

LADY AND THE TRAMP

A Story of Two Dogs

By Ward Greene

CHAPTER ONE

ONCE UPON A time – a time not so long ago but a time when most people still used gaslight and preferred horses and carriages to gasbuggies – there lived in a white and green house on a pleasant street a cocker spaniel named Lady.

She lived with two humans named Jim Dear and Darling. At last, that was the only thing Lady ever heard them call each other. Sometimes, it is true, she heard Darling call him just “Jim” and sometimes she heard him say “Yes, Darling!” in a tone that made Lady quiver. But those times were not very often.

Occasionally there was another human named Aunt Sarah but she really didn’t count. Aunt Sarah was the cloud in the sky, the distant thunder, the hobgoblin around the corner. She was the telephone that rang at the wrong moment, the letter that made Darling sigh, the mention that made Jim Dear growl. Aunt Sarah, in person or prospect, was bad news.

Lady had met Aunt Sarah only once. Then she was a pair of large, buttoned boots and a voice that boomed, “So you still have that dreadful little dog!” Aunt Sarah loved cats. She owned two, but happily she didn’t bring them on that visit. Their names were Si and Am. Lady thought those were very odd names until she learned that Si and Am came from Siam, a place away off yonder.

Lady was a present from Jim Dear to Darling on their first Christmas in the white and green house. She arrived in a hatbox. Quiet under all the wrappings, she heard Darling say, in a tone Lady recognized as not entirely sincere, “A new hat! Why, Jim dear, how sweet of you!” Then – pop! – the lid was off.

Darling cried, “Jim dear, what an adorable puppy!” and now the tone was completely sincere.

“Well, she’ll do till something nicer comes along,” said Jim Dear.

Darling turned as pink as the small tongue that was kissing her. She put her present down and the puppy blinked at her and took two cautious steps.

“Why, she’s a real little lady!” exclaimed Darling, and beginning then, Lady was Lady and the princess of the white and green house.

It was a wonderful house. It wasn’t large but it was brand new and everything in it was new. The floors were so new and shiny that Lady slipped and slid on them. But when the rugs came, they were delightful to the paws. So was the furniture. It was soft – the beds, for instance – where it was supposed to be soft and it was not so soft – the man’s big leather chair – when a dog wanted a cool place to nap in hot weather.

Lady felt that the house belonged to her and, indeed, it did. In the yard she had her own little house, which was called the kennel, and in the spare room she had her own small bed with her own real mattress. But she almost never went to the kennel; in time Darling kept her garden tools there.

And only rarely did she sleep in the spare room; generally she slept on the foot of Darling’s bed or Jim Dear’s, dividing her love equally between them.

They both loved Lady, for she was a well-behaved dog, and always neatly minded her p’s and q’s.

They took her for walks regularly. She wore a red leash, and in wintertime a red blanket, and in rainy weather a red rubber jacket of which she was quite proud. Once Darling, when Lady had a cold, got her four little overshoes. But Lady looked so unhappy when she tried to trot in them that Darling laughed.

“Here,” she said, when they got home, “you can chew them up”—and Lady did.

“Well, they were her own shoes!” Darling defended herself when Jim Dear protested over such extravagance.

Lady had never been allowed to chew shoes before. She thought it was great fun. But a few days later, when she chewed Darling's silver slippers, she got spanked. It taught her a lesson: don't chew things that belong to somebody else. She would be careful, she resolved, until she was given silver slippers of her own. But she never was.

As a big treat on Saturdays or Sundays, Jim Dear and Darling took Lady for rides. She sat between them in the buggy from the livery stable, and barked only when they passed other dogs who were not riding and looked tired and jealous. Lady felt sorry for them and said so; she was very kind.

Once a week Lady had a bath. Being a spaniel, she loved water, though she might pretend she didn't and hide when she saw the soap and brushes and heard the tub run. Jim Dear or Darling, depending on whose turn it was, would look for her under one of the beds. They would coax her out, they would bear her in their arms to the tub. Lady would tremble; that first plunge seemed terrifying.

But once in, what sport! Whimpering, shaking, licking lather, barking, she enjoyed it as much as Jim Dear when he sang under his shower.

Afterwards they combed her and brushed her till her coat sparkled. And every so often she paid a visit to something called the Pet Shop, where her nails were trimmed and her teeth cleaned. Lady was truly a beautiful spaniel then.

"Do you blame us for being fond of her?" Jim Dear or Darling would say when they showed her off to guests.

"You certainly treat her like a little princess," the guests, who perhaps never owned dogs, would reply politely.

Lady, snoozing at their feet, would wiggle an ear. She knew when she was being praised, but she tried to be modest.

Lady's food was carefully chosen. In the mornings she had cereal and milk and perhaps a raw egg. At night she had chopped meat. She learned, too, to eat "scraps," which she loved especially because they came right off the plates of Jim Dear and Darling! She had dog-biscuits; she had bones. She had coffee, too, when Jim Dear and

Darling had coffee, and ice-cream when there was ice-cream. The coffee might be only a sip, but the ice-cream was a whole dish for Lady alone and she could lick the other dishes besides. She loved ice-cream most of all.

Maybe Lady had too many good things to eat. She got sick. Darling telephoned Jim Dear and Jim Dear telephoned back and pretty soon a man with a black bag arrived and gave Lady medicine and she threw up. She felt better then, but she was very much ashamed. Never again would she see a man with a black bag without a foreboding that something unpleasant was going to happen.

“Too much rich stuff,” the man said. “Give her spinach and more bones.”

Lady hated spinach. But she loved bones.

They were knuckle bones, good to gnaw and tastier still after they were buried a week. In the yard, where she was careful not to disturb Darling’s flowers, Lady buried many fine bones.

Sometimes, with Darling, she went in person to the butcher’s. When he would put her bone in a paper bag and hand it to her across the counter, Lady would seize the bag in her mouth and trot home before she touched the contents.

One day there was a new butcher at the shop.

“And a bone for the mutt?” he said after he had filled Darling’s order. Darling nodded coldly and Lady knew that something had displeased her.

“The idea!” exclaimed Darling when they had gone out. “The idea of his calling you a mutt!”

Lady didn’t know, then, what a mutt was except that it must be something pretty disgraceful.

CHAPTER TWO

NEXT DOOR TO Lady lived two other dogs. On one side was a bloodhound named Trusty and on the other a Scottie. His official name was Heather Lad O'Glencairn, but his family called him Jock McGinnis and "Jock" for short; you can't get much shorter than that. These dogs were great friends and they both admired Lady.

"I hope you're going to like the neighborhood," said Trusty soon after Lady moved in. "There are not many dogs hereabouts but they are all well bred. I believe in good breeding."

"Don't let him scare you," Jock McGinnis whispered to Lady. "Even though he's a bloodhound, he's awfully good-natured. Why, he wouldn't kill a flea."

Lady was awed. These were her first dogs and their conversation dazzled her. But she panted agreeably and they were charmed by her winsome looks and her eagerness to please.

Trusty was considerably older than Lady. His size and his sad expression made him seem haughty. Actually he was not only good-natured but self-conscious because of his large ears and grateful for any attention. But he was almost too dignified to be much fun. On bright mornings, when the wind brought interesting smells from all directions and Lady was ready for a romp, Trusty preferred to lie in the sun and discuss pedigrees.

"The moment I saw you," he would tell Lady, his head on his paws and his red eyes fixed earnestly on her, "I knew you were a thoroughbred. The Spaniels, you know, descend from royalty. There was a King Charles, I believe. My own family is not so famous, but in our way we have contributed to the history of the country. Have I ever mentioned my father, Old Reliable?"

“I believe you have,” Lady would say, having heard the story of Old Reliable and his marvelous nose a number of times.

“He never lost a trail,” Trusty would say in happy disregard of her sigh. “Once there were twelve escaped convicts—”

With that he would be off on a yarn that was endless and, to Lady, always a little shocking, for she could not imagine dogs hunting humans.

Once she interrupted, rather sharply for her, “Did you ever catch a convict yourself?”

“No,” admitted Trusty and fell into a moody silence. In a few minutes he rumbled some excuse about getting a lap of water and left her. Lady felt that she had wounded him, but how grievously she did not discover until she mentioned the incident to Jock McGinnis.

“Oh, you shouldn’t have asked him that!” exclaimed Jock, who usually cared little for other dogs’ feelings.

“Why not?” asked Lady.

“Don’t you know about Trusty? He suffers from asthma—no sense of smell. Most embarrassing for a bloodhound.”

“Oh, dear!” moaned Lady. “I did put my paw in it, didn’t I?”

But because of the circumstances there was little she could do to make it right except listen to Trusty’s stories. Often she listened until he bored her to sleep.

Jock McGinnis was a dog of a different nature. Being small and lively, he frequently seemed as much younger than Lady as Trusty was older. She often felt, when Jock went tearing around after birds, and butterflies, and even blown bits of paper, that she was old enough to be his mother. She liked Jock, but she wished he wasn’t such a fidget. He had a temper, too, which got him into trouble with bigger dogs. Jock resented bigness, except for Trusty’s. Barking insults, he would dash to battle; always he lost. “I

tripped,” he would say on his dirty, scuffed return. For he was as sensitive about his size as Trusty was about his nose.

Lady didn’t approve of Jock’s fighting. But she was forgiving and patient with him just as she was with Trusty.

These were the friends of Lady. So it was natural that she went to them with her worries when the great mystery began.

At the outset it was no more than a voice. Or rather it was something missing from a voice of which it had always been a part. The voice was Darling’s. What Lady missed in it was love.

Dogs, as everybody knows, are as sensitive as magnets. The slightest change in his master’s manner will not escape a dog. From her earliest puppyhood, whenever Jim Dear or Darling had scolded her, Lady cringed at the first word. They did not have to raise their voices or speak twice; she immediately begged forgiveness. Yet during the scoldings she had never missed the note of love under the rough tongue.

She missed it now. At first she couldn’t believe it was not there. “I must have been inattentive, or there was a noise in the street,” she reproached herself. She listened wistfully for love when Darling spoke to her; she found the note again and again she lost it. Darling still loved her, but not all the time. That was pain enough. The mystery was that these bad hours for Lady appeared to have no reason that she could discover, it was as if Darling sometimes just forgot her.

She tried not to grieve too much. Darling was absorbed by some worry of her own, no doubt. She would get over it and return to love.

And then Jim Dear did a strange thing.

It was his habit, when he came home at night, to whistle as soon as he turned the corner. The whistle was scarcely necessary, for Lady, who was as good at telling time as any farmer, would have been waiting on the steps since long before five. But the whistle was important; it was a bond, a sort of cheery code, between her and Jim Dear. Away Lady would rush; the gate clicked—“Hello, old girl!”—she was all over Jim Dear in a trice.

