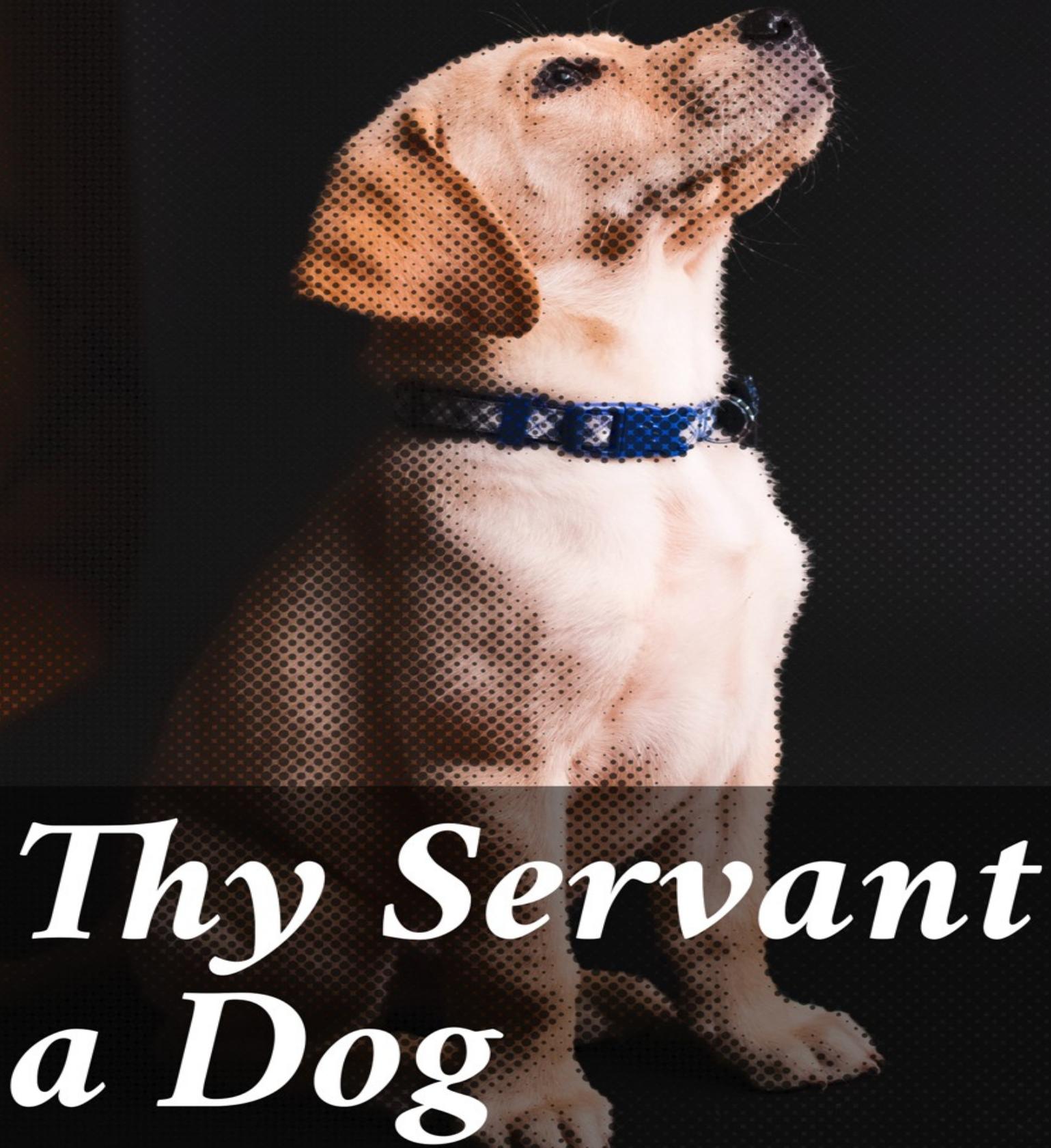


Rudyard Kipling



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Thy Servant a Dog



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PLEASE may I come in? I am Boots. I am son of Kildonan Brogue-- Champion Reserve--V.H.C.--very fine dog; and no-dash-parlour-tricks, Master says, except I can sit-up, and put paws over nose. It is called 'Making Beseech.' Look! I do it out of own head. Not for telling... This is Flat-in-Town. I live here with Own God. I tell:

I

There is walk-in-Park-on-lead. There is off-lead-when-we-come-to-the- grass. There is 'nother dog, like me, off-lead. I say: 'Name?' He says: 'Slippers.' He says: 'Name?' I say: 'Boots.' He says: 'I am fine dog. I have Own God called Miss.' I say: 'I am very-fine dog. I have Own God called Master.' There is walk-round-on-toes. There is Scrap. There is Proper Whacking. Master says 'Sorry! Awfully sorry! All my fault.' Slippers's Miss says: 'Sorry! My fault too.' Master says: 'So glad it is both our faults. Nice little dog, Slippers.' Slippers's Miss says 'Do you really think so?' Then I made 'Beseech.' Slippers's Miss says: 'Darling little dog, Boots.' There is on-lead, again, and walking with Slippers behind both Own Gods, long times... Slippers is not-half-bad dog. Very like me. 'Make-fine-pair, Master says...There is more walkings in Park. There is Slippers and his Miss in that place, too. Own Gods walk together--like on-lead. We walk behind. We are tired. We yawn. Own Gods do not look. Own Gods do not hear...They have put white bows on our collars. We do not like. We have pulled off. They are bad to eat...

