

OCTOBER 14, 1968WILLIAM G. WERNER

Once upon a time there was a man who, for purposes of anonymity and legal defense, will be called George Gindo. The stories he told in the following accounts are true - approximately. As Huck Finn said, "There was things which he stretched, hut mainly he told the truth."

This George Gindo was a suburbanite business man, who in the course of time married and had two children, a girl and a boy, and three grandchildren, one a grown-up and married granddaughter and two little boys whom he called his "young Chicago gangsters." All of these, old and young, loved dogs. They all had accepted the philosophy that a dog, whether mongrel or blue-blooded and registered by the A.K.C. (American Kennel Club to you) was to be loved always (even if he misbehaved, as dogs, particularly puppies, do) he was to be loved. He (or she if of the female sex) was considered always as part of the family.

At this point it must be interjected that Mrs. Gindo issued strict orders that in any accounts of her family pets the vulgar, obscene word "bitch" must never be used; soyou all will understand that clumsy subterfuges have to be employed, once in a while, when mama dags, or daughter dogs, or granddaughter dogs thus are referred to here for reasons of delicacy.

George Gindo had spent his boyhood in a home that was not considered a home if there were no dog in it. His first memories of canines revolved around a large, gregarious, good-natured hund named "Buzz" that was probably descended from 3/4 boxer and 1/4 pug dog ancestry. His face and tail were pug, but the chassis and color were yellow-brown boxer. In the course of time this m^ch-beloved pet was stricken with what probably was a goiter and there developed considerable worry in the family as to what was to be done to alleviate Buzz's increasing suffering. When George (then about 7 years old) returned from school one day, his mother told him that his beloved pet had gone to doggie-heaven. Young George caught the idea

at once. Tears starting, he queried, "Did he die?" "No, Papa had him put out of pain by Joe, the policeman. Buzz didn't want to leave us, so Joe had to shoot him, five times, in the back yard." This, by the way, was some years before police target ranges and modern palaces for pets called veterinary hospitals had been invented; but later, when George was in high school, he learned that some wise philosopher had said, "There is more than one way to kill a dog;" and the pain of that earlier day, when dear Buzz had five bullets in him, returned to bother him in his sleep that night.

Skipping ahead a few years, during which other dogs came to assuage the pain of the missing Buzz, we come to the time when George set up his own home, with a wife, who, although she had grown up in a deprived home without pets, also loved dogs. In due course, two youngsters – a girl and a boy – arrived. After a fireside council meeting, the young parents agreed that a dog must be part of this growing family. Gindo, who had no sneery notions about pure-bred dogs, in his heart would probably have agreed with George B. Shaw, when he said, "I like a bit of mongrel myself, whether it's man or dog." So he stopped in at a certain downtown store, with windows full of tiny, sawdusty animals of questionable ancestry that had tempted him for many months. He brought home a little bundle of fuzz, and was of course greeted with the ecstatic squeals of his little son and daughter.

"What'll we call him, daddy?" was the obvious first question. "Is he a boy or a girl?" wisely inquired little Miss Gindo. "He's a boy," replied the father, without explaining to those innocent young ears some of the problems involved with girl-dogs. After much pulling and pushing to get at the new acquisition, mother settled the matter by deciding that the puppy should be placed on a piece of old rug in a box in the kitchen. Following sundry usual happenings, the new arrival espied a box of Chipso Soap Flakes, which he commenced to nuzzle inquisitively. "There's your name!" shouted George and "Chipso" was named – although he soon was more affectionately and less

commercially called "Chippy!"

As he grew and developed small teeth, and waxed amazingly in size, as becomes a half-breed shepherd dog, Chippy showed signs of believing the old saying (sneered at by breeders with fancy kennels) that "a bargain dog never bites". After the milkman and the mailman, not to speak of the gas-meter man and the parcel-delivery man, began to complain about nipped ankles and snagged pants, Mama George (in the quiet of the late evening council) declared firmly that, for fear her darlings would be chewed up next, Chippy should have to leave the family for good. Fortuitously, the lawn-cutting man agreed to take Chippy home to his farm with him; the children being pacified with the promise that all would pay their pet visits occasionally, "so he won't get homesick." Unfortunately, as he grew to adulthood, Chippy developed from a nipper to a real biter, who when last visited was seen chained to a 20-foot wire, back of the barn. He lunged savagely at anyone who came near, so the little Gindos called him an ungrateful, mean thing and never asked to see him again.

