

Real Friendly Dog

by Kate O'Hara

So, I'm walking around- it's a real nice day, lots of sun and yard work. So I'm walking along and I am in this real rich neighborhood – you could tell everyone was rich because of their humongufuck houses. So, I'm walking and I see this woman and she has a big yard with a pond in it and all sorts of big rocks and statues and a flag about Easter eggs. Lots of stuff – like you know, that, if she were poor, her yard would be full of pinwheels and signs about geese crossing or being a lazy gardener, or a witch. So, I'm walking along and this lady with this gigantic house and all this *real nice* stuff in her yard, this lady is working really hard, digging or planting or something. So, I walk by and I'm thinking about washing machines or flamingos or something, when her dog, some sturdy little bulldog looking dog, this dog runs out the front gate and up to me, panting and wiggling and sniffing and snorting. “Hi little poochie poo.” “You're a good little poochie poo.”

“Nelson! Nelson! Get back here!” The lady walked up to Nelson and me. I smiled at her.

“Hey lady. Nice day, huh?”

“Nelson!” She was pretty high strung.

“You've got a friendly dog,” I told her. She pursed her lips and wiped her hands on her khaki shorts. “Hey, I like those khaki shorts. Sure is a nice day for shorts.”

“Well, I'm getting a lot of work done,” she said. We looked back down at the dog and it was humping my leg.

“Real friendly dog,” I said with a smile.

“NELSON! SHAMEFUL! SHAMEFUL NELSON, SHAMEFUL!” Nelson stopped and ran back inside the gate. “He has never done that before! I have never seen him do that!” She gave me a suspicious look.

“Oh, yeah, umm... it's me. You see, I'm real hot stuff.” The lady doesn't know if I am joking. *Adios*, I tell her. Poor Nelson, she probably never lets him get any lovin'. I wonder if she is the reason the bees are disappearing. I looked back and saw her flushed face trying to prune her bushes and the branches catching on her shirt. I saw her get down on her hands and knees, digging in the dirt, shoulders bouncing. Shameful. Maybe love takes courage or innocence. I've got neither. I prefer my love unrequited. I won't go up and talk to that young, firm thing, with all that hair, across the room, but I do think about these kids when I sit in front of the fire, staring at the evergreen branch I nailed to my wall in the middle of winter. I know Nelson's owner won't think of me again, so I think about those khaki shorts, her red face and neck and her dumb Easter flag and, since it is spring again, I fall in love with her- a little bit.