

Jessica and Fur
by
Mickey Bolmer

(Picture of an old box labeled "Mike's Stuff." The scene moves inside the box where Bear is reading to Dog by the light of a battery powered book light.)

"Stop for a minute, please," said Dog. "Something's happening down there."

"Impossible," said Bear. "Nothing ever happens down there or in here," and she returned to reading: "*I am the Water Genie, Iff,*" he said crossly, "*from the Ocean of the Streams of Story.*" *Haroun's heart....*"

"Sssh," said Dog, "listen."

"Oh, Daddy, why don't you have an animal?"

"I used to. I slept with a dog."

"What was her name?"

"No name."

"No name! You must have called her something?"

"Just Dog. Come on, it's time for bedtime."

"Do you still have her?"

"I think Dog was a boy."

"Do you still have him?"

"Maybe somewhere up in the attic. Do you want me to read some more of *Charlotte's Web* or not?"

"Oh, yes, but, tomorrow, we've got to find your dog. I want to meet him."

"Yes, tomorrow, we'll try, but now, snuggle down. I love you. Your mother loves you. And God loves you."

"Oh, I love you! You promise?"

"Yes, I promise. Now, *Charlotte's Web* by E.B. White, the beginning of Chapter 3, called *Escape: The barn was very large. It was very old. It smelled of hay and....*"

"I knew she'd think of us," said Dog.

"Tomorrow, Tomorrow," Bear sang, "the sun will come out tomorrow! If we read all night, we might just finish this."

•

"They're coming!" shouted Dog.

"Did they have to wait all morning?" said Bear to herself.

"Most likely," answered Dog, "they had to wait until Jessica got home from school."

"If he's anywhere, most likely, he'll be in this box."

"Oh, hurry, Daddy. You've left him in there for so long!"

"Here he is!"

"Oh, Daddy, he's beautiful!"

"Well, he used to have much more hair. The first time I got my hair cut in a barbershop, I came home and cut his hair. Only his never grew back."

"When did you get him?"

"Granny Bonnie and Grandfather Morgan gave him to me when I was about your age. I was sick a lot that year with my tonsils."

"What are tonsils? Come on, let's take him downstairs so he can meet my animals and dolls."

•
"Animals and dolls, I'd like you to meet...Oh, Daddy, we can't call him just Dog."

"Well, what name would you pick?"

"How about...Fur!"

"Fur it is."

"Animals and Dolls, this is Fur. We've just rescued him from a box in the attic. Fur, I can't introduce you to everybody, but sit here. This is Fleure, Katie, Madeline, Peter, and Little Lamb."

"Come on Jessica, it's time to go to the library for story time."

•
"Hello," said Dog. "It's nice to meet you. Please call me Fur or Dog, as you wish."

"I'd call you Dirty Dog Fur," said Peter.

"I know a dog named Genevieve," said Madeline. "She jumped into the Seine before Miss Clavel could count to ten and pulled me to shore by my sleeve. Now, be polite Peter. We all want to meet her...him."

"Once Fred almost ate me," said Little Lamb. "Jessica picked me up just in time. I could see that dog's baaaaa-ck teeth."

"Glad you've joined us," said Katie.

"Welcome to Jessica's room," said Fleure. "I was her first doll."

"I was her first stuffed animal," Little Lamb interrupted.

"I wasn't lonely," Fleure continued, "because she took me everywhere. Now I pretty much stay here, but I have many friends."

"I'm very glad to be here," said Dog. "Don't you find it rather bright?"

"How long did you live in that box?" asked Katie

"I don't know," answered Dog. "About twenty years or so, ever since Mike's parents moved into an apartment."

"How long is twenty years? Was it baaa-d?" asked Little Lamb.

"Oh, no, not so" replied Dog. "We had some pretty good books, a light, and Bear's a very good reader. But now Bear's in there all alone. We've got to do something to help her."

"Don't worry," said Fleure, "I'll talk to Jessica. She'll think of something."

•
"Daddy, I put Fur in your bed so that he could sleep with you."

"Oh, I don't think so, dear. Fur will be much more comfortable here."

"Oh, Daddy, he'd like it so; he's been in that box for so long; aren't you lonely with Mama away?"

