

## **Whiskers Wins Big at the Dachshund Family Reunion**

"Higher, Oscar! Higher!" Whiskers told his best friend, Oscar, a black Dachshund, who was pushing him back and forth in the yellow swing. "I want to fly like the birds."

Every day after breakfast, Oscar and Whiskers would meet at the Kiddie Park across the street from their homes. Together, they would race down the green, turtle slide. Then, together they would go up and down on the giraffe teeter-totter. Finally, they would swing together on the yellow swings. Whiskers and Oscar did everything together, as best friends forever.

The best friends forever were even together when Elie, the lifeguard, was having a kite-flying contest at the community pool. The winner was the contestant who flew the most kites at one time. Oscar believed that Whiskers should not attempt flying more than three kites for fear that the kites would lift Whiskers off the ground and carry him away.

"Don't worry. Give me one more kite." Whiskers laughed as he reached for another kite string. Just as Oscar handed Whiskers a fourth kite, a sudden breeze blew across the pool, lifting the kites and Whiskers up into the warm, summer air. Feeling his feet lift off the ground, Whiskers held on even tighter to the kite strings.

"Wow," Whiskers yelled to his friends below. "I'm flying across the pool!" As he looked down, he heard Elie screaming for help and saw her chasing after him along the edge of the pool.

"Let go of the kites! Let go of the kites!" Elie kept yelling. But, Whiskers was having too much fun flying through the air to listen to Elie's shouts.

As he slowly drifted above the clear, blue, pool water, Whiskers thought it would be fun to dive into the water from high in the sky. And, as if he had done this many times before, Whiskers released the four kite strings and dove head first into the pool.

"I give myself a 10 for that dive," Whiskers told himself as he swam upward to the top of the water. Placing his paws firmly on the cement edge, he pulled himself up, shaking the water from his fur coat.

"Are you all right?" Elie and Oscar asked in unison as they raced over to Whiskers.

"Did I win the diving contest?" he asked Elie as he took the blue, beach towel she handed him. "This was an adventure!" he exclaimed, drying himself with the soft towel.

As Whiskers and Oscar left the yellow swings to play on the back of the green turtle slide, Oscar said, "My parents are having a Family Reunion party today at Sunshine Park. Would you like to come with me?"

"Of course, I'll come with you. We are BFFs," was Whiskers reply.

Later that afternoon when the two BFFs arrived at the Family Reunion party, they saw a huge banner flying over the entrance to Sunshine Park. The banner said, "Welcome to the Dachshund Family Reunion."

Underneath the welcome sign were smaller signs. The first sign announced that "The Douglas Dachshund Family traveled 1,000 miles to attend the Dachshund Family Reunion."

A second sign read, "Debbie and Dilbert Dachshund and their Dachshund twins journeyed 1,543 miles to attend the Dachshund Family Reunion." Below that sign, a third sign stated that "The Dezmen Dachshund Family and their new baby, Daisy Dachshund, trekked 2,133 miles to attend the Dachshund Family Reunion."

There were many more signs on display that announced the distance that each Dachshund family traveled to attend their very, special Dachshund Family Reunion.

Everywhere Whiskers looked there were dachshunds. There were black dachshunds. There were brown dachshunds. There were rust colored dachshunds. There were little, baby dachshunds. There were children dachshunds. There were teen dachshunds. And, there were adult dachshunds chasing after children dachshunds that were running all around the park barking at the teen dachshunds. Whiskers had never heard so much barking. "Cats are so much quieter," he told Oscar.

When the barking finally stopped, Whiskers looked around at all of the dachshund family members having fun at Sunshine Park.

"I'm the only cat at the dachshund family reunion," Whiskers realized as he continued to gaze across the park, searching for anyone who was not a dog. "This is a real adventure!"

"Grab a partner," Grandpa Dachshund announced through the sound system. "It's time to begin the games."

"Come on, partner," Oscar said as he grabbed Whisker's paw and led him to where all of the dachshunds were gathering for the games.

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"The first game is called, 'Burrowing in the Dirt,'" Grandpa Dachshund explained as several dachshunds lined up near a large group of boxes, recently filled with dirt. "The first team to burrow through their box of dirt and find the toy animal wins the game."

When Grandpa called out "Go" all of the dachshunds began burrowing in their boxes of dirt. "I'll just watch," Whiskers thought as Oscar immediately dug deep into the dirt. Oscar was the first contestant to find the toy animal.

"I found it," Oscar called out to everyone. And, while Oscar barked, showing Grandpa that he had beaten all of the digging dachshunds, Debbie Dachshund was helping Dezmen Dachshund pull baby

Daisy Dachshund out of the hole in the dirt. It took both adult dachshunds pulling on Daisy's long curved tail, to get her out from where she was burrowed deep into the dirt.

The second contest was called "Find the Bacon." In this game, Grandpa Dachshund dragged pieces of cooked bacon across the park and hid bacon strips in a storage room next to the playground.

"Get ready to find the bacon," Grandpa called out as a dozen dachshunds lined up to observe which dachshund tracked the smell of the bacon to where it was hidden. After the contest began and while the dogs were busy using their noses to sniff and smell their way across the park looking for the bacon, Whiskers went directly to the storage room. Earlier in the day and out of the corner of his eye, Whiskers had observed Grandpa Dachshund hiding the bacon.

"I found the bacon," Whiskers said as he proudly retrieved the bacon and handed it to Grandpa Dachshund. Grandpa Dachshund was somewhat confused as to how a cat located the bacon so quickly before any dachshund hunters.

There were other contests held throughout the day such as the two-legged-paw race, where two dogs tied their paws together. Or, for Oscar and Whiskers, it was a cat paw and a dog paw tied together.

The contest that the BFFs enjoyed the most was the catch the egg contest where the contestants threw a colored egg toward each other. Each time the egg was caught, the partners took another step backwards. Whiskers and Oscar kept getting further and further away from each other.

"Throw the egg higher," Whiskers kept telling Oscar. "Throw it higher. I can catch it." In the end, Whiskers and Oscar won the game even though Oscar threw the egg into the top of a small maple tree planted in the park. Whiskers climbed the tree to save the egg.

"I was just trying to throw the egg higher," Oscar explained.

"It's time to present trophies to the three top winners of the Dachshund Family Reunion contests," Grandpa Dachshund announced. Sitting on a table in front of him were three large golden trophies.

Each trophy was designed to look like a dachshund with a silver nameplate that said, "Winner at the Dachshund Family Reunion."

Grandpa lifted a trophy and declared, "The 3rd Place trophy goes to the Debbie Dachshund twins." The twins exchanged high five paws as they heard the announcement of their win.

After a round of applause, Grandpa Dachshund said, "The 2nd Place goes to Desman and Delia Dachshund." Both Desman and Delia barked excitedly, ran around the park, and showed everyone their 2nd Place trophy.

"Now, the 1st Place trophy goes to Oscar and Whiskers--a C-A-T ?" Grandpa Dachshund announced with a surprised expression. All of the other dachshunds were amazed that a C-A-T was part of the winning team.

Whiskers grabbed Oscar. "Let's go get our trophy!" Still looking surprised, Grandpa Dachshund handed the 1st Place trophy to the two winners, while the dachshunds barked their approval. With the dachshunds, cheering them on, the two friends held the glittering trophy high above their heads. Whiskers winked at Oscar and said, "This has been an adventure!"