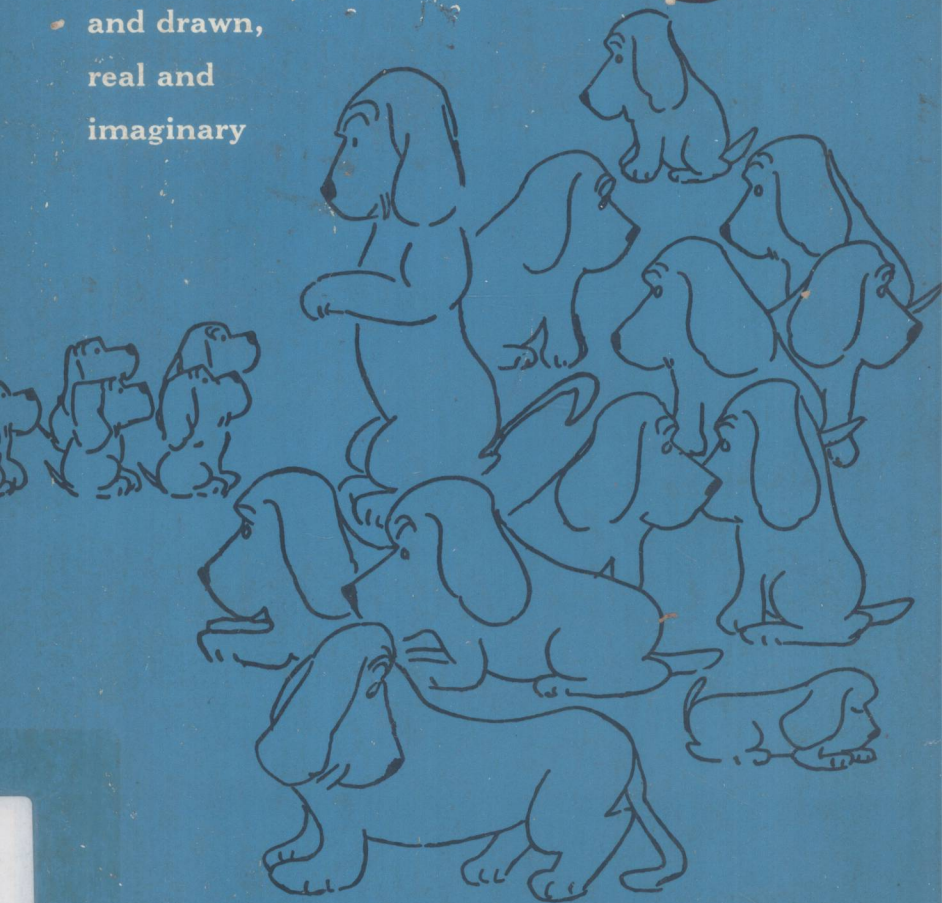


James Thurber

Thurber's Dogs

A collection
of the master's
dogs, written
and drawn,
real and
imaginary



THURBER'S DOGS

A Collection of the Master's Dogs,
Written and Drawn, Real and Imaginary

by

James Thurber



A FIRESIDE BOOK
PUBLISHED BY SIMON AND SCHUSTER

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FOR SARA THURBER SAUERS

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Foreword, with Figures

ON THE LAWNS *and porches, and in the living rooms and backyards of my threescore years, there have been more dogs, written and drawn, real and imaginary, than I had guessed, before I started this roundup with the aid of a couple of literary dog-catchers. When we whistled, dogs began appearing from everywhere, including Kansas City. It was as long ago as 1923 that an Ohio newspaper reporter in his twenties, who called himself James Grover Thurber, sold his first short story, "Josephine Has Her Day," to the Kansas City Star's Sunday magazine. I have decided that the story has a right to a place in this museum of natural, and personal, history. For a time I considered tinkering with James Grover Thurber's noisy, uninevitable, and improbable climax, which consists of a fight in a grocery store, but I came to the conclusion that this would be wrong, and a kind of*

Foreword, with Figures

tampering with literary evidence. Since I have had thirty-two more writing years than Grover, I would end the story, if I had it to do over, with the wife's buying back Josephine for the fifty dollars she was going to spend on a Scotty. I have apparently always had a suppressed desire to take part in a brawl in a grocery, in partial proof of which I reprint herewith, as Figure I, a drawing from a series called The War Between Men and Women, which came out in the 1930's. Grover's only other contribution is "The Thin Red Leash," which appeared in The New Yorker in 1926.



Figure I

Foreword, with Figures

I have done some necessary tinkering throughout this volume, such as replacing time-worn allusions, adding remembered incidents I had left out, and changing titles. Many of the stories and most of the drawings were originally printed in The New Yorker, but some of them come out of other magazines. I especially want to thank Harper and Brothers for their generous co-operation in making this assembling of canines possible, and Harcourt, Brace, who were also helpful.

"Collie in the Driveway" appeared in The New Yorker in 1938 as "Death of a Dog," one of a series of articles under the general title "Where Are They Now?" The accidental killing of Mr. Terhune's collie happened twenty-five years ago, and since I see no reason to perpetuate the ordeal of the Detroit family involved in the accident, I have taken the liberty of giving it a fictional name.

