

ON THE AIR

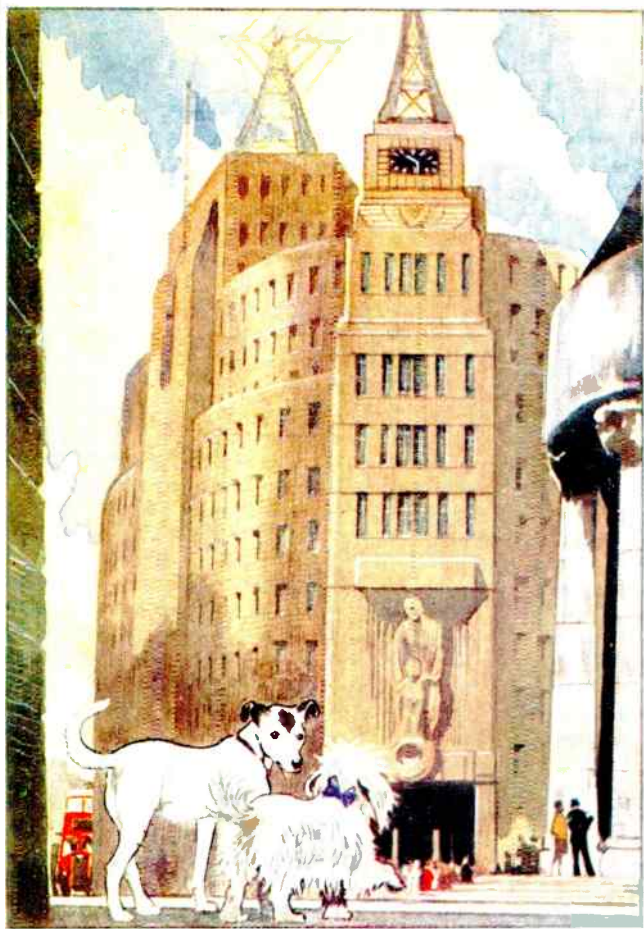
by
DENIS CLEAVER

Illustrated by
G. W. BACKHOUSE

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They reached Broadcasting House.

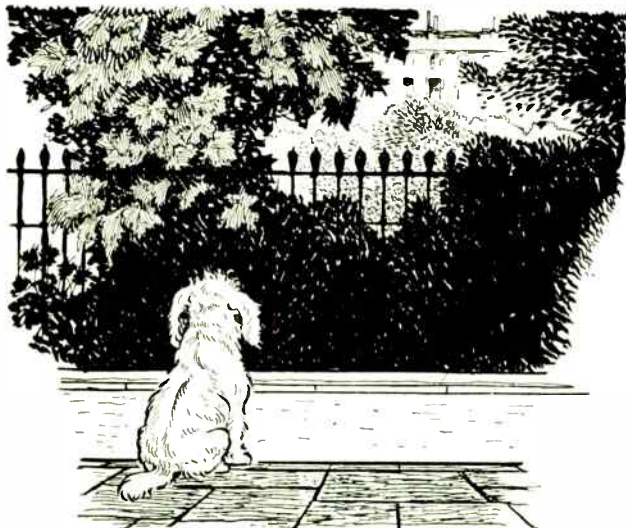
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CHAPTER ONE

Mr. Wallis sat in the evening sun and thought. His eyes were very round as he stared at the neat little garden in the middle of the Kensington square, as if he hoped that the garden would be able to help him. Every now and again he snuffled through his whiskers, which he always did when he was worried. And he was very worried

now. A cat sauntered by with a very haughty air, but even this did not arouse Mr. Wallis, which was surprising, for ever since he had come to London and had discovered that cats usually ran away when barked at, he had been a most ferocious cat hunter. In the country, where he lived with his friend Mr. Willis and his master and mistress, Christopher and Mary, there were no cats at all, for the cottage was a long way from the nearest neighbour. In fact, Mr. Wallis had up to now lived a very quiet life. Fancy not knowing that cats run away when they are barked at !

Mr. Willis, who was older and wiser than Mr. Wallis, sometimes grew quite cross with him. Mr. Willis had rather a superior manner. He had lived in London before coming to Christopher and Mary, and was inclined to give himself airs because he had seen so much more of the world than poor Mr. Wallis. You must not think that he was not nice to his friend ; but Mr. Wallis was so very simple that sometimes Mr. Willis could not help being angry. But



A cat sauntered by.

Mr. Wallis did not really mind. He was very fond of Mr. Willis in a humble sort of way, and took a great deal of notice of him. He seemed so very wise—and even when he was wrong about something he usually managed to make it look as if he had been right all the time! Mr. Wallis wished he could do that, too!

All his life Mr. Wallis had wanted to see London. Adventures were very few and far between in the country, but in London all sorts of things were always happening; exciting, wonderful things. Why, even the streets were paved with gold, or so Mr. Wallis had believed until he came to Kensington. The family had suddenly decided to stay in London for a whole month, and Mr. Wallis had his wish—he was going to see the wonderful city he had heard so much about from Mr. Willis. They had been here for just a week, and Mr. Wallis was most disappointed. Nothing had happened to him so far, except that he had been nearly run over by a taxi and the driver had said horrid things to him!

That could not be counted as an ADVENTURE. And yet, although the streets were not paved with gold but with granite slabs, and although in his heart of hearts Mr. Wallis, who was only a little dog, was rather frightened of the bustle and noise, yet, somehow he had the feeling that wonderful things were happening round the corner all the time. Only he was never there when they happened. When he turned the corner there was nothing but an empty street.

And so now, sitting outside the block of flats where the family were staying, he thought and thought, and worried and worried, wondering how he could find that TERRIFIC ADVENTURE he was sure he deserved to have. After all, though he was a very simple little dog, he had his heart in the right place, and if anybody ought to have an adventure it was he.

“Dear, dear,” sighed Mr. Wallis to himself, snuffing hard through his whiskers, “I wonder how I can find an adventure?”

Just at that very moment however, Mr.

Willis came round the corner of the flats.

"Where have you been?" asked Mr. Wallis. "I looked all over the place for you but you'd disappeared."

Mr. Willis sat down, yawned, cocked one ear up, a favourite habit of his, and spoke in a very superior sort of way.

"I've been with friends," he said. "Such nice people. Very smart of course. They go simply everywhere. In great demand, I can tell you."

"Oh," said Mr. Wallis in a small voice. He felt very out of it when his friend talked like this. In fact, he had felt rather lonely ever since coming to London. Christopher and Mary were out a lot, shopping or going to the pictures, and Mr. Willis had his own friends, haughty dogs he had known when he had lived in London before. This evening, although Christopher and Mary were not out, they were busy listening to the radio. There was a play being broadcast, and both the children enjoyed listening to plays. Mr. Wallis wished they would come out and play with him instead.



"Where have you been?" asked Mr. Wallis.

“ I do think they are mean,” he said to Mr. Willis.

Mr. Willis, however, did not mind a bit, for round the corner had appeared a jaunty little dog with perky ears, a short, stiff tail and a dare-devil expression on his face. He was not exactly fat, but he was certainly not thin ! His name was Mike, and Mr. Willis and Mr. Wallis had made friends with him almost as soon as they had arrived in London. Mike had a wonderful home. His master, who was called Bob, was a dustman, so of course Mike had plenty of food and could hardly help growing just a little plump. He often came round to the Kensington flats, dropping in at all sorts of odd times. Now he came round the corner jauntily enough, but as he drew nearer they could see that he had a worried expression on his ugly little face.

“ Hallo, Mike,” said Mr. Willis, “ how nice of you to come and see us. I say, are you worried about anything ? ”

Mike looked up and down the street, which was really one side of the square.

“Well, as a matter of fact, I can’t find Bob,” he said. “He went out without saying a word to me, and it will be dark soon.”

Mr. Willis and Mr. Wallis looked at each other. It seemed very strange that Mike should worry over his master being out after dark. After all, Bob was old enough to look after himself. Mike seemed to guess what they were thinking.

“I suppose you think I’m silly,” he said, “but you don’t know Bob. Nicest man that ever lived, but he’s got some friends I don’t approve of. There’s that Alf, for instance. Never did like the man, and what’s more, I don’t trust him. I ought not to be saying all this, I suppose, but I know you won’t tell any one else. But to tell you the truth,” here he dropped his voice, “I’ve got an idea that Alf is up to no good. And Bob is so easily influenced. You see what I mean?”

Mr. Wallis had not the slightest idea what he was talking about, but Mr. Willis nodded and looked grave.

“Yes, of course,” he said. “Ah, well, we can but hope for the best.”

When Mike had gone, still searching for his master, Mr. Wallis, in a very small voice, put a question.