"Oh, I'm sure he'd be happier here with all your animals and dolls. And your mother will be back tomorrow. Well, all right, yes, just for tonight. Here we go, *Charlotte's Web* by E.B. White, the beginning of Chapter 4, called *Loneliness: The next day was rainy and dark. Rain fell on the roof of the barn and dripped steadily from the eaves. Rain fell....*"

•
"Why, hello, old boy. What's this? So, Jessica's made you a collar with your

own dog tag. Fur it is. What will she think of next? Well, yes, I promised. Into bed we go. There you go," Mike said putting Fur on the other side of the bed.

(All through the night, Fur uses Mike's motions to snuggle closer.)

"Snuggle up."

"Snuggle a little closer."

(Finally they are cheek to cheek.)

"Ah, there, just right. Now, five words and two numbers: 1. Get Bear! 2. I love you!"

•
(Lucy arrives home)

"Mike, Jessica, I'm home, where are you?"

"Mama!"

"Welcome home! We're up in the attic and finding some great old stuff!"

"Stuff! Mama, please come up right away!"

•
"Mama!"

"Hello, Jessica, Hello, Mike, how I've missed you!"

"Mama, Daddy didn't name any of his animals! This is Bear; I haven't thought of a new name yet. And did you know his grandmother and grandfather gave him Bear? Did you know they helped to build the Empire State Building? And Granny Bonnie and Grandfather Morgan gave him Fur? How was your trip?"

"I will tell you about my trip in a bit. Fur?"

"I missed you! Hello, Mama. Fur is Daddy's dog. He didn't have a name except Dog. Daddy cut off his fur. So I called him Fur. Oh, he didn't know he was doing a bad thing. He thought Fur's hair would grow back. Did you sleep with an animal or a doll? Oh, did you take your animal on your trip? I hope so! I missed you!"

"Yes, I used to sleep with a dog. No, I didn't take WuhWuh with me on this trip."

"WuhWuh is a good name. I'm so glad your dog had a name. How did you get WuhWuh?"

"Oh, I'm not so proud of that story. Thank you for waiting up for me, but it's late; time for showers and bed."

"Jessica, Mother's right. Time to get downstairs and get ready for bed."

"Oh, tell me, Mother!"

"Well, let's all get ready for bed. Then I'll get WuhWuh. She lives in my dresser. When we're all snuggled in together, I'll tell you the story."

"Great! Come on guys, it's a race!"

•
"Mama, you're crying!"

"It's been a long time since I've snuggled in bed with WuhWuh and here we are all together!"

"Oh, it's all right, Mama. At least you didn't leave WuhWuh in a box for years. How did you get her?"

"Well, when my sister Betsy was born, Uncle Jeff gave her this dog. She was bright yellow then. My sister was so little all she did was throw around her legs and arms and cry. I knew she couldn't take care of this beautiful dog. I wanted her so much. So I took her, called her WuhWuh, and hid her under my bed. I left her there a

long, long time, and then I took her out and she was mine. I slept with her every night until I went to college. See how worn she is?"

"Oh, Mama, that was bad. Why didn't Nana and Grandfather make you give WuhWuh back?"

"I don't know. I've never asked them. I think they saw how much I loved WuhWuh. And my sister was very young, too young to play with WuhWuh or even to know that WuhWuh had disappeared. And Uncle Jeff, long before anyone knew I had WuhWuh, got Betsy a new stuffed animal. You are so right; it was bad!"

"What was it? Does she still have it? Does she know you have WuhWuh."

"You'll have to ask your aunt. Now it's time for sleeping."

"Family hug!"

"We're so glad you're home."

"I'm so glad to be home!"

"Mama, Daddy! WuhWuh!"

"Let's get you to bed. If I read *Charlotte's Web* here, Mother and you will be sound asleep in moment."

"Oh, yes, let's! Wait a minute!"

(Jessica runs into her room and gets as many animals and dolls as she can carry and climbs into bed with them.)

"Little Lamb, Fleure, Katie, Madeline, Peter, Fur, Bear, and WuhWuh, I love you, Mama and Daddy, I love you, and God loves you. And everybody else! Now, read!"

"Excuse me?"

"Oh, sorry. Daddy, please read."

"*Charlotte's Web* by E. B. White, a bit into Chapter 5, called *Charlotte: So Wilbur cleared his throat. "Attention, please!" he said in a loud, firm voice. "Will the party who addressed me at bedtime last night kindly make himself or herself known by giving an appropriate sign or signal! "* Wilbur paused and listened...."

Jessica and Fur by Mickey Bolmer©March 1996