

Buster's Farm

A story by Edwin Thompson

Lessons based upon the actions and antics of the real
animals of Buster's Farm

(for Kacy)

A script for the audio story and the animation
project, series one through eight.

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A synopsis of stories from the series BUSTER'S FARM

By EDWIN THOMPSON

Series one: Seven stories, 14:30 total time

Stories 1 through 5 are short character development stories introducing the characters of BUSTER'S FARM; some have lessons interwoven, while others are strictly to introduce the characters and their personalities.

STORY 1. MOVING TO THE FARM: A character development story that takes Buster, the Paso Fino horse, from his lonely life in the city to his new home in the country filled with new friends. The story lesson helps children understand that sometimes moving to a new home can be better than staying where you are.

STORY 2. MEETING NEW FRIENDS: A character development story that introduces Sir Peabody, the cocky and arrogant Peacock, who throughout the series is an antagonist to Buster. Also introduced is B.A. Hooty Owl, a character of practical wisdom that always restores order to the chaos, while offering plain and practical solutions to many of the problems. This lesson teaches us not to be baffled by beauty, or intimidated by those who think that they are in charge.

STORY 3. CRUZ: The PASO FINO PONY: A character development story that introduces the high energy, fun loving pony Cruz. A naive youth full of questions concerning life.

STORY 4. HELPING OTHERS: CAPTAIN HOONY: A character development story that introduces Captain Hoony the cat. This story tells of his near death experience, and how he was saved by B.A. Hooty Owl. The lesson in this story teaches that we should always help others when we can, and that doing right—is always the right thing to do.

STORY 5: ACCEPTING WHO YOU ARE: NERMY KITTY: A character development story that introduces Nermy the kitten, who longs to be as beautiful and as bold Sir Peabody. This story shows that one cannot pretend to be someone, or something you are not, and that you should be proud of your own beauty and individuality.

STORY 6: PREJUDICE: A four minute story that brings all of the characters together, as well as introduces the ducks that live on the farm. The lesson on prejudice is brought into play as some passing crows ask to have a drink of water and a swim in the pond to cool off. The ducks argue to the others that the crows are different from the members of the farm, and therefore should not be allowed to use the pond. This story deals directly with the issue of prejudice. By the end of this story we are shown how much in life can not be seen when one lives in the blindness of prejudice.

STORY 7: SLEEPY TIME: A fifty second filler story that re-enforces the importance of looking out for each other, and living harmoniously together.

Series two: Two stories, 12:06 total time

STORY 8: WHO IS YOUR NEIGHBOR: Based upon the classic story of “The Good Samaritan.” As Buster and Sir Peabody travel into town for supplies they encounter a small dog that has been mugged and left injured along the road. The argument of whether or not to stop and help ensues between Buster and Sir Peabody. Helping the injured dog will cost them money, making it impossible to purchase all of their needed supplies for the winter. True to his character, Buster stops to help the injured dog—much to the objections of Sir Peabody. This story teaches that we are all neighbors, and we should always help those in need. We are shown that one will always be rewarded for their good deeds—sometimes in the most surprising ways.

STORY 9: BELIEVE AND ACHIEVE: THE ANT: Buster encounters an ant doing the impossible, carrying a morsel of food twice his own size. This 50 second story teaches that as long as one believes and tries, then there is nothing one can’t do!

Series three: Four stories, 11:25 total time

STORY 10: PRIDE: It’s molting season, and Sir Peabody has lost his brilliant feathers, along with his self esteem. B.A. Hooty shows us that beauty is fading, but wisdom is permanent. The story teaches the age old adage that “pride comes before a fall.”

STORY 11: SHARING CHORES: As all of the animals are tending their crops Peabody’s paranoia’s pop up as the bees come to gather pollen used to make their honey—which they share with all of the animals. B.A. Hooty points out Peabody’s freeloading ways, and nearly convinces Peabody that the bees are not the “spies” that he imagines. This lesson teaches that when we all work together and share, everyone’s needs are met. And that to “waste not, is to want not.”

STORY 12: STEALING: THE MOUSE: Grain is missing from Buster’s food supply; the culprit is a little mouse. In this story, Buster teaches that to be in need is nothing to be ashamed of, and that asking for help is always more honorable than stealing. The story emphasizes that stealing is always wrong.

STORY 13: EVERYONE CAN HELP IN A CRISIS: Lightning strikes the barn. This causes financial difficulties because the animals have to fix the roof. All of the animals, as well as the neighboring farm animals, pitch in to help raise the needed money. Despite all of the help, they’re still short of the needed money. The burden falls upon Sir Peabody to donate his beautiful plumage in order to raise the additional money. We are shown that during a crisis, painful sacrifices are sometimes required, and that we all have help that we can offer.

Series four: Three stories, 12:11 total time

STORY 14: SEEING BETTER WITH YOUR EYES CLOSED: It's time for the annual yard sale. Sir Peabody has devised a way to make quick sales by helping those who appear to be wealthy, while ignoring those who appear poor. In this lesson, Buster teaches us to not judge others by their looks and the importance of treating all equally. In an interesting experiment, Buster shows Sir Peabody that sometimes you can see more clearly without sight.

STORY 15: TEASING: TATER'S STORY: This story introduces Tater the pop-eyed dog. His enormous bulging eyes make him a target for teasing. All of the animals show Tater how to deal with the teasing from others, and teach him what true friends are. Tater learns not to let the teasing from others dampen his self esteem, and that everyone's different looks are what makes them special and unique.

STORY 16: MISJUDGING OTHERS BY THEIR LOOKS: In this humorous story, Buster encounters a snake in the barnyard, and becomes hysterical with fear. Buster thinks the snake is trying to bite him—while the snake thinks that Buster is trying to stomp him. B.A. Hooty Owl brings reasoning into the chaos and confusion, and teaches us not to draw conclusions based upon how others look, and not to panic in unexpected situations.

Series five: Two Stories 13:26 total time

STORY 17: TERRORISTS STRIKE THE FARM: A timely story that deals with terrorism. Buster's Farm becomes the unexpected target of terrorist buzzards. This story explains why terrorism exists in a way that children can understand. It teaches us not to live in fear, but to learn from the past, live for today, and to be prepared for the future.

STORY 18: BILLY THE BLUEBIRD: TOO MUCH SUGAR: In this story, Billy the bluebird begins feeding at Harry and Harriet the hummingbirds' feeder, creating too much sugar in his diet. This short two and a half minute story teaches the dangers of too much sugar in one's diet.

Series six: Three stories 12:37 total time

STORY 19: TALENTS: UNCLE WOO-WOO: Nermy's uncle Woo-Woo, the Siamese cat, who is a very important artist, comes to visit BUSTER'S FARM. Nermy tries hard to paint like his uncle, but realizes that he has no talent for painting. This story teaches that everyone has a talent, and that if you seek your talent, you will find it.

STORY 20: ADOPTION: PEANUT'S STORY: Peanut the Border Collie, a friend of all of the animals on BUSTER'S FARM, comes for a visit. Having run the gambit of foster

homes, enduring abuse and neglect— Peanut’s never ending joy and zest for life show us that if you wait patiently and cheerfully, with a loving and forgiving heart—love will find you.

STORY 21: PROCRASTINATION: Ed has called an early practice and he’s running late. It’s a beautiful day, too pretty to work on the new story, so all of the animals decide to play hooky from work. This story shows that when you put things off nothing gets done.

Series seven: Two stories, 14:02 total time

STORY 22: AGING: EI-POCO’S STORY: El-Poco, an old war hero, and uncle of Cruz the pony, comes to visit. Cruz has a hard time understanding how his uncle was such a hero in the past when now he is always tired, slow, and can’t play with him all the time. The animals explain to Cruz the effects of aging, as well as the reason why we should all have patience and respect for our elders.

STORY 23: LAZINESS: CAESAR THE GOAT: Caesar the goat, the city-slicker friend of young Cruz, comes to spend several weeks at the farm. His lack of helping with chores, and wandering off unsupervised soon leads to tension and trouble. By the time his stay is over at BUSTER’S FARM he learns that being lazy produces nothing in your life. Caesar finds that becoming productive and active makes exiting and wonderful things happen in your life.

Series eight: One story, 13:20 total time

STORY 24: ANGER MANAGEMENT: After a bad day at jumping practice, Cruz pony is angry over a minor misunderstanding that turned into a physical fight with another pony. Buster and Sir Peabody show young Cruz some important and helpful ways to control his anger, and how to keep calm in a crisis. This story is based upon the lessons from Dr. Grad Flick’s book on anger management.

“BUSTER’S FARM”

THEME SONG

Written by: Jimmy Melan, Edwin Thompson. Performed by Johnny Price and Buster

Come on down to Buster’s Farm

And meet a friend or two

Come and down, we'll have some fun

With children just like you

We'll learn to give

We'll learn to share

We'll learn to live

And we'll learn how to care

We'll have the most fun of all

Down at Buster’s Farm (that's my house)

Down at Buster’s Farm

Down at Buster’s Farm

Come on y'all and meet my friends!

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Series One

MOVING TO THE FARM

Buster was a lonely horse that lived alone in a stall in the city. All he could do was look at walls all day. He sighed, instead of neighing. How he longed to run and play. To eat fresh green grass instead of hay. To have friends to spend the day. Time passed so slowly—it seemed freedom would never come his way.

Years went by, and one day the barn master came and told Buster he was selling the barn so that new houses could be built on the land. He told Buster that he would make more money that way.

It still didn't seem right Buster thought. As bad as it was he never thought it would get worse. Where would he go? What would he eat? He just didn't know.

The day came to leave. As the barn master loaded Buster into the trailer he said, "I have a surprise for you Buster, I think you'll find moving sometimes to be better than staying where you are." In his own sadness, Buster couldn't understand the barn master's gladness—something seemed wrong.

As they drove in the traffic, past all of the houses and buildings, Buster wondered where they were going—he had never been this far from home. As they continued, the houses got further apart and all he could hear

was the wind rushing past. There were no more city noises—trees and grass were everywhere.

Finally they stopped. As Buster got out of the trailer his eyes nearly popped out of his head, he couldn't believe his own good fortune. Before him was the most gorgeous, lush field of green grass, surrounded by the most beautiful wooden fence. There were two cats asleep in the sun, a peacock parading around in his finery and a colt running and playing all alone. Six ducks were in the shade belting out baritone scat, and in the middle of it all was a little red barn. Above the door of the barn was a sign that said, "Buster's Farm."

MEETING NEW FREINDS

The first to approach Buster was Sir Peabody the peacock, his beautiful plumage swaying in the breeze as he approached, his crowned head cocked proudly.

(P) "First things first ole-man, just to let you know, I'm in charge around here—so then welcome aboard."

(B) "Well thank you very much. What are you in charge of?" Buster asked.

(P) "Why the farm of course," sniffed Peabody.

(B) "What about the others? Why are you in charge?" Buster asked.

(P) "Obviously because of my beauty," Peabody said. "You must be tired from your journey—too many questions. Do get some rest. Your room is over there."

(B) "My room!" exclaimed Buster. "The sign says Buster's Farm. I assume that all is mine to share, not just a room!"

(P) "Humph. Yes-yes, minor detail my boy. I must be on my way—things to attend to, we'll chat later."

Hurriedly Peabody folded his feathers and raced off around the barn with great urgency. Confused, Buster noted, "Well he is quite beautiful..."

(H) "Yes—for a peacock, but you don't need eyes as big as mine to see that," spoke a voice from up in the tree. "Hi Buster, I'm B.A. Hooty Owl. Call me Hooty, and never mind Peabody. Come on and meet everyone else." Hooty flew down from the tree and landed on Buster's back.

(H) "Go on over to the barn and I'll introduce you to the other animals. I think you're going to be happy here," Hooty said. "As for whooo's in charge, we all work together and watch out for each other. Even though we're all different, we treat each other as brothers—including Peabody," Hooty said.

