EVERY DOG HIS DAY

By CHARLES T. JACKSON

HUNK EADS and his dog, Bo, wanted to go to the State Fair to-day more than any day of the week. It was Children's Day and Teacher had given tickets to all the kids. But when Hunk went to the fair grounds with his dog, Bo, under his arm the man at the gate wouldn't let him in.

"You can't take that dog in here," said he, and all the West Side kids yelled at Hunk and his dog, Bo. Hunk had to step aside in the line. He went across the street and looked back at the big, white gates and the flags over the fence on the cupolas. The band was playing, and he could smell peanuts and fresh sawdust and hear a prize cow bawling; and many people and carriages and motor-cars were streaming in. Hunk looked down to see Bo smelling of the blue ticket.

"Aw, Bo—we don't care! If they don't let you in, I wouldn't go in—would I, Bo? We'll go hunt skunks, Bo—you and me."

Now, Hunk said this to please Bo. He did want to go to the fair to-day of all days, for to-day was the Dog Show. Hunk Eads had read of it and his dad had told him about it and he saw the pictures in the papers. There were some incredible things in the papers. Patricia, the world-celebrated Gordon setter; Lord Jim, the ten-thousand-dollar Airedale terrier that belonged to the English Ambassador; French bulls and poodles and stag hounds and mastiffs and Bernards of mystifying pedigree and achievements, the details of which Hunk loftily dismissed. Hunk disdained them all. He read of their care and feeding with implacable contempt.

"Aw, Bo—all them kyoodles is no good! What'd a feller do with a dog like that, anyhow? I'd like to see 'em hunt skunks!"

Still Hunk would like to have seen that Dog Show better than anything in the world. He couldn't understand how a man would blow in the papers and brag about how much his dog cost. Bo hadn't cost Hunk anything except the trouble of fishing him out of South Creek two years ago, when the kids of the Third street gang pushed the pup under the ice.

Hunk had no more thought of how much Bo was worth or how much he could have sold him for than he had of his Dad. Dog Show dogs must be different. Hunk would have liked to tuck Bo under his arm and go down the line of dogs at the show—one-thousand-dollar dogs, three-thousand-dollar dogs, ten-thousand-dollar dogs—look at them all in stony silence and then come away again. Then he would have looked Bo over when they got home—Bo with his stubby tail and cat-scratch'd ears and shape that hesitated between being a fox terrier or a spike-tailed pointer, but with eyes that never looked anywhere except ahead to see where Hunk was going, or behind to see what Hunk wanted to do next.

Then Hunk would have sat on the stoop in the twilight, listening to his mother's last warning: "Now, you wash those feet, Henry, before you dare crawl into bed—thank goodness, bare-footed days are pretty near over!"—Hunk would have heard and not heeded, as usual, for he was absorbed in feeling how much of his hand he could wallow-down Bo's throat without choking Bo; while Bo was feeling how hard he could chew Hunk's hand without hurting Hunk. Then Bo would sneak upstairs after Hunk to sleep on Hunk's pants just where Hunk dropped them by the bedside; and Hunk would go to sleep with one hand hanging down, still all wet and slobbery, so's he could touch Bo's ribs just where an upset lye-can had
once taken all the hair off. Then as Hunk rolled over and got his head under the pillow to sleep right he would have heard and felt Bo's last contenting sigh, and he might have murmured:

"Bo, I wouldn't—trade—trade—you off fer the best—best—ten-thousand-dollar dog they—got—or all the other yelps and kyoodles—in this—this—town!"

Not that Hunk loved Bo. No—no! Whoever heard the right sort of boy say he loved his dog? Hunk's invariable mode of address to Bo before any of the West Side kids was: "Hi, there, you mangy kyoodle—take your nose out o' there!" or "Aw, here—Bo, if you don't quit chasin' that Johnson cat when the ole lady's lookin' I'll burn you over the slats with this bat!" or "Aw, cut it out, Bo! If you tear my pants any furder I won't take you to hunt skunks no more!"