On this night there was no whistle. She heard Jim Dear (no other footsteps like his), she smelled him. When the latch clicked, she was not far away. She leaped in joy.

“Down, Lady!”—he was gone in a flash. Lady picked herself up from the tumble she had taken. She was too surprised to be hurt. Why, he had not even patted her! Bewildered but unshaken in her faith, she trotted after him.

Jim Dear was so swift that he was in the living-room before her. He was bending over Darling, he had taken her in his arms where she sat reading.

“Darling, are you all right?” Lady heard him cry.

“Why, of course, Jim dear! Whatever’s the matter?”

“Well, I got to thinking—you alone all day—and going out with that dog—you might trip—anything might happen; I—I guess I’m pretty silly.”

He sounded silly, and Darling almost angry.

“You certainly are! If this is the way you’re going to behave all the time, I’m going to Aunt Sarah’s!”

“Heaven forbid!” said Jim Dear.

“Then don’t be a goose! Sit down and I’ll get your supper and for goodness’ sake, pat Lady. She’s dying for attention.”

Lady was. She got it. But not before the knowledge had cut deep that Jim Dear had not loved her—not in their sacred moment at the gate; not when he said “that dog.” Several days later she timidly consulted Trusty and Jock McGinnis.

“And that isn’t all,” she concluded while they listened with solemn interest, for both were well aware of Lady’s place in her household and how unusual was the state of affairs she described. “There are other things going on that I don’t understand.”

“What things?” demanded Jock.

“They are making over my room.” Lady hesitated; she was shy about discussing intimate details. “They have taken away my bed and put it in the kennel. They’ve gotten a lot of other furniture,”

The two dogs looked at each other and looked away. They were wondering where Lady was sleeping now but they were too polite to ask.

“Of course,” added Lady, “I never slept in the spare room anyway. But it’s very odd. The new furniture is odd.”

“How—odd?” said Jock.

“Well,” said Lady, “it’s not unlike their other furniture except for one thing—it’s littler.”

Trusty lifted his huge ears and wrinkled his forehead.

“What else have you noticed?” he inquired.

“There was trouble this morning, though I’m not sure it had anything to do with the mystery. But she was so excited when I picked it up—she all but pounced on me—”

Lady stopped. She was remembering the time she chewed the silver slippers and how different today was, as if she had picked up something twice as precious. But she hated confessing an old naughtiness in order to explain.

“Go on,” said Jock.

“Well,” she said, “I found it on the floor and began to play with it—”

“Haven’t we all?” encouraged Trusty.

“— and suddenly she screamed. She fairly snatched it from my mouth. Honestly, I was frightened!”

“But what was it?” insisted Jock, his curiosity burning.

“It was her knitting. It was like,” said Lady, “a little sock.”

The others stared at her. Trusty broke the silence.

“Do you suppose,” he pondered in his deep bass, “your lady is going to have a—have a—”

He hesitated and managed a sneeze.

“A bairn!” burst out Jock McGinnis.

“A bairn?” repeated Lady.

“He means a baby,” confessed Trusty.

“And what,” said Lady, “is a baby?”

Trusty pondered. “They yell a lot,” he said at last.

“They’re very soft,” said Jock. “But they break easily. Even humans must be careful with them. You’ll not be allowed to play with it!”

“What else?” asked Lady.

“Well,” said Trusty, “personally I don’t like their smell.” He stared at her defiantly and she knew he was bluffing a little.

“But I still don’t understand,” said Lady plaintively. “Are babies mostly like dogs or mostly like humans?”

The two older dogs exchanged glances; they realized they were not getting babies across to Lady, and maybe they were not giving babies a break.

“They’re certainly not like dogs,” said Jock. “No tails.”

“More like humans,” agreed Trusty, “but considerably smaller.”

“But everybody says they’re very sweet,” both dogs said.

At that moment, before she could ask more, a shrill whistle brought Lady, Jock and Trusty to their all-fours, noses up, ears cocked, tails tilted.

CHAPTER THREE

THEY HAD been talking on the sidewalk in front of Trusty's home, too absorbed to notice passersby. It was noon. No master would be about for hours. Yet plainly the whistle was a masterly pipe. They looked around. Not a man was visible, only another dog who had loped up and now danced a few feet away.

He was a stranger and on sight Lady shrank, for he was like no other dog of her acquaintance— neither small nor large, of no recognizable breed, not dirty yet certainly not washed. He simply looked, to her, rough. His only badge, a healthy red tongue, waved like a flag in the friendliest of grins.

"Hi, fellers," said the dog. "Heard you yip-yapping about babies and thought I'd butt in and give you the real lowdown."

The bloodhound and the Scottie ignored him. They still strained at attention. Lady daintily stepped back.

"Waiting for another whistle?" asked the dog, still grinning his sociable grin. "Shucks, fellers, you fall easy. That was me!"

Trusty allowed his great head to turn. Jock scowled.

"You don't believe it? Listen—."

The strange dog lowered his head and shook his tousled hair. A second whistle split the breeze. He winked at Lady.

"Wasn't that a wowzer?" he bragged.

"I'm afraid," said Lady primly, "I don't know what a wowzer is."

"Well, crack my cuspids," exclaimed the stranger. "If it ain't a gal!"

Lady was so taken aback by this truthful yet, put as it was, somewhat roguish statement that her legs trembled. Had she been alone she might have run away. A growl beside her relieved but frightened her. Trusty hushed Jock McGinnis with a shake of the head.

"Did you really whistle?" demanded Trusty.

"Sure! Want to hear another?"

"But I never knew of a dog who could whistle. Only men whistle."

"That's what you think, big boy." Again his chuckle held a lilt that excused his pertness. "Whoever said dogs can't be as smart as men? Or a sight smarter! Ever hear a man bark?"

"See here, you!" snarled Jock. "Just who do you think you are?"

The strange dog's eyes flickered; it was the only sign that he had heard Jock. He went on talking to Trusty, though Lady had a weird sensation of being tied to the corner of his glance. A shimmer of excitement seemed to fill the air around her.

"Of course they try to bark but, my paws and pants, you know what a flop they are, believing they can fool a dog and all that hash. Not that it ain't good sense to make believe you're fooled sometimes, bark back and play crazy and be a dope. Gets treats maybe and besides, it gives 'em a laugh. Shucks, I got nothing against men!"

Jock McGinnis could stand this nonsense no longer. "I said," he howled, "just who do you think you are?"

"Who, me?" The stranger cocked an innocent eye toward Jock. "They call me the Tramp." His cold nose suddenly nudged a McGinnis rib. "What's the name?" he snapped.

Jock made a rush. He turned a somersault. The Tramp had skipped aside.

“Tut tut, Sandy!” the Tramp warned as the Scottie tried to recover from his bump and his chagrin. “Keep your fur on; I don’t fight; it’s dumb. Certainly not in front of the little pigeon here.”

Lady’s legs shook again. She feared she had been insulted, the more so because the dog winked his gay wink. Really, she should run away. But a guilty fascination held her. She even found herself whispering, “Pigeon? Pigeon? But pigeons are lovely birds!”

There was no fight. Jock McGinnis was so crestfallen that he subsided into a low mutter. Trusty was still lost in wonder at a dog who could whistle and had such small respect for men. The Tramp’s tail and tongue wagged on. He talked, apparently, to Trusty, but Lady felt that every word he said was addressed to her and that he planned it that way wickedly.

“Getting back to babies, somebody said they were sweet. Oh my tongue and tail! They scratch, pull, bump, squeeze, do everything a dog hates. Tell you another thing—they’re homewreckers. The worst kind of homewreckers! Dog thinks he’s got it pretty soft; nice food, nice bed, nice fleas to scratch, nice moon to bark at. Along comes a baby. Does the dog get steaks any more? Nope; too much dough; gotta buy baby a pram. Does he sleep inside? Nope, might be bad for the baby. Can he scratch? Heavens no! Fleas might hop on baby. Can he bark? I should say not; he might wake the baby.” Now he looked and spoke directly at Lady. “I’ll tell you something straight from the boneyard, pigeon—when a baby moves in, the dog moves out!”

His audience fell silent in the face of such authority and over Lady crept a fit of shivers. The Tramp regarded her kindly.

“Oh, well,” he said, “if humans are suckers for babies, they can be suckers for dogs, too. If a baby moved in on me, f’r example, I’d just move out on another family. You folks don’t use the old brain. I bet not one of you has more than one family. Take me, I’ve got six. I picked ‘em scattered so they don’t cross trails and I visit ‘em all according to what’s cookin’. Boy, it’s a merry-go-around, keeping six families certain they own you even if you do wander, but it’s worth it for the old bread-basket.”

The Tramp had spread himself on the walk like a terrier settling and now he shimmied his stomach in a way Lady could only consider vulgar. But he rattled on as if nothing was more natural.

“Tell you a joke—none of them think I’m the same kind of dog. Family on Elm Street calls me a boxer. Family out Greentrees way says I’m part police. Been called everything from a borzoi to a poodle. Just goes to show you men don’t know the first thing about dogs.”

His tongue ran in and out in hearty laughter at man’s confusion and, no doubt, his own ancestry’s.

“By the way,” spoke Trusty, and his bass was very deep, “just what breed are you?”

“Who, me?” The Tramp scratched leisurely. “I dunno—I’m a mutt, I guess.”

In Lady’s mind the word rang a bell. She remembered that day at the butcher’s and Darling’s disgust. With fresh shock and pity she gazed at the Tramp, who merely thumped a leg.

“But let’s not yap about me,” the Tramp was saying. “Let’s hear about you fellers—’scuse it, the pigeon, too. What’s buried around here and how’s scraps? Tell you what—how’d you like to come over to one of my houses? In the next block there’s a widow woman bakes cookies every Tuesday. She’s a pushover for a moan. Let’s—hey, fellers, where you going?”

For Trusty and Jock McGinnis, as at a sharp command, had swung on their paws and were stalking toward their respective homes. The Tramp watched them go with a faint glint in his eyes and his tongue only halfway out.

“Well, tie me down and bob my bottom,” he drawled, “if they ain’t a pair of pucklepups. The blue-ribbon boys, eh? What do you say, pigeon, shall me and you go a’roamin?”

Lady swallowed a gasp. He could have thought it meant yes when actually she was only scared. Her gallants had deserted her, she was too timid to follow them and she was alone with a mutt. What could she do except shake her head?

“Every dog to his own likes.” The Tramp rose, scratched and yawned. “Just the same, some day you may be wishin’ for a lot you’re missin’.” He grinned at her. “Say, I’m a poet and don’t know it, what? Well, so long, pigeon. If you ever need a pal, gimme a yip.”