CRUZ: The Paso Fino Pony

(H) "This is Cruz the pony, who as you can see loves to run and play, kick up his heels—he fancies himself a dancer."

Running in excited circles around Buster, Cruz was ever so happy to have another horse to run and play with.

(C) "Hi-ya-chief—race you around the farm," Cruz said excitedly. "I bet I can jump higher than you," And with that Cruz was off and running.

(H) "Let him go for today—all the time in the world to run and play," Hooty said. "As you can tell, you'll never have to be alone again. You'll have plenty of company here on the farm."

"The first thing you need to do is look real close and see that we all have our own beauty. Some of us on the outside, and some of us on the inside. And some of us," Hooty rolled his eyes towards Sir Peabody, "well some of us have too much pride. Let's eat and I'll tell you more about us."

HELPING OTHERS: Captain Hoony

(H) "This is Captain Hoony, the only cat to have flown like a bird.

Captain Hoony got up stretching from his nap in the warm sun, "Pleeeeed to meet you," he purred.

Captain Hoony got his name because a long time ago as he napped in the field, a huge eagle swooped down from the sky and picked him up as he slept. As they soared high above the field, Hoony was trapped tightly in the talons of the eagle."

(B) "What'd he do?" Buster asked.

(H) "In a daring move to save himself, he bit the eagle on the leg. Causing the eagle to let go—sending Hoony free-falling towards the ground."

(B) "Like skydiving!" a big-eyed Buster belted out.

(CH) "Yes," purred Hoony, "as the ground grew nearrerrrr I thought, 'Puuuurfect, this will cost me one of my lives!'"

All of a sudden Hoony was caught again in the talons of a bird, but alas, not that of the eagle. It was B.A. Hooty Owl, who brought him gently and safely to the ground.

Ever so thankful, Captain Hoony asked, "What can I do to thank you for helping me?"

Hooty winked his all-seeing eyes and said, "You certainly don't owe me, for sharing goodness with others is free. I only did what I could, and did what was right. For do unto others as you would have them do unto you. If we work together Hoony, we can help and protect those who live with us day and night."

So from that day on, Hooty and Hoony watched over all of the animals that slept at night on the farm, and they in turn watched over Hooty and Hoony when they slept during the day. Working together, they protected each other day and night from harm—while living together peacefully on the farm.

ACCEPTING WHO YOU ARE:

Nermy Kitty

Nermy the cat was cute as a button. He could jump and leap so high and far, he believed one day that he'd catch a star. One of his favorite games was chasing fallen feathers from Sir Peabody. Nermy had quite a collection of toys.

Nermy was quite the fan of Peabody—or quite the fan for Peabody. Sort of a court jester for Peabody's imaginary kingdom. The animals would all laugh at Nermy's acrobatic play.

But few knew of Nermy's true affection for Peabody. When he thought no one could see him, he would stick all of his feathers into his tail and parade around fanning—just like Sir Peabody.

As he would parade around feathers would begin falling out, and in no time Nermy would have no feathers left to fan. Disappointedly, he would realize he was only a cat. He longed so to be like, and to share Peabody's brilliance that he couldn't see his own beautiful soft fur. For in his lack of pride he could never see that you can't be something you are not, and the best thing to do is just be you.

PREJUDICE: The Crows

One hot summer day as the ducks were cooling off in the pond, swimming and dipping, quacking up a good time, just enjoying the natural coolness of the water—some crows that were flying by stopped to rest and refresh themselves at the pond. As they went to get a cool drink of water, an outraged voice of the biggest duck boomed, "HEY! HEY! THIS IS OUR POND!"

Startled the crow cried, "We only wish for a drink and a dip to cool dow..."

(D) "NO, NO, NO, crows and such drink from their own pond—elsewhere!"

(C) "But we..."

(D) "NO, NO!" Boomed the big duck, "This is the water for us ducks. You can see the obvious difference between us can't you? This is a private place."

(C) "Where's the crows' pond?"

(D) "I wouldn't know—I'm not a crow," cracked the duck to the amusement of his peers.

Hearing the ruckus, the other animals gathered to see what was going on.

(B) "What's the problem?" Buster inquired.

(D) "These crows are invading our pond," the big duck said, as though petitioning the participants of this particularly peculiar predicament.

The crow spoke to Buster, explaining they only wished for a drink and would be on their way. All of the other animals thought that to be a reasonable request.

Outraged the big duck mutinously tried again, "These crows from who-who knows where, want to drink from our pond, and they want to swim in it too! They're different from us. We don't know anything about 'em."

Trying to bring reason into the problem, Hooty said, "With only our eyes we can see they're animals as we are. Assuming that, they must have needs and desires similar to ours." And slowly added as he glared directly at the duck, "And I assume they have feelings also. Perhaps if you'd share your time, and our water, you'd get to know 'em— and you'd know where they're from."

Still stumbling on his now solitary crusade, the big duck said the obvious, "But-but they're black."

(H) "And you're white, and I'm brown."

(C) "I'm yellow!" interrupted Cruz.

(P) "And I'm many colors—splendid colors I might add."

(B) "And I'm red, a bay," boasted Buster. "What's your point on the color? You never saw our colors did you?"

(D) "But they're not one of us—you know a member," the determined duck demanded.

(H) "A member of what?" inquired Hooty.

(D) "The farm!"

As the argument trailed on, young Cruz now confused by the entire issue, told Buster and the cats, "Well this conversation is for the birds."

(HK) "Indeed it is. I'm in puuuurfect agreement," purred Hoony.

(B) "Let's go," said Buster.

As they turned to leave, Nermy, quiet all this time spoke up, "I say we vvvote on it. All in favorrrr of sharing our water with others, rrrregardless of their color or where they live, say yes."

A resounding "Yes," echoed across the pond.

(N) "All in favorrrr of denying the needs of others because of their color say yes." There was only silence.

In hearing the truth of his argument, the big duck realized how useless his prejudice was, and how selfish as well. "Well, I'm sorry, I-I was wrong. Please join us," the-not-so-big-duck now sheepishly said.

And the rest of the afternoon the crows entertained the others with the stories of their journeys. Stories of barren deserts where only harsh, prickly cactus grow—with their halting upswept arms. And stories of lush meadows full of wild-flowers of all kinds and colors growing together. How from the air they seemed to weave a richly colored tapestry of diversity across the earth.

When the crows had gone, all of the animals felt so much more enriched having shared, and learned of things and cultures far outside of their farm. They realized how much they would have missed had they chosen to stand in the blindness of prejudice. And how dull a place the world would be if flowers were only one color.

SLEEPY TIME

And as the sun goes down, the animals gather around under the stars. While Buster and Cruz are sleeping sound, Nermy and Hoony patrol the grounds. And Peabody sleeps in his tree, while Hooty keeps a watchful eye to see—together they're a happy family at Buster's Farm.

Series Two

WHO IS YOUR NEIGHBOR

(B) "Well—it's that time of year again. We'll have to make that trip to town and get some supplies for the winter. Let's see, we'll need some grain and wheat, and some new blankets as well."

(C) "I think we'll need some hay as well Buster," reminded Cruz. "Hey Buster! Can I come with you and Mr. Pea, canna-huh-canna?"

(B) "I think you're still a little bit young yet little fella. It's a few day's hard journey and those roads are rough."

(P) "Dangerous as well I might add—rumors of robbers, bandits, and thieves. As though we need any extra worries to worry about," bristled Pea

(C) "But I'm no trouble. I can take care of myself," Cruz pleaded.

(P) "My-boy if you were half as able as you are willing, I would gladly trade places with you. I'd soon not go out into the world and its dangers!"

(B) "You'd just soon not go outta your house," mumbled Buster.

(P) "Say there what ole-man?"

(B) "I said you got the courage of a lion, not a mouse."

(P) "Not quite what I heard," Peabody poutingly protested.

(B) "I'm gonna go hitch up the wagon. Y'all make a list of all the

things you need, and I'll be ready to go soon."

As Buster made sure the wagon was road ready, the ducks and chickens loaded up the supplies and water Buster and Pea would need for their journey.

(CH) "Pppppleeeese don't forget the catnip," purred Captain Hoony.

(H) "Here's the money you'll need for our supplies, and some for your overnight stays. Spend wisely; we're on a tight budget this year. And be careful for trouble and tricksters," Hooty advised.

As they left young Cruz ran circles around Buster and Mr. Pea all the way to the road, pleading his case along the way.

(C) "Come on Buster let me go with you. I'm old enough. I'm big enough. I can help pull the wagon—come on Buster."

(B) "Maybe next year little Cruzy, maybe next year."

"Goodbye. Be careful. Have a good trip," all of the animals said as they waved until Buster and Pea were out of sight.

As they traveled along the road they would occasionally pass other travelers traveling the opposite way. Buster would cheerfully ask them, "Hey! How y'all doing? How's the road ahead?"

In passing conversation they would exchange news, and tell each other of what was ahead and where they were from.

(P) "I say ole-man, must you be so friendly to every stranger that we pass? It's just not necessary that we chit-chat with the bric-a-brac we pass along the path—it could be dangerous I say!"

(B) "They won't be strangers if you'll say hello and introduce yourself. If we pass 'em again they won't be strangers at all. Because now I know their names and where they come from. Heck—they're just like neighbors now."

(P) "Neighbors—huh. More like strangers who now know all of our businesses as well. You're quite the social butterfly ole-boy."

As it got later and later in the day, the sun got lower and lower in the sky, and they saw fewer and fewer fellow travelers.

Peabody, long since having retired to riding in the wagon, remarked to Buster, "I say—it's getting a bit late to be out here. How bout you pick up the pace a bit eh?"

"Yeah, that's easy for you to say," Buster reminded.

Just then they heard a whimpering noise—a low moaning for help coming from just ahead.

(B) "Look up ahead there, on the side of the road, it looks like that little doggy's hurt," Buster told Pea.

(P) "I don't know— it could be a trap. Acting like he's hurt. Pretending.

And when we stop to help him—ZOOM— his comrades in crime jump out of the woods to rob us. This road is known for such treacheries. Packs of wild dogs that rob and hurt travelers traveling through these parts. I say we move to the other side of the road and avoid possible trouble!"

(B) "But he could be hurt," Buster reminded

(P) "But it could be a trap my-boy. I've seen many of these things in my travels. We don't know who he is. He looks like some mutt left in these parts, a plague among us if you will—these strays."

(B) "Well if he lives in these parts that would make him our neighbor and we should help him."

(P) "You don't know who he is!"

(B) "He's our neighbor."

(P) "I think not."

(B) "Yep. That's right—a neighbor. And we should treat our neighbors as we would ourselves, or as a family member."

(P) "Good grief Buster—he's hardly a neighbor. We're a days journey from home. He's a stranger, a mutt, possibly a nut. I appeal to your senses ole-boy, don't stop and get involved—I smell trouble!"

(B) "You don't get close enough to smell a rose cause all you see is the thorns!" Buster chided.

As they approached, it was obvious the little doggie was hurt. He was weak and bleeding, hardly able to speak. He had been robbed of his collar and food.

(B) "Goodness little doggie, what happened? You look terrible. Let me help ya. Help me get him up Mr. Pea."

(P) "Touch him? I think not. There's no telling what I'll catch! Let's go on and send help back."

(B) "Well if that's what you want to do, you go on alone. I'm gonna stay here and help him."

(P) "Ga-ga-go-on alone? On this road—with bandits on the loose. Somewhat like bending me over the barrel here don't you think? You leave me no choice."

(B) "You've always got a choice Mr. Pea. Life is full of choices—you decide."

(P) "Humph, if this is something you think we must do. We're already running late—low on water," bemoaned Pea, as they helped the little injured dog into the wagon.

