

A SERIES OF
MISINFORMATION & MAYHEM

FAKE
NEWS

**A fable
about the
perils of
prattle**

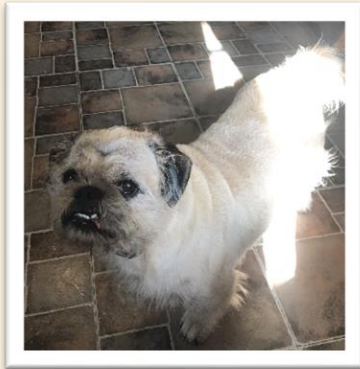
Oaklie Schnauzer listened to gossip and made decisions based on misinformation until the idle talk taught her a lesson... the hard way.

Story by: Chuck E. Parish AKA: "Poppy"

This short fable is dedicated to my Grandsons Michael and Gabriel
-AKA: "Bud" & "P.J."

Inspired by the question: "Poppy, what is fake news?" - Bud





Brady Pug loved to eavesdrop and gab. He roamed his neighborhood hoping to hear something juicy to tell Rebel Min Pin and Oaklie Schnauzer.

One day, Brady discovered some real juicy news, so he excitedly told Rebel and Oaklie, "You won't believe what I heard! Old Man Ranger is moving! His house will be empty!"

Rebel grimaced. "Not again," he thought. "Brady is such a 'fake news' reporter."

"Where did you hear about this?" asked Rebel.

"I was on Main Street and heard Old Man Ranger and Stanley Squirrel discussing how to quickly pack up items," said Brady. "Oaklie, this is good news for you!"



Oaklie was pleased. "I've been searching for a new place and Old Man Ranger's home is perfect! I'm going home now to pack!" Oaklie left to gather her belongings, excited she would be moving. By sunset, she'd packed and loaded everything.

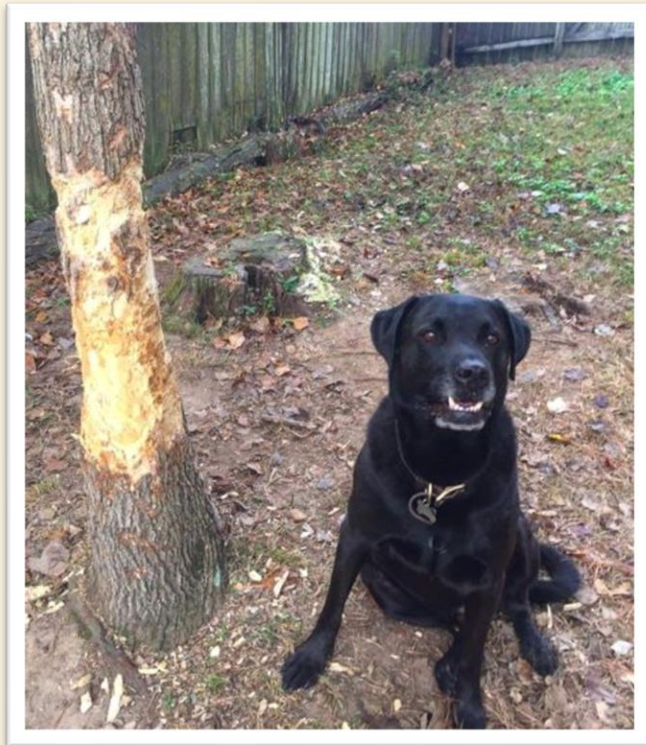
"This wagon is heavy," Oaklie thought, pulling it along. She headed toward Old Man Ranger's home. Oaklie told everyone she encountered she was moving into Ranger's house. They were shocked about Old Man Ranger moving away.

When Oaklie arrived at Old Man Ranger's house, he greeted her happily. "Oaklie, it's great to see you! What is all that stuff in the wagon?"

Oaklie said, "These are my belongings! How soon are you leaving? I'm moving into your home."

Ranger looked confused. "Leaving? What are you talking about? I love it here and I'm staying forever! Would you like some tea?"

"Oh dear," Oaklie exclaimed, crestfallen. "I've packed up and left home! And I've told everyone you were leaving! What a mess! I know now not to



believe Brady's idle gossip!" Wise Old Man Ranger comforted Oaklie, "My little friend, you have listened to misinformation about some actual events." Ranger explained, "Brady did hear me discussing how to quickly pack up and move with Stanley Squirrel. But he didn't tell you that I was explaining to Stanley that I was removing the tree and that is why 'he' had to pack up so quickly, not me."

Moral: "Listening to fake news & misinformation fosters mayhem."



Misinformation Mayhem Reflection

Brady Pug liked to listen to other people's conversations. He shared what he heard, even if he didn't know if it was true. This gossip was his downfall.

Brady's friend, Rebel Min Pin, recognized Brady's failing and had grown to be cautious about Brady's talk. Brady's gossip at first seemed innocent enough. Oaklie Schnauzer, however, was naïve and took everything Brady said to be true.

Oaklie believed what Brady said about Old Man Ranger moving, so she got excited and anticipated moving into Ranger's home. She made an important decision based on Brady's ill-gained information. What's more, Oaklie became a party to Brady's mess by spreading gossip to others.

Unfortunately for Oaklie, she didn't realize her error until she had already packed, moved out of her house, and arrived at Ranger's home with all her belongings – ready to take over his empty house. However, Ranger never had any intentions of moving out. So, there was Oaklie, all packed up and nowhere to go.

Maybe you have behaved like Brady in the past: listening to others and repeating it freely. You didn't hear the whole story, but it didn't matter — you still gossiped.

Perhaps you're more like Oaklie: too trusting to recognize the chaos that ensues from acting on gossip. You become an unwitting instrument to the gossip by making decisions based on misinformation and repeating it to others.

How you obtain and handle information can have a profound impact on you and others.

Ultimately, if you engage in spreading misinformation, your friends will figure it out and learn not to trust you. When you think carefully about whether to repeat information, you'll feel more confident and positive about your choices (and so will your friends).

Your life will be free from the misinformation mayhem caused by listening to and repeating gossip.

Self-Reflection Questions:

1. Do you listen to gossip? If so, why?
2. Do you repeat gossip? If so, what are the reasons you spread idle talk?
3. How can you avoid repeating gossip to others?



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