So Hunk, when he was turned away from the fair grounds gate with Bo, crossed the street with a sigh. It was giving up a good deal not to pass into this gilded, domed and minarette city of delight behind the high board fence where the band was playing and he could hear the slam-bang of the sledges on the weight-lift machines and the calls of the side-show spielers and the whinnies of the silky horses in the prize stock pavilion and a lonesome blue-ribbon calf bawling. All these fine sounds came out above the pleasant noise of many people going in and wandering—folks who had no dogs under their arms nor principles whatever. Still Hunk regretted nothing—on matters affecting Bo there was nothing to compromise.

"Aw, Bo—I don't think they's any dog worth ten thousand dollars, anyhow—no dog they got in there. How'd you like to be put in a box like Dad said, and be insured and wear ribbons and have to jest eat biscuit—and have to get washed? Aw, Bo—you wouldn't stand fer it!"

Bo went on ahead, exploring a tarweed ditch that ran along the fair grounds fence. Hunk looked prospectingly along that fence; he and all the town kids had prospected that fence all week as they had last year and the year before. All the town kids and all the yelps and kyoodles had made fruitless pilgrimages along outside that fence. There was no chance. At each corner a guard kept an eye on the fence as well as the kids, and they wouldn't even let you inside the outer barbed wire one. Hunk merely walked down the pasture towards the slaughter-house, but along the wire fence listening to all the fine noises that a fair can make. Along with the whinnies and brays and moos and baas and cackle s that came to him from the pavilions along this side of the grounds he could hear now a continual yapping and barking and howling. All the unhappy dogs in the bench show were wailing as if they knew that somewhere outside it was fine and sunny and there dogs ought to be.

"Aw, Bo—hear 'em! They ain't worth much. They sound jest like all the yelps around town. You an' me, Bo—we'd rather go hunt skunks."

Bo came tearing back along the tin-can-festooned creek that wandered away through the pasture. It was sort of an old junk-pasture where all sorts of refuse was dumped from the town and fair, and the creek was just that kind, too—seeped and spilled out from under the fair grounds fence, scummy and uncertain, but straying off past the slaughter-house into the woods and hills until finally it shook off its grimy servitude and began singing and falling and hurrying with all sorts of adventures. A creek that knew Hunk and Bo as Hunk and Bo knew it—and they could all laugh and run together when once they got safe from the town.

Bo circled wildly in on the forbidden ground, ploughed into the tarweed, scratching his spine, his feet in the air, grinning up with the pure delight of living and possessing a boy who said: "Skunks?" on a morning like this. Then he hopped on three legs down into the creek-bed—just where it oozed under the high fence, protected here by a crisscross of barbed wire and drainboards rough and rotted. Bo smelled in under this for an enticing glimpse of the fair. And all he saw was the back of some building from which came the clamor of high-bred dogs whose stomachs were not quite
right and whose souls were all wrong. Bo gave a yap of cheerful derision—and then, suddenly—right in his face came back a surprised "wu—uff!"

Hunk Eads heard that, too. He looked across the wire to see Bo and a stranger, noses together, ears cocked, giving gruff "Wu—uffs—uffs" at each other, in startled suspicion, challenge, cajolery as two capable, high-minded and independent dogs will do on meeting for the first time.

"Wu—uff—who-are-you? Gr—rr—rr—want-to-fight?"

"Gr__rr—rr—not-unless-you-do-but-I'm-ready—whu—uff!"

"Gr——rrr—rr!"

Then: "Aw, you—Bo! You git out o' that!"

But Bo had the end of a rotten board in his mouth, shaking it, and the stranger was yawning away on the loose barbed wire. And Bo hauled a bit of board down into the creek mud and the stranger pushed into the wire and twisted and kicked and finally came through with a manful yelp.

He had left a blue ribbon and a large gob of stiff brown hair on the barbs. He crawled up out of the mud and tin cans of the creek as if mud and tin cans were an eager and new experience to a hungry soul. Bo hopped on across and the stranger followed straight to Hunk. Once in the pasture he stopped and shook himself as if here, on the green, under the sun, among the cockleburrs and smelling a boy's stone bruise, life was good.

Hunk stopped and looked at that dog. Never in his life had he seen such a homely dog. The stranger was loose and clumsy and red-haired, with comical and useless whiskers, but he had inquiring brown eyes and a humorous, speculative grin. He paddled around in the tarweeds after Bo and now and then looked up at Hunk as if to say: Well, boy, I'm right here and not ashamed of it—what'll we do next?"