The Tramp cantered down the street. When he was a block away the ghost of a cheery whistle drifted back to Lady. It was to haunt her for many days. She returned to her own yard sedately. But she was most unhappy. Somehow her friends had failed her. Darling was going to have a baby and a strange dog, a mutt, had left her safe but miserable. For the first time since she was a puppy Lady crawled into her kennel and cried.

CHAPTER FOUR

LADY'S LIFE in the days that followed was not what it once was. Another dog might still have envied her, for she was fed and sheltered. But she was no longer princess of the white and green house.

Her meals became uncertain and not very good. Now Darling often did not get up for breakfast. Jim Dear made his own coffee and it was bad. If he remembered to pour a sip in a saucer before he rushed away, Lady could scarcely lap it. If he gave her cereal, he forgot to sprinkle sugar. Most of her meals were leftovers. There were never any second helpings. Even the bones were poor; Darling did not seem to care whether the butcher sent knuckles or not. Lady dug up old bones from the yard. But they had lost their juice and were good for nothing much except tossing. As for ice-cream, that was just a memory.

"But Jim dear, you shouldn't," said Darling on the single occasion when Jim Dear came home with a pint of plain vanilla. "No sweets, he said."

They gave Lady most of the pint and the poor thing, having gone without ice cream for so long, gobbled it. Of course she got sick. Again the man with the black bag arrived and again the most unpleasant results happened.

"Not enough exercise," said the man.

So Lady and Darling took long walks which Darling said would be good for them both. But the streets were getting hot, Darling hummed absent-mindedly instead of laughing, and Lady's paws hurt. Then autumn came and soon the first snow and the streets were filled with slush and ice. Lady should have had a bath; her nails needed cutting. She moped.

“We really should do something about her,” said Darling. “She’s too dirty to sleep on our beds.”

“I’ll bathe her next week,” promised Jim Dear. “But she might as well get used to sleeping in the kitchen. It won’t be long before she’s sleeping there all the time.”

So Lady slept in the kitchen and was lonely and wondered what she had done to be punished.

“You’re not being punished,” Jock McGinnis reassured her. “It’s because her baby will be here soon. I heard my family say so.”

“Oh that baby!” moaned Lady. “I still don’t know what babies are like.”

“Sweet,” said Jock.

Lady tossed her head. “That’s not what others say. They scratch, pull, bump, squeeze and—when a baby moves in, the dog moves out!”

Jock eyed her somberly; in a moment he began to breathe in a heavy, strange, audible manner.

“What’s the matter?” asked Lady.

“Nothing’s the matter. What do you mean?”

“That noise you were making; are you ill?”

“I was whistling,” said Jock. ““Annie Laurie.””

“Oh,” said Lady.

After that a slight coolness sprang up between them; often when she heard Jock barking an invitation to come out, she stayed inside and brooded, not really wanting to play.

The same was true of Trusty. Their quarrel, though scarcely a quarrel, dated from a day when he rumbled on at great length about ancestors. They were most important to a dog, he said. A dog should always remember them and try to live up to them and not associate with other dogs unless they had fine ancestors, too. A dog who didn't know who his ancestors were, he said, was a dangerous dog to have around.

"I don't see why," said Lady. "I should think it was much more important what you do rather than what your ancestors did. Besides, how do you know your ancestors were all fine dogs?"

"My father, Old Reliable—" began Trusty.

"Oh, bother your father!" snapped Lady and deliberately lifted a leg and began to scratch. It was a thing she had never done publicly before.

She knew she had been rude and the next day she dug up one of the few knucklebones left and offered it to Trusty. He accepted sadly and they shared it, but she had a feeling that he disapproved of her, and the funny part of it was that she didn't care.

The truth was that Lady was homesick. Now homesickness is a trouble that can happen anywhere. You do not have to be away from home to be homesick if what makes home wonderful is away instead of you. Love had made Lady's home wonderful. It was all around her, every day, in Darling, in Jim Dear, in herself. Now she could find it nowhere, though she searched the house. In its place were new rules and strange changes. She longed for a thing gone and could not understand why or where it had vanished.

In her homesickness she remembered the dog who called himself the Tramp. He had had so many homes—six, he said—yet he had seemed the sort of dog, a mutt, who had no home at all. Whenever Jock tried to whistle, she thought of the Tramp, and she realized that in her tiff with Trusty she had been sticking up for the Tramp, though the Tramp was not mentioned by either. It might be fun to "go a'roamin'" with such a dog; maybe, together, they could find love.

Sometimes she pricked up her ears when the wind brought a far whistle that might be his.

Once she believed she saw him, leaping with some children through flying leaves. But they had faded into the autumn haze before she could be sure.

And she dreamed of him. He came prancing toward her in his own tousled finery, rough hair and waving tail and red tongue. He was tossing cookies like a circus juggler. “See?” he called. “I can juggle better than men!” And he did—he juggled bones and balls and pretty soon bigger objects like kennels and beds and, at last, houses. “Come on!” he called. “Come on, little pigeon!” And now they were pigeons, she and Tramp, only they were still dogs and went flying over the top of the world towards the full moon. “Come on!” called Tramp and she watched him ahead of her, flying, dancing, tossing, and suddenly he was juggling the moon—one moon, two moons, a hundred moons—until they exploded in a burst on Tramp’s nose and she woke up. It was a lovely dream.

But mostly she dreamed of babies and they were all had dreams. In her dreams she never saw them clearly, being confused by confusing descriptions, but they were there. They pulled, squeezed, scratched, bit, bumped, and then they bellowed and their smell was most unpleasant.

On a freezing winter’s night Lady was sleeping uneasily in the kitchen when, all at once, she woke. She had heard a cry. At first she believed it was in her dream, a noisy baby perhaps. Then she heard it again. The cry was in the house and it was Darling’s voice but not as she had ever known it; there was pain in the cry.

Lady got up. She stood shivering in the middle of the kitchen floor.

Soon there were other sounds, running feet that were Jim Dear’s, the spurt of a gas jet and Jim’s voice at the telephone, telling someone to “hurry!—hurry!”

Then Lady was afraid. Fear crept into her throat and her legs and the pit of her stomach, fear as cold and hard as the ice outside. She was not afraid for herself; she was afraid for those she loved.

Shaking, she walked to the kitchen door, which was closed tight. She knew she should not scratch it. But fear drove her. She rose on her hindlegs; she scratched and scratched in a frenzy to get out.

No one came. Jim Dear had rushed upstairs again. The door stayed tight. Lady cowered close to the floor. She put her head on her paws.

At last, after what seemed ages, there were other sounds, the ring of horses' hooves and the squeak of a vehicle stopping. Jim's footsteps plunged down the stairs two at a time.

Lady dared to do another thing she had been taught not to do. The kitchen window was high but there was a chair beneath it. By jumping to the chair, rising on her hindlegs, putting her forelegs on the sill and stretching as high as possible, Lady could just look out.

On the front porch, hatless, Jim Dear in his dressing-gown was calling again, "Hurry! Hurry!" Striding up the walk was a man. He carried a black bag.

Lady dropped weakly to the floor. The worst was going to happen!

CHAPTER FIVE

LADY CRAWLED as far as she could under the kitchen sink. Here were the darkest shadows. Here she drew herself tensely against the wall, waiting for the man with the black bag to come and get her.

But the man did not come. Instead, upstairs, she heard the constant sound of moving feet, four feet. She could tell Jim Dear's. The other two must be the man's. There was a new smell in the air. It was like the smell of medicine; it made her a little dizzy. Suddenly she remembered something Trusty had said. Was this the way babies smelled? No, no, that would be too awful!

She heard their voices, Jim Dear's and the man's. Jim Dear's was so stuttery and fast she could hardly make out what he was saying. The man's was slow and calm, like a human's telling a dog not to pull on the leash.

She heard the man say, "Now, now, Jim, take it easy; you're not the world's first father." This was puzzling. The only father Lady knew much about was Trusty's and she couldn't picture Jim Dear as Old Reliable.

Then she heard the man say, and with the words all her forebodings crashed upon her, "This isn't the first baby I've delivered, either!"

Lady's forelegs dropped. Her head sank. Nothing she could do now would help anybody, least of all herself...

"When a baby moves in, the dog moves out..." Yes, but where? She didn't have six families!

Once, early in that dreadful night, she saw Jim Dear, though Jim Dear did not see her. He banged into the kitchen, made for the stove, turned on all the jets, lit them, and covered the flames with pot after pot of water. All the time he was talking to himself: “Keep calm he said, don’t get excited he said, water he said, we’ll need plenty of hot, hot water!”

Lady couldn’t make head nor tail of that one. Why didn’t they just run water in the tub the way they did when Jim Dear bathed her?

Lady tried to sleep. She whimpered and shivered and finally she did sleep, but she dreamed of nothing but babies, and they were ogres.

The windowpanes were light when she woke. She listened, but all the house was still. Carefully she stepped from under the sink, softly she jumped to the bench, stretched high and looked out. The horse and buggy she had seen before were gone. Then the man with the black bag must be gone, too.

A door creaked behind her. In a panic because she had broken the rules, Lady jumped down. But Jim Dear, who stood there, did not scold her. Though his hair was as tousled as the Tramp’s, and his eyes were puffed and red, he was smiling. And what did he do but drop to his knees and take her in his arms!

“Lady, Lady!” he whispered. “You’re the first to know—it’s a boy! And my Darling’s all right, Lady, everything’s going to be okay!”

Lady licked his face and realized that he had been crying. She had never tasted his tears before and she licked with all her might to wash them away.

“Here, here, stop that!” said Jim Dear, laughing. When he pushed her away, he pushed gently. He stood in the middle of the floor, his hands in the pockets of his dressing-gown, while Lady looked at him. He heaved a heavy sigh. “Oh, shucks,” he said, “I guess I’ve got to telephone Aunt Sarah.”

Lady listened while he telephoned Aunt Sarah. He said, “Hello, Aunt Sarah, this is James. Sorry to disappoint you—it’s a boy.” After that he mostly said, “Uh, huh; uh, huh;” except once, when he cried out, “Oh, no, please don’t do that! I tell you she’s fine!”

So everything was all right again between Jim Dear and Lady, but she was very confused. “It’s a boy.” Twice he had said that. Well, a boy simply wasn’t a baby. She had seen lots of boys. Some boys had patted her and some boys had teased her. You could put your paw on boys—they were either good boys or bad boys. On the whole she rather liked boys. If that was a boy upstairs, he might be fun; he would throw sticks and she would fetch them. But if it was a boy, why was the house so still? Good boys or bad boys, she’d never known one that wasn’t noisy.

The house became more silent than ever a little later after Jim Dear bustled back into the kitchen. “Hi, Lady!” he said. She wagged her tail violently. He rummaged on the shelves and then he called out, “There isn’t any here! I’ll run get some! Be back in a jiffy!” The murmur of Darling’s voice assented from upstairs. Lady was left alone in the kitchen and Jim Dear did not close her door.