II

Now we live at Place-in-Country, next to Park, and plenty good smells. We are all here. Please look! I count paws. There is me, and own God- Master. There is Slippers, and

Slippers's Own God-Missus. That is all my paws. There is Adar. There is Cookey. There is James-with-Kennel- that-Moves. There is Harry-with-Spade. That is all Slippers's paws. I cannot count more; but there is Maids, and Odd-man, and Postey, and Telegrams, and Pleasm-butcher and People. And there is Kitchen Cat which runs up Wall. Bad! Bad! Bad!

At morning-time Adar unties and brushes. There is going quick upstairs past Cookey and asking Gods to come to brekker. There is lie-down- under-the-table-at-each-end, and heads-on-feets of Gods. Sometimes there is things-gived-under-table. But 'must never beg.'

After brekker, there is hunting Kitchen Cat all over garden to Wall. She climbs. We sit under and sing. There is waiting for Gods going walks. If it is nothing-on-their-tops, it is only round the garden, and 'get-off-the-flower-bedsyou-two!' If it is wet, it is hearth-rugs by fire, or 'who-said-you-could-sit-on-chairs-Little-Men?' It is always being-with Own Gods--Own Master and Own Missus. We are most fine dogs...There is Tall far-off dog, which comes through laurels, and looks. We have found him by own dust-bin. We said: 'Come back, and play!' But he wented off. His legs are all bendy. And wavy ears. But bigger than Me!

III

AUGUST 1923

Please sit up! I will tell you by Times and Long Times-- each time at a time. I tell good things and dretful things.

Beginning of Times. There was walk with Own Gods, and 'basket-of- things-to-eat-when-wesit-down--piggies.' It were long walks. We ate lots. After, there was rabbits which would

not stay. We hunted. We heard sorrowful singing in woods. We went look-see. There was that far-off Tall dog, singing to hole in bank. He said: 'I have been here dreful long whiles, and I do not know where here is.' We said 'Follow tails!' He followed back to Own Gods. Missus said: 'Oh, you poor big baby!' Master said: 'What on earth is Kent's puppy doing here?' Tall dog went on tum plenty, and said small. There was 'give-him-what's- left.' He kissed hands. We all wented home across fields. He said he were playing with washing-on-line, which waved like tails. He said little old dog with black teeth came, and said he would make him grow- into-a-hound, if he went with. So he wented with, and found beautiful Smell. Old dog said him to put his dash-nose-upon-the-ground and puzzle. He puzzled long ways with old dog. There was field full of 'ware-sheep and beautiful Smell stopped. Old dog was angry and said him to cast-forward. But Peoples came saying loud. He ran into woods. Old dog said if he waited long enough there he would grow-into-a-hound, and it would do-him-good to have to find his way home, because he would have to do it most of his life if he was so-dash-stoopid-as- all-that. Old dog went away and Tall dog waited for more beautiful Smell, and it was night-times, and he did not know where home was, and he singed what we heard. He were very sorry. He is quite new dog. He says he is called 'DamPuppy.' After long whiles there was smells which he knew. So he went through hedge and ran to his home. He said he was in-for-Proper-Whacking.

One Time after That. Kitchen Cat sits on Wall. We sing. She says: 'Own Gods are going away.' Slippers says: 'They come back at Biscuit-time.' Kitchen Cat says: 'This time they

will go and never come back.' Slippers says: 'That is not real rat.' Kitchen Cat says: 'Go to top of House, and see what Adar is doing with kennels-that-shut.'

We go to top of House. There is Adar and kennels-that-shut. She fills with things off Gods' feets and tops and middles. We go downstairs. We do not understand...

Kitchen Cat sits on Wall and says: 'Now you have seen that Own Gods are going. Wait till kennels-that-shut are put behind kennel-that-moves, and Own Gods get in. Then you will know.' Slippers says: 'How do you know where that rat will run?' Kitchen Cat says 'Because I am Cat. You are Dog. When you have done things, you ask Own Gods if it is Whack or Pat. You crawl on turn. You say "Please, I will be good." What will you do when Own Gods go and never come back?' Slippers said: 'I will bite you when I catch you.' Kitchen Cat said: 'Grow legs!'

She ran down Wall and went to Kitchen. We came after. There was Cookey and broom. Kitchen Cat sat in window and said: 'Look at this Cookey. Sometimes this is thick Cookey; sometimes this is thin Cookey. But it is always my Cookey. I am never Cookey's Cat. But you must always have Own Gods with. Else you go bad. What will you do when Own Gods go away?' We were not comfy. We went inside House. We asked Own Gods not to go away and never come back. They did not understand...

