

## ~ CHAPTER FIVE ~

### *The Pale Pink Dog*

WHEN Henry woke up one Monday morning in the spring, the first thing he thought was, Five, more days till Saturday. On Tuesday the first thing he thought was, Four more days till Saturday. By Wednesday he felt as if Saturday would never come.

It all began when Henry and Ribsby made their weekly trip to the Lucky Dog Pet Shop to buy horse meat.

"Well, if it isn't Henry and Ribs!" exclaimed Mr. Pennycuff. "Do you have your entry blank for the dog show?"

"What dog show?" asked Henry.

"Didn't you hear? The park department is having a dog show in the park next Saturday. Boys and girls up to sixteen years old may enter their dogs. The Woofies Dog Food Company is giving prizes. Better take an entry blank and fill it out. A fine dog like Ribsby is sure to win a prize."

Ribsby wagged his tail.

"Well," said Henry doubtfully, "he's an awfully good dog but he isn't any special kind. I mean he isn't a cocker or bulldog or anything."

"That doesn't matter in this show. Now you just take this blank and fill it out. See, here's a place for dogs of mixed breed like Ribs."

"Gee, thanks," said Henry. "I think I will."

He took his entry blank and two pounds of horse meat, and he and Ribsby ran all the way home.

When they came to Klickitat Street, Henry saw Scooter and Robert playing catch. Mary Jane and Beezus and her little sister Ramona were standing under a snowball bush, shaking petals down over themselves and pretending it was snowing.

"Hey, look!" yelled Henry, waving the paper at them.

The children gathered around him to look at his entry blank. "I'm going to enter Ribsby," said Henry. "He'll win a prize. Mr. Pennycuff said so."

"Aw, Ribsby's just an old mutt!" scoffed Scooter.

"He is not! He's a smart dog and besides, it says he doesn't have to be any special kind of dog. See, it says dogs of mixed breed."

"Say, look at the list of prizes!" said Robert. "Woofies Dog Food, squeaking mice, feeding dishes, leashes, movie tickets, beanies, silver loving cups-a whole lot of stuff."

"If they're giving silver cups, I'm going to get a blank for Princess Patricia of Tarabrook. She's a better dog than Ribsby," said Mary Jane.

"Princess who?" demanded Scooter.

"Princess Patricia of Tarabrook. That's Patsy's real name. She has a pedigree and I know she'll win a silver cup." Patsy was Mary Jane's cocker spaniel.

"You know," said Robert thoughtfully, "I'm going to enter Sassy. She's getting kind of old, but she's still pretty lively and she might win a movie ticket or something."

Beezus and Ramona didn't have a dog. They had a cat, three white rats, a turtle, and one guppy. Beezus said she knew where she could borrow a puppy named Puddles.

"Well, I guess I might as well enter Rags," said Scooter. "He's the smartest dog around here. He can even sit up and shake hands. And he's all Airedale, too. He isn't any mixed breed like that old mutt you found."

"Ribsy isn't old and he isn't a mutt either! And he can sit up, too. He's a better dog than your old Rags and he'll win a better prize. I'll bet he wins a silver cup!"

"Don't make me laugh!" scoffed Scooter. "If he'd been any good, his folks wouldn't have let him get away."

At last Saturday came. Henry jumped out of bed as soon as he woke up, because he had a lot to do before the dog show at ten o'clock. At breakfast he stopped gulping his cereal to ask, "Mom, can I give Ribsy a bath in the bathtub?"

"*May I* give Ribsy a bath in the bathtub."

"May I give Ribsy a bath in the bathtub?"

"Can't you use the laundry tub in the basement the way you usually do?" his mother asked.

"But, Mom, this is special for the dog show. I want to do an extra good job on him this time. If I get him good and clean, I know he'll win a silver give Ribsy a bath in the bathtub if you'll promise to clean up the bathroom afterward."

"Thanks, Mom. I'll clean it up. Excuse me, please."

"Henry, I'm afraid you didn't eat much breakfast. I hope Ribsy does win a silver cup, but I wouldn't count on it too much if I were you. After all, he's just a mongrel."