They gave him some food and water, and cleaned and bandaged his wounds. As they continued on, the little dog told them of how as he was going up the road, a pack of wild dogs had surrounded him—had beat him up

and stolen his money, food, and water. They had left him there in the ditch.

(P) "The absolute lack of humanity these days—it's appalling!"

(B) "Your one to talk you pious peacock," mumbled Buster.

(P) "Yes but I did stop and help," perked Pea, as though trying to petition a pardon for himself.

As the sun was setting, they arrived at the next town. Buster got rooms for them, as well as some food and water. He had also called a doctor, a veterinarian, to come out and check the little doggie's wounds. Nothing serious was wrong with the little doggie. He just needed to rest a day or so before traveling again.

The next morning while checking out, Buster told the inn-keeper, "Here's enough money for last night. And here's some more money for the little doggie to stay another day or so, and some money for his food as well. If you could see that he's OK until he can travel again—I'd be much obliged. And if you need more, I'll pay you when we pass back this way on our way home."

As they traveled on, hours had past and Peabody had not said a word. He just kept huffing his tail and saying, "Humph."

(B) "If you've got something to say—say it."

(P) "Humph."

(B) "If you've got something on your mind, say it."

(P) "Humph."

(B) "You might as well get it off your chest."

(P) "Then I will say a word or two about your behavior."

(B) "I knew you would."

(P) "Here we are—going to town to get our supplies for the winter.

Running late. On a financial budget. And you take the chance of being robbed—or worse—to help a stranger!"

(B) "A neighbor."

(P) "Fine—a neighbor. You feed him. You give him our water. You care for him. You pay for his room, and then spend more of our money on a doctor. We won't be able to purchase all the supplies we came for. We were short on money as it was!"

"We're lucky we're not lying in the ditch robbed and mugged ourselves. We'll all starve if you keep acting this way. We'll be the ones depending on the kindness of strangers. You know ole-boy charity starts at home."

(B) "Your right and we have all we need. We've got more than we need. And from those who have much—much is expected."

(P) "And I know a fool and his money soon go separate ways,"

retorted Pea.

(B) "Hoarding money doesn't help anybody. And if you only give your help and money expecting to get it back..."

(P) "With interest!" interrupted Pea.

(B) "Then that is your reward. And that's not caring or sharing. You should help others with what you have because you can."

(P) "We'll never see that money again!"

(B) "Helping others like we did may take a little food from your belly, but it's nourishing to the soul Mr. Pea. If you give to, and help others, it'll come back to you in good measure—pressed down. You'll get back more than you gave."

(P) "In case you're unaware—they call that interest in the financial world ole-boy," pecked Pea.

(B) "Well gett'n more isn't so you'll have even more. It's so you can share even more. Gett'n all you can—and canning all you get— that's not right. We should all share."

"Humph!" was Pea's only reply.

And so they went on to town and got their supplies. They were unable to get everything on the list. They also had to cut back on some grain and hay as well.

(P) "Well Buster, thanks to your generosity it'll be slim pickings for us all this winter. Wait till the others hear about this, humph, I certainly wouldn't want to be in your hooves when they do."

On the way home they stopped at the inn where they had stayed with the little doggie. The inn-keeper told Buster that the little dog had rested up and gone on his way. Everything had worked out fine he explained.

As Buster and Pea arrived home the next day, all of the animals ran out to the road to greet them. Their excitement over something was obvious.

(P) "Well it's seems as though the others have heard the news and formed a lynch mob for you ole-man. Bad news travels fast eh ole-boy?" Peabody said, trying to throw in his last jab at Buster before being around the others.

(P) "Curiosity may have killed the cat as they say, but who'd have thought kindness would kill the horse?" Pea, laughing at his own bad humor, added.

Buster prepared for the worst.

Hooty excitedly explained how earlier that morning two huge wagons had shown up at the farm. The wagons were piled so high with grain, wheat, and supplies they had to tie it all in. It took a team of four horses to pull the

huge wagons.

Hooty had explained that they had not ordered, nor could afford such a plethora of supplies. The horses told everyone the story of how Buster and Mr. Pea had helped the little hurt doggie several days ago.

Well as it turns out, the little doggie was the pup of an important and very wealthy big dog from a nearby farm. He had sent the supplies to Buster's Farm out of gratitude. He had been touched by the way Buster and Mr. Pea had sacrificed their needs for those of a total stranger.

Many others had passed, unconcerned for the little doggie, ignoring his moans and pleas for help. The big dog had sent more than enough supplies to last all of the animals a long-long time. He had also arranged a big party that night to thank Buster and Mr. Pea for their gallant giving.

That evening they had a fabulous feast filled with fun. The big dog got up to thank them, "I just want to thank you both for your carrying and sharing spirit. While other just passed by, not want'n to help or get involved with my little . . ."

Peabody jumped up and pompously began, "Yes-yes you know—as soon as I saw the little doggie ahead I could tell he needed our help. And helping others is something we should all do. A sacrifice at times. But let this be a lesson for us all, doing good for others will always come back

to you. Now Buster ole-boy, say a few words if you will."

(B) "Ah–yeah, it happened something like that. But all of this is overwhelming. We just did what we could do to help a neighbor. Because as I see it, we all live at the same address –planet earth, and that makes us all neighbors."

“Indeed! Here! Here!” They all cheered.

BELIEVE and ACHIEVE: The Ant

One day Buster saw a beautiful ant that wore a red velvet coat upon its back. The ant was steadily, if not slowly, making his way across the field. This small ant was carrying a morsel of food twice as big as himself. Amazed, Buster approached the ant and said, "You can't carry that food, for it's twice as big as you!"

The ant paused and said to Buster, "Don't say I can't. For I'm an ant, and there's nothing an ant can't do. If you only believe you can—you'll be amazed at what you can do. So if you'll please move aside, I have no time to play. I must be on my way. I bid you a fair and pleasant day."

As the ant continued on his way, Buster realized that it was true. That if you only believe and try—then there's nothing you can't do!

Series Three

PRIDE

For when Sir Peabody arrived at the farm, he was in his molting stage, he had no beautiful tail feathers. But he was still a brilliant blue. None the less he walked around mumbling, "What'll I do?"

(H) "What'll you do about what?" asked Hooty.

(P) "I've lost my beauty," sighed Peabody.

(H) "You've lost your feathers, they'll grow back," said Hooty.

(P) "I'll be ugly—you'll see," sighed Peabody.

(H) "Says who?" snapped Hooty.

(P) "Says me. You're just an owl. What do you know?"

(H) "But I'm wise."

(P) "But I'm beautiful."

(H) "But my beauty never falls out—for my wisdom is my beauty."

(P) "I'm doomed—I'm ugly!" Peabody began to shout. And as Peabody ran off more feathers fell out.

(H) "You may as well go and hide, for you can't see past your pride."

And with that Peabody disappeared into the woods.

As usual, Hooty was right, and Peabody's feathers grew back brilliant and bright. And when they did Peabody no longer hid. Each spring would

bring Peabody with his head all cocked and reared, and strutting more boldly with each new feather that appeared. And when his plumes had all grown back full and bright—a strange music would greet dawn's first light.

(B) "What's that noise?" Buster asked, his ears rotating like radar.

(D) "All hail! Sir Peabody and his new Spring plumage. 'New clothes for the emperor!'"

First Nermy appeared from around the barn strutting to a Scottish march, complete with a family-coded kilt—and playing the bagpipes! The ducks bumping backsides made drumming noises as they emerged from around the barn. And after them was Sir Peabody. His tail opening and closing in a surging show of his new many-eyed plumage. His head was bobbing in time with the pipes.

(P) "Step aside—step aside. As you can see I've beauty that cannot hide." And with those words and great pride, Sir Peabody would begin his annual "Parade of the Plumes." His was a grand delusion that he was in charge, because in his own words he was, ". . . the most beautiful."

Yes—he's his own king in an imaginary kingdom. Where he worships his beauty and his beauty serve him well. And year after year his plumes fall out each fall—and yet he never learned the lesson that teaches us all—pride comes before a fall.

SHARING CHORES

One beautiful day while everybody was working in the garden tending their crops, Buster and Cruz their carrots, Hooty his corn, the cats their catnip and Peabody—well Peabody generally ate with one of the animals each night. After all he fancied himself in charge, so what an honor he felt it was for them. Well out of nowhere came the bees. They meant no harm, only to gather an armful of pollen that they would use to make their honey—of which each spring they would share with everyone.

(P) "Humph, we'll their gathering our pollen from the plants we worked so hard to raise. Freeloaders of society—those bees. They're a nuisance. Dangerous, possibly spies," Peabody's lowering voice trailed off.

(H) "Nonsense you paranoid peacock," piped Hooty, "they're working for their food, just like most of us." glaring directly at Peabody.

(P) "And what do you mean by that?" asked Peabody, fluffing up his tail—which he always did in an argument.

(H) "I mean that they take a portion of ours, and we get a portion of the fruit of their labor, the honey.

Sir Peabody especially like the honey, "Nectar of the gods," he had once said. Which was why he always thought that his portion should be larger than everyone else's, if only by a teeny-little bit?

(P) "Well yes-yes, but still possibly spies you know."

(H) "Spies of what?" asked Hooty.

(P) "Why secrets of course!"

(H) "Oh—you have secrets Peabody?" Hooty asked suspiciously.

(P) "I've no time for this, pressing things to do. You're all doing fine here laboring in the gardens—I'll be on my way."

As he agitatedly bristled past the animals he told Nermy, "I'll see you then at six for dinner, you're looking forward to it I'm sure."

As he brushed past Buster he cocked his head proudly and exclaimed, "Humph—Buster's Farm indeed!"

(H) "Oh never mind him," said Hooty, "if he could only learn to share and to share alike, is to waste not or to want not."

(C) "I think he has learned that," spoke Cruz ironically. "Seems he's learned it well!"

"Indeed." all of the animals agreed.

STEALING: The Mouse

Buster was perplexed as he told the others, "I don't know, I tell ya, it seems as though there's some food missing."

And sure enough, in the bottom of his feed bucket was a small hole.

(B) "A mouse hole!" Buster beamed. "With a trail of grain!"

Buster began following the trail of grain, which soon led him to a little nest way back in the hay stack. Snuggled up asleep in a nest of hay was a little-bitty mouse. Buster stood above him, and in a booming voice bellowed, "Hey! Are you the mouse that's been in my house stealing my food?"

The tiny mouse looked up, waaaaaay up, and in a trembling, squeaky little voice answered, "Yes-yes, I took some food, I-I was hungry."

(B) "You stole my food. Broke in and stole it!" Buster reiterated.

(M) "I-I don't eat much, I only took a little," he explained, as though trying to lessen the charges.

(B) "Taking without asking is always stealing. If you'd-a-ask me, I'd a shared."

(M) "You mean if I'd have asked, you would have shared?" asked the astonished little mouse.

(B) "Why of course. I'm a horse. And when we have—we share with those who need. Gosh little fella, I've got plenty of food, for you and me both. Just what I waste would feed you."

(M) "But I-I was ashamed to ask for help," the mouse said shyly.

(B) "Why you never have to be ashamed to ask for help. There's no shame in being in need. Why heck—we all need help at sometime or the other. And we can all be of help to others somehow," Buster explained.

"Everyone will think more highly of you if you ask for their help instead of being a thief. Stealing is always wrong—always! Remember little fella, a friend in need is a friend indeed."

(M) "Then let's become friends who meet in need, and be friends without greed," the little mouse said proudly.

(B) "O-ke-doe-ke little fella. That sounds good," Buster agreeingly neighed, as the new friends both shared some grain together.

EVERYONE CAN HELP IN A CRISIS

BOOM! Went the thunder. Followed by the sound of lightning cracking the sky—striking the barn. In a moment, without notice, tragedy had entered the lives of the animals. The roof of the barn had been damaged by the lightning. Rain poured into the stalls where the animals slept, and was pouring into the food storage as well.