“Mr. Willis, what does ‘influenced’ mean, please?”

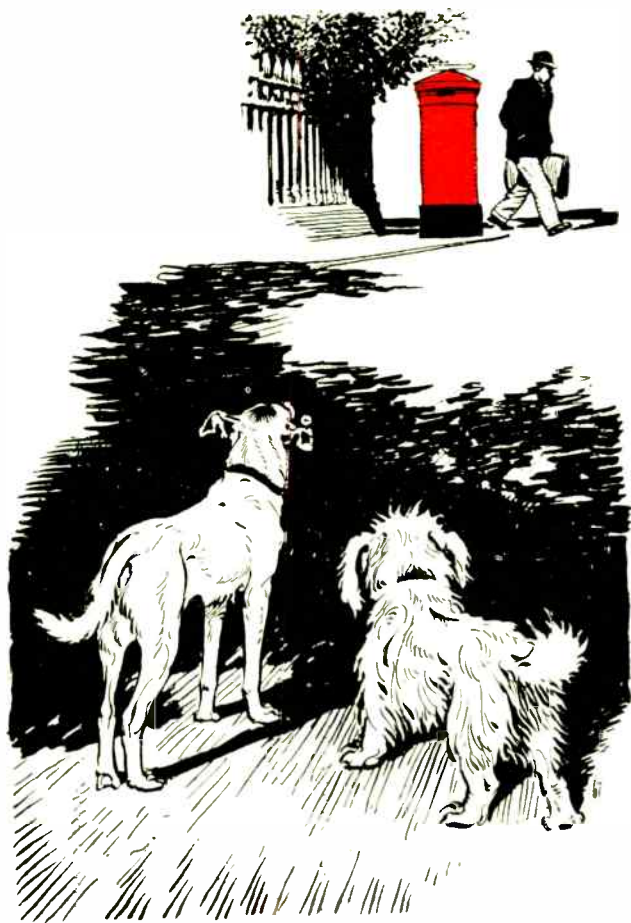
Mr. Willis did not reply for a few moments. If Mr. Wallis had not been such a simple dog he might have thought his friend did not know!

“It means . . . it means . . . well, really, Mr. Wallis, it’s far too difficult for you to understand.”

Mr. Wallis was prevented from asking any more questions, for just then, round the corner, came Bob.

“I say, I say, there’s Bob!” cried Mr. Wallis excitedly. “Come on, let’s go and tell him Mike is looking for him.”

He began to run up the street, Mr. Willis following. Little did they know as they followed Bob that they were just about to start an adventure that could only be called STUPENDOUS.



"I say, I say, there's Bob!"

O.T.A.

17

B

“ Bob! Bob! Hi, Mike wants you! ” barked Mr. Wallis.

But Bob did not hear. By this time it was growing dusk, and a little breeze had sprung up, making the leaves scurry across the grass in the garden. And Mr. Wallis scurried too, Mr. Willis coming more sedately behind, along the street, round a corner and then right into an open doorway. All was dark inside, and Mr. Wallis, who was just a little bit frightened of the dark, halted.

“ I wonder why Bob came in here? ” he said. “ Where are we, do you think? ”

This was a question Mr. Willis *could* answer. They were in the kitchen which was built under the block of flats. Here the meals for the restaurant were cooked, and when people living in the flats did not want to have their meals in the restaurant, trays of food were sent up to them. Each flat had a little opening in the wall of one of the rooms. It had a pair of sliding doors and was called a hatch. A small lift ran from the kitchen right up to the top of the

block of flats. When you wanted a meal you just told the people in the kitchen and they sent it up in the lift, stopping it at the hatch of your flat. You then opened the sliding doors, there was your meal on the lift, and all you had to do was to take out the tray, press the button and send the lift back again to the kitchen below.

Mr. Willis and Mr. Wallis were now in the kitchen. It was in darkness and quite deserted. Bob had disappeared.

“Are you sure he came in here?” asked Mr. Willis.

“I think he did,” replied Mr. Wallis. “But I can’t imagine what for.”

Mr. Willis began to explore. Certainly there was no sign of Bob. Then he came to the lift shaft in the corner. There was no lift to be seen, and that meant that it was probably stuck somewhere farther up the shaft.

“Somebody,” said Mr. Willis, “has forgotten to press the button and send it down again. Would you like a ride in a lift, Mr. Wallis?”

“ I don't know,” said Mr. Wallis doubtfully. “ Is it dangerous? ”

Then he remembered that he had wanted an adventure. Perhaps it would be an adventure to ride in a lift.

“ All right,” he said bravely. “ I don't mind.”

Mr. Wallis, pleased to show what a clever dog he was, pressed the button at the side of the shaft and in a few moments the lift came down, very silently, and with a slight bump came to rest.

“ There we are,” said Mr. Willis, “ in you go.”

Very gingerly, Mr. Wallis stepped into the lift. It was very small, but there was room enough for the two dogs. Perhaps a man could have got into it, but only by crouching.

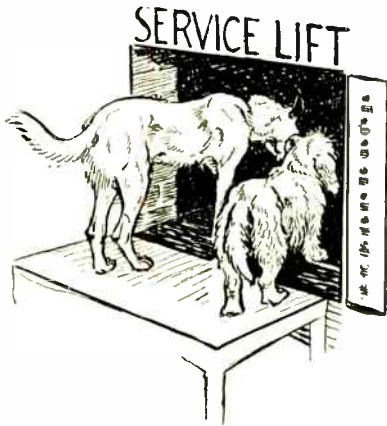
“ And away we go! ”

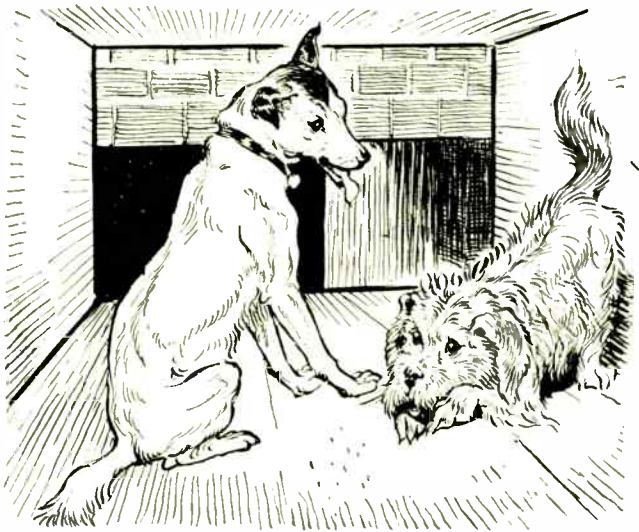
Each flat had a button by the side of the hatch, and when you pressed this the lift either came up from the kitchen or went down again. The kitchen had a button, too, and when Mr. Willis pressed this for

the second time, the lift began to rise. Mr. Wallis felt as though his tummy was sinking through his paws!

“Oh, dear,” he thought to himself, “I do hope we shall be safe. How awful if the lift went wrong and we fell right down the shaft!”

But he was careful not to let Mr. Willis see that he was frightened. He puffed out his whiskers and tried to look as though he was enjoying the ride.





CHAPTER TWO

Smoothly the lift rose. After a moment or so, Mr. Wallis's tummy caught him up, so to speak, and then he felt better. He still could not help wondering whether anything would go wrong with the lift—he very much hoped that Mr. Willis knew how to stop it—but he did his best to look brave.

“Quite nice, isn’t it?” said Mr. Willis, as the walls of the shaft flowed past.

“Yes. Oh, yes, very,” snuffled Mr. Wallis.