Now the house was quiet as falling snow. Not a whisper, nor a sigh reached Lady, who was beginning to tremble where she sat in the middle of the kitchen floor. She trembled with a great wish to know and a daring to find out. Sunshine made a path of brightness through the open door. Lady picked up her paws and slowly advanced.

Quiet in the hall, quiet in the other rooms, quiet on the stairs. Lady hesitated, looking up. She waited as long as her pounding heart could stand it. Softly she began to climb.

And then, when she was halfway up, it came—a sound so new and strange it was like none she had ever caught in hush or clatter. It was more of a coo than a whimper, it was warmer than summer rain and softer than green leaves rustling. A bird might have made it or water in a brook, but never a boy, and hardly a baby.

Lady stood stock-still, yearning for the sound to be repeated, for it made her feel all warm inside in a way she had never felt before. Instead she heard Darling’s voice, very low. Darling was singing. Lady shivered, the song was so gentle, so sweet, so comforting. And there was nothing in the song or the voice but love.

Lady climbed the stairs.

The song ended. The other sound Lady had heard did not come again. The house was all one great hush. She felt she could hear the pad of her own paws as she nestled on the threshold of Darling's room.

"Why, Lady dear!" Darling's voice had never been kinder. "Come in!"

Lady crept in.

"Jump!" said Darling. "But be careful."

Lady was very careful. She lay where she had always lain at the foot of the bed, where her eyes could adore Darling, where Darling's hand could touch her head. But, though love shone brightly in Darling's face, Lady's eyes were not for her; they adored what Darling held.

Have you ever seen a baby asleep? Then we don't have to tell you how Lady felt.

CHAPTER SIX

THAT WAS at ten minutes to ten on January the fourteenth. Lady had belonged to Jim Dear and Darling for a little more than a year, during which she loved only them and—well, Jock and Trusty a little bit. At five minutes to ten Lady's world changed; she loved a baby more than she loved them all.

"Isn't he sweet, Lady?" Darling said in her wonderful, happy voice. "He's your baby, too, and you must always take care of him."

Lady did not have to pant or wag. Darling knew from the look in her eyes that she understood.

And then, at ten o'clock, Lady's world changed again. This time it turned topsy-turvy.

The doorbell rang. It was a loud, long, let-me-in-right-away ring. Lady growled. Ordinarily she would have jumped down and run to the door. But this ring was not a friendly ring. Besides, she must not leave the baby.

"I wonder who that can be," Darling said. "It doesn't sound like Jim and he wouldn't ring if he forgot his key. I wish Jim was back!"

Jim returned at exactly that moment. They heard him say something outside and they heard someone else, sharp and bossy. Darling gasped, Lady growled again. The front door opened and up the stairs tramped heavy feet. They were not Jim Dear's.

"Why, Aunt Sarah!" cried Darling. "Whatever brought you here?"

“And whatever do you suppose?” Aunt Sarah had a voice like a steamboat’s; it made Lady shudder to hear it coming from a human. “Do you think I’d desert my only sister’s child at a time like this? I’m here to stay!”

“But really I can get along—” Darling tried to protest.

Aunt Sarah broke in. “Nonsense! YOU don’t know how to take care of a baby, child! Doesn’t that prove it? A dog on the bed! Probably fleas all over the baby already! Scat, you pest!”

Lady scrambled off to escape Aunt Sarah’s sweeping slap. In the doorway Jim Dear stood with a look on his face as though he had just bitten a bad apple. Lady ran to him. His hand went down to her cautiously.

“Better disappear, old girl,” he whispered. Lady did.

“Fetch my bags, James,” she heard Aunt Sarah boom as she scampered downstairs, “and don’t bang my new motorcar; it’s an electric, the latest thing! Be careful of the big hamper. That’s the precious pies and they’ll be needing their milk. Have you milk?”

Lady retreated once more to the shadow of the kitchen sink. But first she took one peek out the window. In front of the house, where earlier the horse and buggy were, stood a boxlike thing with no horse. That must be the “electric,” thought Lady. Jim was unloading a number of objects.

Now what, she wondered, was this all about? Why on earth did Aunt Sarah carry pies with her? Only the baker did that. Why did pies need milk? And how was she to guard the baby if Aunt Sarah shooed her away?

When Jim Dear brought in the bags, he did not look cheerful. He set them down with a bang. He brought in the hamper last. He set it down with bang, too. From the hamper tore a chilling shriek— two shrieks!

They were echoed from the stairs. “James! Didn’t I tell you to be careful? Oh, the pies! The precious pies! You might have killed them!”

Lady was frozen with horror. For the shrieks from the hamper were not made by pies. They could be made by only one kind of animal—cats!

And sure enough, above the hamper, after the bang it got, escaped a long tail—two tails!

Aunt Sarah dashed to the rescue.

“Are you hurt, my pets? The bad man! I’ll let you out this instant!”

Lady, who had dropped to her stomach, dashed forward with a snarl as vicious as ever Jock McGinnis snarled. Aunt Sarah kicked at her.

“Hold that cur!” she screamed.

Jim Dear caught Lady by the collar. He didn’t hold her very tight. Lady had the feeling that nothing would have pleased him more than to let her go. But he didn’t. Together they watched Aunt Sarah remove the cover from the hamper. They saw two large cats step out.

They were sleek cats and no doubt, to Aunt Sarah, lovely cats. But not to Lady. To her they were ugly, they grinned evilly, they had bad eyes. While their names were Si and Am, they should have been called Double Trouble, for that was all they were to bring Lady.

Lady still growled as fiercely as though she meant to slaughter them then and there, (a doubtful possibility, for Si and Am were big and they had claws like sabres). Then everyone heard a cry so woebegone and fretful that Lady realized the Tramp was right; babies could make awful noises when things went wrong.

Lady jerked away from Jim’s grasp. She bounded up the stairs. She must protect the baby!

The caterwauls of Si and Am followed her. “Fraidy!” they screeched. “Fraidy dog! Fraidy dog! Fraidy dog!”

Lady did not care. Crouched on the bed between the baby and the door, she challenged all invaders.

Darling's fingers stroked the rough hair around her neck. "Poor Lady," she crooned. "Poor little baby—poor me. But don't mind, we'll make her go home as soon as we can." Softly she began to sing the song, the baby stopped crying and Lady felt a great deal better.

Aunt Sarah didn't go home. Neither did Si and Am. So Lady made a resolution; she would be polite to Si and Am, she would try to make friends with them. After all, they were guests.

She showed Si and Am around the house. "This is the spare room. It used to be my room. The baby sleeps here now." She showed them the kitchen. "That's my bed in the corner and that's my dish. I wonder where you folks will sleep." She showed them the back porch. "Maybe you'll sleep here or down cellar. There are mice down cellar. Do you like mice?" She showed them the yard; Trusty and Jock were watching in amazement from afar. "Don't you worry," she assured the cats. "I won't let them bother you. They're really awfully nice dogs."

Si winked at Am and Am winked at Si.

"She won't let them bother us," meowed Si.

"They're really awfully nice dogs," mimicked Am.

And suddenly they both let out their dreadful shrieks. Lady looked at them, yelling and prancing, in distress. Had she said something funny, something wrong? Never mind, she would keep on trying to be polite.

Sometimes, she decided, Si and Am weren't actually so bad. "Gosh," they said, "you've got it pretty nice here. Gosh, that's a nice bed and that's a nice bowl. What's in it?" They finished Lady's breakfast and smacked their chops. "Gosh, let's see the cellar—mice, you say? —yummy yum!"

But they were mischievous cats. They loved nothing so much as playing pranks on somebody else.

Si and Am had no toys of their own. They sneaked Lady's toys, her ball and her rubber bone and her old overshoes, which Lady kept in a corner and was always careful to put back when she was through with them. Si and Am would leave Lady's toys where Aunt Sarah was sure to stumble on them. Aunt Sarah always thought that Lady had left them.

They dug up Lady's bones and brought them into the house, a thing she had never done. Cats are not supposed to like bones, so Lady got the blame.

Once, when Aunt Sarah was upstairs, Si and Am leaped unto the piano and pranced up and down the keys. Lady made the mistake of running into the room to tell them they mustn't. They ducked behind the curtains just in time; Aunt Sarah was rushing downstairs. Poor Lady was caught on her hindlegs with her forepaws against the keyboard.

"You naughty dog!" cried Aunt Sarah. "If you were mine, I'd get rid of you in a twinkling."

Worst of all was the way Si and Am swiped milk. They always swiped Lady's milk when she had cereal, but they weren't above swiping the baby's milk which the milkman left at the front door. Somehow they managed things so it looked as if Lady had swiped the milk.

Aunt Sarah was loud in her complaints, and Darling was distressed.

"I can't imagine what's gotten into Lady," Darling said. "She was never bad before."

Lady suffered terribly. And Si and Am sat on the back fence, caterwauling in unison, "Lady is a dumb-bell! Lady is a dumb-bell! Hah hah hah hah hah!"

CHAPTER SEVEN

THERE WAS only one bright spot in Lady's troubled life. She was no longer allowed upstairs at all and at night, when she thought she would sleep in the warm kitchen, she early discovered her mistake. The cats slept in the kitchen. Cold though it was, Lady slept in the kennel outdoors. There her dreams were nightmares, of Aunt Sarah scolding, of Si and Am laughing, yowling, and spitting. But when spring came, things got a little better.

They bought the baby an outdoors crib, and on warm, bright days it was put in the yard with a netting over it. Lady could curl up near by. She could hear the baby laugh. Sometimes Darling was there and she sang softly. Sometimes Darling would go away for a while and Lady was left in full charge. The pigeons came to flutter and coo overhead. The baby cooed back. The sun shone. Lady was almost happy.

At these times Si and Am were usually off somewhere else, enjoying their own escapades, for neither of them was interested in the baby.

"A little pig," Si said.

"Drinks all the milk," Am said.

"Baby is a bumbleboop!" they would screech together and skip away on a prowl after pickings in the neighbors' yards.

Lady was mortified for them. But she was so glad to be left alone with the baby that she was content not to point out how wrong they were.

One day she was drowsing beside the crib when Aunt Sarah called Darling to come inside. The baby was asleep. The sun beat down pleasantly. Pigeons fluttered and strutted. One of them flew up and perched on a corner of the crib. Lady opened a wary eye. But a pigeon was harmless. This one was a handsome bird and Lady remembered the time she had been called a pigeon and the dream in which she and the Tramp had gone skimming to the top of the world. She smiled as she dozed.

Suddenly the most dreadful thing happened. There was a frightened squawk from the pigeon, which flew away. At the same instant there was a bang and a crash. The baby screamed. Lady sprang awake. She saw the crib falling and Am, who had upset it, dash to the cellar. Without a sound he had been stalking the bird, without warning he had struck. But he had missed. The consequences he left in haste.