(B) "What'll we gonna do now?" asked Buster to no one in particular. Hooty, having flown up and surveyed the situation, frankly replied, "We'll have to fix the roof."

(P) "Yes-yes marvelous idea, do get to it. I'll stay here inside and watch the food supplies. You all do be caref..."

Hooty interrupted Peabody's prelude to work prevention speech with real world truth, "We'll need money to fix the roof."

(B) "Money—I've heard that word before," Buster nervously exclaimed.

The ducks mumbled amongst themselves, while Captain Hoony and Nermy silently stared at the damage—blinking their eyes ever so slowly as only cats do. Their intensity almost made you believe that they could “will” the roof repaired.

(C) "How are we going to get money?" Cruz asked.

In silence they all wondered. Suddenly Peabody began fanning his feathers excitedly, and in his usual know-it-all tone of voice began.

(P) "Well—being more educated than most of you. Having traveled widely, and having seen many things. As well having studied music..."

"Get to the point!" exclaimed everyone.

"If there is one," added Hooty.

(P) "Well yes-yes, and might I say I was. Anyway—the symphony has instruments that are played with a bow, the violin, the cello and the..."

"The point Peabody!"

(P) "Humph. Well tactfulness aside then, the bows are made from horse hair—so there! They pay handsomely for fine, long, natural horse tail hair, such as Busters' there."

"Really?" everyone except Buster leaning curiously closer to Peabody asked.

(P) "Good day! Do you think I make these things up? Of course they do. We could sell Busters hair and fix the roof."

Silence fell among the animals. It was Busters decision.

Buster looked up from the ground and slowly began to speak, "I'd loose my tail. It'll take years to grow back, but. . ."

(P) "Yes ole-boy, but sacrifices must be made in a crisis," Peabody interruptingly interjected.

(B) "As I was saying—I was lonely for years. And now I have so many new friends. It's a fair trade. I'll do it!"

The arrangements were made. Buster's tail hair was cut off, leaving him only a few inches of tail. Sadly it still wasn't enough money to fix the roof.

The animals had a meeting to see what else they had that could be sold to raise the additional money. The chickens had eggs. The ducks had soft new down feathers that were used in making cushions. The bees, having heard of the animals' plight, donated gallons of honey. Still they were short of money to fix the roof.

The only thing of value the animals had to sell was Peabody's feathers. They were used in many decorative crafts, and sold in the city as cat toys. There was only one problem. It wasn't molting season—and they would have to be plucked out.

(P) "Plucked out! I say—you've all gone mad! Somewhat like asking the king for his crown, don't you think? Pluck them out. I smell pain—suffering. Ah-what say we wait till fall on this eh?" Peabody anxiously tried to convince everyone.

(H) "We can't wait until fall. We need a new roof now," Hooty reminded.

(P) "Yes-but pain–suffering!"

(B) "Sacrifices in a crisis is what you said," quipped Buster.

(P) "Yes-but pain-pain."

(H) "Everyone has suffered some pain through this ordeal. Your feathers are all that we have left–our only hope. You must," Hooty decreed for all.

And so he did, as courageously as he could.

(P) "OOOOW!" "OW!" Peabody bellowed as the needy bounty was plucked from his booty.

And so the roof was repaired through the giving of all. Soundly, if not somewhat sorely for a while, they all slept knowing the sacrifices that were made were for the good. They had all learned that in a crisis, everyone has help and value that can be mustered and used to pull through troublesome times together.

Series Four

SEEING BETTER WITH YOUR EYES CLOSED

(B) My goodness—time sure does fly. I can't believe its time for the annual yard sale already,” Buster proclaimed.

Each year all of the animals, as well as those from the nearby farms, would get together and have a three day yard sale. They would all sell their crafts, as well as any unused or unwanted items. Each year the sale drew more and more visitors. At times it was a challenge just to help everyone with their questions and purchases.

Many customers would like to haggle over the price of items, trying to get the best price, and naturally such an event kept Sir Peabody’s feathers in a ruffle.

As he was helping one chicken who was interested in an old feeder, the chicken asked Sir Peabody, " Iiiii don’t know if this-this-this is woooth what yooour asking, wiiiiil you take-take two dollars foor it?" the chicken cackled.

Quite annoyed Pea replied, "Humph, here-here chicken, if I had wanted two dollars for it, I would have priced it at two dollars. The tag clearly says three dollars—obviously that is my price. As you can see there are plenty of others here to help. I've no time for your basement bargaining.

You think about it. I must go help others who are plainly more financially fit—a pecking order if you will."

As Pea huffed away the chicken cackled back, "Aaaaah don't get yoor feathers in a rrruffle!"

By the end of the first day, Peabody had gotten to where he was only helping those customers who appeared to have money. When a fancy wagon would pull up, or an animal wearing a fancy collar would come, Pea would rush to help them—ignoring others who had been waiting.

The second morning Peabody told Buster, "I say ole-boy, let me share something with you. Quit wasting your time on those who are obviously poor and only have a little to spend. Spend your time with those who look like they have lots of money to spend." he confidently confided to Buster.

Perplexed Buster replied, "How do you know that the others don't have money to spend? You can't judge others just because of what their wagons and collars may look like. And besides, it's not fair the way you're ignoring and treat'n those who have been wait'n a long time for help."

(P) "It's a matter of business my boy."

(B) "Well you oughta make it your business to treat everybody equal. You're making too many judgments based upon what you see, or what you think you see," Buster scolded.

(P) "Certainly not—conclusive evidence you see."

(B) "I don't think so," added Buster

(P) "Well there it is! My point exactly. See ole-boy you're a horse, a muscle machine, not a thinker."

(B) "Humph! You think so?" Buster bristled.

(P) "Know so—for see, I'm a thinker."

(B) "Well let me tell you what I think about that. Let me show you something to think about—close your eyes," Buster said.

(P) "I hardly think your little demonstration is at all necessary."

(B) "Close your eyes!" Buster bellowed.

Startled, Pea snapped his eyes closed.

(B) "Now what do you see?" Buster asked.

In a bored tone of voice Pea replied, "Well obviously nothing Buster."

(B) "Good, now tell me what color is that bird over there?"

(P) "Without sight one can't see Buster-boy," Pea replied menacingly
melodic.

(B) "And how big is that wagon over there Mr. Pea?"

(P) "One can't see with his eyes closed you know."

(B) "Sometimes you can see better with your eyes closed than you can with them open."

(P) "Now that I'd like to see," Peabody smart-aleckly replied—still holding his eyes closed.

(B) "So you're telling me that you can't tell a chicken from a rabbit right now?"

(P) "Not without seeing them."

(B) "So you wouldn't be able to tell what type of wagon they drove up in, or if they looked rich or poor—now would you Mr. Pea?"

(P) "Well, no-no, I wouldn't."

(B) "And because of that, you wouldn't be making conclusions about them based upon what you saw them as. If you had no sight then you'd not be as judgmental as you are."

(P) "Hummm," Peabody mumbled as he nervously shifted about.

(B) "If you couldn't see their wagons or collars then you'd have to draw your opinions based upon getting to know them, or-or how they acted," he pointedly injected. "And not upon what they looked like or how big their barn might be—now wouldn't you Mr. Pea?"

(P) "Well sir, I retract my former statement, for you are a thinker. You have called my hand ole-man. I have been wrong and unfair treating everyone based upon how I thought I saw their social standing. I can see

now that when you strip away the material things of this world we're all the same indeed."

(B) "That's right Mr. Pea. Sight is a precious gift that we should use to enjoy the beauty of this world, and it shouldn't be used as a tool to judge others."

Having realized the errors of his ways, Peabody began helping everyone with equal enthusiasm. He stopped treating others special because they appeared more wealthy than others. He could now see that he had been wrong in using his vision to make blind conclusions.

TEASING: TATER'S STORY

Tater, the pop-eyed dog. His enormous bulging eyes made him a target for teasing. His hyper-energy always seemed to be getting him into trouble. He never seemed to do right, but he never meant to do wrong.

(T) "My life is rrrrough-rrrough, everyone's always teasing me. Calling me pop-eyes. Saying it looks like I caught a Mack truck head on. It hurts when they tease me. All I want to do is please—and all they want to do is tease," Tater confided to the animals.

(B) "Well little Tater, we don't tease ya, we love you just the way you are," Buster explained.

(T) "I know all of you don't tease me. But those who don't know me tease me about my looks, and they laugh at me, and point. It makes me not want to meet or play with anyone new. They don't give me a chance," Tater sighed.

(P) "Yes-yes, but you can't let the opinion others have of you sway the opinion you have of yourself," confidently confided Pea.

(T) "But what can I think of myself when others are always rejecting me?" Tater asked. "They make me feel unwanted. They make me feel ugly," he added.

Peabody becoming a bit ruffled with concern told Tater, "Good day! Get this straight, good friends—real friends, will always love you for who you are. And you're kind, loving, and fun to be around. Those who judge you without knowing you—let their comments roll off you like water off of a ducks back.

And don't let them dampen your spirit my-boy. The opinion of a fool means nothing. Don't waste your time on them. There are too many good and interesting animals to meet in this world—cultivate real friends," Peabody emphasized.

(T) "You mean ignore them?" Tater asked.

(P) "Ignore them indeed! Head up—chin out. Besides, do you really want to waste your time being around such animals anyway? They're all bores."

(B) "That's right," Buster agreed. "Remember little Tater, those who make fun of others are just trying to make themselves look better," Buster added.

(C) "Look better? They look mean, ugly, and selfish to me," Cruze chimed in.

(P) "That's exactly what they are, and that's certainly not the type of

friends one needs. Humph, with friends like that one certainly wouldn't need enemies. And remember my-boy, as a sailor I once meet in Singapore said—or was it Hong Kong—but none the less, what he told me summed it up quite well. Let's see, he said, uh-no—it went something like—um everybody's got one. No-no, or was it—yes-yes, I remember now. 'Opinions are like as''

(B) Ahhhh—Mr. Pea that's not an appropriate analogy for now.

Remember this is story for children, not drunken sailors. But little Tater remember, not everybody's made alike. There's different kind of horses, different kinds of birds, different kinds of everything. That's what makes the world so interesting and everybody special, 'cause everybody's different.

(T) "So my looks make me special—not funny? And those who tease me aren't really my friends anyway," Tater realized aloud. "I should feel sorry for them—not myself!"

(P) "That's the spirit ole-boy," Peabody encouraged.

"That's right," Hooty added, "your special, I'm special, and we're all special. Our looks—our personalities and talents—make us all different and unique. If we were all the same the world would not have so many diverse and wonderful things to offer and do."

“We should spend our time and energy loving and sharing with others; appreciating their uniqueness, their specialness, and their individuality. Not spent on teasing others or being around those who do.”

(B) "You know little Tater, my mamma taught me a saying when I was a little colt. And her little saying says it all. She'd tell me, 'I look different cause I am different. I act different cause I am different. I am different cause I'm special!'"

And with that, all of the animals felt a renewed sense of pride in themselves. A pride deep within, one that is not swayed by the comments of others who don't know that they're special too.

MISJUDGING OTHERS BY THEIR LOOKS

(B) "Help me! Help me! Somebody help me! He's trying to kill me! Help me!" screamed Buster as he reared up and down.

As the others ran to help they saw nothing or no one.

(P) "What's the matter ole-boy?" inquired Peabody.

(B) "That snake—he tried to bite me!"

Seeing nothing, Hoony gave Buster a look that only cats can give—that look of, "Helloooo...sanity check."

(B) "Look there. He's hiding now," said Buster as he pointed toward the barn.

Curled up in the hollow of the tree base was a three foot snake, scared and hissing for help. His tail sounding like a maraca being shaken by fear. As the others approached him, the snake began pleading his case.