In view of this unsatisfactory experience with the cut-rate product of that pet store, George Gindo decided to consult an expert - a friend who was a dog-fancier. The result was a lovely little girl wire terrier, as a Christmas gift to the family. Unluckily, little Misty Meg died 60 days later of one of a group of those mysterious ailments then known (but never much understood) as "distemper". Because of this tragedy, the dog-fancier agreed to give the Gindos another trial with a pretty, strong, girl-dog named "Becky". She had another name, a mile long in the dog registry, but Becky she was and a very lovable part of the family she promptly became. Becky, however, was a somewhat older dog, who was beginning to cast eyes elsewhere, and one sunny day she dashed across the suburban street in pursuit of company and was frightfully maimed by a bus. The accident happened right in front of a neighboring physician's house, so professional means of putting her to sleep were promptly administered by the

crusty old medico, who did nothing to assuage the children's hurt by declaring, "People who have such a fine dog shouldn't let it roam the streets like that!"

Undaunted, the Gindos decided that they should try again, but this time the dog-fancier recommended a girl-dog, with the suggestion that in a few months it be spayed, on the score that this treatment would eliminate the desire to explore that had brought Becky to her untimely end. A nice, friendly, black-and-tan Welsh terrier it was, and from her parents' kennel names a name "Ruffie" was coined. She was an adored and adoring part of the family for about ten years. Soon, however, it was quite plain that Mrs. Gindo was her idol. Whenever that lady left home for the grocery, the hairdresser or a bridge party, she knew, sure as shooting, that when she returned, Ruffie would recognize the sound of her car a block away and would dash to the top of the front lawn, to greet her with the joyful bark. Even a near, tragic collision with the automobile, when her exuberance was particularly unrestrained, failed to break her of the habit of being the official noisy greeter at the return of the mistress of the house.

By the way, speaking of barking dogs in the Gindo family: their dogs, it was fully understood, used barking as a medium of conversation, but they unconsciously learned, from puppyhood, at whom to bark, when to bark and in what tone of voice. In this family they learned soon to know that a milkman or a postman should be greeted with never more than a single, friendly bark - not an angry growl, a snarl, or a racket. It never could be said of the canine member of the Gindo family what Pudd'nhead Wilson said of a barking dog that was making a nuisance of itself: "I wish I owned half of that dog. Why? Because I'd kill my half!"

When a dog that, like Ruffie, is loved in a home realizes that she really and truly is part of the family she shows it pretty quickly. She takes over; she dominates the place with a proprietary air. When company comes she steps

forward and really enjoys helping the hostess greet the guests. When the head of the household returns from work, he is likely to find his doggie sublimely self-confident, enthroned in his favorite armchair in the library; and no matter how often the pet is chided, when mother comes home in the middle of a wintry afternoon, there on that fine new living-room couch (a forbidden sleeping spot) is the incriminating indentation - still warm - plumb in the middle of that sacred piece of furniture!

Although she was a rather small dog, Ruffie was a spunky little girl. Once in a while she tried to carry her courage beyond the breaking point; for instance when a boy dog three times her size attempted insolent advances (although such an experienced man of the world should have known better, considering Ruffie's medical history) . Or when one fine Sunday afternoon in late spring, the Gindos were taking a stroll with her past a fenced-in pasture in which a cow was placidly enjoying her Sunday dinner. Ruffie discovered a sort of rabbit-hole under that fence which she quickly enlarged and crawled through. Charging on the cow, she probably felt offended at not being noticed, so she commenced to circle threateningly around the strange animal. Finally Elsie, bored to tears at such impudent, inconsequential carryings-on, turned her head and let out a mournful, loud "Moo!" That was far too much for Ruffie; she fled, helping, so terrified that Gindo had to show her where the eicape-exit rabbit-hole was.

