

Born To Run

I'm a running dog, a chasing dog, a racing dog. I'm not a fighting dog. I never in all my life had a fight before that night. My speed had always got me out of trouble before. This time I didn't have a chance to use it. He came at us out of nowhere, leaped straight at my face, teeth bared and snarling. He may have been small but he was all aggression, all muscles, all teeth, and I realised at once that he'd rip my throat out if he could. So I fought back with all my strength because I knew I was fighting for my life. It was him or me.

For a while I gave as good as I got, but I very soon understood that I was neither strong enough nor cunning enough. I was up against a street fighter, a killer dog. As we tussled and tore at each other, I could feel my strength ebbing fast. If Becky had not pulled us apart when she did, it would have ended much worse for me. As it was I got away with a bloodied ear. Becky was not so lucky.

I didn't really know how badly hurt she was until we were through the fence, and running through the streets, until I looked back and saw she was staggering rather than running. I stopped to wait for her. She was leaning against a lamp post now, so I ran back to her. "It keeps bleeding," she said. She was breathing hard and clutching her wrist. "It won't stop bleeding."

by Michael Morpurgo