



DOG KISSER

1 Boston's tongue licked the guy's face. Once he was done with the nose and eyes he started in on the ears. I grimaced through half-closed eyes, peering at what my mischievous labrador retriever was doing.

"Attaboy," said the guy. "Who's my schnooky? Who's da-puppy-dog? Huh? Who's da one?"

This sent Boston into a frenzy; he happily licked his new-found friend. Saliva was spread all over the man's face. To this day, it just boggles my mind - how can people let dogs decorate their face with all that muck?

2 I knew the guy simply as 'Dog Kisser'. Every day I took Boston for a walk on the beach and every day, no matter what time it was, we stumbled upon Dog Kisser.

"C'mon, boy. C'mon, Boss," I called, but he feigned ignorance. You see, I refused to even let Boss lick my toe, let alone my face. I was a doggy-love-free-zone but, finally, he'd discovered somebody with no apparent lick-restrictions. I couldn't watch any longer. It was so wrong.

3 "Boss! NOW. Come!" I took him by the collar and hauled him out of harm's reach. "Sorry, mate," I said, even though I wasn't. "We've got to go. I've got ... things to do."

I threw the chewed-up pink Frisbee. Boston bolted up the beach after it. I took one last look over my shoulder and saw Dog Kisser kneeling on all fours, his hair in disarray. He looked positively heartbroken as Boss scampered out of his life for another day. I shuddered and ran, finding Boss lying in the shallows, tearing his Frisbee to bits.

4 That night I complained again at dinner.

"He's just being friendly," Mum said. "It's nice that somebody loves him. You barely go near Bossy. Sometimes I wonder why we even have a dog."

"But you haven't seen this dude. It's disgusting... I don't even know if I can finish my dinner just from thinking about it."

"Oh, don't be ridiculous," she said. "You're exaggerating."

"Yet again!" said my older sister, her only words for the entire meal.

5 But I wasn't exaggerating; if I had a tiny video camera I'd record it and put the horror show up on our new plasma while we were eating dinner. Then we'd see who was just being friendly.

Next afternoon at four o'clock, after a two-minute noodle session (I was really digging this bizarre prawn flavour that tasted like chicken ... or pork), I put the Boss on his lead and headed out the gate. I checked both ways. No sign of Dog Kisser. I took a right and Boss immediately reefed the lead out of my hand, darting off to roll in a rancid cane toad pancake on the road. Then he sprinted up the street and sniffed something random on the grassy footpath. It looked suspiciously like poo of some variety.

6 "Bosto, come," I yelled. He snatched one last whiff and ran after me, top speed, slamming on the brakes to sniff a telegraph pole. At the cricket ground we cut through the bush track, the fastest way to the beach. I was worried because there was no way out if you met Dog Kisser on the track. I could try going cross-country through the bush but I'd tried that once before and had been cut up pretty bad by lantana. I broke into a jog and Boss followed, overtaking me midway up the trail.

By the time I'd caught up to Boss at the beach park he was inspecting the wrong end of a pit bull terrier. I apologised profusely to the owner. "Boss, c'mon, man. Gimme a break."

7 I threw his mangled Frisbee over the sand dune and he ran off down the sandy path to the beach. When I arrived at the crest of the dune I scanned the beach for DK. Nothing. Good.

I continued down the path and tackled Boss at the bottom, eating a face full of sand. And then I heard it.

"Whooza bootiful one, huh?"

8 I brushed the sand from my eyes and, somehow, from out of nowhere, Dog Kisser materialised. Did he have some kind of underground lair down here? Was he a phantom? How did he always just seem to appear?

I stood, stunned, watching as Boss leapt for him. This was when Dog Kisser did something I'd never seen before. He let Boss lick right across his mouth. My mind had rapid flashes of the cane toad, the poo, the pit bull terrier, then back to the horror show happening right there on the sand. This was a new low.

"It's OK," Dog Kisser tried to say, muffled by Boston's tongue.

"No, it's not OK," I said. "It's wrong!"

9 I pulled Boss off the dude and Boss started whining. Dog Kisser looked as though he was about to start blubbing, his arms out-stretched, but I dragged Boston until we were a safe distance away and I flung the Frisbee again. He ran off. This time I didn't look back. I'd made a decision. My dog walking days were officially over.

10 Two weeks later, I was watching some diabolical afternoon game show when Mum returned from work.

"Have you still not taken that dog for a walk?" she said.

