

5

THE PALE PINK DOG

When Henry woke up one Monday morning in the spring, the first thing he thought was, Five more days till Saturday. On Tuesday the first thing he thought was, Four more days till Saturday. By Wednesday he felt as if Saturday would never come.

It all began when Henry and Ribsy made their weekly trip to the Lucky Dog

Pet Shop to buy horse meat.

"Well, if it isn't Henry and Ribs!" exclaimed Mr. Pennycuff. "Do you have your entry blank for the dog show?"

"What dog show?" asked Henry.

"Didn't you hear? The park department is having a dog show in the park next Saturday. Boys and girls up to sixteen years old may enter their dogs. The Woofies Dog Food Company is giving prizes. Better take an entry blank and fill it out. A fine dog like Ribs is sure to win a prize."

Ribs wagged his tail.

"Well," said Henry doubtfully, "he's an awfully good dog but he isn't any special kind. I mean he isn't a cocker or bulldog or anything."

"That doesn't matter in this show. Now you just take this blank and fill it out. See, here's a place for dogs of mixed breed like Ribs."

"Gee, thanks," said Henry. "I think I will."

He took his entry blank and two pounds of horse meat, and he and Ribsy ran all the way home.

When they came to Klickitat Street, Henry saw Scooter and Robert playing catch. Mary Jane and Beezus and her little sister Ramona were standing under a snow-ball bush, shaking petals down over themselves and pretending it was snowing.

"Hey, look!" yelled Henry, waving the paper at them.

The children gathered around him to look at his entry blank. "I'm going to enter Ribsy," said Henry. "He'll win a prize. Mr. Pennycuff said so."

"Aw, Ribsy's just an old mutt!" scoffed Scooter.

"He is not! He's a smart dog and besides, it says he doesn't have to be any special kind of dog. See, it says dogs of mixed breed."

"Say, look at the list of prizes!" said Robert. "Woofies Dog Food, squeaking

mice, feeding dishes, leashes, movie tickets, beanies, silver loving cups—a whole lot of stuff.”

“If they’re giving silver cups, I’m going to get a blank for Princess Patricia of Tarabrook. She’s a better dog than Ribsy,” said Mary Jane.

“Princess who?” demanded Scooter.

“Princess Patricia of Tarabrook. That’s Patsy’s real name. She has a pedigree and I know she’ll win a silver cup.” Patsy was Mary Jane’s cocker spaniel.

“You know,” said Robert thoughtfully, “I’m going to enter Sassy. She’s getting kind of old, but she’s still pretty lively and she might win a movie ticket or something.”

Beezus and Ramona didn’t have a dog. They had a cat, three white rats, a turtle, and one guppy. Beezus said she knew where she could borrow a puppy named Puddles.

“Well, I guess I might as well enter Rags,” said Scooter. “He’s the smartest dog

around here. He can even sit up and shake hands. And he's all Airedale, too. He isn't any mixed breed like that old mutt you found."

"Ribsy isn't old and he isn't a mutt either! And he can sit up, too. He's a better dog than your old Rags and he'll win a better prize. I'll bet he wins a silver cup!"

"Don't make me laugh!" scoffed Scooter. "If he'd been any good, his folks wouldn't have let him get away."

At last Saturday came. Henry jumped out of bed as soon as he woke up, because he had a lot to do before the dog show at ten o'clock. At breakfast he stopped gulping his cereal to ask, "Mom, can I give Ribsy a bath in the bathtub?"

"*May* I give Ribsy a bath in the bathtub?"

"*May* I give Ribsy a bath in the bathtub?"

"Can't you use the laundry tub in the basement the way you usually do?" his mother asked.

"But, Mom, this is special for the dog show. I want to do an extra good job on him this time. If I get him good and clean, I know he'll win a silver cup."

Mrs. Huggins sighed. "Yes, Henry, you may give Ribsy a bath in the bathtub if you'll promise to clean up the bathroom afterward."

"Thanks, Mom. I'll clean it up. Excuse me, please."

"Henry, I'm afraid you didn't eat much breakfast. I hope Ribsy does win a silver cup, but I wouldn't count on it too much if I were you. After all, he's just a mongrel."

"He isn't a mongrel, Mom. He's a mixed breed. And I know he's a better dog than any dog around here. Come on, Ribsy."

Ribsy followed Henry into the bathroom. When Henry began to run the water into the tub, he looked at Henry and then at the water. Then he tucked his tail between his legs and started to sneak out of

the bathroom.

"Oh no you don't!" Henry grabbed him by the collar. He put his arms around Ribsy's middle and lifted him into the tub. Ribsy was heavier than he had been that day about a year ago when Henry carried him into the bus.

Because this was a special occasion, Henry didn't use flea soap. He used his mother's shampoo. Ribsy whimpered. Henry rubbed the shampoo on him and worked it into a thick lather. He rubbed and scrubbed. The suds foamed thick and white until Ribsy, except for his face, was hidden in mounds of thick lather.

"Now you ought to be good and clean," said Henry. He scooped up handfuls of water from the tub and poured them over the dog. He poured and poured but the lather only grew thicker. If only he hadn't used so much shampoo! He tried mopping Ribsy with his washcloth. That helped but

it still wasn't fast enough. He had an idea. He moved Ribsy around so that he faced the end of the tub, and turned the shower on him. Ribsy tried to jump out but Henry held him. Ribsy raised his head and howled.



"Henry!" his mother called. "What are you doing to that poor dog?"