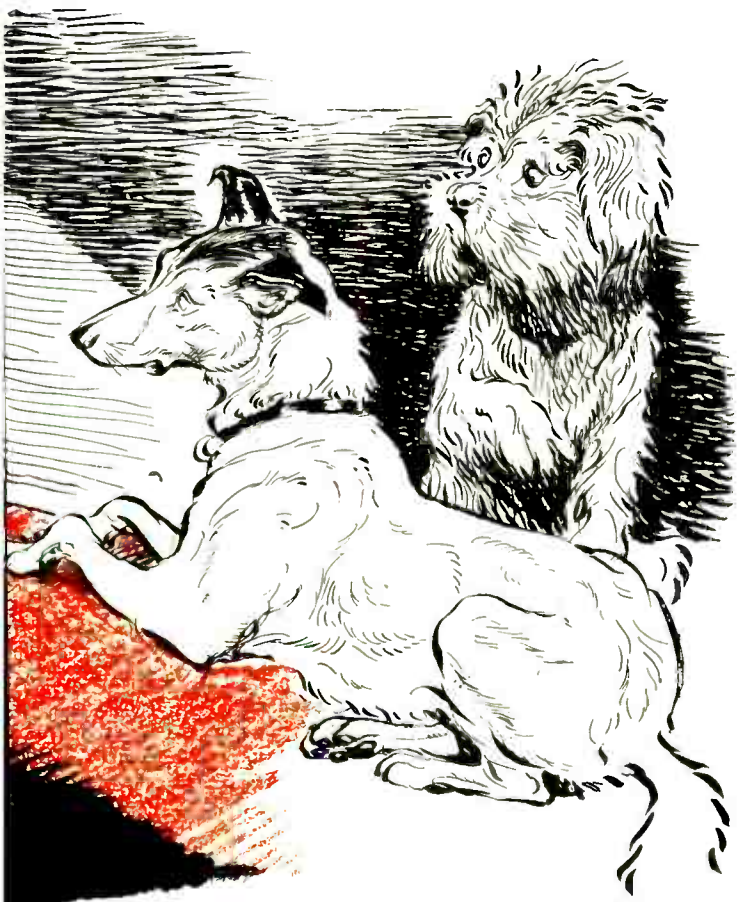
And at that moment, just when he was beginning to get used to the movement and had almost forgotten his fear that the lift might either fall down the shaft or go right on and hit the roof of the flats, at that very moment the lift stopped. For one horrible second Mr. Wallis thought it was going to fall, and running into the corner he hid his head under his paws and waited for the catastrophe. But nothing happened. The lift just stayed motionless.

“That’s funny,” said Mr. Willis, quite unperturbed, and casting a contemptuous glance at Mr. Wallis in his corner.

Nothing happened for a moment, and then two little doors in the shaft were flung open and a round, red, dishevelled face stared in at them. Mr. Wallis, who had just plucked up enough courage to uncover his whiskers, gave a yelp of terror and returned to his corner. Mr. Willis, however, realised



A round, red, dishevel



ce stared in at them.

that the lift had stopped opposite the hatch of one of the flats.

“Wuff,” he said to the face, in a friendly sort of way.

But the face did not seem at all friendly.

“Good gracious,” it said, “what on earth . . . ?” Before it could complete the sentence, the lift suddenly began to move again. With a gasp of amazement, the face watched the two dogs disappear up the shaft.

“Well, things are coming to a pretty pass,” it muttered, returning to the desk, which, littered with papers, stood near the window of the room. “Dogs in lifts! Whatever next!”

In the lift, Mr. Willis was beginning to wonder whether after all he did know how to work it. He was sure he had pressed the button properly down there in the kitchen, and yet here was the lift behaving in a most extraordinary manner. Mr. Wallis, who seemed to have forgotten that he had wanted an adventure, was quite certain that he was going to be hurled right up to

the roof of the flats. Up and up they went, faster and faster.

The lift stopped so abruptly that Mr. Wallis was flung out of his corner. As he hit the other side of the lift, once again two little doors were opened in the shaft, and once again they found themselves looking into a room. Once again a face stared at them. But this time it was not the red, round face they had seen lower down, but a rather dirty face with bristles on its chin. They recognised it at once as belonging to Bob, Mike's master.

"Wuff, wuff," barked Mr. Willis delightedly.

"Wuff, wuff," repeated Mr. Wallis, deciding that he was going to jump out of the lift and return to the ground-floor by way of the stairs which ran past each flat.

But Bob did not seem at all pleased to see them. He stared in amazement for a moment and then, before either Mr. Willis or Mr. Wallis could make a move, shut the hatch doors. Immediately the lift started to descend again. Mr. Wallis began to cry

quietly to himself. His whiskers twitched and big tears trickled down his nose. This was awful. In fact, it was worse than awful. Perhaps they would never get out of this lift! Perhaps they would go on, up and down, up and down, for ever and ever!

But no, yet again the lift stopped abruptly.

“I think,” said Mr. Willis, “we’ve stopped at that other flat again. Now, Mr. Wallis, be ready to jump out as soon as the hatch doors are opened.”

As he finished speaking the doors opened with a jerk, and there, sure enough, was the red, round face again.

“Now look here,” said the face, “what do you think you’re doing? This lift,” it added severely, “is not intended for dogs to ride in. Oh, no, you don’t!”

Mr. Willis had tried to jump out, but the man pushed him back, slammed the doors and pressed the button. Again the lift rose.

“Well, that’s a nice way to behave,” said Mr. Willis indignantly.

Mr. Wallis was by this time almost past caring what happened to him. He had



The doors opened with a jerk.

ceased crying, because this did not seem to do any good. He just sat there in the corner and looked reproachfully at his friend. His whiskers quivered with fear and temper, for Mr. Wallis, though usually quite harmless, could fly into the most awful tempers sometimes.

"It's all your fault," he moaned. "Making me come in this horrid lift. Pretending you knew how to work it. You're nothing more than a cheat!"

With that he began to growl, which he did when in a temper, and scabbled at the floor of the lift with his front paws, as if he meant to dig a hole and drop right through to the bottom of the shaft.

"I hate you," he snuffled angrily.

Mr. Willis looked ashamed of himself. He had to admit that Mr. Wallis was quite right. He *had* persuaded him to enter the lift, and he *had* pretended that he could work it. In fact, he had quite believed he could. But now he was not so sure. The lift seemed to be rising faster than ever.

Jerk! It had stopped again. And at the

same flat as before, right at the top of the building. Bob's face gazed at them once again. Mr. Willis, determined that this time nothing should prevent him jumping out, dived under Bob's arm as quick as a flash.

"Here, you get out of this," said Bob. "What do you mean by following me about, eh?"

"Well, Mike is looking for you," said Mr. Wallis, who had crawled out of the lift while Bob's attention was occupied with Mr. Willis, who now felt much better and braver with a solid floor under his paws. "And what are you doing up here in this flat?" he added.

Bob, of course, did not understand a word that Mr. Wallis said.

"You stop making that noise," he snapped.

He began to move across the room to the lift.

"I'm getting out of this," he muttered, beginning to climb into the lift, a very tight squeeze, for he was quite a large man. He was half in and half out of the lift when

the door of the flat was flung open, and there stood red-face.

“What on earth is all this noise about?” he demanded. “I won’t have my work disturbed by dogs barking all over the place. Don’t you know that every sound comes down that lift shaft?”

He stared at Bob, still trying to scramble into the lift, then at the leather bag on the table, and suddenly sprang forward. He grasped Bob and hauled him out of the lift.

“I see,” he said grimly, “a burglar, eh? Came up in the lift, did you? Well, well.”

He seemed a very strong man, for he held Bob quite easily with one hand while he picked up the telephone with the other. Mr. Willis and Mr. Wallis watched in astonishment while red-face telephoned the police station and told them that he had caught a burglar and would they please send round a policeman at once.

“But look here,” said Mr. Willis, “this is Bob! Mike’s master, you know. He can’t be a burglar. He’s a dustman.”

Red-face took no notice, and presently a



"A burglar, eh?"

O.T.A.

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C

large policeman came and took Bob away.

“Very smart piece of work on your part, Mr. Carruthers,” said the policeman, who seemed to know red-face quite well.

Mr. Carruthers smiled. Mr. Willis and Mr. Wallis decided that he was really quite a nice man.

“Well, to be truthful,” he said, “it was these two dogs who made me come up here. Barking their heads off, they were, so I thought I had better see what they were barking at. I don’t know how they got into the lift in the first place, but I suppose the burglar wanted the lift so that he could escape, and must have had quite a shock when he found two dogs in it. Then, I expect, he sent it down again, hoping that they would jump out in the kitchen, but it kept getting stuck at my flat. Anyway, we have to thank them for everything, really.”

Listening with all their ears, Mr. Willis and Mr. Wallis discovered that the owners of the flat were away, and that Bob had broken in by coming up in the lift and forcing the hatch doors.

“Very clever,” said the policeman, “but not quite clever enough. Now come along, my man, you’re coming back to the police station with me.”

“There you are,” said Mr. Wallis, turning to his friend when Bob had been taken away. “I was right after all. Bob did go into the kitchen.”

Then he stopped suddenly. He had been feeling very pleased with himself. He had tracked down Bob and had helped Mr. Carruthers to catch him trying to steal. In fact, if he and Mr. Willis had not been in the lift, the burglar probably never would have been caught. But then, as he puffed out his whiskers with pride, he realised that Bob was going to be taken away to prison. And Bob was Mike’s master.

“Oh, dear,” he said, “what have we done? Poor Mike!”

Mr. Willis cocked one ear up and the other down as he thought this over. It certainly was hard on poor Mike. And Bob had seemed such a nice man, too. Still, he certainly should not try to steal

things from other people like that.