"Hi, Ma. Nice to see you, too," I said sarcastically.

"He's dug another crater in the middle of the lawn. Say goodbye to your allowance if you don't start walking him," she said.

"But the—" I said.

"I know, the big, terrifying Dog Kisser's out there. Boo-hoo. You're going to have to move past it, Dan. Start walking or no allowance."

11 I sat there for a moment, utterly depressed. Then something crossed my mind. I jumped up and made a beeline for the pile of newspapers in the box beside the bin. I found the Gazette and flicked to the classifieds. I knew I'd seen a dog-walking service in there, a cheap one run by some local group.

Bingo. There it was. Pack Leader Dog Walking Services — three dollars an hour. I could shell out for that three times a week and still have six bucks from my allowance. I seized the phone and punched in the digits.

12 Next afternoon at three forty-five the doorbell rang. Boston scarpereed up the hall. I emerged from the lounge room and looked towards the open front door. My jaw sagged.

Kneeling on the floor, being smothered with licks was Dog Kisser.

"Izza puppy dog, hey? Thassalovevelyoneofadoggy, huh. Gunna go for walks, hey?" he said.

13 I could not believe it. I shuffled up the hall and reluctantly handed over the lead. He took it, grinning from ear to ear.

"C'mon, boy," he said.

And the two best friends took off up the street. I stood dumbfounded and watched them go.

I smiled ... and then I felt like vomiting, but I kept it down.

Life was sweet. Everyone was a winner.

Vocabulary

Find words in the text that match the meanings below. The word is in the section shown in brackets.

- 7 To be in a state of disorder or a mess (3)
- 8 Overreacting or stretching the truth (4)
- 9 To have a rotten smell (5)
- 10 The top of, e.g. a mountain (7)
- 11 Not expensive (11)

Grammar

A **proper noun** is used to name people, places, days of the week etc. They must start with a capital letter.

Find the **proper nouns** in these sentences from the text.

- 12 Boston's tongue licked the guy's face.
- 13 "He's just being friendly," Mum said.
- 14 No sign of Dog Kisser.
- 15 I found the Gazette and flicked to the classifieds.

Back To The Text...

- 16 The word *reluctantly* in section 13 is used as
 - a an adverb.
 - b an adjective.
- 17 Did the dog owner ever call Boston anything other than Boss?
 - a no
 - b yes

18 Who do you think this text is most likely written for?

- a little children
- b older children

Sequencing

Look back through the card to find what happened first. Choose **a** or **b**.

- 19 a Boss had a roll on a flat cane toad pancake.
 - b The owner had a strange noodle snack.
- 20 a The owner jogged up the trail.
 - b Boss checked out the wrong end of a Pit-Bull Terrier.
- 21 a The owner had a look through the classifieds.
 - b The owner tackled Boss at the beach.

Think About This

- 22 The Dog Kisser's language is very much like
 - a text talk.
 - b baby talk.
 - c veterinarian talk.
- 23 The word *rancid* in section 5 is best replaced with
 - a dead.
 - b crushed.
 - c rotten.

Challenge Option

Drawing: Draw a pet you have owned or would like to own.



Questions

- 1 Whose face was covered in saliva?
 - a the narrator's
 - b Boston's
 - c Dog Kisser's



- 2 Why did Boston feign ignorance?
 - a He didn't hear the narrator calling for him.
 - b He had found someone who'd let him lick his face.
 - c He wanted to run onto the beach.
- 3 What would the narrator liked to have done to prove he wasn't exaggerating?
 - a He would record Dog Kisser with a tiny video camera.
 - b He would take Boston for a run down to the beach.
 - c He would pay Dog Kisser to take Boston for a walk.

- 4 Why did the narrator wonder about Dog Kisser having an underground lair?
 - a Dog Kisser loved letting Boston lick his face.
 - b Dog Kisser seemed to appear out of nowhere.
 - c Dog Kisser was a phantom.

- 5 Why did the narrator hire Dog Kisser to walk Boston?
 - a Boston missed Dog Kisser.
 - b Boston was digging holes in the backyard.
 - c The narrator was going to lose his allowance if he didn't take Boston out walking.

- 6 What does this ending demonstrate?
 - a The narrator didn't care if Boston licked Dog Kisser, just so long as he didn't have to see it.
 - b The narrator didn't mind losing some of his pocket money, so long as Dog Kisser was happy.
 - c The narrator was selfish and lazy.