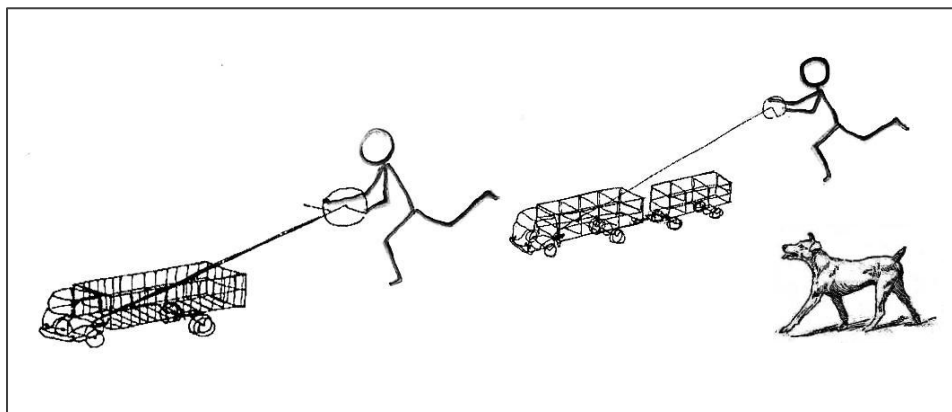


# *Ben and Boet*

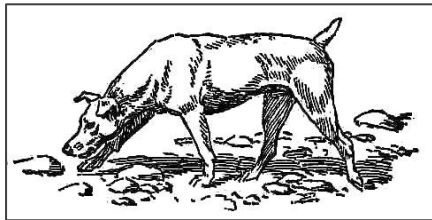
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# *Ben and Boet*

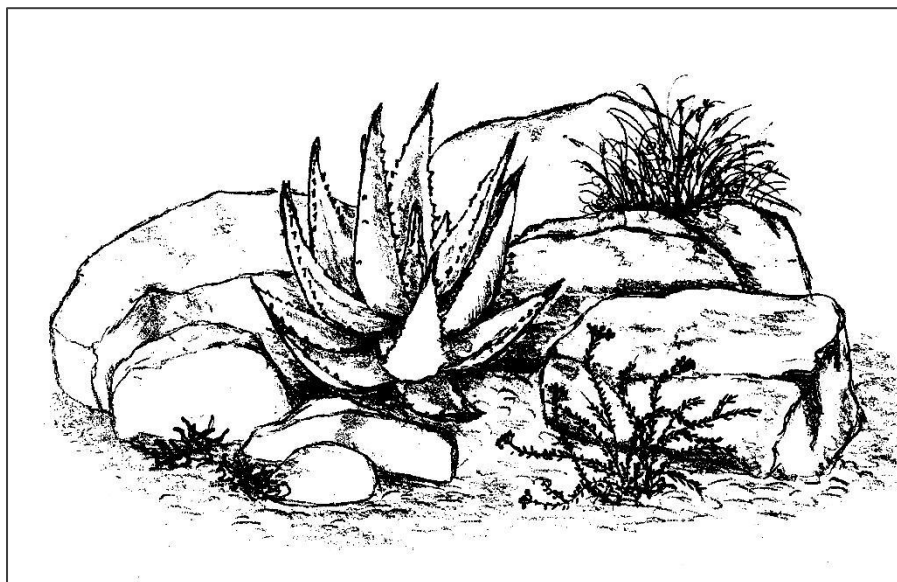
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*Pictures of dogs borrowed from "Jock of the Bushveld".  
Other drawings by Heather Oberholzer.*

This book belongs to .....

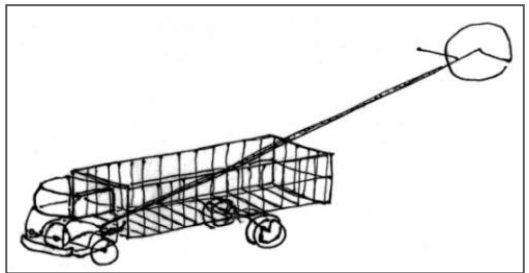


# The bridge



Ben and Boet were busy in the veld, making roads for their wire cars.

