



In the sprightliness of Airedales, she says, there is some suggestion of "tap dancing and vaudeville."

ence between commanding a dog to sit and commanding him to retrieve or negotiate obstacles is like the difference between requiring mannerly behavior in a classroom and commanding the students to draw a picture or write a poem. The picture or the poem belongs to the artist, no matter who commissioned it, and some dogs are more insistent on this aspect than others."

When she first met Bandit she did not know what work he would be good at, what song he had to sing. It turned out that he sang for obstacles to be surmounted—boulders, high tractor seats, even ladders "and all else," she writes, that is "aptly and splendidly climbable." But that knowledge came only near the end of Bandit's story, an illuminating case history in the pit bull wars and a moral tale—as all classic dog stories should be.

Once upon a time Bandit belonged to a courtly man named Lamon Redd, 76 years old, a retired steelworker who lived on the rents from rooms in his house and an identical one beside it, on Henry Street in Stamford, Connecticut. What Bandit mostly did was sit on the front stoop beside Redd and keep track of the neighborhood. A time came when the girlfriend of a tenant, coming in after midnight, stepped on Bandit in the dark and got a nip from him. But Bandit had no real trouble

until the steamy July day in 1987 when one of Redd's male renters was set upon by the outraged mother of a girl he had been quarreling with. She chased him down the driveway between the two houses, yelling and hitting at him with a broom. The drive was Bandit's responsibility; besides, the young man often fed him and took him for walks. Bandit bit the woman.

For centuries under common law, dogs have been allowed a bite or two if the bite occurs in the defense of master or property, or after the dog has been flagrantly tormented. In most places they still are. But because of the public terror of pit bulls generated since the mid-1980s, in a number of localities (whole states like Washington, Ohio and Connecticut, counties like San Mateo in California, cities like Los Angeles) canine-control departments have been granted largely unchallengeable authority to take whatever measures they deem necessary to deal with "vicious" dogs, and enormous leeway in deciding if a dog is dangerous in the first place. In some extreme cases, a single unsubstantiated complaint that a dog "approached" a child in a "threatening" way can result in the death of the dog or the punishment that now fell on Lamon Redd.

Bandit was taken away. To get his dog back and to keep him from being destroyed, Redd was told, he would have to build a chain link fence around his property, six feet high, and (though Bandit had lived indoors) put a doghouse in his yard. Many dog owners, already intimidated, can't comply with such demands. But in the weeks that Bandit stayed on death row in the pound, Redd spent \$4,000 to have the work done.

Whether or not the dog was teased or beaten while he was in custody, as Vicki Hearne suspects, is open to question. But once back in Henry Street he forgot his manners and relieved himself on the stoop, something he'd never done before. The second time this happened, Redd "whipped him and whipped him." And finally Bandit bit his master in the whupping hand, 16 stitches' worth. This occurred inside the fence and was no danger to the public. But the Stamford Canine Control Division heard, picked up the dog and ordered him put down.

Bandit stands accused

Redd blamed himself: "He notified me—'grrrr, grrrr'—but I kept whupping him." So Redd hired a lawyer. In November 1987, Vicki Hearne got involved in the case, first as an expert in dog behavior, then as a plaintiff. Canine Control took the position that Bandit was a biter and a vicious dog. He must be put down. Vicki argued that Bandit, on the record, basically was not a bad dog but a "splendid" dog who could be safely restored to his owner and society by training.

After an appeal hearing upheld the original disposal