"Just washing him," answered Henry, and turned off the shower. Ribsny shook himself. Henry used four bath towels on him, but still he wasn't dry.

Oh well, it's a warm day. Maybe the sun will dry him off, thought Henry. He took one of the towels and hastily wiped it over the floor and tub.

"Henry, I have to go downtown this morning. I hope you and Ribsny have good luck at the dog show." Mrs. Huggins had her hat on, ready to leave.

"Thanks, Mom. Say, have you seen the leash? It says on the entry blank all dogs must be on a leash."

"I think you left it in the basement," Mrs. Huggins said as she went out.

Henry ran down to the basement. At the bottom of the stairs he found the leash—at least, it had been a leash once. Now it was

chewed into half a dozen pieces. Henry looked hurriedly around for something to use in its place. If only he had more time! The only thing he could find was his mother's rainy day clothesline. After climbing up on an apple box to untie it, he ran upstairs and fastened one end to Ribsy's collar. It was longer than a leash but it would have to do.

When Henry went out on the front porch, he saw Beezus and Ramona coming down the street. Beezus was carrying a squirming black puppy that kept trying to lick her face. "Puddles, you stop that!" she commanded and set him on the sidewalk. Puddles was wearing a red bow on his collar and Henry was pleased to see that Ribsy wasn't the only dog with a rope for a leash.

"Come on, Henry, we'd better hurry," said Beezus.

Ribsy sniffed at the puppy and decided to ignore him. "Hey, look," exclaimed Henry. "There's Mary Jane and Patsy and Robert and Sassy up there ahead. We'd better run."

When they reached the park, Henry saw that already there were hundreds of boys and girls and dogs there ahead of them. Henry had never seen so many dogs. There were boxers, Great Danes, Pekingese, Airedales, cockers, Saint Bernards, Pomeranians, beagles, setters, pointers, and just plain dogs. Some, like Puddles, were wearing ribbons on their collars, some wore sweaters, and some had on little paper hats.

A loudspeaker on a sound truck blared out. "Take your entry blanks to the registration desk by the tennis courts."

"Come on, Ribsy." Henry found his way through the crowds of children and dogs to the registration desk. There he waited.

in line to weigh Ribsy on a big scale. At first Ribsy didn't want to be weighed, but Henry and a boy scout managed to shove him upon the scale and keep him still long enough to see that he weighed twenty-eight pounds.

"You've grown a lot heavier in a year," said Henry. "Maybe we shouldn't call you Ribsy any more."

After the dog was weighed, a lady gave Henry a yellow cardboard arm band. It had "Woofies Dog Food—Woofies make dogs woof for joy" printed on it. Below that there was a space for the kind of dog, weight class, and the ring in which the dog was to be shown. The lady wrote on it, "Mixed breed—25 to 40 pounds—Ring 3."

Henry led Ribsy toward a sign with "Ring 3" printed on it over by a flower bed. Ribsy stopped to shake himself and then, before Henry knew what was happening,

he dashed over to the flower bed and rolled in the dirt.

"Hey, cut that out!" yelled Henry. "You're getting all dirty."

It was too late. Henry pulled Ribs, streaked with mud, out of the flowers. Henry tried to brush off the dirt. Then he tried to rub it off with his handkerchief. He only smeared it. He was discouraged. Why had he bragged so much about his dog? Now he would never win a prize.

When Henry reached Ring 3, he saw that it was made of rope tied to four stakes driven into the ground. Inside was a table piled with the prizes Henry had read about. Henry looked at the silver cup and thought it would look nice on his dresser. Not that he had a chance with a muddy dog. He noticed some of the boys had brought brushes and were brushing their dogs. He wished he had thought to bring a brush.



The day was warm. Henry sat down on the grass with the rest of the boys and girls to wait for the judging to start. He kept trying to brush some of the dirt off Ribsy. In the ring next to his he saw a snow-white dog. Somebody said it was a Siberian sled



dog. The dog's owner was brushing him and sprinkling white powder on him to make him look whiter.

Henry had an idea! If he only had time, he could run home for a can of talcum powder to sprinkle on the white parts of

Ribsy! That would cover up the dirt. It didn't matter about the yellow and black and brown parts. The dirt didn't show there much.

Just then the voice boomed over the loudspeaker. "We are going to postpone the judging for a little while, because we have a real treat for all you kids. Maud, the trained mule, is going to entertain you."

The children all started toward the truck to see Maud. That is, all except Henry. He was not interested in any trained mule. He wanted Ribsy to win a silver cup. Here was his chance. He could run home and back while Maud the mule performed.

"Come on, Ribsy!" he yelled. "We have to step on it."

Followed by Ribsy, he ran as fast as he could out of the park and up the hill to his house on Klickitat Street. He rushed into his room and snatched his hairbrush. He

tore into the bathroom and grabbed a can of talcum powder. Then he rushed back to the park with Ribsy. The children were still crowded around Maud.

Henry was so hot and sticky that he had to sit down on the grass to catch his breath. Ribsy was panting and his tongue hung out. Henry brushed him with the hairbrush. That helped a little. Then he sprinkled powder on the big white spot on his back.

Henry was horrified. He could scarcely believe what he saw. The talcum powder wasn't white—it was pink! Who ever heard of a dog with pink spots! Quickly he tried to brush the powder off. But Ribsy was still damp and the powder didn't brush off.