(S) "Pleasssse, let me expssssplain. I wasss passssing through and he appeared, ssstarted yelling and tried to ssstomp me. I sslithered over here to be sssafe," he hissed.

The others looked at Buster.

(B) "Look at him, he's evil—those eyes and fangs—he could've killed me!"

(S) "And you hoovesssss me," the snake said.

Feeling a stalemate to the excitement brewing, Peabody, always anxious to stir a situation, inquired of the snake, "I say—why were you passing through here? Can't you see this is our farm?"

(S) "I can't ssssee the topssside of the grasss from here."

(P) "Well uh, yes-yes that obvious."

(B) "Snakes are bad," Busters reminded everyone.

(C) "Not Mr. Greeny who lives in the hay stack," Cruz said.

(B) "Well some snakes are bad," reasoned Buster.

(CH) "And I know of horses that have stepped on cats," Hoony purred in.

(P) "Yes-yes you know—in the homeland colonies there are cats who can hurt horses—tigers you know. Which reminds me of a trip that I took some time ago..."

(H) "I think we can see that everybody has the ability to hurt someone. But the point here is—did he try to attack you Buster?" Hooty asked, trying to refocus on the issue.

(B) "I thought he did."

(H) "You thought—or did he?" Hooty questioned.

(B) "I was scared. He wasn't supposed to be there."

(H) "Be where?"

(B) "On the ground there."

(H) "Where would you expect him to be? He can't fly," reasoned Hooty.

(B) "But his noise—his looks—they scared me."

(H) "But he didn't do you anything?"

(B) "Well no. I-I guess not," realized Buster embarrassingly.

(H) "Now see, the little snake thought that out of nowhere you came to hurt him. Your looks and noise scared him as well. Had he bitten you or had you stepped on him, someone would have been hurt for no reason other than fear and misunderstanding."

Peabody realized that right now would be a good time to pitch his newest project idea—so with his verbal spoon he stirred.

(P) "Here-here! My point exactly. A prime time to talk about that ah-new security fence project—most important. I say, stop the music there would you Ed."

(Confusion breaks out among Cruz and Buster as to the identity of this "Ed" that controls the music)

(P) "Yes—as I see it, with all these passersby we're..."

(H) "Noooo, no— it's not. It's a prime time to realize we should all be aware of unexpected things to appear in our paths from time to time. And

when encountered we should neither panic or rush in, but slow down to see what really is there. Reason it out, and then react."

All of the animals nodded in agreement. Eesssspecially the snake!

Series Five

TERRORISTS STRIKE THE FARM

(B) "I don't know—I can't quite figure it out y'all, this is the third day that big-ole buzzards' been circling overhead. He flies around real slow, then just flies away. For three days he's been doing that now."

(P) "Scoundrel! Scoping out the lay of the land—seeing what he can steal. We should send out ariel scouts to check it out. We need to protect our air space. It's not enough that no one will consider my security fence project, and now look—spies in the skies!"

(H) "For all of your paranoia's, I have to admit that circling buzzards are not a good sign," said Hooty.

(B) "The mockingbirds came around the other day with the latest news. They said some dangerous stuff had been stolen from an Army depot. They said that rumor had it..."

(P) "Oh Buster! Mockingbirds! Please ole-man can't you find a more reliable source for your news? You know that they're known for carrying tales—gossips, troublemakers. They rearrange the news to fit their fancy. But do go on ole-man—what was their tale de'jour?"

(B) "Well, they said they thought the buzzards may have something to do with that break-in at the Army depot."

(P) "And what Sherlock Holmes figured that out?"

(B) "They found some feathers in the supply area, buzzard feathers."

(H) "Hmmm," Hooty said as, he rolled his eyes towards the skies.

For the next week or so all of the animals kept a watchful eye to the sky, but not a buzzard was seen.

(C) "They must have been looking for a new place to live, or just sight-seeing," said Cruz

(B) "You could be right. I suppose we can all relax. It was probably something like that," Buster agreed.

So life at the farm went back to its normal routine of chores and playing. Things were fine as usual.

Early one morning as the sun was rising in its glory—its rays peaking over the trees, making the morning dew shine upon the grass as though diamonds had been sprinkled on the lawn overnight. Everyone was going about doing their normal morning chores—when out of nowhere three buzzards swooped out of the sky. Before anyone could say a word they had each dropped a firebomb onto the farm.

One had hit the barn, and in an instantaneous explosion the barn was ablaze. Another bomb had landed in the pond causing a floating fiery inferno upon the pond. The third had landed in the corn patch, turning the ripened

corn into a massive popcorn field.

(B) "Fire! Fire! Run for your lives. Fire! Everybody out the barn!"

Buster bellowed.

Mayhem was rampant. The rear of the barn had collapsed. Moans and screams for help were heard coming from inside. Buster managed to pull little Cruz out of the debris, and was able to remove a roof rafter that had fallen on Mr. Pea—trapping him in the growing blaze.

Hooty had managed to pull out Nermy, whose front legs had been broken by falling debris. Captain Hoony had managed to save two chickens.

The fire had grown into an inferno, and with the pond ablaze there was no water in which the animals could fight the fire. Helplessly the animals watched as everything was destroyed.

When the fires had finally burned themselves out, the animals took an account of their damages and losses. The barn had been totally destroyed, reduced to a pile of smoldering ashes. Half of the crops had burned, and the pond water was undrinkable.

Cruz required many stitches for his cuts and wounds. Mr. Pea had a broken wing, and most of his feathers had been singed off. Nermy had two broken legs and Buster was treated for burns on his legs and back. As well, most of his tail hair and mane had been burned off. Sadly six chickens were

unaccounted for, and four ducks had perished in the pond fire.

(C) "I-I just don't understand why they'd do this Buster, we-we didn't do then anything. I-I just don't understand," cried Cruz.

(B) "Well little Cruzy, I wish I had the answer, or something I could tell you—but I'm just as confused as you are."

(C) "But I-I'm scared. Why did this happen?"

(P) "Terrorism—that's what this is! The work of those terrorist buzzards. I've run across the devastation caused by those scoundrels in my travels about the world. But who would have thought it to happen here—to us. I must say I am surprised myself—but more than that I'm mad as a hornet—mad as a hornet! Retaliation is in order. War comes to mind. If my wing wasn't broken I'd fly over to those. . ."

(B) "Calm down Mr. Pea, calm down,

(H) "That's right—calm down Mr. Pea. Let's not talk of war. Let's all be thankful that we survived with wounds that will heal."

(BD) "I don't know if my wounds will heal, I've lost my friends. My hurt is deep inside," replied the big duck.

(CH) "I'm in purrrrrfect agrrrreement," purred Hoony

(H) "Well time will heal wounds and injuries, and having forgiveness will help heal the hurt in your hearts," replied Hooty.

(C) "What if they come back again? I-I'm scared."

(H) "Well Cruz, don't let your fears overwhelm you. It's normal to be worried and scared, as well as mad. But we must remember that life is filled with surprises, both good and bad. We need to channel our fears and anger into productive energy that we can use to be wiser and more prepared in the future, we must go on with our normal lives."

(P) "Prepared for the future—I do say! I hope this has opened up all of your minds to the security projects I've been pitching for years around here—falling upon deaf ears. Now I hope you'll all listen to my ideas I've been talking about. I say at this point we—we need more than a fence and ariel security—we need a homeland security team."

(B) "I think he's got a point this time everybody. We need to do all we can to be prepared against this type of terrorism every again," Buster agreeingly neighed with Sir Peabody. This may have been the first time in history that Buster and Sir Peabody were in agreement with each other.

Over the following weeks, due to the shortage of food and water, rationing was put into effect. Even Peabody dropped his usual argument for his larger portions. Everyone understood sacrifice for all was the order of the day.

The animals from surrounding farms had donated food, water, and

supplies. They did all of the chores the injured animals were unable to perform. They had all gotten together and had an old fashioned barn raising—within days the animals had build a new barn. They used stronger and more resistant materials as well. The pond had been drained and refilled with fresh water.

The tragedy at Buster's Farm had brought all of the animals from surrounding farms closer together. For they had all realized how easily this tragedy could have happened at any of their farms. They became more united in looking out for their neighbors.

They held meetings and drew up security plans that were put into effect at all of the farms. They all kept a sharp lookout for, and reported any suspicious activity to the security team, who would then investigate the reports.

Early one morning the mockingbirds came with news that a nearby farm had captured three buzzards that had been circling their farm. They had been holding them for interrogation, and decided a trial should be held at Buster's Farm.

The day of the trial arrived. The air was buzzing with excitement and anticipation. Hooty started the questioning.

(H) "What do you know about the group of buzzards that did these

dastardly deeds?" he asked.

(BZ) "Nothing," was their unanimous reply.

The only thing that was known for sure was that all of the buzzards were from a foreign land, far way away from this area.

As one buzzard was leaving the witness stand, Buster noticed that he was missing a few feathers. He called for the evidence found at the Army depot—the buzzard feathers.

Buster called the one buzzard back to the witness stand and questioned him about his whereabouts the time of the robbery.

(BZ) "I was with my friends," he smugly replied.

(B) "I don't doubt that," Buster said. "Stand up and turn around if you would," asked Buster to the buzzard. And when he did, Buster held the feathers found at the Army depot up to the missing feathers of the buzzard. "A perfect match!" he exclaimed.

A wave of whispers rushed through the room.

(P) "Guilty! Guilty! Hang him now! Punish him now!" shouted Pea, as he banged his cast upon the table.

There was a growing agreeable anger amongst the crowd. Hooty was able to subdue their growing vigilante attitude.

In light of the evidence, the other two buzzards turned on their friend

and started telling everything. They told how they had planned the robbery, and had breached the security at the Army depot disguised as messenger carriers.

Most frightening were the reasons for their attack on the farm, and the carnage caused on innocent, unsuspecting animals. Hate and intolerance had driven them to their deeds. They explained how they felt that those who did not believe and live like them should be punished and destroyed.

Sobs of sorrows seeped through the court. For no one could understand how in a world as beautiful and as wonderful as ours, such hate and anger from intolerance could exist—let alone invade their own farms.

Pea jumped up and started yelling, "I say no more immigrants. No more foreigners. This is our land!"

As the crowd began to work into a frenzy again, Buster got up and spoke.

"Hold on—hold on everybody. Your headed in the wrong direction. Just because a few foreigners did some mean and hateful things doesn't mean all foreigners are mean. My grand-daddy was a foreigner once. We Paso Fino horses come from Columbia and Peru, and Mr. Peas' relatives come from Asia."

"This country was founded on taking in others who were looking for a

better life for themselves and their families. That's what makes this country so diverse and great. We can't stop doing what made us great to begin with."

(H) "Buster is 100% correct," interjected Hoony. "We have all had our lives changed by this terrible tragedy. We have all become more united, more prepared, safer now. Let's grow stronger and better, not weaker and bitter."

"Let us remember hatred and prejudice can be contagious. Let's not become that which we fear the most. Let's learn from the past, live for today, and prepare for the brighter future that lies ahead for us all.

"Agreed," said all.

Oh—and by the way—the buzzards were all sent to jail for the rest of their lives. Because remember, wrong doing has its consequences, and wrong doers are always punished.

BILLY THE BLUEBIRD: TOO MUCH SUGAR

Billy the bluebird blew by blasting bundles of beautiful begonia blossoms beyond unbelievable boundaries! Fallen flowers fell fourteen feet forward from the ferocious force field following his fast fly-by!

Harry and Harriet, the hummingbirds, had noticed Billy the bluebird had been feeding at their feeder of late, and that was a problem. You see, Harry and Harriet's normal diet consist of a high amount of sugar for their size, but their metabolism is designed to handle the amount of sugar needed in their diets.

Billy the bluebird on the other hand shouldn't have much sugar in his diet, because sugar makes his already high energy level go zooming at four times faster than it's already fast pace.