IV

Time After. Own Gods have gone away in kennel-that-moves, with kennels-that-shut behind! Kennel came back at Biscuit-time, but no Gods. We went over House looking. Kitchen Cat said: 'Now you see!' We went to look

everywhere. There was nothing...There is Peoples called Carpenters come. They are making a little House inside Big House. There is Postey talking to Adar. There is Pleasm-butcher talking to Cookey. There is everybody talking. Everybody says: 'Poor little chaps.' And goes away.

Some more Time. This night-time, Shiny Plate shined into our kennels, and made sing. We sang: 'When will Own Gods come back?' Adar looked out from high-up-above, and said 'Stop that, or I'll come down to you.' We were quiet, but Shiny Plate shined more. We singed 'We will be good when the Gods come back.' Adar came down. There was Whackings. We are poor little small dogs. We live in Outside Places. Nobody cares for.

V

Other more times. I have met that Tall far-off dog with large feet. He is not called 'DamPuppy.' He is called Ravager-son-of-Regan. He has no Own God because he will pass-the-bottle-round-and-grow-into-a-Hound. He lives across Park, at Walk, with dretful Peoples called Mister- Kent. I have wented to Walk. There were fine smells and pig-pups, and a bucket full of old things. Ravager said: 'Eat hearty!' He is nice dog. I ate lots. Ravager put his head through handle of bucket. It would not go away from him. He went back-first, singing. He sang: 'I am afraid.' Peoples came running. I went away. I wented into dark place called Dairy. There was butters and creams. People came. I went out of a little window. I sicked-up two times before I could run quick. I went to own kennel and lay down. That Peoples called Mister- Kent came afterwards. He said to Adar 'That little black beast is dam-thief.' Adar said 'Nonsense! He is asleep.' Slippers came and

said: 'Come and play Rats.' I said: 'Go to Walk and play with Ravager.' Slippers wented. People thought Slippers was me. Slippers came home quick. I am very fine dog--but Master has not come back!

VI

After that Time. I am Bad Dog. I am Very Bad Dog. I am 'G'way-you- dirty-little-devil!' I found a Badness on the road. I liked it! I rolled in it! It were nice! I came home. There was Cookey and Adar. There was 'Don't;-you-come-anigh-me.' There was James-with-kennel- that-moves. There was: 'Come 'ere, you young pole-cat!' He picked up, and washed with soap, and sticky water out of kennel-that-moves rubbed into all my hairs. There was tieup. I smelled very bad to myself. Kitchen Cat came. I said: 'G'way! I am Filfy Bad Dog! I am Proper Stink-pot!' Kitchen Cat said 'That is not your own rat. You are bad because Own Gods do not come back. You are like Peoples who can not be good without Own Gods to pat.'

VII

Other Fresh Times. Now I am great friend of Ravager. Slippers and me have wented to hunt Hen at Walk. She were angry Hen-lady with pups. She bit Slippers, two times, with her nose, under his eye. We all went one way. There was Pig-lady with pups that way. We went other way. There was Mister-Kent-Peoples with whack-stick that way. We wented more ways, quick. We found a fish-head on a heap of nice old things. There was Ravager. We all went for play. There was cow-pups in field. They ran after. We went under gate and said. They ran away....an after till they stopped. They turned round. We went away again. They ran after. We

played a long while. It were fun. Mister-Kent-People and more Peoples came calling dretful names. We said to Ravager: 'We will go home.' Ravager said: 'Me too.' He ran across field. We went home by small ditches. We played Rat-sticks on the lawn.

Cowman Peoples came and said to Adar 'Those two little devils have been chasing pounds off the calves!' Adar said: 'Be ashamed of yourself! Look at 'em! Good as gold!' We waited till Peoples were gone. We asked for sugar. Adar gave. Ravager came through laurels--all little. He said: 'I have had Proper Whacking. What did you get?' We said 'Sugar.' He said: 'You are very fine dogs. I am hungry.' I said: 'I will give you my store-bone in the border. Eat hearty.' He digged. We helped. Harry-with-Spade came. Ravager went through laurels like Kitchen Cat. We got Proper Whacking and tie-up for digging in borders ... When we are bad, there is Sugar. When we are good, there is Whack-whack. That is same rat going two wrong ways...

VIII

Harry-with-Spade has brought a Rat...Look, please! Please look! I am Rrreal Dog! I have killed a Rat. I have slew a Rat! He bit me on the nose. I bit him again. I bit him till he died. I shookened him dead! Harry said 'Go-ood boy! 'Born ratter!' I am very-fine-dog- indeed! Kitchen Cat sat on the Wall and said: 'That is not your own Rat. You killed it to please a God.' When my legs are grown, I will kill Kitchen Cat like Rats. Bad! Bad! Bad!

IX

Time soon After. I wented to Walk to tell my friend Ravager about my Rat, and find more things to kill. Ravager