"Hi you!" Hunk hailed him, how'd you ever git in the State Fair? The darnedest, ugliest, sorry old dog I ever seen in my life! Ain't he, Bo?"

Bo said: "Whu-uff." Then he smelled of the place on the stranger's hide where the barbs bad torn off his wiry coat. Then they smelled noses. Then they went on after Hunk in the most matter-of-fact way—Hunk's dog, Bo, and the Ambassador's ten-thousand-dollar Airedale terrier, Lord Jim.

"Aw, you—Bo," said Hunk, "can this feller catch skunks?"

Now, Lord Jim didn't know anything about skunks. He had never heard of skunks. Skunks never moved in the Best Circles. Lord Jim never moved anywhere else. Lord Jim belonged to an Airedale clan, born and bred on the Ambassador's country place in Somersetshire, or some other shire. Lord Jim didn't know or care. All his life he had been cared for by a "man"—fed, washed, combed, exercised, inspected, measured, ribboned, praised and price-marked. But somehow, nobody ever thought of loving Lord Jim. He was accustomed to sitting around places—kennels, shows, railroad trains or steamships with a good-natured grin and a ready cheerfulness, bored but making the best of it. The Ambassador was busied with empires and two-battleship programs, so he had no time to love Lord Jim. He merely paid for him. The "man" was employed to wash, comb, inspect and otherwise safeguard Lord Jim, but he was too busy to love him. And all the Ambassador's people and friends and all the other people who saw Lord Jim on the estate or kennel shows merely gazed admiringly or with respect; and the Ambassador's best bachelor crony summed the matter up when he said, once, pulling his mustaches:

"My word, Ponsonby, that bally beast of your s is stupid."

No one inquired further. The Ambassador brought Lord Jim to Washington and there a high and mighty lady got him into an exclusive kennel show; and then, by some influence or other, he was taken to this State Fair exhibit, all properly guarded, insured, cared for. Lord Tim didn't care—ministers of state, dog biscuit, coddling; women, world politics—it was all the same to him. He would much rather smell in a rathole, but was too well-bred to say so.

"My word, Ponsonby, that bally beast of yours is stupid."
He had smelled in a rathole! That was why he was now here. He had been comfortably covered, after his morning wash and exercise, in a safe nook just back of the section in the Dog Show where they would bring him out at the proper time, and his groom was away a moment in the washroom, when Lord Jim saw his first rat. It came in through the wire screen partition from the adjoining section, and as the curtains in front made the light bad this plebeian rat and the ten-thousand-dollar Airedale watched each other for a moment or two in some uncertainty. Then the rat slunk across the box, and Lord Jim was interested. He stuck his nose forward, smelled—and suddenly something awoke in his brain past all the dog diets and kennel club points that ever were. He launched himself straight forward at that rat vanishing in the gloom, struck the lower corner of the wire screen, the staples flew out and Lord Jim was half under before he knew it. The rat was dashing away down an empty corridor; and, as it was easier to wiggle through than back Lord Jim went on. The rat gained a door and Lord Jim tore after. The rat made for the forty feet of dingy sod to the fence and Lord Jim sprinted. The rat got under the old boards by the drain, and Lord Jim hunted with silent diligence. Then muttering to himself he looked under the fence and saw Hunk Eads and Hunk’s dog, Bo.

Now, that is the lamentable tale of the Two-Battleship Ambassador’s Ten-Thousand - Dollar Sunday - supplement-exploited Airedale terrier. The groom, who did not find Lord Jim, was gone for as much as ten minutes. Then he almost died. Then he spread the alarm, and everyone looked everywhere all over that fair and all over the town and telephoned and telegraphed and prayed and supplicated, and did everything except go down past the slaughter-house where Hunk and his dog Bo were hunting skunks.

Lord Jim and Bo stopped at the slaughter-house, and when Hunk hailed them from the creek each had a pig’s ear. It tasted good. Better than anything Lord Jim ever ate. Right out there in the sunshine and free air, with nobody around. Hunk sat on the fence and diagnosed his stone-bruised heel while Bo and Lord Jim lunched. Then he got down and limped on down the creek among the wild crab-apple thickets.