Lady barked her loudest. She ran to the crib, which had tipped on its side. The baby was half in and half out. She tried vainly to push the baby back with her gentle nose. So Darling and Aunt Sarah found her when they ran out of the house.

That night was the blackest Lady had ever known. She was chained in the kennel after she had been scolded and spanked. She heard Darling say heart breaking things and Aunt Sarah worse. She knew, when Jim Dear came home, that they were saying things to him. They were holding some sort of conference to decide what to do.

At last, after nightfall, Jim Dear brought her supper. But Lady could not touch it. She licked his hand.

“Poor little doggie!” He scratched her ears. “I don’t understand it. But I suppose she’s right—we’ll have to put a muzzle on you.”

Lady could not sleep after he left. She lay in the door of the kennel with her sad eyes on a lighted window. That was the baby’s room. Lady did not move until the light went out.

Later, someone called softly. It was Jock McGinnis, nosing her out in the dark. She had not talked to him in weeks.

“Hear you’re in trouble,” he said, sitting down. “I slipped out to see if there’s anything I can do.”

“Oh, Jock, I am!” moaned Lady. “And it wasn’t my fault!”

“I know.” The Scottie coughed deep in his throat. “I saw it all from my yard. Those confounded cats! They’re not around, are they?”

“Oh, no, they’re inside.” In fact, Si and Am, both a little frightened by the result of Am’s blooper, had stayed discreetly down cellar licking their whiskers. They didn’t come near Lady.

“It’s a shame,” Jock said. “I’ve thought it was a shame for a long time but—well, I didn’t have the chance to tell you. Been sort of neglecting your old pals lately, haven’t you, lassie?”

Lady apologized. Surely he must understand how it was with visitors. And then there was the baby.

“Hum,” said Jock. “The baby was bad enough, but those confounded cats—!” He hesitated. “What I really came over to say,” he went on, “if things get too tough—or, for that matter, if they get better—I mean I’ve been thinking about this for some time—I’ve a pretty roomy kennel over at my place and my family likes you— darn it, lassie, if you—would you—?”

She lifted one paw. “Please, Jock—don’t go on. You’re awfully sweet and thoughtful. But I can’t leave my own, you know.”

The Scottie got up. His tail drooped. He sighed. “Well, no harm trying. Don’t forget I asked you, lassie. If you ever change your mind—.”

He faded blackly and Lady was alone again with her sick heart. But not for long. She heard paws and a snuffle. This was Trusty, blundering at the kennel door.

“Had a time getting through the fence,” he rumbled. “Is there anyone else about? I thought I smelled a cat.”

Lady reassured him and Trusty sank to his haunches. He had heard the bad news from Jock. A nasty business and one that looked hopeless as time went on. If there was

anything he could do she must call on him even though, as appeared lately, she needed no advice from her old friends. Lady apologized and Trusty nodded.

“I understand. You don’t have to explain. But don’t you think, my dear, that even your love for the baby is not worth the sacrifice? You are a dog of exceptionally sensitive breeding. You need a protector. While I am not as young as I once was, I fancy I can hold my own in a fight or a frolic. My father, Old Reliable, at the age of twelve—”

“Trusty,” said Lady gently, “I know what you want to say and I appreciate it. But I will never leave my family.”

Trusty’s big ears sagged. He said, with dignity, that he respected her spirit. But if she should ever change her mind—.

“I won’t, Trusty. Thank you just the same. Trusty, I want to ask you something. What is a muzzle?”

She could tell, even in the dark, that he regarded her with dismay.

“You poor dear! Is that what they are going to do to you? A muzzle is—a muzzle is—well, no dog should ever know!”

On that shadowy fear Lady fell asleep.

CHAPTER EIGHT

AUNT SARAH insisted on buying the muzzle herself.

Early the next morning she marched into the yard with Lady's leash in her hand. Lady wagged her prettiest. She believed Aunt Sarah had forgiven her. She thought Aunt Sarah was taking her for walk. Not Aunt Sarah! She was taking Lady a ride—in the electric.

The ride ended at the Pet Shop. Of course, having been there before with Jim Dear and Darling, Lady was overjoyed. The Pet Shop meant that she would be combed and brushed and perhaps that she would get a new toy. Aunt Sarah certainly had relented! And then Aunt Sarah said gruffly, "I want to look at muzzles."

In the next half hour Lady learned why Trusty had spoken in such horror. She found out, to the full, what a muzzle is.

A muzzle is the flea that never stops biting.

A muzzle is the tin can impossible to shake.

It is the goad that rouses all a dog's worst instincts.

It is the gag that paralyzes his best.

Seeing, smelling, tasting, speaking are checked or choked by the muzzle. It sours the spirit, poisons the blood, and breaks the heart. The muzzle is the prison camp, the torture chamber of dogs.

They tried many muzzles on Lady. They tried leather ones, they tried wire ones, they tried muzzles that clamped and muzzles that rubbed and muzzles that merely tickled like annoying insects. They tried muzzles that let Lady bark and some that let her show her teeth and others through which she could lick just a little. And she did bark and she did show her teeth and she tried to lick—to lick or bite or gnaw or do anything to get rid of the muzzle—until she was too hoarse even to whimper and lay panting in a heap of weariness and shame.

She suffered for others as much as she did for herself. She heard Jim Dear's perplexed voice again. She saw Darling's face, white and grieved, when she left the house. What would they think of her, bound and disgraced? What would other dogs, seeing her, think? Jock and Trusty? And she could never face the baby, who would not coo, who would not smile but would only scream at the sight of Lady in a muzzle!

Aunt Sarah said, "I'll take this one."

Lady did not know or care which it was. Aunt Sarah had to drag her from the shop, drag her across the sidewalk toward the electric.

"Get along, you bad dog!" cried Aunt Sarah. Lady pulled back as hard as she could.

The Pet Shop was in a strange neighborhood. The streets before her were strange to Lady. And now, suddenly, they began to fill with strange dogs, laughing and leering at the terrified little cocker.

"Lookit!" they yelped. "We know—it's a muzzle! Wow, wow, what's she done? Who'd she hit? What a temper she must have! Bet she won't try it on us! Come on, take it off! We dare you to, we double-dog dare you!"

Aunt Sarah was scolding and shaking her umbrella. "Go away!" she cried. "Go away, you bad dogs! You should all have muzzles on you!"

Suddenly one dog ran in, snapping at the umbrella. Lady made a lunge with all her strength. The leash broke. She was free!

"Stop!" shouted Aunt Sarah. "Stop, you bad dog!"

The pack took up the hunt. “Bad dog! Bad dog!” they yowled and one or two of the more reckless changed it to the most terrible cry a dog can hear—“Mad dog! Mad dog!”

Aunt Sarah tried to run after Lady. She tripped on a dog and went down in a swirl of skirts, umbrella, and yips. It was several minutes before she got out of that tangle!

The delay helped a little. Broken leash, muzzle and all, Lady sprang ahead, through traffic, past yelling dogs, past humans who were yelling, too.

An alley opened at the right. She took that turn and another and another. Her legs wobbled, she was all but spent. Suddenly, as she rounded a corner, a brick wall loomed. A dead end!

Lady stumbled to her knees. Behind her bayed dogs who knew these alleys better than she. Her race was run. At the last moment, before their pursuit overtook her, she thought she heard a whistle. But she was too beaten to be sure. Darkness fell like a club out of the bright sky.

When Lady came to herself, someone or something was worrying her face. She felt and heard champing teeth and she backed away with a gasp of terror.

“Take it easy; little pigeon,” said a voice. “We gotta get the trap off your schnozzle.”

She opened her eyes, still in dread of an army of dogs, and saw but one. He was the Tramp, resting for a moment on his rear and smiling at her through his uncombed whiskers.

“Say, they sure fixed you up for keeps, didn’t they?” he remarked. “I’ve seen muzzles that were muzzles, but this one ain’t fit to tie on a pound-master.”

“Dogs!” gasped Lady. “Where are the dogs?”

“Those fellers?” The Tramp pretended to yawn. “Just a bunch of puppy chasers. Dumb, too—almost as dumb as men. I gave ‘em the old one-two and they faded like the cops were after ‘em. I’ve learned a whistle or two since I saw you last. Want to hear?”

But Lady looked so piteous under her mask that the Tramp was too touched to demonstrate.

“And Aunt Sarah—where is she?” Lady began to shake.

“Never heard of that one and I’ve looked them all over. Well, nearly all,” added the Tramp. “Now see here, little pigeon”—he got up and gave her an encouraging wink through the muzzle’s bars— “You mustn’t be down-hearted, you’re with me! We’re going places and do things soon as you chipper up. But first of all we’ve got to shuck the hardware.”

Lady was catching on to his funny way of talking. “Oh, yes!” she begged. “Oh, please get it off! It’s awful!”

The Tramp frowned. “You said it. I bit the leash in two, but this other dingus is a sticker. I’ve been trying ever since you passed out to shake her loose and I can’t. It won’t budge. And that leather’s too tough for even my teeth. I’m stumped! Not really stumped,” he added quickly. “I’ve never been really stumped! But we need help. Let me think.”

He sat on his hindlegs thinking, and Lady sat on hers, gazing hopefully at him. She was sure he would find a way.

“It’s got to be cut right there,” he said slowly. “A man could do it in a minute with a saw or scissors or a knife. But what man will cut a muzzle for a dog? They’ll think you are savage and dangerous or you would never have it on. That’s how dumb they are! But another animal—”

He scratched his head. Lady waited.

“A swordfish would do it,” he said. “I don’t know any swordfish, do you?”

Poor Lady had never heard of a swordfish.

“Or a squirrel or a beaver,” said the Tramp. “I wonder if there are any beavers around here.”

He scanned the alley so earnestly that Lady wouldn't have been surprised had a beaver poked its head from a garbage can.

“Nothing bur rats, I guess,” said the Tramp. He soothed her alarm. “Don't fret, kid, we'll steer clear of those fellers. Gee, I hate rats worse'n I hate cats! But this isn't getting n any gravy.” He pawed the ground impatiently. “By gosh, we'll find a beaver!”

He stood up. Lady stood up, too.

“Come on!” he cried, “come on, little pigeon!” just as he had in her dream. Away he went and unhesitatingly she followed his waving tail. If anyone, anywhere could help her, he would be the Tramp.

CHAPTER NINE

THE CITY Zoo closed at five o'clock. It lacked a little of the hour when the two dogs, footsore and weary from their long hike, trotted up to the entrance. Lady was still muzzled. But she didn't feel as badly. All the way Tramp had cheered her and comforted her with his gaiety and one look from him had silenced any strange dog.

The first thing they saw was a sign: "No Dogs Allowed."

