

# A HUNTER'S HEART

## CHAPTER FOUR ~ BY KAY HIVELY

All Sam could do was watch the wagon roll out of sight with Old Drum sitting in the box behind his master. In all his life, Sam had never been so sad. He just couldn't believe that Old Drum was walking right beside him and he didn't even recognize the best hunting dog in the country.

Angrily, Sam kicked at a rock as he walked slowly to the barn where his father had gone to finish cleaning the rabbits.

Sam sat down on a little milk stool to help his father. Mr. Pittman could see that something was bothering his son. Neither of them spoke for several minutes. Then Mr. Pittman asked his son what was wrong. Sam began to blurt out his problem. He called himself a dummy for not recognizing Old Drum.

Sam's father worked quietly at his job and listened as his son berated himself. Finally, Sam finished telling his father how mad he was at himself.

Then Mr. Pittman spoke, telling his son to take a lesson from what happened this morning. He said it is not a good idea to judge dogs, or people, by the way they look. He said the most important thing about a dog or a person is not what they look like or what kind of clothes they wear. He said the important thing is what they have in their hearts and in their minds.

Sam's father said that Old Drum had a "hunter's heart," and that is why he was such a great dog. Old Drum's lean body and floppy ears do not give a clue to what is in his heart, Mr. Pittman explained. The wise father reminded his son not to "judge a book by its cover," and to respect everyone and everything, regardless of what they look like.

For a long time, Sam thought about what his father said. Now that he had seen Old Drum, Sam wished he had a dog just like him. He wouldn't even mind if it wasn't a handsome dog. If a dog had a hunter's heart, that was all that counted.

Quickly the two finished their work. Then, with the three rabbits cleaned, Sam carried them to the cabin for his mother to cook. His father stayed in the barn and began working on the rabbit skins. The family always liked rabbit fur. Sam's mother used it to make their gloves and caps, and, if they had extra, the furs could be sold in town.

It was warm inside the cabin. Sam's mother was at her spinning wheel making yarn from the wool that had come from the sheep last spring. Mrs. Pittman told Sam she was going to make a new coverlet for his bed. She said if the winter was cold, the wool cover would keep him warm all night long.

Sam thought to himself that a dog sleeping on his bed at night would be just as warm.



Author Kay Hively and Illustrator Billie Gofourth-Stewart are both of Neosho, Missouri. Produced in partnership with this newspaper and the Missouri Press Foundation. Copyright 2005.

## LEARNING EXTENSIONS

### THINGS TO THINK ABOUT AND DO

A. Mr. Pittman told Sam to not "judge a book by its cover." What does that mean? Talk to an adult about what that means. Ask the adult to give you some examples of this wise saying.

B. In class, lead a discussion about what Mr. Pittman called a "hunter's heart." There are other kinds of hearts. Have everyone in class tell what kind of heart they have or what kind of heart they would like to have.

Show Me Standards Met: G1: 3; G2:3; G3:3; G4:4; CA: 5; CA:6; SS:6

**Next Week: Chapter 5 – More bad news**