

GOOD STORIES FOR CHILDREN—By WALT McDUGALL

The Awful Fate of Two Studious Children Who Offended Their Teacher

THERE were two children, Andrew and Maud, in the Beardsley household, and two dogs, Bruce and Sandy, but this story is mainly about the dogs. They came to the house on the same day, two fuzzy little puppies, mild-eyed and sleepy, but awoke at once to play with the children and begin their warfare upon table-covers, pillows, book-covers and shoes whenever there was a chance.

They were both of a size when they came, but Bruce was a setter and grew tall, lanky and long, while Sandy, who was a beagle hound, with ears that touched the ground, seemed to grow more slowly, and so Bruce soon was a giant beside his little, short-legged companion. Both were mischievous and playful beyond all measure, yet innocent-eyed and demure, and it was hard to believe sometimes, when one looked into those brown eyes, that the owners of them could do such awful things. But when questioned about some misdeed those eyes looked guilty and those tails sank and a hang-dog air took the place of the confident and assertive demeanor of the puppies, and you could immediately detect the guilty one!

After all, they were generally guilty, for when there was an opportunity for mischief neither allowed it to pass, so both shared usually in the guilt and its punishment, also.

They were both dogs of pedigree and therefore were cared for and pampered far more than falls to the lot of ordinary dogs. While they were small they were never allowed to go out of sight of some member of the Beardsley family. They slept all over the house, on the beds, on divans, skirts of dresses, in satin-upholstered chairs, on coats laid down on chairs, everywhere and anywhere, and both fancied that everything in that household was arranged for their comfort or diversion.



THE FLIGHT OF THE TERRORIZED CIRCUS ELEPHANTS

When punished for tearing out hair from a sofa lining or chewing up a handsome book they felt injured and abused, and when caught in the act of lifting a roast of beef from the kitchen table and soundly whipped therefor neither of them felt sorry for the theft, but only for the detection.

So, also, when either of them had eaten the soap or sampled some other indigestible and sickening morsel and was tenderly nursed he imagined that a hard fate had selected him as victim instead of laying his ill to his own greed or foolishness. Bruce was perhaps the most amenable to discipline, for Sandy, although he was fully as good-natured as the setter, was apt to sulk after punishment a little and resent all approaches for a few minutes. Bruce had also the most unappeasable appetite for waste-baskets, patent leather shoes, ribbons and chair or sofa linings, while Sandy preferred to tear open packages and see what was inside.

Both were inordinately fond of growling in a mud puddle and then rushing into the house and rubbing the mud against dresses or table-covers, and of bringing in the most noxious of bones and hiding them in out-of-the-way places to gnaw upon between 12 and 1 at night. They usually tried to hide them in the beds.

Sometimes Bruce would worry the chickens belonging to a neighbor when they appeared on the street, for that is a bird-dog's instinct, but he was always punished for it, and that seemed to him the cruelest injustice of all, for the temptation was almost irresistible. He was forever bringing home the queerest things, too, that he found on the street whenever he was permitted to go abroad—old garments found in a vacant lot, rags, old shoes, pieces of ragged doormats, hats thrown away by their owners and any rubbish of the sort, for he was a natural retriever and thought he was doing a service by recovering these lost articles.

When kept in the back yard they amused themselves by digging deep holes, almost tunnels, in the ground in search of hidden objects which they never found, and alternately howling to get indoors, and when once in scratching at the same door to get out!

Bruce, being in training for hunting in the future, was naturally more obedient; he came when called, although frequently he took his time in coming, but Sandy never came until he was quite ready, and that is a peculiarity of the hound. He would calmly sit down and look at his master with an innocent gaze, as if wondering what was going to happen to him if he obeyed, and then as calmly run off! Nothing seemed to move him except the dinner bell, and then he came in a hurry. Of course, both dogs had the usual supply of fleas to annoy them, but fleas are really necessary to dogs; at least, to puppies, else they would spend all their time in mischief, and as for old dogs they are useful in keeping them reminded that they are dogs and not emperors or kings.