Henry decided to make all Ribsy's white parts pink so they would match. Maybe in the bright sunshine the judges wouldn't notice. He sprinkled powder on Ribsy's

white ear and left hind paw. He even sprinkled some on his white tail. Yes, Ribsy did look better with all his light parts matching. Maybe the judges would wear dark glasses.

Maud finished her act and the children came back to the rings with their dogs. "Hey, look at the pink dog!" a boy exclaimed.

"I never heard of a pink dog," a girl said. "What kind is he?"

"He's a mixed breed," said Henry.

He put the talcum powder can in his pocket and decided not to say anything about it. Maybe the others would think he had some rare breed of dog.

A man stood in the center of the ring. Henry noticed that he was not wearing dark glasses. "All right," the man called. "Bring your dogs into the ring and march them around in single file."

"Come on, Ribsy, they're going to start

judging. You'd better behave yourself." Henry led him by the clothesline into the ring.

The children walked their dogs around in a circle. Ribsy's long rope tangled with the other dogs' leashes. Finally the judge directed them to stop. "Now get your dogs ready," he ordered.

Henry didn't know what he meant, so he watched the others. Some of them knelt by their dogs and made them stand still and look ahead.

That must be what the judge meant. Henry knelt beside Ribsy. Ribsy sat down. He opened his mouth and let his long pink tongue hang out. He was thirsty.

"Come on, Ribs, stand up," begged Henry. "Be a good dog." Ribsy began to pant. "Come on, get up!"

Ribsy lay down on the grass and panted harder. Henry pulled and tugged. He

looked over his shoulder at the judge. The judge was looking at the ears and teeth of a dog that was standing properly. Then he ran his hands over the dog. The dog didn't move.

"Come on, Ribsy!" begged Henry. "It'll be our turn pretty soon." Ribsy closed his eyes. "I know you're thirsty. I'll get you a drink of water just as soon as I can."

The loud-speaker made an announcement. "Will the boy scouts please take pans of water to each ring?"

Henry was relieved to see a boy scout coming with water, but when Ribsy's turn came, he sniffed at the pan and refused to drink.

"I guess he's used to his own dishes," explained Henry. "He just doesn't want to use the same pan as the other dogs."

"Can't help it," said the boy scout. "It's the only one I have."

Ribsy continued to pant.

At last the judge came to Henry. "Well, well, a pink dog," he exclaimed.

"Yes, sir," said Henry. It was lucky his own green hair had grown out so it could be cut off. A green-haired boy and a pale pink dog would have looked funny.

"Come on, son. Stand him up."

Henry boosted Ribsy to his feet. Ribsy tried to sit down again, but Henry held up his hind end by the tail. The judge looked at his ears and teeth. Then he ran his hands over him. He looked at his fingers afterward. They were pink. "HMMMMM," he said.

When the judge had looked at all the dogs, he ordered each child to walk across the ring and back with his dog. Henry noticed that the boys and girls who knew about these things held the leash in the left hand. When his turn came he held the

clothesline in his left hand and started across the ring. Halfway across, Ribsy sat down to scratch behind his left ear. Henry pulled at the rope. When he reached the other side of the ring and turned back, Ribsy turned the wrong way so that he crossed in front of Henry.

Henry tripped on the rope and started to change it to his right hand, but just then Ribsy ran around behind Henry to growl at a dog that was mostly spaniel. The boy who owned the spaniel pulled him away and started to the other side of the ring. Ribsy ran in front of Henry and pulled at his rope to get closer to the other dog. The harder he pulled, the tighter the rope drew around Henry's legs. The children began to laugh. Ribsy was so excited he ran around behind Henry and pulled the rope even tighter. The laughter increased.

"Cut that out, Ribsy!" Henry ordered, looking over his shoulder at his dog. He



felt silly standing there wound up in a clothesline.

"Come on, son," said the judge. "We can't waste time. A lot of other boys and girls want to show their dogs, too."

Now, on top of all his troubles, the judge was cross with him. Henry knew a cross judge would never give him a silver cup. Discouraged and feeling even sillier, Henry twirled around like a top to unwind himself from the rope. Relieved to have that part of the show over, he dragged Ribsy to the side of the ring. In a few minutes he could take his dog home and give him a drink.

After each child had walked his dog, the judge went around the ring pointing to different boys and girls, saying, "All right, you stay in the ring." He looked at Henry and his dog. "HMMMM," he said. "All right, you stay in."

As the contestants left the ring, the boy

scouts handed them prizes. Those who left first won the smallest prizes. The longer they stayed in the ring, the bigger the prize.

"Hey, Henry, are you still in?" Henry looked up. Robert and Sassy were standing outside the rope.

"Yes," answered Henry, "and I sure don't see why. Ribsy did everything wrong. Did Sassy win anything?"

"Just a dog whistle." Robert took another look at Ribsy. "Say, how did he get all pink?"

"Aw, mind your own beeswax," said Henry. He pretended to be watching the judge carefully. One by one the man asked the boys and girls to leave the ring.

"Look what I won!" Henry saw Beezus waving a rubber mouse. "See, it squeaks!" She squeaked it. Then she stopped. "Look!" she squealed. "Ribsy is pink!"

"Shut up!" Henry looked at the judge.

He wished he knew why he was staying in the ring. Every time the judge passed him he looked at Ribsy and said, "HMMMM. Stay in the ring."

Mary Jane was the next one to see him. "See, I won a pillow for Patsy to sleep on," she said and then looked at Ribsy. "Why, Henry Huggins! What did you do to that poor dog? He's all pink. Just wait till your mother finds out about this."