Harry the hummingbird had shared with Buster the problem at hand, so Buster confronted Billy the bluebird.

(B) "Hey little Billy-bird you seem to be flying around way above your normal speed limit lately."

(BB) "I know-I know. I've been feeding at the hummingbird's feeder—makes me feel full of energy—lots of energy. All that sugar makes me feel good—real good," he explained, with his tongue wagging at a hundred miles per hour.

(B) "But that's not part of your normal diet, and little birds like you don't need all that sugar. It's gonna be bad for you in the long run. You're feeling good now, but it'll catch up to you. I'm warning you—you better watch the amount of sugar you take in."

(BB) "But maaaaaan Buster, sugar sure is a zoom. Don't sleep much, wake up tired and groggy—but more sugar and zooom again."

(B) "You better watch you don't get addicted. You could set off a chain reaction, too much energy-too low energy- too high of energy- too low of energy. I'm-a-tellin-ya, watch it," Buster warned.

Well sure enough, while speeding through the forest, Billy the bluebird hit a tree. He had been flying so fast that he couldn't dodge the tree in time—BAM! Knocked silly. He realized then Buster had been right. Too much sugar in your diet is not a healthy thing.

(B) "Well I hate to say I told you so—but I told you so. You're just lucky it knocked some sense into you, because others haven't been so lucky you know."

And so Billy the bluebird, having banged bundles of brilliance into his brain, returned to his normal diet that kept him safe and healthy—and safe from the crashes of a sugar buzz as well.

Series Six

TALENTS: Uncle Woo-Woo

Nermy's Uncle Woo-Woo, the Siamese cat, was a very famous and important artist. His artwork was shown the world over. Having to attend all of the openings at galleries around the globe kept Woo-Woo traveling most of the time. The times he had to paint were precious and few.

During one hiatus, he decided to spend some time with nephew Nermy. As well, he knew inspiration for new work could always be found at the farm. When he arrived he was graciously greeted by everyone.

(WW) "I hope I'm not intruding, or won't be too much trouble."

(B) "Why heck no—we're happy to have you visit with us. Besides it'll be fun and interesting to watch how you create," Buster gleefully replied.

(WW) "I thank you for your kind words and your hospitality."

As Nermy showed uncle Woo-Woo to his quarters, Peabody snipped to Buster, "Humph. A bit strange don't you think—those Bohemian artist types. We should be on a..."

(B) "Oh hush Mr. Pea. Really—can it."

Buster had set up a space in the rear of the barn where uncle Woo-Woo could sleep and paint. Having his own space away from the other animals was important; because sometimes artists are inspired in the middle

of the night, and Woo-Woo would sometimes be painting to the wee hours of dawn and beyond.

One afternoon uncle Woo-Woo was trying to show little Nermy kitty how to draw and paint. No matter how hard he tried, little Nermy couldn't quite grasp the concept. The more he tried, the better it got, but he still just couldn't get it right.

(N) "I just can't do it. I have no talent," Nermy disappointingly exclaimed.

(WW) "Ahhhh that's not ah-truuue, we all have a talent," Uncle Woo-Woo explained. "You trrrrying-ah-too hard. You need to let your creative energy flow naturrrrrally. You need to work with it—not against it—this no-ah produce-ah fruit frrrrom your labor."

(N) "But I want to paint like you uncle Woo-Woo, but I can't paint. I don't know what my talent is," Nermy sighed.

(WW) "Ahhhh Nermy-son, you will find your talent when you least expect it. Keep an open mind, have-ah patience. And remember, sometimes the one you want to be your talent—not your talent," Woo-Woo explained. "You looking in wrong ah-field," he added.

(N) "But we only have one field," Nermy misunderstanding replied.

(WW) "Oh-it's-a-like-you looking for carrots in the apple orchard. Your talent not where you looking Nermy-son. Keep looking. Try many things. Be purrrrsistant. Be patient."

(B) "Be patient—did I hear someone say carrots and apples? I'm hungry now!" said Buster, now on full food alert.

(P) "Humph—more like nuts I say," whispered Peabody to the nearby quadry of ducks.

(D) "More like a quack," quacked the duck from his quagmire.

(H) "Did you say something Peabody?" Hooty interrupted.

(P) "Quite! This conversation is quickly getting queer. This talk of looking for talents to those who have none—somewhat like sending the boy on the quest for the Holy-Grail if you will. I mean you're either born with them, such as I am—shame that it is that some of us get multiple doses—you know, the multi-talented, much like myself."

(H) "And just what are some of your many talents Peabody?" Hooty asked.

(P) "Well I say—we do digress. I believe you were helping poor Nermy here. Things to do. I'll be on my way," Peabody shouted over his wing, as he raced out of reach of interrogation.

(WW) "Oh Nermy-son, he wrong-wrong-wrong. We all born with a talent. Many things we can practice and learn—become very-very good at. But when you find your talent, it come-ah easy. And then practice will make it purrrrfect. So keep looking Nermy-son. Keep trying new things. And don't listen to others who say you have-ah no talent—not so! We all have a talent. It will come to you in time—maybe a long time—but if you seek your talent you will find it."

(B) "Well with that said Woo-Woo, what about those carrots and apples you mentioned? I'm hungry as a horse. Wait a minute—I am a horse."

ADOPTION: Peanuts Story

Peanut the Border Collie, the most loving, loyal dog anyone could want as a companion. She was so full of love, and had such a joy for life, that at times she was absolutely effervescent.

She bubbled with joy. She saw beauty in everything. Especially sunsets and sunrises—oh how she loved those. "The always changing painting in the sky by the great master," she would say, in a never ending awe of its beauty.

If you knew her past, you would have to wonder how she could see the beauty of the world so clearly and with such intensity. It made you have a special appreciation for how she could still trust anyone, let alone love everyone.

Every time she came for a visit at Buster's Farm the animals would all enjoy her humor and playfulness. Her zest for life was almost contagious. For you know how everyone likes to be around those who are happy and friendly.

It was always good to see Peanut; however, at the same time it brought a mixed blessing, one that was spiced with sorrow. For you see, whenever she was visiting, it also meant she had been thrown out of another

home, or abandoned on yet another lonely road somewhere in the middle of nowhere.

Several years earlier Peanut had lost one of her parents. Her other parent couldn't take care of Peanut alone, or for whatever unknown reason had given Peanut up for adoption. Through the years poor Peanut had run the gambit of foster homes in search of that one family that would love her and take care of her.

She had been placed in some of the most awful and abusive foster homes imaginable. Some of the people who so called, "loved her," would beat her, neglect to feed her, or simply neglect or ignore her health and hygiene needs. Many of these foster homes she simply ran away from.

Her times on the streets had given her a street savvy way beyond her years. She had every trick in the book tried on her. Through it all, it still had not taken away—let alone dampened—her upbeat attitude that one day she would be loved. She still loved everyone.

Peanut always attributed her upbeat joy to having a forgiving heart. She never held onto her anger, or held grudges towards those who had mistreated her or that had done her wrong. She was always thankful to even the meanest of her foster parents. She was thankful that they had at least tried to love her.

She had learned long ago that carrying around anger, grudges, and being unforgiving was unhealthy, and perpetuated the unhappiness on a daily basis. Sort of like living the bad experience over and over again every day. She learned that forgiveness towards others is an absolute-essential ingredient for having a happy life.

Well, this time Peanut had arrived right at the busy time around the farm. Everyone was harvesting their crops, and selling the abundance of the left over's at a little roadside stand in front of the farm. Her help was welcomed, and her zest for life made even work fun.

Over the years many people had gotten to know of the high quality produce the animals at Buster's Farm raised. It would draw many people that were willing and able to pay the higher price for the work and time that had gone into producing such quality produce.

While stocking the freshly picked produce at the stand, Peanut was telling Hoony about the latest foster home she had been placed in. And how it seemed everyone in the area seemed to love and hate her at the same time.

She told Hoony how utterly confusing such a situation was. And how she was growing weary of going from home to home. She almost sobbed when she told of how she almost dreaded to see what was to be next. But as

always, in a cheerful outlook added, "The next foster home will be the one where I find love," she confidently told Hoony.

Meanwhile, over the counter, out of sight from Peanut and Hoony, was a woman who by accident was overhearing their conversation. She was so touched hearing about Peanut's plight in life. She had been looking a long time for a dog for her son, but they were all either too mean or too rough.

Upon checking out, she inquired of Buster, "Who's the new addition to the farm, that cute little border collie over there?" she asked Buster, as she looked towards Peanut.

(B) "Oh that's just our friend Peanut. She's staying here for a while," Buster said.

Trying to be discreet of Peanut's personal business, Buster changed the subject. "How's your family? Heck—you've been coming here long enough now, you seem like family yourself. How's that new house y'all built? I hear it's a beauty. And I gotta tell ya," he lowered his voice to a whisper, "you're some of the nicest people that come here every year—and I'm not just saying that," Busters said.

The lady thanked Buster for the compliment, and updated him on how her family was. She mentioned how she had been having trouble finding the

right dog as a companion for her son. She told Buster how she had overheard Peanut and Hoony's conversation.

Well you know how this story ends don't you? That's right—she adopted Peanut right then and there! Her new family cared for her, took care of all of her needs, and even brought Peanut to the Pooch Parlor every week to get trimmed, bathed, and perfumed.

They would bring Peanut to the farm occasionally to visit all of her friends. Peanut not only had found love, but had found, "Doggie heaven, right here on earth," as she had described her new home to everyone.

As well as finding a loving home, Peanut had learned the lesson that teaches us good things come to those who wait patiently and cheerfully. And that if you believe with all your heart—and have a cheerful and forgiving heart—love will find you. Guaranteed!

PROCRASTINATION:

(B) "Good morning Mr. Pea. How...oh excuse me—I'm so tired for yawning. It sure is early. How ya doing this morning Mr. Pea?"

(P) "Well Buster—you're right. It is early. What's the big deal that we all have to be here so early in the morning?"

(B) "Well, Ed said this is a long story we gotta do. It's about fifteen minutes long, and we had to get here early."

(P) "Get here early! The sun's hardly up. I mean this is—where's the coffee?"

(B) "Well they-hav'n-they hav'n. Well..."

(P) "Look, you're already flubbing your lines, and we haven't even gotten started. And it's so early-early. And it's such a beautiful day outside. That sunrise was just simply magnificent."

(B) "Yeah, it's supposed to be just a perfect day."

(P) "Humph, a perfect day to be inside working all day."

(C) "Hey everybody—how y'all doing? It sure is early huh? Boy—even I'm a-kinda-think'n it's early this morning to be here. Why we gotta be here so early?"

(B) "Oh it's a long story."

(C) "What?"

(B) "No I mean a long story—like we gotta do a long one."

(C) "Hey Buster! How come I don't hear any music?"

(P) "Humph, go figure boy. It's so early—musicians be here this time of the morning? By the way, where's Ed? He's the one that called this early meeting and all this early practice."

(B) "Yeah—come to think of it."

(C) "Why don't we go outside and play a little while before he gets here, because it sure is pretty outside. It's a pretty day not to be working huh?"

(B) "You got a point there."

(P) "Yes-yes, I do say—Ah, you know-um, we could put this off to another day. I mean you know there's always tomorrow—we could do this story then. Why don't we all do that? I say we go enjoy the day."

(B) "Well I'm kinda for that. I wouldn't mind going back to sleep for a little while."

(C) "Yeah, and I-I got some friends that are all off today—and we could go play kick the ball. I'm all for that. OK. Let's go."

(B) "Let's go."

(P) "Yes-yes, I do say—we'll do this yet another day. OK. I'll see y'all."

(B&C) "Bye Mr. Pea."

(B) "I'll see you later little Cruzy."

(ED) "Where is everyone?"