Ruffie in time suffered from some mysterious "female ailment" and had to be cyanided by the vet. Through their tears the family unanimously agreed on another Welsh terrier, also female ; but in view of the advancing age of the youngsters it was decided to "risk" an unspayed girl-dog (perhaps the children were hoping some day to have a litter of baby Welsh terriers from her). After a popular storybook of the day, she was named "Bambi". The new arrival was also a beloved part of the family for many years, but the task of guarding her against amorous boy-dogs at certain crucial periods was an onerous one fraught with

many close escapes. To this day, the broad colonial front door shows enamel-covered grooves caused by an overambitious German shepherd who, denied the desire to call on his lovely playmate Bambi inside, lost his temper. The family would have been grateful for the help of one of those modern pills, in such a crisis!

Dogs of the tribe Gindo, as part of the family, were always permitted-the run of the house. Throughout her childhood, Gindo's little daughter was crazy about dogs. (Grown up, today, she still is). She and her younger brother thought nothing of hugging and kissing - yes, kissing - their dogs; and at nighttime, particularly in colder weather, the current pet would sneak up to the bedroom floor and, despite warnings of disapproval of the parents, would snuggle at the foot of the bed of one or the other of the children, on top of the blankets. (Mother did draw the line at a dog between the sheets). Come early morning, when the pet knew that mama or papa would be astir, with a thump the animal would land on the floor, innocently looking up, expecting to be ordered downstairs and out of the house. Neither of these youngsters cared a straw for the old saying, "He that sleeps with a dog must rise with fleas." In fact, because bathing a dog was considered great fun, like washing a dolly, the Gindo dogs were agreeably, surprisingly free from fleas.

One day, however, a real crisis developed in little Miss Gindo's apartment, for she was discovered, to the horror of both she and her mother, to have that terrible affliction - spoken on only in whispers - known commonly as WORMS! The grave, elderly pediatrician, summoned in haste, confirmed the awful, disgraceful truth. He entered her bedroom, however, at the most unlucky time; for there on the blankets, at the foot of the bed, snoring in placid comfort, was beloved Bambi! Now this, of course, violated all those rules of health and sanitation that the nice old medico could recite. But, worst of all, he did not like dogs, with a capital "D"! Boy dogs or girl dogs alike. (Papa and mama once had a sneaking notion that he had been bitten by a dog in his boyhood.) But, anyway,

he thundered, "GET AWAY, DOG!" Such a mean tone of voice had never, never, never been heard in little Miss Gindo's bedroom; and poor little Bambi shot from that bed as though she had been hit in the seat with a handful of BB pellets. From that day she ran under the bushes when she saw that pediatrician's car coming up the street. In his absence, however, the good doctor's blast did not put a stop to Bambi's bedroom visits, or the hugging and kissing by the little mistress.

Years sped by, as is the habit of years, and now the Gindos had a little granddaughter, while, of course as part of that family there was a dog - a handsome girl schnauzer. After a short time, she wandered down the wrong street on the wrong day; consequently, in due course this handsome schnauzer presented that family with a litter of by-blows, the members of which, in varying degrees, looked like one-half mother and one-half (probably) cocker spaniel. One of the pups was so irresistably cute that the young folks insisted that it should be given to grandma and grandpa Gindo, who were out of dogs at that time. Because the puppy was so very tiny, their little granddaughter declared that it should be called (after a certain breakfast cereal) "Bite-size" - a name that was quickly shortened to "Bightsy". This nickname, by the way, was the source of occasional confusion, when a strange child would ask, "What's its name?" When told "Bightsy" the natural query was, fearfully, "Will it bite?"

As might be expected, considering her ancestry, Bightsy was not at all a thing of beauty. She had, it is true, the most expressive large brown eyes and ever-alert, pointed ears, but down below she had the short legs and general underpinning of her (presumably) cocker spaniel daddy. Grandma Gindo accepted the present of the puppy with one condition: at the proper time she must be spayed. This rite duly accomplished, in time the result, which often follows, was increasingly apparent; for short-legged Bightsy, with her sharp ears, grew as fat as an over-fed boxer, to such an extent that one day a very good friend, surveying her for the first time, exclaimed, "What an

absolutely ugly, funny-looking dog that is!" Nevertheless, to all, puzzled, who inquired as to the breed, the Gindoes, old and young, sniffily retorted, "She's a schnauzer, of course!"

