

# "POODLE IN THE PANTRY"



For many years, Kitty and I plugged our ears whenever the kids got around to asking for a dog. "Life's tough enough," we argued, "without adding a four-legged problem to our other difficulties."

But, as most parents eventually do, we yielded to pressure in a weak moment several months ago.

Penny and Jack had treated us to one of their rare "good days" and that girl on the radio was doing a fine job of selling "Doggie in the Window." And so, the following morning, a silly black mop of poodle joined the family circle.

"Remember," I said sternly, "it's your dog and it's up to you kids to look after her. Mom and I want no part of her," I added, as I took the pup away from Jack and bounced her on my lap.

Things went along fairly well for several months. There were the regular feedings, groomings, visits to the "vet," and, of course, the constant problem of the pup's indiscretions. These, strangely, always found the kids in bed or away from the house!

The other morning, however, dawned with a crisis. We'd been out late the night before and I was wiping a big 5:30 a.m. yawn off my face as I came downstairs. The blood-shot streaks in my eyes quickly turned to solid red!

The poodle had wormed her way into the pantry and among her trophies were a bag of flour, a broom, some paper towels, and a box of corn flakes! She sat proudly in the midst of the debris, her eyes shining, and her tail rapping out a conga beat on the floor. I was screaming like a wild-man and chasing the pup in ever-widening circles about the kitchen when the kids came in to investigate.

"This is it!" I shouted at them. "This poodle is through, finished!"

"But, daddy," Penny ventured, "She's only a puppy!"

"It's about time you kids learned that youth is no excuse for destruction and bad manners!" I snapped.

"That's what you're always saying, but you

adults aren't perfect-mannered either," Jack said rather timidly.

"What do you mean?" I asked.

"Take yesterday," he replied, "there were about ten people waiting to board a CTA bus. A big man, with a bundle and a gladstone bag, jumped on first. Then he blocked everybody while he searched for his wallet and finally came up with a \$2 bill. When the driver gave him his change, he screamed he wanted tokens.

"After he got his tokens, he walked back to the first seat, parked on the outside and put the bundle on the inside by the window. He dropped his bag in the aisle just in time for the man behind him to trip over it. When we got under way, all the seats were taken and a few people were standing, but he never moved the bundle. And at least 15 more people had to hurdle the bag to get to the rear of the bus as we went along the route.

"There was a 'no smoking' sign across the aisle but he lighted up a big cigar and gave the operator a hard time when he was asked to put it out.

"Then when he got to his home stop, he barged out the front door and into some people waiting to board, even though the way was clear to the center exit!"

As I listened to the young speech-maker, the pup shinnied up my leg and began licking my hand.

"Well," I conceded, calming down, "Maybe people are never too old to take stock of their manners."

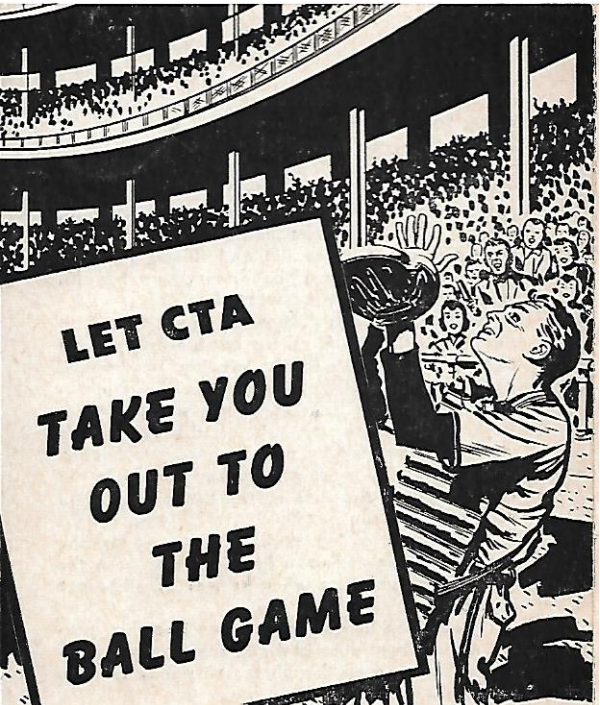
"Jeepers, Dad," Penny shouted, "it's almost six o'clock and the puppie will be off schedule if she doesn't get out soon!" She and her brother vanished from the room.

The rising Sun looked pretty on the dewy grass as the poodle and I headed for the vacant lot down the street.

Sincerely,

Bill Saver





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