"He isn't a mongrel, Mom. He's a mixed breed. And I know he's a better dog than any dog around here. Come on, Ribsy."

Ribsy followed Henry into the bathroom. When Henry began to run the water into the tub, he looked at Henry and then at the water. Then he tucked his tail between his legs and started to sneak out of the bathroom.

"Oh no you don't!" Henry grabbed him by the collar. He put his arms around Ribsy's middle and lifted him into the tub. Ribsy was heavier than he had been that day about a year ago when Henry carried him into the bus.

Because this was a special occasion, Henry didn't use flea soap. He used his mother's shampoo. Ribsy whimpered. Henry rubbed the shampoo on him and worked it into a thick lather. He rubbed and scrubbed. The suds foamed thick and white until Ribsy, except for his face, was hidden in mounds of thick lather.

"Now you ought to be good and clean," said Henry. He scooped up handfuls of water from the tub and poured them over the dog. He poured and poured but the lather only grew thicker. If only he hadn't used so much shampoo! He tried mopping Ribsy with his washcloth. That helped but it still wasn't fast enough. He had an idea. He moved Ribsy around so that he faced

the end of the tub, and turned the shower on him. Ribsby tried to jump out but Henry held him. Ribsby raised his head and howled.

"Henry!" his mother called. "What are you doing to that poor dog?"

"Just washing him," answered Henry, and turned off the shower. Ribsby shook himself. Henry used four bath towels on him, but still he wasn't dry.

Oh well, it's a warm day. Maybe the sun will dry him off, thought Henry. He took one of the towels and hastily wiped it over the floor and tub.

"Henry, I have to go downtown this morning. I hope you and Ribsby have good luck at the dog show." Mrs. Huggins had her hat on, ready to leave.

"Thanks, Moan. Say, have you seen the leash? It says on the entry blank all dogs must be on a leash."

"I think you left it in the basement," Mrs. Huggins said as she went out.

Henry ran down to the basement. At the bottom of the stairs he found the leash—at least, it had been a leash once. Now it was chewed into half a dozen pieces. Henry looked hurriedly around for something to use in its place. If only he had more time! The only thing he could find was his mother's rainy day clothesline. After climbing up on an apple box to untie it, he ran upstairs and fastened one end to Ribsby's collar. It was longer than a leash but it would have to do.

When Henry went out on the front porch, he saw Beezus and Ramona coming down the street. Beezus was carrying a squirming black puppy that kept trying to lick her face. "Puddles, you stop that!" she commanded and set him on the sidewalk. Puddles was wearing a red bow on his collar and Henry was pleased to see that Ribsby wasn't the only dog with a rope for a leash.

"Come on, Henry, we'd better hurry," said Beezus.

Ribsby sniffed at the puppy and decided to ignore him. "Hey, look," exclaimed Henry.

"There's Mary Jane and Patsy and Robert and Sassy up there ahead. We'd better run."

When they reached the park, Henry saw that already there were hundreds of boys and girls and dogs there ahead of them. Henry had never seen so many dogs. There were boxers, Great Danes, Pekingese, Airedales, cockers, Saint Bernards, Pomeranians, beagles, setters, pointers, and just plain dogs. Some, like Puddles, were wearing ribbons on their collars, some wore sweaters, and some had on little paper hats.

A loud-speaker on a sound truck blared out. "Take your entry blanks to the registration desk by the tennis courts."

"Come on, Ribsby." Henry found his way through the crowds of children and dogs to the registration desk. There he waited in line to weigh Ribsby on a big scale. At first Ribsby didn't want to be weighed, but Henry and a boy scout managed to shove him upon the scale and keep him still long enough to see that he weighed twenty-eight pounds.

"You've grown a lot heavier in a year," said Henry. "Maybe we shouldn't call you Ribsby any more."

After the dog was weighed, a lady gave Henry a yellow cardboard arm band. It had "Woofies Dog Food-Woofies make dogs woof for joy" printed on it. Below that there was a space for the kind of dog, weight-class, and the ring in which the dog was to be shown. The lady wrote on it, "Mixed breed-25 to 40 pounds-Ring 3."