Like many humans who are not favored by nature with good looks, Bightsy made up for her appearance by being in her way about the sweetest part of the family through three generations. Even the veterinarian, to whom she had to be taken periodically for shots or minor ailments, hardened as he was from seeing dogs from morning until night, fell in love with her; and although she knew that his white table was likely to be the scene for painful shots or unpleasant pills, she unflinchingly wagged her stump of a tail in pleasure at greeting him in his office, time after time.

One summer day the Gindos drove with her to an outdoor restaurant a couple of miles from the veterinarian's office. They parked Bightsy in the car while they were eating, but because it was very warm, all of the car windows were opened. Strange children in the neighborhood, seeing her with her friendly grin and sparkling big eyes, opened the door and invited her to play with them. A week or so later it was time for the usual visit to the vet, who greeted his favorite patient with "Bightsy, didn't I see you over on the avenue the other day, running around?" Grandpa Gindo explained what had happened, whereupon the compliment of her lifetime came to the waggle-tailed doggie: "I thought so! There ain't no dog in this county like Bightsy!"

Having a certain strain of animal-chasing in her blood, she used to try to track down rabbits that occasionally fed on the family flowers. There were, however, two faults in her technique: in the first place, because of her physical makeup and topography, she was getting increasingly fat and slow in her pick-up, while the rabbits were not. In the second place, she won distinct disfavor one night, when she was let out, by somehow falling over a rabbit that must have fallen asleep. This poor, defenseless animal she proceeded to worry into a bloody mass, which she

proudly deposited on the front doorstep for the inspection of her mistress, who was entertaining that evening. She never quite understood why she was not praised for that feat of tracking down and killing such a fleet enemy of the flower garden.

Despite the affection lavished on her by the rest of the family, Bightsy was undoubtedly "grandpa's dog", and her greeting of him, especially on his return from a business trip, was riotous with joyful barks. One of her favorite stunts was exhibited whenever the family automobile was loaded for a picnic or other outing. All were eager to be started, but of course had to wait while grandpa Gindo checked on the locking-up of the house. Then it was that his wife would call, "Bightsy, tell him to hurry up!" whereupon a clatter of barking could not be squelched until the master of the house descended to the garage and invited her to jump on the back seat.

As we all know, most dogs are inveterate travelers, and Bightsy was no exception. When, as frequently was the case in summertime, her owners drove to a nearby town for a summer-theatre weekend, shopping at a motel, she sensed from overheard conversation and the appearance of overnight bags that she was about to be taken on a trip. She was prancing with delight before the rear car door was opened for her. Of course, care had to be taken to choose a motel that did not show a horrible "no pets" legend opposite its listing; and Bightsy showed her appreciation by being a model of deportment, sleeping quietly on her little rug near her pan of water, in the bathroom. During evening theatre hours she slept contentedly in the automobile, until intermission time, when, after a short run, she trotted back to the car for the rest of her snooze. Although she was a good watchdog at home, she never dreamed of barking in a motel room; and although ordinarily a bit choosy about her food, she accepted the run of the menu on a trip, as did her master and mistress.

One summer weekend, a show was chosen near a motel that had not been visited since the summer before. As the car, with Bightsy proudly

erect in the rear seat, drove up, she commenced to pant wildly in recognition of the neighborhood. As soon as the door was opened she bounded, not for the motel office, but to the door of the very same room that had been occupied a year ago. There she stood, welcoming, wiggling and wagging her tail, so glad to be home. She knew where the family home in that motel was!

On one occasion, though, this inveterately enthusiastic auto tourist proved quite below form. Gindo's grown son had been away for several months to a distant city, in a new job. While there, in keeping with the fad of the time, and his age, he had purchased a new car - a two-seater open Austin Healy, of which he, of course, was inordinately proud. Once home, he insisted, naturally, that his parents should know at once of the rare comforts of driving in this speedy, new, imported job, notable principally for its quite-too-narrow seats. His mother's turn came first. She returned home alighting breathless, her hair dishevelled, and slightly pale of face - hardly an enthusiast for the new car. Papa was then persuaded to squeeze aboard, and, of course, Bightsy was not willing to be left behind, so she jumped up on papa's lap. "Hold your hat!" shouted the proud driver, as, without further warning, the the stick-shifted vehicle jumped forward, tires squealing, at high speed. That was just too much for Bightsy, hardened auto tourist though she was. With a terrified yelp, she leapt to the ground, staggered to the sidewalk, and limped back home with a sprained ankle. She never could be inveigled into another ride in that scorcher!

