

Chapter 3

Ska-Ruffy, a real wire-haired terrier

And everybody's pal!

Par for the course

Ska-Ruffy, was a wire-haired terrier with real wire hair! He and his narcoleptic poodle buddy Poolee, who passed out whenever excited, were booted out of their posh kennel home. They were dumped in a dump with junkyard dogs, whom they managed to befriend and were not eaten! The junkyard owner kicked them, and since they were hungry, they found pots to clean out at the Ho Che Min French Vietnamese restaurant. That was great until the Board of Health found Ska-Ruffy swimming in a pot of beef bourguignon. But, they could go back if they were careful not get caught. So for unwanted pups, they did OK. After all, Ska-Ruffy was everybody's pal and made friends wherever he went, like his possum buddies.



One day, Ska-Ruffy and Poolee were out strolling and enjoying a nice day when they came upon a wide-open, lush green meadow. It reminded them of the happy days back at the well-groomed estate where they lived before they were booted out. Ska-Ruffy missed how he would playfully romp around the well-manicured estate grounds with his family. He missed his show dog brothers and sisters and wondered if his were winning show medals now. Ska-Ruffy certainty was not. But, Ska-Ruffy was a happy-go-lucky real wire-haired terrier, so he ran across the lovely big lawn without a care.

Poolee sat with his new possum buddies, Puerto Rico, and his son, Juan, and just watched. Poolee knew if he got too excited, he'd be down for nap time. He didn't feel like a nap, so he just watched. As they watched Ska-Ruffy run around, he told his opossum buddies all about his fancy home and his beautiful sister Blush, a prize-winning poodle who looked very good in pink. He missed how they would take long strolls around the grounds and laugh and dream about winning dog shows. He told them that Ska-Ruffy had a secret crush on Blush but was too shy to tell her!

Just then, Ska-Ruffy saw a little white ball fall out of the sky and roll onto the middle of the green field. Ska-Ruffy, being a curious, playful young dog, ran over and scarfed up the dimpled white ball off the freshly mowed field. The ball felt odd. It was hard, and it sounded funny as it rolled around inside his mouth, between his little teeth and pink gums. Ska-Ruffy didn't like it and was about to spit the oddball out when a man in a very funny-looking outfit, shaking a metal stick in the air, shouted,



“Hey! Put that ball down!” He raced right at Ska-Ruffy. Ska-Ruffy jumped straight up, ran a few strides, tripped, tumbled, and swallowed the slick dimpled ball.

With outstretched arms and agitated hands, the furious man was about to grab Ska-Ruffy by his collarless neck.

Luckily, three other men drove up in a golf cart and laughed at the scared, silly look on Ska-Ruffy's quivering, wiry face. Even the angry man stood up without ruffling a bristle of Ska-Ruffy's wired-hair coat and laughed. "That's the funniest looking dog I've ever seen, one said. "He ate my golf ball, barked out the other golfer. "Ah, look at him, he's just a scared pouch."



Ska-Ruffy did have a fearful look and felt terrible, too. He wanted to run away and hide, but when he stood up and took only a tiny step, he felt dizzy and fell to the soft ground into a most uncomfortable position.

Poolee, Puerto Rico, and his son, Juan, just looked on with surprise when they saw it was Ska-Ruffy that passed out and not them! Ska-Ruffy had just swallowed a good-sized morsel for a dog his size. Whatever it was, he swallowed it, but it was not sitting well.

Ska-Ruffy was in no position to move and rolled onto his side, so did the ball inside him. He rolled onto his back and looked all around, looking for a comfortable spot for himself and the ball. There was none. It looked like Ska-Ruffy was break dancing, but he was not enjoying it. With his tight wire hair and all the rolling around on the soft, freshly cut lawn, Ska-Ruffy had picked up loose grass and sod and looked like a great green Chia pet.



Feeling less than dignified with his new green jacket, Ska-Ruffy shook his uncomfortable body as if he was shaking off water. Grass and dirt flew everywhere, covering the golf course with grass and sod. Ska-Ruffy sneezed sod out from his nose and looked at the man. He was not happy!

The others laughed so hard tears filled their eyes, and they slapped their thighs. One golfer fell to the ground, rolled around, and sneezed snot from his nose, too. He rolled far too well and looked ridiculous, Ska-Ruffy thought. Ska-Ruffy wanted him to stop and felt in no mood or condition to laugh.

Sensing Ska-Ruffy was not break dancing and was actually a distressed canine, one man leaned down and gently picked Ska-Ruffy up. The man, who happened to be a Veterinarian had a way with animals. When he felt Ska-Ruffy, he realized to his utter amazement -

"This dog has wire hair!" I mean real wire hair!

Astonished and uneasy, the man gingerly passed the puzzled pup off to his friends, and they examined him as if he were a mutant strain from a failed brush with genetic nature. Little bits of sod fell off Ska-Ruffy's wire coat as each man held Ska-Ruffy very carefully and finally put him back down as if he were a kibble-eating time bomb. They were not sure what to do with this highly unusual wire-haired terrier.

