

Fiction

UNIT

F.2 A Dog Named Duke

by William D. Ellis

The only part of this story which is not known for certain is whether or not the dog knew what he was doing for Charles - "Chuck"- Hooper. Most, who are familiar with the story, believe he knew what he was doing every step of the way. I'm one of those who believe, because I watched it day by day.

William D. Ellis

About the dog Duke

Duke was a rough-playing Doberman Pinscher, four year old, 23 kilos. His coat was red with a fawn vest. Chuck Hooper had doubts at first about buying him because his wife, Marcy, was not really a dog lover. She's a tiny blonde; Pomeranian was her idea of the right-size dog for a colonial house on a small plot. This Duke needed a hectare. Chuck visited Duke at the kennel several times before he made up his mind. After about three months, he decided he had to have the big Doberman. Duke's appeal for Chuck was his rambunctiousness. It took a long time before Marcy was more than polite to the dog.

- Duke is a Doberman. What are the other known breeds of dogs?**
- Match the words in the boxes with their explanations given below:**

rampageous

subdural haemorrhage

bellow

blonde

taut

rambunctiousness

grin

critical

confinement

quivering

shimmied



- a. This is the other word for trembling. _____
- b. This is used for smile. _____
- c. You call a person this if he/she has pale gold coloured hair. _____
- d. This is a quality which relates to high energy and noise. _____
- e. This is related to dancing or moving in a way that involves shaking your hips and shoulders. _____
- f. This is to express a tendency to show violent and wild behaviour often causing damage. _____
- g. We use it for a condition which is serious, uncertain and dangerous. _____
- h. This is a state in which one is forced to stay in a closed space. _____
- i. This is a medical condition involving bleeding in the brain. _____
- j. It is a loud, deep shout to show anger. _____
- k. This is a condition when the rope or leash is stretched tightly. _____

3. Now read the following account

- In 1953, Hooper was a favoured young man. A big genuine grin civilized his highly competitive nature. Standing six-foot-one, he'd played on the university football team. He was already a hard-charging zone sales manager for a chemical company. Everything was going for him.
- Then, when he was driving home one autumn twilight, a car pulled out in front of him without warning. Hooper was taken to the hospital with a subdural **haemorrhage** in the motor section of the brain, completely paralysing his left side.
- One of Chuck's district managers drove Marcy to the hospital. Her husband couldn't talk; he could only breathe and see, and his vision was double. Marcy phoned a neighbour, asking him to put Duke in a kennel.
- Hooper remained on the critical list for a month. After the fifth week some men from his company came to the hospital and told Hooper to take a year off. They would create a desk job for him at headquarters.
- About six weeks after the accident, the hospital put him in a wheelchair. Every day there was someone working his paralysed arm and leg followed by baths, exercise, a wheeled walker. But Chuck didn't make much headway.
- In March, they let him out of the hospital. After the excitement of the homecoming wore off, Chuck hit a new low. At the hospital there had been other injured people, but now, each morning when Marcy quietly went to work, it was a gate slamming



- down. Duke was still in the kennel, and Chuck was alone with his thoughts.
7. Finally they decided to bring Duke home. Chuck said he wanted to be standing when Duke came in, so they stood him up. Duke's nails were long from four months' confinement, and when he spied Chuck he stood quivering like 5000 volts; then he let out a bellow, spun his long-nailed wheels, and launched himself across three metres of air. He was a 23-kilo missile of joy. He hit Chuck above the belt, causing him to fight to keep his balance.
 8. Those who saw it said the dog knew instantly. He never jumped on Chuck again. From that moment, he took up a post beside his master's bed around the clock.
 9. But even Duke's presence didn't reach Chuck. The once-iron muscles slacked on the rangy frame. Secretly, Marcy cried as she watched the big man's grin fade away. Severe face lines set in like cement as Chuck stared at the ceiling for hours, then out of the window, then at Duke.
 10. When two fellows stare at each other day in, day out, and one can't move and the other can't talk, boredom sets in. Duke finally couldn't take it. From a motionless coil on the floor he'd spring to his feet, quivering with impatience.
 11. "Ya-ruff"
 12. "Lie down. Duke!"
 13. Duke stalked to the bed, poked his pointed nose under Chuck's elbow and lifted. He nudged and needled and snorted.
 14. "Go run around the house, Duke."
 15. But Duke wouldn't. He'd lie down with a **reproachful** eye on Hooper. An hour later he would come over to the bed again and yap and poke. He wouldn't leave but just sit there.
 16. One evening Chuck's good hand idly hooked the leash onto Duke's collar to hold him still. It was like lighting a fuse: Duke shimmied himself U-shaped in anticipation. Even Hooper can't explain his next move. He asked Marcy to help him to his feet. Duke pranced, Chuck fought for balance. With his good hand, he placed the leash in his left and folded the paralysed fingers over it, holding them there. Then he leaned forward. With Marcy supporting him by the elbow, he moved his right leg out in front. Straightening his right leg caused the left foot to drag forward, alongside the right. It could be called a step.
 17. Duke felt the sudden slack in the leash and pulled it taut. Chuck swayed forward again, broke the fall with his good right leg, then straightened. Thrice he did that, then collapsed into the wheelchair, exhausted.