Then came a time when the Gindoes had to leave home for an extended trip; and in the absence of nearby relatives, the canine part of the family had to be looked after for a couple of weeks. Gindo was perhaps over-solicitous concerning a temporary home for his beloved pet, but really there was no problem. The gentle man and wife in charge of the well-recommended boarding home for pets loved dogs, and their charges responded instinctively. When, after his trip, Gindo drove up to collect Bightsy, she in fact seemed rather loth

to leave her kindly guardian. But after a mile or so, Gindo turned his head and asked, casually, "Glad to be home, Bightsy?" The response was immediate and unmistakably affirmative: High-pitched yelp after yelp were followed by a joyful leap into the driver's lap, as he precariously clung to the wheel, with licks and again and again more intimate yelps. When at last they drove up to the home garage, Bightsy raced all over the yard, dashed into the laundry to greet the laundress; then up to the kitchen to search out the cook; then upstairs, bedroom to bedroom, to be sure she missed no one at home. Most surely, she was glad to be again part of the family!

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As the years passed on, the Gindo daughter and her little girl moved to another far city, and naturally here they commenced again to collect dogs. First they had a large, white girl poodle. Gindo, a good Republican, suggested that the little arrivals be named "Mamie" and "Pat"; but the smallest grandchild had trouble with the word "Mamie" and it became "Amy", while "Pat" seemed too Irish a name for a DeGaulle-style poodle, and the name became "Jo-Jo". A little later, Jo-Jo was presented to the elder Gindos back home. To their surprise, old Bightsy was not at all jealous, but greeted the new part of the family with real affection. Possibly the older dog looked upon the young poodle as her own son. This conclusion seemed strengthened as the days wore on, because to their surprise the Gindos had no problem with housebreaking the puppy: foster-mother Bightsy took complete charge of that problem and escorted her adopted son out of doors whenever it seemed necessary.

Unfortunately, as he grew older, Jo-Jo developed into a roamer and taught Bightsy, previously a home-body, some bad habits. The two pals would decide to explore a far-away woods and bring home a flock of ticks. This affliction bothered Bightsy for some years, until antitick pills were developed. Shortly after the second or third woods - exploration adventure, Jo-Jo was hit

by a car while roaming where he should not have been, and for some weeks his pal was plainly lonely for him.

Bightsy lived a long time - 14 years - to become in her sweet way unquestionably the most popular part of the family. Toward the end, increasing blindness and a weakness in her short legs caused her to stumble up the stairs, so, sadly reconciled, the Gindos, old and young, knew she would not be part of the family much longer. One night, late, she was not around and Mrs. Gindo, alone in the house, began to worry. Presently the phone rang. A friendly Mobil Oil station man called, saying, "There's a strange, funny-looking gray dog here. She plumped herself in front of our cash register, and looks as though she's all in. We went across to the pizza parlor and got her something to eat, when we noticed next to her license a tag with your phone number on it." It seems that Bightsy probably had followed the laundress down to the bus line, and then, half blind, had lost her way in the gathering darkness. Finally, she had staggered into the oil station, a place that no doubt looked vaguely familiar to her as a stopping place, in her past automobiling days. Mrs. Gindo hastily donned a coat, got out the car and soon Bightsy was home again, most weary, but plainly relieved and happy.

The next New Year's morning, when the Gindos went down to her sleeping-basket, she had stolen away to doggie-heaven; for there certainly must be a special heaven for such unselfish givers of joy as she.

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Meanwhile, in the distant city, Amy, Jo-Jo's sister, had been given a girl playmate in the shape of a sleek black girl Labrador retriever, named "Rosebud", who was sent to school to learn to accompany the son-in-law, her master, on duck-hunting trips. She was so well trained, in fact, that her master could not look at a shotgun in the collection on the wall, or even talk about hunting, without exciting Rosebud to a jumping, frenzy.

As a retriever, she was very easily trained to dash out of the front door first thing in the morning, on command, to pick up the newspaper from under the bushes. It must be confessed, however, that in her early training period, she like the "nice doggie, nice doggie" pat on the head so much that she was likely to deposit six newspapers, gathered from the neighbors' homes within a half-mile around. Then she had to be reasoned with.