"You keep quiet!" Henry said fiercely. There were only a few left in the ring.

Scooter was last to arrive. "Hi, Henry," he said. "Are you and that old mutt still in the ring? The judge must be blind. I guess Rags is a pretty good dog. Just the best in his class is all, and now he has to go to another ring to compete for the best dog in the show." He held up a small silver cup. Like the others, he looked at Ribsy. "I must be seeing things! A pink dog!" Scooter began to laugh. He sat down on the grass,

laughing so hard he rolled back and forth.

Henry didn't think Ribsy was that funny. By this time Henry was so hot and disgusted that all he wanted was to get out of the ring, go home and get Ribsy a drink of water out of his own private pan.

"HMMMM," said the judge again. At last only Henry and another boy were left. Henry remembered that the other boy's dog had done all the right things.

The judge stepped to the center of the ring with a silver cup in his hand. Henry wasn't at all surprised when the judge handed it to the other boy. He just wondered why he hadn't been asked to leave the ring. He thought he must have made a mistake, but the judge said to Henry and the winner, "Come along to the main ring. There will be some more judging there."

Puzzled, Henry followed. Beezus and Ramona, Scooter, Mary Jane, and Robert, and their dogs followed Henry. Maybe

Henry was going to win a prize after all.

In the main ring were the prize winners from all the other rings. Henry noticed two big silver cups on the table and saw his judge whispering to the other judges. They all looked at Ribsby. Ribsby panted harder than ever. The judges had the winners show their dogs again.

This time Henry wasn't taking any chances with the clothesline getting wound around his legs. He wound it around his hand so that there was only a foot of rope between his hand and Ribsby's collar. Ribsby did not behave any better the second time he was shown than he had the first. When Henry's turn came to lead him across the ring, he stopped to growl at a boxer. The boxer growled back.

Henry heard Scooter say, "If that mutt doesn't look out, he's going to get all bit up."

Ribsy growled louder. The snarling boxer advanced, dragging the little girl who owned him along on the end of his leash.

Henry tried to pull Ribsy away but Ribsy ignored him. The dogs circled around one another, pulling their owners after them. Henry yanked so hard at Ribsy's collar the dog choked. The boxer snarled and sprang at Ribsy, using his powerful front paws to knock over the smaller dog. Henry's hand was wound in the rope and he could not let go. He was pulled down on his stomach with his face in the grass.

"Look! Henry's in a dogfight!" screamed Beezus in great excitement.

The boxer's owner began to cry.

Henry was so mixed up he wasn't sure what was happening. He smelled the damp grass and felt it tickling his nose. He could hear snarls, growls, and barks. He could

hear children screaming and yelling. The boxer stepped on his back. Henry said, "Oof!" He lifted his face from the grass in time to see a boy scout try to stop the fight by throwing a pan of water at the dogs. He missed the dogs but he didn't miss Henry.

Two judges ran into the ring and grabbed the dogs by their hind legs. They yanked the snarling animals apart.

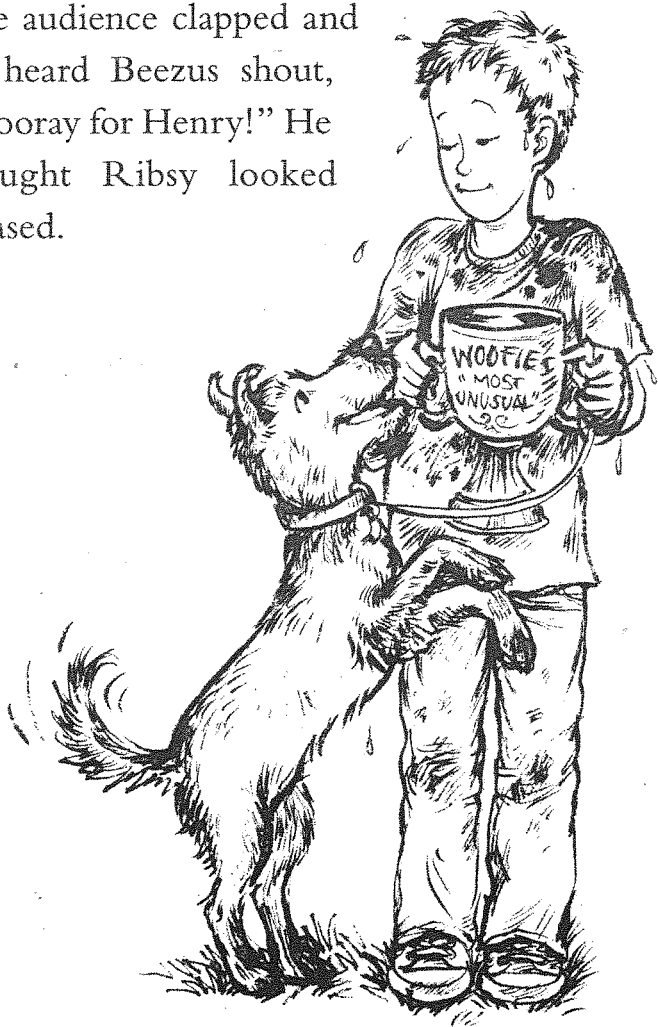
"All right, son. Go ahead," ordered one judge, while the other helped the little girl hold her boxer.

Embarrassed and dripping, Henry got up from the grass and, without looking either right or left, hurried Ribsy across the ring and back.