"Oh, dear!" sighed Lady.

"Think nothing of it," encouraged the Tramp. "They never stumped me yet!"

He whistled sharply. The gatekeeper looked everywhere but at the dogs. The Tramp whistled again. The gatekeeper left his post to peer over the fence. Several people were leaving the grounds. The Tramp whisked behind one of them. At that moment the gatekeeper turned.

"Here, you," he said, "did you have that dog inside?"

"What dog?" said the other man.

"The dog with you," said the gatekeeper.

"That's not my dog," said the man. "I never saw him before."

The Tramp was grinning up at the man. He was frisking and wagging. Lady watched mystified.

“Oh, yeah?” sneered the gatekeeper. “He looks like he never saw you before, doesn’t he? Why, I heard you whistle for him!”

“I did not!” barked the man.

“Are you calling me a liar?” growled the gatekeeper.

They began jawing each other. They had forgotten the Tramp. He skipped to Lady’s side. “Come on, kid,” he said. “They’ll be too busy to pay any attention to us for a while! Ain’t humans the diilies?” Through the entrance both dogs galloped.

“And now,” sang the Tramp, “to find a beaver!”

They looked and looked. They went into the monkey-house and the bird-house and the elephant-house. They saw lions and tigers and giraffes and bears. The hour was getting along toward feeding time and the animals were hungry. They began to sing for their supper and, since there were many different animals requiring different kinds of food, their song was quite mixed up and made a terrific din.

Lady was frightened. And she was sorry for the animals, who were locked in cages even tighter than the muzzle locked her. She feared that she and the Tramp would be caught by the keepers and put in a cage, too. But Tramp was most successful in dodging them. He did this by trotting at their heels. Keepers never expect to see animals outside cages!

At last, as they were following a keeper down a woody path, they saw a sign, “To the beavers.” They kept right behind the keeper. And then, when he reached a house that said, “Beavers—Check walking sticks and pencils outside,” what did the keeper do instead of going in, but put up another sign, “Closed for the night!”

Lady lay right down in the path and cried. Her muzzle seemed to weigh a ton. Probably she would never get it off.

The Tramp ran around her in circles. He was terribly distressed, “Lady,” he begged. “Lady dear——don’t cry! We’ll never give up so long as there’s a bark or a bite left in us!”

But Lady felt as though she were done for. It was getting dark. The keeper had gone. She would never see her home or the baby again.

Suddenly a small voice nearby said, “Did you want something?”

For a moment the two dogs could see no one in the shadows. Then the Tramp cried out, “By gosh, a beaver!”

He was standing near the edge of the path beside a hole from which he must have just stepped, and he did not look very pleased.

“Just what did you expect to find here?” he remarked crossly. “Buffaloes?”

The Tramp swallowed a growl. Lady spoke first.

“You did rather surprise us,” she apologized politely. “We’re very sorry. And you could do us a great favor—that is, if you’re not too busy—.”

“Not busy at all,” snapped the beaver. “I do wish they’d stop pinning that busy stuff on us. I think they get us confused with those stupid bees, always buzzing off to work. I like to loaf. But what’s your knothole?”

“It’s this”—Lady scratched at the muzzle.

The beaver came close. “Sa-a-ay, but that’s a clever contraption,” he said in an interested tone. “Make it yourself?”

“Of course she didn’t,” broke in the Tramp impatiently. “She’d get out of it if she knew how she got in it. By the way, how did you get out? Of the house, I mean?”

The beaver took a sidelong glance at the Tramp and another at the house. His expression indicated he didn’t think much of either. “That? You don’t really think they coop us up in that shack against our will? The place is a joke! But it’s snug enough and the fare’s good, besides being brought to you instead of having to forage around in the muck. Enough of us stay in daytimes to make things look right, but we stroll about at night. You’d be surprised at the number of animals that do.”

Lady had been aware of many rustlings and other mysterious noises in the woods, and she began to tremble. “Oh, please, sir,” she wheedled, “I wish you could get this off!”

“Well, now, let’s have a look,” said the beaver “H-m-m-m-m, leather! I never cared for it. But if I can be of assistance to a lady—”

“Chaw ‘er right there,” interrupted the Tramp.

The beaver bristled. “Say,” he grunted, “who’s doing this? I’m no tiger and I don’t chaw, I chew, Stand aside, please.”

The Tramp obeyed. Lady knew his feelings must be hurt, but she was so afraid the beaver would be offended and stalk away that she said nothing.

The beaver bent above her. “Be still,” he warned, “it won’t hurt”—there was a quick crunch; the muzzle fell with a clatter—“there you are, miss!”

Lady leaped and danced. She felt as though she had lost all her weariness along with the hateful thing. The Tramp leaped and danced with her. They cavorted down the path.

“Here!” cried the beaver. “You’re forgetting something!”

Lady ran back to him. “Oh,” she said, “I can never thank you enough! It was wonderful of you to be so kind!”

“Not at all,” said the beaver stiffly. “But don’t you want this?” He was holding the muzzle in his front paws. “Quite a contraption,” he murmured, “quite a contraption.”

“Do you like it?” cried Lady. “You can have it! I never, never want to see it again!”

“Why, that’s nice of you,” said the beaver. “Thanks a lot!”

She rejoined the Tramp. They hurried away from the beaver house, away from the zoo. The Tramp was barking with delight.

“Didn’t I say I’d get it off?’ he barked. “Didn’t I say you could count on me?”

“Darling,” answered Lady, blushing a little because the word just hopped out,
“Darling, I think you’re wonderful!”

CHAPTER TEN

NEVER WAS such a night as the Tramp and Lady spent roaming and romping through the streets and byways of the great city. The stars were out. It was not too cold. Wind and water sang with them.

They visited the river, where Lady had a swim that seemed to wash away all her woes. The Tramp, who said swimming made him itch, stayed on the bank, but he watched her admiringly.

They visited all his families. Most of them were poor families but she could see that they loved the Tramp, even though they called him by different names like Hector and Rover and Butch. Because she was with him they loved her and were kind to her, too.

The families fed them such scraps as Lady had never eaten before. For the first time Lady tasted corned beef and cabbage, hominy grits, bread pudding, baked beans, honeycomb tripe, and chitterlings. She loved them all.

For dessert they called on a hokey-pokey man. The Tramp didn't know him, but he whistled so convincingly that the hokey-pokey man believed he himself had whistled. So he patted the dogs when they came flying up and gave them each two strawberry ice-creams. And after that they had cookies from the widow who baked every Tuesday.

At midnight the moon came up. The Tramp and Lady sat side by side on a hilltop watching the golden ball.

“Are you happy, pigeon?” he asked her.

She didn't answer for a moment. She was thinking that indeed she had been so happy for the last few hours she had forgotten not only her troubles but her responsibilities.

She sighed. “I must go home, Tramp,” she said.

He turned on her. “Not to those people who muzzled you? Why, that would be terrible!”

“I must,” said Lady simply. “They are my family.”

“But I have lots of families,” Tramp objected “Any one of them will be glad to put us up. And there are other places. There’s a swell old box down by the river. It’s a little musty but you’ll be comfortable. And I know a cellar near here with a rug in the coal bin. Go home? Shucks, any old place I park my paddies is home, sweet home to me.”

Lady hesitated. She longed for him to understand what she was about to say, yet she would not for anything have hurt one who had been so comradely and kind.

“I know you lead a wonderful and exciting life, Tramp,” she said, “But don’t you ever feel that so many homes are like—well, not having any? You can’t leave a home lying around as you would a bone, hoping it will be there when you get back or, if it’s gone, there’ll always be another. A home is like a mother or a father; there’s only one.”

The Tramp was a little miffed. “I wouldn’t know about that,” he said. “I don’t know who my mother was and I’ve never been a father.”

Lady felt sorry for him, for she could still remember her mother.

“Tramp,” she said, “I wish you could see the baby”

“Child of those wicked muzzlers?” he inquired. “I hope the baby’s better than they are!”

“Oh, he’s gorgeous!” breathed Lady. “And they’re not wicked! It was the coming of Aunt Sarah that spoiled everything.” She decided she wouldn’t mention the cats.

“Aunt Sarah sounds like a pain in the paw,” agreed the Tramp.

Lady, taking a deep breath, said, “Tramp, why don’t you come home with me?”

“And run into Aunt Sarah? She might bite me!”

Lady laughed. “She’ll be sound asleep. So will everybody,” she said, thinking of the cats.

“Suppose they muzzled me?”

“You can leave early. My kennel is in the yard and you can have it. But first I’d dearly love to show you the house if we can get inside. I want you to see a real home!”

“Mighty few houses I can’t get in,” bragged the Tramp.

“—and you can run faster than any of them if they bother you,” urged Lady.

The Tramp rose. He shook himself lustily. “If you’ve got to go,” he said, “I suppose I had better escort you.”

Once he stopped as they trotted along. “To tell you the truth, little pigeon,” he said wistfully, “none of my homes will seem like home after tonight!”

On they went, shoulder to shoulder.

* * *

The home of Lady had been anything but happy that night. Sharp voices, anger, and sorrow filled it from the time Aunt Sarah returned with the news that Lady had run away. Darling had first cried and then turned on Aunt Sarah with bitter reproaches. Aunt Sarah threatened to pack up and leave. Darling said she wished she would. When Jim Dear heard what had happened, he was as sad and angry as Darling. He phoned the police. He himself searched for Lady, whistling and calling through the empty streets. At last, when everyone went to bed, worn out from worry and quarreling, Aunt Sarah began to pack. Jim Dear and Darling were heartbroken and Si and Am didn’t dare poke their noses out of the cellar. To this battleground of humans Lady led the Tramp at an hour long after the last tear had dried on Darling’s eyelids.

When they were still a block from home, Lady cried out, “Why they’ve left a light on! Perhaps it’s for me!”

It was. Darling had insisted on it. And the back door, they discovered, was open.

“Now wasn’t that thoughtful of them?” said Lady.

On the tips of their paws they entered the house. Lady had shown Tramp the yard and the kennel, she had pointed out where her bones were buried. In the bright kitchen her bed and dish were where they used to be. She was touched and delighted. She yearned to go farther. The baby would be asleep in the spare room. The night-light would be burning. Oh, if they could have just one peek! The Tramp was tall enough to see over the side of the crib. As for herself, just to be near the baby would be heaven enough. Stepping softly, they started up the stairs.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

NOW THEY were not the only ones abroad at that late hour. In their room Darling and Jim Dear slept soundly. In hers Aunt Sarah snored. In the cellar Si and Am had grown tired of hunting mice; they had gone to sleep, too. The one thing wakeful in all the silent house, except for the Tramp and Lady, lurked in the baby's room. And it was not the baby.