The two, Amy, the poodle, and Rosebud, the Labrador, were good pals, eating side-by-side from their respective pans, but they had one very bad habit, which grandpa Gindo learned of, to his sorrow, on a visit. Like all Gindo dogs, these two lived a lot indoors, in a home surrounded by a large lawn, back of which, about a half-mile away, was a small, shallow lake. One evening, when Gindo for an hour or so was alone with the two, they made motions asking to be let outside; so he opened the door. They dashed off and were not in evidence for an hour. When his daughter returned, she said, "Where are the dogs? Oh, heavens, you didn't let them out at night, together!" As if in answer to her anxiety, they dashed up, soaking wet, gleefully shaking slimy, sticky lake-scum from their ears, pelts and tails. Cleaning up the slick-coated Labrador was no great problem, but that mud-covered curly white poodle was another story, indeed! Grandpa Gindo was lectured in words of one syllable that if that ever happened again, he > would have to go down in that cellar and wash, dry and comb Amy into household respectability.

After a number of years, Amy passed the child-bearing stage; in fact she became the most fashionable doggie in the neighborhood, with a hysterectomy! So the family was concerned about i-fcs next generation of dogs. A new hunting dog would be needed one of these days. But Rosebud was completely, determinedly uncooperative. She never was interested in sex. She always had seemed strangely aloof when boy dogs - no matter what breed - came around. In fact, as she advanced in years, she was known to flee in terror at the sight of a boy dog, during those days when, according

to all books and rules, she should have been a bit more socially approachable. Time after time, at the kennel, under expert supervision, she rejected the most luring, blandishing advances of carefully chosen, registered mates. Finally, her master, desperate for a litter of pups from such a fine hunter, arranged with the owner of a splendid, registered male Labrador for artificial insemination. Aha! at last it seemed to work! Rosebud showed all signs of finally becoming a mother. In a few weeks certainly she looked as though she was indeed in an "interesting condition".

The time came: her torso seemed properly filled out; and she even was beginning to produce liquid refreshment for her long-awaited brood. But no pups came! The veterinarian, called in for consultation, gravely accused her of what in this modern age is known as a "false pregnancy". "But she is heavy with milk! What'll we do about that?" protested the mistress of the house, with memories of certain friends of hers who had had hospital problems. Said the vet, "Well, I'll tell you. Your neighbor's mama-dog has six new-born Labradors and not nearly enough nourishment for four of them. It looks as though two of her pups will starve to death. Let's bring those two over here and see what happens."

There was Rosebud, sad-eyed - because she knew she was in disfavor with the family - lying in her clean, nicely newspapered delivery-box. Then the vet strode in with two puny little Labradors. Startled, she staggered to her feet, probably completely unbelieving; but she commenced at once to lick the two changelings clean, cuddled them beneath her underside, to feel immediately, for the first time in her life, the wonderful thrill of actual motherhood. The puppies, almost starved, picked up strength and vigor from that minute on, and soon outstripped their puny brothers and sisters at the kennel. A bit later, in fact, as tiny milk-teeth commenced to protrude, mama Rosebud had to do what other mama-dogs have had to do before her: she had to bat off the over-eager sucklers, preparatory to weaning them toward other sustenance provided by the delighted hunter, his

wife, and the two little gangsters. Today, the hunter looks forward impatiently to the time when he will flush out birds with not one, but two Labradors; for Rosebud, by agreement, has indeed earned her wet-nurse fee in the shape of a puppy of her very own. And the hunter declares that there is one person in the world who really believes in the stork - Rosebud!

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The scene must now move on to Colorado, where the granddaughter, now grown, has passed through college and has acquired a new member of the family; a puppy St. Bernard with a fancy registered name, soon shortened to an affectionate "Val". She (Val, that is) grew by leaps and bounds and soon looked like a young lioness. Alas, she proved unfit as a prospective mother (another hysterectomy) but in other ways she was an adorable lummoX-looking part of the family, never troublesome, unless she had to be crowded into the small rear seat of a mini-car, or when some man (beau or otherwise) pretended for the sake of comedy, to speak sharply to her mistress. With a bound and a woof, the sleepy, friendly lioness would jump up most frighteningly. Val never could take kidding, when her loving mistress was involved!

