

## Chapter 2

### Ska-Ruffy, everybody's pal

#### A real working stiff

Ska-Ruffy was a real wire-haired terrier, with real wire hair! He and his narcoleptic poodle buddy Poolee were booted out of his fancy kennel home. They also were not welcome at the junkyard, where they had made some friends. Since there was no kennel food service now that he and Poolee were homeless, they got hungry, very hungry. Ska-Ruffy had to figure out how and where to get his daily kibbles. So he and Poolee roamed around their new world and sniffed and sniffed until they smelled something delicious. It was from a restaurant, the Ho Chi Mignon. A French-Vietnamese restaurant with a very lovely odor.



Out back in the alley were big pots ready to be scrubbed. Ska-Ruffy saw a meal ticket in that pot! He told Poolee to stay safe in a big, empty drain pipe down the block. Ska-Ruffy went back to the alley and looked into the pot. There was food stuck on the bottom, so Ska-Ruffy jumped into the big pot and spun around like a break-dancer. He scoured out all the stuck-on food with his wire brush hair. He cleaned up!

As he was getting out of the pot, a worker came outside and saw him. Ska-Ruffy jumped out quickly and was about to run away when the worker saw how clean the pot was. “Hey! Do you want a job?” the worker said. He pointed to the other pots, and Ska-Ruffy said, “Sure!”



While Ska-Ruffy was working, Poolee, safe in the drain pipe, had made friends with an opossum family. Puerto, the mom, Rico, the dad, and their son, Juan. The possums were having a fun time with Poolee. When the opossums came into Poolee's drain pipe hiding place, they scared him and - yep - he passed out, and the opossums did too! When they woke up, they realized they had something in common: falling asleep. Poolee couldn't help it when he passed out. Puerto Rico and son Juan could just fake being asleep! Poolee admired that. They were fast friend!

Ska-Ruffy finished his break dancing clean-up session and left the alley. He got back to Poolee, who was happy to see him. Ska-Ruffy was glad Poolee had new friends and gave all of them the food right off his back. There were a lot of food bits stuck to his bristly hair, and it looked like little shish kabobs with several pieces stacked on his wiry hair! They all had a Ho Chi Mignon smorgasbord!

Ska-Ruffy had a meal ticket now and went back every day. He was very well liked at the Ho Chi Mignon. He could even bring Poolee, who mostly just watched but sometime shined the silverware and buffed the plates with his fluffy tail and head.

They both loved their tasty job until one day the Board of Health paid a surprise visit to Ho Chi Mignon's crowded kitchen. The inspector found Ska-Ruffy in a large pot of beef bourguignon, where he was swimming around and enjoying himself and the stew, far too much. He and Poolee, who the Health



Inspector thought was napping on the job, were booted out of the delicious Asian fusion cuisine eatery onto their sorry canine behinds. But, outside, Ska-Ruffy picked off the food bits and made a doggie pile for Poolee, who was, of course, still passed out.

The Health Inspector watched and smiled. Even though he did not approve of Ska-Ruffy's occupation, he still found Ska-Ruffy to be a fine dog. He told Ska-Ruffy, "I won't be back here for a while. Stay so out of trouble and bon appetite." He winked at them, and Ska-Ruffy knew he hadn't lost his meal ticket; he just had to be careful!

Ska-Ruffy had another friend.

He was everybody's pal.