell to the ground and did not move.

“No!” shouted Will. Clive started barking. Will knew that he should have kept quiet the moment that he had cried out. It was too late.

Both men looked in Will’s direction and pointed at him. They had seen him.

The older man grabbed Alex by her wrists and dragged her into the barn on her back – her legs trailing behind her. The younger man snatched the money bag from Alex’s waist, got into the van and started to reverse down the drive.

Will had to think quickly.

He ran.

Clive ran.

Will ran into the field next to the farm. He knew that the van would not be able to follow him as long as he stayed in the field. He ran. His heart was thumping, deafening in his head and he was very, very afraid.

Will could hear the van's engine as it followed the edge of the field down the lane. Clive was running by Will's side which made him feel a little better.

Suddenly the van raced ahead and then stopped. The man got out of the van, climbed over the gate on the side of the field that Will was running towards. The man started running in Will's direction hoping to cut him off before he could reach the hedge and get into the next field.

Will could see that the man was already short of breath and that he couldn't run very fast. "Come here!" shouted the man.

No way. Will ran.

Will and Clive reached the opposite side of the field but, to his horror, the man had covered more ground than he had thought. The man was maybe five seconds behind Will and he had a decent chance of grabbing him.

Will crashed through the hedge and out of the first field. He cut his face on a thorny branch and could feel the blood trickling down his face. To Will's surprise, there was a stream on the other side of the hedge. He splashed through the stream – his shoes, socks and trousers soaking wet with the freezing cold water. Will reached a wooden fence on the other side of the stream and leapt over it. Clive squeezed underneath the lowest rung of the fence.

The man stood on the other side of the stream staring at Will. Will stared back.

"Come here!" shouted the man.

Will turned and ran. He found himself in a farmyard. He recognised it. He recognised the jeep parked on the drive.

“Who are you?” shouted an old man.

“It’s OK dad.” said James coming out of the farmhouse. “This is Will, Alex’s neighbour. Wow! Look at you lad. What has happened Will? You look like you’ve been in the wars.”

Will quickly told James about the men and how they had taken the crates of beer. He told him about how he had followed them and how they had pushed him and kicked Clive. Will told James everything. James’s face flushed with anger when Will told him about what the men had done to Alex.

“Dad, you ring the police – now!” shouted James as he strode towards his jeep.

“I’m coming with you,” said Will and he jumped into the jeep with Clive.

“Will, you stay here,” said James as they slowly approached the farm. He cut the engine and stopped the jeep a way down the lane before reaching the farm. He jumped out and went the rest of the way on foot. Will noticed that James had taken his shotgun with him and wondered if that was a good idea.

Will stayed in the jeep for a few minutes but he was worried about James and even more worried about Alex. What had the men done to her? Where was she?

Will decided to go and investigate.

Will made sure that Clive stayed in the jeep and began to make his way to the hedge. He climbed through the hedge and into the orchard. He could hear angry voices coming from up by the farmhouse and he saw James slam the older man’s head against the side of the van. The younger man rushed at James but he was too slow and James easily dodged him. James kicked the younger man and he fell to the floor struggling to breath.

Silence.

Will ran around the other side of the house.

He stood and listened outside one of the smaller barns. He thought that he could hear a muffled shuffling sound – like someone was struggling to get free. The door to the barn was padlocked shut and he knew that he would not be able to break in.

Will noticed that there was a gap between the top of the wall and the roof of the barn. He noticed that there was a pile of wooden crates stacked against the wall. If he could climb up the pile of crates then maybe he could reach the gap in the wall.

Will loved climbing and prided himself on being able to climb any tree. He made short work of clambering up the pile of crates and it was not long until he had reached the gap in the wall and was able to see inside the barn.

Alex was on the ground with her back against the wall. Her feet were tied together with tape and her hands were secured behind her back. She had a piece of thick black tape over her mouth and she was struggling in an attempt to get free.

Will squeezed in through the gap and jumped down onto the floor. Alex's eyes opened widely when she saw Will and he could tell that she was pleased to see him.

Will tore the tape from Alex's mouth.

“Ow,” said Alex. Then she smiled and said, “thank you Will.”

“James is here,” said Will, “and the police are on their way.”

“Good,” said Alex. “Find something sharp and cut me free please Will.”

Will looked around and he soon found a pair of rusty garden shears. He carefully cut through the tape that bound Alex's hands and she then made short work of cutting through the tape that bound her feet.

Suddenly they could hear police sirens. The sirens got louder and then louder as they closed in.

They heard tyres crunching on the stones of the drive.

“Stay where you are!” said a voice.

“Drop the weapon and lie down on the floor!” said another voice.

“OK,” – Will recognised James’s voice.

“In here!” Alex shouted. “In here!”

A few seconds later Will heard the padlock being hit with a heavy object which sounded like a very large hammer. The door opened and two police officers, one of whom was armed with an assault rifle, stood in the doorway.

“Thank goodness,” cried Alex, “thank you.”

The other police officers had James and the two men lying face down on the drive – their hands cuffed.

Alex and Will very quickly gave their accounts of what had happened. One police officer stood with his weapon drawn on the three men while another unlocked James’s handcuffs and indicated that he should get to his feet.

Alex ran to James and kissed him. She then ran to Will and hugged him tightly. James walked over to Will and shook his hand. “Thanks Will,” he said, “you are a brave boy.” Will felt very proud.

The police searched the barns and found many items that had been reported stolen from various places over the last few months. Lawn mowers from the garden centre. Benches from the park. Trampoline from gardens.

James ran Will home in his jeep. He told Will’s mum and dad what had happened.

Will fell asleep on the sofa and his mum put a blanket over him and let him sleep.

The next day James invited Will's mum to the farm shop to buy anything she wanted for half the price. She was so happy and filled her shopping trolley with jams, vegetables, candles and beer for Will's dad.

The two nasty men were sent to prison for stealing many things and for hitting Alex and tying her up.

James and Alex took Will and his parents out for a meal at the local pizza restaurant two weeks after the incident with the nasty men. Will had garlic bread to start, pepperoni pizza for the main course and two bowls of ice cream for his pudding.

The end.

Dear reader, I hope you enjoyed my story. I wrote this story for my eight year old son to read during the COVID-19 lockdown. He enjoyed reading the story and so I decided to share it online. This is not Will and Clive's only adventure and so, if you enjoyed this story, why not read the other books?

