

# CONVERSATIONS WITH DOG

## **A Stranger is Just Someone You Haven't Barked at Yet**

Dog: HEY, BRAND NEW FRIEND!

Chuck: WAH!

Dog: Friend?

Chuck: Er...hi?

Dog: Friend?

Chuck: I mean...we haven't met before...

Dog: Best Friend?

Chuck: You don't already have a best friend?

Dog: Yes.

Chuck: Okay.

Dog: But he's inside.

Chuck: Right.

Dog: So I can't see him. And Other Dog Best Friend I only ever see when her Mistress walks her past here in the evenings, so she isn't here either. And Lady Who Smells Like Cat Wee Best Friend only comes over when Girlfriend of Best Friend is out on Friday nights, so she isn't here either.

Chuck: Riiiiiiight...

Dog: So I need a New Best Friend.

Chuck: A temporary one.

Dog: Exactly.

Chuck: Right.

Dog: Where's Friend going?

Chuck: Work.

Dog: What's work?

Chuck: It's something you do to make money.

Dog: What's money?

Chuck: It's something you exchange for things you need, like food.

Dog: Oh. Is sitting shirtless in front of the computer all day with headphones on and screaming obscenities considered work?

Chuck: Not unless you're working for a telco customer care team.

Dog: Ah. That explains why Best Friend only ever buys my food from Aldi.

Chuck: You know about Aldi?

Dog: Everyone knows about Aldi.

Chuck: Fair point. Well, I really do need to be getting along to work, so...

Dog: Will you come back to talk, New Best Friend? I enjoy our talks.

Chuck: This is literally the first time we've talked.

Dog: I'm very bored and lonely.

Chuck: Maybe try talking to your Best Friend? Bark at him until he comes outside?

Dog: He doesn't really do 'outside'.

Chuck: Ah.

Dog: He's a redhead.

Chuck: Right. Well.

Dog: His name isn't actually 'Best Friend', you know. I just call him that because we have what you'd call a fairly formal relationship.

Chuck: Sigh. So what's his real name?

Dog: Master.

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Dog: It's sarcasm. I'm being sarcastic.

Chuck: Right.

Dog: I'm not stupid. I know that 'Master' is a role, not a name.

Chuck: I'm running late for my bus.

Dog: Okay, see you later, New Best Friend. I'm gonna go roll in poop, then wait here at the gate all day for you to come back on your way home.

Chuck: Yay?

## **9 to 5(ish)**

Dog: HEY, NEW BEST FRIEND!

Chuck: Hey.

Dog: Heading off to work?

Chuck: Yup.

Dog: What do you actually do for work?

Chuck: Oh, a couple of things.

Dog: That's exactly how Master describes *his* working situation.

Chuck: Oh. And what does he do for work?

Dog: He does something called 'between jobs.'

Chuck: Right. Well, that's not my situation. I have one primary job, which pays the bills—

Dog: Which is?

Chuck: I work as a retail store supervisor.

Dog: What's that?

Chuck: Basically, I work in a shop, selling stuff to people who need stuff.

Dog: What sort of stuff?

Chuck: Oh, pretty-much anything, depending upon what company I'm working for. I've sold home lighting systems, vinyl records, stationary, books, furniture, board games, suits, home accessories, electronics...

Dog: Oh, just like Master's friend—'Friend Who Sells Stuff To Master Out Of The Back Of A Rusted Van.'

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Chuck: Okay, sure. But as a store supervisor, I also get to tell the other staff what to do.

Dog: What sort of stuff do you tell them to do?

Chuck: I tell them to sell stuff to people who need stuff.

Dog: And that gives you a sense of purpose and fulfillment?

Chuck: Absolutely not.

Dog: Right. But it pays your bills?

Chuck: Barely.

Dog: So that's why you need a second job?

Chuck: Yup.

Dog: And what's the second job?

Chuck: I'm an author.

Dog: What's that?

Chuck: I'm a writer.

Dog: What's that?

Chuck: I write stories, and sometimes people pay me money for them.

Dog: And that job gives you a sense of purpose and fulfillment?

Chuck: It does, yes.

Dog: And it pays the bills?

Chuck: Barely.

Dog: Right, so each individual job earns barely enough to pay the bills, but *combined*...

Chuck: Combined, I earn enough to be living only *slightly* below the poverty line.

Dog: HURRAY! Oh, wait...

Chuck: It's okay. Like I said, I do enjoy the writing, at least.

Dog: What do you write about?

Chuck: Cats, mostly.

Dog: Wow. So you've gone *really* niche, then.

Chuck: Not really.

Dog: No wonder you hardly make any money from it.

Chuck: Hey!

Dog: You said it yourself.

Chuck: Look, I may not make a fortune from writing about cats, but my cat books do earn me money.

Dog: Like, how much?

Chuck: That's private information.

Dog: Oh, go on. Give me a hint.

Chuck: Well...okay. Last month I was able to buy a new pair of socks with my royalty cheque.

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Dog: Outstanding. With financial goals like that, you should definitely keep writing books about cats.

Chuck: You're mocking me.

Dog: What gave it away?

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