

BAGUETTE & BONTON - #6

DROOP-EARS
THE STORY (1ST BOOK)
-PART ONE-

MANDYKA





BAGUETTE AND **BONTON** WERE QUIVERING WITH FEAR. BUT DON'T WORRY, THIS ISN'T ONE OF THOSE SCARY STORIES. AND THEIR FEAR WASN'T THE SCARY KIND - IT HAD A MUCH SIMPLER EXPLANATION: A LITTLE SOMETHING CALLED STAGE FRIGHT.

OUR FRIENDS WERE ABOUT TO GO ON STAGE FOR A SCHOOL PLAY ABOUT THE EPIC FOUNDING OF **WOOFLAND** BY **DROOP-EARS**, THE FAMOUS DOG FROM FAR-OFF NORMANDY WHO HAD REACHED THE ISLAND'S SHORES IN 1713.

BONTON HAD GOTTEN THE ROLE OF THE HERO'S **BLACKSMITH** FRIEND, WHO'D BECOME A CARPENTER IN ORDER TO REPAIR HIS SHIP. **BAGUETTE** WAS SUPPOSED TO PLAY THE PART OF **BONELINE**, **DROOP-EARS'** BEAUTIFUL WIFE, WHO HAD HELPED HIM FOUND THE FIRST SETTLEMENT OF THEIR NEW TOWN. THE STORY IS ONE OF THE MOST WELL-KNOWN TALES IN **WOOFLAND**. WHY DON'T WE GO OVER IT TOGETHER WHILE WE WAIT FOR THE PLAY TO START?

DON'T WORRY, THIS ISN'T A HISTORY LESSON.
IT'S THE EXCITING ADVENTURE OF A SLIGHTLY GOOFY FRIEND WHO MANAGED TO STUMBLE HIS WAY INTO HISTORY.
LET'S GET TO KNOW HIM TOGETHER, SHALL WE?



NORMANDY

NORMANDY IS A REGION IN NORTH-WESTERN FRANCE.
IT BORDERS ON THE ENGLISH CHANNEL, ACROSS FROM ENGLAND.
THE SEA ALONG NORMANDY'S HUGE BEACHES IS COLD AND GREY, BUT IN SUMMERTIME IT'S STILL A VERY POPULAR VACATION SPOT.
BETWEEN 1600 AND 1700, MANY EXPLORERS SAILING TOWARD AMERICA SET OFF FROM NORMANDY, WHICH MANY GREAT PEOPLE HAD CALLED HOME... BUT CERTAINLY NONE OF THEM HAD COME FROM THE HIGHSNOUT FAMILY IN MANY YEARS - UNTIL 1707, THAT IS.



THE FATHER, **PROUD HIGHSNOUT**, WAS AN OLD DRILL SERGEANT WHO HAD EARNED MANY MEDALS IN VARIOUS BATTLES, AND HAD RETIRED TO GROW COTTON IN THAT AREA, WISELY PREDICTING THAT IT WOULD LATER EARN HIM A LOT OF MONEY.

THE MOTHER, **SHY HIGHSNOUT**, HAD GLADLY FOLLOWED HER

HUSBAND, AND FROM THEIR NOW QUIET LIFE TOGETHER IN THE PROPERTY THEY CALLED "COTTONPATCH", SHE GAVE BIRTH TO A HAPPY, LIVELY AND FUNNY PUPPY... WHOSE EARS WERE SO LONG THEY NEARLY DRAGGED ALONG THE GROUND. SINCE THIS WAS UNUSUAL FOR THEIR BREED OF DOG - THE BASSET ARTÉSIEN NORMAND, TO WHICH THE HIGHSNOUT FAMILY BELONGED - THEY DECIDED TO NAME THEIR PUP **DROOP-EARS**.

DROOP-EARS WAS A RASCAL THROUGH AND THROUGH. HIS FAVOURITE PASTIME WAS TO CHASE RABBITS OUT OF THEIR BURROWS, WHICH RIDDLED THE FIELDS AROUND THE PLANTATION, AND DRIVE THEM TOWARD THE

HOUSE. THE HUNT SOON BROUGHT A WHOLE WARREN OF RABBITS BARRELLING THROUGH THE KITCHEN AND LIVING ROOM, UNDOING ALL OF HIS POOR MOTHER'S HARD WORK.

OBVIOUSLY PROUD, THE FATHER, WOULD GIVE HIS SON A STERN



PUNISHMENT, USING MILITARY METHODS LIKE SENDING HIM TO BED WITH NO SUPPER, LOCKING HIM INSIDE HIS ROOM ("IN SOLITARY CONFINEMENT", AS HE CALLED IT) FOR A DAY OR TWO, OR GIVING HIM CLEAN-UP DUTY TO FIX ALL THE WRECKAGE CAUSED BY THE POOR, TERRORIZED RABBITS.

HOWEVER, THIS WASN'T ENOUGH TO PUT THE BRAKES ON THE WHEELS TURNING FRANTICALLY INSIDE THE PUP'S MIND.

(CONTINUE)