

My ears perked up instinctively, pulling me from my deep slumber in the rays of sunlight that rained through the window to create a puddle of light on the floor. I could hear the sounds of my human stumbling around on the up-floor, probably trying to put on those body covers that humans like so much. He does that every morning. I waited patiently for him to come down, as I was not allowed to climb to the up-floor. After forever and a half, he finally appeared at the top of the floor-changers. I greeted him enthusiastically, wagging my tail and bouncing energetically at the bottom of the descent, almost knocking over the tall pole that holds up the fake sun.

“What the hell are you so excited about?” he mumbled as he staggered down the stairs. I had no idea what this meant, but he was talking to me before he had drank his hot water that reeked of burning, which was a sure sign that today was a good day. I bent down into a playful position with my tail wagging so hard it caused my entire body to shudder and I let out a small *woof*. The look on his face told me that making noise had been horribly wrong and his expression was so full of not-happy that my ears dropped and my tail curled underneath me. I lay down and stared up at him with as much regret and sorrow on my face as I could muster.

A thin smile appeared across his sleepy face and he mumbled, “Good boy, it’s okay,” before heading off to the food-making room to heat his water for his morning ritual. I walked down the hall and into the food-eating room to wait. After a few minutes, he walked in, carrying his big bowl of crunchy-slurpy food and his taller, thinner bowl of smelly hot water. He set the bowls on the floor-with-legs and left the room momentarily. I heard him walk down the hall to the front wall opening, groan as he bent over to pick something up, and stumble as he almost toppled over. He spouted out that sound that he only makes when he is irritated, like a hiss with a click: “ssshhht!”

He wandered back into the room, mumbling to himself and carrying the crinkly sheets with the squiggles on them, which apparently served as a source of entertainment every morning. He sat down and opened the crinkly sheets as I took my normal position under the floor-with-legs, against his cold feet. He heaved a comfortable sigh as my warm fur began to heat his icy toes. I nodded off to sleep, listening to the sound of my human slurping his hot water and crunching his food.

I felt the muscles in his feet tighten as he stood to go run water on his bowls and I hopped out of his way. I followed him into the food-making room and watched eagerly as he turned on the little-river-maker and rinsed his bowls before putting them in the sweet-smelling rumble-box. I wagged my tail with excitement; I knew what was next in the morning routine! He opened the bag of food that sat on the floor by my bowl. He scooped up a large pawful of the crunchy delicacies and dropped them in my metal dish. I smiled appreciatively at him before digging in. He patted me on the head and chuckled lightly before heading down the hall to the big room and turning on the talking-glow-box.

I heard a go-machine door slam and strange shoes coming up to the door that clicked against the ground. The hair on the back of my neck stood up. No one would dare ruin my human's morning ritual! I ran down the hall to the front door, my long toenails slipping and sliding on the shiny wood ground. I stuck my nose through the slot in the door and took a whiff of whoever was on the other side. The putrid sweetness that assaulted the inside of my nostrils and coursed through my lungs was enough to knock me on my haunches. The ding-dong rang through the house.

I heard my human grunt and groan as he picked himself up off the wide chair that he called "couch" whenever he yelled at me to get off of it. He wandered down the hallway and opened the door. Peeking around his legs, I looked out at a very strangely covered female human that, upon seeing my human, released a strange smelling pheromone into the air. It smelled similar to that of a female dog when she is in heat, but this fragrance had more of a putrid stench than the attractive smell of the dog next door.

My human tried to talk to this female standing on the outside floor but for some reason he had a hard time making the sounds. The female smiled and made a strange but sweet hacking sound that, if my human had made it, may have sounded like a laugh. Now my human, who smelled much more real, earthy, and human than this giant chew toy of a person did, was also giving off a strangely familiar pheromone. *I get it!* I thought, *This must be the female he is mounting!*

My human headed out the door with the female and shut it behind him. I looked up at the hooks next to the door. The jingly metal things that he always took with him when he rode in the big go-machine were still hanging there. I jumped up and snatched them off the hook.

Sticking my nose through the slot again, I shook my head, making the metal things jingle outside. I heard my human's hurried footsteps as he came back to get them.

“That’s a good boy,” he said as he patted my nose. His tone sounded like praise, so I gave him a happy little *woof* before heading back to my puddle of sunshine on the floor to wait for his return.