

Summer Detective Story: A Bear, a Dog, and a Mystery - level 3

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"I'm proud of my dog," said Mark.
"Macca's my dog too!" shouted Taylor.

Mark and Taylor lived with their parents on a farm near the woods. Mark had gotten a puppy for his birthday two years ago, and now the puppy had grown into a proud-looking Husky. Mark **agreed to let his younger sister Taylor help look after the dog**, but Mark still always thought of Macca as belonging just to him.

"Macca likes everybody," Mark said.

"He likes me more!" Taylor **teased**. Macca barked. "He's agreeing with me!" **squealed** Taylor.

"He is not," Mark laughed. But he was glad to have something to argue about, **since** it took his mind off the wintry cold. Dad had sent them down the driveway to pick up today's mail -- but their driveway was over a quarter of a mile long, and it was covered with snow. It ran between two fields where they'd grow strawberries in the spring, but now even those were also covered with snow. For the long, cold trip to the mail box, Mark and Taylor had brought Macca along **to keep them company**.

Suddenly they saw an enormous **paw print** in the snow ahead of them. It had five toes -- like a person -- but each one ended with **a sharp claw**.

"It's huge!" shouted Taylor. "It's six **inches** long at least!" Mark hurried to look around for the creature that had made it, but all he saw was the afternoon sunlight on the snow, and **bare tree trunks** at the edge of the field. A trail of paw prints led off into the trees which grew thicker further up the hill, forming the beginning of a wide forest.

"Come on!" said Taylor. "Let's follow the paw prints."

"Let's not," said Mark. He knew the creature to which the paw prints belonged. "It's Old Mugger."

"Who's Old Mugger?" asked Taylor.

Old Mugger was a giant black bear. Late one night last summer, the bear had surprised everybody -- including the farmers -- by making an unexpected attack from the forest. The bear started **clawing** a horse on the nearby farm, but the horse quickly galloped away. The clever horse had survived, but the next morning when the farmer woke up, he'd seen a trail of claw marks running down the horse's side.

Mark had seen the claw marks too -- and he'd known right then that he never wanted to meet Old Mugger the bear.

There was more bad news that afternoon. After all that walking, Mark and Taylor discovered that their mailbox was empty. They'd walked a long way for nothing.

As they **headed back** down the driveway, Mark **wondered** if that bear was still around. And then Macca suddenly started barking at something behind them. Had he seen the bear? Mark turned quickly to look, but it was just a truck coming up the road. Then he recognized the truck, and shouted excitedly to Taylor. "It's the mailman! Maybe we'll get some mail **after all!**"

Taylor **sighed** loudly to show that she didn't want to walk back to the mailbox, and then said "We have the fattest mailman ever."

"That's not polite," said Mark.

"But it's true," Taylor said **smugly**.

Mark and Taylor watched as Orville, their mailman, **struggled to gather up** the mail in his truck. His truck **tilted** as Orville reached over for the magazines he was delivering, and then it tilted back the other way as he straightened up and stepped out its door. But then the magazines went flying into the air as Orville slipped and fell into the snow.

"Oof!" said Orville, as his body plopped into a white snow **drift**.

And magazines landed gently all around him.

Taylor ran to pick up the magazines out of the snow. "Thanks," said Orville.

"Dad doesn't like it when his magazines get wet," Taylor said, ignoring Orville altogether. She quickly gathered up all the magazines, then began running back to the house.

Mark picked up two more letters that had fallen into the snow, as Orville stood up without saying anything, brushing the chunks of snow off his trousers. Then he noticed Mark's dog.

"His name's Macca," Mark said. "Don't worry, he won't bite you." Macca barked playfully.

"Mailmen always worry about getting bitten by dogs," Orville said **warily**. "Especially me -- I'm terrified of dogs, because I'm too fat to **outrun** them!"

Mark laughed, and said "Don't worry. My dog's very well behaved -- and he's **a purebred!**"

Orville still had chunks of snow in his hair, but he **tossed** his head and looked strangely at the dog. "Is that right?" said Orville. "My brother breeds dogs. He sells them to rich people who are looking for the purest breed of a dog. I bet your dog would be worth a lot of money!"

Mark laughed, but then realized that the mailman wasn't making a joke. "My dog's not for sale!" Mark said. Orville didn't say anything back. There was an awkward silence. Mark checked the ground for any more letters that their mailman had dropped, but Orville was already **revving up** the engine on his mail truck. Before Mark could say anything, Orville was already driving away down the road.

* * *

Back at the house, Mark told his father that he and Taylor had seen bear tracks in the snow. Mark's father looked worried, and his mother tried to change the subject. "We need to take Macca to the vet soon for his annual check up!" she said casually. But it didn't work. Mark was still worried about the bear.

After dinner that night, Mark **let Macca out** into their back yard. "I wouldn't sell you for a million dollars," he told his dog -- and Macca barked once, wagging his tail happily. The weather was unpredictable, and an inch of snow had already piled up on the tall fence that ran around their yard, so Mark was glad that Macca had a warm doghouse to sleep in.

But that night, Mark had a nightmare. Macca was lost on their farm, and **no matter how hard he looked around**, he couldn't find his beloved dog anywhere. Mark tried calling out for Macca in the night, but then he flopped down into a big drift of snow -- just like Orville their mailman had done that afternoon. In the dream, Mark's sister Taylor **skipped up** and stole all the mail out of Mark's hands. When Mark woke up that morning, he was in a frustrated mood. He **leaped** out of bed and went straight to the backyard to say hi to Macca.

But Macca was gone.

It had snowed in the night -- there were now two inches of snow along the fence around the yard. All sounds seemed to be muffled by the snow, filling the yard with a strange silence. An empty winter wind blew across the sunny sky. **But there was no sign of Macca.**

"Macca's missing!" Mark said.

"Maybe a bear ate him," said Taylor. She was already awake, wearing a short-sleeved t-shirt that said, "I WILL be seen and I WILL be heard." She'd come out of her room to see why Mark was upset.

"A bear did not eat my dog!" Mark said angrily. But he ran out into the front yard to look for paw prints. All he saw was snow -- the driveway was completely covered with a smooth blanket, and it muffled all the sounds, making everything seem dangerously quiet.

It was just like his nightmare last night...

Suddenly Mark heard his dad's voice, shouting out from the house. "It's too cold for you to be running around outside!"

"But Dad!" Mark shouted back.

"At least let me get your jackets out of your rooms."

"Dad!" Mark said insistently. "We need to talk to you!"

"And I'm warm enough already," shouted Taylor. As they walked back to the house, Taylor asked "Do you think mom just took Macca to the vet this morning?"

"Or maybe Orville the mailman stole him," Mark said. "He has a brother that sells dogs to rich people."

But by the time they reached the house, Mark had suddenly put all the clues together. He turned to his father and said, "Macca's gone from the back yard. And I know who's responsible!"

Do YOU know who's responsible?

Who stole the dog?

Did Old Mugger eat him?

Did mom take him to the vet? ...

**This is the Suspect List: Mom Old Mugger Orville
Taylor**

SOLUTION OF THE MYSTERY

ŘEŠENÍ ZÁHADY

(heslem pro vstup je správná odpověď)