Mr. Carruthers was wondering what to do with the two dogs. He could not leave them in the flat, and after they had been so helpful in capturing the burglar, they certainly deserved a reward. They were both wearing collars, and on each was their name and their new address in London. Mr. Carruthers examined the collars.

"Mr. Willis," he murmured to himself, "2, Cranton Court, Kensington. Why, bless my soul, you live in these flats! And what's *your* name, I wonder?"

He examined Mr. Wallis's collar and found, of course, that he, too, lived at 2, Cranton Court.

"Well, I suppose I had better take you back home," he said. "But first, you can come back to my flat and I'll see if I can find you two nice, large bones."

So back they went with him to his flat, and sure enough, he found the bones and gave one to each of them. Then, just as he was going to take them home, he suddenly stopped.

“Look,” he said, “I’m on the B.B.C. I wonder whether you would like to go on the air? You know, broadcast. How about it?”

Mr. Wallis immediately began to snuffle with excitement. Fancy, they were being asked to broadcast! My word, what an ADVENTURE that would be!

“Well, I don’t know,” said Mr. Willis. “I shall have to see if I can find the time. I have a lot of things to attend to in London, you know.”

“Don’t be so silly,” snapped Mr. Wallis. “Of course you’ve got the time. And if you don’t want to broadcast, I do! As a matter of fact, I think I should be rather good at it. Do you think they’ll want me to sing?”

Mr. Carruthers was still talking.

“Yes,” he said, “I think you’d be just right for that play next week. Well, come along, I’ll take you home and see what your family has to say about it.”



CHAPTER THREE

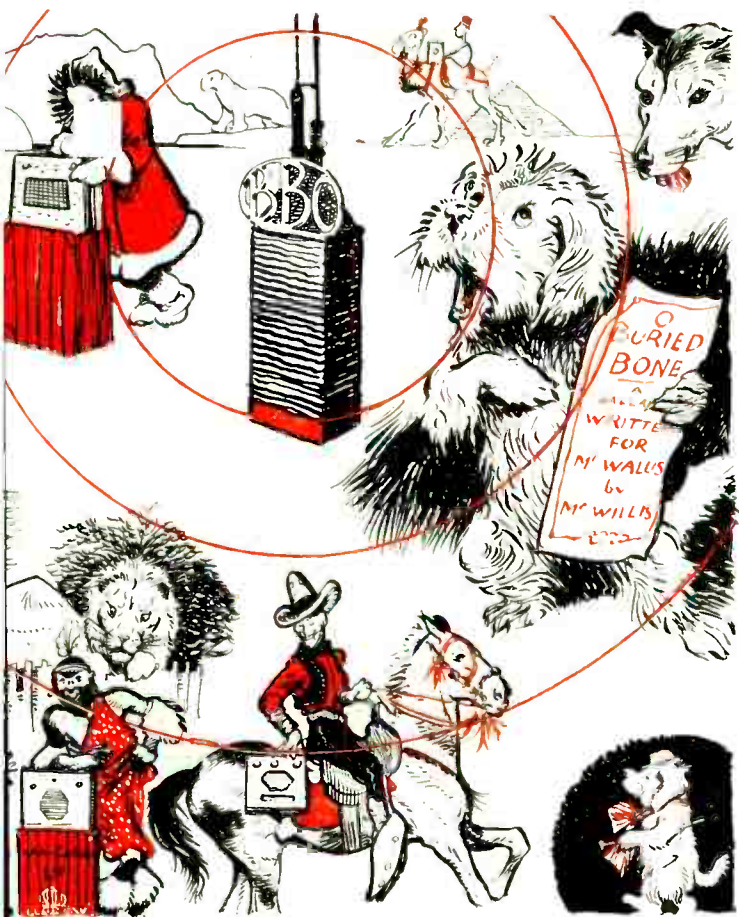
The whole family was tremendously excited, especially Christopher and Mary. When Mr. Carruthers had asked whether Mr. Willis and Mr. Wallis could broadcast, they could hardly believe their ears. Anna, who had looked after them all for many years, and could cook better than any one else in the whole world, was excited, too.

She was an Austrian, and though she had been in England for a long time, still could not talk English very well.

“That on the radio you should go is a thing of the most wonderful,” she said. “Though why two naughty little dogs they should require, I cannot tell!”

But she was really very fond of Mr. Willis and Mr. Wallis, though she sometimes got cross with them. Mr. Wallis, of course, was almost beside himself with excitement. He was to broadcast! His voice would be heard by millions and millions of people! It was wonderful. In fact, to be quite truthful, he grew very conceited.

Mr. Willis, try as he might, could not help feeling excited, too. It would certainly be fun going to Broadcasting House and taking part in the play. It seemed that Mr. Carruthers had been working hard at the play in his flat and that was why he had been so cross when Mr. Willis and Mr. Wallis had made a noise in the lift. Now, however, he was quite nice. Neither of the



ard by millions.

two friends quite understood what parts they were to take in the play, but Mr. Wallis had made up his mind that he would have to sing.

But there was one thing which made Mr. Willis and Mr. Wallis feel rather sad. Bob had been taken away to prison, and poor Mike was homeless. He came round to see them on the morning after Bob had been arrested by the policeman. He looked so sad that Mr. Wallis felt very sorry for him.

“It’s all right,” said Mike bravely, “you couldn’t help it, I know that. And to be honest, I suppose Bob ought to be in prison. But it’s the first time he’s ever done such a thing. It was that Alf who led him into it, I know that. I told you he had a bad influence on him, didn’t I?”

For the first time Mr. Wallis understood what this meant. He certainly had not realised before that Mike had meant that Alf was trying to persuade Bob to become a burglar. But now he knew exactly what “influenced” meant.

“Still, it’s no good worrying, I suppose,”

said Mike. "I shall just have to find another home."

Mr. Wallis looked at Mr. Willis, and Mr. Willis looked at Mr. Wallis.

"Look here," said Mr. Willis, turning back to Mike, "why not come and live with us?"

Mike looked doubtful. "How about the family? Wouldn't they mind?"

Mr. Willis cocked one ear as he thought this over. Yes, he supposed, the family might object to a third dog in the flat. Then he had an idea. He and Mr. Wallis were to go to Broadcasting House for a rehearsal that very evening. Christopher and Mary were going with them, and as they knew very well, the rest of the family were going to the theatre. Anna would be out, too.

"The flat will be quite empty," said Mr. Willis. "If they come back and find you here, looking very sad, they won't have the heart to turn you away. Can you look very sad, do you think?"

"Oh, yes, I expect so," said Mike. "In fact, I *feel* very sad, you know."

“Well, there you are, then. At any rate it will give you a home while you look round and find something else.”

And so it was arranged. Mike said he would have no trouble in getting into the flat.

“I can manage that all right,” he said. “Well, thank you both very much. Very decent of you. But, of course, I shan’t stay very long. This sort of life wouldn’t suit me, you know. I’ve been so long helping Bob with his work, that I don’t think I should be very happy unless there were a few dustbins to explore. Still, as you say, it will do me very well for a time.”

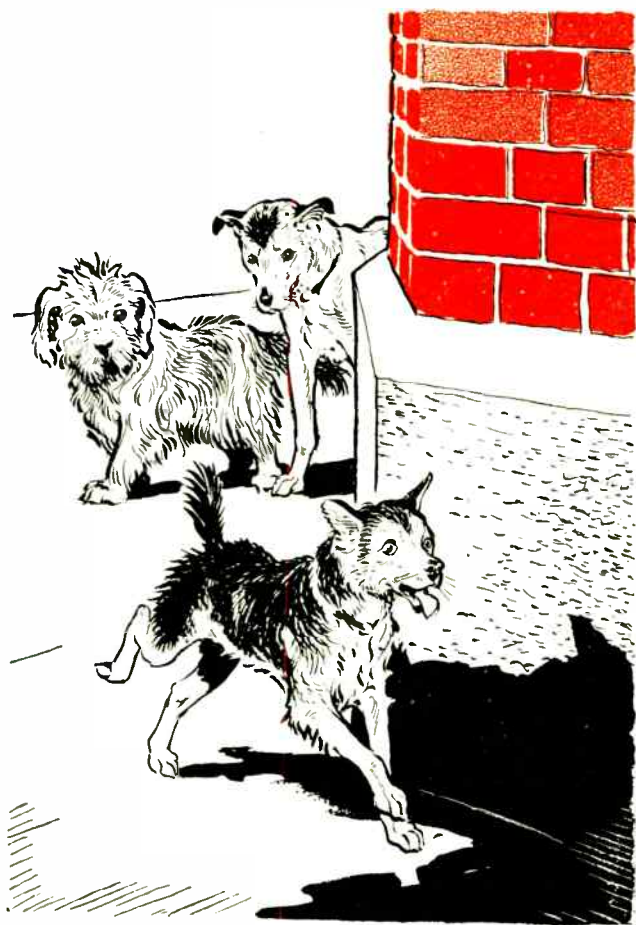
He trotted off round the corner, trying to look as jaunty as usual, but Mr. Willis knew that he was really feeling very sad.