When the two were not eating or gnawing upon a bone or something more valuable to other people they were sleeping generally close together on the divan, yet they both put in a good deal of time romping, too. Such was the affection existing between them that neither lost his temper for a moment, no matter how much some of the playful bites hurt, although a yelp often showed pain, and neither of them hesitated for a second in backing the other up in a feigned attack on a strange dog. This never came to anything, of course, for both of them were far too young to know anything about fighting, and when the strange dog growled and showed his white teeth as he advanced toward them it was funny to see them rush for home with eyes starting and tails between their legs, yelping with terror.

The first cat they encountered was afraid, of course, and backed up against a wall, which gave these two towards a vast courage, and they attacked in platoons, but a set of sharp claws drawn promptly across each damp nose brought out two astonished yells, and they fled. After that they never approached too near to anything in the cat line except a tiny kitten.

There never was a pair of dogs who were so well cared for, although I must confess that neither of them appreciated their good luck. In the matter of being bathed every week they were very much like some children I have known and resisted stoutly each and every attempt, so that each bath was a continued struggle, although they always felt particularly frisky afterward.

They had the privilege of sleeping almost everywhere, a thing few dogs can boast, and their meals were cooked especially for them with as much care

as those of the rest of the Beardsley family, and at the slightest sign of illness they were taken to the dog doctor and attended to instantly. Hand-some collars adorned them and sometimes the children decorated them with great bows of ribbon.

They had nothing to do but eat, play and sleep, although, of course, without being aware of it, they were being taught to obey and soon would be trained to hunt, or would have been, had not the strange thing happened that altered their whole future. Both were happy, but both considered that they were very unfortunate in being obliged to do things which they disliked and in not being allowed to have their own way, and, strange to say, Andrew and Maud Beardsley also complained of the same sad fate.

Andrew, being several years older, considered himself the more unfortunate, but as Maud had to practice on the piano two hours daily, the fact that he had more studies than she was thus balanced. He studied arithmetic, geography, history, grammar, physics, physiology, anatomy, French, German, Latin, Greek, elocution, drawing, geometry, geology, astronomy and English literature, besides taking dancing lessons twice a week. From diligently studying he had become so near-sighted that he was compelled to wear strong glasses constantly. He was a tall, slim boy and had headache very frequently, but as she was first in all of his classes. Maud, besides learning music and dancing, studied only eight or nine subjects as yet, and she was not near-sighted, but as she was not as clever as her brother she found it far more difficult to master the many studies put upon her and she was never very far from the foot of the class.

Neither of them had any time for play, of course, for had they taken time for that they would have had to neglect some important study and thus fall behind at school, and their parents were so proud of their accomplishments that they rarely thought of the hours spent in study. In fact, Andrew often considered that his father thought far more of the dogs and paid much more attention to their health than he did of that of his children, and this may have been quite true. When one of the dogs yelped in his sleep or twitched his legs Mr. Beardsley would look very grave and wonder whether it was worms or not that were troubling the puppy, and if a dog's eyes watered he consulted "Diseases of the Dog" to see if he was getting distemper, but when the children were sneezing their heads off he never noticed it at all!

Well, as time passed on, the dogs went abroad more frequently, for they had now learned to remain near at home, but once in a while they strayed away for perhaps a block or two, when out would chase some member of the family to hale them back again, for the dread of losing them was great upon all.

Little by little, for Sandy, like all hounds, was naturally a roamer and led Bruce in such matters, they extended their wandering farther and farther from home until sometimes they were a half-mile away before they were caught, and many a back yard and garbage barrel they thus became intimately acquainted with, and also with more than one pair of water or soap-suds, hurled at them by some indignant housekeeper, whose garbage pail they overturned or whose kitchen they had audaciously invaded in broad daylight.

One morning the dogs wandered far in the outskirts of the city and came upon a number of men, who were busily and hastily erecting an enormous tent. Bruce immediately hurried to the spot, for he smelled meat cooking and his nose soon detected from where the delicious fragrance came. Before either of them could form a plan for obtaining some of the meat the cook saw them, and a brick came sailing toward them, hurled by a well-practiced hand. It struck the ground beside Sandy, who left with a yelp, followed by his comrade instantly, for they saw many other bricks near by.