reproachful: a look to show that you are criticising someone



18. Next day, the big dog started early; he charged around to Hooper's good side, jabbed his nose under the elbow and snapped his head up. The big man's good arm reached for the leash. With Hooper standing, the dog walked to the end of the leash and tugged steadily. Four so-called steps they took that day.
19. Leaning back against the pull, Hooper learned to keep his balance without Marcy at his elbow. Wednesday, he and Duke took five steps; Thursday, six steps; Friday, failure- two steps followed by exhaustion. But in two weeks they reached the front porch.
20. By mid-April neighbours saw a daily struggle in front of Marcy's house. Out on the sidewalk they saw the dog pull his leash taut then stand and wait. The man would drag himself abreast of the dog, then the dog would surge out to the end of the leash and wait again. The pair set daily goals; Monday, the sixth fence post, Tuesday, the seventh fence post, Wednesday
21. When Marcy saw what Duke could do for her husband, she told the doctor, who prescribed a course of physiotherapy with weights, pulleys and whirlpool baths and above all walking every day with Duke, on a limited, gradual scale.
22. By now neighbours on their street were watching the pattern of progress. On June 1, news spread that Hooper and Duke had made it to an intersection quite far away.
23. Soon Duke began campaigning for two trips a day, and they lengthened the targets, one driveway at a time. Duke no longer waited at each step.
24. On January 4, Hooper made his big move. Without Duke, he walked the 200 metres from the clinic to the local branch office of his company. This had been one of the district offices under his jurisdiction as zone manager. The staff was amazed by the visit. But to Gordon Doule, the manager, Chuck said, "Gordon, this isn't just a visit. Bring me up to date on what's happened, will you -so I can get to work?" Doule gaped. "It'll just be an hour a day for a while," Hooper continued. "I'll use that empty desk in the warehouse. And I'll need a dictating machine."



25. Back in the company's headquarters, Chuck's move presented problems -- tough ones. When a man fights that hard for a comeback, who wants to tell him he can't handle his old job? On the other hand, what can you do with a salesman who can't move around, and can work only an hour a day? They didn't know that Hooper had already set his next objective: March 1, a full day's work.
26. Chuck hit the target, and after March 1, there was no time for the physiotherapy programme; he turned completely to Duke, who pulled him along the street faster and faster, increasing his stability and endurance. Sometimes, walking after dark, Hooper would trip and fall. Duke would stand still as a post while his master struggled to get up. It was as though the dog knew that his job was to get Chuck back on his feet.
27. Thirteen months from the moment he worked full days. Chuck Hooper was promoted to regional manager covering more than four states.
28. Chuck, Marcy and Duke moved house in March 1956. The people in the new suburb where the Hoopers bought a house didn't know the story of Chuck and Duke. All they knew was that their new neighbour walked like a struggling mechanical giant and that he was always pulled by a rampageous dog that acted as if he owned the man.
29. On the evening of October 12, 1957, the Hoopers had guests. Suddenly over the babble of voices, Chuck heard the screech of brakes outside. Instinctively, he looked for Duke.
30. They carried the big dog into the house. Marcy took one look at Duke's breathing, at his brown eyes with the stubbornness gone. "Phone the vet," she said. "Tell him, I'm bringing Duke." Several people jumped to lift the dog. "No, please," she said. And she picked up the big Duke, carried him gently to the car and drove him to the animal hospital.
31. Duke was drugged and he made it until 11 o'clock the next morning, but his injuries were too severe.
32. People who knew the distance Chuck and Duke had come together, one fence post at a time, now watched the big man walk alone day after day. They wondered: how long will he keep it up? How far will he go today? Can he go it alone?
33. A few weeks ago, worded as if in special tribute to Duke, an order came through from the chemical company's headquarters: "..... therefore, to advance our objectives step by step, Charles Hooper is appointed Assistant National Sales Manager."

William D. Ellis



About the Author

William D. Ellis was born in Concord, Massachusetts. He began writing at the age of 12, at the urging of an elementary-school teacher who early on discerned his talent. Ellis's study of the history of Ohio provided him material that he eventually used as the foundation for a trilogy of novels: **Bounty Lands**, **Jonathan Blair: Bounty Lands Lawyer**, and **The Brooks Legend**. Each of his novels appeared on best-seller lists, and the trilogy itself eventually earned its author a Pulitzer Prize nomination. The most important recurring theme in his works is the triumph of survival.