“He’ll soon forget all about Bob,” said Mr. Wallis, gazing after him.

Mr. Willis shook his head. Mr. Wallis was a very silly little dog.

“No he won’t,” he said. “He’ll never forget about Bob at all.”

That evening they went to Broadcasting



Mike trotted off.

House. At the entrance a large man stopped them.

“Can’t have dogs in here,” he said gruffly.

“Well, I like that,” grunted Mr. Wallis. “Don’t you understand that we are the famous Mr. Wallis and Mr. Willis?”

“And stop that barking,” added the man. “Now then, move along, please.”

But Mr. Carruthers came along just at that moment, and soon put matters right.

“It’s perfectly in order,” he said to the large, gruff man. “The two dogs are performers. Now, come along to the studio.”

To Mr. Wallis’s horror, they had to go up in a lift, but this time nothing went wrong with it, and they arrived safely at the studio. Inside were quite a lot of people, and one lady immediately ran forward, picked up Mr. Wallis and began to kiss him.

“Oh, the dear, darling little dog,” she said. “Isn’t he just too sweet?”

Mr. Wallis wriggled and went quite red

with embarrassment. He simply hated being kissed. It was most undignified to be picked up like this. Mr. Willis made matters worse by smiling broadly.

Eventually Mr. Wallis was released. Mr. Carruthers turned most of the people out of the studio and told Christopher and Mary what the two dogs were to do.

“You see,” he said, “in the play there are two dogs. Of course, the listeners don’t see them, they only hear them bark, but it is important that the barks should be just right. Now first of all I want to test Mr. Willis and Mr. Wallis to see if they bark nicely. Do you understand?”

Christopher nodded. He understood perfectly.

“Oh, yes,” he said. “You had better test Mr. Willis first, and then Mr. Wallis will know what he has to do.”

“Do you think they will bark when you tell them to?” enquired Mr. Carruthers.

“They always do what they are told!” said Mary at once.

But Mr. Wallis, though nobody knew it

yet, was sulking. First, he had expected to be asked to sing, and he felt very angry that all they wanted him to do was to bark. And second, why had they put Mr. Willis on first? It was not fair. *He* ought to have been first. And so he began to sulk.

“We’ve got two other dogs here,” said Mr. Carruthers, “and we shall test them as well. All right,” he added, turning to his assistant, “bring them in.”

The assistant went out and came back leading a small terrier and a cocker spaniel. Then Mr. Willis was told to be ready to bark.

“When I say ‘bark,’” said Jeremy, “you give one bark, Mr. Willis. Do you understand?”

Mr. Willis did not mind a bit that they had not asked him to sing. He thought it was all rather fun. And so he stood ready, watching the microphone with great interest. This had been lowered so that it was nearly on a level with his nose. Then the sound of his bark would be heard more



In came a spaniel and a terrier.

O T A.

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distinctly by the listeners. The other two dogs barked first, one after the other, and then Christopher told Mr. Willis to bark.

“Wuff,” said Mr. Willis very loudly.

“Good, just right,” said Mr. Carruthers.

“Now, once more to make sure.”

“Wuff,” said Mr. Willis obligingly.

Then it was Mr. Wallis’s turn. But he was still sulking. When Christopher told him to bark, he just closed his mouth and looked obstinate.

“Come on, Mr. Wallis, bark,” repeated Christopher.

Mr. Wallis merely snuffled into his whiskers. He wanted to sing, not bark.

“Oh, dear, he’s got the sulks,” said Mary. “What a shame. Now, Mr. Wallis, be a good dog.”

Mr. Wallis sat down. He could not remember ever feeling quite so sulky as he did now.

“Baby,” said the cocker spaniel in his ear.

“I suppose he can’t bark,” said the terrier. “Fancy not being able to bark!”

Mr. Wallis began to grow angry. He was not going to be called names.

“Oh, yes I can,” he said. “I can bark better than either of you. I should just think so, indeed!”

“That’s what you say,” remarked the spaniel.

“If you *can* bark,” said the terrier with a sneer, “why don’t you do it?”

Mr. Wallis flew into a temper. His whiskers bristled with rage. He quite forgot that he was supposed to be sulking.

“Wuff, wuff, wuff, wuff,” he barked. “There, is that good enough?”

“No, no, not so loud,” implored Mr. Carruthers. “And I only want one bark, not four. I’m afraid we shan’t be able to use Mr. Wallis if he doesn’t do better than that,” he added.

Mr. Wallis could hardly believe his ears. Not use him! Why, they *must* use him!

“I’ll give you one more chance,” said Mr. Carruthers. “Come along, we’ll go through that again.”

So the terrier barked, and the spaniel

barked and then Christopher told Mr. Wallis to bark. And this time, Mr. Wallis did as he was told. It might be nicer to sing than to bark, but it was better to bark on the radio than do nothing at all !

“Wuff,” he said.

Christopher breathed a sigh of relief. Thank goodness Mr. Wallis had stopped sulking. Mr. Carruthers was quite satisfied.

“All right,” he said, “I think we’ll use Mr. Willis and Mr. Wallis. Perhaps we shall need you others some other time.”

And so the cocker spaniel and the terrier were taken away, very disappointed that they were not to take part in the play. As he went out, the terrier even nipped Mr. Wallis. But Mr. Wallis did not mind. After all what was a nip compared with going on the air ?

“Don’t forget,” said Mr. Carruthers to Christopher and Mary, “you must be here to-day week at exactly half-past six. The play starts at seven o’clock, but you must be here half an hour earlier. With the two dogs, of course.”



The terrier nipped Mr. Wallis.

“We won’t forget,” said Christopher, who was thrilled at being in a real broadcasting studio.

“We certainly won’t,” said Mary.

When they got home they found that Anna had returned and was standing looking at Mike, who was sitting at her feet.

“Well,” she said, “a little dog have I found. In my kitchen. And sad the little dog looks. He is hungry, yes?”

She went to the cupboard and fetched some dog biscuits, which Mike ate very readily. Then once more he began to look sad.

“But how did he get in here?” asked Mary.

Mr. Willis and Mr. Wallis looked guilty, but nobody thought of asking them if they knew anything about Mike. Christopher found a window open (the flat was on the ground floor), and said that Mike must have got in that way.

“The poor little dog,” said Anna, “it is not right that into the cold we should turn him. He shall stay here until your father

and mother return. Yes, indeed, he shall.”

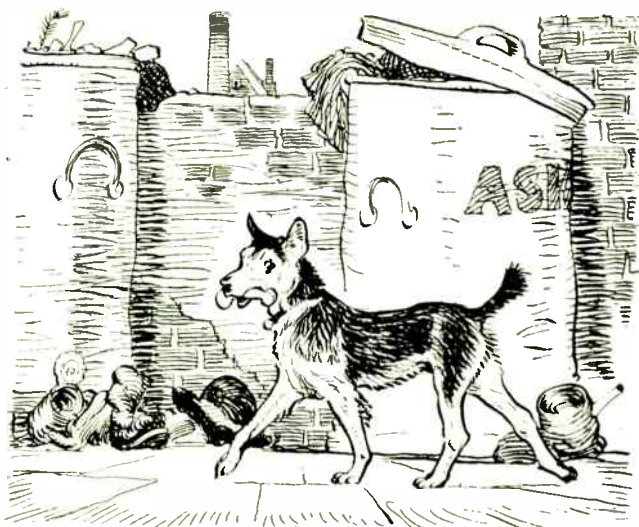
“That’s all right,” said Mr. Willis a little later, when the children had gone to bed and Anna was in the kitchen. “Anna always gets her own way. They’ll let you stay, old chap.”

And so it turned out. Mike looked so sad that nobody had the heart to turn him away.

“It’s very nice of them to take me in,” said Mike, as he curled up for the night on an old cushion Anna had given him, “and please don’t think I’m not grateful to you and Mr. Wallis. But I’m terribly worried about Bob. Such a nice man, really. And I don’t care what he’s done, he’s still my master, you know. When you’ve been with one man for five years you sort of get used to him.”

Mr. Willis nodded seriously. He knew exactly what Mike meant.

“Ah, well, we must hope for the best,” he said consolingly. “You never know what might turn up.”



