

## Dog Days

By Ron Koppelberger

He cleared the mystic plane, the realm of sleeping dogs and fluttering sparrows in misty dreams of paradise, never wavering, tail-wagging, sloppy tongued and hungry. The trail was dusty and lined by the red sash of roses and amber marigolds in bloom. He paused near a clearing at the far end of the path, scratching fervently at his haunch. Fleas, the entrance to doggy nirvana and he still itched. The sky rolled in azure reflections of nearly, except for the fleas, perfect paradise. Sniffing the ground, he wagged in a curious hope. The scent of food, warm perfumed wind, roses and daisies commingled with the odor of damp leaves and the female. A soul-mate perhaps, the heady mists filled the spaces between whispering tempests in heavenly reward and the urge to run, run for the promise of a sunrise, a gentle respite from the cares of life.

He stared ahead and watched as a pond, cool freshwater and mossy around the edges, appeared like a mirage in a sweet dream of respite. Gentle, lazy eyes, and wagging grins, the female sniffed the air near the far side of the pond. She barked in commune with the spirit of freedom and love. She padded closer to him with expectant joy and the prospect of sharing a divine fate, an Eden in sure seasons of rabbit hunt and foxy demeanor. Closer, closer, until he was within inches of her damp nose; tail wags in acquiescent glee and the essence of both biscuits and prime rib savored in tune with the Quiet joy of souls in commune, he had never been happier.

The jangle, jangle of a bell, low and resounding, filled the air. The old dog heard footsteps and the noise of people talking in hushed waves of sound. "Come on boy", Confused in mazy sensation his eyes began to clear and the dinner bell clanged on. Vast, grassy green, he ran and ran to the dinner that awaited him. The dream would wait and the promise of another love would greet him someday, for now he had the dinner bell, dog bones and the affections of his master to fulfill the waking wont of dog days.

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