

Bright Dog

Bonnie



Books About Bonnie:

Big Dog Bonnie • Best Dog Bonnie

Bad Dog Bonnie • Brave Dog Bonnie

Busy Dog Bonnie • Bright Dog Bonnie



Bright dog Bonnie

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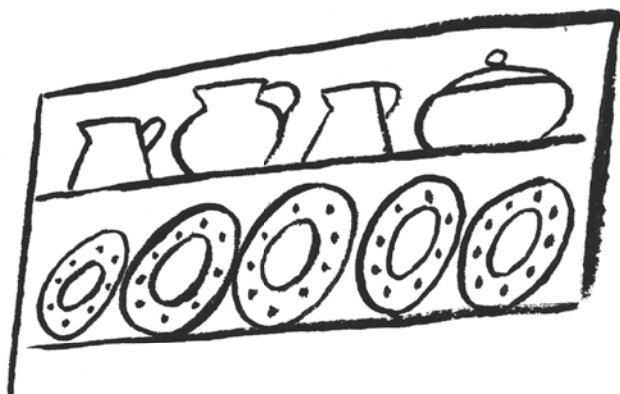
To Elodie and Willow Charles

B.M.

To my wonderful daughter, Georgia

S.M.





•Naughty Dog•

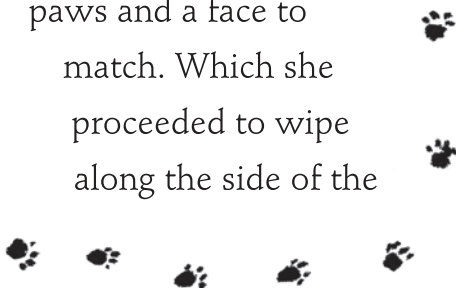
Harry had never known Bonnie to be in such a naughty mood. Not even before she went for her training because she'd scratched the postman and stolen a shoe. Harry smiled when he thought of that – and maybe that was the problem. As he said to Susie, the friend he'd met at the dog training school, "You can't make a dog good if you think it's funny when she's naughty."

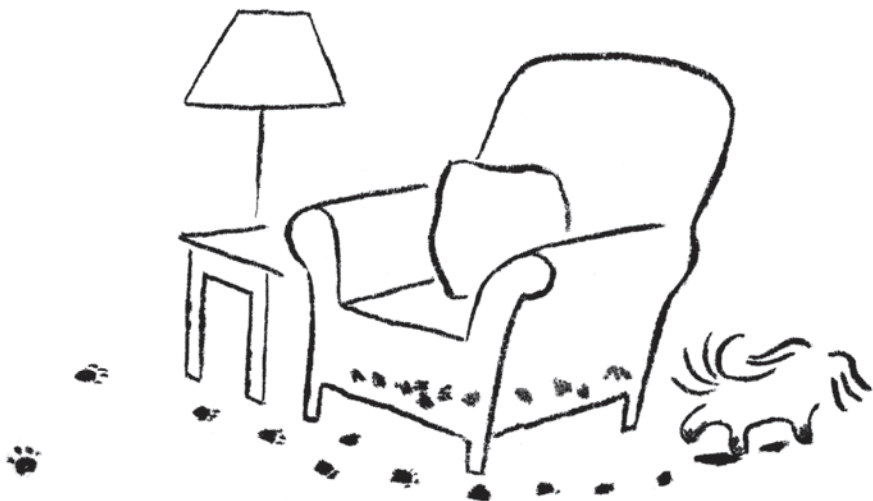
But one day something happened which didn't make Harry smile. Not one bit. For Bonnie's naughtiness led to something – or rather, *somebody* – totally unexpected coming into their lives, and Harry wasn't at all sure it was a good thing.

It had been raining that Saturday morning and Mum was already grumpy. Things got worse when Bonnie jumped out through the cat flap, pottered about in the garden investigating those funny creatures who lived under the soil, and



came back in with muddy paws and a face to match. Which she proceeded to wipe along the side of the





pretty cream-coloured armchair
that Zack and Zena's mum had just given
them because she had no room for it any
more.

"Aargh! Bonnie, you naughty dog!"
shouted Mum. "Get your grubby little face
away from my new chair!"

Oops, thought Harry, now it'll be my
fault.

"For goodness' sake, Harry, couldn't you
have stopped her?"

There you go!

He was just about to protest, when the telephone rang. Dad often called on a Saturday, so Harry raced over. The phone was on the kitchen wall and he wanted to reach it before Mum; he hated the way her voice went all funny when she spoke to Dad.