Henry led Ribsby toward a sign with "Ring 3" printed on it over by a flower bed. Ribsby stopped to shake himself and then, before Henry knew what was happening, he dashed over to the flower bed and rolled in the dirt.

"Hey, cut that out!" yelled Henry. "You're getting all dirty."

It was too late. Henry pulled Ribsby, streaked with mud, out of the flowers. Henry tried to brush off the dirt. Then he tried to rub it off with his handkerchief. He only smeared it. He was discouraged. Why had he bragged so much about his dog? Now he would never win a prize.

When Henry reached Ring 3, he saw that it was made of rope tied to four stakes driven into the ground. Inside was a table piled with the prizes Henry had read about. Henry looked at the silver cup and thought it would look nice on his dresser. Not that he had a chance with a muddy dog. He noticed some of the boys had brought brushes and were brushing their dogs. He wished he had thought to bring a brush.

The day was warm. Henry sat down on the grass with the rest of the boys and girls to wait for the judging to start. He kept trying to brush some of the dirt off Ribsby. In the ring next to his he saw a snow-white dog. Somebody said it was a Siberian sled dog. The dog's owner was brushing him and sprinkling white powder on him to make him look whiter.

Henry had an idea! If he only had time, he could run home for a can of talcum powder to sprinkle on the white parts of Ribsby! That would cover up the dirt. It didn't matter about the yellow and black and brown parts. The dirt didn't show there much. Just then the voice boomed over the loudspeaker. "We are going to postpone the judging for a little while, because we have a real treat for all you kids. Maud, the trained mule, is going to entertain you."

The children all started toward the truck to see Maud. That is, all except Henry. He was not interested in any trained mule. He wanted Ribsby to win a silver cup. Here was his chance. He could run home and back while Maud the mule performed.

"Come on, Ribsby'," he yelled. "We have to step on it"

Followed by Ribsby, he ran as fast as he could out of the park and up the hill to his house on Klickitat Street. He rushed into his room and snatched his hairbrush. He tore into the bathroom and grabbed a can of talcum powder. Then he rushed back to the park with Ribsby. The children were still crowded around Maud.

Henry was so hot and sticky that he had to sit down on the grass to catch his breath. Ribsby was panting and his tongue hung out. Henry brushed him with the hairbrush. That helped a little. Then he sprinkled powder on the big white spot on his back. Henry was horrified. He could scarcely believe what he saw. The talcum powder wasn't white it was pink! Who ever heard of a dog with pink spots! Quickly he tried to brush the powder off. But Ribsby was still damp and the powder didn't brush off.

Henry decided to make all Ribsy's white parts pink so they would match. Maybe in the bright sunshine the judges wouldn't notice. He sprinkled powder on Ribsy's white ear and left hind paw. He even sprinkled some on his white tail. Yes, Ribsy did look better with all his light parts matching. Maybe the judges would wear dark glasses.

Maud finished her act and the children came back to the rings with their dogs. "Hey, look at the pink dog!" a boy exclaimed.

"I never heard of a pink dog," a girl said. "What kind is he?"

"He's a mixed breed," said Henry.

He put the talcum powder can in his pocket and decided not to say anything about it. Maybe the others would think he had some rare breed of dog.

A man stood in the center of the ring. Henry noticed that he was not wearing dark glasses. "All right," the man called. "Bring your dogs into the ring and march them around in single file."

"Come on, Ribsy, they're going to start judging. You'd better behave yourself." Henry led him by the clothesline into the ring.

The children walked their dogs around in a circle. Ribsy's long rope tangled with the other dogs' leashes. Finally the judge directed them to stop. "Now get your dogs ready," he ordered.

Henry didn't know what he meant, so he watched the others. Some of them knelt by their dogs and made them stand still and look ahead.

That must be what the judge meant. Henry knelt beside Ribsy. Ribsy sat down. He opened his mouth and let his long pink tongue hang out. He was thirsty.

"Come on, Ribs, stand up," begged Henry. "Be a good dog." Ribsy began to pant. "Come on, get up!"

Ribsy lay down on the grass and panted harder. Henry pulled and tugged. He looked over his shoulder at the judge. The judge was looking at the ears and teeth of a dog that was standing properly. Then he ran his hands over the dog. The dog didn't move.

