

Reading sample

It came time to go to sleep.

“Good night, dearest Dachshund,” Dane whispered as she pulled the blanket up to her snout. She dreamed about swinging in a hammock with him, surrounded by sweet-smelling lilac bushes.

“Good night, dearest Dane,” Dachshund sighed as he stretched out in bed. In his dream, he and Dane raced to the sledding hill, which they slid down softly in the brilliant sunlight.

It was a very beautiful Christmas Eve. Almost.

pp. 23–25

Smells

The snow melting brought endless new smells with it. Dachshund and Dane’s days were filled with sniffing. Their snouts were pointed to the ground from morning till night as they incessantly smelled, compared, and discussed.

“Hey, come here!” Dachshund shouted, waving Dane to a fencepost. “Have you ever sniffed anything like this before?”

Dane trotted over and gave the post a long, hard sniff.

“It reminds me a little of a young mountain goat that has just shed its coat,” she suggested thoughtfully. “Or maybe a red deer?”

“Come on, it’s definitely not a deer! You were right the first time—I bet it’s a mountain goat. The cold scent of steep cliffs is pretty clear.”

They padded onward. Soon, Dane called out to Dachshund.

“You won’t believe what I found! This old stump smells like a pine marten that has just barely escaped the jaws of a hungry wolf. Come see how strong it is!”

Dachshund sniffed once and was amazed—the smell really was powerful!

“I just came across the smell of a badger over there—it’s that same old guy who’s been expanding his den out past the woods for at least the last five years,” Dachshund told her. “The scent tells me he’s dug two more entrances and five exits in addition to the three entrances and four exits he had already. Some creatures really can get hoity-toity sometimes!”

“It smells like a herd of cattle passed that oak over there. When I went to take a closer look, I found a nursing bottle.”

Dachshund went “mm-mmm!” in pleasure as he stretched out his back. “You reckon we should get gathering and canning now?”



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Dane agreed.

They couldn't just let the wind sweep away the cloud of incredible springtime smells. Because many of the trickles of meltwater had originally fallen as snow blown from far away, they also carried distant smells. Apart from the amazing scents of mountain goats and pine martens, there were also whiffs of flying squirrels, snow leopards, bobcats, lynx, pink sowbread flowers, and yellow pond lilies. Not to mention the usual smells of coltsfoot, fir needles, pinecones, damp moss, and earthworms.

So, Dachshund and Dane gathered up the most exciting, spicy, sweet, mellow, and unusual scents, and arranged them into a fabulous bouquet. Dane then stuffed the mixture into a large glass jar, which she set on her living room table. Every now and then, she liked to unscrew the lid, take a sniff, and give samples to her friends for their birthdays.

pp. 40–43

On the Beach

The sun glittered and sparked on the sea. Gentle, drowsy waves slid across the sandy beach.

"The water is just perfect for a swim," Dachshund said, feeling a little woozy from sunbathing. "Are you coming in, too?"

Dane shook her head. She had settled in beneath a sunshade, was crocheting a new collar for formal occasions, and had no plans of scampering into the waves.

"You go ahead. Just don't wade out too far—it gets deep pretty quick here."

Dachshund snorted and strutted into the waves. They were soft, cooling, and refreshing.

"I'm no puppy! I'll swim out as far as I'd like," he thought as he happily sloshed straight towards the horizon. The bright light made him squint, but his tail was a steady rudder.

"I wonder if she can see what an incredible swimmer I am."

Dachshund made a couple of especially powerful doggy-paddle strokes and slapped his tail against the surface. A little too much water splashed into his throat and made him cough, but he didn't care.

By then, the shore was rather far behind

him and the waves were getting higher.

"It's about time for Dane to yip for me to come back!" Dachshund thought a little anxiously. "Is she even watching? Would she swim to my rescue at all?"

Dachshund was floundering and felt a little bit out of control. A couple of pesky waves splashed over his head and his tail was starting to tire out, not to mention his paws.

Back on shore, Dane was afraid she'd lose all her fur from worry. "What's that crazy Dachshund up to this time?!" she groaned. "Why does he always have to doggy-paddle out so far?"

Dane trotted around the sand in circles, watching Dachshund so intensely that she thought her eyes might pop out. "But if I swim out there, then he'll think that I think he's just some pup who isn't a strong enough swimmer! Oh, no!"

Whimpering and swaying, Dane stood panting right on the edge of the sea, waiting for the right moment to rush to the rescue. It had to be perfect—not a smidgen too early nor a smidgen too late.

As soon as Dachshund stuck his snout out of the water after the next wave rolled by, he decided to finally turn around to head back to shore. He couldn't go any further, no matter what Dane might think of him. So, he simply let the surf carry him back to the beach, where he lay panting on the sand.

"You sure swam out pretty far," Dane remarked from the shade of her umbrella.

"So you saw me?"

"Of course I did. You were paddling around like it was nothing. It was an absolute joy to watch."

The two stretched out and relaxed on the sand until late that evening, both recovering in pleasant silence.

pp. 56–58

The Hike

Come on a hike through the woods to the big boulder! A journey full of unexpected turns! Anyone who'd like is welcome to join. We'll meet tomorrow beneath the oak tree. Mutt.

So read the flier Dachshund was carrying when she scampered over to Dane.