Finally only Henry and another boy were left. The judge stepped to the center of the ring. "The big cup for the best dog in the whole show goes to the boy with the setter." Everybody clapped when he handed the boy one of the big silver cups. Ribsy growled at the winner.

"And now," said the judge, "the cup for the most unusual dog in the show goes to the boy with the a—a—mixed-breed dog!" He handed Henry the other big silver cup.

"Gee, thanks," was all Henry could say. The audience clapped and he heard Beezus shout, "Hooray for Henry!" He thought Ribsy looked pleased.



Everyone gathered around to admire his cup until a newspaper photographer asked them to stand back while he took a picture of Henry and his dog and wrote down his name and address. Henry was going to have his picture in the paper!

"Congratulations," said Scooter, "but I still think he's a mutt."

"Well, anyway, he won a bigger cup than Rags," boasted Henry, "but I guess Rags is a pretty good dog, too. Good old Ribsy. Now we'll get you a drink of water."

He led Ribsy to the nearest drinking fountain. He filled the silver cup with water and put it on the ground. Ribsy greedily lapped the water. Henry patted him. "Good old Ribsy. I knew you wouldn't drink out of any dish but your own."

6

FINDERS KEEPERS

After lunch on the Saturday after the dog show Henry was in his room feeding his catfish. He dropped a tiny pinch of food into the water and watched it drift down to the bottom of the aquarium, where the catfish busily dug through the sand to find it.

“He-e-e-nry!” Robert was calling from the front yard.

Henry put the lid back on his aquarium.

and went out on the front porch. "Hi. What do you want?"

"Come on out and let's practice tumbling like the fellows in the gym at the Y."

"OK." Henry ran down the front steps. Ribsy looked up from the bone he was gnawing and growled. It was not a cross growl. It was a growl that meant, "Don't bother me. Can't you see I'm busy?"

The boys practiced standing on their hands and turning somersaults on the lawn until Robert said, "Come on, let's try that trick where one fellow gets on his back with his feet in the air and the other fellow gets on top of his feet and the first fellow turns him around and around." He flopped on the grass with his feet in the air. "Come on. Try it," he said.

Henry sat on Robert's feet and lay back with his arms and legs outstretched. Robert tried to twirl him around. Henry teetered.

"Hey, you're kicking me!" Henry toppled over upon Robert.

"Oof!" Robert sat up. "You're too heavy. Let's try something else."

"I know what. Let's go over to Beezus's house and practice chinning ourselves on her chestnut tree."

They found the girls in front of Beezus's house. They were busy tying a long jumping rope from the horse chestnut tree across the sidewalk to the lilac bush. Ramona, who was wearing pink coveralls and curlers in her hair, was scratching on the bark of the chestnut tree with her fingernails.

"Hi," said Henry.

"Hello," answered Beezus, stopping work on the rope.

"Mewow, mewow," said Ramona.

"What does she mean, 'Mewow'?" asked Henry.

"Oh, don't pay any attention to her,"

answered Beezus. "That's the way she says miaow. She's pretending she's a cat."

"Mewow," said Ramona and patted the curlers in her hair. "I'm a cat with curly hair."

Henry and Robert exchanged disgusted looks. Girls certainly started to be dumb when they were awfully young. They watched the girls in silence. Then they all sat down on the grass and waited.

"I wish you'd go away," said Mary Jane at last. "We're busy."

"Don't mind us," said Henry. "We have all day."

Beezus tightened the knot on the jumping rope. "Henry Huggins! I think you're mean. Why don't you play in your own yard?"

"We want to watch what you're doing," answered Henry, chewing on a blade of grass.

“Ho! I know. I’ll bet you think you’re going to be tightrope walkers!” scoffed Robert. “Why don’t you tie the rope up high? It’s only about two feet off the ground.”

“Dumbbell!” said Beezus. “Every time we walk across it without falling off we’ll move it up a foot. I’ll bet even people in circuses don’t start practicing at the top of the circus tent. And they have nets under them, too.”

“Aw, you can’t even walk it when it’s two feet off the ground,” scoffed Henry. “I’ll bet you couldn’t walk it if it were one inch off the ground.”

“You be quiet, Henry Huggins!” ordered Mary Jane. “Why don’t you and Robert mind your own business? Go on, Beezus. Let’s not pay any attention to them. They just think they’re smart.”

Beezus opened her mother’s umbrella

and held it in her right hand. As she stepped up on the rope, Mary Jane took hold of her left hand to steady her. The lilac bush bent under her weight, the rope sagged, and Beezus was standing on the sidewalk with the rope under her feet.

Robert and Henry hooted with laughter. "You sure look silly standing there on that rope with that umbrella in your hand!"

"You keep quiet!" snapped Beezus. "Let's see you do it if you think you're so smart."

Henry laughed harder. "She can't even walk it when it's a trillionth of an inch off the sidewalk!"

Robert rolled on the grass. "Not even if it's a billionth of a trillionth of an inch off the sidewalk!"

Beezus waved the umbrella. "You get off my property!"

"You can't make us!" yelled Henry.

"If you don't go home, I'll never speak to you as long as I live!" Beezus was really angry.