"Come on, Ribsy!" begged Henry. "It'll be our turn pretty soon." Ribsy closed his eyes. "I know you're thirsty. I'll get you a drink of water just as soon as I can."

The loud-speaker made an announcement. "Will the boy scouts please take pans of water to each ring?"

Henry was relieved to see a boy scout coming with water, but when Ribsy's turn came, he sniffed at the pan and refused to drink.

"I guess he's used to his own dishes," explained Henry. "He just doesn't want to use the same pan as the other dogs."

"Can't help it," said the boy scout. "It's the only one I have."

Ribsy continued to pant.

At last the judge came to Henry. "Well, well, a pink dog," he exclaimed.

"Yes, sir," said Henry. It was lucky his own green hair had grown out so it could be cut off. A green-haired boy and a pale-pink dog would have looked funny.

"Come on, son. Stand him up."

Henry boosted Ribsby to his feet. Ribsby tried to sit down again, but Henry held up his hind end by the tail. The judge looked at his ears and teeth. Then he ran his hands over him. He looked at his fingers afterward. They were pink. "HmMMM," he said.

When the judge had looked at all the dogs, he ordered each child to walk across the ring and back with his dog. Henry noticed that the boys and girls who knew about these things held the leash in the left hand. When his turn came he held the clothesline in his left hand and started across the ring. Halfway across, Ribsby sat down to scratch behind his left ear. Henry pulled at the rope. When he reached the other side of the ring and turned back, Ribsby turned the wrong way so that he crossed in front of Henry.

Henry tripped on the rope and started to change it to his right hand, but just then Ribsby ran around behind Henry to growl at a dog that was mostly spaniel. The boy who owned the spaniel pulled him away and started to the other side of the ring. Ribsby ran in front of Henry and pulled at his rope to get closer to the other dog. The harder he pulled, the tighter the rope drew around Henry's legs. The children began to laugh. Ribsby was so excited he ran around behind Henry and pulled the rope even tighter. The laughter increased.

"Cut that out, Ribsby!" Henry ordered, looking over his shoulder at his dog. He felt silly standing there wound up in a clothesline.

"Come on, son," said the judge. "We can't waste time. A lot of other boys and girls want to show their dogs, too."

Now, on top of all his troubles, the judge was cross with him. Henry knew a cross judge would never give him a silver cup. Discouraged and feeling even sillier, Henry twirled around like a top to unwind himself from the rope. Relieved to have that part of the show over, he dragged Ribsby to the side of the ring. In a few minutes he could take his dog home and give him a drink.

After each child had walked his dog, the judge went around the ring pointing to different boys and girls, saying, "All right, you stay in the ring." He looked at Henry and his dog. "HmMMM," he said. "All right, you stay in."

As the contestants left the ring, the boy scouts handed them prizes. Those who left first won the smallest prizes. The longer they stayed in the ring, the bigger the prize.

"Hey, Henry, are you still in?" Henry looked up. Robert and Sassy were standing outside the rope.

"Yes," answered Henry, "and I sure don't see why. Ribsby did everything wrong. Did Sassy win anything?"

"Just a dog whistle." Robert took another look at Ribsby. "Say, how did he get all pink?"

"Aw, mind your own beeswax," said Henry. He pretended to be watching the judge carefully. One by one the man asked the boys and girls to leave the ring.

"Look what I won!" Henry saw Beezus waving a rubber mouse. "See, it squeaks!" She squeaked it. Then she stopped. "Look!" she squealed. "Ribsby is pink!"

"Shut up!" Henry looked at the judge. He wished he knew why he was staying in the ring.

Every time the judge passed him he looked at Ribsby and said, "HmMMM. Stay in the ring."

Mary Jane was the next one to see him. "See, I won a pillow for Patsy to sleep on," she said and then looked at Ribsy. "Why, Henry Huggins! What did you do to that poor dog? He's all pink. Just wait till your mother finds out about this."

"You keep quiet!" Henry said fiercely. There were only a few left in the ring.