CHAPTER FOUR

Several days went by. Mike was by now quite accepted by the family and had settled down fairly happily—though Mr. Willis sometimes caught him with a wistful expression on his face as he thought of the dear old days amongst the dustbins. Anna had grown very fond of him and gave him a lot of tit-bits. But neither Mr.

Willis nor Mr. Wallis minded, for after all, poor Mike had little enough to make him happy. Before very long all the family—and even the B.B.C.—were to be very thankful that Mike had been adopted by the family at 2, Cranton Court. It happened like this.

On the day before the play was to be broadcast, Mike and Mr. Willis were sauntering slowly round the square talking of this and that. Mr. Wallis was engaged in chasing leaves in the little garden in the middle of the square. Though he would not for worlds have admitted it to any one, he pretended that the leaves were alive!

“Have you heard yet what they are going to do with Bob?” enquired Mr. Willis, after they had walked once round the square. “Will they keep him in prison long, do you think?”

“I don’t know,” was the reply. “He has been up before the magistrates once, but they sent him back to prison for a week so that the police could make enquiries.

They call it remanding him, I think. Tomorrow they will try him properly."

"Perhaps," suggested Mr. Willis helpfully; "they will decide that as he has never done such a thing before he ought not to go to prison."

Mike did not look very hopeful. "It's that Alf who ought to go to prison," he said.

At that very moment, who should come round the corner of the square but a small, furtive looking man dressed in shabby clothes and a bowler hat.

"Look, there *is* Alf!" said Mike, showing his teeth and growling quietly. "My word, but wouldn't I like to bite him! Leading Bob into bad ways!"

Alf certainly looked a horrid man. He had black, greasy hair, a sharp face and a long, pointed nose. His teeth were discoloured, his eyes were narrow and shifty. For a little it looked as if Mike really would attack him, but Mr. Willis pushed him away.

"It won't do any good," he said. "Come along, let's go and sit by the fire."



"Look, there's Alf!"

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Reluctantly Mike followed him into the flat. He supposed his friend was right, but how he would have liked to sink his teeth into Alf's skinny leg! For nearly an hour he sat by the fire in Anna's kitchen and thought of all the things he would do to Alf if only he could. At the end of that time, Anna came in.

"Where is Mr. Wallis?" she said sharply. "In the square he was, but now he is not."

Mr. Willis was not very worried. Mr. Wallis never strayed far away, and he was sure to be somewhere in the square. It was comfortable by the fire, but after a time he decided that perhaps he had better go and find Mr. Wallis. It was quite possible that he had got himself stuck under a bush or something! So he trotted out into the square, slipped through the railings which surrounded the gardens, and looked for Mr. Wallis. But Mr. Wallis was not there. Then Mr. Willis searched the whole square thoroughly, but with no result. Mr. Wallis had gone.



Searching for Mr. Wallis.

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“ Oh, dear,” said Mr. Willis, “ what can have happened to him ? ”

That was what Jeremy and Mary and Anna wanted to know, too. They all searched the square, they all called Mr. Wallis, they all whistled him. But Mr. Wallis did not answer. What a to-do there was ! Jeremy ran to tell his father, and his father, who was very fond of Mr. Wallis, looked grave. Then he telephoned the police-station.

“ It’s not as if Mr. Wallis were an ordinary dog,” he told the policeman who answered the call, “ he’s an unusually clever dog, and he’s due to broadcast to-morrow evening.”

How pleased Mr. Wallis would have been if he could have heard himself described as a clever dog ! But he was not there to hear. They sent a policeman round from the station—the very same one who had arrested Bob—and he took down all the details in a large notebook with a very blunt pencil.

“ Well, we’ll do what we can,” he said, when he had finished, “ but there are a lot

of dog thieves about, you know. Still, perhaps Mr. Wallis has only gone for a long walk and will come back.”

But Mr. Wallis did not come back. The afternoon and the evening dragged slowly by, and still there was no sign of him. The family went to bed at last, very sadly. They all thought that he must either have been run over or stolen. The B.B.C. had been told all about it, and every now and again the telephone rang and it was Mr. Carruthers, asking whether Mr. Wallis had come back yet. Each time the bell rang they thought it was the police to say that they had found him, but it never was.

Mr. Willis sat by the fire and felt very, very miserable. Simple though Mr. Wallis might be, he was very fond of him. He shuddered as he thought of him being run over. It was hardly less horrid to think of him being stolen, taken away to some horrible place and probably starved and beaten. Mr. Willis did not sleep a wink that night, and first thing the next morning ran out into the square in the



Only the milkman was there.

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hope that Mr. Wallis would come trotting round the corner with some wonderful tale of adventure. But no, the square was deserted except for the milkman, who was planking down the bottles and making a fine clatter about it.

It was after breakfast that Mike made a suggestion.

“You know,” he said, “I’ve been thinking. Do you remember that just before Mr. Wallis disappeared yesterday that horrid Alf was in the square?”

Mr. Willis nodded. He remembered quite clearly.

“Well, it wouldn’t surprise me if he stole him,” continued Mike. “He’d do anything.”

“Do you really think so? That he stole Mr. Wallis, I mean.”

“I can’t be sure, of course,” said Mike, “but he might have done. Are you game to come with me to Alf’s house, just in case Mr. Wallis is there?”

Mr. Willis did not have to be asked twice. Anything was better than this wait-

ing about with nothing to do but wander round the square and hope that Mr. Wallis would turn up. Besides, Mike might be right; Alf might have persuaded Mr. Wallis to go home with him. Mr. Wallis was so simple he might easily have decided that Alf was a nice man. And, after all, he would not recognise Alf, for he had never seen him before.

So without further delay, Mr. Willis and Mike trotted away. Round the corner of the square they went, out into the main road, and then for what seemed miles and miles along pavements, over roads, through small alleys and so eventually to what Mike told Mr. Willis was the east end of London. Mr. Willis looked round him and sniffed. The neighbourhood was certainly very different from the other parts of London he had seen. The roads were narrower, and the houses dirtier and shabbier. But there were a lot of fascinating smells, and if it had not been that he was so worried about Mr. Wallis, he would have enjoyed the adventure very much.

On the whole he thought he preferred the east end to the west end !

Mike knew his way and led Mr. Willis to a shabby little street near the Whitechapel Road.

“ This is where Alf lives,” he said, “ I’ve been here many a time with Bob.”

The house was half-way down the street. A shabby place it was, with two windows broken and the paint peeling away from the wood. There was a tiny little garden in front, but nothing was growing in it except a gaunt bush black with soot and dirt.

“ This is where we have to be careful,” whispered Mike. “ Follow me and don’t make any noise.”

They crept cautiously up the path, round the side of the horrid little house and so into a yard at the back. This was littered with broken bottles, old pieces of iron, backless chairs and a lot of paper and other rubbish. At the end of the yard was a shed. And from the shed came a whimpering noise.

“That’s Mr. Wallis!” said Mr. Willis. “I’d recognise his cry anywhere. Oh, Mike, you were right! Alf *did* steal him!”

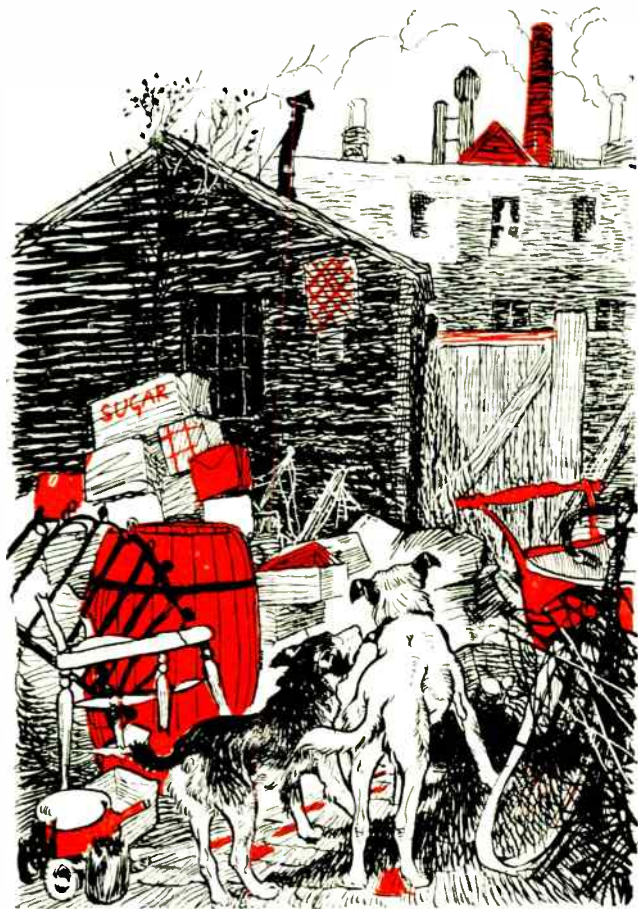
He started to run towards the shed, but Mike pulled him back.

