

## **The Foolish Youth and the Old Dotard**

**By Therese Meaney**

A young dog was bouncing through the forest, when he saw an old owl perched on a tree.

The dog barked excitedly: “Bark! Have you seen my ball?” then started sniffing around rapidly.

The owl replied grumpily as he had been just woken up: “Ey? Speak louder, pup.”

The dog questioned a little louder: “I *said*, ‘Have. You. Seen. My ball?’”

Owl: “Too woo! Have I been to the stall? Of course not! I’m not a cow.”

Dog howling: “*Have you seen my ball?*”

Owl (grumpily): “Too whit! I heard you; you needn’t shout. Beats me why these young animals have to mutter and mumble all the time. I have no idea where your stupid ball is. You might have buried it somewhere, silly pup. I declare today’s generation will be no good. In *my* days the flowers were prettier, the sun was brighter, and the animals were nicer.”

Dog (growls angrily while digging): “Grrr! I’m not a silly puppy. I’m a full grown bull dog (well, almost) and I demand some respect. I’m going to kill the cat next door, beat Fido to supper, become a world champion of tug of war, and a renowned show dog.”

Owl: “Too whit! Too whoo! You’re a hot billy guppy? What on earth is that?”

Dog: “*Never mind!*”

Owl: “Too whoo! Quiet! You nearly battered my ear drums! Also, it is best not to be rash. I’m guessing that you were saying something rather foolish. By the way, what does that ball look like?”

Dog: “Woof! It’s blue and small.”

Owl (looks guilty): “Oh. I happened to find it and use its stuffing for my nest. But I *have* found lots of other balls. Perhaps you might like one of them instead. I’m terribly sorry.”

Dog: “Bark! I’m coming up.”

Owl (does not hear him and bombards the dog with lots of balls)

Dog: “That’s *enough!* (picks up a small blue ball up): Thank you.”

Owl: “Ey? Hank Moo? Who on earth is that?”

Dog (sighs, thanks him loudly and departs)

Owl (grumpily): “He didn’t even bother to get these balls back up to my nest.”