

## Man's Best Friend is No Prince

Pets are becoming more and more treated like royalty. I don't know when this shift occurred, but now my own friendly mutt Prince (and I swear I didn't think he'd take his name to heart) thinks it his right to sleep in the house with me. I never invited him in. He now lies in waiting just outside the stoop until the doorbell rings at the arrival of a package. At the opening of the door, he dashes between the legs of the fellow making the delivery and makes a run for my favorite chair.

Then he settles in in front of the TV to which I am not amused when he grabs the remote and turns on a movie. I really could not care less to watch "Weekend at Bernie's" one more time. When I approach him, a simple barring of the teeth acknowledges who's really in control of the household. But he is not impressed with my display and to further infuriate me, does not budge one bit.

So with this, out come the gloves. I calmly walk over to retrieve the phone book, thumbing evidently through the yellow pages in the "animal shelter" section. He is watching from the corner of his eye, but seems nonetheless carefree. When I finally reach the imaginary woman on the phone, I make sure to speak loudly enough so as my point will be plain.

"Hello?" Yes, I am interested in a cat."

(Silence. More silence, then nodding my head.)

"Oh, I see- the only cats you have come from a wild strain of African dog-eating leopards?"

(Dramatic pause, with wide eyes. Then laughter.)

"Oh no, no! I don't have any other pets!"

(Scribble with a pencil on a notepad.)

"Yes- yes. One-thirty sounds good. See you then. Ta-tah."

I hang up the phone satisfied and then glance over at my pet who has helped himself to a beer and is sniffing his nether region. I stomp off to engineer Plan B.

This is one smart dog! I do admire him, and am, admittedly, a little bemused at the situation. Perhaps I do owe him a little more respect- and I have been meaning to spend more time with him. Him living in the house wouldn't be *that* bad.

And with that I was off to the hardware to buy parts to install a doggie door and get him his very own cushion so he could sit with me right by my chair. Maybe he would be willing to compromise with "Antiques Roadshow" once in a while.

But when I returned home, I found the front door locked. The back door was locked too. Just then, a delivery truck pulled up and the driver rang the doorbell. To my surprise, the door opened, so I darted in to see what was going on. The home shopping network was on the TV and at least three other dogs were sitting on my furniture. He had just ordered me a doghouse.