"Perhaps we'll make a trailer for our lorry - these roads must be wide enough," said Ben.



Boet smiled. He liked the idea of a trailer for the lorry. They would be able to load tins and stones into it, and other things too.

They came to a place in the veld where there was a little dry stream bed in their way.

The little sloop was only knee-deep, but it was too steep and narrow for the lorry.

"What shall we do here, Ben?" asked Boet.

"We need a bridge here," decided Ben. "What can we use? It will need to be strong."

They went back to the house to look for something to make the bridge. Behind the chicken house they found a few old wooden planks. They chose two long broad ones and took them to the place where their path crossed the little dry stream bed.

Carefully they laid the planks across the narrow stream bed, and used stones to smooth the ground on each side so that the planks could lie nice and flat.

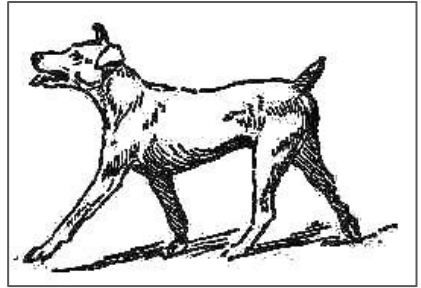
"Come, let's try it!" said Ben.

Slowly he drove the big lorry over the bridge. It was perfect - strong enough, and just the right width. The wire cars made a hollow sound

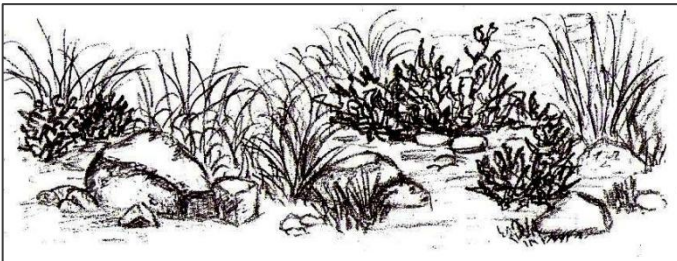
as they went over the planks, making Ben and Boet laugh.

"It's a good strong bridge," said Boet happily.

With the big lorry and the old wire car they drove on their new veld roads, going fast on the straight bits and carefully round the bends. And everywhere they went, Boet's dog Bennie followed them faithfully.



The roads snaked along between the little bushes of the veld, and the wire cars did the same, making sharp S-turns in the sand. It was great fun.



## Looking for a lost cow 4



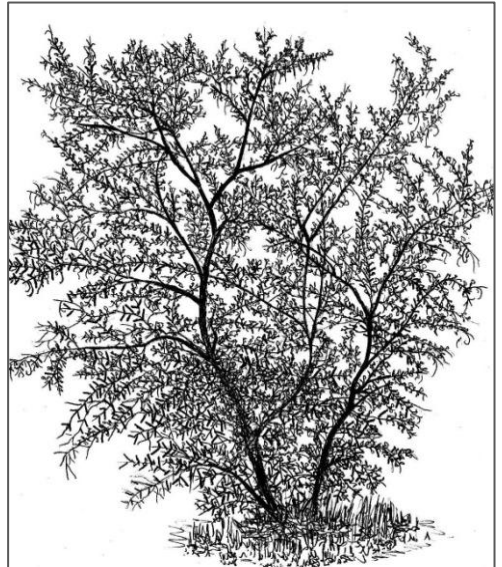
Ben and Boet were walking in the veld with Bennie. Boet's father had asked them to go find a lost cow.

They were looking for the cow in the thick bush along the river, where the grass was long. They couldn't find her anywhere.

"Do you think she is hiding from us?" asked Ben.

Boet shook his head. "She must be here somewhere. The cattle like this long grass near the river."

They soon got tired of searching. It was difficult to move through the thick riverside bush. Thorn trees often stood in their way, scratching them as they pushed their way through.