But she was too quick. Harry stood by as she said, “Hello? Oh, Dave?” as if she hardly knew the person on the other end of the line. He waited as she complained about the washing machine, the weather and the dog; and he wondered why grown-ups didn’t realize that the more

they moaned, the worse things seemed.

At last she handed him the phone but waited beside him, which made him feel awkward. All Dad wanted was to ask how school was going and how Harry had done in his last test.

Harry grunted.

“What’s with the one-word answers, big guy?” asked Dad.

Harry wondered why grown-ups didn’t realize that if they asked you interesting questions, they’d get interesting answers.

“What are you getting me for my birthday, Dad?”

“It’s over two months off, Haz! You can email me some requests the week before.”

“Oh,” said Harry. That was certainly *not* an interesting answer.

He put the phone down and looked up at Mum. When he saw her frowning, he knew he had to get out of there pretty quickly.

“I think I’ll take Bonnie next door,” he said brightly.

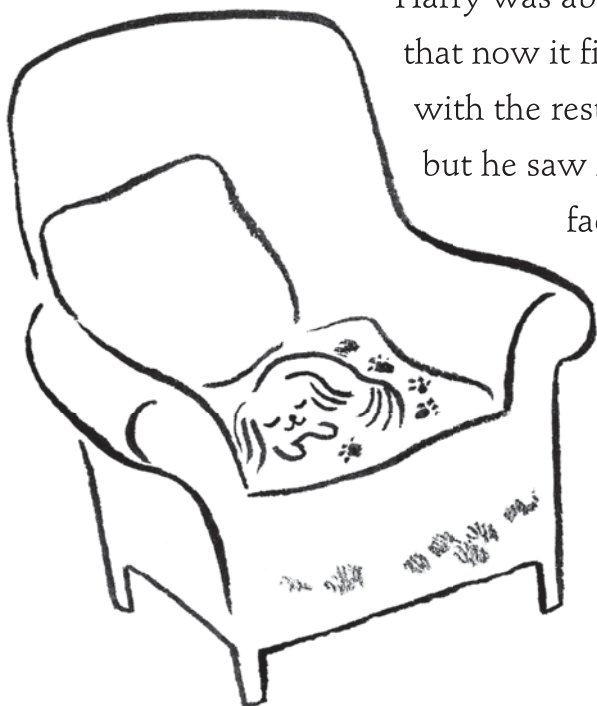
“She needs a walk around the block first.”

But when they went back into the living room, the little dog was curled up in a ball on the cream armchair, fast asleep. As well as the muddy smears along the side, there was a pattern of brown paw prints all over the cushion – and suddenly the chair Mum loved didn’t look nearly as smart as it had.

Harry was about to joke that now it fitted in better with the rest of their flat, but he saw his mother’s

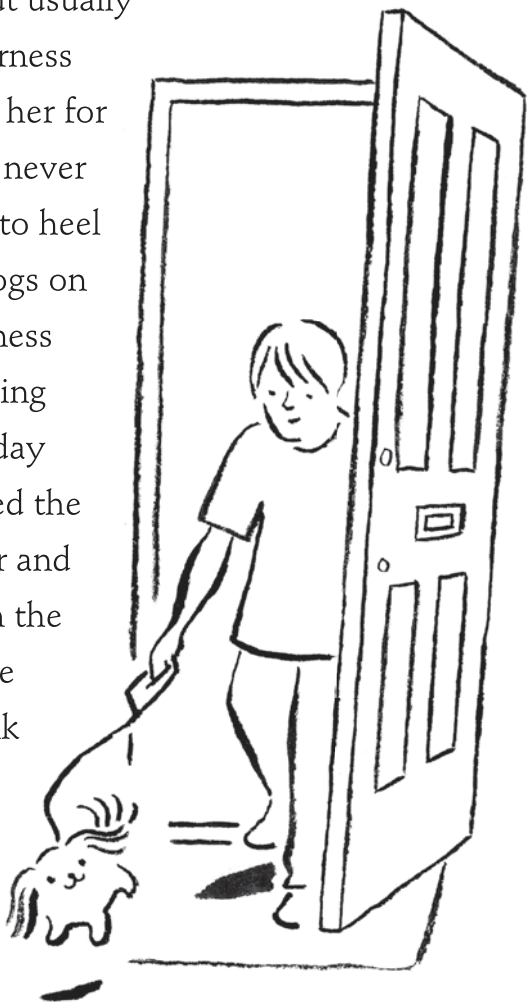
face and changed his mind.

“Harry, will you get that animal out of here – NOW!”



He didn't need telling twice.

But in his hurry to escape Harry forgot something very important. Bonnie always wore a collar, but usually they added a harness when they took her for a walk. She had never learned to walk to heel like the show dogs on TV, and the harness stopped her pulling on her neck. Today Harry just clipped the lead to her collar and was out through the front door before Mum could think of getting him to clean up Bonnie's muddy trail.



Luckily the rain had stopped. Mr Wilson was standing outside his house, and he told Harry that Zack and Zena had gone to the supermarket with their mum. Boring! thought Harry. Now he'd have to take Bonnie for a walk as Mum had ordered.

But Bonnie didn't want to go for a walk. She dug her paws in stubbornly, thinking that the soft, warm chair was a much better choice than the cold, damp pavement.

"Come on, Bons!" pleaded Harry.

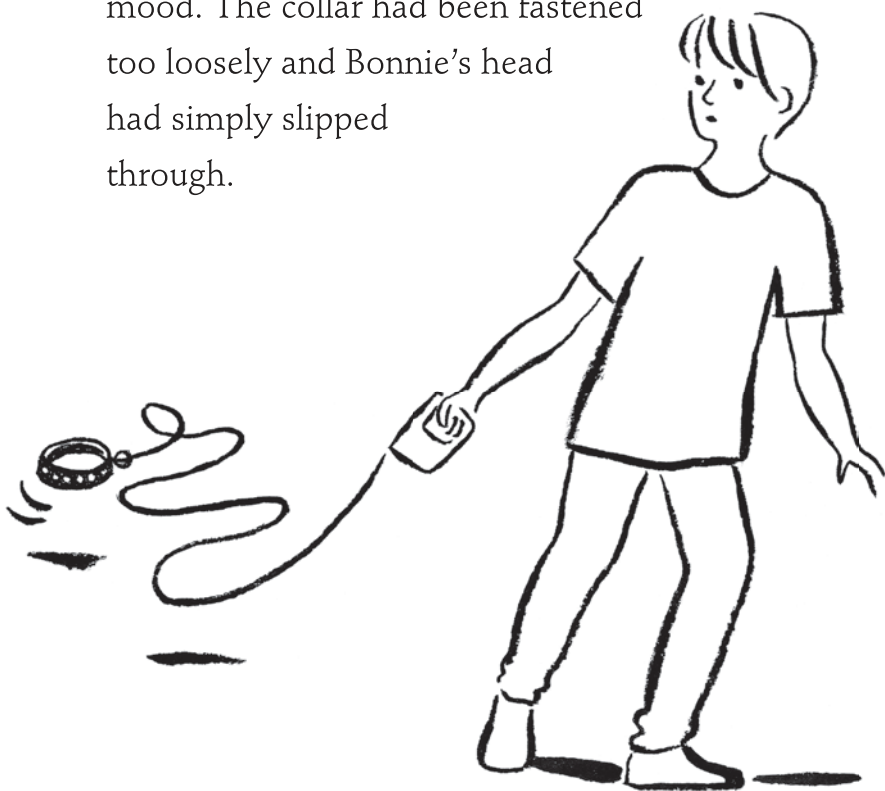
"Grrrrr!" Bonnie replied, putting her head down like a little white bull.

"Come ON!"

Harry was as fed up with his dog as his mum was. As fed up as his dad was when Mum answered the phone with that cold, distant voice. As fed up as Bonnie was with being pulled around and shouted at. He turned and stomped along the pavement, letting the lead run out to its longest extent,

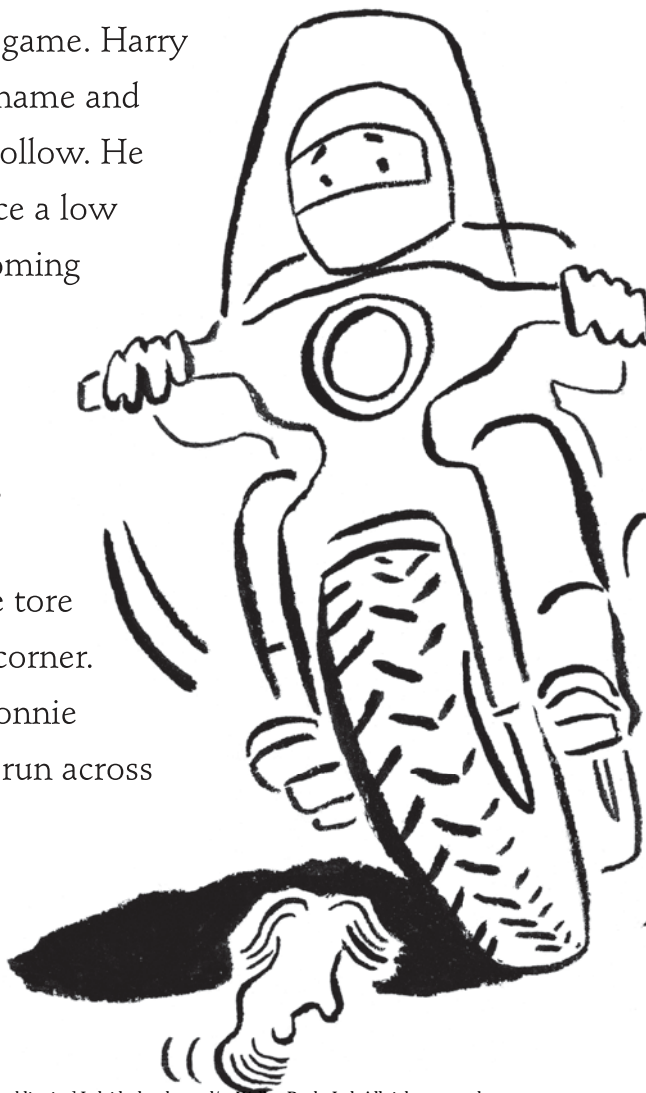
then tugging hard. He *would* make that stubborn little dog obey!

Then suddenly there was nothing on the end of the lead. Nothing ... except air and the sparkly black jewelled collar Mum had bought one day in a dressing-up-Bonnie mood. The collar had been fastened too loosely and Bonnie's head had simply slipped through.



After that everything happened very quickly. Bonnie felt freedom lift her spirits, and she rushed off the way they had come, as if this was a wonderful game. Harry yelled her name and started to follow. He didn't notice a low grumble coming nearer and nearer, building to a roar as a big black motorcycle tore round the corner.

Just as Bonnie decided to run across the road.



Harry saw the white ball of fluff facing the big black motorbike, heard the engine noise change at the same time as he heard his own voice – almost as if it didn't belong to him – shriek, “BONNIEEEEEEEEE!”

Then it was over. The motorcyclist swerved, wobbled horribly, but managed to stay upright – and stop. Bonnie sat shivering in the middle of the road. Harry rushed forward and scooped her up, imagining in those horrible seconds what it would have been like had she been hit.

He buried his face in her fur and whispered, “You're all right, Little Bear.”

Somebody was shouting. The motorcyclist was striding towards them. All dressed in leather, his face completely hidden by the helmet, the biker looked like a scary creature from *Doctor Who*.

“What do you think you're doing?”

The helmet came off with a furious yank – and the face frowning at them was just as frightening. The man had a bushy beard and thick, dark hair and his mouth looked very red as it shouted, “I could have been killed!”

“S-s-s-so could my dog,” stammered Harry.

“Never mind the stupid little mutt! You ought to be ashamed of yourself, letting a dog run out of control like that.”

“S-s-s-she’s *not* out of control!” Harry protested, but not very convincingly.

“Yes, she is!” shouted the man.

“No, she’s not!” Harry shouted back.

“Yip yip yip yip YIP!” barked Bonnie, who was now over her shock and knew she had to protect Harry from this fierce-looking stranger.

“Shouldn’t have a dog if you can’t control it!” bellowed the man.



"Shouldn't ride a fast bike if you can't control *that!*" yelled Harry.

"Yip, yip, yip!"

You could hear the racket a mile away. No wonder Mum came out, drying her hands on a tea towel and looking worried.

"What's going on?" she asked.

"That dog nearly had me off my bike!"

"He nearly ran Bonnie over," wailed Harry, close to tears now.

