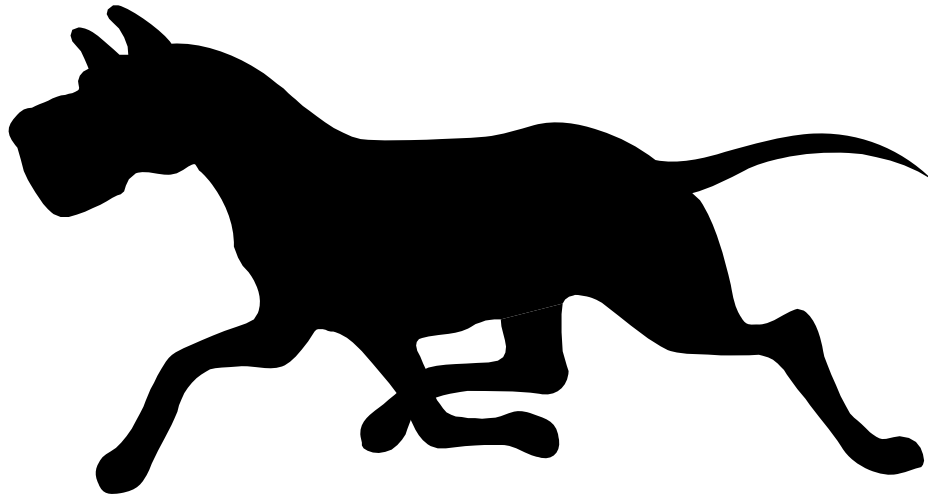


Little Luther's Lifetime Lessons

The Gift



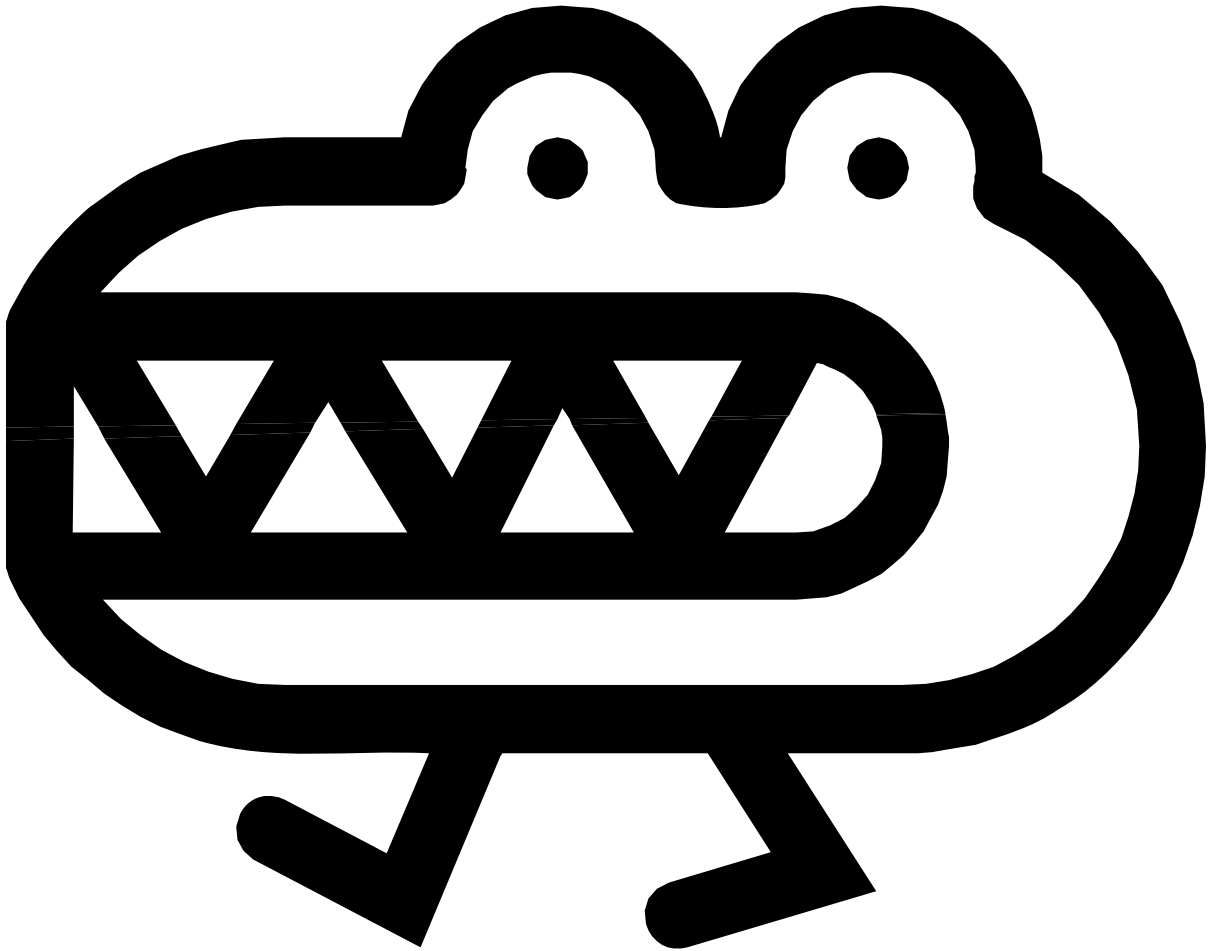
By Sharon N. Black

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Out in the country, where the sky was big and the stars shone brightly, Little Luther was growing up. When he came to live at Black Dog Farm, he was the size of a bag