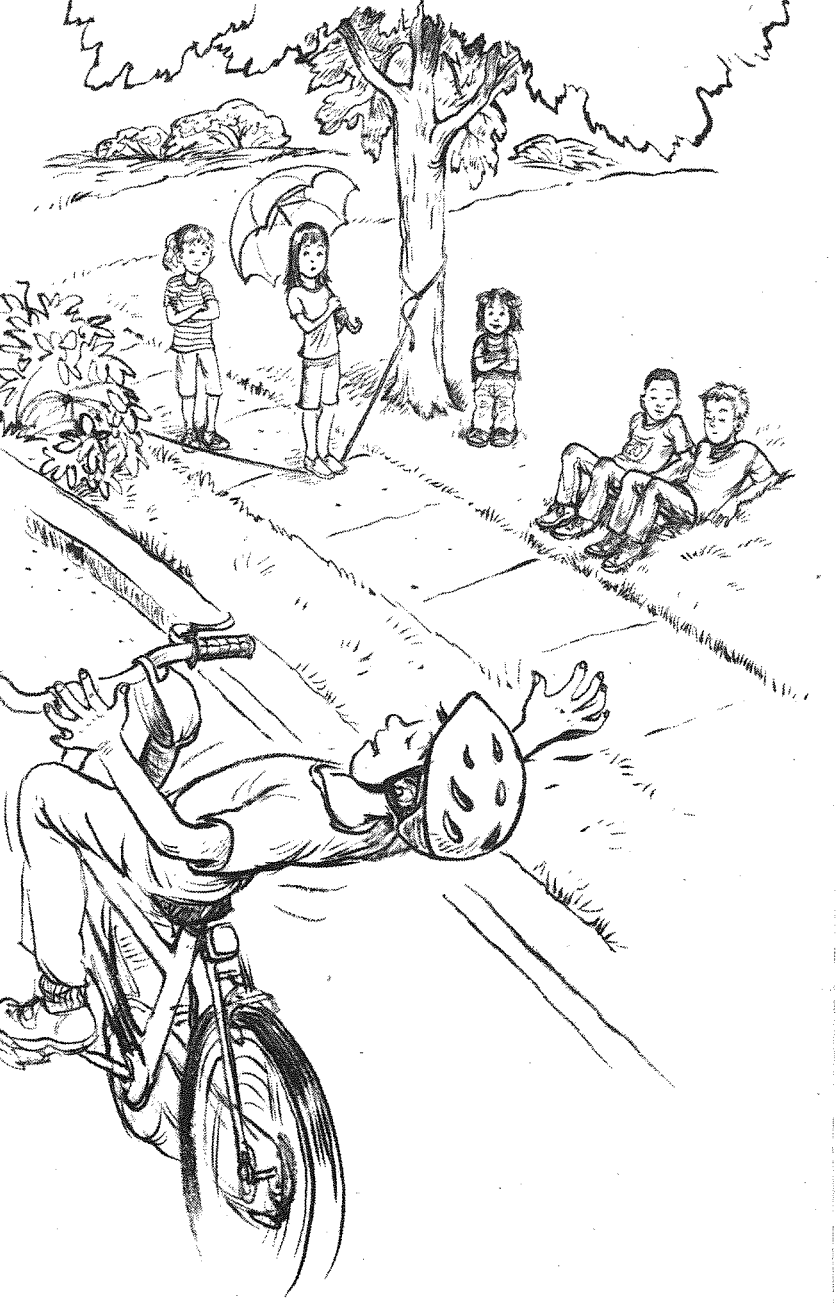
“Or me either.” Mary Jane glared at the boys.

“See if we care!”

Just then Scooter rode down the street on his bicycle. “Look!” he yelled. “No hands!”

The others stopped squabbling to watch. As Scooter approached, he bent slowly backward while he continued to pedal. When his head had almost touched the fender over the back wheel, the bicycle began to wobble. The handlebars turned and the bicycle headed for the curb. Scooter tried to sit up. It was too late. He had lost his balance. The bicycle bounced up the curb and tumbled Scooter sprawling upon the grass. The bicycle, stopped by the chestnut tree, toppled over on top of him.

Robert and Henry hooted as Scooter sheepishly untangled himself from his bicycle. He rubbed his shin but didn't say anything. The children knew the fall must have hurt,



but Scooter wasn't going to admit it.

"Well, anyway, I did it once," he said, carefully feeling his right elbow to make sure it wasn't broken.

"Aw, I'll bet you didn't." Henry was pleased. Usually he was the one to have accidents while Scooter watched.

"I did, too!"

"I bet you didn't."

"Keep quiet, all of you!" shouted Beezus. "And get off my property this minute!"

"Beezus, you keep out of this!" ordered Henry.

"Aw, you're just a dumb girl," sneered Scooter.

"Yes, a dumb girl," echoed Robert. "And anyway, it isn't your property."

"My dad pays rent on it, so it's just the same as my property." Beezus raised the umbrella to hit Scooter.

"Hit him!" yelled Mary Jane, far from her usual ladylike self.

"Don't you dare hit me!"

"Hey, you kids!"

It was a strange voice. The children stopped quarreling to see who it was. A strange boy was sitting astride a bicycle by the curb. He was a big boy, big enough to be in the seventh or eighth grade. He didn't belong on Klickitat Street and none of them had ever seen him before.

"I've been yelling at you for five minutes," he said and grinned. "Is one of you Henry Huggins?"

Henry was so surprised he didn't answer. Who was this boy and how did he know his name? Robert nudged Henry, who remembered he hadn't answered. "Oh yes," he said, "that's me."

The boy reached into the pocket of his jeans and pulled out the newspaper clipping that showed Henry and Ribsy at the dog show. Henry couldn't understand why this

strange boy was carrying that picture with him. Just then Ribsy began to bark furiously and Henry saw him running down the street toward them.