"Let's walk in the river," suggested Ben.

"Good idea," agreed Boet. "Come, Bennie."

The dry river bed was only a little wider than a car. They walked along on the soft sand. On each side, the banks were lined with tall, thick bushes. The cow was nowhere to be seen.

They came to a bend in the river, and round the corner in the sand they saw tracks.

The tracks were fresh. Boet was pleased.



"Look," he said, "These must be the cow's tracks at last. Now we will find her!"

They followed the spoor. The sand was smooth and it was easy to see the tracks. Rocks and stones lay in the dry river bed, but the cow had mostly preferred to walk on the soft sand.

Sometimes Ben and Boet saw other small prints in the sand too.





"Meerkat or mongoose?" wondered Ben. Boet didn't know.

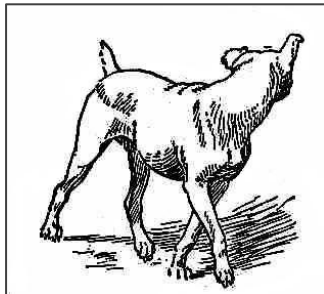
They found a few porcupine quills lying on the ground. Ben wished



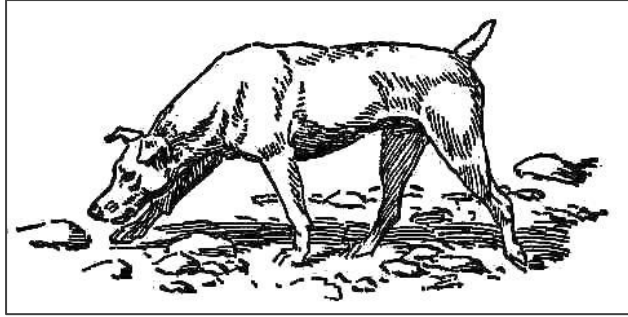
he would see a real live porcupine one day, with its quills all standing up on its back.

Suddenly the cow's tracks left the river bed, went up the bank, and disappeared into the thick riverside bush.

"We'll struggle to get through here," said Boet. "We won't be able to see the spoor at all. Now it's going to be hard to find that cow."



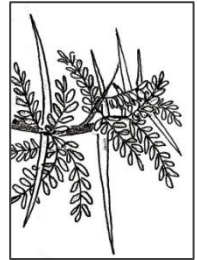
Then Ben en Boet noticed what Bennie was doing.



He was running along following the spoor where it went up the river bank and into the thick bush. Nose to the ground, he was following the scent confidently.

"Let's follow him," said Boet eagerly.

They hurried after the dog into the bush, struggling to push their way through the dense thorn trees.

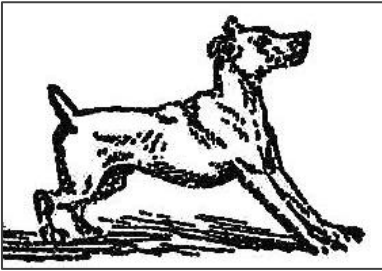


They couldn't keep up. Bennie disappeared. The bush was so thick that Ben and Boet couldn't see far at all.

The tracks had disappeared. The dog too. The two boys had no idea in which direction to go.

Then they heard Bennie barking from far away, deep in the bush. Encouraged, they struggled on, pushing through the thorns in the direction of the barking.

At last Ben and Boet came to an open place. And there, to their relief, they saw Bennie and



the cow. The dog was barking bravely, and the big old cow was standing looking crossly at him.

He stopped barking as soon as he saw Boet, and ran to him.

"Good dog!" said Boet. "You found the cow for us!"

Ben laughed too. "Good dog!"

