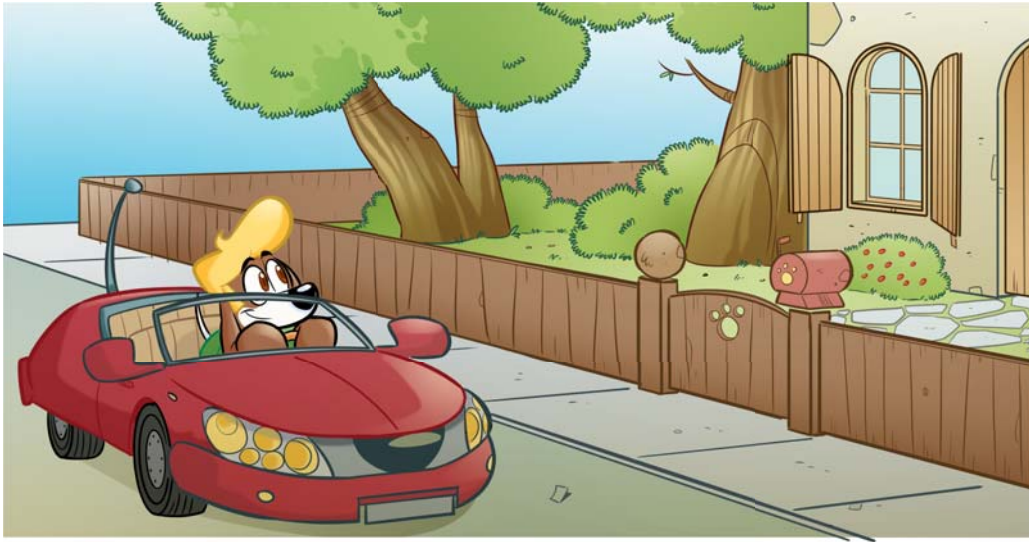


BAGUETTE & BONTON - #8

THE PICNIC -PART ONE-



THE PREPARATIONS_



EVERY SEPTEMBER, A SHORT TIME BEFORE SCHOOL STARTED AGAIN AND THE MAJORITY OF **WOOFLAND'S** INHABITANTS RETURNED TO TOWN, **BAGUETTE** AND **BONTON'S** FAMILY HELD A GREAT BIG PICNIC.

ALL THE FAMILY, THE ENTIRE PACK, ALWAYS SHOWED UP. IT WAS AN OLD TRADITION.

SO **UNCLE CHAMPION**, WHO WOULD RETURN TO **WOOFLAND** FOR THE PARTY EVEN WHEN HE WAS TRAVELING AROUND THE WORLD, SHOWED UP AT **BAGUETTE** AND **BONTON'S** HOUSE AT THE CRACK OF DAWN TO HELP HIS BROTHER **QUILL** AND **MOMMY MELODY** GET EVERYTHING READY.

HE WASN'T SURPRISED TO FIND THAT **GRANNY PANCAKE** AND **GRANDPA EAGLE-EYE** HAD GOTTEN THERE BEFORE HIM, AND WERE PREPARING THE LAST OF THE FOOD. THEY HAD BOTH DROPPED BY THEIR SON'S HOUSE BEFORE THE SUN HAD EVEN COME UP.

NOR WAS **CHAMPION** SURPRISED WHEN THE DOORBELL RANG RIGHT AFTER HE ARRIVED, ANNOUNCING **GRANNY GARLAND** AND **GRANDPA DOODLE**.



NOR WAS IT STRANGE TO HIM EITHER THAT **BAGUETTE** HAD JUST GOTTEN UP AND YET WAS AWAKE AND FULL OF ENERGY, WHILE **BONTON**, FOR HIS PART, WAS STILL SNORING UP A STORM. TO BE CLEAR, IT WASN'T THAT THE PUP WAS LAZY; HE SIMPLY LIKED TO SLEEP IN A LITTLE IF HE COULD, AND IN ANY CASE, HE

KNEW THE OTHERS WOULDN'T ARRIVE FOR ANOTHER HOUR.

BUT WAIT... "THE OTHERS", YOU ASK?

OF COURSE, YOU'RE RIGHT. YOU MAY HAVE THOUGHT THAT **BAGUETTE** AND **BONTON'S** FAMILY WAS ALREADY ALL THERE!

THE OTHERS_

BONTON WOKE UP AS THE PREPARATIONS WERE ALREADY WINDING DOWN, AND THE HOUSE WAS FULL OF PEOPLE. HE GREETED EVERYONE AND WHEN HE HAD BREAKFAST, HE WAS THE LAST TO DO THIS, TOO.

