

Greyfriars Bobby

Scotland's Most Faithful Dog

by Cathy Marks

OFFICER JOHN GRAY (or "Auld Jock" as he was called by his friends) rubbed his eyes as he walked his beat in the early hours of a moonless, drizzly October night in 1857. The flicker of the gaslit street lamps gave little relief from the dreariness hanging over the city of Edinburgh, which was made even worse by the coal smoke pouring from the chimneys of the houses along Candlemaker Row.

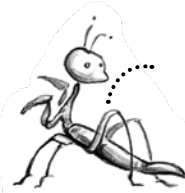
Hearing the familiar clicking of tiny paws tapping on cobblestones, Auld Jock paused and smiled down at his companion. "There now, Bobby," he said. "It'll soon be dawn, and we'll be dryin' by the fire sure enough."



You know, I'm kind of suspicious, questionable, about Spider's sudden friendship with the rain.



I'm delighted that Spider and the rain are getting along. Pete the policebuggy won't tolerate any more nonsense with Spider and the weather on his beat, regular route!

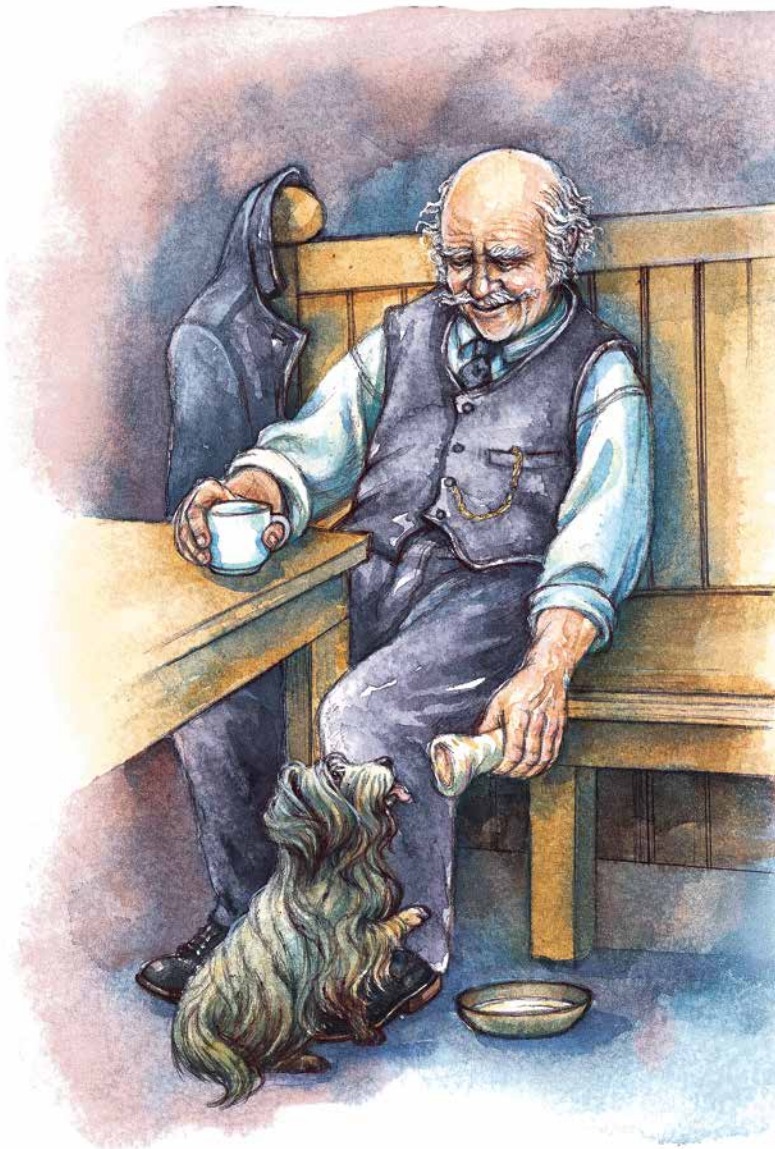


Art by Alexa Rutherford

It had been two years since Bobby had come to Auld Jock as a puppy, and the dog had immediately become his greatest source of happiness. Many wondered why Auld Jock had chosen such an odd watchdog. Bobby was a tiny Skye terrier after all, barely larger than a doll, with short legs and long, shaggy hair that hung over his eyes and body. But Auld Jock knew that Bobby had the heart of a lion, fierce in his own mind and always ready to take on man or beast many times his size.