"Dizzy!" the boy shouted and sprang from his bicycle. "Here, Dizzy!" Ribsy jumped up on the boy and licked his hands. The boy laughed and patted him and, when Ribsy would stand still long enough, scratched him behind his left ear.

That's funny, thought Henry. How does he know Ribsy likes to be scratched behind his left ear? And why does he call him Dizzy? "His name isn't Dizzy," he said to the boy. "It's Ribsy and he's my dog!"

Ribsy looked at the boy and wagged his tail again.

A terrible thought came to Henry. Ribsy must have belonged to the boy before he found him in the drugstore over a year ago. The boy had seen his picture in the paper

and had come to take him away!

If only Ribsy hadn't won the prize in the dog show and had his picture in the paper! Then the boy would never have found him. Henry didn't know what to do. He couldn't give up Ribsy after a whole year. He couldn't.

He moved closer to Ribsy and put his hand on his collar. "He's my dog," he said. "He's my dog and you can't take him away. He was a skinny old dog when I found him and I bought him a collar and a license and a dish and now I buy him two pounds of horse meat every week and Woofies Dog Food besides. And I wash him and brush him and everything." Henry gulped. "You can't take him away!"

"Henry does take awfully good care of him," added Beezus loyally.

"Henry found him, so he must have run away from you," said Robert.

"Finders keepers, losers weepers,"
chanted Mary Jane.

"Well, I had him longer than you have,"
said the boy. "And I fed him and brushed
him, too. I had him when he was a puppy.
He used to chase his tail so much I named
him Dizzy. And the only reason he ran
away was because he was heartbroken. I
went to Scout Camp for the summer and
Mom and Dad went East and we left Dizzy
with my aunt and uncle. They said he was
so lonesome and homesick he wouldn't eat
or play or anything. Then one day they
couldn't find him anywhere. They thought
maybe he'd gone home to look for me so
they drove over to our house to look for
him. He wasn't there and they looked every
place. They advertised in the paper and
everything."

"So he did run away," said Robert. "You
left him and he ran away."

Ribsy licked the boy's hand again.

"Look. He remembers me and wants to come home with me."

"But he likes me, too," protested Henry.

Ribsy looked at Henry and wagged his tail.

For the first time Scooter spoke. "We like Ribsy right here in this neighborhood. He's just about the most popular dog around here and every one of us would miss him."

Henry stared at Scooter in amazement. It was the first time he had heard him say anything good about Ribsy.

"Yes, we all like him," agreed Robert. "All the kids at Glenwood School like him. He waits for Henry every day under the fir tree and all the kids know him."

"Yes, what about us?" asked Beezus. "Henry has taken care of him for a whole year and I don't think it's fair for you to take him away."

"He didn't have a collar or a license tag when I found him," said Henry.

"He had them when I went off to Scout Camp. I don't know how he lost them except my aunt said he was awfully thin when he disappeared. Maybe he slipped his collar off over his head or somebody took it." The boy reached in his pocket. "I have my birthday money that you can take." He held out a five-dollar bill to Henry.

"Five dollars! I wouldn't sell Ribsy for a million dollars!"

"Oh, I didn't mean for you to sell him," said the boy hastily. "I meant the money to help pay his expenses for the last year. I know it isn't enough, but it's all I have."

Henry felt sorry for the boy. He could understand why he would want to keep a smart dog like Ribsy. But Henry couldn't part with his dog. Nothing exciting had ever happened to him before and look at all

the things that had happened this year!

Henry knelt and put his arm around his dog's neck. "You wouldn't want to leave me, would you, Ribsy? You wouldn't want to leave Klickitat Street, would you?"

Ribsy licked Henry's face.

The stranger knelt and snapped his fingers. "Dizzy, you want to come home with me, don't you?"

Ribsy looked at him, wagged his tail, and said, "Woof!"

"I guess he likes both of us," sighed Henry. "But I don't care. He ran away from you and I found him."

"That's right. Just like I said, Finders keepers, losers weepers," said Mary Jane.

"But I raised him from a pup. And my mother and father and kid sister miss him, too."

"But he likes to meet me after school and play with the kids." Henry paused to pet

the dog. Then he said slowly, "Maybe we should let Ribsy decide."

"Sure," said Scooter. "That's a good idea. Don't worry, Henry. He'll choose you."

"That seems fair enough," agreed the boy. "How shall we let him choose?"

"I know," said Scooter. "Leave Ribsy where he is and each of you go twenty squares down the sidewalk in opposite directions. Then when I say, 'Go!' you both start calling at the same time. Whichever one Ribsy goes to gets to keep the dog."

"OK," agreed Henry. He felt all quivery inside.

"Sounds fair to me," agreed the boy.

"Oh, Henry, what if he doesn't choose you?" asked Beezus fearfully.

"Don't worry," said Mary Jane. "He won't want to leave Henry."

Scooter held Ribsy by his collar. Henry counted twenty squares down the sidewalk

toward his house. The boy walked twenty the other way. They both turned and faced the dog. Henry's mouth felt so dry he was afraid he might not be able to call.

