

The Western Counties Hospital is a large one, with dozens of different departments and five or six connected buildings, each with three or four entrances. By that afternoon it became noticeable that a dog seemed to have taken up position outside the hospital, with the fixed intention of getting in. Patiently he would try first one entrance and then another, all the way around, and then begin again. Sometimes he would get a little way inside, following a visitor, but animals were, of course, forbidden, and he was always kindly but firmly turned out again. Sometimes the guard
290 at the main entrance gave him a pat or offered him a bit of sandwich—he looked so wet and beseeching and desperate. But he never ate the sandwich. No one seemed to own him or to know where he came from; Plymouth is a large city and he might have belonged to anybody.

At tea time Granny Pearce came through the pouring rain to bring a flask of hot tea to her daughter and son-in-law. Just as she reached the main entrance the guard was gently but forcibly shoving out a large, **agitated**, soaking-wet Alsatian dog.

“No, old fellow, you can *not* come in. Hospitals are for people, not for dogs.”

300 “Why, bless me,” exclaimed old Mrs. Pearce. “That’s Lob! Here, Lob, Lobby boy!”

Lob ran to her, whining. Mrs. Pearce walked up to the desk.

“I’m sorry, madam, you can’t bring that dog in here,” the guard said.

Mrs. Pearce was a very determined old lady. She looked the porter in the eye.

“Now, see here, young man. That dog has walked twenty miles from St. Killan to get to my granddaughter. Heaven knows how he knew she was here, but it’s plain he knows. And he ought to have his rights! He ought to get to see her! Do you know,” she went on, bristling, “that dog has walked
310 the length of England—*twice*—to be with that girl? And you think you can keep him out with your fiddling rules and regulations?”

“I’ll have to ask the medical officer,” the guard said weakly.

“You do that, young man.” Granny Pearce sat down in a determined manner, shutting her umbrella, and Lob sat patiently dripping at her feet. Every now and then he shook his head, as if to dislodge something heavy that was tied around his neck.

Presently a tired, thin, intelligent-looking man in a white coat came downstairs, with an impressive, silver-haired man in a dark suit, and there was a low-voiced discussion. Granny Pearce eyed them, biding her time.

320 “Frankly . . . not much to lose,” said the older man. The man in the white coat approached Granny Pearce.

“It’s strictly against every rule, but as it’s such a serious case we are making an exception,” he said to her quietly. “But only *outside* her bedroom door—and only for a moment or two.”

agitated (ăj'ĭ-tāt'əd)
adj. disturbed; upset
agitate *v.*