Bobby took his duties as a watchdog very seriously. He learned several English words, including the phrase, "Bobby, on trust." This meant he had to lie very still, watching everyone, and bark noisily if he spotted anything suspicious.

Bobby and Auld Jock were inseparable. As part of their daily routine, the two would visit a local coffeehouse for lunch. Both were always welcome. Bobby would sit at Auld Jock's feet, happily chewing on a bone.



The winter of 1857–58 was particularly harsh, and Auld Jock developed a terrible cough, which worsened steadily. By February, he didn't have the strength to rise from his bed. Bobby lay at his feet, watching him. Auld Jock called



him to come closer, gently stroked the shaggy hair away from his sad eyes, and murmured, "My poor wee Bobby."

The next day, Auld Jock died.

On the day his master was buried in Greyfriars Kirkyard, Bobby silently watched the unfamiliar scene and left when it was over. After dark, he crept back into the churchyard.

The next morning John Brown, the church's caretaker, found Bobby lying atop Auld Jock's grave and yelled, "Off with ye, ye mangy animal. No dogs allowed in this yard!"

At this, Bobby growled and showed his teeth: he wasn't about to budge from his master's grave for this nasty old man.

"Are ye daft? That's Auld Jock's wee Bobby!" shouted the church-



yard's gravedigger, James Dunn.

"Bless my foolish heart! That he is!" said Mr. Brown. "I'm off to bring him back a bite of breakfast."

Soon Bobby was feasting on a bowl of porridge, all angry feelings aside. From then on Mr. Brown gave him food and water regularly, as a thank-you to Bobby for guarding the churchyard at night.

Bobby remained near the grave always and considered Greyfriars his home and territory. He even scared away the many cats that had lived there for years. The only time Bobby ever left the grave was at lunchtime, when he would return to the coffeehouse for a meal, just as he had done every day with Auld Jock.

Although everyone in the town loved him, no one could officially adopt Bobby because he howled all night whenever anyone tried to bring him indoors. This made Bobby an ordinary, unlicensed stray dog, which meant he would surely be taken away.

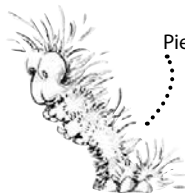
The top Scottish police officer at the time, William Chambers, turned out to be a true dog lover. When he heard Bobby might be captured, Provost Chambers arranged to have Bobby's lifelong dog-license fee paid.



Hey, Sam, I'm back!
Want some pie?



Pie? What flavor?





Bobby was given a collar with a brass plate that read "Greyfriars Bobby from the Lord Provost, 1867, licensed." Now that he was officially registered, Bobby was free to spend his days as he wished—with Auld Jock, as always. Bobby remained at Greyfriars until his own death fourteen years later. He was buried near the master he loved so dearly. 🌟

Bobby's legend lives on.

A year after Bobby's death, Burdett Coutts, a wealthy baroness, had a fountain built in the churchyard as a tribute to Bobby. It provides drinking water for the public and has a trough for dogs. Topping the fountain is a life-size bronze statue of Bobby. The plaque on the fountain reads: "A tribute to the affectionate fidelity of Greyfriars Bobby. In 1858 this faithful dog followed the remains of his master to Greyfriars Churchyard and lingered near the spot until his death in 1872."

MUD! WAHAHAHOO YEAH!