THE DOORBELL RANG AGAIN AS HE WAS FINISHING BRUSHING HIS



TEETH, SO HE RAN TO OPEN THE FRONT DOOR, REVEALING HIS **AUNT NEVADA**.

"HI, PUP! HOW ARE YOU?"

"AUNTIE!"

"HELLO," SAID A FAINT AND SHY

VOICE FROM BEHIND HIS AUNT. "COME IN, COME IN!" SAID **MOMMY MELODY** LOUDLY IN A HAPPY VOICE, DRYING HER EARS ON HER APRON AS SHE STEPPED SWIFTLY TOWARD THE NEWCOMERS, "IT'S SO NICE TO SEE YOU, SISTER!"

THE **BASSET HOUND**, WEARING HER FAUX-LEATHER JACKET, TOOK OFF HER HAT AND ENTERED, FOLLOWED CLOSELY BY THE SHY **SIAMESE CAT**, **COUSIN UTAH**.

UTAH WAS A KITTEN ADOPTED BY **NEVADA** IN CHINA, ON THE CHOW CHOW PENINSULA, DURING A WORK ASSIGNMENT.

NEVADA, YOU SEE, WAS AN ARCHAEOLOGIST - AND A PALEONTOLOGIST - WHO CONTINUALLY TRAVELED THE WORLD STUDYING DOGOSAURS AND ANCIENT CIVILIZATIONS.



LITTLE **UTAH** HAD BECOME PART OF THE FAMILY ONLY THREE YEARS BEFORE, BUT EVERYONE WAS DELIGHTED THAT SHE HAD **BAGUETTE** AND **BONTON** MOST OF ALL, BECAUSE THEIR NEW COUSIN WAS EXACTLY ONE YEAR OLDER THAN **BONTON** AND SIX MONTHS YOUNGER THAN **BAGUETTE**, SO THE THREE OF THEM HAD BECOME FAST FRIENDS RIGHT AWAY.

JUST AS EVERYONE WAS HUGGING, THE DOORBELL RANG AGAIN, AND THIS TIME IT WAS **GRANDPA DOODLE** WHO ANSWERED. ALL OF THE EXPECTED FAMILY MEMBERS WERE FINALLY UNDER THE SAME ROOF!

FROM THE STATE OF CHIHUAHUA

DOODLE GLEEFULLY GREETED HIS OTHER DAUGHTER, THE YOUNGEST. HER NAME WAS **PLUMBLINE**, AND SHE WAS AN ARCHITECT. HAVING ONLY JUST ARRIVED FROM THE AIRPORT, SHE HURRIEDLY DROPPED OFF THE MEXICAN SPECIALTIES SHE HAD BROUGHT FOR THE PICNIC WHILE HER BOYFRIEND PAID THE CAB DRIVER.



"HI, DADDY!" SAID PLUMBLINE.
"HELLO PLUMBLINE, I'M SO GLAD TO SEE YOU," REPLIED GRANDPA DOODLE, GATHERING HER IN A BIG HUG.
"PLUMBLINE!" MOMMY MELODY AND AUNT NEVADA YELPED IN UNISON, HEARING HER VOICE. THEY BOUNDED UP TO HER AND ALL THREE STARTED LEAPING FOR JOY AT SEEING EACH OTHER AGAIN.
"LMM..." INTERRUPTED A VOICE FROM THE DOORWAY, WHICH

WAS FILLED WITH REJOICING DOGS, "MAY I COME IN TOO, POR FAVOR?"
IT WAS ABDOMINO, PLUMBLINE'S BOYFRIEND.

YES, ABDOMINO WAS MEXICAN. NOT ONLY WAS HE A PROFESSIONAL WRESTLER - A LUCHADOR, AS THEY CALLED THEM IN THOSE PARTS - AND A CHIHUAHUA, BUT HE WAS ALSO STRONG ENOUGH TO LIFT A DOGMOBILE! AS SOON AS HE HAD LAID EYES ON HIM, UNCLE CHAMPION RAN UP TO HIM... THE TWO BARELY GREETED EACH OTHER BEFORE THEY STARTED TO ARM WRESTLE ON THE LIVING ROOM TABLE (BUT ONLY AFTER PUTTING ON A WRESTLER'S MASK AT THE REQUEST OF BAGUETTE AND BONTON)!

AND FINALLY, THE FAMILY WAS
ALL TOGETHER!

(CONTINUE)

