

Murphy's First

How about that? Today I'll celebrate my first birthday. My old servant tells me that will happen only if I behave myself. He said there was still the rest of the morning to get through without stirring up any trouble.

"Why? What happens at noon?" I asked.

"Your birthday present arrives," he said.

"Well, I'm sure I deserve it," I said.

"Maybe," he said. "But you haven't progressed very rapidly or very far this year. You can't just land here in the living room in your birthday suit on your birthday and expect a big celebration."

"I can't?"

"No, no. You have to be able to demonstrate you are worthy of ... of ..."

"Having a birthday party?" I interjected. "Sheesh!"

"Well, yes," he said, "that might be a good way to look at it."

"So," I said. "What do I have to do to qualify?"

"We should make a list," he said.

"A check list, yes," I said, "so I can check off the things I've done right."

"OK, that's fair. We'll make a check list for a One Year Old Dog."

"You handle the pencil and paper," I said. "I don't write very well."

"Here," he said, "let me label this across the top of the sheet of paper: 'Expected Behavior of An Alive And Currently Breathing One Year Old Dog. Now, what shall we put down first on our list?"

"OK, first," I said. "He doesn't poop on the floor. Ever."

"You did last week," said the old guy.

"Yeah, but that didn't count. I got messed up on my schedule."

"Actually," he said, "you lost track of what you were doing during your time outside and then had to go when you got back in the house."

"OK, OK," I said, but I want half credit for that one. Here's another. And this one is important: 'Dog Defends His Servants From all Perils.'

"You do?" he said, his eyes rolling. "All you

do is run around the house heedlessly barking out the windows at nothing."

"I'm trying to cover all the perils," I said.

"How about waiting till you see one before you start barking?"

"Never give a peril a chance to get ahead of you," I said. "But I've got another. Write this down. 'Contributes to Household Economy By Eating Outdated Dog Food Without Complaint.'"

"Wait a minute, there's nothing wrong with that food," he said.

"Here's another," I said. "Write this down: 'Establishes Home's Reputation By Welcoming Anyone Who Walks Through The Door.'"

"You jump all over them," he said, "and won't leave them alone the entire time they're visiting."

"Like I said ..."

"You terrorized the young widow Mrs. Zolushka, our Russian Avon lady."

"Who, me?"

"You wouldn't stop licking her. I had to stop you at her elbows."

"You're just jealous," I told him.

"Regardless ..."

"I can't get enough of that Volgograd Sleeper Cell body lotion," I said. "Or her other favorite."

"I know what you mean," he said. "I buy it from the young lady just to help her out."

"You shouldn't be wearing that stuff," I said.

"I don't," he said, "I use it to clean the drains."

"Why do I feel like I'm losing this game," I asked. "How many accomplishments can I have on your list?"

"As many as you want," he said.

"I mean how many checkmarks do I need to have a party?"

"Let's say ... five."

"How many do I have so far?"

"None that I can see."

"We're wasting time and you're pulling one of my four legs," I said. "I saw my birthday cake on the kitchen table."

"There's the doorbell," he said. "It's Mrs. Zolushka."

You can't go wrong when your servants bake you a cake and your birthday present shows up at the door wearing Pushkin Nights body lotion.

Copyright by David Griffin, 2015

The Windswept Press
Murrells Inlet, South Carolina

www.windsweptpress.com