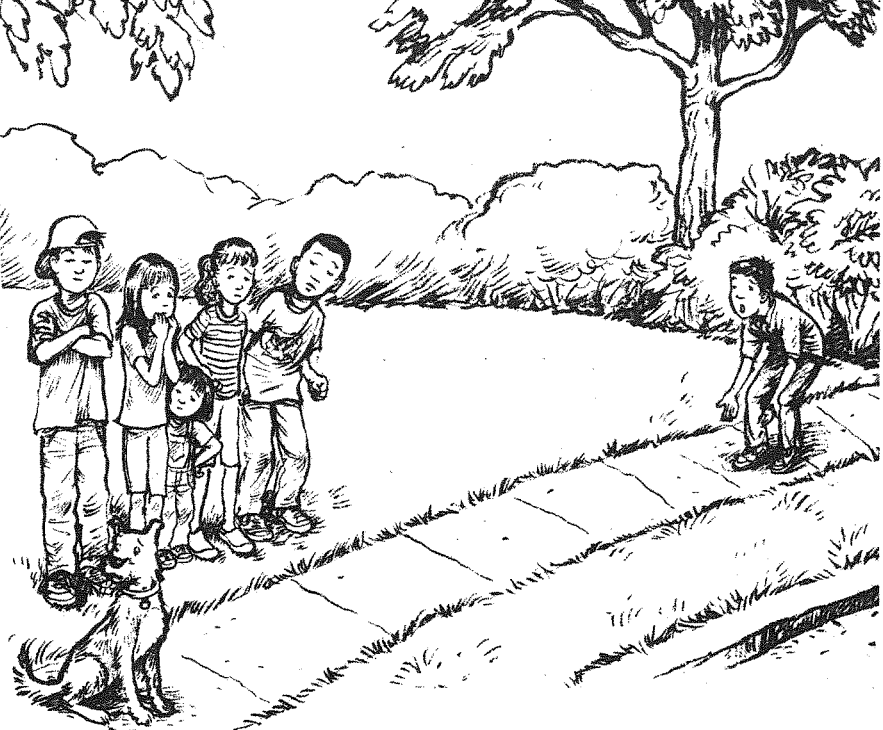
Scooter turned to the boy. "Say, you don't have any meat or anything in your pockets, do you?" he asked suspiciously.

"No, I don't. Cross my heart."

"How about you, Henry?" Scooter was going to be fair.

Henry gulped. "No, me neither."





"OK. We want to make this a fair contest."

"Good luck, Henry!" shouted Beezus.

"Thanks," said Henry weakly.

Scooter turned Ribsy toward the street so he was facing neither Henry nor the strange boy. "All right, you guys. Ready, get set—go!" He took his hand off Ribsy's collar.

"Here, Ribsy! Here, Ribsy! Come on, Ribs!" At least Henry's voice worked.

"Here, Dizzy, Dizzy, Dizzy!" The dog's former master snapped his fingers.

The dog looked at Henry. He looked at the other boy. Then he sat down to scratch behind his left ear with his left hind foot.

"Ribsy!" wailed Henry. "Come here! Here, Ribsy! Here, Ribsy!"

"Come, Dizzy! Come, Dizzy!" called the boy. Ribsy stood up and took a few steps toward the boy and wagged his tail. The children groaned.

"Ribsy!" shouted Henry with a sinking feeling in his stomach. Ribsy stopped, turned around, wagged his tail, and said, "Woof!"

"Attaboy, Ribsy!" shouted Henry.

"Go on, Ribsy!" screamed Beezus.

"No coaching from the audience!" ordered Scooter.

Ribsy took a few steps toward Henry. Then he looked back at the other boy.

"Horse meat, Ribsy, horse meat! Here, Ribsy! Here, Ribsy!" At the mention of horse meat Ribsy looked at Henry.

"Here, Dizzy, Dizzy!" Then the boy had an idea. "Here, Ribsy! Here, Ribsy!" he called.

"Hey, you're cheating!" objected Henry. "I'm supposed to call him Ribsy."

"There wasn't any rule about what we should call him."

"That's right, Henry," agreed Scooter.

"Look, he's turning around!" shouted Mary Jane.

But Ribsy only turned around to chew at a spot near his tail. He bit at the flea, sat down, scratched behind his left ear again, and then stood up. The boys kept on yelling.

With a tired sigh Ribsy sank down on

the sidewalk, put his head on his paws, and closed his eyes.

The children groaned. "Don't go to sleep now, Ribsy!" begged Henry, who was so scared his hands felt cold and damp.

Ribsy opened his eyes and, without moving his head, turned them first toward the strange boy and then toward Henry. "Come on, Ribsy," they both coaxed.

Slowly Ribsy stood up, and after a backward glance at the stranger, trotted eight squares down the sidewalk toward Henry. He paused, scratched again, and trotted the remaining squares to Henry. Then he sank down with his head on Henry's foot and closed his eyes again.

Ribsy had chosen Henry!

The children cheered, but Henry couldn't say a word. He knelt and hugged his dog.

"I knew he'd choose you, Henry," crowed Mary Jane. "I just knew it all the time."

"My, but I was scared for a minute," said Beezus.

The other boy looked so disappointed that Henry couldn't help feeling sorry for him. "I'm glad Ribsy wants to stay with me," said Henry, "but I'm sorry you have to lose him. He's an awfully good dog."

"I hate to lose him, too, but I guess I can't complain. It was a fair contest." The boy threw his leg over his bicycle. "Say, do you suppose I could come over to see him sometimes?"

"Sure. Any time you want."

"Thanks. I'll be around soon." The boy rode off down the street.

The children all crowded around Ribsy to pet him. "I sure am lucky," said Henry, "but he had me scared for a while."

"Jeepers, I don't know what this neighborhood would have done without Ribsy," said Beezus. "Come on. Now that Ribsy is

Henry's for keeps, let's think of something we all can play."

