

## **THE BARN FIRE DOGS**

ON A SHEEP FARM IN OHIO FILLED WITH LOTS OF GREEN GRASS AND TALL TREES LIVED 3 BEAUTIFUL WHITE DOGS. THEY WERE CALLED GREAT PYRENEES AND THEIR JOB WAS TO GUARD THE FARMER'S SHEEP FROM HARM.

THEIR MOTHER'S NAME WAS CINDY AND SHE WAS VERY WISE. SHE HAD PROTECTED SHEEP AND GOATS ON A VERY BIG FARM IN PENNSYLVANIA. CINDY KNEW MANY CLEVER WAYS TO DO HER JOB FOR THE FARMER. IN THE DAY TIME, THEY WORKED TOGETHER WITH THE FARMER TO KEEP THE FARM SAFE FROM INTRUDERS. AT NIGHT, THE BIG WHITE DOGS WORKED ALONE.

THESE DOGS WERE A VERY BRAVE AND SPECIAL KIND OF DOG WHO HAD BEEN TAUGHT BY THEIR MOTHER, CINDY, TO WATCH AND PROTECT ALL ANIMALS IN THEIR CARE. THEY HAD BEEN BORN ON A SHEEP FARM IN PENNSYLVANIA IN A LARGE WOODEN HORSE BARN. LATE AT NIGHT, WHEN ALL THE OTHER ANIMALS WERE ASLEEP CINDY WOULD TELL HER PUPPIES SECRETE GUARDIAN DOG THINGS, LIKE HOW TO BARK AND SCARE AWAY ANY DOGS OR COYOTES WHO MIGHT WANT TO HARM THE SHEEP.

THEY LEARNED THE BARK FOR 'GO AWAY! I AM ON GUARD HERE' AND THE BARK FOR 'REAL DANGER' SO THE SHEEP WOULD RUN AND HIDE BEHIND THE BIG WHITE DOG SO NOTHING BAD WOULD HAPPEN TO THEM.

THEY LEARNED HOW TO KEEP THE SHEEP AWAY FROM THEIR DOG FOOD. THAT CAME IN HANDY, BECAUSE SHEEP COULD SOMETIMES MAKE PIGS OF THEMSELVES.

SOMETIMES THEY WOULD HAVE TO THINK ON THEIR OWN BECAUSE CINDY COULD NOT THINK OF EVERYTHING HER PUPPIES WOULD HAVE TO. SOON THEY WOULD BE GROWN UP AND GREAT PYRENEES LIVE STOCK GUARDIAN DOGS THEMSELVES, SO CINDY TOLD THEM TO 'JUST DO WHAT IS BEST FOR THE ANIMALS AND PEOPLE IN YOUR CARE.'

THE PUPPIES WERE IN TRAINING, BUT ALSO HAD FUN. THEY CLIMBED OVER STRAW BALES PLAYING IN THE BARN. THEY WRESTLED WITH EACH OTHER UNTIL THE NOISE GOT TOO LOUD AND CINDY MADE THEM STOP THOUGH SHE WAS NEVER REALLY MAD AND ALWAYS GENTLE AND KIND TO THEIR PUPPIES.

CINDY ALWAYS TOLD THEM THEY WERE SPECIAL AND HAD AN IMPORTANT JOB TO DO BUT SOMETIMES THEY JUST COULDN'T HELP THEMSELVES AND THEY CHASED AND LICKED THE BARN CATS 'ZAK' AND 'MOUSE' WITH THEIR BIG PINK TONGUES. ZAK AND MOUSE DIDN'T REALLY CARE BECAUSE THEY ENJOYED THE GAME TOO.

FINALLY AFTER THEIR TRAINING WITH MOM WAS OVER, THEY ALL WENT TO WORK ON OTHER FARMS. THREE OF THE DOGS WENT TO THE SHEEP FARM IN OHIO.

THEY LOVED IT THERE BECAUSE THEY HAD REAL SHEEP OF THEIR OWN TO GUARD. THE FARM WAS OWNED BY A HUSBAND AND WIFE NAMED KELLY. MRS. KELLY WAS CRAZY ABOUT ALL KINDS OF ANIMALS. THERE WERE 4 HORSES, NAMED DOC, ROCKY SHOOTER AND DASHERO. TWO POT-BELLIED PIGS ALSO LIVED THERE AND WERE NAMED PENELOPE AND WILBER. THE PUPPIES ALL AGREED THAT THEY HAD NEVER SEEN A PIG AS UGLY AS PENELOPE, IN ALL OF

THEIR LIVES, BUT THEY NEVER TOLD HER THAT BECAUSE IT MIGHT HURT HER FEELINGS. AFTER ALL, ALL THREE PYRENEES LIKED HER JUST AS SHE WAS.