The Rat for a long time had watched that house. He lived in a drain at the end of the yard. But he was so cautious, so clever, and so crafty that no one had ever seen him—not even Si and Am, though they had often sniffed around that drain. Far back in its black depths the Rat's beady eyes had spotted them and he had crouched and grinned through his long, sharp teeth.

Tonight the Rat was hungry, curious, and bold. When the Tramp and Lady were sitting on their hilltop gazing at the moon, he had ventured out and in its pale light had crept across the yard. As they were starting for Lady's home, he was on the back steps. He, too, had found the open door. He, too, had entered the kitchen, shied away from the cellar and the cats and slithered up the stairs, sheathing his long, sharp claws. The night-light attracted him. He was in the room, his eyes glittering, at the moment Lady led the Tramp to the foot of the stairs.

They did not make a sound going up. They did not make a sound crossing the upstairs hall. At the door of the baby's room Lady waited. She could see the edge of the crib. Her heart told her the baby was there. With one paw she silently waved the Tramp to go in first.

Had the Rat been less absorbed, he must have sensed the presence of something behind him. But as the cobra fascinates the bird, so the bird enchants the cobra. The Rat

had climbed a post and gained the top of the crib. There, from its foot, he feasted his gaze on what lay but a few feet away across the counterpane. The baby was pink and white and chubby. Red began to glow in the Rat's eyes. His long tail lashed slowly back and forth. His claws bunched for the attack.

He never launched it. With a roar more like a lion's than a dog's, the Tramp was on him.

Lady had seen Tramp's face, its horror and sudden fury. Then she had seen the Rat. Her blood froze. As Tramp leaped her heart leaped with him. She had an instant's thrill of admiration at the grace and skill of that jump—he caught the Rat by the throat without so much as grazing the crib—when the light went out with a crash.

The battle of the Tramp and the Rat will never fully be told, for it was none of your million-dollar boxing matches followed blow by blow. It was a battle in the dark; it was gnash and scratch and shake and struggle; it was life or death. Yet it could have but one outcome—the dog was the better fighter.

He knew when it was all over. The Rat went limp between his teeth. Tramp dropped the carrion with a sniff of disgust. He backed away and fell to his all-fours, licking his wounds. He was very tired—so tired that he could only look up and blink when lights blazed and everyone at once seemed to pile in upon him.

Their frightened faces and shouting voices were like a nightmare. And there were cats. Tramp bared his teeth.

“It's a strange dog!” someone screamed.

A rough hand grabbed him by the back of the neck.

Tramp submitted. They were making a mistake. It was not he who had attacked the baby. But they would discover how wrong they were in a minute, they would find the Rat's body and all would be well. He tried to wag in the man's grip. He tried to drag the man to the Rat. Then he could not believe his own eyes.

The Rat was gone!

CHAPTER TWELVE

TOWARD DAWN the decision was made: the Tramp must die.

Darling pleaded for his life. After all, she begged, the baby was not hurt, only frightened. If the strange dog had followed Lady into the house, it was her fault for leaving the door open. He seemed like a good dog, even if he was a mutt without owner's tag or license. Let the dog out and drive him away, she urged. Perhaps he, too, had a home and family somewhere.

Jim Dear was uncertain but grim. If it was just a question of the dog following Lady into the house, he said, it would be different. But there had been a fight; of that he was sure. The smashed condition of the room proved it. And there was blood on the floor. He didn't doubt that Lady had tried to defend the baby against the strange dog. He would keep the dog locked up until he had time to think it over.

Aunt Sarah tipped the scales. "If you don't report that beast to the authorities," she declared, "I will! And I shall insist that he be put out. He's a menace to human life. Will you ever dare to leave the baby outdoors again with a savage brute like that at large? If you do, you should be locked up yourselves!"

She was too much for them; Jim Dear went to the telephone and called the pound.

"As for that precious Lady of yours," sniffed Aunt Sarah, "it's my opinion she tempted the beast to trail her. She was running after strange dogs the last time I saw her. Thank heaven I'm leaving a house where such goings-on are allowed!"

“Amen to that!” said Jim Dear. But he told the pound-master to come and get the Tramp. And the pound-master said the Tramp would be executed by noon unless an owner claimed him.

The news spread fast.

The pigeons heard it where they nested under the eaves. They flew to other houses and yards and to far-off alleys. The dogs that had chased Lady heard it and shivered, thinking, “It might have been one of us.” Jock McGinnis heard it and Trusty. They sought each other out and consulted in low growls. Lady heard it. She had been chained in her kennel in the yard; she put her head on her paws and wept. And in the cellar Si and Am heard it and turned to each other with scared eyes.

A dog was sentenced to die. They all knew what it meant. On the outskirts of the city stood that gray and forbidding building no animal could pass without a shudder. Sometimes a bird ventured too close and fluttered to the ground with gasping breath. If a larger animal went into that building, he might never come out alive. A dog was to die there today and the animal world waited in sick suspense, for there was no way to stop man when he set out to kill.

Only one dog in the city saw the sun rise that morning with any cheer in his heart. He was the Tramp. Shut up in the kitchen, he had fallen asleep, fagged out. But when he woke, the day was a new day. He had been hurt and puzzled the night before; he still did not understand. But the sun was smiling through the window, the mistake they had made would surely be discovered now, they would come soon and let him go and perhaps he and Lady could roam again through the streets and over the hills. Meantime it was not unpleasant to lie on the rug where she had lain, to drink from her dish and to imagine how, in this corner and in that, she must often have sat with her brown eyes shining and her ears perked.

In the yard, as the sun mounted higher, Lady dragged herself to the kennel door. She fixed her wistful, tearful gaze on the house. The pigeons had come and gone, leaving their doleful message. She hoped against hope that somehow Tramp’s innocence would be proved, that at least she could see him and wag goodbye before they took him away.

To her, in her grief, came Trusty and soon afterward Jock, neither dog sure of all that had happened but both conscious of a tragedy deeper than any words of theirs could heal. They sat beside her silently and she told them a little.

“He was so brave, boys,” she ended. “He went for that Rat like a streak of lightning and he never let go till he won. And to think,” she sobbed, “that it was all my fault!”

“You mustn’t say that,” consoled Jock. “You were only trying to change his wandering ways.”

“But I’m amazed,” declared Trusty, “that your family didn’t guess the truth. You say they didn’t find the Rat?”

“I looked everywhere for it myself,” sobbed Lady. “I can’t imagine what became of it!”

And she cried so hard that all her body quivered.

Jock and Trusty bowed their heads, suffering with her. At last Trusty cleared his throat. “You think a lot of this fellow, don’t you?” he rumbled.

“Oh, boys”—as she lifted her head, they saw the light in her wet eyes—“the Tramp is just gorgeous!” Just then, far down the street, sounded a faint but harsh clang. A dog passed the front of the house, running like the wind. A cat’s head bobbed up from a bush and down again. There was a whirr of wings overhead. The twitter of the pigeons reached them—“They’re coming! They’re coming!”

Lady struggled to her feet. The other dogs were up. “It’s the wagon,” croaked Jock McGinnis.

They saw it pull up and stop, a huge cage drawn by two huge horses. A man got out, burlier than a bear, and in his hand he swung a leash like a trunk-strap and a muzzle as heavy as a flatiron. He strode to the house and rang the bell. The watchers trembled, but they stood their ground.

The front door opened and closed. Soon the kitchen door swung back. The burly man tramped out and with him was the Tramp. The leash was tight on the neck that never wore a collar. The muzzle was a weight around his head. Yet he had not cried out, he had not whimpered. He only looked bewildered.

“Get on with you,” ordered the man.

The Tramp obeyed. Suddenly he saw the watching dogs. His tail waved, his red tongue popped out. He barked loudly.

“Don’t fret, little pigeon!” he barked. “They never stumped me yet!”

Then he was gone, marching ahead of the man, and the wagon, too, was gone in a whirl of wheels and hooves.

Lady gave one convulsive leap. “Tramp!” she cried and the chain that bound her snapped. She was through the gate and up the street, Trusty and Jock McGinnis at her heels. But at the corner they found her running in circles.

“Which way did they go?” she called. “Oh, which way did they go?”

Trusty lifted his great head into the wind of the morning. The wrinkles were like seams across his forehead. His eyes began to burn. Jock McGinnis was watching him almost in awe.

“I don’t know what good we can do if we catch them,” Trusty said. “But we’re going to try. Old Reliable, help your son!”

He put his nose to the ground. He circled once, his nose twitched, his mouth opened in a long bay. He was off, Lady and Jock McGinnis after him.

A hush fell on the neighborhood; not even a pigeon could be seen. At last the cellar window of the house moved and the scared eyes of a cat appeared, fixed on the little kicks of dust that were settling in the sunshine.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

JIM DEAR and Darling had stayed upstairs when they took the Tramp away. Darling could not bear to see it, she said, and Jim had stayed with her, his arm around her as she cried softly. They were in the baby's room, which Darling hadn't had the time or the heart to straighten up.

"Suppose," she reproached Jim, "they were taking him away?"

"But it's his safety we are thinking of, dear," said Jim and he held her hand very tight. But he let Aunt Sarah answer the pound-master's ring.

Now Aunt Sarah was finishing her packing. Jim Dear and Darling did not hear the cats come in.

Si and Am had spent some very uneasy hours. Shut up in the cellar, Am had paced back and forth while Si glared at him and spat mean words.

"You should never have touched it," accused Si.

"But I wanted to see what it was," Am defended himself.

"Why did you hide it?" demanded Si.

"It was just a joke," pleaded Am. "I thought it belonged to Lady."

"Some joke!" sniffed Si.

“You’ve played jokes yourself,” retorted Am. “How was I to know this one would turn out the way it did?”

“Well, it’s taught me a lesson,” said Si. “I’ll never play a joke on anybody again. Not that I like dogs; that strange dog looked dangerous. But Lady likes him and I—I’m sorry for Lady!” And suddenly Si’s mouth turned down at the corners and he began to cry.

* * *

(There is a page missing here. From context we can surmise that Si and Am returned the Rat to the baby’s room where it was found by Jim Dear and Darling, who quickly realize the truth of what happened. Even Aunt Sarah does! Darling remains behind while Jim Dear and Aunt Sarah set off in pursuit of the pound-master in the electric; Si and Am coming along for the ride.)

* * *

At the last minute Si and Am had jumped into the rear seat.

“I wouldn’t miss this for all the cream in Jersey!” hissed Si to Am.

“You bet your sweet lives!” Am hissed back.

“Go it, Aunt Sarah!” yelled Jim.

Back at the white and green house, Darling knelt beside the baby’s cradle.

“Dear God,” she prayed, “save the dog that saved us!”

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

TRUSTY WAS panting hard. The sweat ran in little rivers off his tongue. But his great feet kept pounding.

