

MY CONVERSATION WITH DOG

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The action takes place in a park. There is a park bench and a tree. GUY, an everyman, sits on the bench eating a sandwich.

It is clearly a nice spring day.

Guy eats his sandwich and watches the very pleasant everyday park activities around him. A ball rolls to his feet and he tosses it back to its owners with a smile, and a sigh. He tears off small pieces of his sandwich and tosses the pieces to the birds in front of him. As he watches the birds eat the bits of bread, DOG approaches. doG is not old but he walks with a cane. He sits at the foot of Guy and sniffs the sandwich in Guy's hand. Guy smiles at doG and pats him on the head. doG scratches his ear and sniffs again at the sandwich. Guy looks at the small bit of sandwich and reluctantly tosses it to doG. doG catches the sandwich in his mouth and eats it contentedly. doG gets up slowly on his cane, limps to the tree and urinates. He then limps back over to Guy and reclines on the ground at Guy's feet.

DOG

Lovely day.

GUY

Yes it is. (Pause.) It must be nice to urinate wherever you want?

DOG

Yes, it is.

They both watch a dog run by. doG perks up and BARKS.

GUY  
I'm sorry you can only watch all the other dogs running and playing.

DOG Barks.

DOG  
I'm barking.

GUY  
I'm sorry all you can do is sit here and bark at the other dogs.

DOG  
I like to bark. Besides, I could go run and play with them. I simply choose not to.

GUY  
But you only have three legs. I'm sure its very difficult for you to run?

DOG  
You should have seen me running this morning. I was all over the park.

GUY  
So it isn't so difficult?

DOG  
It's running.

GUY  
Did you have to learn how to, after the accident?

DOG  
After what accident?

GUY  
Oh, I see. You were born with three legs?

DOG  
Of course.

GUY  
I'm sorry. That's so unfair.

DOG  
I don't understand. Why should that be unfair? And why should you be sorry?

GUY  
I'm sorry you weren't born with four legs like all the other dogs. It's unfair that you got cheated out of a leg.

DOG

But I have three legs. That's one more than you have. Do you feel cheated?

GUY

No. I also have two arms.

DOG

Hmm - never really had a need for arms. No, I'm happier with the extra leg. You could say I have a leg up on you.

GUY

That's very funny. You have a marvelous attitude. I would be quite angry if I was born with a handicap.

DOG

Yes. I suppose that would make me angry too.

GUY

But you were... (Pause) I mean, You only have three legs. Other dogs have four legs. Your not like other dogs.

DOG

Of course not. No two dogs are the same. Some are big, some are small, some are fast and some are slow. All dogs are not created equal. Is it your contention that all men are created equal?

GUY

Well, it is in our constitution.

DOG

I've seen many people in my time. You too are very diverse species. And clearly you are not all equal. Do you equate equality with value?

GUY

I'm sorry, I didn't mean you were not as good... I just meant, don't you wish you had four legs like the other dogs?

DOG

Antlers.

GUY

What?

DOG

I've seen the big deer with antlers. I wish I had antlers. Now that would be cool.

GUY

But dogs don't have antlers.

DOG  
And I don't have four legs.

They both stare of into the park.

DOG  
Are you missing something?

GUY  
Excuse me?

DOG  
Do you feel like life has been unfair to you? Perhaps you are projecting your dissatisfaction with your own life on me.

GUY  
That's quite an insightful comment for a dog.

DOG  
You think all we do is sit around and lick ourselves?

GUY  
I've got to admit my life hasn't exactly turned out the way I thought it would. And that doesn't exactly make me happy.

DOG  
But it turned out exactly the way it did.

GUY  
I don't think it had to.

DOG  
You think you can control the way things are?

GUY  
I'm an intelligent being. I can control myself.

DOG  
I can control myself too and I'm just a dumb dog. But I can't control the way things are. Dogs just go with it. I have three legs, he has four. I can lick my balls, you can't. It all evens out. That's just the way things are.

GUY  
I wasn't implying that dogs are not intelligent. You seem to be a very smart dog and a happy one despite only having three legs. But I have seen dogs that don't seem as happy as you.

DOG  
When something makes me happy I'm happy. When something doesn't I'm not. Tail wags - tail doesn't wag.

GUY

And you can just go about your... dog business and never think about the unfair things in life?

DOG

There you go again with that unfair thing. Fairness is a concept created by man.

GUY

You sound like a fatalist.

DOG

No. I just - am.

GUY

So would you consider yourself an existentialist?

DOG

No. I'm a dog.

GUY

Don't you ever worry about the bigger picture?

DOG

The bigger picture?

GUY

The Bigger Picture.

DOG

What is the bigger picture and why should I worry about it?

GUY

You know. Questions that are bigger than ourselves. Is global warming going to destroy the parks so puppies of the future won't have a place to play? Do meat by-products cause Lymphosarcoma? Will bad press lead to wrongful legislation against Pit Bulls and other misunderstood breeds?

DOG

You worry about all those things?

GUY

Well not those things, more human concerns - except for the thing about Pit Bulls and Lymphosarcoma... and the parks. Hey, I'm concerned for all the world's animals.

DOG

Sounds like The Bigger Burden to me.

They stare at each other, nodding.

DOG

So what are you doing about the bigger picture?

GUY

Um, I can't solve the bigger picture. I just worry about it.

DOG

Well that just sounds like a waste of time.

GUY

What do you know? You're just a dog.

Guy stares out into the park. doG scratches his ear.

DOG

Maybe I'm not just a dog.

GUY

No. You are a dog, albeit a bright one, a dog nonetheless.

DOG

Perhaps I'm really an advance being from another planet here taking a much needed rest. Perhaps all dogs are.

GUY

Perhaps... No. That's ludicrous. Why would you come to this planet and choose to be a dog.

DOG

A dogs life is a pretty easy one. You eat, sleep and poop - and somebody else takes care of it all for you.

GUY

Yes, for the lucky ones. But there are plenty of abused dogs. And against abuse, you dogs are defenseless.

DOG

Yes, you are right there.

They both stare out into the park watching all the dogs play. doG barks at a few of the dogs that run by.

DOG

But when it's good - it's good. (He sniffs the air.) Hey, maybe I'm God here to teach you a great life lesson.

GUY

No, you're not God.

DOG

How do you know. Dog is God spelled backwards.

GUY

And live is evil spelled backwards. You're still not God. I watched you urinate on a tree.

DOG

And what makes you think I haven't the right to urinate on one of my own creations? (He sniffs at the tree.) Hey - poop is poop spelled backwards. Coincidence? I think not.

Guy stands up and stretches. doG lifts himself to his feet by his cane and stretches too.

GUY

Well, whoever you are, you've been very nice company.

DOG

Thank you. Likewise.

GUY

I need to be going now.

DOG

Getting back to work?

GUY

No. I just have to get home.

DOG

Got to go worry about the bigger picture?

GUY

Not today. I think today I'll go home and play some ball.

DOG

Hm, sounds like a good idea. I'm going to go chase my tail.

They begin to walk off in different directions. Guy stops and turns to doG.

GUY

Perhaps we'll meet here again sometime?

DOG

I don't think so. I don't get down this way very often. But I sure did enjoy our conversation.

GUY

Me too. Thank you, doG.

Guy exits. doG sniffs a little bit, then runs off with a limp, barking in the distance.

THE END