of groceries. Just one year later, he was as tall as a pony with strong legs and a deep chest.



Luther had big bones, big feet, big eyes, and a very big mouth indeed.

All though he was big on the outside, he was still young on the inside.



Luther loved to

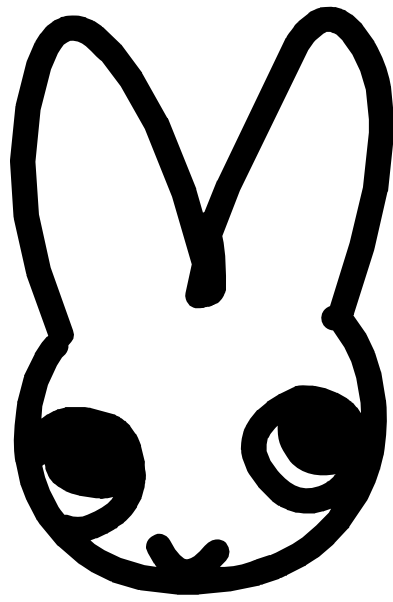
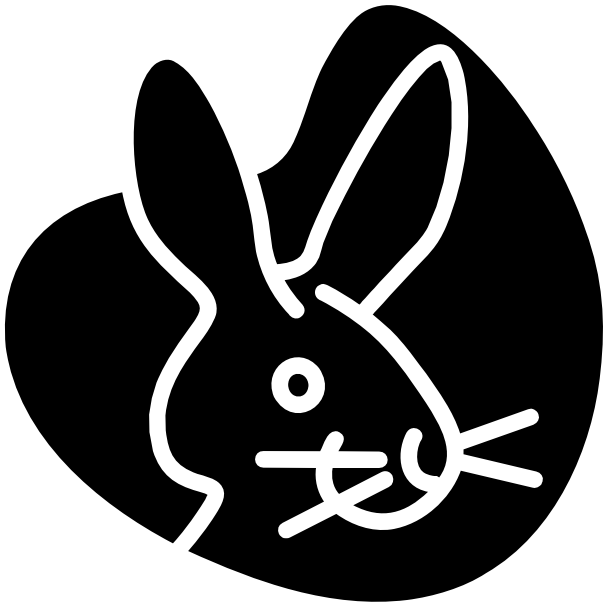
Sit on his people's laps

