

Saving Missy

Awoken by a loud and prolonged yawn from the fireplace, I looked at my watch and saw it was after midnight. Bob was watching me, head on one side. She yawned again.

Creaking to my feet, I shuffled to the door, turning back to look at her on her makeshift bed.

‘Well. Goodnight then. Stay.’ Bob’s tail thumped the floor.

I pulled myself upstairs to get ready for my own bed, but just as I was preparing to switch off the lights there was the scrabble of claws and a second later, her face appeared at the door.

This was not part of the plan at all. She had to be on the ground floor, deterring intruders, not lounging around in my bedroom. ‘No!’ I said firmly, leading her back downstairs. She followed me, tail wagging, then sat expectantly in the living room as I wondered what to do. In the end I dragged a couple of chairs from the dining room and made a barricade at the bottom of the stairs. Maybe I could buy one of those gates people got for toddlers. More expense.

I went back up to my room, and closed the door, listening out for her whining or scratching, but heard nothing. Angela had said she was a very good dog. One just had to be firm. I went to sleep thinking about where we would walk the next morning, and if we might meet Otis. He could throw a stick for her, and she could wait outside the playground while we played on the swings.

I slept deeply, and in the morning when I awoke, two things struck me at once. One: Bob was curled at the end of my bed, snoring loudly, hairs all over the covers, the door to my bedroom still closed. And two: for the first time in my life, ever since

Beth Morrey

Fa-Fa told us the story about the ripper who sang nursery rhymes
from the wardrobe before he cut up his victims, I hadn't checked
the cupboards before I went to sleep.

Cave canem. Beware the dog.