



Celebrating the Power of Voices

Every year on September 30th, the world comes together to celebrate International Podcast Day, a platform that honours the storytellers, educators, and creators behind the microphone. Podcasts have transformed how we consume information, offering everything from deep-dive investigative journalism to light-hearted entertainment, accessible anytime and anywhere. The day encourages listeners to explore new shows, support independent creators, and recognize the growing influence of audio content in shaping culture and ideas. It's not just about entertainment, it's a celebration of connection, learning, and the power of voices that inform, inspire, and spark meaningful conversations globally.

#PRACTICAL

HIGH Heels For Men

Why Heels were originally worn by Men: A Historical Perspective



Today, high heels are often seen as a symbol of feminine fashion, elegant, stylish, and sometimes empowering. But surprisingly, heels

were not always designed for women. In fact, heels were initially worn by men, with their origins deeply rooted in practical and social reasons that reveal much about history, power, and style.

The Practical Origins of Heels

The story of heels begins in ancient Persia around the 10th century, where mounted warriors used high-heeled shoes to help secure their feet in stirrups while riding horses. These heels improved grip and balance, giving cavalry soldiers greater control and

effectiveness in battle. As Persian influence spread westward, the use of heels traveled along with it. European men, particularly nobles and aristocrats, adopted heels in the 16th and 17th centuries to emulate the practical and prestigious styles of Persian horsemen.

Heels as a Status Symbol

By the time heels arrived in Europe, they evolved beyond their practical function. High heels became a powerful status symbol, signalling wealth, nobility, and military prowess. The higher the heel, the greater the wearer's social standing.

Kings, nobles, and military leaders wore heels to

distinguish themselves from commoners. For example, King Louis XIV of France was famous for his red-heeled shoes, which became a hallmark of French aristocracy. His personal preference even led to laws regulating who could wear certain heels, reinforcing social hierarchy.

From Masculine Power to Feminine Fashion

Heels remained a part of men's fashion for centuries but began to shift during the 18th century. As clothing styles changed, heels became more delicate and associated with female attire. By the 19th century, heels had largely disappeared from men's wardrobes and became

more firmly linked to women's fashion. The transformation was also influenced by changing societal roles and gender norms. While heels once symbolized power and dominance for men, they gradually morphed into a tool for enhancing femininity and elegance.

Why Did Heels Fall Out of Fashion for Men?

Several factors contributed to the decline of heels in men's fashion.

- **Practicality:** Industrialization and modernization called for more practical, comfortable footwear for men, especially as soldiers and workers needed mobility and safety.
- **Changing Aesthetics:** The rise of new masculine ideals favoured simpler, more functional dress, moving away from the ornate styles of previous centuries.
- **Gender Norms:** Social conventions increasingly linked heels with femininity, leading to their association predominantly with women's fashion.

The Modern Resurgence

Interestingly, heels for men are making a comeback in some circles today, especially in avant-garde fashion and performance arts, challenging traditional gender norms and celebrating style beyond conventional categories. High heels were once the

domain of men, warriors, kings, and aristocrats who used them for practicality and status. Over time, heels transitioned to become a distinctly feminine fashion item, shaped by cultural shifts and evolving ideas about gender and power.



'Cess' for Stray Dog Menace?

As much as it sounds easy, there are major logistic problems that have been given scant attention. Delhi is supposed to have a seven to eight lakhs stray dog population. To effectively enforce the Supreme Court resolution, approximately 1,100 stray dogs need to be caught daily and all have to be sterilised within a 24 hour period. The emphasis is on the female! This would mean an approximate two year cycle of Animal Birth Control. If this is implemented, the dog population would come within control. The survivors then would require shelter, attention and nourishment for at least three days. Please remember that at the present moment, WHO reports 5,726 deaths annually from Dog Bites in India. Newspaper reports claim as many 45 children dying from dog attacks every day.



#DOGS



The Supreme Court of India has weighed in on the issue advocating for a sterilisation and vaccination program (ABC) as the primary method of stray dog management. The court's stance is based on the idea that culling or mass killing of dogs is not only inhumane but also ineffective. When dogs are removed from an area, it creates a 'vacuum effect' where dogs from neighbouring areas or litters quickly move in to fill the vacant territory, leading to a perpetual cycle of culling and re-population.



sterilisation and vaccination drives and the establishment of dedicated shelters and medical facilities for dogs which are literally non-existent at the moment.

