

Lucky's Revenge

By Glen Rockhill (a.k.a. Swift Fox)

Prelude:

Tripod, leaning against a tree, taunted Lucky as he collapsed, panting, over the finish line, "It's about time you showed up Loserboy."

The assembled Dalmatian puppies and other farm animals laughed as yet again Tripod reigned victorious over the loud mouthed, over-confident Lucky. It was becoming a daily event to watch Lucky get beat, over and over again by Tripod. If it weren't for the jeering which came afterward, it might have become boring by now.

Mooch called out, " Hey Luckless! When are you gonna wake up and realize that you'll never beat the champ Chump? Ha, ha, ha!"

The puppies nearby, Dipstick and Wizzer laughed along with the farm dog.

"I can just go for such a strong, muscular, ath-a-lete like yourself Tripod." Two Tone cooed, scratching Tripod's ear with her paw.

Lucky just lay there, covered in mud and grime and sweat, trying to catch his breath. He had almost had the three-legged pup a couple times during the race. That last jump across Muddy Flats always gets the better of him. By the time he gets free of the mud and back to dry land, Tripod is practically across the finish line. Lucky got pulled back to reality as he saw Tripod standing over him, his lame dog's handicap sticking straight in his face.

"Same time tomorrow Loser?" Tripod asked haughtily, "What shall it be? Digging? Swimming? Or another race? I need to know so I can schedule my workout around it. You know I can't resist proving to you how inept you are."

Tripod paused, waiting for the answer that never comes.

"Aww. That's ok loser!" Tripod jabbed, "Take your time. Catch your breath." He sniffed the air over Lucky, "And. Take a bath. You stink!"

Tripod turns and throws dirt in Lucky's face with his back paws. He leaves the exhausted pup lying there in a dirty heap as the three-legged Dalmatian leads the others back to the farm.

"You know where to find me when you need me Loserboy!" Tripod called back and the whole group began laughing anew.

Chapter 1

"That's it!" shouted Lucky angrily as he barged into the clubhouse dripping with mud, slime and dirt.

"Lost again, huh Luck?" observed Rolly sleepily from a corner of the room. Lucky turned and shot him an angry glare.

"PU!" cried Cadpig as she caught wind of the rancid puppy, "That's the third time this week Lucky! If Mom, Dad or their pets finds you like that you're in for it."

Lucky began to sober up and calm down. These were his friends and he didn't want to be mad at them. Besides he really needed their help right now.

"I know, I know, I know." Said Lucky dejectedly, "Can ya guys help me get cleaned up?"

"Sure!" Both Rolly and Cadpig answered helpfully.

The three pups stealthily moved around the barnyard to the water faucet on the side of the Dearly's house. They unraveled the hose some and looked up to find that the knob was too high for any of them to reach.

"No problem." Chirped Cadpig optimistically, "Rolly. Would you step over here please?"

"Ok." Rolly said and moved to where his sister was pointing. A spot just under the water faucet. Cadpig leaped onto her brother's back and climbed up to his head. Standing on her back paws she reached up and caught hold of the knob.

She looked back at Lucky, "Lucky. Hold onto the end of the hose."

"Ok. Got it." Lucky barked back as he grabbed the hose and Cadpig turned the water on.

The water raced through the hose, around the coils and shot out of the nozzle with more force than Lucky could handle. The hose kicked back and threw the young Dalmatian high in the air. Lucky did not let go though, and he rode the hose as it crashed to the ground and shot out to the right, dragging along the helpless pup.

"Aaargh!" Cried Lucky as he was thrown this way and that.

"Lucky!" Rolly shouted, "Let go!"

Lucky's paws finally slipped off the hose and he landed on his back at Roger's feet.

THUD!

"What's going on here?" asked Roger, looking down at the three pups, finally stopping at Lucky. "Lucky." Roger admonished, "Dirty again? If you can't keep out of trouble, you're going to be put on a lead."

Lucky laid his ears to the sides, brought his tail between his legs and looked up at his mom and dad's pet with big, sorrowful eyes.

"Oh, come on you little rascal." Roger said playfully to Lucky, "Let's get you cleaned up." He reached down picked up the dirty puppy and turned off the water faucet. "Cadpig. Rolly." called Roger, stopping the other two pups from making their slow retreat, "Don't play with the water. You two go and play and stay out of any more mischief."

Cadpig and Rolly scurried away happily as Roger carried Lucky into the house for another bath.

Chapter 2:

Later that afternoon, well after Lucky's bath, Lucky, Rolly, Cadpig and their chicken friend Spot, were lying in the grass, relaxing in the ebbing warmth of the setting sun.

"I'm tired of always losing to Tri-pod." Lucky stated.

"W, w, w, well," Began Spot, "Why don't you just stop challenging him?"

"What!?" Lucky roared, "Just give up trying? No way! One of these times I WILL beat him!" Lucky finished pounding his fore-fist into his other paw for emphasis.

"Yes, but Lucky," interjected Cadpig, "even with all your positive attitudes and perseverance, you still lose." Then the small dog's eyes shot wide open as she got an idea. "Perhaps Spot is right in a way Lucky." Cadpig told them.

"I am?" said Spot, surprised.

"She is!?" said Lucky and Rolly at the same time equally surprised.