THEN CAME THE OTHER BARN CATS DOTTIE AND NOSEY AND FOUR ANGORA GOATS WITH BIG HORNS. EVERYONE DECIDED THEY EVEN THOUGH THE GOATS HAD THE PRETTIEST WHITE CURLY HAIR, THOSE HORNS WERE STILL SCARY.

THERE WAS ALSO A BORDER COLLIE NAMED 'JOHN HENRY' WHO GATHERED AND MOVED THE SHEEP FROM FIELD TO FIELD. HE WORKED AND RAN VERY FAST. HIS LONG HAired COAT WAS BLACK AND WHITE AND HE HAD A LONG BUSHY TAIL.

OF COURSE WE MUST MENTION THE TWO TERRIERS WITH THE WIRE-HAired COATS, WHO WERE CALLED CAESAR AND TANK. FROM WHAT THE PUPPIES COULD TELL, CAESAR AND TANK JUST PLAYED AND SWAM IN THE CREEK AND CAME HOME SMELLING OF OLD FISHY WATER.

THE KELLYS HAD A NAME FOR EVERYTHING, EVEN THE TRACTOR. THEY CALLED IT FLASH, BUT THAT WAS A JOKE BECAUSE WHEN IT RAN, IT WENT PRETTY SLOW.

THE SILLIEST OF ALL THE ANIMALS' NAME WAS NOAH WHO WAS ALSO A GREAT PYRENEES. HOWEVER, NOAH FAILED LIVESTOCK GUARDIAN SCHOOL, SO HE GUARDED THE FRONT GATES TO THE FARM INSTEAD. AS HE DOES, HE WATCHES ALL THE COMINGS AND GOINGS. NOAH IS VERY HAPPY TO HAVE THIS AS HIS JOB BECAUSE HE IS A VERY FUNNY DOG WHO IS ALWAYS READY TO PLAY OR GET A PAT ON THE HEAD. MRS. KELLY SAYS HE GOT VERY SICK WHEN HE WAS

A VERY LITTLE PUPPY AND AFTER THAT HE ONLY WANTED TO TAKE CARE OF PEOPLE. THE PUPPIES THINK HE IS TRYING TO PAY THE PEOPLE BACK FOR BEING SO GOOD TO HIM.

THE REALLY BIG NEWS IS THAT THE PUPPIES HAVE THEIR OWN NAMES NOW: CALEB, LUKE AND RACHEL. ALL THREE AGREED THEY WERE QUITE SATISFIED WITH THEIR NEW HOME.

AS THE YEARS WENT BY, ALL THREE PUPPIES GREW AND GREW. THE BOYS WEIGHED ABOUT 120 POUNDS EACH AND RACHEL WEIGHED 95 POUNDS. THEY WERE ALL BIG, WITH LONG FLUFFY WHITE HAIR. EVERY DAY MRS. KELLY TOLD THEM THEY WERE GOOD DOGS, AFTER SHE AND HER HUSBAND CHECKED THE PASTURES WITH ALL OF THE EWES AND LAMBS.

THE PUPPIES DID NOT ALWAYS WORK IN THE SAME FIELD AS THERE WERE SO MANY SHEEP TO PROTECT. BUT ON THE SCARIEST DAY OF THEIR LIVES, LUCKILY, THEY WERE ALL TOGETHER.

IN THE COLDEST PART OF THE WINTER, ALL OF THE EWES WHO WERE EXPECTING LAMBS WERE MOVED NEAR THE FARM HOUSE AND INTO SEVERAL LARGE BARN. IT WAS DURING THIS TIME THAT THE MOST DANGEROUS DAY OF THEIR LIVES OCCURRED. WHILE ALL OF THE EWE SHEEP WERE INSIDE THE BARN ONE SNOWY VERY COLD DAY THE DOGS SMELLED A STRANGE ODOR. IT WAS SMOKE, BUT THE FARMER WAS NOT BURNING ANYTHING. THE SMELL BEGAN TO GROW STRONGER AND THEN THE DOGS SENSED SOMETHING WAS VERY WRONG. THEIR MOTHER HAD NEVER TOLD THEM ANYTHING ABOUT THIS KIND OF DANGER, BUT LUKE, CALEB AND RACHEL JUST KNEW THAT THIS WAS INDEED **DANGER.**

SOMETHING WAS REALLY WRONG, AND CALEB, LUKE AND RACHEL BEGAN TO MOVE THE SHEEP OUT OF THE BARN AS FAST AS POSSIBLE. THIS WAS DIFFICULT BECAUSE THE BARN WAS MADE UP OF THREE HORSE STALLS WITH THE DOORS REMOVED. OF COURSE, THE SHEEP DIDN'T WANT TO GO OUTSIDE IN THE COLD AND ICE BUT THE THREE PYRENEES WERE CERTAIN SOMETHING VERY BAD WAS HAPPENING. LUKE STARTED CLEARING OUT THE FIRST OF THE HORSE STALLS PUSHING THE EWES OUT INTO THE CENTER HALLWAY. CALEB WAS CLEARING OUT THE OTHER STALLS AND RACHEL WAS PUSHING ALL THE SHEEP OUT OF THE SMALL BACK DOOR. IT WAS VERY DIFFICULT WORK, AND THE SMELL OF SMOKE GREW STRONGER AND STRONGER. STILL, NONE OF THE 3 PYRENEES STOPPED WORKING. BY NOW THE SOUND OF THE CRACKLING FLAMES WAS AS LOUD AS THE BLEETING OF THE SHEEP. ALL OF THE WALLS AND RAFTERS WERE ON FIRE DROPPING ASH ONTO THE FLOOR BELOW. THE HAY AND STRAW STORED IN THE BARN WAS ALSO BURNING, AS WELL AS SOME STORED LUMBER FROM A VERY OLD BARN.

BY THE TIME THE LAST OF THE SHEEP WAS OUT OF THE BACK DOOR OF THE BARN THE FLAMES WERE AS HIGH AS THE TREES SURROUNDING THE BARN. ALL OF THE SHEEP WERE PUSHED INTO THE FAR CORNOR OF THE PADDOCK AND ALL THREE PYRENEES STOOD CROSS WAYS AGAINST THEM TO KEEP THEM FROM RETURNING TO THEIR BARN. ALL OF THE SHEEP WERE PRESSED TIGHT INTO THE CORNER AND AS FAR FROM THE BARN AS THE DOGS COULD GET THEM.

THE VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT ARRIVED AND HAD TO TEAR DOWN THE FENCE TO GET AT THE BURNING BARN. EVEN WITH THE FENCE TORN DOWN THE 3 DOGS WOULD NOT ALLOW ANY OF THE SHEEP TO MOVE EVEN WHEN THE

FIREMEN CALLED THE DOGS. AFTER THE FIRE, THE BARN WAS COMPLETELY DESTROYED, BUT NONE OF THE ANIMALS THAT HAD BEEN INSIDE WERE INJURED AND LATER, DELIVERED ALL OF THEIR LAMBS WITHOUT PROBLEMS. THE DOGS WERE ALSO UNINJURED WITH NOT EVEN A SINGED HAIR ON THEIR THICK WHITE COATS.

THE KELLYS WERE SO PROUD OF THEIR WONDERFUL DOGS FOR ALL OF THEIR BRAVE WORK. NO PERSON HAD TOLD THE DOGS TO ACT THIS WAY. IT WAS THEIR MOTHER'S TRAINING LESSONS AND BREED HERITAGE THAT MADE THEM DO SUCH A GREAT JOB. THESE TYPE OF DOGS HAVE BEEN USED FOR A VERY LONG TIME TO GUARD ANIMALS AGAINST HARM FROM OTHER ANIMALS BUT REACTING LIKE THIS TO SMOKE AND FLAME IS VERY UNUSUAL.

FOR THEIR HEROIC ACTIONS, CALEB, LUKE AND RACHEL RECEIVED THE HERO DOG AWARD IN 1999 AT THE GREAT PYRENEES NATIONAL DOG SHOW. THIS WAS THE FIRST TIME THE AWARD WAS GIVEN TO A DOG WHO HAD SAVED ANYTHING OTHER THAN A HUMAN LIFE. THEY WERE VERY SPECIAL DOGS AND THEIR MOTHER WOULD HAVE BEEN VERY PROUD OF THEM. MR. AND MRS KELLY CERTAINLY WERE PROUD AND TOLD THEM SO EVERY DAY.

ALL THREE DOGS WORKED FOR THE KELLY FARM FOR THE REST OF THEIR LIVES GUARDING THEIR SHEEP. NEVER DID ANY SHEEP OR LAMB COME TO HARM WITH THESE HEROIC DOGS ON GUARD. AS THE DOGS BECAME OLD GUARDIAN DOGS THEY HAD ANOTHER LITTLE ANIMAL OR SHOULD WE SAY PERSON TO CARE FOR. THE NEW GRANDSON OF THE KELLYS, ALEC, WAS BORN AND HE TOO CAME UNDER THE WATCHFUL EYE OF THE PYRENEES.

NOW THE FARM HAS TWO BOYS TO CARE FOR WITH THE ADDITION OF LITTLE OWEN WHO IS ALEC'S LITTLE BROTHER. THE PYRENEES LOVE THEIR JOBS AND THE EXTRA ATTENTION THE LITTLE BOYS GIVE THEM ALONG WITH THEIR GUARDIAN DUTIES.

(This tale is also a true story)