

An old dog.

Franca Davenport

Bob thought the old farmhouse would be a good place to sleep. Or at least better than sleeping outside. The roof had fallen down and there were no windows but Bob was sure there was going to be a storm tonight and he wanted shelter. The last two evenings he had slept by the side of the road. Bob was homeless.

Inside the farmhouse was an old table and a few cupboards but nothing comfortable to lie on. Then Bob saw that there was a staircase and decided to go upstairs.

‘It would be nice to sleep upstairs,’ he said to himself ‘Like I was living in a proper house.’

As he climbed the steps they made a creaky sound and some bits of dust fell onto the floor. By the time Bob got to the top he was quite out of breath. Bob had asthma.

When he got there, he found an old mattress in the corner. It had a stain on it but Bob didn’t mind.

‘Home Sweet Home,’ he said and snuggled down to sleep wrapped in an old curtain.

Bob was right about the storm. In the middle of the night the wind blew and the rain came in through the window. Bob curled up into a ball and tried to ignore it. ‘At least I’m not outside,’ he said to himself. Then there was a big crash and Bob sat up. For a moment he thought a tree had fallen onto the house but the house seemed alright. It wasn’t until the next morning he realised what had happened. The crash had been the stairs! In the night the stairs had fallen down and Bob was trapped upstairs.

Bob looked out the window. There was no way he could jump out of there. He sat down and felt miserable. He could feel his chest hurting and he began to cough. Bob was worried about his asthma.

‘HELP!’ he shouted out of the window ‘SOMEONE HELP ME!’ But after an hour or two of shouting he started to lose his voice and was exhausted. He wanted to go to sleep, but didn’t want to miss anybody arriving who might help him. Then as he looked around in desperation, he caught sight of an old plastic water bottle in the corner. ‘Maybe I could send a message in a bottle,’ he thought ‘That way if I’m asleep and somebody turns up they might find it.’ It was a long shot but he might as well try. He scribbled down a note on a scruffy piece of paper, put it in the bottle and threw it as far as he could out the window.

It was when Ben the sheepdog was on a walk with his master Brian that he found the bottle. He had ran ahead to the old farmhouse where he hoped to find some food left by picnickers. But today when he got to the old farmhouse there was nothing to find. Nothing but an old plastic water bottle. Ben picked it up and shook it just in case there was something inside, but then he heard the sound of Brian calling him and went to find his master.

‘What’s this Ben?’ said Brian as he took the bottle from the Ben’s mouth ‘A present for me?’ Brian looked at the bottle. There was something inside it. A piece of paper. He pulled it out with his fingers and read.

Dear anyone

I am in the old farmhouse. I have no food and no water and I can’t breath right. Please help me.

Bob Sinclair.

Brian laughed. He thought it was a joke. But when he saw the name at the bottom *Bob Sinclair* he stopped. Everybody knew Bob in the area. He was homeless and a bit rough, but he was harmless enough.

When Brian got to the old farmhouse there was no one to be seen. 'Perhaps he's recovered,' he thought. Then he heard a loud snoring from the second floor.

'Bob,' he shouted 'Are you there Bob?'

Bob woke up. 'Yes,' he shouted back 'I'm here. I'm here.'

'Wait there while I call the police.'

Brian rushed back to his house and called the police as well as the ambulance and the fire-engine. The firemen rescued Bob from the first floor window and he was taken to the hospital.

The next day when Brian came to visit him, Bob kept saying thank you over and over.

'Don't thank me,' said Brian 'thank Ben. He was the one that found you.'

Bob smiled 'Well,' he said 'I suppose it takes an old dog to find an old dog.'