"Well, yes, in a matter of speaking." Cadpig answered, then continued, "Lucky. When you challenge Tripod what things do you challenge him to do?"

Lucky looked a little confused but answered his sister, "Well, um, running, and swimming, and diving, and digging, and..." Lucky paused and looked up at his sister in shock and understanding.

Together Cadpig and Lucky finished the thought, "...Just about everything that Tripod is good or better at."

"Right!" congratulated Cadpig for her brother's awareness, "So all we have to do is find something that you, Lucky, can do better than Tripod."

"But there isn't anything Lucky can do that Tripod can't." Rolly observed pessimistically, winning him a round of dirty looks from the others. "Well it's the truth." He defended.

"He's right." Lucky said dejectedly as Spot nodded in agreement.

"Well I for one am not going to give up that easily." Cried Cadpig as she stood up tall and pointed a paw at each of them, "And I'm ashamed at the lot of you for giving up so easily. Now lets take a few minutes and think about the problem before running to any more conclusions!"

They lay back in the grass again, watching the clouds over their heads turn shades of orange and red, while they sought a solution.

The sun had set and stars had replaced the clouds by the time they gave up to head back to the barn and a night's rest.

"I can't think of anything." Lucky said.

"All I thought about was food." Rolly said.

"Rolly!" The other three shouted.

Rolly brought a forepaw up protectively, "Sorry Lucky. I tried, I really did."

"I couldn't think of anything either." admitted Cadpig.

"M, m, m, me either." said Spot, " I guess the only thing you're good at Luck is leading this little rag tag group of misfits."

Cadpig jumped up in excitement and shrilled, "Spot! That's it!"

"What's it?" They asked.

"Follow the Leader!" Cadpig stated, but the other three were giving her dubious looks. She explained, "You said it yourself Spot. 'Lucky is a good leader.' So if Lucky challenges Tripod to a game of Follow the Leader, Lucky is in control of the game and Tripod has to do anything and everything Lucky does."

"Yeah." Lucky breathed, smiling.

"But Cadpig," Rolly interrupted, "We couldn't think of anything Lucky can do that Tripod can't."

"True," Cadpig agreed, "But as leader, Lucky can do and try anything to beat Tripod."

"I'll can do it!" Lucky shouted, "That's it! I'll challenge him tomorrow!"

Tails wagging behind them the three puppies and the chicken ran back to the barn. When they got there however, they found all the puppies lined up, and their parents waiting for the tardy puppies. All three could sense that they were in trouble and they postured appropriately.

"Um, I think I'll be g, g, going now guys." Spot said nervously as she back stepped out of the barn, turned and ran to the chicken roost.

The three puppies didn't take notice as their eyes were locked on their parents as they slowly moved to take their spots in line.

"Lucky." Perdita called commandingly, "Come, here."

All three pups looked as though they had been hit and stopped dead in their tracks.

"Cadpig. Rolly. Take your places in line." Pongo barked, "Lucky. Do as your mother says. Now!"

Lucky scurried to his mother's side as Rolly and Cadpig did likewise to their spots in line.

Lucky sat dejected and worried at his mother's side, trying to be as small and inconspicuous as he could.

"Children," Perdita began, "You have been getting much to dirty and it is disturbing our pets."

"There are only the three of them to take care of all of us." Pongo continued, "A daunting task even for humans."

"Our pets have asked us to tell you that the next puppy to get dirty this week..." Perdita stated.

"...will be grounded to a lead and leash for two weeks. No exceptions." Pongo finished.

All eyes turned to Lucky, sure that they would see him in that predicament.

Perdita drew their attention back, "Please children. We must not become so much of a burden that our pets find it necessary to use more drastic means."

"I'm sure you won't let us down." Pongo said positively and received 98 barks of approval back. Only Lucky didn't answer. He was sad because he was sure his neck would be attached to that lead. He realized now that the only thing that he could do better than any of the other pups was get into trouble.

A loving lick from his mother pulled him out of his melancholy. He looked up to see Perdita smiling at him. "Come with us son." She said.

Lucky followed his parents out of the barn to the pump and trough in the middle of the barnyard. Once their Pongo and Perdi stopped and turned to face their son.

"Luck my boy." Pongo began with pride in his voice, "You remind me of myself when I was a pup. I couldn't keep out of trouble to save my spots."

Lucky's demeanor brightened to hear this from his father. Pongo looked to Perdi and she nodded for him to go on.

"But Lucky my son, we warned all your brothers and sisters, but we're really counting on you to keep out of trouble for the next two days." Pongo said sadly.

The weight of the remark made Lucky begin to tremble with worry. He didn't want to let his parents or his brothers and sister or their pets down. Again the caress of his mothers soft tongue brought him out of his stupor.

"Son, we know you'll do your best. And no matter what happens. We will always love you Lucky." She comforted, "Now run along and get some sleep. An active puppy needs his rest."

Both adult Dalmatians gave the young pup a loving lick and sent him on his way. They watched as Lucky disappeared into the barn.

"Oh Pongo." Worried Perdita, " Do you think he can do it."

Pongo laughed, "It will take a miracle from the Creator to keep that pups neck from the leash that is sure to come his way. But we can always hope."

Perdi smiled at her handsome husband as Roger called from the kitchen door, "Pongo! Perdi! Time to come in you two."

The two dogs turned and charged happily into the house.

Chapter 3: