

THE TALE OF THE DOG

by Ken Bradbury



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Entering from opposite directions, Mrs. Prunty with her dog, Toby; and Miss Francis with her dog, Charlie. The dogs are on imaginary leashes. The parts may be played by either gender with a little switching of names and pronouns.

MISS FRANCIS: Good morning, Mrs. Prunty!

MRS. PRUNTY: Miss Francis! Good to see you!

(Toby and Charlie growl at each other.)

MISS FRANCIS: Toby! Be nice!

MRS. PRUNTY: Charlie, calm down. I just don't understand why our dogs don't get along, Miss Francis. We see each other every morning. *(Charlie growls.)* Charlie! Charlie, stop it!

MISS FRANCIS: *(Toby growls.)* Toby! Stop that! You know Charlie! Be a sweet boy.

(Both dogs start barking.)

MRS. PRUNTY: Charlie! Charlie, behave!

MISS FRANCIS: What's the matter with you, Toby? I'm sorry, Mrs. Prunty. Toby gets like that sometimes. Say, did you read about that sale at the ...

(And at this Miss Francis and Mrs. Prunty freeze in their positions. When the dogs speak the owners freeze, but when the owners speak the dogs become ... well ... dogs. Later in the piece when the dialogue becomes more rapid, the owners do not freeze when the dogs talk.)

TOBY: *(after a moment, looks at the owners, then speaks)* So ... how's your morning?

CHARLIE: Oh, same old, same old. You get up, you scratch, you run around the yard and do your business. Then what's-her-name says, "Let's go for a walk, Charlie! Oh, aren't you happy to go on a walk, Charlie!" All I know is that

she's getting her exercise while I'm missing
Wheel of Fortune.

TOBY: Same here. She's got no imagination. Hey ...
they're gonna get suspicious. You ready?

CHARLIE: On three.

*(The two dogs growl and go at each other, barely being held
back on their leashes.)*

MRS. PRUNTY: Charlie! Bad dog, Charlie!

MISS FRANCIS: Toby, I'll take you home right now! I swear I
will!

(The dogs calm a bit.)

MRS. PRUNTY: Miss Francis! That collar! Toby's collar! That
is the most darling thing I've ever seen!
Where did you get it?

MISS FRANCIS: Ebay. I love pink.

MRS. PRUNTY: Oh yes, yes ... pink highlights Toby's eyes so
beautifully!

(And the two owners freeze.)

TOBY: Pink. Yeah. Pink.

CHARLIE: I wasn't gonna say anything.

TOBY: A pink collar! That's what every German
Shepherd wants is a stupid pink collar. You
know Beelzebub?

CHARLIE: The cat?

TOBY: Yeah. The cat. The cat that keeps comin'
around tryin' to steal my Kibbles and Bits.
Usually I just growl at him and he jumps the
fence, but yesterday ... yesterday, Charlie, he
looked at my pink collar and laughed. A cat
laughed at me, Charlie! I just wanted to crawl
up against a fire hydrant and die!

CHARLIE: I can't imagine.

TOBY: Made me feel like a Pomeranian. Yip. Yip.

CHARLIE: *(looking up at the owners)* They're watching!

MISS FRANCIS: You know, I'd thought about buying one of
those bark collars? Have you seen those
things?

- MRS. PRUNTY:** The things that shock the dog when he barks?
MISS FRANCIS: Yes. I've heard they work.
(The owners freeze.)
- CHARLIE:** What?!!
TOBY: Don't worry. You know Max?
CHARLIE: The Boston Terrier down the street?
TOBY: Yeah. He told me his owner put one on him. He said all you gotta do is the first time they try to shock you, you roll on the ground and scream like you're dyin'.
- CHARLIE:** Don't taze me, bro!
TOBY: Yeah. Just act like it's killin' you and they'll throw it away. It doesn't take much to fool a dog owner.
- MRS. PRUNTY:** I don't know. I'd never want to hurt Charlie.
CHARLIE: *(quietly, to Toby)* That's my babe.
MISS FRANCIS: But I think that Charlie needs a firm hand. You know, if you just let a dog have his way, then you won't be able to handle him.
- MRS. PRUNTY:** Oh, Charlie knows who's boss.
CHARLIE: *(quietly)* Yeah. It's me.
MISS FRANCIS: Oh dear ... I smell something. I think it's time Toby had his bath.
- MRS. PRUNTY:** Charlie loves taking a bath.
(The owners freeze.)
- CHARLIE:** He does not! Where'd you get that? You think I'm howling and slapping at the water because I'm happy? That's my angry face! I hate taking a bath!
TOBY: I'm always afraid she's gonna drown me. She puts me in the sink. Is that humiliating or what? A sink! At least gimme a bathtub! I've got my pride! I feel like a crockpot!
CHARLIE: She uses soap?
TOBY: Yeah. The kind that's not supposed to sting your eyes.
BOTH DOGS: Wrong!



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