Stray dogs are often attracted to human settlements by accessible garbage. Improved waste management and sanitation will reduce the food sources for strays, naturally reducing their population and dependence on human areas. This is now evident in 'Smart Cities' in India. Instead of demonising strays, some communities have found success in caring for them. This can include designated feeding spots, volunteer-led monitoring and reporting of sick or injured dogs to authorities. The major question of who bears the cost is critical. The current model often relies on an erratic mix of government funding, non-profit contributions and individual donations. This is unsustainable and sporadic. It leads to a patchy and inefficient system.

The idea of a small 'dog cess' (At the moment, we have cess on education and oil! Many more are hidden in our electricity, municipal and water bills), on taxes is a viable and potentially effective solution. A small, earmarked amount could provide a consistent revenue stream for animal welfare programmes. This funding could be used for establishing and operating animal shelters and veterinary clinics. Funding ABC programmes on a large scale

which includes the mass killing of animals. The Supreme Court is correct in its emphasis on humane treatment and long-term effectiveness. However, a successful solution requires more than just judicial pronouncements. It needs a collaborative effort from the government, non-profit organisations and the public. The root of responsible pet ownership is not in the abandonment of pets. Strict laws and public awareness campaigns are needed to promote responsible pet ownership, including mandatory micro-chipping, sterilisation of pets and severe penalties for abandonment or unnecessary breeding.

Effective Animal Birth Control (ABC) programmes must be implemented systematically across cities and towns. This involves regular

designed to stabilise the stray dog population over time and reduce the spread of diseases. As much as it sounds easy, there are major logistic problems that have been given scant attention. Delhi is supposed to have a seven to eight lakhs stray dog population. To effectively enforce the Supreme Court resolution, approximately 1,100 stray dogs need to be caught daily and all have to be sterilised within a 24 hour period. The emphasis is on the female! This would mean an approximate two year cycle of Animal Birth Control. If this is implemented, the dog population would come within control. The survivors then would require shelter, attention and nourishment for at least three days. Please remember that at the present moment, WHO reports 5,726 deaths annually from Dog Bites in India. Newspaper reports claim as many 45 children dying from dog attacks every day.

This approach aligns with a global movement towards humane animal management. Organisations like the World Health Organisation (WHO) and the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH) have long advocated for vaccination and sterilisation as the most effective and ethical way to control rabies and manage stray dog populations. The legal framework in India, specifically, the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, 1960, also prohibits unnecessary cruelty,

human child. It is therefore harmonised to live with humans. A stray dog, however, must fend for itself. It lives in a state of constant struggle for survival, shelter, scavenging for food and navigating threats from other animals and humans. This constant struggle, not an innate nature, is what can make stray dogs appear aggressive or wary of humans.

The idea that we are treating dogs like humans is a valid point of contention. The core argument for not allowing strays to roam free is not about treating them like humans, but rather recognising their status as animals that can pose a risk to public health and safety. The risk of dog bites, the spread of diseases like rabies and the potential for traffic accidents (chasing of motorcycles/cycles and even early morning runners) are all legitimate concerns.

The Supreme Court of India has weighed in on the issue advocating for a sterilisation and vaccination program (ABC) as the primary method of stray dog management. The court's stance is based on the idea that culling or mass killing of dogs is not only inhumane but also ineffective. When dogs are removed from an area, it creates a 'vacuum effect.' New dogs from neighbouring areas or litters quickly move in to fill the vacant territory, leading to a perpetual cycle of culling and re-population. Sterilisation and vaccination, on the other hand, are



