

Bandit: the story of a good-bad dog

misdeeds, can be ruined by having to sit by and do nothing about someone, like a malefactor, who is flagrantly out of place. Hearne describes shepherds as "experts in the game of 'What's wrong with this picture?'" Airedales take a sportier approach to life. As long as there is work in view in which they will be able to show off their skills, they are happy.

True pit bulls are a sort of terrier, their formal American Kennel Club (AKC) title being American Staffordshire terriers, not to be confused with bull terriers like the female dog who plays Spuds MacKenzie (a male) on TV, or with mug-faced bulldogs like Yale mascot Handsome Dan. Along with many officially "vicious" dogs in recent years, Bandit had been loosely described as a pit bull, but when Hearne met him she instantly saw that he was an American bulldog, probably of murky antecedents but clearly with immense dignity. "Even in the most bulldoggy [pit bulls]," she writes about that first encounter, "there is something—a sprightliness in the stance, some suggestion of the possibilities of tap dancing and vaudeville, some impish gleam of the eye—to suggest the terrier." And she adds, "There was no terrier in this guy, [only] stalwartness."

The wet Airedale is named Texas. When he's rinsed down he's supposed to get his collar put on. But when he dodges, instead of the high-level discipline one has been led by her detractors to believe that she would employ, all Hearne says—in a chirpy, low-key but upbeat clarinet tone—is "Texas, that's not how to do it." Texas obediently puts his head forward in the proper way and is lifted down to the floor. "Kennel up," she says in the same voice. He zips into an anteroom where there is a row of wire kennels, pops into one, spins around and puts his nose forward as if to leave again. She clangs the wire door and expertly hooks a hot-air tube to the cage so he won't catch cold.

Texas is full of vim and vigor, a young dog impatient



Drumming in snow, Hearne gives "search" command
Drummer, an Airedale who is one of her top dogs.

Drummer faster, and he is more of a natural cutup, and in ways sloppier, than Hearne normally permits. "I talk about him," she says "the way Twain described *William Lloyd*: 'He'll be president some day—if they don't *beat* him first.'"

Drummer door to Texas, and now released, is Drummer, a much larger Airedale she uses for obedience and search-and-rescue trials. Hearne feels that people and *Drummer* have songs to sing—yes, she does talk that way. *Drummer* of Drummer's songs, I learn, is "I am Drummer, *Drummer*, of the Kennel." But he has been known to lapse into more plaintive lays, among them: "Vicki, I am *Drummer*. We're a team. Why are you doing things *with* that crazy little dog Texas? He couldn't find a *phone* in a telephone booth."

Drummer may one day push him, but Drummer is her *Drummer* one public dog. The "heels" and "sits" he does are *Drummer* warm-up exercises for advanced work, like a *Drummer* cancer limbering up at the bar. She tries to *Drummer* search commands to a minimum, even in the formal *Drummer* of a new dog. "Telling a dog to sit," she says, "*Drummer* boring for the dog, and for you. The differ-

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