

NO DOGS ALLOWED



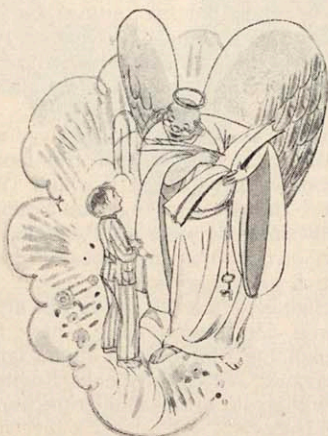
A wet tongue touched his arm



"Don't worry!" said the lady angel



Too late for Pat to warn him!



"Has Pat got here yet?" he asked



by

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ILLUSTRATIONS BY MAGINEL WRIGHT BARNEY

A story of the love between a boy and his dog. "He can follow me anywhere!" boasted Binks, but the day came—

IT WAS hot, so hot that a bird protested irritably from the branches of the maple overhead. The smell of the blistered paint of Binks' red coaster made your nose burn, and Binks' bad leg tingled under its brace. Every once in a while a gust of burning wind rushed down the valley, slamming doors and flattening newspapers against neat hedges. There was something desperate about the wind, as if God had started a fire, fierce beyond anything he had intended, and was doing his best to blow it out; but Binks knew that Mrs. Bassett, his father's housekeeper, would say he shouldn't think in that familiar way of God.

After the gust had passed, everything was oppressively still and sultry. When you lay on your stomach on the bank and squinted off down the rolling highway, you could see layers of heat waves shimmering above the asphalt. Upon this phenomenon Binks commented to Lilian Anne Olmsted, who had come down the road to play with him. But Lilian Anne would not look.

"You can see it if you move just a little," urged Binks. "Well, I won't," yawned Lilian Anne. "I wouldn't move to see—" then she did move. She sat bolt upright.

"Binkshop Vaile Tennant," she commanded, "you make your stupid old dog stop chasing that poor cat."

Binks, also, sat bolt upright, as abruptly as if Lilian Anne had slapped him.

"Pat O'Reilly is not a stupid dog," he said very distinctly, "and he doesn't have to stop unless he chooses."

But at that moment Pat O'Reilly did choose. He came caroling back, every wire hair jauntily erect. He threw himself down at Binks' feet, sighed prodigiously.

Binks flung himself upon him, crooning endearments, with a reproachful eye upon Lilian Anne. Pat O'Reilly gulped and lowered his eyes to hide an overwhelming emotion, as is the way of a small boy and his dog the world over.

"There, you see?" Binks continued to stare accusingly at Lilian Anne. "He understands every word I say. He's the smartest dog in town. He's the smartest dog in the country. He's—" Binks grew quite pale and swallowed—"he's the smartest dog in the whole world."

"If he's so smart—" Lilian Anne disdainfully angled a sandal upon a slim brown toe—"why doesn't he go to school with you?"

"He does," Binks' eyes were wide with triumph. "And he waits outside all morning for me. He'd foller me anywhere."

"Well, I know one place he can't follow you."

"Where?" Binks' challenge crackled, but his gray eyes were a bit anxious.

"To Heaven."

"Huh! I guess he can, too." But Binks looked startled, and his arm tightened around Pat O'Reilly.

"Well, I guess he can't. You don't suppose God wants Heaven all messed up with mangy Irish terriers, do you?"

Binks considered this hideous possibility for a moment. "Then he's not," he announced at length, "the kind of God I would choose."

He caught his breath as he spoke, but his eyes were very dark and steady in his white face.

"Oh, Binks, what you said!" Lilian Anne was rigid with horror. "You don't choose God; He chooses you, if you love Him, and keep your heart pure, and 'bey His laws." Lilian Anne was quite carried away by her evangelical fervor. "God is love. You ought to—"

"Not if he doesn't love Pat O'Reilly, He isn't," enunciated Binks with grim finality.

"You wicked boy! God will punish you just the way He punished that Jones boy for going swimming on Sunday."

"He did not! I don't believe God ever let Eddie Jones drown just because he went swimming on Sunday. I don't believe God's like that."

"Well, I know He *is*," Lilian Anne spoke with a little superior smile that Binks found vaguely reminiscent. Lilian Anne was always "dressing up" in the tones and manners of her elders. "If you want to be saved, you must repent your sins and be —"

WELL, Pat O'Reilly always repents. Why, just yesterday—you know how he hates to be bathed—well, just yesterday, after he ate up Mrs. Bassett's knitting, he went down and sat in his tub and barked and barked for someone to come and bathe him."

Lilian Anne waved this aside.

"Mark my words," she pursued didactically—ah, now Binks knew who it was Lilian Anne was "dressing up" in today. It was Mrs. Bassett. Mrs. Bassett said, "Mark my words" in just that tone, and she always spoke with that air of authority when she mentioned God.

There were sucking noises in the hot asphalt behind them, and a car drew up at the curb. A lady leaned out of the driver's seat. She was all in white and looked deliciously cool and, as always, deliciously lovely. She was Lilian Anne's mother. Binks had often thought that she was exactly what you would choose in a mother if you were lucky enough to have one.

"Lilian Anne," she said—and her voice, too, was deliciously cool and soft—"run right home. Mary shouldn't have let you come out here in this heat. I declare, she gets more irresponsible every day. And, Binks, Mrs. Bassett has been looking everywhere for you. It's time for your glass of milk and your nap."

She smiled her lovely smile at Binks, and he scrambled to his feet and beamed, in spite of the loathsome words "milk" and "nap." Then he stood on his good leg and wriggled his elbows as he always (Turn to page 52)