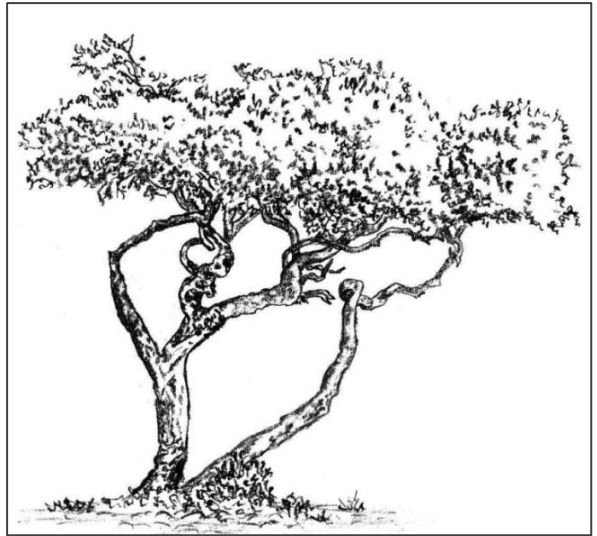
Bennie wagged his stumpy tail, looking proud of himself.

"Come, Bennie," said Boet. "Now you can help us get this old cow to go home."



Ben and Boet and Bennie walked along slowly through the veld, chasing the cow home. It was far, and she would not go fast.

It was a lovely day. The sun shone and the veld looked beautiful.



But Bennie was not looking at the scenery. He ran along with his nose to the ground, looking for spoor.



For a moment he stood still, sniffing at something.

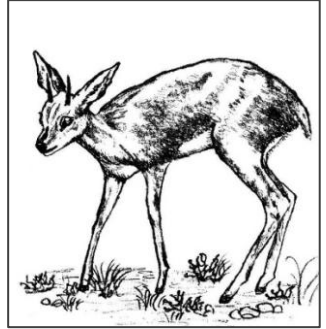
"Look, it's a kudu spoor," said Boet, pointing. "But it is old. The kudu is long gone."



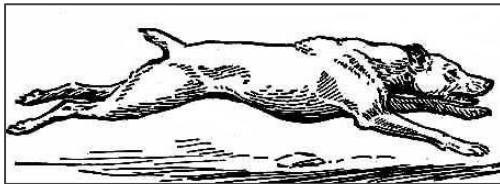
Bennie had also gone - he knew it was an old spoor, and was already looking for other tracks.

Slowly Ben and Boet chased the cow on.

Suddenly, nearby, a sound startled them. A little buck crashed out out of a bush right next to them and ran away. Bennie set off after it.



The steenbokkie was very fast, too fast for the dog, even though Bennie chased it a long way.



After a while he came back panting.

"You look tired, Bennie!" laughed Boet. "That steenbokkie was too fast for you!"

Soon Bennie was running along next to Ben and Boet again, his nose to the ground as before.

"What are you smelling now, Bennie?" asked Ben.

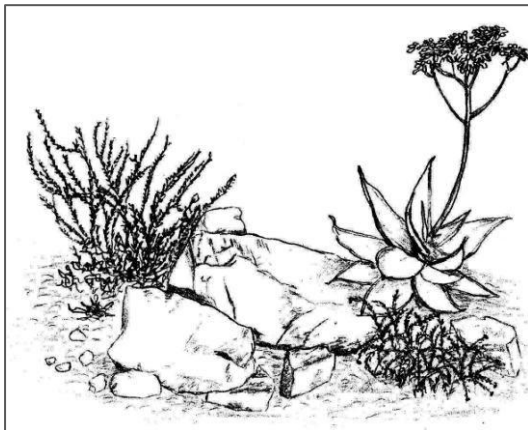


"Perhaps a rabbit," said Boet.

"Or maybe he's following a meerkat spoor. There are lots of them in the veld."

"The farm is a wonderful place for a dog," laughed Ben. He was glad he had given one of his dog Witvoet's puppies to Boet.

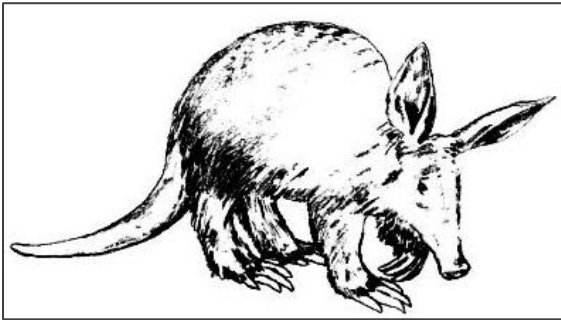
The old cow would not walk fast. The two boys walked slowly along behind her, bringing her home.