Now, it was a circus tent that was being erected, and on the other side they suddenly came upon a spectacle that filled them with terror and curiosity mingled. A number of wonderful animals, with

tails at both ends of their bodies, were drawn up in a circle with a man in the centre.

They were motionless when the dogs approached, but instantly at the word of command they took hold of each others' tails with their front tails and began to move around the circle. Such a sight paralyzed the two dogs. They began to bark and the sound threw the elephants, for that's what they were, as probably you guessed at once, into a sort of panic, as elephants do not like strange dogs, and in a moment they all ran away at full speed, overturning everything in their path.

There is nothing a dog loves so dearly as seeing something fleeing from him, especially if it is very large, and both Bruce and Sandy were filled with a joy so intense that for a moment they simply forgot how to bark! They then hurried after the fleeing elephants, although both were so tickled that it was very difficult to run fast, yet they soon overtook the great animals and were barking madly at their heels, which, of course, caused them to go faster. People hurried out of their houses, awakened by the shrill trumpeting of elephants, a sound unheard before in that city. The lions and tigers in the menagerie tent set up an awful, deafening roar, recognizing the familiar alarm of the tropic forest, and all the loose dogs in the place came out and promptly joined in the beautiful pursuit of elephants. Horses, which are dreadfully afraid of elephants, seeing the beasts approach, broke away from their fastenings and tore through the streets wildly, overturning the people who came running up the side streets to see what was happening, dashing even into stores, breaking windows and creating havoc everywhere. The frightened elephants, however, when they had reached the open fields, over which they galloped, tearing down fences as if they were made of straws, soon distanced all but one or two of the fleetest dogs and when they reached a small hickory wood they formed a circle and stood heads outward, and, of course, as soon as they stopped, the dogs ran away at once!

Bruce and Sandy, reflecting for a moment, realized that they had created the commotion of their lives, and really considered that few dogs, even old ones, had ever done so much damage and caused such terror in any land, for thirty-nine horses had run away, eleven children been run over, ten old men and women seriously hurt, six dogs shot, a hundred windows broken, trees upturned and sixteen elephants lost, for they thought nobody could ever capture the enormous animals again.

They trotted home tired and happy, with wide-grinning jaws and gleaming eyes, and sneaked demurely into the back yard, pretending that they had not even heard of the disastrous happenings.

When the children returned later and told their parents what had occurred the dogs listened as if it were all news to them, but Sandy couldn't help winking once as Andrew stated that it was all started by two big St. Bernard dogs!

Just a week later Bruce killed a chicken. Sandy helped chase the fowl, but had no hand in the slaughter, for he was not of a breed that usually catches things, although sometimes, it is true, beagles will capture slow-running rabbits. Bruce stood over the dead chicken, which was a large, fat hen, and looked at Sandy, then he said:

"That was fine sport! The greatest yet!" He nibbled softly at the hen.

"But what do you think you'll get for that?" whispered Sandy. "I think you'll be killed!"

Bruce looked guilty and apprehensive. Then they both sneaked away, but Mr. Beardsley had seen the crime committed and he was ready for Bruce when, after slinking around behind the house, he returned, looking very innocent and demure, as if butter would not melt in that great mouth. Mr. Beardsley had picked up the chicken and he now called Bruce to him and, after showing it to the dog, gave him the most protracted walloping he had ever had, after which he tied the hen to his collar. Oh, but he was a shame-faced animal then!

He sat perfectly still for awhile, then, rising, tried to shake off the unpleasant burden which his very soul loathed now, but it was fast to him. Then he slunk into the back yard and sat there disconsolate, and even Sandy forsook him, for he could not bear to look at his comrade's shame.

Suddenly a soft clucking was heard and, looking out of my window, which overlooked the Beardsley yard, I saw a wonderful sight. While Bruce sat there in disgrace there walked slowly into the yard some twenty hens with accusing eyes fixed on him. They stared solemnly and silently at their dead sister, and then with one voice began again to cluck, but louder than before. It sounded as if they were charging him with the crime, and, you may not believe it, but the dog could not face those accusing eyes and turned his gaze away.

