

Chapter VI - Teenty and Weenty

ALL around the sides of the dining-room were pockets, or bins, in the wall; and these were full of those things the prairie-dogs are most fond of eating. Clover-seeds filled one bin, and sweet roots another; dried mulberry leaves--that must have come from a long distance--were in another bin, and even kernels of yellow field corn were heaped in one place. The Puff-Pudgys were surely in no danger of starving for some time to come.

"Teenty! Put back that grain of wheat," commanded the mother, in a severe voice.

Instead of obeying, Teenty put the wheat in his mouth and ate it as quickly as possible.

"The little dears are so restless," Mrs. Puff-Pudgy said to Twinkle, "that it's hard to manage them."

"They don't behave," remarked Chubbins, staring hard at the children.

"No, they have a share of their father's obstinate nature," replied Mrs. Puff-Pudgy. "Excuse me a minute and I'll cuff them; It'll do them good."

But before their mother could reach them, the children found trouble of their own. Teenty sprang at Weenty and began to fight, because his brother had pinched him, and Weenty fought back with all his might and main. They scratched with their claws and bit with their teeth, and rolled over and over upon the floor, bumping into the wall and upsetting the chairs, and snarling and growling all the while like two puppies.

Mrs. Puff-Pudgy sat down and watched them, but did not interfere.

"Won't they hurt themselves?" asked Twinkle, anxiously.

"Perhaps so," said the mother; "but if they do, it will punish them for being so naughty. I always let them fight it out, because they are so sore for a day or two afterward that they have to keep quiet, and then I get a little rest."

Weenty set up a great howling, just then, and Teenty drew away from his defeated brother and looked at him closely. The fur on both of them was badly mussed up, and Weenty had a long scratch on his nose, that must have hurt him, or he wouldn't have howled so. Teenty's left eye was closed tight, but if it hurt him he bore the pain in silence.

Mrs. Puff-Pudgy now pushed them both into a little room and shut them up, saying they must stay there until bedtime; and then she led Twinkle and Chubbins into the kitchen and showed them a pool of clear water, in a big clay basin, that had been caught during the last rain and saved for drinking purposes. The children drank of it, and found it cool and refreshing.

Then they saw the bedrooms, and learned that the beds of prairie-dogs were nothing more than round hollows made in heaps of clay. These animals always curl themselves up when they sleep, and the round hollows just fitted their bodies; so, no doubt, they found them very comfortable.

There were several bedrooms, for the Puff-Pudgy house was really very large. It was also very cool and pleasant, being all underground and not a bit damp.

After they had admired everything in a way that made Mrs. Puff-Pudgy very proud and happy, their hostess took one of the lighted candles from a bracket and said she would now escort them to the house of the Honorable Mr. Bowko, the Mayor.