It was interesting to walk in the open veld. All around them Ben and Boet could see signs of the animals that lived there.

They came across a place where something had dug a great big deep dark hole in the ground. A huge heap of soil lay next to it. At first Bennie sniffed around eagerly, but soon lost interest.

"The aardvark isn't here anymore," said Boet.



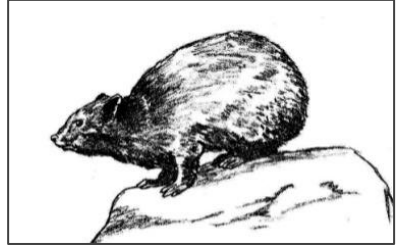
That was also one of the animals that Ben had never seen. He wished he could.

They were walking along slowly behind the cow when suddenly Bennie took off again.

"Chasing a monkey, Bennie?" called Ben.

Boet shook his head and pointed with his finger towards a rocky outcrop in the distance.

"No, look - we are near the dassie krans. Look at the dassies sitting there on the rocks in the sun."



Bennie ran through the veld towards the krans. Ben and Boet could see the dassies scurrying to hide away in their holes under the rocks.

Bennie chased them excitedly, running to and fro on the rocks and barking all the time.



Ben and Boet stood watching. The old cow, glad to stop, began to graze. Bennie kept on dashing to and fro, barking and barking .

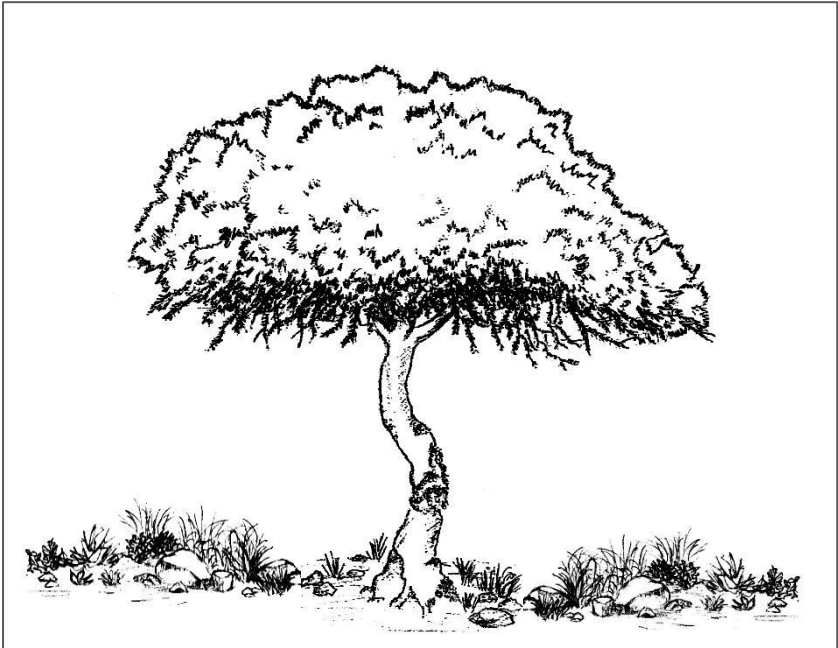
Ben and Boet waited. At last Boet called him, "Bennie! Come Bennie!"

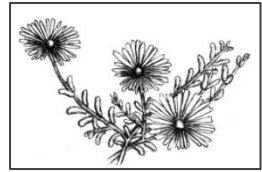
Bennie was a good dog. He listened. He stopped barking, left the dassies, and came to Boet at once.



"Good dog!" Boet praised him. He was proud of his dog that he was so obedient.