"Hi, you—old chin whiskers," he admonished Lord Jim, "git a wiggle on you and hunt skunks. You're big enough to rassle 'em good."

So deeper into the autumn woods they went. Hunk waded in the rustily, leaf-filled hollows and Bo and Lord Jim skurried around the banks and smelled under roots and in fence corners. It was a fine day for skunks, and the short gingerbread tail of Lord Jim waved exultantly far in the van through weed patches, collecting more cockleburrs than all the yelps and kyoodles in town could have done. They got in his long whiskers, and after a while Hunk stopped the raid to pull them off. What he couldn’t pull off he cut out with his knife, after which Lord Jim grinned thankfully but did not look so well. He crawled under culverts where Bo could barely wiggle through and all this added mud and gum from the tarweeds, and by mid-afternoon when Hunk whistled Bo back from a fight at the tannery, Lord Jim caused him surprise.

"Ole feller, you're a sight—you got in more dirt than Bo would in six months. You don't seem to know much about mudholes, anyhow."

They went across more pastures and chased cows and finally, far ahead, Hunk heard Bo bark. He climbed the fence into the new county road and hurried down a quarter-mile of new-laid tar, all black and fine-smelling in the sun. In the hollow where it turned, sure enough Bo was barking under a woodpile just by the road. Joyously Hunk drew near. Bo had his head under the wood and Lord Jim grinned expectantly from the top.

Yes, sir—skunks.

Hunk Eads could smell 'em.

Skunks were the one thing that Hunk and Bo were forbidden to hunt, which was the reason they hunted 'em. The last time Hunk hunted skunks his mother made him eat in the woodshed and sent his clothes out to be boiled, thereby losing her wash lady, and also
Hunk had to soak Bo for hours in carbolic water and get licked by his dad as well. But Bo and Hunk would hunt skunks. Skunks were the last Adventure.

Hunk smelled skunks the very first length of wood he threw off the pile; and he began to smell them more as he threw more wood. Round and round the woodpile circled Bo and Lord Jim. On one side was the new tar road and on the other cockleburrs and gravel. Bo and Lord Jim distributed tar in the burrs and burrs in the tar and on each other and over the cordwood and on Hunk's clothes. Hunk worked with encouraging yells, for to hunt skunks everyone must encourage everyone else. Round and round the woodpile tore Bo and Lord Jim, watching every crevice of the lowering sticks.

Lord Jim did not know what it was all about, but he tore around because Bo did and because Hunk yelled. In no time Hunk had half that cord of wood scattered around in the tarred road and the dogs splashed in and out and dashed under Hunk's legs expectantly, for now he was getting down to the last sticks. Also he was getting sick. In hunting skunks the ecstasy all comes from this climatic issue: Will you get the skunk before you get sick?

Hunk's battle cries were coming thickly now. He was weak and dizzy, and tried to hold his nose and pitch cordwood at the same time, which cannot successfully be done.

"Aw, you—Bo!" he gasped—"you—better watch—out! I—Ooo—oh—'way he smells he's a—a—humdinger—Bo!"

Bo sneezed and wheezed and coughed—he always got sick first, which was pure anticipation, for this was nothing to what Bo got later. He had to catch the skunk. Lord Jim stood at the other end of the woodpile, drooling, watching down under the sticks. Never had he smelled anything like this; he was sick clear down to the end of his ten-thousand-dollar tail, but still Lord Jim would have stayed by Hunk if it rained skunks. No one else ever let him eat pig ears or run in the cockleburrs. So Lord Jim looked pallidly at Bo and still smiled—but with effort.

"Now, hi—you fellers!" Hunk's voice struggled through a delicious delirium, his head spinning, the world upside down, his insides squirming to get out, his breath gone altogether: "When—I—lift this big stick, you—rassle—'im! . . . I—I'm goin' ter—run!" Then his eye fell on Bo, whose eyes were popping out of his head. "Aw, Bo—let ole whiskers do it. He—he's bigger'n you are and—he—don't have to—go home—to mother!"

Then Hunk gripped the last cordwood stick. "Now—rassle 'im!"

