

Annie's Wish

Murphy, Annie's black toy poodle, is learning tricks. So far he can sit, shake, roll over, lie down, and stand on his hind legs for longer than I'd think possible.

Right now he is learning about his feelings. When Annie says, "Be sad," he is supposed to put both paws over his eyes. So far, Murphy is not very sad.

We are talking now about weddings, Annie's brother just having come home from one. "Annie," I say, "when you get married, if Murphy

were to be in the wedding, what would he do?" "What do you mean?" Annie says. She looks worried. Annie's father clarifies. "What part would Murphy play,"

he says, "in your wedding—if he was in it?" Then Annie knows: "Murphy would be the flowers." "Ah," I say, "the flower dog—

he would carry the flowers down the aisle." "No," says Annie. "Murphy would *be* the flowers." She picks him up and presses him close.

"I'd carry Murphy instead of holding a bouquet." What a beautiful day for a black dog. When Annie gets married, be sad, Murphy, be sad.