



# BILL WALLACE

## UPCHUCK and the ROTTEN WILLY

Cats and dogs  
just can't be  
friends—or  
can they?



# CHAPTER 1

When the door closed behind me, I yawned and stretched. There were days I enjoyed sleeping late. This morning was crisp and cool, but not really cold. I was glad to be up. There was no wind. Not even the slightest breeze tickled the red and yellow leaves or rustled through dry, brown blades of grass. It wasn't often that the wind was still. I paused a moment, listening to the quiet, yet marveling at how many sounds there were.

Next door, Mrs. Parks told her husband to be careful driving to work and to bring home some chicken from the market for supper. Cars zoomed and rushed by on the big road near Luigi's Restaurant. Crows cawed from Farmer McVee's pecan orchard. Luigi's was over five blocks away,



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and Farmer McVee lived nearly a half-mile from our housing development. Still, the crows who raided his pecan trees sounded as close as if they were flying right over the top of my house.

I strolled around to the front yard and paused at the curb. Mr. Parks backed out of his driveway. I glanced both ways, to make sure there was nothing else on the road, then trotted across before he came in my direction.

At the alley behind Tom's house, I paused. Holding my breath, I moved nothing but my eyes. Once certain that Rocky was no place to be seen, I raced across the big, open grassy area toward the new high school. That's where my friend and I were to meet this morning.

It surprised me to find Tom already sitting on the wood fence between the baseball diamond and the football field.

Tom cocked an eyebrow and glanced down at me.

"About time you got up," he teased. "Been waiting on you for two hours."

"Have not." I frowned.

Tom smiled. "Would you believe, five minutes?"

We laughed.

He nodded at the wide wood rail beside him. "Come on . . ."—he paused a moment—" . . . up Chuck."



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The corners of my eyes tightened as I glared at him. But as I watched, I couldn't tell from the sly grin on his face whether he'd said it that way on purpose or by accident. Before I had a chance to figure it out, he turned his attention to the football field.

I hopped up next to him on the fence and leaned forward, trying to catch his eye.

"You do that on purpose?" I asked.

Tom ignored me. Still, I wasn't sure whether I could see a little glimmer in his eye or not. Without glancing at me, he motioned toward the field.

"Man, look at the haircut on that pink dude. You ever see anything so ridiculous in your life?" He chuckled.

I frowned and tilted my head to the side. "I think it's called apricot. Not pink."

"Apricot, pink," Tom shrugged. "Who cares? It's hilarious."

"Yeah," I nodded. "Talk about a 'bad-hair day.'"

"You know why their noses are so long and pointed?" Tom asked, only giving me a quick glance.

"No. Why?"

"So they can find—I mean, smell each other in the dark."

"Don't need to be dark," I managed with a



# MY NAME IS UPCHUCK.

But please—pretty please—just call me Chuck.

Okay, so I've told a few rotten dog jokes. So sue me. But we cats have to hang together in a dog-eat-cat world! I can think of a few nasty poodles and a fanged Doberman I'd like to bite right back. But to tell the truth, I'd rather be smart and *scared* than brave and *scarred*.

Everything was okay until my best friend Tom moved. Then My Katie went away to a place called college. I can tell you I was one lonely cat. All I wanted was a new friend, but all I met were a stinky skunk and a stupid cow. I mean, what kind of conversation can you have with a cow who only says "Moo"?

Things were really getting desperate. I started prowling farther and farther away until I fell off a fence one night—into the yard of a beast as big as a car and black as death. His name was Rotten Willy.

And that's where my *real* story begins....

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