

**The Adventures of**  
**AsparaGUS**

**Gus Discovers His Roots**

Written by Jan Ruehling



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Gus was hungry!

He knew that he was hungry because his little red dachshund tummy told him so. It rumbled and grumbled and tumbled, but it was not a happy hungry. His tummy did not sing like it once did when he was a puppy. Then, his little tail would wig and wag as fast as the pendulum on his grandmother Augusta's clock.

Gus trotted into the kitchen. "Oh, there you are!" Gus's mother, Augusta, smiled. "I was just about to whistle for you to come for lunch." Gus's mother always whistled for him instead of calling for him by name, as his friends' mothers would do. He liked that because it made him feel like he and his mom shared a special code.

As grumbly as his tummy felt, Gus nibbled at his food. He watched the pendulum of his grandmother's clock swing back and forth, back and forth, wig-wag-wig-wag. He studied the figures of the two dachshunds that stood atop the clock. They had been carved to look like Grandmother Augusta and Grandfather Gus. Their long tails were entwined to form the pendulum of the clock swinging back and forth, back and forth, wig-wag-wig-wag. Gus's mind was really on the green sticks with the curly tips that surrounded the face of the clock.

"Mom," Gus yelped, "what are those green sticks with the curly tips around the face of the clock?"

Gus's mother looked up at the clock and sighed. "Eat your food and don't ask so many questions."

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“But, Mom,” Gus persisted, “why can’t you tell me what they are?”

“Asparagus, Gus!” his mother yapped. “They are called asparagus.”

“But, what’s . . .?”

“Gus, I do not want to hear another yip from you until you finish your food.”

Gus stared at his mother, his brown eyes growing wide with surprise. Never had his mother barked at him like that!

Gus padded over to her and put his paws around her waist. “I’m sorry, Mom,” Gus gulped, holding back tears.

“Oh, Gussie-poo,” his mother whispered, using her pet name for him, “I’m the one who’s sorry. I didn’t mean to bark at you.” Gus’s mother gave him a big hug, and he hugged her too. “Let’s sit down, and I’ll tell you about your grandparents and asparagus.”

“Many years ago,” she began, “my mother and father—your grandmother, Augusta, and your grandfather, Gus—lived in a

beautiful, green valley where I was born. Each day we would go to our asparagus garden. In the garden, we grew the same plants that are on the clock—asparagus. We were happy working in the garden and your grandmother would cook delicious dishes using the asparagus.”

“Why don’t we eat that kind of food now?” Gus asked. “We do not grow asparagus here.” Before he could ask why, his mother went on.

“One day, we had to leave the valley. Mother and Father were very sad as they packed our belongings, which included a special box that held the asparagus seeds and crowns.”

*Wow!* thought Gus. His mind filled with the kinds of crowns that kings and queens wear. “Were we rich? Did we live in a palace, Mother?”

Gus’s mother looked at him and laughed. “No, Gus. We did not have jewels or money. Baby asparagus plants are called crowns. They are grown in gardens. Your grandmother and grandfather



had a lot of patience, which they found was necessary to produce a beautiful, healthy crop.”

Gus was disappointed, but he had learned something new about asparagus. He wanted to ask many more questions to learn even more and find out why they did not have an asparagus garden now. Before he could begin, his sister, Gusta, limped into the room.

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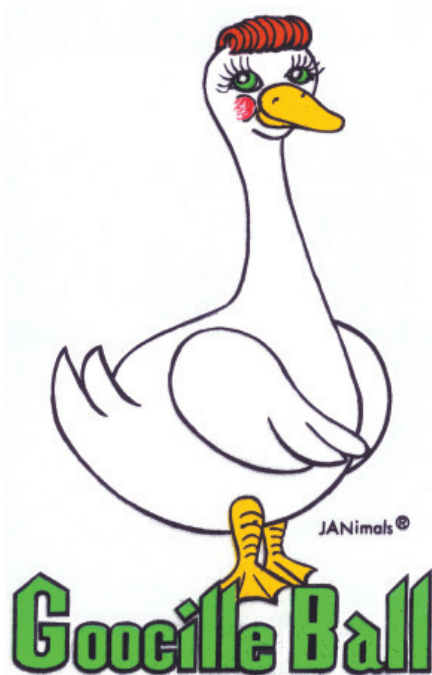
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“Mama!” she cried. “I hurt my paw.”

Gus’s mother hurried over to her daughter. When Gus saw that his sister was not seriously hurt, he became impatient. More questions had just popped into his head. He wanted to

know what happened to his grandfather and grandmother and why asparagus tasted so delicious.

Gus pranced back and forth, back and forth. He looked across the room at his mother and sister. *Gee*, he thought, *they look so much alike*. Each was long, slim, and golden. Each wore a white lacy cap. His mother's was old and worn, but she kept it starched and clean. His sister's was newer but always seemed to stay wrinkled and dirty. Now she was using it to wipe her eyes. Gus grinned. His mother would not like that! Gus knew that her cap meant something very special to her. While he watched his mother and sister, a plan formed in his mind. He would go



in search of his own asparagus. His tummy agreed. It stopped rumbling and grumbling and tumbling and began to sing again! Gus darted out the door and leapt across the yard. When he spotted his friends in the distance, he paused with his right front paw raised in the air. “Gocille Ball” was fluffing the patch of fiery red feathers that

topped her white head. “Squirrley Temple” was licking her lollipop. “WaterMELONIE” was sunbathing, her seeds popping in all directions. They were down by the bay, waiting for their friend, the “Duke of Whalington,” to swim up and play with them.