Now, one of the teachers of the children was an old man named Quirk, who was a deep student of the occult, which means all sorts of things like astrology, alchemy, palmistry, mind-reading, clairvoyance and hypnotism, besides a lot more that are less innocent, such as witchcraft and magic, but very few people suspected him of knowing more than the things he taught at school, because he wore such shabby clothes.

He knew how to make the wind blow as he pleased, how to call all sorts of birds and animals to him when he wished, how to change people into birds, beasts, stones and other things, and he was able by merely saying something that sounded like "AINA, MAINA, MONA, MACKIE" to accomplish the most wonderful things.

So, as you may perceive, without my stating it, he was a good man to keep friendly with and yet, such are the accidents of life, both the dogs and the Beardsley children happened to fall foul of him, the very worst one they could have discovered in all the city, and bring upon themselves the disaster which caused me to sit down and write this touching tale.

On the morning, and it was a Saturday morning, the only day in which the Beardsley children allowed themselves an hour or two of leisure and play, that it all happened. Mr. Quirk had been up since early dawn compounding a wonderful mixture that smelt simply dreadful, composed of herbs, medicines, dried snakes, toads, bugs, rubber, feathers, bones, rags, lizards, snails, oil, soot, pitch, news' papers, ants' eggs, worms, seaweed and a dozen other ingredients, the secret of which he kept to himself, all boiled together in an immense cauldron, around which he had constantly walked chanting a weird melody in Arabic, Choctaw, Finnish, Thibetan and Polynesian, which sounded so dreadful, as well as so occult, in that dim, mysterious hour between night and day, which astrologers all select for their necromantic operations, that had you heard him you would have shivered with fear.

He was tired and cross, as well as hungry, as he came down the street past the Beardsley house, the tails of his long black coat flapping in the wind like the wings of an old crow, to which his black eyes and long sharp nose gave him a startling resemblance. He was also nervous as well as cross, and so, when Bruce and Sandy, watching, as usual, upon the porch for an opportunity to annoy somebody, perceived him approaching and dashed down at him with loud and deafening barks, he was so startled that in his alarm he tried to climb a small tree in front of the house.

Andrew and Maud were sitting on the porch, and the sight of their old teacher wildly endeavoring to climb a small maple tree while the dogs circled around him, was too much for their gravity and they burst forth into loud laughter, instead of instantly calling Sandy and Bruce to them.

The tree was too small for Mr. Quirk to climb and Bruce, emboldened by the man's fright, grabbed him by the coat-tails, while Sandy seized his old silk hat, which had fallen to the ground, and ran up on the porch with it, whereat the children laughed louder than ever, forgetting in their amusement, just as if they had been common, vulgar urchins, the respect they owed to their aged teacher.

Now, had they been aware that Mr. Quirk was an adept, almost a sorcerer, in spite of his humble demeanor and seedy appearance, they would have restrained their glee nor dared to ridicule him even under such comical circumstances, for their laughter aroused Mr. Quirk to a rage which was greater

They Became Dogs and Their Two Pet Dogs Became Children

than his fright had been, and suddenly, dropping his feet to the ground, he administered a well-directed kick in the stomach to Bruce, which hurled him yelping ten feet away, and coming up on the porch, he demanded that Andrew take his hat away from Sandy, who was rapidly putting it out of shape by banging it savagely against the rail and tearing at the brim.

Andrew, at once realizing how impolite they had both been, immediately took the hat from the dog and handed it to his teacher, but he could not restrain his laughter, and I think this made Mr. Quirk more angry than ever. He seized the hat and went down the steps with a terrible frown on his face, which boded no good to either dogs or children. Had they known what was the terrible revenge the adept would wreak upon them for their ridicule they would have wept bitterly instead of laughing loud and long whenever they thought of the old scarecrow frantically trying to climb that two-inch maple tree.

But they never dreamed that he could harm them or punish them beyond some harder tasks in school, and when at dinner they told the story to Mr. Beardsley, although he tried to look stern and grave, his mouth twitched suspiciously as he reproved them.