Chase cats

Play in the garden

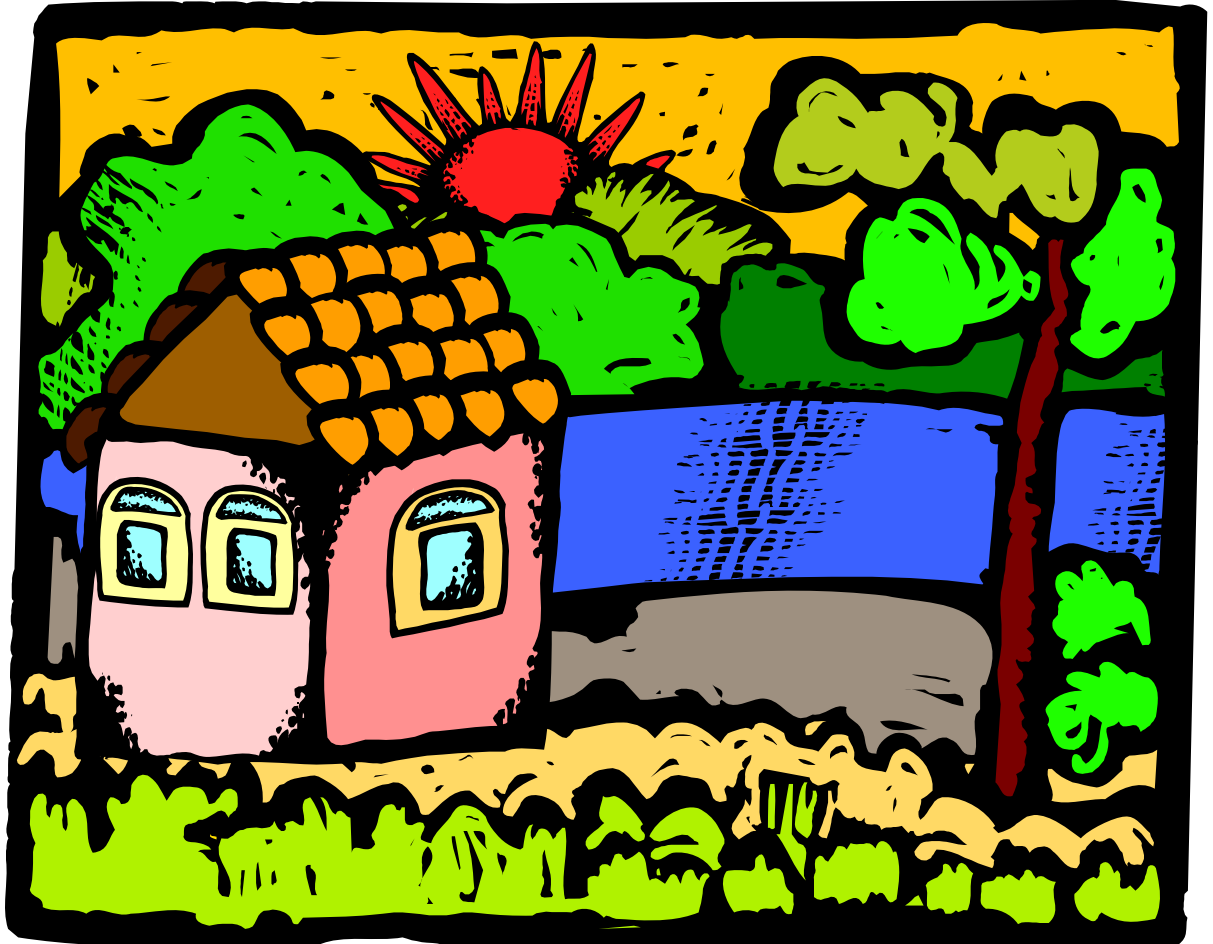
And snuggle with anyone who came along.

Little Luther was a sweet little puppy in a BIG dog body.



Outside in the garden where the sunflowers, potatoes and berries grow, two little bunnies lived in a cozy strong hutch.

George and Shirley Bunny had bright eyes, big ears and wiggly noses.



Little Luther loved to romp in the garden near the bunny hutch.



Now and then, Little Luther got very excited.

He liked to

Run and

Jump and

Bark and

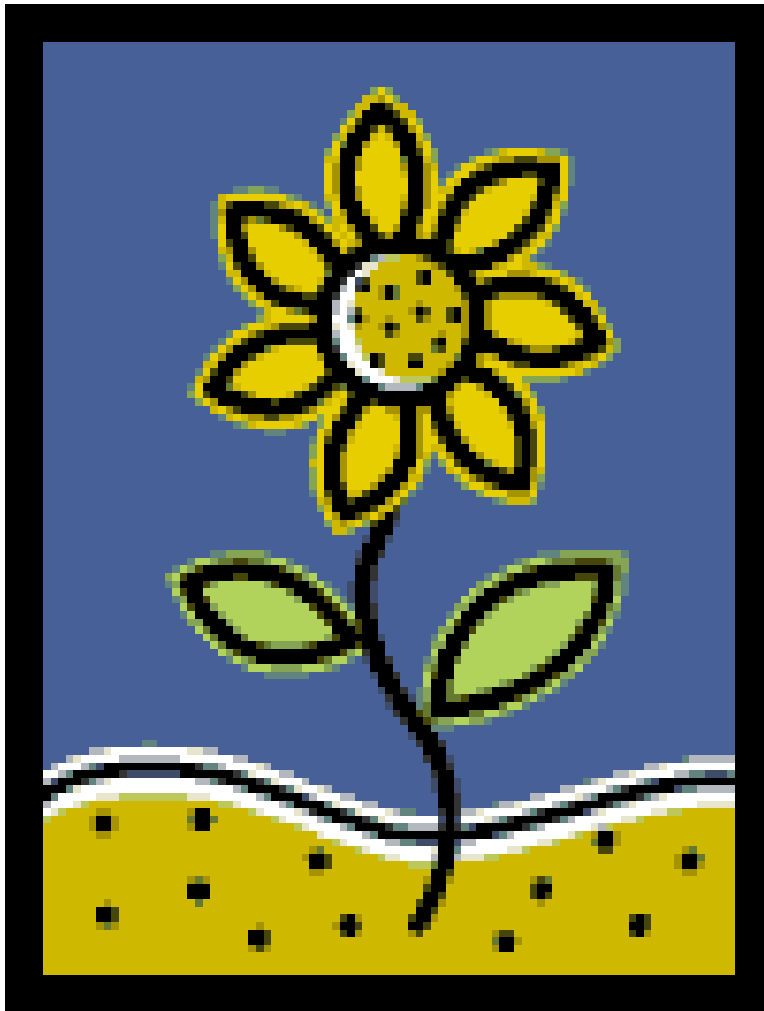
Roll around in the dirt.

