The Seeing Eye Dog

By : Steve Balsky

This one is dedicated to my online fan, Moonphish. Without him, I would not have the fanbase that I do and for this, I am indebted. The character that he is based on is in no way indicative of him as a person as I have never actually met the guy if you can dig that. Okay ramblers? Let's get ramblin'.....especially you Phishy...

Published on
Booksie

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It was a seething hot morning in Central Park. Near 32 degrees. In the shade. Various people were out listening to their iPods and jogging or walking with their Starbucks lattes, enjoying the beautiful day and all that the fine city offered.

Few paid attention to the Labrador Retriever and the leash that it carried between its teeth. Attached to the leash was the Great Dane, well beyond its years, attempting feebly to keep up with its younger counterpart.

The Retriever stopped by a green painted bench, where a beautiful French Poodle sat unaccompanied.

â Hey, howya doinâ ?â the Retriever asked the female canine, sitting all pristine on the bench. He could see that her paws were manicured.

â Okay, I guessâ , she replied. A gold tag reading â Gigiâ around her neck glistened in the sunlight.

The Retriever regarded her chain. â Right..So is â Gigiâ your handle?â

She tittered, â Yeah, I guess it is.â

â Whereâ s your master?â

She gestured with her head. â Over there. See the lady in the pink shorts?â

â The one with the big nose?â

â Yeah, thatâ s her.â

He coughed into his right paw. â My name is Alpo.â

She giggled and looked behind her shoulder to see what her master was up to. The lady was apparently talking to an infant in a stroller, saying goofy stuff in a silly human voice like, â Thatâ s a good boy. Does mommyâ s good boy want a cookie?â Stuff like that.

â Whoâ s the stiff?â She gestured to the Great Dane that was now sleeping nearby a water fountain.

Alpo snorted. â Aw. Heâ s not deadâ ¦heâ s â ¦.my guy.â

â Your *guy*?â she quired.

Alpo cleared his throat. â Yeah, I mean, heâ s not â my guyâ in the sense that Iâ m caninosexual, but heâ s my *guy* in the respect that Iâ m responsible for him.â

Alpo climbed himself onto the bench.

â He looks dead to me,â Gigi said.

Alpo nodded. â I can see why you say that, but itâ s not quite that way.â He regarded the sleeping Great Dane whose snores could rival that of his conversion with Gigi. â Actually, heâ s just old.â

Gigi looked at him with trepidation. â How old?â

Alpo thought for a moment.â Heâ s like â ¦.14 years. In human years thatâ s like 78.â

Gigi nodded. â Thatâ s pretty freakinâ old. So..Whatâ s his name?â

Alpo shook his tail passionately. â Well, what the masters call him â ¦.or his *real* name?â

She just looked at him incredulously.

Alpo said, â Okay, I call him â Moonfishâ .â

Gigi jerked back on her space on the bench.

â â *Moonfish*?â What the hell kind of name is that?â

â Well,â said Alpo, shifting his way ever so closer to Gigi on the bench, â The guy l*oves* fish. Iâ m talking tuna, salmon, you name it!. The guy laps it up likes itâ s chocolate. Now, if the masters donâ t give it to him, he moans.â

â *Moans*?â she quired.

Alpo nodded. â Yeah, moans. Like you never heard. He could give an Advil a headache. Seriously. The dude moans like there is no tomorrow until he gets his fish, fortified with a fiber supplement no less. And he does it whenever there is a full moon. Thatâ s why I call him â Moonfishâ .â

Gigi giggled, her tail waggling with a sweet tone emanating forth.

â Rightâ ¦but what is his *real* name?â

Alpo sniffed. â His real name? I think the masters call him â Harveyâ or some goofy shit like that.â

â *Harvey*?â â She asked incredulously. â Thatâ s a *human* name.â

Alpo laughed, â Yeah, tell me. And a bad one at that. I like â Moonfishâ so much more.â

Gigi smiled, making her snout crunch up.â So do I. â Moonfishâ is a cool name.â

â So, whatâ s the deal?â she asked.

Alpo shrugged. â Not a bad gig, actually. The masters donâ t want to put him to sleep. Heâ s been in the family for years and years. So I gotta walk him and make sure he doesnâ t get into trouble and makes regular bowel movements. I get free room and board and there are some perks. Like sometimes I get sushi and bottled water, not the tap crap with all the chemicals.â

Gigi jumped off the bench, much to Alpoâ s surprise. She began to kick her side as if she fleas. While doing so she said, â So what do you do with the old guy?â

Alpoâ s eyes widened. â *Do*? Well, his eyes arenâ t what they used to be..So I guess you say Iâ m his Seeing Eye Dog.â

Gigi rolled over onto the fertile grass and kicked her legs in the air. After making it onto all fours, she exclaimed, â A Seeing Eye Dog for a *dog*? Thatâ s insane.â

Alpoâ s eyes narrowed. He was dying for a cigarette right now. â Thatâ s right baby. Life is insane. Itâ s how you deal with it. I take care of Moonfish here.â

Gigi laughed so hard Alpo hoped she would roll over again and expose her privates.

â So like, what do you do for him?â she asked.

Alpo looked over his shoulder on both sides as if someone would be watching him. â Well, I likeâ ¦I tell him where the various fire hydrants are, help him walk and you know.. I show him where his private parts are..â

Gigiâ s eyes lit up. She stood erect on all fours. â You *do* it for him?â

Alpo shook his head with vigor. â Nah, what do you take me for?â he asked. â I just kind of..gesture in the right directionâ ¦and he takes it from there. Iâ m not one of those canines to lick another's balls if you can dig that.â

Gigi laughed so hard Alpo thought she would have a heart attack.

â Alpo, you are so funny!â she stated.

Alpo pretended to fix his non-existent tie, â Well, ya know baby..some of us got it and some us donâ t. Fortunately..I got so much of it!â

Gigi climbed back up onto the bench. She looked Alpo directly into the eyes. â I would like to see you again.â

Alpo felt a shiver run down his spine. No animal, canine or otherwise, has been this frank with him. Not even his cousin Frank. He barked out loud, wagged his tail and said, â Sorry about that. Nerves, I guess. Yeah, I would love to see a bitch like you againâ ¦I mean a female dogâ ¦â His cheeks reddened in embarrassment.

Gigi laughed, burying her snout between her paws. â Itâ s okay. All the scumbags come up with the same line, but youâ re cute so itâ s okay.â

Alpo was very uncomfortable at that point, so he jumped off the bench and went over to tend to his sleeping friend.

â Hey, Fishy..Harveyâ ¦Moonfish.. wakey, wakey! You have more hydrants to foul. Letâ s go!â

Slowly, achingly slowly, Moonfish made his way to all fours, joints cracking in the process. He rubbed his snout against Alpo out of love. Alpo put his paws around him and sniffed him for a few moments. Gigi looked on, pleased.

Alpo looked over at Gigi. â Hey, me and the old guy got to jet. Next week. Same time?â

Gigi nodded her mane, causing her dog tag to jingle with anticipation. â You know it.â

Alpo equally nodded, trying to hide his anticipation. He grabbed Moonfishâ s leash between his jaws and made his way to the next hydrant, waving his tail to Gigi in the process.

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