

“Good heavens, man, I’m not suggesting I’d *sell* him to you. You must have him as a gift. Think of the train fares I’ll be saving. You’ll be doing me a good turn.” **D**

“Is he a big eater?” Bert asked doubtfully.

By this time the children, breathless in the background listening to one side of this conversation, had realized what was in the wind and were dancing up and down with their hands clasped beseechingly.

“Oh, not for his size,” Lob’s owner assured Bert. “Two or three pounds of meat a day and some vegetables and gravy and biscuits—he does very well on that.”

Alexandra’s father looked over the telephone at his daughter’s swimming eyes and trembling lips. He reached a decision. “Well, then, Mr. Dodsworth,” he said briskly, “we’ll accept your offer and thank you very much. The children will be overjoyed and you can be sure Lob has come to a good home. They’ll look after him and see he gets enough exercise. But I can tell you,” he ended firmly, “if he wants to settle in with us, he’ll have to learn to eat a lot of fish.”

So that was how Lob came to live with the Pengelly family. Everybody loved him and he loved them all. But there was never any question who came first with him. He was Sandy’s dog. He slept by her bed and followed her everywhere he was allowed.

Nine years went by, and each summer Mr. Dodsworth came back to stay at the Fisherman’s Arms and call on his erstwhile dog. Lob always met him with recognition and dignified pleasure, accompanied him for a walk or two—but showed no signs of wishing to return to Liverpool. His place, he intimated, was definitely with the Pengellys.

In the course of nine years Lob changed less than Sandy. As she went into her teens he became a little slower, a little stiffer, there was a touch of gray on his nose, but he was still a handsome dog. He and Sandy still loved one another devotedly. **E**

One evening in October all the summer visitors had left, and the little fishing town looked empty and secretive. It was a wet, windy dusk. When the children came home from school—even the twins were at high school¹⁰ now, and Don was a full-fledged fisherman—Jean Pengelly said, “Sandy, your Aunt Rebecca says she’s lonesome because Uncle Will Hoskins has gone out trawling,¹¹ and she wants one of you to go and spend the evening with her. You go, dear; you can take your homework with you.”

Sandy looked far from enthusiastic.

D SEQUENCE

What event finally leads Lob’s owner to give him to the Pengelly family?

E SEQUENCE

Note on your timeline the nine-year break in the story after Lob came to live with the Pengellys. What do you think happened during that time?

10. **high school:** In Great Britain, students go to high school when they are about 11 years old.

11. **trawling** (trô’lĭng): fishing with a net pulled behind a boat along the sea bottom.