Hunk dashed the last cover aside and then dashed for the road.

Back of him he heard the mad battle. Round and round and round—Lord Jim and Bo and the skunk. Over and over with that skunk in the tar and cockleburrs. Lord Jim never knew why he did it. He just saw the skunk and grabbed feverishly.

Farther and farther up the hill Hunk retreated valiantly, watching the combat. "I got tar on my pants now already—and that's enough for mother," he reflected.

Then down in the wreck of that woodpile scattered in the road, silence reigned. The skunk was flattened. Bo lost no time. He staggered weakly down to the creek and crawled in. He lapped and coughed and then came out to roll and plough in the dirt and gravel. Lord Jim didn't know what to do. He had no further interest in the skunk. So he wobbled up the hill and was surprised when Hunk fled, yelling wildly.

"Old ginger whiskers, don't you come near me! I smell 'most as bad now as the last time I come home!" And upon the fence Hunk sat. Bo came along, but he had rubbed the first palpitant, ecstatic fragrance of that skunk into the creek bed dirt. Lord Jim didn't know the rules of a skunk hunt. He went on back to town and, undimmed and unsubdued, walking carefully forty paces from Hunk Eads, for Hunk, now the ardor of the chase was done, had begun troubledly to think of home and mother.

"Aw I'll tell her this ole whiskers dog did it, Bo! We don't smell bad as he does, do we, Bo? That ole feller,
he don't know enough to brash himself off after he hunts skunks."

Then they went on towards town. When they got a mile from the wood-pile they all felt better. The air seemed fresher here; and yet when they passed the tannery office, Hunk in the lead, the lady stenographer looked up. When Bo came along she pressed her handkerchief to her lips. When Lord Jim came along she shut the window and was pale. And they were all on the other side of the road, too. After skunk hunts Hunk Eads always went home by secluded ways and alleys, subdued, yet eager to please mother. It was useless to try to deceive mother. She would know he had hunted skunks. So would the neighbors. So would all the folks on every street he passed. All the West Side kids yelled to-night, as they always yelled:

"Hi, Hunk, did you get the skunk?"
"Aw, sure. What you think me and Bo hunt skunks for? I got the best skunk dog you ever see. You see that hombly ole feller follerin' me and Bo? He's a good skunk dog, too,—only he's so full of tar and burrs and gravel now he can't hardly hist hisself along. Only I wish he wouldn't roller me home to mother. . . . If you kids know any guy 'at wants a good skunk dog—hit—fellers, there comes the cop!"

Now the cop saw and smelled Hunk Eads simultaneously. He stopped on the other corner and mopped his head wearily. He was a tired cop. He had been chasing and rounding up dogs ever since nine o'clock. So had all the other cops. They were under strict orders from the chief. Why, the afternoon papers had a front story on it! The Ambassador's Ten-Thousand-Dollar Airedale—where was he?

The cop looked at Hunk and Bo and Lord Jim. "Hey, you kids, you seen any strange dog around here?"

The town kids watched each other and the cop, injudiciously embarrassed, as the town kids always did when addressed by the law. Whatever was the matter, of course some of them had a finger in it. Hunk Eads looked stolidly at the cop. Bo scratched his ear. Lord Jim smelled of himself.

"Say, you," began the cop—"you Eads kid, there! You been hunting, ain't you? Sufferin' Johnson! Wait till your dad sees you!"

"Aw, my dad don't care—much. He c'n smoke so he don't have to smell me—much. It's mother 'at always has to smell a feller."

"I guess she will." The cop cautiously approached and waved his stick at Hunk's canine companions. "And I'm going to have them two kyoodles of yours pinched by the board o' health—that's what I'm going to do. And say, did you see any prize dog down there? They lost one at the fair and it busted up the Dog Show."

Now, when the cop came near, Lord Jim got up. He sat down and got up, and sat down and got up continually, for if he didn't stick fast to the sidewalk he stuck fast to himself. The oil and tar on Lord Jim had gathered waste paper, weed-seeds, autumn leaves all the way from the slaughter-house to the First Church, Scientist, and now he could but club the walk dismally with his stubby tail when the cop approached. Still he looked trustfully at Hunk Eads, and still more trustfully at the cop, for policemen, in Lord Jim's world, had ever treated him with respect.