A few jumps behind him, Jock McGinnis encouraged Lady.

“He’ll do it,” he kept repeating. “I didn’t think he had the nose for it, but he’ll do it!”

“Oh, Jock, he must!” sobbed Lady.

Both the smaller dogs were as blown as Trusty, yet neither would give up. Once Trusty lost the trail and this was a breather for them. But, watching him circle, they were too anxious really to rest.

“What can we do when we get there?” asked Jock. “It’s almost noon. He dies at noon.”

“Jock, I don’t know,” Lady answered. “But somehow we can do something if we’re only in time!”

Trusty circled past them.

“Sense of smell not what it used to be,” he apologized. They tried feebly to wag their confidence.

A pigeon flew ahead. “This way! This way!” he signaled.

Trusty followed. His head went down, his head went up, his long bay electrified them. Away they dashed again. Far behind, Aunt Sarah stopped the electric. She, too, was lost. Si and Am watched anxiously while Jim asked directions. Far ahead the stone building loomed. Men in gas masks waited. The clock in its tower said five minutes of twelve.

And somewhere in between the dog-wagon rolled.

The driver was in no hurry. He was the same man who had put the muzzle and the leash on the Tramp. That dog, he was thinking, is a very well-behaved dog; he hasn't let out a yip since I fastened him; it's a kind of shame to execute a dog like that; but of course I've got to do my duty.

The Tramp was silent because he was trying to figure a way out of his difficulties, For once it seemed as though men were smarter than he. A whistle would do him no good now. Neither would a beaver. Even if a beaver was there to gnaw off the muzzle, he couldn't escape from the wagon. It had bars on the back. Tramp sat looking through them disconsolately at the street sliding under the wagon- wheels. Maybe she was right, he was thinking, if I'd stuck to one home and one master, he would help me now.

Suddenly he let out a tremendous yelp.

"Here, here, poochy! Cut that out!" the driver called over his shoulder. "That won't do you any good, you know."

But the Tramp kept right on barking. He jumped at the bars and barked and barked. For he had seen, blocks behind, three dogs running and one of them, as they began to gain, he recognized as Lady.

"Come on, little pigeon! Come on!" he barked. Then he saw that the leading dog was the bloodhound he had met one day. "Come on, feller!" he barked. "Come on, big boy!"

The driver was annoyed. He didn't know why his prisoner had gotten so excited all at once. Still, most dogs barked in the wagon; he was used to it. And it wouldn't be long now; they were nearing the end of the road. He whipped up his team.

Trusty ran as he never had before. His tongue roiled, his eyes were caked with dust. But he lengthened his stride and every bound brought him closer. Now he was but a few leaps behind the wagon; now he could look up and see Tramp frantic at the bars. "Come on, Champ," he heard. Trusty swerved. He was even with the spinning wheels. He was past them.

Just ahead of him and to his right were the pounding legs of horses. They looked like giant clubs to the tired dog. What would Old Reliable have done? Instinctively Trusty knew. With his last crumb of strength, he sprang.

The off-horse reared. The other horse stumbled. The driver shouted, yanking his reins. He was too late. Horses and wagon went down in a splintering crash. A block away the men in gas masks looked up in wonder at the sound.

A crowd quickly collected. A policeman arrived. He found the driver, who was bruised but not badly hurt.

"What's this?" demanded the policeman "What happened?"

The driver shook his head. "I don't know. Something must have frightened them. They shied on me so sudden I couldn't hold them."

"Well, they seem to be all right," said the policeman. "A little battered, but all right. So's the dog in the cage. Taking him to the pound?"

"Taking him to be put out," said the driver, "unless his owner claims him. If it hadn't been for the accident, he'd be dead by now."

Everybody looked at the Tramp. The cage had turned over on its side, shaking him considerably. But he had come up smiling and he had all but lost the muzzle. The crash had knocked it askew. It dangled from his neck where he stood at the bars, kissing noses with Lady and Jock McGinnis.

"Too bad," said the policeman. "Looks like a nice friendly mutt."

Just then an electric drove up and stopped with a squeal of brakes. Jim jumped out and pushed his way through the crowd.

“Why, Lady!” he cried. “What are you doing here?”

She ran to him and licked his hand, wishing one wish with all her heart. If, now, he would only understand!

“Your dog?” asked the policeman.

“Yes,” said Jim.

Another voice boomed, for Aunt Sarah had pushed past Jim. “And so’s the dog in the cage,” said the voice of authority. “Release him at once!”

They did; Aunt Sarah’s orders were usually obeyed. Jim took the muzzle off the Tramp. “You won’t need that where you’re going, feller,” he said.

He called to Lady and Jock McGinnis. “Come on,” he said, “the lot of you! And no fighting with the cats!”

But the two dogs were hanging back, waiting for something.

They were lifting the wagon now and preparing to back the horses into the shafts. As the wheels were righted someone called out.

“Look what’s here! It’s another dog.” The crowd drew closer.

“That must be why your horses shied,” the policeman said to the driver.

Lady’s master stooped. “I know him, too,” he said. “He was the dog next door—poor fellow!”

For Trusty would run no more.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

THEY BURIED Trusty under an apple tree in his own yard after services which Lady and Jock and the Tramp attended along with the humans Trusty loved the best. There was a song and a prayer and above his grave they put a stone:

HERE LIES TRUSTY

SON OF FAITHFUL BESS AND OLD RELIABLE

HE DIED A HERO

The other dogs would never forget him. Grass grew green on his grave and sunshine warmed it and on summer days, when the three sat in Lady's yard, they would look across to the spot where Trusty slept and speak of him, wishing he were with them.

"But he is with his ancestors whom he admired so much," Lady would say, thinking of Trusty stalking through the Happy Hunting Grounds with his father, Old Reliable.

"And not a dog there with a better nose, I'll bet," Jock would add.

The Tramp said little, for he had no words to express his gratitude to the dog who had given his own life to save him.

The Tramp had changed. Perhaps his narrow escape from the vagrant's fate had done it. Perhaps Darling's lavish kindness when they brought him home with Lady had touched his heart. But actually the change seemed to date from a little talk with Jim a few days later.

There was nobody else about at the moment, not even Lady. They sat in the kitchen, which seemed to have become the Tramp's headquarters. He was spraddle-legged at Jim's feet, looking up at him with a comical-quizzical air as though he sought to determine what manner of man was this.

"Well, old fellow," said Jim, "here we are and I don't even know your name. Around town I hear that some folks call you Butch and some call you Hector but you don't seem to belong to any of them really and they don't belong to you. Well, once I had a dog not so different from you. I was just a boy, then, and this dog—well, I guess he was just a mutt. But we had a lot of fun. We went roamin' and rovin' and do you know what I called him? I called him Tramp. I've always missed that dog, even years later. So now I'm going to call you Tramp. Okay?"

The Tramp grinned and he thumped his tail three times. This was a remarkable man; he could look right inside a feller.

"Of course," said Jim, "it's all up to you. If you want to fly the coop, there's nothing I can do to stop you. But I've been wondering." He leaned forward and put his elbows on his knees and his face in his hands, looking hard at Tramp. "Strikes me you've been a pretty gay dog in your time. Probably lived more than a dogs' life, as they say. Now this is something strictly between me and you and the hitching post: I was as a gay dog myself once. I want to tell you something, Tramp, it doesn't pay. No, sir, in the long run there's nothing left but loneliness or a lot of cantankerous old ex-gay dogs like yourself. You should see 'em at my club!"

The Tramp thumped his tail once and Jim had the odd feeling that this was a remarkable dog; he seemed to understand every word a feller said.

"No," said Jim, "the only thing for a dog or a man is to settle down and raise a family. I've started on one and if you and Lady—"

He broke off, regarding the Tramp, who suddenly looked up and laughed. "You little of a gun!" said Jim.

He resumed. "All of this is leading up to something." His right hand went into his coat pocket. "If you're going to stick around here, you've got to belong to this family and

we've got to belong to you." His hand came out of his pocket, holding something wrapped in tissue. "You have no collar and by the look of your neck, you never had one. Will you go for it, Tramp? It means you're ours for keeps, tag and all."

The Tramp got up and walked over and sniffed the leather. Then he bent his head and licked Jim's hand a single swipe and Jim fastened the collar, in just the right hole for comfort, on the neck that had never worn man's collar before. The Tramp shook himself once, trotted to the door, looked at Jim and scratched with one paw.

Jim got up to let him out. "Want to show it to Lady? Atta boy!"

Lady was delighted with the new collar. She was the first to notice the other changes that began gradually in the Tramp. Most of them delighted her, too, although there were unaccountable moments when she wished the Tramp had stayed as he was in every respect.

No longer did Tramp wander. He seemed content to trot beside Lady and Darling when Darling took the baby for a roll in the perambulator. As he said, it was his job now to guard the baby, too. And he liked loafing in the yard with Lady, only seldom talking about the old days; but he was always glad to romp with her.

"Don't you miss your six families?" she asked him once.

"No," said the Tramp.

"But wouldn't you like to revisit the zoo and look up that beaver?"

"I didn't like him," said Tramp.

Lady was just a little put out. "Do you mean to say we aren't ever going a-roaming again?"

The Tramp eyed her as if he had something else on his mind. "Perhaps," he said. "There'll be time enough for that later."

It was the next day, when Jock McGinnis came over, that it happened. Jock made some remark addressed to "Miss Lady."

Tramp eyed him. “Mrs. Tramp, if you please,” he said.

Jock McGinnis’s tail stopped wagging.

“Well,” he said. “Well!—Congratulations!” and he went home looking rather forlorn.

Lady was too pleased to be sorry for him.

“Darling,” she said, gazing fondly at the Tramp, “Did I ever tell you that you were gorgeous?”

“You go dig a bone,” said Tramp.

“But I mean it. I hope our children are just like you.”

“Mutts?”

“I love mutts,” said Lady. “Tramp,” she wheedled, “whistle for me!”

He shook his head. “Do you think that stuff’s becoming in a father?” he demanded with as much dignity as Trusty.

Sure enough, the puppies arrived just before Christmas. There were five. Two had Lady’s ears and two had Tramp’s tail and one had ears and a tail like no dog’s you ever saw.

“He’s a real mutt,” said Jim.

“But he’ll probably be the smartest of all,” Darling said. “We’ll call him Junior.”

On Christmas morning—the baby’s first Christmas as well as the puppies’ and the first Christmas together for Lady and the Tramp—there was a tree with all sorts of presents for the baby. And under the tree were presents for all the dogs. Such a scrambling and barking! In the middle of it, as the Tramp was trying to keep order, he

stopped with a fatherly growl. It seemed to him that somebody had whistled. But it wasn't Jim's whistle and it wasn't his own.

Now whose do you suppose it was?

The whistle, faint but merry, came again. They all looked.

It was Junior!