Mr. Quirk hurried back to his laboratory, totally forgetting that he had eaten no breakfast, but so wild with rage and mortification at having been a spectacle for children that he was no longer hungry. He set to work at once upon a patent spell and all day long he toiled at this task.

First he prepared a mystic powder, consisting of a silvery substance made from the scales of sea-snails and the shells of a certain snail found only in the Island of Cyprus, to which he added the eyes of beetles, seeds of the owl-berry, grains of hurricane-root and gum from the strabismus tree, after which he moistened the pile with angleworm oil and moulded it all into two shapes, one that of a child and the other that of a dog, and set them in the hot sun to dry for several hours, and all the time he chanted that mysterious lay that was taught to the ancient alchemists by the Phœnician voyagers. It sounds something like this, although I am afraid I have not spelled all of the words right:

"O KIMAZU BENALI SWAZIO PORAH!
KAZAM A-BAZZAH BAZIPP!
SWASS MAGORUM BISMALIGALLAH,
OLLA PODRIDAMAGIPP!"

These seem very simple, if not actually silly words, but no one knows what tremendous power they have over occult forces. I am informed that nothing can resist them, especially when the word "BISMALIGALLAH" is pronounced with the right accent, and you may be sure that old Mr. Quirk knew exactly how to pronounce it.

He waited until nearly night and just when the sun was going down he went to the window and, looking out at the western sky and raising his skinny hands, he muttered:

"The spell is perfected! Now, when those fated children again compare their lot with that of the dogs, let the charm, oh, Zamiel, take instant effect!"

Then he took a match and lighted a taper, and slowly pressed the two figures which he had made into one shapeless mass, after which he applied the burning taper to it, and with a sort of fizzy sparkle something like a "sizzer" firecracker, it began to ignite, and after awhile burned slowly, the smoke, pungent and stifling, finally driving the adept out of his laboratory into the fresh, cool night air.

"That will burn almost all night!" he muttered; "now I'll go and eat!"

At midnight Andrew awoke and asked Maud if she was asleep.

"No, I am wide awake!" replied the girl; "I was thinking of Monday's lessons."

"Dear me!" sighed Andrew, as he turned over and then, hearing Bruce bark, he added:

"Those dogs are awake, but they're only thinking of having fun! How much better off they are than us!"

"Yes, indeed," replied Maud; "and they never have to wash or dress either!"

"Still, when they die, they can't go to heaven, I guess," added Andrew, and then he shivered, for something was happening to him! He heard Maud utter a queer, startled cry, and the next minute he found himself changed into something with four feet standing up in bed. He saw a dog in the room and instantly recognized Sandy, and tried to call him, but uttered a sort of yelp instead of words. Sandy seemed dazed, but in another minute both realized what had occurred. They had been changed into Bruce and Sandy, and this was all the more evident because they now heard children knocking for admittance into the house.

So Mr. Quirk was avenged and the children were now dogs, and the dogs children! The parents do not know what has happened, although they marvel at a queer change in their offspring, who seem less inclined to study, less capable of continued endeavor and far more playful than before, while such intelligent and well-behaved trained dogs were never seen anywhere.

Whether they are pleased with the change no one can tell, nor can it be learned how long the adept intends to keep them thus metamorphosed, as they call such a transformation, but there they are, and if you don't credit my statement, go to the Beardsley house and talk both to the dogs and the children and ascertain if they are not very, very peculiar. I am sure you will be convinced that no other explanation will enable you to comprehend the wonderful difference plainly to be seen in all four.

If Mr. Quirk releases them I will then have another story to tell you, for the experience of two children who have been turned into dogs will be well worth telling. But the children who were dogs before can tell me nothing, for, strange to say, they cannot talk. Mr. Quirk must have made some mistake in his charm, for, although it worked as far as changing their forms went, it failed to give them voices or leave human speech in the dogs, so, until they talk, we will never know what they think or how they feel.

Perhaps the adept deprived them all of speech in order to prevent the betrayal of the change he had made, but it is very hard to see how he could have been suspected. WALT McDUGALL.