

On The Beans Story
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Beans was the family dog when I was little. He was nominally a Boston terrier, but looking back on it now, I think he may have had something else mixed in. He had a bulldog look like a Boston terrier, but he was predominately white rather than black, and he was quite a bit bigger than the typical Boston terrier. Beans was “put to sleep,” as they say, when I was about three—I think I remember my parents saying that he had just gotten old.

Beans had been a beloved family pet and was often the subject of discussion when my much-older brother and sister and their spouses came to the house for Sunday dinner. There was one Beans story I remember in particular that was repeated time and again around the dinner table while I was growing up. The story was retold virtually verbatim with laughter and good cheer. That is, by everybody but me; I remember feeling on the outside of the group on those occasions and listening in silence and feeling vaguely uncomfortable, although I couldn’t have told you why.

The Beans story:

“I sure miss Beans. What a great dog.”

“He sure was. He was really smart.”

“Was he ever! Smartest dog I’ve ever been around. Remember, he didn’t like Bobby for some reason?”

“Yeah. I don’t think he wanted Bobby around.”

“I don’t think he did. Remember that time he tried to lead Bobby away?”

“Yeah.”

“Bobby was about a year and half, remember?, he hadn’t been walking long, and it was out on the sidewalk in front of the house. Bobby tottered toward Beans with his hand out, I suppose wanting to pet him. But just when Bobby got close, Beans moved a little bit away. Bobby kept tottering toward him, sort of following him, and Beans moved away again. This went on a couple of times, and I turned away to do something, and the next thing I know, I look up and there’s Beans and Bobby way down at the corner and Beans was most of the way across the street and Bobby was out in the street following him.”

“That was Beans’ way of getting rid of Bobby.”

“Yeah. It was really something for a dog to know to do something like that.”

“Beans was a great dog. We’ll never have another dog as good as Beans.”