His legs flew, his mouth opened wide and he barked and barked.

He played like a puppy, but the problem was ...

He had become as big as a pony.

What a sight!



George and Shirley Bunny loved Little Luther, but got scared when he romped in their peaceful garden.

They worried about the flowers, the food, the hutch, and the safety of George and Shirley Bunny.



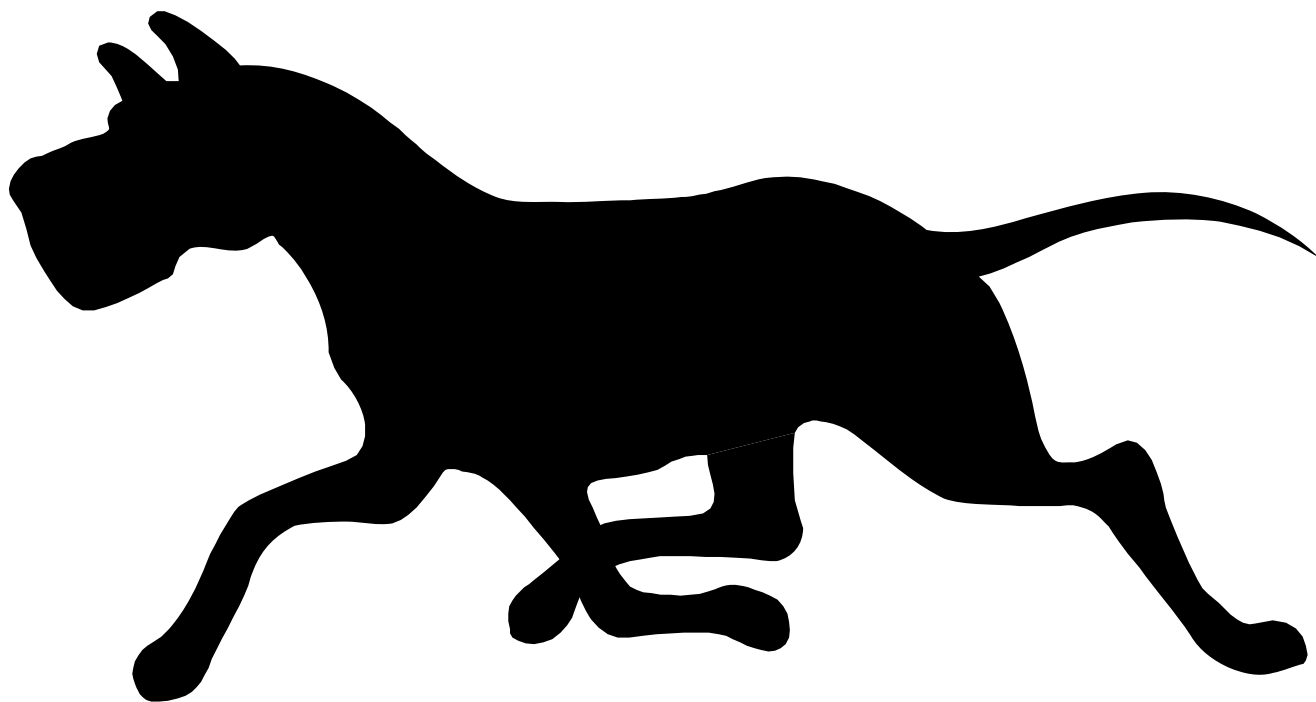
One crisp, fall day Little Luther could not resist a good romp in the garden.

