

THE DUCK WHICH DID NOT LIKE WATER AND SHOES

(a true story by Régine LABAT RAVON)

Once upon a time, there was a little duck which had grown up among hens and cockerels. That the reason why, he was sure to be one of them. Also, as a hen or a cockerel, he did not like water very much and he hated to have a bath.

He had a white neck, a dark body and a curious piece of red skin just above the top of his beak between and around the eyes. He was also a very talkative duck. Happily he belonged to a breed which did not make a lot of noise; he coughed and spluttered swinging his neck during the conversation.

But, he was really a duck and, as a duck which leaved in the south west of France, his destiny was to finish his life as a confit the next december.

Fortunately for him, a six old year girl spent hers summer hollydays in the neighborhood in hers grand parent's house. This little girl, called Muriel, was used to come every day to give him a little piece of bread or some grass across the wire netting. She loved the duck and then she had given the name "Lilou" to the animal. Of course, when the hollydays were finish, she became very sad to leave her new friend . Her home was to 150 kms from her grand parent's house and she didn't expect to see Lilou again. Also, her grand mother decided to buy the duck to give a present for next Muriel's birthday. Her neighbor was also happy to give Lilou because she liked this original duck and she had more and more difficulties to decide herself to kill him.

The 14th october, the day of the anniversary, grand parents came in Muriel's home with the famous Lilou. That was a great and nice surprise for the little girl and a very good luck for the bird because the family lived in a old house with a very large courtyard and a big garden. Some little hens and a cokerell lived there too; Lilou became quickly their friend and as soon as their chief because these other animals were a dwarf kind.

They were nice friends with him, but Lilou preferred children. He liked to stay behind the french window specially the kitchen one. During breakfasts and dinners he was still knocking the window with his beak talking all the time with the family. He enjoyed the garden too where he spent most of his new time, staying with the children when they were playing on the grass. He walked among them, around flowers and he often rested under the trees. But he never tried to swim in the very small fish pool which was in the garden. He still did not like water. More, he hated it. Once, he was particularly dirty, the children had put him into this little pool to try to wash him; Lilou became very furious and he had puchased them trying to pinch theirs legs in all the garden. That was his way to show how he was very angry. But he was the only once with them. Even then the children pushed back him slowly with their shoes the duck's beak, in order to prevent him to escape on the road, Lilou stayed always calm.

But the other Muriel's grand father, who lived there too, was used to do it like that more often, specially when he had to ride outside with his bike. He was an old landman and, for him, a duck can never be a pet. Even though, he never hurt Lilou, but, as a south west old man too, he was used to swear and grip very much specially when it became difficult to push a bike while a duck was trying to escape out. So, Lilou did not like the grand father's shoes too and all the shoes consequently.

Once, many children shoes where forgotten outside, near the door, Lilou took them and trailed with angry along in the middle of the courtyard, one by one, undoing shoelaces and soles during a very long time. It was his revenge against all the shoes. Griping shoes particulary which he couldn't catch.

But except water and shoes, he was a very kind duck and really an affective one.

Another day, he was a little hurted unfortunatly by the car in the courtyard. He had cried with real tears and spoke very sadly to the chidren. Obsiously, he needed affection to be comforted. The family was very afraid that he was more wounded as it was apparently seemed. So, with their parent's aproval, the children took him in the kitchen under an old cover near them to watch him and to nurse him. It was the only time Lilou was in the house. He was so happy to be inside that it complained more and more. Maybe he was an actor duck too because, except a small fear, he was in perfect health.

He remained a long time in good health, still leaving with Muriel and her family, free and happy among all his friends of poultry yard.

That is the true story about the famous Lilou, a loving duck which hated water and shoes but which like very much children.

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