But this policeman glared indignantly at Lord Jim.

"Say, you Eads kid!" he roared, "you can't do this now! Everybody's complainin' about you. And you ain't got a license on that darn tar baby, either. I'm going to take him down, and if your pa wants him he'll have to come and pay the tax."

"Beat it!" sung Hunk to Lord Jim, "git out of here, old whiskers!"

But the more he tried to kick Lord Jim along the street, the more trustfully Lord Jim eyed the cop. From under his coattails the cop took a leash of wire and rope and fastened it about the new dog's neck.

"Aw, here," protested Hunk, vauntingly. "He ain't hurtin' you, that dog ain't. He's a good skunk dog, too."

"We don't need any more skunk dogs on the West Side!"

So down the street they went, the cop, groaning nobly in the pursuit of his
duty, Lord Jim wobbling along, puckering painfully as the tar dried on his ribs, and behind them Hunk and his dog Bo and all the West Side kids. Already the cop felt mean and dizzy and weak, but he was doing his duty nobly.

And when they came to the station the cop was speaking thickly, sickly, holding his club to his nose, his helmet lurching over his forehead, hauling Lord Jim stickily behind. In front of the station was an automobile in which were two women to whom the chief was talking, and when the first fragrance of the West Side cop and his cavalcade was wafted along they all looked up interestingly. They stopped talking, the ladies closed their eyes giddily, and the wild-eyed man sitting with the chauffeur, who had been valet to the Ambassador's ten-thousand-dollar Airedale, felt himself sinking strangely. But he had had those spells all day.

Sepulchrally the cop walked past. At him the chief glowered without a word. The desk sergeant stuck his head out the door and muttered.

"Fer th' luv av yer job, Cassidy, what's that ye got now?"

"I dunno. I'm sick. Jerry Eads' boy's been hunting again. And ye said to bring all the dogs. This may be wan, but I doubt it."

"Officer Cassidy!" roared the chief, "take it away! Don't ye see the lady's fainting?"

"So am I, and divil the sympathy I get. How can I go home to me wife now?"

"Take it away!" howled the chief, "or it's before the Trial Board ye go!"

At the end of his string Lord Jim puffed dismally. At his end of the string Officer Cassidy pulled sorrowfully. Lord Jim tried to get up, and because he was stuck he groaned, and because he groaned the disheveled man in the car opened his eyes and stared. Then he sat up. Then he gurgled frightfully and fell out of the car. And the next minute he was down on his knees before Lord Jim, letting out wild Cockney yelps, howls, entreaties, prayers, curses on all Hamerica.

"B'lime me! 'Is Lordship! 'Ow—ow!"

The two ladies looked and shrieked—and collapsed. Officer Cassidy cast one long, wan, seasick look at Lord Jim and his man and then fled into the station-house past the desk sergeant, who tried to bar him.

And without the station the chief gazed with the vast, tense contempt of the Irish on Lord Jim and his man. "And is that ut? That—and ye tur-nerd the town upside down for?"

Then to Hunk Eads and his dumb-founded retinue: "Ye little divil, ye get home out of here fast as ye can. When ye can come around smellin' like a Christian lad there's fifty dollars for ye for finding the da-ag. The honor of the city is saved—but God help Cassidy!"

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A private car rolled out of town the next day. From his seat opposite a pale but now well-composed lady who occasionally entertained Ambassadors sat Lord Jim. The train went past the slaughter-house out upon which Lord Jim looked interestingly. The lady and Lord Jim's man, B'lime Me, wouldn't have known a slaughter-house when they saw one. But Lord Jim saw more—a small boy and a small dog trying to poke a rake handle under an ancient drain. Lord Jim had been soaked, shaven, scraped, medicated, deodorized. He reeked of all the perfumes of Araby now. Otherwise—

But somehow he felt a thrill away down to the end of his tail, which now was as hairless as a banana. He tried to wag it away down under the swathes of medicated cotton. Ouch! It hurt. Everything hurt.

But how Lord Jim did look back at Hunk Eads and his dog Bo poking away at whatever it was under that rotten old drain!