

Weeks 1 - 3 : Good Dog, Bad Dog

“Look, Dad!” Bella pointed to a puppy. He was spinning in circles trying to catch his tail. He looked like a mini tornado!

“That's the one I want!” Bella said.

“He's a ball of energy, Bella. Are you sure?” asked Dad.

“YES!”

“You'll have to work really hard to train him to obey.”

“Oh, I will, Dad. I promise!”

“Good,” said Dad, “because a disobedient dog gets into trouble, and we don't want that.”

Oscar definitely had lots of energy! He chewed up Bella's new shoes, broke two lamps, and dragged Mom's clean laundry all over the house. He was quite sneaky and would hide, then dash off and get into more mischief.

One day, Bella's friend Nathan came to visit with his dog, Dexter. When Bella opened the door, Oscar zoomed out and started to run across the yard.

“OSCAR!” yelled Bella. “Get back here! Bad dog!”

But Oscar was having way too much fun to obey her!

Meanwhile, Dexter stood quietly next to Nathan, staring up at him.

“Ok, Dexter,” said Nathan with a smile. “You may go play.” He waved his hand forward and Dexter sprinted after Oscar.

“Now we have to catch two dogs!” moaned Bella, “before they run out to the road!”

“Don't worry, Bella,” Nathan said. “Dexter will come when I call him and I think Oscar will follow him.”

“DEXTER! Come!” Dexter obeyed Nathan right away and Oscar was trailing close behind. Bella quickly snatched him. Oscar whined and squirmed, very mad about being caught.

“Dexter is so obedient! How did you do that?” Bella was amazed!

“It was a lot of hard work,” said Nathan. “But a dog gets into trouble if he doesn't listen, so I trained him to obey from the time he was a puppy.”

“Well, Oscar,” said Bella, “we're starting obedience training tomorrow!”

Weeks 4 - 6 : A Big Disappointment

“Bella!” called Mom. “It’s time to go! The roller skating rink will be crowded today, so we need to leave early.”

“I’m teaching Oscar to sit,” said Bella. “I’ll be there in a minute.”

Bella held up the treat and Oscar stared at it. “SIT!” Oscar jumped instead! “NO! I said SIT!” She pushed his back end down to get him to obey.

“BELLA!” Mom called again. “If you want to roller skate, we must leave now!”

“Just one more minute, Mom. I’m almost done.”

“Oscar,” said Bella. “IF you sit, THEN you get the treat!” She held up the treat again. “SIT!” He danced around but he really wanted that treat! “SIT!” Bella said one more time. Oscar finally stopped wiggling and sat down.

“GOOD BOY!” shouted Bella. She dropped the treat in his mouth and hugged him.

“OK, Mom. I’m ready now.” Bella came running with her skates and they drove to the roller rink. But when they arrived, a big sign was posted: **FULL. Next Open Skate at 4 pm.** Bella saw her friends skating on the rink, laughing and having fun. She almost cried.

“I’m sorry, Bella. If you had come the first time I called, this wouldn’t have happened. IF you obey, THEN you are rewarded. But if you don’t, you can miss out on something good.”

On their way home, Mom asked, “Why are you training Oscar, Bella?”

“I want him to be a good dog like Dexter and come when I call him.”

“What will happen if he doesn’t obey you?” asked Mom.

“He might run out the door again and get hit by a car!”

“Yes,” replied Mom, “and that would be sad. You’re teaching him to obey so he will be safe and happy. Dad and I want you to be safe and happy, too. That’s why you also need to learn to obey the first time we tell you to do something.”

Weeks 7 - 9 : When No One Is Watching

Bella was teaching Oscar to stay. After he sat down, she held her hand up and said, "Stay!" She walked backward, stopped, then called, "Come!" Oscar raced toward her.

"GOOD BOY!" She gave him his treat. "Now, let's see if you obey when I'm *not* looking."

Bella told Oscar to sit and stay. After she walked backward, she turned around so Oscar could only see her back. She counted to five then turned around. Oh, no! He was gone!

"OSCAR!" she called. He quickly came running out the barn door looking for a treat.

"No. You can't have a treat. You didn't obey. You have to obey when I'm looking at you *and* when I'm *not* looking at you!" Bella tried a few more times, but Oscar kept running off. She grew frustrated so she took him inside. No treats for Oscar.

"How did Oscar do today?" asked Mom.

"Not very good. He will only stay when I'm watching him, not when I turn around."

Bella sat on the couch with her iPad to play *Racing Penguin: Slide and Fly*.

"Thirty minutes," Mom reminded her. Bella set the timer. She was doing so well at the game that she didn't want to stop. Since Mom wasn't there, she added ten more minutes to her time.

Mom walked by. "I told you 30 minutes. You know the rule."

"But I was trying to get to the next level," she said.

"Bella," asked Mom, "why didn't you give Oscar his treat today?"

"Because he only obeyed when I was looking, not when I couldn't see him."

"That's right. You want him to obey because you love him and know that a disobedient dog gets into trouble. I love you, too. When you obey, even when I'm not watching, I can trust you and be more sure you'll be safe. I'm sorry, Bella, but you cannot use your iPad for a week."

Weeks 10 – 12 : A Special Treat

“Bella, please take these cookies next door to Zoe’s house. Her mom needs them for the bake sale. Then come right home so we can go to the farmer’s market.”

“Ok, Mom. May I have one?”

“No. She needs them all.”

Those cookies smelled sooo good! *“Mom won’t know if I eat one,”* thought Bella.

“Oscar! Come!” Oscar immediately obeyed. “You’re such a good boy,” said Bella. Oscar was looking up at her. He loved Bella. She worked hard teaching him to obey and now he had become her best friend. As she thought about that, she decided, *“I better not take a cookie. Mom wouldn’t be very happy.”*

Bella rang the doorbell and Zoe answered.

“Hi, Bella!” Zoe seemed very excited. “Come see my new kitten! She’s so cute!”

“I love kittens!” Bella laughed. “What’s her name?”

“Willow. She’s orange and white. Come see!”

Bella was about to come in, but remembered that she was to go to the farmer’s market.

“I wish I could, but I have to go right home.”

“Just for a minute,” begged Zoe. “Please, Bella?”

Bella reeeally wanted to see Willow! *“What should I do?”* thought Bella. She looked at Oscar sitting quietly by her side.

“I can’t, Zoe. But I’ll come later, ok?”

Zoe looked sad when she closed the door.

“What’s wrong?” asked Mom when she saw Bella’s face.

“Zoe wanted me to meet her new kitten, but I told her I couldn’t right now. She was sad.”

“I’m sorry, Bella. But you did the right thing. Come on. Let’s go.”

The market was crowded. Mom bought many vegetables and three loaves of bread at the bakery table. She noticed Bella staring at the last giant chocolate chip cookie.

“And I want that last cookie,” Mom told the baker. “Oh! And that big dog biscuit, too!”

“Thank you for obeying today, Bella. You and Oscar have made me very happy and I wanted to reward you!”

Bella tried to smile, but her mouth was full!