(C) "Ah-but-well—Buster went back to bed, and Mr. Pea—he's gone. And I'm gonna play kick ball. I'll see ya Ed."

Half trapped by Ed's sudden arrival, Cruz, Mr. Pea, and Buster hurriedly rush away.

(ED) "Well I guess that's the story on procrastination. When you put things off—nothing gets done."

Series Seven

AGING: El-Poco's Story

El-Poco, an uncle to little Cruz. He was a very old Paso Fino horse that had moved from Peru a long time ago. He always had many stories to share from having lived a full and productive life, and just from having lived to be so old. How old he really is—is a mystery—because its not polite to ask people how old they are.

In his exciting life, El-Poco had traveled many places. He had even been in a World-War once, “The big one,” he would say. He had been a soldier horse—a war horse as they are known. El-Poco's duty in the war was pulling the wagons that carried out injured soldiers from the heart of the battles. He had been awarded many medals of honor for his valiant service. Saving many lives, he was a true hero.

El-Poco had seen the horrors of war first hand. But he would only tell the stories to the younger animals, in hopes that they could learn from the mistakes that only age and wisdom can share. And hoping that the war stories would show them how awful and unforgiving war is. He tried to show them that there is nothing glamorous about war. El-Poco's was a dream that Cruz's generation would be the one that finally shows the world how to live in peace together.

Minus the war stories, uncle Poke had plenty of stories to tell. The stories from his experiences in life kept everyone captivated for hours. For you see, it's one thing to hear about or read of history and the past, but it's a whole 'nother thing to hear it straight from the horses mouth that was there.

Listening to their elders was how the animals passed on their family heritage and tradition to the younger generations. Those who ignore spending time with their elders, who have lived a long life, miss-out on living history—and a first hand account of their own families and relatives. They miss out on the history of themselves.

Of course Sir Peabody loved when POCO came to visit. "The General," is how he respectfully referred to El-Poco. He would always try to get POCO to talk of, and to share past war stories.

(P) "I say General, do tell me again about the Battle of the Bulge, and I'm not talking about Buster's expanding waste line there—ha-ha."

(B) "Then you must want 'a hear the one about the battle of the bulging ego—yours!" Buster said game fully joining Peabody's idea of cutting humor.

(C) "Come on uncle Poke, let's go run and play kick the ball."

(El-P) "I'll have to take a rain check on that now little Cruz. I'm feeling a little under the weather and a bit stiff in the joints, and moving slow today.

I'll probably go have a nap for a while. Let's see how I'm feeling later OK?"

(C) "OK uncle Poke—but why do you want ‘a take a nap every day? I had to do that when I was real little. I don't have to take naps everyday now—‘cause I'm bigger," Cruz boasted.

(El-P) "Well it helps me recharge my old batteries," he said, as he went off to his stall for a rest.

(C) "I don't understand how uncle Poke did all of those things in the past when he's always tired and moving so slow now?"

(B) "Well see little Cruzy, as you get older you get slower and weaker, and need to rest now and then."

(C) "That's just the opposite of what's happening to me. I'm getting bigger and faster—and stronger every day!" Cruz said.

(P) "That's right boy. Life is like a flower if you will. First a little bud as yourself there, then you bloom into a magnificent flower—and if I do say so, at this point in my life I'm quite the bed of roses."

(B) "Here comes the battle of the bulging ego."

(P) "Humph, anyway Nermy-boy, like I was saying, first a bud, then a flower. And just as the flower, our own beauty begins to fade—ah-ah..."

There was a dead silence. Everybody was looking at Peabody, waiting for his own words to sink into his head—and they did.

(P) "Oh my! I'm doomed! My beauty will fade. I'll be ugly!" he cried aloud, as he went off around the barn. His tears streaming in the wind.

(H) "And probably none the wiser. Thank goodness he's gone. We've already done that story in book three," Hooty said. "You see Nermy, as one gets older your body is like a clock—it winds down and runs slower. Napping at uncle Pocos age is sort of like winding the clock again."

"Also when one ages, you slowly start trading the beauty and energy of youth—for the beauty and wisdom of age. A new beauty, one that is crowned with a head of gray hair like your uncle Poco."

(C) "Sort of like a sign to say how far you've made it in life, and how much you've learned in life—huh Mr. Hooty?"

(H) "Sort of like that little Cruz. So just understand when your uncle Pokes a little tired and slow, it's just so he can rest up and share more of what he knows about life with his favorite nephew—as well as us all."

(C) "But I thought owls knew everything Mr. Hooty?" Cruz asked.

(H) "Even I learn much from your uncle Poke. Poke has years of knowledge on me, and teaches me many things. The wise know that there is much to be learned from our elders. And that we should give them the respect and honor they deserve for having lived a long life, and for sharing much with us all."

(B) "That's right little Cruzy. We should all take time to spend with our elders. And remember, time is a precious thing to the older animals amongst us. We should help them as much as we can. 'Cause remember, all that opportunity that we have to become anything we want to be—all that knowledge, and all that help to get you there—comes from our elders. So take time to listen and learn whenever you can."

(C) "I think I understand a lot better now. And as soon as uncle Poke gets up from his nap I-I'm gonna ask him to tell us some more stories of his life—and tell him how much I love him."

(P) "Now you're talking boy—Carpe diem."

(C) "What's that mean Mr. Pea?"

(P) "Well, it's Latin, for seize the day. Which I think is a great place to end this story on aging, don't you think so Ed? Seize the moment—I think that works. What say you go ahead and stop the music there Ed, and call this one a wrap ole-man."

Mysteriously all of the horses start wondering aloud again of who this Ed is?

LAZINESS: Caesar the Goat

One summer Cruz had his friend, Caesar, over for a week or so. Caesar lived deep in the heart of the city. He didn't have any brothers or sisters. As well, both of his parents had to work outside of the home. This left Caesar alone most of the time. He was often very bored, and he was always lazy. He had an excuse for everything. He had little or no responsibilities.

On the other hand—life at Buster's Farm was always busy. Between chores and playing, there was always something to do, or to be done.

(B) "Hey little Caesar, could you please come and help me get some hay out of the loft?"

(Czr) "I-i-i-i-i-i don't think I-i-i-i'm bi-i-i-ig enough to lift hay."

(B) "It's not the whole bale, it's just the little flakes," explained Buster. "We need to put 'em in everyone's stalls for breakfast. I'll meet you over by the hay in a minute or so. Hoony's gett'n the grain and little Cruz is fill'n up the water troughs. We'll be ready to eat breakfast soon."

(Czr) "I-i-i-it sure is er-er-early," yawned Caesar. "Y'all sure do g-g-g-et up early around here."

(B) "Well like the old sayin goes, 'Early to bed, early to rise—makes one healthy-wealthy and wise.'" "Now go on, and I'll see you shortly."

Caesar hadn't gone twenty feet before he was sidetracked by a butterfly fluttering by, and then by the fluffy clouds overhead. Once he had started imagining shapes within the clouds—the next thing you know, he had fallen asleep behind the barn.

As the animals were gathering for breakfast, Buster asked, "Has anyone seen little Caesar? I'd asked him to help me get the hay flakes and he hasn't shown up yet."

Cruz put down the water pale and cheerfully volunteered, "I'll help you get the hay Buster."

(B) "Well thank you little Cruz, but I'm worried about little Caesar, something could have happened. We better go look for him," Buster worriedly suggested.

(P) "I'm sure the boy is fine. Just taking in the country sights and smells—all new to a city boy you know. However, might I take this opportunity to say, we wouldn't have to be worried one bit if you would all reconsider my security fence proposal. Perhaps you all don't understand the concept quite clearly. Let me..."

(B) "Oh boy—not again! Mr. Pea, we all said no twice. We're not going through this with you again. Let's go look for little Caesar."

Everyone looked everywhere. No Caesar. Hoony and Nermy checked the hay lofts. Buster checked with the ducks by the pond. And Mr. Pea—well he thought it best if he just stay put in case Caesar showed up. Still no Caesar. Everyone was beginning to get worried and scared.

Hooty took to the sky for an ariel view. From his vantage point way up in the sky he could see the entire farm. Circling around-looking down, he saw Caesar asleep behind the barn.

(H) "I see him. He's behind the barn," directed Hooty from above.

As the animals gathered around. Buster nudged sleeping Caesar with his cold nose, "Wake up!"

Surprised and embarrassed Caesar jumped up. "I-i-i-is it time for br-r-breakfast?" he asked—all wide-eyed in embarrassment.

(B) "It's past time for breakfast. I asked you to come help me, and here you are asleep again!"

(Czr) "I-i-i-im sor-r-r-ry, I-i-i-I'm not used to getiing up so er-r-r-ly."

They accepted his excuse and all went and enjoyed a good breakfast. Throughout the day, especially during chore time, Caesar was nowhere to be found. And always had some lame excuse for his whereabouts—generally

sleeping somewhere.

One day he disappeared for hours. He hadn't told anyone he was going off exploring alone—which they never allowed any of the younger animals of the farm to do. All of the animals were very worried that Caesar may have wandered off into the woods and gotten lost. Hooty was unable to see through the forest canopy from the air, so his wide-eyed ariel view was of no use.

They broke into search parties going in several directions to look for Caesar. After hours of searching they all went back to the barn. No one had seen a trace of Caesar. It was getting dark, and the animals were worried sick. As they returned to the barn, there was Caesar, standing out in the field staring at the sky.

(Czr) "W-e-e-e-r have y'a-a-al been? I-i-i- was scar-r-r-ed you left me."

The animals were speechless. Both relieved and angered at Caesar's disappearing-reappearing act.

(B) "Where have we been? Where in the heck have you been? We've looked everywhere for hours. Where were you?" Buster sternly demanded.

(Czr) "I-i-i'de gone swimming in the river."

(P) "Swimming in the river! Alone? Are you nuts or just plain crazy? Do you know how dangerous such a thing is?"

(Czr) "Bu-u-u-ut I-i-i- swim in the city pool all the ti-i-i-ime."

(P) "City pool! This is the woods—a river—not a pool with a lifeguard, a light, and a drain. There are undercurrents that could suck you underwater and carry you miles away! Alligators lurking in the shadows—snakes—all sorts of beasts waiting to prey on you naive attitude. In my day such behavior would have been rewarded with a swift..."

(B) "Calm down Mr. Pea—but little Caesar we gotta talk about your behavior. Even though you're a guest, you should be helping in the chores. You always seem to be getting out of helping anyone do anything."

(Czr) "Bu-u-u-ut you all g-g-g-get it done without me."

(B) "That's not the point. You should help. Not just sit around watching others do all the work."

(P) "Yes-yes, such behavior left unbridled will result in you becoming a watcher of life—not a doer. The world has enough watchers. We need more doers in this world," Peabody said.

(B) "He's right Caesar. Watching others doesn't do anything to enrich your own life. And you'll never be successful at anything in life if all you do is daydream and sleep."

(H) "Daydreaming is fine. The world's greatest ideas came from dreams. But hard work is required to make a dream become a reality. Being lazy perpetuates lazy. Being busy makes things happen," Hooty explained.

(P) "Here-here, he's right. Watching others live their lives is like watching you own life go by—wasted, unnoticed. And this going off on your own must stop! If all your to be is a burden around here—I vote that you go back home."

All of the stern words had made Caesar realize how he had been both acting selfish and lazy. He also could feel their concern for him within those stern words of correction. And so for the rest of his stay at the farm, Caesar helped with all of the chores. The more he helped and worked, the better he found that playtime felt. He also found that being active actually gave him more energy.

By the time his stay was over at the farm, Caesar had learned that being lazy produces nothing in your life. His newfound discipline went on to help him in all aspects of his life when he returned home. He began helping around the house—cleaning, dusting, picking up, and washing the dishes while his parents were at work.