I have not included dog drawings in which the hound plays only a decorative part. I stuck him into scores of drawings about men and women over the years, when there was white space that needed something to balance the people and the lamps and the chairs. (In those drawings the dog has about the same importance as the pictures on the wall, and doesn't belong in this gallery.) Twenty years ago, my dog was borrowed by D. T. Carlisle for one of the drawings in his "The Belvidere Hounds," and this draw-

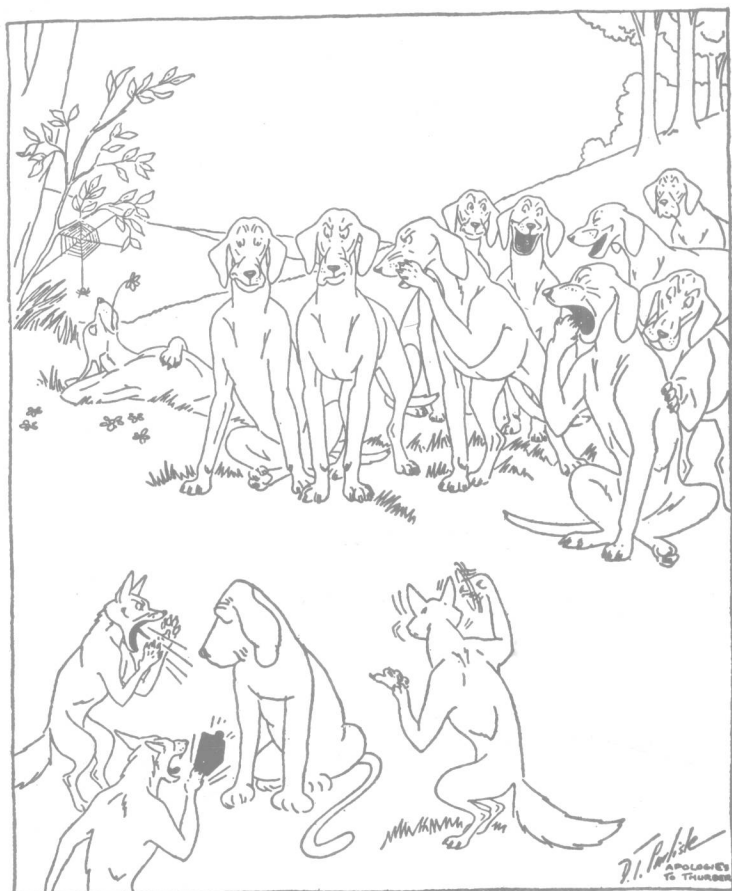


Figure II

The Belvidere Hounds unexpectedly checked by the mysterious behavior of a New York guest.

Foreword, with Figures

ing is reprinted here, as Figure II, by permission. *"The Belvidere Hounds"* came out in a special edition of fewer than two thousand copies. I got mine for five dollars, years ago, but the book now costs twenty dollars, and is well worth it.

I have not included, in the prose portion of this book, every piece of mine in which a dog appears, because nobody could lift such a volume, but *Feely*, for example, is surely as important as *Emma Inch* in the story about that devoted and inscrutable woman. Some may contend that *"The White Rabbit Caper"* is a Fred Fox detective story, and that the mastiff and the dachshund merely get in his way. This may be so, but I wanted to put it in, and so I put it in. Another problem arose in the case of *"Lavender with a Difference,"* a section of which is reprinted here as *"Canines in the Cellar."* I could not very well have left out Judge, the pug dog, and Sampson, the water spaniel, since these were the first dogs the Thurburs ever owned, and the dogs my mother put in the cellar unquestionably deserve a prominent place in this chronicle. I have added a little to this piece, but no butchery of my short biography of my mother has been committed. Anyway, it appears in full in another book. *"The Monroes Find a Terminal"* was based on an incident involving Medve, and I have added one or two lines to the story, but I have left in, as a kind of relic, a mistake I made which The New

Foreword, with Figures

Yorker's almost infallible checking department overlooked, the episode of the taxi driving west on Sixteenth Street.

Seven or eight of the prose items in this museum have never before been published in book form, and a few are entirely new. Publishers like to have such facts mentioned. (Dogs and writers don't much care.) The Introduction, which follows this foreword, is taken from The Fireside Book of Dog Stories and has been trimmed somewhat to make it fit in here. "A Preface to Dogs" was never a preface to any book.

I had originally intended to reprint a short piece about bloodhounds which I wrote for The New Yorker's "Talk of the Town" in 1932, but then I met Fancy Bombardier and his owners, Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Sheahan, and their other bloodhounds, and this set me off on a long and fascinating trail. I wish I had had more time on this research, to me the most exciting and rewarding I have engaged in for a long while. Bloodhound-owners are courteous and helpful people, and I mention most of those who so generously assisted my trailing. I want to add, however, the names of Mrs. Robert Noerr of Stamford, Mrs. A. M. Langdale of Sussex, England, and Dr. George Whitney, of New Haven, son of the distinguished Dr. Leon F. Whitney.

Thurber's Dogs is dedicated to the first great-grandchild of Mary A. Thurber, who lives at the New Sen-

Foreword, with Figures

eca Hotel in Columbus, Ohio, and is eighty-nine going on ninety as I write this. She still knows and remembers more about Thurber dogs than anyone else in the world.

Christabel, the poodle, is about to become fifteen years old, and since she was given to my daughter when my daughter was nine, and since my daughter now has a daughter of her own, this makes old Christabel, I suppose, what might be called a granddog. She doesn't act like one.

I may have said a few things more than once in this book, and the reader is likely to come upon debatable assertions here and there and small pieces of prejudice or personal bias flapping in the air, but such things are bound to occur in a dog book of any kind, especially one written by a dog man who owned his first dog before the battleship Maine was sunk.

JAMES THURBER

West Cornwall, Connecticut

THURBER'S DOGS

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THE HOUND
AND
THE HARE

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