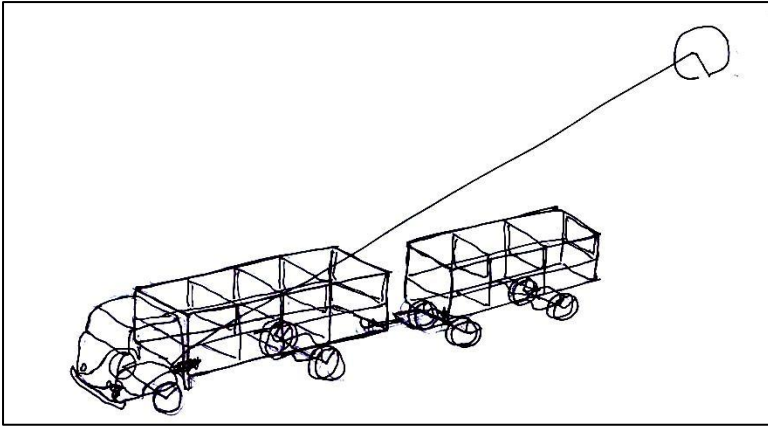
Bennie 's tongue hung out. He was very tired, but his little stumpy tail was wagging. It looked as if he had really enjoyed chasing those naughty dassies!





The veld was full of traffic!

Ben and Boet had made another long wire lorry, as well as a good long trailer to go with it.



Ben drove the new lorry and trailer. Boet came behind with their first lorry, while the other farm children followed, driving Ben and Boet's old wire cars. Dust hung in the air over the busy veld roads.

They came to their new bridge, and laughed when they heard the long line of cars rattling over the planks.

After a while Ben stopped to draw breath.

"Boet," he said. "You know what? Our wire cars haven't got garages. Let's build some for them."

There were many stones lying beside the veld paths that they had made.

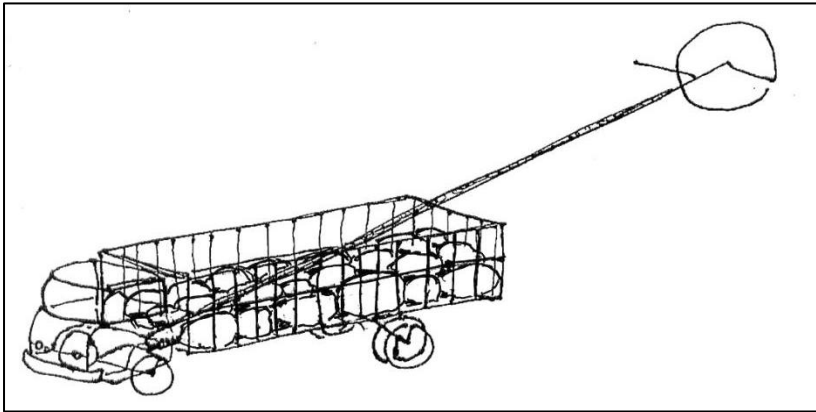


Ben and Boet worked together. It was easy to scrape open a square space next to the road and to line it neatly with stones. The stones formed the walls of each smart new garage.

"This new lorry with its trailer will need a really long garage!" said Ben.

"I'll fetch more stones!" said Boet, jumping up.

He drove the old lorry to a stony place, loaded it full of good stones and delivered them to the place where Ben was busy laying out the special garage.



"Aha!" said Ben. "Now we will soon be done!"  
Boet felt pleased.

They all laid out stones until each wire car had its own neat parking place next to the road. The children were happy with the garages that they had made, and enjoyed parking their cars in them.

Boet's parents came to look. They were proud of Ben and Boet for being so good at making wire cars and lorries.

Soon they all set off again on the winding veld roads. It was now Boet's turn to take the new lorry with its long trailer. The other children followed with the old cars, which they had loaded with tins and stones. The stones rattled in the tins, making a wonderful sound.

The cars and lorries left dust hanging in the air as they roared past. Bennie ran along too, trying to join in, as he could hear everyone laughing and could see that they were all having great fun.