Scooter was last to arrive. "Hi, Henry," he said. "Are you and that old mutt still in the ring? The judge must be blind. I guess Rags is a pretty good dog. Just the best in his class is all, and now he has to go to another ring to compete for the best dog in the show." He held up a small silver cup. Like the others, he looked at Ribsy. "I must be seeing things! A pink dog!" Scooter began to laugh. He sat down on the grass, laughing so hard he rolled back and forth.

Henry didn't think Ribsy was that funny. By this time Henry was so hot and disgusted that all he wanted was to get out of the ring, go home, and get Ribsy a drink of water out of his own private pan.

"HmMMM," said the judge again. At last only Henry and another boy were left. Henry remembered that the other boy's dog had done all the right things.

The judge stepped to the center of the ring with a silver cup in his hand. Henry wasn't at all surprised when the judge handed it to the other boy. He just wondered why he hadn't been asked to leave the ring. He thought he must have made a mistake, but the judge said to Henry and the winner, "Come along to the main ring. There will be some more judging there."

Puzzled, Henry followed. Beezus and Rarnona, Scooter, Mary Jane, and Robert, and their dogs followed Henry. Maybe Henry was going to win a prize after all.

In the main ring were the prize winners from all the other rings. Henry noticed two big silver cups on the table and saw his judge whispering to the other judges. They all looked at Ribsy. Ribsy panted harder than ever. The judges had the winners show their dogs again.

This time Henry wasn't taking any chances with the clothesline getting wound around his legs. He wound it around his hand so that there was only a foot of rope between his hand and Ribsy's collar. Ribsy did not behave any better the second time he was shown than he had the first. When Henry's turn came to lead him across the ring, he stopped to growl at a boxer. The boxer growled back.

Henry heard Scooter say, "If that mutt doesn't look out, he's going to get all bit up." Ribsy growled louder. The snarling boxer advanced, dragging the little girl who owned him along on the end of his leash.

Henry tried to pull Ribsy away but Ribsy ignored him. The dogs circled around one another, pulling their owners after them. Henry yanked so hard at Ribsy's collar the dog choked. The boxer snarled and sprang at Ribsy, using his powerful front paws to knock over the smaller dog. Henry's hand was wound in the rope and he could not let go. He was pulled down on his stomach with his face in the grass.

"Look! Henry's in a dog fight!" screamed Beezus in great excitement.

The boxer's owner began to cry.

Henry was so mixed up he wasn't sure what was happening. He smelled the damp grass and

felt it tickling his nose. He could hear snarls, growls, and barks. He could hear children screaming and yelling. The boxer stepped on his back. Henry said, "Oof!" He lifted his face from the grass in time to see a boy scout try to stop the fight by throwing a pan of water at the dogs. He missed the dogs but he didn't miss Henry.

Two judges ran into the ring and grabbed the dogs by their hind legs. They yanked the snarling animals apart.

"All right, son. Go ahead," ordered one judge, while the other helped the little girl hold her boxer.

Embarrassed and dripping, Henry got up from the grass and, without looking either right or left, hurried Ribsby across the ring and back.

Finally only Henry and another boy were left. The judge stepped to the center of the ring. "The big cup for the best dog in the whole show goes to the boy with the setter." Everybody clapped when he handed the boy one of the big silver cups. Ribsby growled at the winner.

"And now," said the judge, "the cup for the most unusual dog in the show goes to the boy with the a-a-mixed-breed dog!" He handed Henry the other big silver cup.

"Gee, thanks," was all Henry could say. The audience clapped and he heard Beezus shout, "Hooray for Henry!" He thought Ribsby looked pleased.

Everyone gathered around to admire his cup until a newspaper photographer asked them to stand back while he took a picture of Henry and his dog and wrote down his name and address. Henry was going to have his picture in the paper!

"Congratulations," said Scooter, "but I still think he's a mutt."

"Well, anyway, he won a bigger cup than Rags," boasted Henry, "but I guess Rags is a pretty good dog, too. Good old Ribsby. Now we'll get you a drink of water."

He led Ribsby to the nearest drinking fountain. He filled the silver cup with water and put it on the ground. Ribsby greedily lapped the water. Henry patted him. "Good old Ribsby. I knew you wouldn't drink out of any dish but your own."