

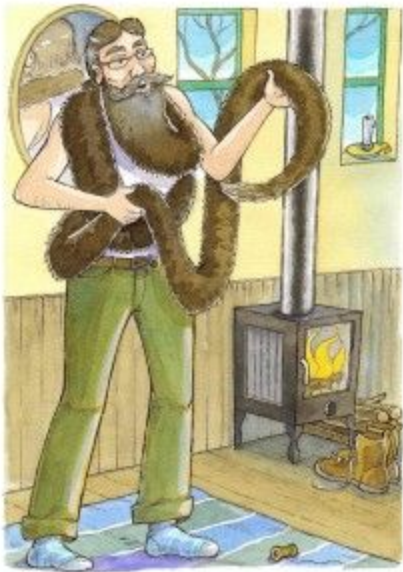
The lonely tailor

Dell the tailor lived in a little town near the sea. Dell loved making beautiful clothes for the people in town. He was very busy snipping and sewing every day. He was so busy that he didn't have time to make friends. In fact, he didn't even have time to trim his own beard.

One morning, the town hall bell rang and Dell woke up. He stretched and yawned loudly.

"Today is market day," he said. "No snipping and sewing for me! No making new clothes. No making old clothes into not so new clothes. Today I shall buy freshly baked bread, delicious jam and fresh, fresh fruit and vegetables." Then he sighed sadly. "I wonder," he thought, "if anyone in town will talk to me today."

Dell got out of bed to wash himself and brush his teeth ... as he did every morning. He made a cup of coffee and some breakfast ... as he did every morning. He put on his vest and a pair of trousers ... as he did every morning. But ... he did not put on a shirt or a jacket. He never dressed in normal clothes like everyone else.



You see, Dell the tailor had a very, very long beard. Because he never had the time to trim it, his beard had been growing for forty-five years. It was so long that when he went out, he wrapped his beard around his body; one, two, three times. That's why he only needed his vest and trousers. His beard kept him warm in winter and cool in summer.

That winter morning when Dell went shopping, everyone stared at him. They always did. Then they turned around and hurried away without saying a word.

"Silly people," he said to himself. "It's only a beard." He forgot that it was the longest beard in the world. He forgot that people were not used to seeing someone wrapped in a beard.

Dell hurried to finish his shopping. As usual no one spoke to him and he felt very lonely.

On his way home from the market, Dell saw a little dog at the side of the road. It shivered and shook and looked at him with sad eyes.

“Oh,” said Dell, “poor puppy. Are you cold? Are you lost?”

Dell felt so sorry for the little dog that he gave it a piece of bread. The hungry little dog gobbled the bread down and wagged his tail, but still shivered with cold.

Suddenly Dell had the most amazing, incredible, brilliant idea.

“What if I cut off a little piece of my beard and wrap that around you? Would that keep you warm until your find your way home?”

“Woof, woof, woof,” said the little dog, as if it understood every word.

So Dell took a pair of scissors and cut off a piece of his beard. He wrapped the piece of beard around the puppy and gently tied a knot. It looked just like a tiny jersey. The puppy seemed so happy it could not stop wagging its tail and licking Dell’s hand.

Just then Dell heard someone calling. “Pepper! Pepper! Where are you?”

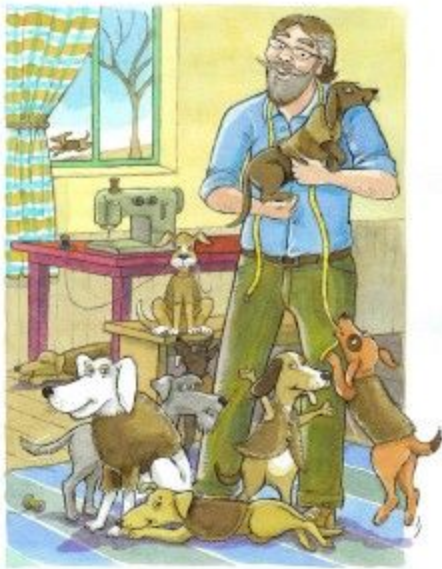
A lady rushed up to Dell and the little dog. “Oh, Pepper, there you are. I’ve been so worried,” she said.

“Oh-oh,” Dell thought, “she is going to turn away because of my beard.” But she didn’t.

“Thank you so much for finding my dog,” she said. “My name is Pauline. Ummm ... aren’t you Dell the tailor?” she asked.

Dell nodded, but he was worried about what she would say about her dog’s new jersey.

“Well, will you look at this?” said Pauline. “What a good idea! Pepper,” she said to her dog, “you look so snug and warm.” Pepper licked her face happily.



“I am sure there are many little dogs that need snug warm jerseys now that it is winter,” she said to Dell. “You could make jerseys for them as well.”

And that is just what Dell did. He cut off pieces of his very long beard to make doggy jerseys. Very soon he had a short beard.

Dell the tailor now made new clothes, old clothes into not so new clothes, and lots of doggy jerseys. He also made many new friends. And, of course, Dell had to make clothes for himself too because now he did not have a long beard to keep him warm in winter and cool in summer.