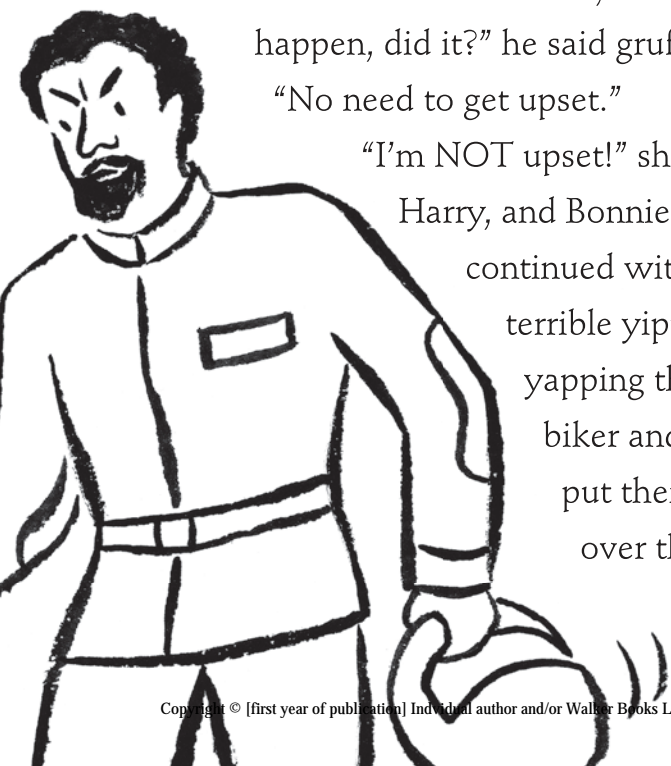
The man saw his face. "Well, it didn't happen, did it?" he said gruffly.

"No need to get upset."

"I'm NOT upset!" shouted

Harry, and Bonnie

continued with such a terrible yipping and yapping that the biker and Mum put their hands over their ears.



The man told Mum what had happened, and Harry just listened, head down, because everything he said was true. It *was* all his fault. He waited for his mum to shout at him.

But nothing happened.

When he looked up, she was smiling at the man.

“Well, you’re obviously a very good rider, to control your bike like that,” she said.

The man shuffled his feet. “Well, I’ve been riding for years, you know,” he replied with a big grin. “The name’s Eddie, by the way.”

“Oh, yes ... er ... I’m Ann,” said Harry’s mum, sounding flustered.

There was a short silence. Bonnie was





wriggling like mad in Harry's arms, so his mum suggested he take her inside. "Give her a biscuit to calm her down."

"Probably could use one yourself too, eh, lad?" smiled Eddie.

Harry glared at him and turned away.

Back in the house, he snuggled up on the sofa with Bonnie, expecting to hear Mum come in to tell him off at any moment. This was turning out to be a horrible day. He looked at the muddy chair and waited for the storm to break.

It must have been a good twenty minutes later when he heard footsteps, and the front door closing. And laughter. Mum burst into the room – face pink, eyes bright. The biker

followed, his helmet under his arm. He seemed to fill the room.

“You’ll never guess, love!” she said. “Eddie and I went to the same college!”

Eddie grinned. “Yeah, but I was a bit before you.”

“Isn’t that an amazing coincidence? So I’ve asked him in for a cup of tea and a piece of cake. It’s the least we can do, since Bonnie could have killed him!”

Eddie threw back his head and laughed loudly as if she’d made the funniest joke in the world.

Where was the shouting monster in black? Come to think of it, where was the shouting small dog in white?

Harry couldn’t understand it. Bonnie was lying next to him like a little lion, her head held up straight, her coal-black eyes fixed on the stranger. Normally she would be on the floor, yelping like mad. Why, she even still

barked at Mr Wilson, and they'd known him for ages.

But when this visitor sat down in the muddy armchair and waited for Harry's mum to bring in the tea, Bonnie padded over to sniff at his big biker boots. Eddie said, "Shall we be friends now, little dog?" and – to Harry's amazement – Bonnie licked his outstretched finger.




“Your dog likes me, Ann,” said Eddie when Mum came in with the tray.

“Not such a silly little dog then, eh?” smiled Mum.


“No way!” said Harry, but nobody seemed interested in his opinion.

“In fact,” Eddie said with a wink, “she just might be the brightest dog I’ve ever met!”







BONNIE was still recovering from
the shock of that big black motorbike roaring
along the road towards her. And as for
the angry monster riding it...



But it was all over now. Here he was in their
home, and somehow everything was all right.
The man smelled of leather and leaves and lots
of interesting things, and Bonnie knew
there was something good about him.



Dogs can always tell. Usually she
didn't want anybody (except those children
next door, and the girl with the
annoying chihuahua) to come onto
the territory that belonged to her pack.



But this man was different.



Bonnie could sniff the difference in the air.
It was making Mum laugh out loud – and that
is the most beautiful sound to a dog.