4. Based on your reading of the story answer the following questions by choosing the correct option

- (a) With reference to Hooper, the author says, "Every thing was going for him", What does it imply?
- he had everything that a man aspires for.
 - people admired him.
 - he did what he wanted.
 - he was capable of playing games.
- (b) Duke never jumped on Chuck again because _____
- Duke was paralysed and unable to jump.
 - Chuck was angry with Duke for jumping at him.
 - Duke realized that Chuck was not well and could not balance himself.
 - Marcy did not allow Duke to come near Chuck.
- (c) The author says that Duke 'knew his job'. The job was _____
- to look after Chuck.
 - to get Chuck on his feet.
 - to humour Chuck
 - to guard the house.
- (d) " _____ even Duke's presence didn't reach Chuck ". Why?
- Duke was locked in his kennel and Chuck couldn't see him.
 - Duke hid himself behind the bed post.
 - Duke had come to know that Hooper was not well.
 - Hooper was lost in his own grief and pain.



5. Answer the following questions briefly

- a) In 1953, Hooper was a favoured young man. Explain.
- b) They said that they would create a desk job for Hooper at headquarters.
 - i) Who are 'they'?
 - ii) Why did they decide to do this?
- c) Duke was an extraordinary dog. What special qualities did he exhibit to justify this? Discuss.
- d) What problems did Chuck present when he returned to the company headquarters?
- e) Why do you think Charles Hooper's appointment as Assistant National Sales Manager is considered to be a tribute to Duke?

6. Following dates were important in Charles Hooper's life in some way. Complete the table by relating the description with the correct dates.

January 4, March 1, June 1, October 12

Date	Description
	News spread that Hooper and Duke had made it to an intersection
	Hooper walked independently from the clinic to the branch office
	Hooper planned to start a full day's work at office
	Duke met with a fatal accident

7. Just A Minute

Given below are five qualities that Charles Hooper displayed during his struggle for survival.

courage

perseverance

determination

endurance

faith

Get into groups of four. Each team will choose one quality to talk about to the whole class for about one minute. But before you talk you have two minutes to think about it. You can make notes if you wish.



LISTENING TASK

8. Listen to an excerpt from a news telecast on a national channel carefully and complete the table given below.

BRAVE HEARTS

S.No.	Name of the Brave-heart	Place they belong to	Reason for Award
1.	Saumik Mishra	Uttar Pradesh	foiled theft
2.	Prachi Santosh Sen		saved a child
3.	Kavita Kanwar	Chattisgarh	
4.		Jodhpur	dodged marriage to 40 year old
5.	Rahul-balloon seller	Delhi/National Capital	
6.	M. Marudu Pandi	Tamil Nadu	averted rail disaster
7.		Bangalore	saved a baby caught in bull fight
8.	Silver Kharbani	Meghalaya	
9.	Yumkhaibam Addison Singh		saved an eight year old from drowning
10.		Uttar Pradesh	saved people from drowning
11.		Haryana/Jind	helped nab armed miscreants
12.	Kritika Jhanwar		fought off robbers



WRITING TASK

9. **Read the diary entry written by Charles Hooper on the day he received the order, ".....Charles Hooper is appointed Assistant National Sales Manager."**

March 1, 19.... Thursday

10 pm

Last four years have been eventful. The day I brought Duke home.... (Marcy was almost impolite to him because she would have preferred a Pomeranian to a Doberman) to a stage on October 12, 1957 (when she would not allow anyone else to carry the injured Duke to the vet)... much water has flowed under the bridge.

From being a very fit high-charging zone sales manager, I was reduced to a paralysed cripple forced to lie on a bed alone with my thoughts due to a small error by a car driver. Despair had led me on to helplessness... Was I to be a vegetable for the rest of my life? I never wanted to be a burden on Marcy.

Duke's re-entry into my life lifted my numb spirits. The day he made me take my first step, there was a rekindled hope. Duke assumed all the responsibility for leading me back to my office desk ... Life had taken a full circle. From shock to denial and helplessness to anger, Duke taught me to cope with the challenge and led me to accept the changed mode of life. I am happy to be living as well as working successfully.

The order that I have received today is my tribute to Duke who would always be alive with me and be a part of everything else I achieve in my life.

When a person loses something, he is shocked and gets into a state of denial leading to anger. In such a situation coping well leads to acceptance and a changed way of living in view of the loss. Taking cues from what happened or might have happened with Hooper, write your views in the form of an article about 'Coping with Loss' in 150-175 words.