“Not so fast,” he said. “If Alf sees you he’ll steal you as well, and then where shall we all be?”

It was by now well into the afternoon, for it had taken them all the morning to make the journey from Kensington. The broadcast was due to start in just over two hours!

“We *must* get back to Broadcasting House in time,” said Mr. Willis. “Come on, Mike, we simply must rescue Mr. Wallis!”

But Mike was a clever dog. By the side of Alf’s house ran a narrow alley, right past his back yard. Mike led the way to this alley. Now they could not be seen from the house because of the brick wall which separated the yard from the dirty little lane. Fortunately, there was a door in the wall just by the shed, and when Mike



The yard was littered with old iron.

pushed against it he found it was open. Cautiously the two dogs slipped through. By springing on to a box which stood near the shed, Mr. Willis could see right inside. There was Mr. Wallis, looking very frightened, tied up to a hook in the wooden wall of the shed.

“He’s there, he’s there,” said Mr. Willis joyfully, rejoining Mike. “Come on!”

The door of the shed was closed, but it was not locked. Evidently Alf had thought Mr. Wallis quite safely tied up. Mike and Mr. Willis pushed against it and the next moment they were inside.

“Oh, Mr. Willis, how glad I am to see you!” cried Mr. Wallis. “Oh, dear, what an awful time I’ve had! A man brought me here. He said he would give me some lovely bones. He seemed such a nice man, but when we got here he tied me up and I haven’t had anything to eat all day!”

“You silly,” replied Mr. Willis, “that was Alf. Don’t you remember? He was the man who persuaded poor Bob to become a burglar.”

But he was not really cross with Mr. Wallis for being so simple. He was far too pleased to have found him.

“Now, we’ll soon have you out of here,” he said briskly.

But at that moment there came the sound of footsteps outside in the yard. The shed door swung open again, and there was Alf.

“Hallo, what’s all this ? ” he said roughly. “Now then, you get out of here.”

With that he picked up a small brick and threw it at Mike. Now Mike had hated Alf before, but now he hated him more than ever. The brick hit him just behind the ear. It hurt, and with a growl, Mike sprang at Alf. His teeth fastened round Alf’s leg, and the man let out a roar of pain and fury.

“I’ll give you something for that,” cried Alf, dancing round on one foot, while Mike hung on desperately to the other ankle. It was just as Alf managed to pick up a heavy stick and was preparing to hit Mike with it, that Mr. Willis joined in the



Mike sprang ad



ie shed at Alf.

fight. He, too, sprang at Alf, and very fortunately managed to sink his sharp white teeth into his arm. Alf dropped the stick and furiously kicking tried to throw Mike off so that he could attend to Mr. Willis. But Mike held on. In the corner, Mr. Wallis howled at the top of his voice, straining at the rope which held him.

How it happened, Mr. Willis did not know. But just when he realised that he could not hold on any longer, a large paint pot, which was standing with its lid off on the shelf above Alf's head, fell over. It was half-full of paint, and it fell very neatly right over the man's head. It completely covered his face.

"Oooogh! Urrrrgh!" gasped Alf, as the paint got into his mouth and eyes. He was in complete darkness and felt most uncomfortable. He stopped kicking and clawed at the paint pot, trying to get it off his head.

"Quick!" gasped Mr. Willis, "now is our chance!"

But they still had to release Mr. Wallis,

and if a policeman had not suddenly appeared, attracted by the terrific noise, there is no telling what would have happened !

“ Now then, now then, what’s all this ? ” said the policeman, standing in the doorway and surveying the scene.





CHAPTER FIVE

“ Yes,” continued the policeman, “ what’s going on here ? ”

Alf, at last succeeded in dragging the paint-pot off his head, threw it into the corner. Rivulets of dark red paint were making their way down his face ; his eyes and mouth were almost blocked.

“ Grooh ! ” said Alf, clawing at the paint

and after a moment managing to get his mouth uncovered.

“That’s no way to talk to an officer of the law,” said the policeman severely. “I asked a civil question and I want a civil answer.”

“Can’t talk with paint in my mouth,” muttered Alf. “There, that’s better. Well, if you want to know, these dogs set on me. And in my own shed! Ought to be stopped, being set on in your own shed, it did.”

The policeman gazed at Alf suspiciously, and then at the three dogs. Mr. Willis was taking no notice of either Alf or the policeman. He was interested only in Mike’s efforts to gnaw through the rope which was keeping Mr. Wallis a prisoner.

“Ah, that’s as maybe,” said the policeman. “Is that dog yours?” he added, pointing to Mr. Wallis.

“I should just think I’m not, I’m Mr. Wallis, I am.”

Not for the first time he thought how silly it was that humans could not understand doggy language. However, in this

instance it did not matter, for the policeman, not waiting for Alf to answer, continued in a very accusing sort of voice :

“ We’ve had word that a dog like that is missing. Seems to me you’ve been doing a bit of dog stealing.”

One look at Alf’s face was sufficient to show the policeman that he was right.

“ You just come along with me down to the police-station,” said the constable, laying a heavy hand on Alf’s shoulder.

What he intended to do with the three dogs they never discovered, for at that moment Mike’s sharp teeth succeeded in biting through Mr. Wallis’s rope.

“ There you are,” said Mike. “ Now what do we do ? ”

Mr. Wallis scampered away from the wall and ran through the door of the shed.

“ Come on,” he said, “ I’ve got a broadcast to do ! ”

“ Here, come back,” called the policeman, but it was no use. Mr. Wallis leading, the three dogs ran out of the yard into the dirty little alley and so out into the road.

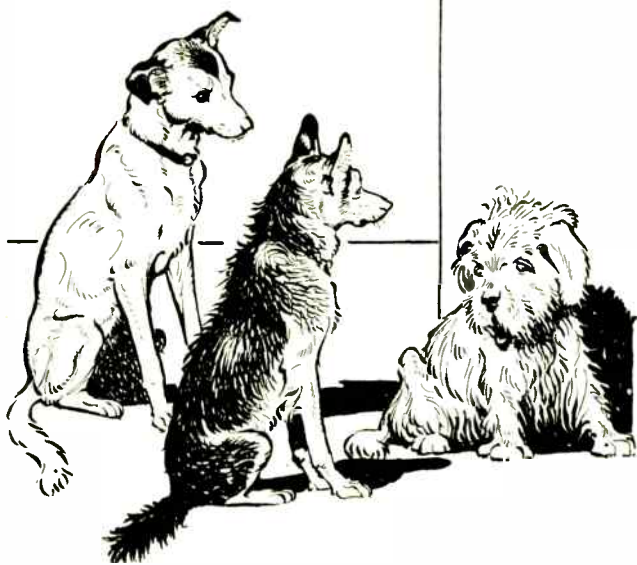
They had to be at Broadcasting House at half-past six and it was now nearly five. They certainly could not wait for the policeman to take them away to the police-station and then to telephone Kensington that Mr. Wallis had been found. By that time it would be too late to reach Broadcasting House. Mr. Willis, who had very good manners, did stop for a second to try to explain to the constable that they were in a terrible hurry but were very grateful to him just the same, but he did not seem to understand.

Mike was feeling very pleased with himself.

“Now they’ve arrested Alf, he’ll go to prison, too,” he panted, as they all ran down the road.

Neither Mr. Willis nor Mr. Wallis, however, was very interested in Alf just at that moment. They were glad, of course, that he would be punished for stealing Mr. Wallis, but they had no time to think about that now. Somehow or other they had to reach Broadcasting House by half-past six.

ALDCATE



"Oh, dear! Oh, dear!" wailed Mr. Wallis.

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After they had run for about half an hour, dodging in and out of the crowds, they had only reached Aldgate Underground Station, and still had ever such a long way to go.

"Now look here," said Mr. Willis, "we shall never get there in time like this."

"Oh, dear, oh, dear," wailed Mr. Wallis, "how awful everything is. Now nobody will hear me broadcast."

He sat down, feeling very tired and hungry, and looked sad. His whiskers drooped pitifully. It was such a disappointment after looking forward to the play. Mr. Willis, however, was not downhearted.

"We can't run all the way," he said, "but we can ride. Mike, do you know which bus goes to Kensington?"

Mike, however, was not quite sure. He rather thought that there was no bus which went straight through to the flats.

"You have to change, I think," he said. "But in any case, I don't think the conductor would let us on."

"I don't suppose he would—if he saw

us get on," replied Mr. Willis cheerfully. "Anyway, it's our only chance. We'll take the first bus that comes along going in the right direction, and get off when it seems to be going in the wrong direction. And the conductor mustn't see us getting on, don't forget that."