His helping around the house helped create more time for his family to spend together once his parents got home from work. As well, learning to

concentrate and finish the chores at hand had caused his grades in school to go way up. He had found that learning in itself can be exciting and fun. And that when you put your mind and your body in motion—great things can happen in your life.

Series Eight

Anger Management:

Based upon the lessons of Dr. Grad Flick

As the evening shadows grew longer at Buster's Farm, all of the chores of the day were done. The two cats slept in the warm sun, while the ducks cooled themselves off in the pond. Buster, the wise and practical Paso Fino horse—and Sir Peabody, the brilliantly colored cocky Peacock, enjoyed the beauty and serenity of Buster's Farm.

As Buster and Mr. Pea rested in the shady green pasture, under the ancient oak tree that towers over the little red barn—that is home to all of the animals—they watched as the sun grew larger as it sank lower into the afternoon sky. Creating the ever changing colors of yet another sunset masterpiece.

(B) “Well little Cruz pony oughta be back from the barnyard jumping competition soon. He sure has spent a lot of time practicing. I sure hope he did well today,” Buster said.

(P) “Yes-yes, I'm sure the lad did fine. He'll probably be in high spirits when he gets home,” Sir Peabody added.

Just then the quite peacefulness of Buster's Farm was shattered. SLAM! Went the barnyard gate. KA-BLAM! Off sailing through the air went the feed bucket.

(B) “What's the matter little Cruz? You seem a bit angry this afternoon,” Buster inquired, to the quite visibly annoyed Cruz.

(P) “Yes my-boy, do tell us what would cause you to be acting so rude—

slamming things, kicking things around— anger is no excuse for those types of behavior my-boy,” Sir Peabody correctively interjected.

(C) “I don’t know if I’m mad, sad, glad or scared. I-I-I’m so upset I’m not sure how I feel right now,” replied Cruz to his defense.

(B) “Well why don’t you calm down and let’s talk about it little Cruzy. Tell me what happened to cause these feelings,” suggested Buster.

(P) “Yes do tell. Let’s hear the problem so that we can all work out a solution. After all, three heads are better than one at solving a problem,” Mr. Pea proclaimed, as he edged his way deeper into the commotion.

(C) “Well Mr. Pea I’m so upset I’m shaking. Maybe we could talk later. I-I’ve got a knot in my stomach. And I’m breathing so fast I can hardly think—let alone talk,” Cruz explained.

(B) “Well little fella, one things for sure, if you’ve got all of those symptoms, then your angry. As angry a snorting bull! If you’re shak’n, and getting tight jawed, and your hearts racing at a hundred miles an hour—those are sure signs that you’re angry. Would you like me to show you a little trick that’ll calm you down Cruzy?” Buster asked engagingly.

(C) “Sure Buster show me a trick. And if it helps me feel better I-I want to see. Show me Buster,” Cruz excitedly exclaimed.

(B) “Well OK. First take a deep breath through your nose.” Cruz filled his

lungs with air, anticipating the trick. “Now slowly let it out through your mouth.”

Cruz did exactly as Buster explained.

(B) “Now do it again,” Buster said.

After several moments of this little Cruz asked Buster, “So what’s the trick Buster?”

(B) “Well Cruzy how ya feeling?”

As he thought about it, he realized how much better he felt. And with a voice full of excitement Cruz exclaimed, “I feel calm now. My stomach is better, and I’m not shaky anymore. That was a good trick Buster. Thank you.”

(B) “Your welcome Cruzy. And remember, you can do that trick any time and any place to keep from becoming angry. And if you’re already angry, it works to help calm you down as well. Now why don’t you tell us what happened today,” Buster said with concern.

(C) “Well ah-ah–today at ah...”

(P) “Calm down my boy and start at the beginning. A good place as any to start you know,” suggested Pea.

Calmly Cruz continued. “Today at the barnyard competition–when I was doing my second jump–I jumped so high and so far. I could feel I had done well. I was feeling proud of my jump. But-but when I-I landed, the ground was slippery, and I started sliding. And I-I slowly came to a backwards stop–just barely bumping the

pony waiting in line at the water trough.”

(P) “Sounds harmless enough to me,” giggled Mr. Pea.

(C) “Yeah. You would think so Mr. Pea—but what I didn’t know was my little bump into the pony caused him to push the colt in front of him at the drinking trough.”

(B) “Oh boy—I smell the trouble brewing,” Buster mumbled.

(C) “It caused his head to be pushed all the way under water—clean past his eyes! All of the others around started point’n and laugh’n. The colt looked at the pony—who looked at me—and-and that’s when the trouble started.”

“The only thing the colt saw was me doing my happy dance over my good jump—which he didn’t even know I had done. He thought I had shoved the pony into him to on purpose. I-I didn’t even know anything had happened.”

“Before I could explain, he started calling me names. And all the others were laugh’n, and edging him on—and-and then he pushed me. It all happened so fast. I-I could hardly keep up with what was happening.”

“I tell you Buster, I sure wish I would have known your trick to keep calm then, because I was getting angry. Before I knew it he reared up, and I kicked him. It’s a good thing the teacher was there to break it up. And now I have to see him tomorrow—so I’m nervous about that. But I had a great jump today—so I’m happy too! I just don’t know how I feel,” confided Cruz.

(P) “Yes my boy, it’s quite natural to have mixed emotions. Several feelings at once you know, but you need to learn to identify your feelings—so that you’ll know best how to handle a situation. What to do to keep it from becoming a problem, sometimes a bad problem.”

“In my vast travels and quest for knowledge, I have seen every mix of emotions imaginable. Angry. Scared. Happy. Sad. Angry-sad-and scared. The list goes on and on. I don’t know if you’re all aware that as well as the vast studies that you know I know...”

(B) “Painfully aware!” Buster interjected.

(P) “Humph. As well I have studied behavior and...”

(B) “Oh boy—here we go. Mr. Pea can you just help us help little Cruz with his problem?” Buster pleadingly asked.

(P) “Well yes-yes, I was only talking about my experiences in life. As you all seem to think I make these things up!”

(B) “The point Pea!”

(P) “Humph—OK then! In summary Cruz my-boy, one of the most important things that you can learn is to be aware of your feelings and emotions. Just like the symptoms that you had earlier, as Buster noted, these are signs of anger. And do let me say—you must learn to think ahead. Think of how your actions today will effect your future, as well as the punishments that may come today. Many times in my

travels I've seen so many little misunderstandings turn into big trouble!"

"Once in Singapore, I saw a collie dog in a crowded room get pushed into a hog—a simple accident—but my-my hogs can be hot headed beasts, but I digress. So anyway, the hog took this as a mean action against him from the dog. He completely misread the situation, missing the truth altogether."

"Then the name calling, shoving, and threatening began. It turned into total chaos. I-I don't want to talk about it—but I will tell you this—they both ended up locked in the pen for ten years! Ten years of their lives wasted because of an over reaction to an accidental bump."

(C) "Ten years—that's longer than I've been here!" exclaimed Cruz. "That's a long time to taken away from having fun—like playing kick-the-ball and jumping," he added.

(B) "That's right little Cruz. You need to learn to stop, think, and then react. When you feel that you're getting angry—you can start deep breathing—and slowly count to ten. You can even use self-talk as well."

(C) "Self-talk? What's that Buster?" Cruz inquisitively inquired.

(B) "Well, when ya feel angry feelings coming on, tell yourself to chill out and take it easy. Say, I can stay in control—or this is no big deal—things like that. Say 'em to yourself, or even say 'em out loud if you want to. 'Cause all of these things'll help you from showing your angry feelings. It'll help ya keep your cool when a bad

situation starts. Remember little Cruzy, to be cool you gotta keep your cool.”

(C) “I understand now Buster. If I think ahead, do deep breathing, and tell myself to stay calm—I can stop things from going the way they did today.”

(B) “That’s exactly right little fella. Put out the flame of anger before it becomes a raging wild-fire,” encouraged Buster.

(P) “You know Cruz, one thing we should all do in life as well, is to take a moment to think about others feelings in a situation. Think about how they feel in light of how they see things happening. Take time to look at it from their hooves. Empathy is the technical term might I add...”

(B) “No might about it—you did,” chided Buster to Pea.

(C) “I see your point Mr. Pea. If I would have looked at what happened today from what the colt saw—I-I guess I would have understood his reaction better. And—and if I would have been him, I might have been angry too.”

(B) “Sometimes a simple I’m sorry goes along way little Cruz. That’ll put out most fires faster than water,” said Buster.

(P) “True-true, and way too few say it these days,” agreed Pea.

(B) “Once you start practicing these things you’ll see how many things in life can be handled with kind words. And remember, treat everyone as you’d like them to treat you. And when you do well at staying calm—reward yourself,” Buster explained.

(C) “Reward myself—like get a treat?”

(B) “No little fella. Tell yourself, I did well—I kept my cool—I handled that well, things like that.”

(C) “Kind of like giving myself a little pat on the back—huh Buster?”

(P) “That’s right my-boy, remind yourself when you do well. And remember that self-talk can also help to re-think something that didn’t work so well in the past, so that next time a different approach can be used. Learn from your mistakes. And do like Buster said, ‘stop, think, and then react.’”

“If your problem allows time, come home and talk it over with others. As I said, three heads are better than one at solving a problem—brainstorming—that’s what it’s called, most helpful. It’s where everyone gets together and talks about the problem, and the best solution is found. Sometimes when you’re in the middle of a bad situation you become so blinded by anger that as the old saying goes, you can’t see the forest for the trees,” explained Pea.

(C) “You know everybody—I’m going to start doing these things today,” said Cruz.

(B) “Now your thinking Cruzy. Maybe tomorrow you could bring an extra snack to share, and start by apologizing—say your sorry for the accident and misunderstanding. And who knows, ya’ll could even become friends, and share a laugh over it,” Buster encouraged.

(P) “Indeed! That’s a marvelous idea Buster. As well Cruz, you can start making assertive statements. It always helps to clear the air you know. Letting people know how you feel, what you expect—communication—a wonderful thing.”

(C) “What do you mean Mr. Pea? I don’t understand,” Cruz asked a little puzzled.

(P) “Well you see, from a purely behavioral point of view...”

(B) “Pea—can you make it simple? Please,” Buster pleaded.

(P) “Humph. Certainly. You see, from a layman’s view, ask for what you want. Learn to make “I” statements. Like, I want to solve this problem, or I feel angry when you call me that name, and I would like you to stop calling me that name.”

“Equally important is to avoid blaming others. When they feel as though you’re blaming them they may become angry, which only raises the level of anger in the situation. But better yet—in keeping with Buster’s short term thinking—tomorrow you can approach the colt, apologize and say, I’d like to explain what happened. And after you do, tell him, I want to be your friend.”

“Learn to take responsibility for your actions, and to accept the consequences—the good as well as the bad. Always do the appropriate things necessary to make good come from a situation, and that starts by staying calm and cool.”

(C) “I see what to do now. Tomorrow I’ll take some deep breaths, focus on my feelings, and see things from his point of view. I’ll talk calmly and tell him what I

want.”

(B) “And what’s that little Cruzy?” Buster reaffirmingly asked.

(C) “To be friends, and to laugh over the whole thing,” Cruz proudly exclaimed.

(B) “You know little Cruzy, I think you have the situation in hand,” Buster said in a supporting tone.

(P) “And remember what Buster said, ‘stop, think, and then react,’” Pea reminded.

(C) “I feel better now—having talked about it. And-and ya’ll taught me some good ways to stop from getting angry. Thanks for listening and helping you guys. I feel much better now—I say we all have a snack,” Cruz suggested.

(P) “Yes indeed! I’m certainly for that,” Peabody exclaimed.

(B) “You know I’m always up for food,” Buster chimed in.

Having learned valuable lessons on how to keep your cool—and how to put out the fires of anger—all of the animals enjoyed a good, healthy snack together. Once again, important lessons in life had been learned at Buster’s Farm.