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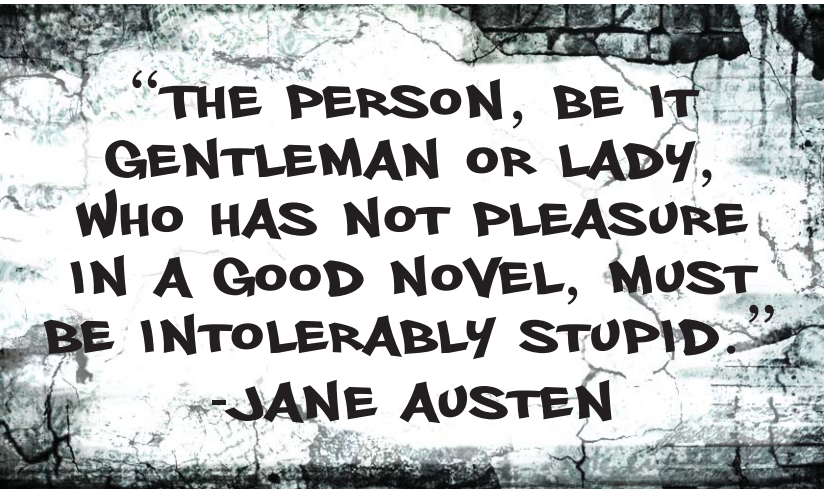
The stray dog problem is a major conundrum. As much as we love dogs as pets, we are averse to caring for the stray ones. Where is the difference? Pets are considered loving and faithful while the strays are just the reverse, ferocious and aggressive.

Addressing the stray dog issue requires a multi-faceted approach, balancing the welfare of both animals and humans. The perception that stray dogs are inherently ferocious and aggressive, while pets are not, often stems from a lack of understanding of canine behaviour and the different environments these dogs live in. However, the core of the problem lies in irresponsible pet ownership, inadequate waste management and the failure of local authorities to implement and enforce effective Animal Birth Control (ABC) programmes.

The distinction between a pet and a stray dog is primarily one of environment and social milieu. A pet dog receives food, shelter and medical care, just as much as



THE WALL

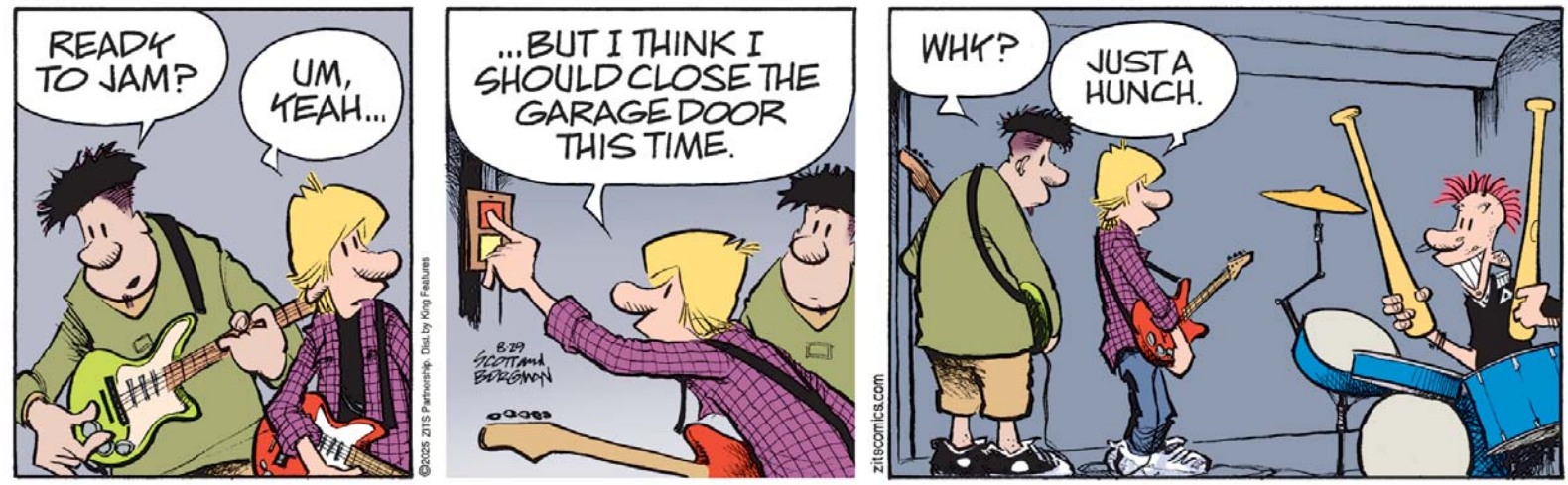


BABY BLUES



By Rick Kirkman & Jerry Scott

ZITS



By Jerry Scott & Jim Borgman