One day, along came a tall, handsome astro-geo-physicist, who was soon on friendly terms with Val, but he liked poodles, so one day, as an engagement-offering, he brought along a small black girl-poodle, which Val graciously accepted and proceeded to housebreak, rather vicariously, it must be admitted. Soon the older dog was quite accustomed to having the little poodle, named "Piper", cuddle up under her huge belly while they peacefully snored together.

Some months later, after the young people's marriage a beautiful kitten, tiny, brown and white striped, with blue eyes, strayed into the physicist's laboratory; and thus still another part of the family was added. The kitty was instantly on good terms with Val and Piper, but was still so young and tiny that it must have been jerked away from

its mama (wherever she was) far too soon. Accustomed as she soon was to climb over the huge bulk of snoozing St. Bernard, one evening she was observed to have nuzzled her way underneath the lioness, looking for a free lunch. Val was quite undisturbed: maybe she was having sweet dreams of having somehow, barren old maid as she was, acquired a family at last.

One weekend, Gindo's daughter flew out to stay a few days in the Colorado home, while its mistress was off on a business trip with the new husband. Saturday night a mountain storm blew up with frightening speed. The temporary mistress of the home, asleep in her bed, was awakened to find an elderly St. Bernard, a middle-aged poodle and a baby kitten, all playing it safe, asleep at the foot of her blankets. They all knew what it meant in that home to be truly "a part of the family"!

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For several years now the elder Gindos have not had a part of the family to replace Bightsy. Even if they had had the heart to think of a replacement, the fact is they were getting into the wanderlusty, traveling age of retired couples, which meant too many kennel trips for a new pet. But to this day every once in a while, over his evening cigar, Gindo drops his newspaper and dozingly meditates over dogs he has known:

- of the gentle little fox-terrier, years ago, in the place next door, where three little girls were forbidden by a stern mother to allow the poor, freezing pet indoors, on snowy nights, even when it whined pleadingly.

- or of the big^beautiful brown boxer named Gretel, who^every evening for several years would come to call after supper, make her friendly greeting and then solemnly trot home, 100 yards away; and of how these social calls were interrupted for four years while

Gretel's master moved to a defense plant in San Diego; and of how, one evening, after supper, there was a ladylike scratch on the screen door, as Gretel returned, to resume her social amenities, but this time to display proudly two handsome small boxers, as part of her family.

- and of the elderly couple, with a large houseful of valuable antiques, who imported a sort of German Hound of the Baskervilles, who understood only German commands, like "Platz!" for "Lie down" and who paced back of the chairs of guests at dinner, ominously warning them that he was guarding the house; and who almost scared the pants off of the short, bald-headed physician, when on his first call he attempted to leave by the front door, with his suspicious-looking black bag in hand.

- and of the childless couple who cuddled a nasty-tempered little black Manchester the size of a large rat - a dog that snapped at the most friendly head-patter; the very dog whom Gindo observed, one day, being teased to snap at his master.

- and of the dark apartment, the home of a middle-aged cripple, a lame, perennially unshaven, arthritic old man, and a hunch-backed, unkempt housekeeper, who owned a little mangy mongrel that was constantly dodging canes and crutches, that snapped at every visitor and that barked nervously whenever someone passed by on the street.

As he meditated, Gindo again decided that dogs such as these, and many, many more he could remember, were lonely, or ill-tempered, or jittery usually for only one reason: they were not loved; they were there only as watch-dogs, or as a contri-

bution to the household scenery, but they never really were accepted as "part of the family". A "nice" dog in a home is invariably a loved dog!

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L'Envo i

Many years ago, my wife and I were subjected to a solid evening of unbelievably wonderful tales about a most unusual fox-terrier that a bachelor friend and his sister had just acquired. All through the evening, it was Trixy did this and Trixy did that.

Shortly after, we listened with polite and even friendly attention to a similar and quite understandably biased recital from an elderly pair, of the beauty, talents and assorted precocities of their first grandchild. Since then, we have learned that these are two sure ways to bore one's friends.

Not being a Thurber, I would have eschewed stories about unusual pets, except that those of my friend Gindo were likely to prove of interest, especially to this most pleasant, tolerant, captive audience. But as to my grand-children, they are rather beyond the age of precocity, so right there is a sensible place to stop!

William G. Werner

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