Ska-Ruffy felt uncomfortable, too, with all this unfamiliar fondling. He tried to bark, but the golf ball in his tummy and the condition of his throat after he swallowed it made his bark come out like a burp.

Ska-Ruffy's ear shot up at the sound. He shook his head fast and looked around, adding amusing animation to the surprised slapstick expression on his already unnatural-looking face. His ears dropped down. He knew none of them made the sound. It must have been him, he thought. He noticed he felt a little better, so he burped again and contentedly licked his nose. Much better, he thought. The men laughed again, and the one who was getting up fell back down and wiggled his stubby little exposed legs into the fairway air.

As they regained their composure and got back to their game of golf, none of the men had any hard or bristling feelings about the circumstances of their meeting. Ska-Ruffy joined the foursome.

Luckily, for Ska-Ruffy, although a wire-haired dog swallowing a golf ball was not specifically cited in the rule book, the man, whose golf ball was currently unplayable, was allowed to drop a ball. He did not lose a stroke. Ska-Ruffy, unfortunately, was still in the rough. He would have the painful experience of finding out that what he swallowed was not edible when it came out later. Ska-Ruffy now knew that a golf ball was not something a dog should eat.

Poolee, who had passed out just watching the commotion, came to and silently watched as Ska-Ruffy drove off with the four men in the two golf carts. Poolee, like most poodles, was bred for high society, but he preferred to stay in the shadows and off the fairways. He knew his buddy Ska-Ruffy would get him scrapes.

Poolee's opossum buddies, Puerto Rico, and his son, Juan, left the scene the minute they saw the golfers. Opossums and groundhogs were not welcome at the Country Club. In fact, one of the opossums' other buddies, Rocky groundhog, loved digging holes all over the course and was a wanted varmint. There was a price on his head, and he had to keep it out of sight.

Once the golfers and Ska-Ruffy got to the clubhouse, Ska-Ruffy's chaperones showed off their prickly new pal. They noticed he had no collar and did not know who owned him or what to do with him. Since Ska-Ruffy had bonded with them and gotten the game of golf in his system, so to speak, and also knew eating golf balls was a hazard, they decided to adopt the cute, tough, bristled, real wire-haired terrier.



They learned how to hold Ska-Ruffy in just the right way so his wiry hair didn't get stuck too them! It was a very nice place for Ska-Ruffy and Poolee to call home!



And they let Poolee sleep or pass out whenever he wanted, which was often with all the commotion of a fancy Country Club!

Ska-Ruffy and Poolee made a few new friends.

Ska-Ruffy, the real wire-haired terrier, was everybody's pal.

Chapter 4

What a Racquet

With the help of his very respectable, low handicap pals, Ska-Ruffy became a big hit at the “Par for the Racquet golf and tennis club. He was such a hit that they made him their mascot, and soon Ska-Ruffy was living it up at the Country Club.

Ska-Ruffy had a new home, and he got a job! It was a novel job at the club, one well-suited to his odd and wiry genetic condition. Ska-Ruffy would stand firmly at attention outside the clubhouse door, and as the golfers entered, they would clean their clotted golf shoes on his wire back. It worked out great. He felt he was doing a good service; the golfer's shoes were never so clean, and at the end of the day, he had spent his time getting back rubs. It was a respectable job, and it felt good too!

Poolee was allowed to stay, too. The Groundskeeper built them a special dog house. They called it their dog pad since they didn't want to think they were the dog house! The Social Director made Ska-Ruffy a special double-breasted coat with “Ska-Ruffy, the real wire-haired terrier” tastefully embroidered above the Country Club's crest. The jacket even had a soft red rope handle that made it easier to pick the prickly pup up and gave him a formal, distinguished, almost regal look. He was a member of the club with full run of the place.

Poolee got plenty of rich high-brow scrapes but lay low. One time, the cleaning crew almost threw him in the dumpster. He had passed out in the hall. They thought he was used cotton balls and swept him into the garbage. He barked and scared them, then he got scared and passed out again. This time, they knew it was just Poolee in an unconscious state! They would let him pass out wherever. He would wake up pretty quickly anyway.

It was perfect, almost. Ska-Ruffy would have kept his back-scratching job for life if it were not for the embarrassing botch-up at the annual club banquet and that awful punch bowl incident.

Ska-Ruffy was ceremonially removed from his duties and lost his dog house, his embroidered jacket, and even some of his dignity. He was no longer the respectable Country Club mascot. He was canine non gratis.

Ska-Ruffy did not like to remember that sad night, but his fun-loving friends, who were there and actually caused the ruckus and were a large part of the travesty, would never let him forget it.

Occasionally, they teased him enough that even he laughed. After all, it was a very funny story, what with the food fight, the ice sculpture meltdown, and, well, it was a ridiculous story that would be told again, possibly in the next chapter.