He ran

He jumped

He barked and rolled happily in the cool grass and dry leaves just outside the cozy bunny hutch.





George Bunny turned to Shirley and said, "I have had it with Little Luther."

"He is

So rude

So loud

So careless and

So BIG!"

Shirley Bunny's dark eyes grew big as she listened to George speak about their friend Little Luther. "Oh dear, oh my," she said sadly.



"George, we can't talk about Little Luther behind his back," said Shirley Bunny in a soft, kind bunny tone.

"Gossip will hurt his tender feelings and he will not learn his Lifetime Lesson.

"George Bunny, I understand that you feel scared by Little Luther's garden romps, but you need to tell him, not me.

"Little Luther needs your help."

George and Shirley Bunny spent the cool, fall afternoon practicing ways to talk with Little Luther.

They hopped around the hutch, wiggling noses and flopping ears, until they came up with just the right plan.

They made sure the words were correct and kind.

They planned to talk to Little Luther in a warm, private place.

The wanted to give the message to Little Luther as a gift...

A Lifetime Lesson.





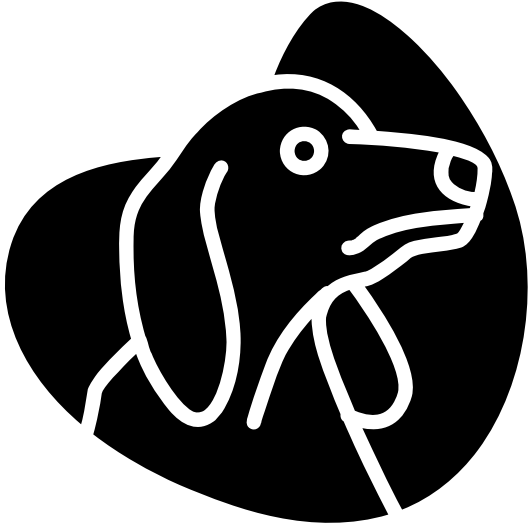
The Bunnies called to Little Luther and invited him to put his big head into the hutch. They gave him a soft place to rest his chin.

George sat close to his face. "Luther, I need to talk to you about your garden romps."

"When you run and jump and bark and roll in the peaceful garden, I feel scared. I do not want the flowers or the food or the hutch or George and Shirley Bunny to get hurt.



"I hope that you will romp in the open field, where your long legs and big body and loud voice will not scare me."

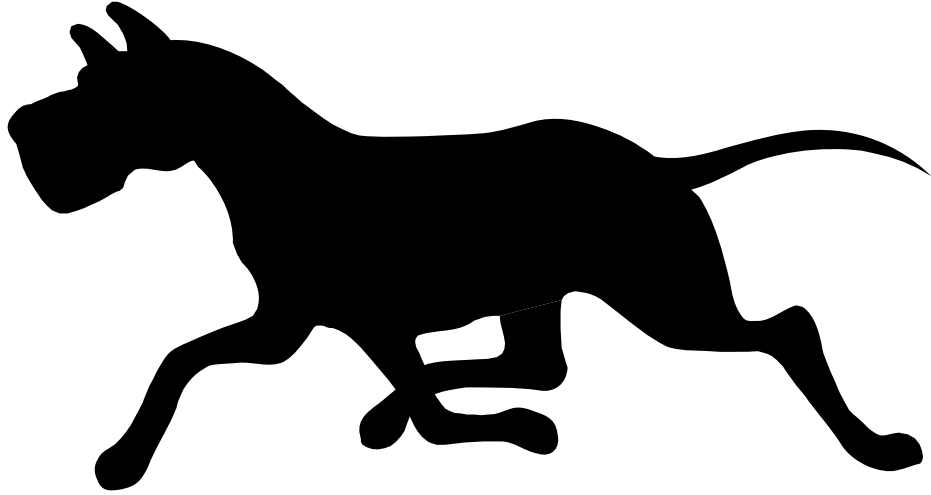


Little Luther sat quietly. A warm tear ran down his soft black fur.

The bunnies wiped his tear with a beautiful red leaf. Moments passed and Little Luther quietly spoke. "I am so happy playing in the bright red leaves. I never thought about scaring you. I'm so sorry.

"I (sniff sniff sniff) am glad you told me and I will move my romps into the open field so the garden will be safe. I am sad that I scared you, (sniff) and happy that you told me how you felt. You were very kind and strong bunnies. The truth is a gift. "

George looked at Shirley Bunny and said, " I guess we all learned a Lifetime Lesson today!"



The End

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