



## Chapter Two – by Kay Hively

John Robert blinked his eyes. But blinking did not change anything. Standing quietly on the other side of the water trough was the biggest, blackest dog the boy had ever seen.

The massive dog paid no attention to John Robert. Using his big tongue, the dog lapped up great scoops of water. The dog was big but he had a friendly look. John Robert was not frightened.

As the thirsty creature drank, John Robert looked around to see who was with the dog. There was no one to be seen. The dog seemed to be by itself.

While John Robert watched the dog drink, Mr. Herman came out of the barn and walked toward the cabin. Suddenly, he saw the big animal near John Robert. Thinking it was a black bear, Mr. Herman ran to protect his son from a bear attack. But as he approached the animal, Mr. Herman realized it was a dog — a very big dog.

John Robert and his father stood together and watched the dog drink. John Robert asked his father if he had ever seen a dog that big. Mr. Herman said he had never seen such a creature. But, he admitted, the dog seemed friendly.

As the father and son talked about the dog, the cabin door opened and Mrs. Herman stepped outside. As she searched for her husband and son, Mrs. Herman spotted the big dog. Her eyes got very big, and, with a cry of surprise, she jumped back into the cabin and slammed the door. Mr. Herman laughed and then put his hand on his son's shoulder and said they should go in for supper. John Robert asked what to do about the dog. Mr. Herman said the best thing was leave it alone and see what happened.

As they started toward the cabin, John Robert walked backward so he could see what the dog would do. The big dog just watched as the boy and his father went inside. John Robert immediately ran to a window and looked out. The dog was still standing by the water trough.

During supper, Mr. Herman teased his wife for being afraid of the dog. Mrs. Herman blushed at the teasing, and said she thought some kind of wild creature had wandered out of the woods. John Robert could hardly pay attention to supper. He wanted to go back to the window and see if the dog was still in the yard, but his mother made him stay at the table until the family had finished eating.

Finally, Mrs. Herman gave John Robert permission to leave the table. Quickly, he ran to the window and looked out at the water trough. The big black dog was gone.



*Author Kay Hively and Illustrator Billie Gofourth-Stewart are both of Neosho, Mo. Produced by the Missouri Press Foundation. Copyright 2007.*

## Things to Think About and Do

- Have you ever had a stray dog come to your house? If one came to your yard, what should you do? Does your community have a Humane Society? Invite someone from the Humane Society to visit your class and talk about stray animals.
- The strange dog is very large. Make a list of eight large dogs and eight small dogs. Choose your favorite dog on each list and then rank them in order with your favorite dog being number one.
- Some newspapers publish information from local shelters on pets available for adoption. Look for this in your newspaper. Create an ad that would encourage someone to adopt a homeless animal.

STANDARDS: G1:6 G4:3; G4:6 CA6; CA4; S3; G1:3

Next Week: Chapter Three – A north wind blows