So they trotted along to the next bus stop, where a crowd of people were waiting, and joined the queue. Nobody took any notice of them. After a few moments a bus came along, and while the conductor had his back turned, the three dogs jumped on, ran up the stairs and crouched under the back seat.

"Whatever you do, keep quiet," whispered Mr. Willis, who had by now taken charge of the expedition.

So they all three crouched there motionless, Mike keeping his eye on the road through the door at the top of the stairs, so that he could tell the others when the bus seemed to be going in the wrong direction. The conductor came up to collect the fares, and walked right past the three



They crouched under the back seat.

dogs without seeing them. He went to the front of the bus and presently came back again, jingling the coppers in his sachel.

“ Any more fares, please ? ” he said.

“ Any more fares, please ? ”

And at that very moment, just as he was level with the seat under which the dogs were hidden, Mr. Wallis had to sneeze ! The dust had got into his whiskers, and before he knew what had happened, a terrific explosion rang through the bus.

“ Atishoo ! ” sneezed Mr. Wallis, and then again, “ Atishoo ! ”

The conductor jumped. The noise seemed to come from under the back seat.

“ Here, what’s all this ? ” he said, peering between the legs of the passengers. “ Dogs, eh ? Any one own these three dogs ? ”

Nobody answered, and the conductor began to haul Mr. Wallis out.

“ Now then, you come out of there, ” said the man, hauling away for all he was worth.

Now in the usual way, Mr. Wallis was a

very peaceful dog. He had never bitten anybody in his life. But what with one thing and another he was now desperate. He wanted to broadcast so much, and everybody seemed to be doing their best to prevent him. Suddenly he flew into a temper, and not an ordinary sort of temper.

“I’ll give you what for,” he snarled, whiskers bristling, eyes flashing. “There, take that! And that!”

“Ow!” exclaimed the conductor, as Mr. Wallis’s teeth nipped his ankle. And “Ow!” he cried again, as the next snap touched his fingers.

He let Mr. Wallis’s collar go as if it had been red-hot, and at that moment Mike suddenly noticed that the bus had turned a corner and was going in the wrong direction.

“Come on,” he called, “we’ve got to get off!”

The conductor, who was sucking his hand, was not at the end of his troubles. The three dogs swept out from under the seat, ran between his legs, upset him so that

he sat down with a bump, and escaped down the stairs. The bus pulling up at this instant, they all tumbled off on to the pavement. The conductor, dragging himself to his feet, stared down the staircase and shook his fist at them.

“I’ll have the law on you for this,” he shouted.

Mr. Willis, Mr. Wallis and Mike were already out of hearing, however.

“Well, where are we?” panted Mr. Willis, as they stopped to draw breath with the bus already a long way behind.

“Holborn,” said Mike. “Now all we’ve got to do is to get a bus that goes along Oxford Street to the Marble Arch, and then another down Park Lane and . . .”

“Good gracious, we shall never get there in time,” interrupted Mr. Willis. “And when we reach Kensington, we’ve got to get to Broadcasting House.”

Mr. Wallis sat down again. It was nearly six o’clock and it seemed that they never would reach Broadcasting House. Very slowly two large tears began to run down

his nose and make his whiskers all wet.

“It is a shame,” he snuffled. “And I did *so* want to broadcast.”

“Well, we’ve done our best,” said Mike, who privately thought that Mr. Wallis was rather a baby.

“It’s no good sitting there crying,” said Mr. Willis. “While there’s life there’s hope, you know! Come along, there’s a bus.”

They ran to the stop, but there a great disappointment awaited them. It was certainly a bus, but the wrong bus. In fact, a very wrong bus, for it was the same one they had scrambled off only a few minutes earlier! They must have cut off a corner and caught it up again.

The conductor stared at them as if he could hardly believe his eyes.

“What, you again! Hey, Bill,” he shouted to the driver, “you just wait for me, I’m going to get my own back on these dogs. Especially that little whiskered one,” he added.

At this Mr. Wallis put his head down and



Mr. Wallis, head down



like the wind.

ran like the wind. The conductor's face was so grim, so terrifying, that he was scared out of his wits. On and on he ran, not caring which way he went, only interested in going as fast as possible. Mr. Willis and Mike followed. After a few moments the conductor gave up the chase, but Mr. Wallis did not know this, and was too frightened to look round to find out. All the time he felt as if the man was right on his tail! The others called to him, telling him that there was no reason to go on running, but he took no notice. In fact, he did not hear them. And so, on and on, faster and faster they ran, Mr. Wallis scuttering along, his little legs twinkling, Mr. Willis and Mike doing all they could to catch up with him, but only being able to keep him in sight.

"Well," panted Mr. Willis, "I've never seen him run like this before! In fact, I didn't know he could!"

Over roads, past houses and shops, through quiet squares the three dogs ran, leaving behind them old ladies clutching

their skirts and old gentlemen shouting "Tally-Ho!" thinking that the hunt was up and at least a fox was being chased. The roads and squares behind Oxford Street had never known such a whirlwind chase! Then, at last, Mr. Wallis came to a large main road cutting across his route at right-angles. But even this did not stop him. The traffic was streaming past, but he was more afraid of the conductor who he thought was behind him than of all the traffic in the world. The traffic lights changed as he arrived, and like a flash he had streaked across under the very noses of snorting lorries and buses as they panted and puffed, waiting for the lights to let them through. Mr. Willis and Mike followed, but as they were half-way across the lights changed, and they only just had time to reach the opposite pavement before the surge of traffic roared down on them.

"Dear, dear," murmured Mr. Willis, "Mr. Wallis can't go on like this for ever, surely?"

And neither could he! Down another

quiet street he fled like the wind, turned right when he came to the next main road, and not looking where he was going, hit his nose very hard against a brick wall.

Bump! He staggered under the shock and sat down very suddenly on the pavement.

“Oh, dear, oh, dear, where am I?” he wondered, rubbing his nose with his paw.

The world was swinging past like a see-saw, and bright stars shone before his eyes. Then a large hand descended out of nowhere and grasped his collar.

“Well,” said a familiar voice, “so here you are! And only just in time!”

It was Mr. Carruthers, and behind him were Christopher and Mary. As Mr. Wallis blinked at them, and the stars gradually faded, he could see that the big building into which he had run full tilt, was none other than Broadcasting House!

“Well, how clever of me to get here after all,” he said.

Mr. Willis, who had by now caught him up, snorted. Really, Mr. Wallis was awful.



Bright stars shone before his eyes.

Having run all this way without the slightest idea where he was going, he pretended that he had come to Broadcasting House on purpose! There was no time to be angry with him, however, for Mr. Carruthers and the children grasped the end of rope which was still attached to Mr. Wallis's collar, and dragging him along, called to Mr. Willis to follow. Just as they entered Broadcasting House, Mike came running up.

"Hallo, where have you been?" asked Mr. Willis. "I thought we must have lost you."

But it seemed that Mike had met a friend and had received good news. Bob was not to go to prison after all. As it was the first time he had tried to steal anything, the court had told him to be good in future and to keep away from people like Alf.

"My friend told me all about it," said Mike. "And as for that Alf, I'm sure he will go to prison, because he has been a burglar before. So now I must get home as quickly as I can to welcome Bob. Thank

you so much for all your kindness. Remember me to the family, won't you? Good-bye. Oh, and good luck with the broadcast. Sorry I can't stop, but you understand, don't you?"

With that he trotted away, tail very straight, head at a very jaunty angle; the last Mr. Willis and Mr. Wallis saw of him was as he hurried round the corner, eager to see his master again.

"Now then, come along, come along," said Mr. Carruthers, and hurried them into the building, into the lift, and so to the studio. They were just in time.

Mr. Carruthers was to introduce the play, and he stepped up to the microphone and began to talk in a very calm voice, just as if he had not been out nearly all day with Christopher and Mary trying to trace the missing dogs. He announced the title of the play, the names of the actors and actresses (not forgetting Mr. Willis and Mr. Wallis), and then the play began. Of course, it was not like an ordinary play in a theatre, because there was no stage, but Mr. Willis

and Mr. Wallis found it very interesting. Almost before they realised that their turn had come, Mr. Carruthers was signalling to them to be ready. Mr. Wallis felt quite ill with excitement. Fancy, he was really and truly going to broadcast !

He cleared his throat, snuffled through his whiskers and looked very proud. He would show them ! At last he was ready.

“ Wuff,” said Mr. Willis.

“ Wuff,” said Mr. Wallis.

Then he looked round as much as to say, “ There, now, don’t you think that was a really GOOD bark ? ”

