

# THE DOG MAN

## By Robert Frankel

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**CHARACTER:** Phillip (male)

*(PHILLIP enters, nattily dressed and slightly breathless having just finished running away from a mistake. HE is a dour, snooty 30-year-old - perhaps using a British dialect. While HE tries to remain "above it all", his eyes dart around the room as HE talks, looking to see if someone has followed him and awaiting the pending punishment HE fears is coming. After a moment, HE defensively and somewhat melodramatically begins to speak to the audience.)*

I suppose you're wondering why I'm here. Because quite frankly I'm wondering why you're here. It's a little much considering what I did. Convening a tribunal is wholly unnecessary. I have not taken anyone's name in vain. I have not stolen so much as a loaf of bread. I have not shot a person. I have only slightly, and not without provocation, kicked. . . a dog. In the buttocks. TOED, really. Toed a dog. There was no full backward extension of the calf, and therefore no real acceleration. A simple nudge was all. A nudge. . . with emphasis. It was, however, a . . .

*(Eyes dart around for a moment.)*

. . .well it was a gypsy's dog. Or just a swarthy-complexioned old woman wearing lots of beads and bangles and. . .

*(Imitating accent.)*

. . .TALKING like ZEES.

*(Resumes normal speech.)*

I don't know the difference really. Between an old, bejeweled woman and a gypsy, not between the old woman and the dog though both did sport a fair amount of hair. But, really, what would you do? I was simply strolling down Main Street this morning, on my morning pilgrimage to my own personal Mecca, when out from an alleyway bounded a brown, mangy, tick-infested, mud-incrusted, devil-eyed cur-of-a-dog. And there it sat, right there on the sidewalk, strategically placing itself between me and

that purveyor of potent potions that is so critical to making the sun rise each day - Starbuck's.

***(HE casually scratches an itch on his neck as HE continues, the melodrama rising to his defense.)***

And I do not believe this to be simple hyperbole, by the way. Note that both STAR-buck's and the sun involve celestial beings of the same type. Coincidence? Methinks not. Well, striving to eschew violence when diplomacy will do, I endeavored to step around the mutt. . .

***(Leg is lifted and hangs there until story indicates it comes down.)***

. . .when I heard the unmistakable sound of thunder rumbling from afar. Thunder? I puzzled. I looked up, seeing both the sun AND an overcast day. I've got sunshine, I pondered, on a cloudy day. 'Twas then I realized that I had mistaken the far off sound of heavenly belching for the all-too-near rumble of this menacing hound before me who was now showing off a simply spectacular array of incisors and bicuspid's! There I hung, wide-eyed, poised in precarious mid-step over the proverbial moat with its requisite snapping amphibian, when a voice rang out in the clear, sharp tones of the cavalry's bugle, "Pinky! Pinky, NO!"

***(Pauses to collect himself. Puts leg down momentarily.)***

That, as it turns out, was to be the only time I was grateful to hear that rasping, rankling, vampire-accented, rope-of-a-female-voice during my entire five minute encounter.

***(Scratching with a bit more intent at his neck as HE continues.)***

Nevertheless, I was astounded at the transformation of said Pinky. (Here, I must pause to say that the innocuous moniker 'Pinky' given to the hell hound before me was like naming the shark in Jaws, Muffin!

***(Rising to an angry, defensive shout.)***

... The fact that Pinky was a TEACUP POODLE NOTWITHSTANDING!

***(Looks defiantly at the Audience for a moment, daring them to laugh. Then HE gains control once again, and resumes story, lifting his leg in mid-step.)***

As I was saying, at the sound of her name, Pinky ceased his snarling and did his best impersonation of a domesticated, cuddly, toothless newborn puppy. I say 'impersonation' (or would that be im-dog-nation?) because just as my wide eyes lost their width, just as my dangling leg began its relaxing return to Earth, just as a seemingly nice little old lady appeared at my side and the sun shone bright in the sky, toothless, cuddly Pinky matched my leg with it's own harmless leg. . . and relieved himself in my now well positioned. . .

***(Indicating his crotch area with one hand, while now scratching his ear vigorously in the characteristic dog-style of back to front with an open hand.)***

. . .mid-section. Even this abomination I might have tolerated had it not been for Pinky's subsequent laughing - nay, GUFFAWING! - at me in his own doggie way. The final indignation. And THAT was when, having never played football or really any sport involving a range of motion beyond that of fork-to-mouth, I attempted to punt Pinky to perdition! And though a feeble attempt that mainly found air, I did manage to wipe the grin off of Pinky's face. At the same time, however, I turned to the little old lady and discovered that I had embossed a full-fledged scowl on her puss.

***(Eyes dart furtively around once more and HE begins to sporadically pant dog-like, tongue showing.)***

And out of that sco-OOOOOO-wl. . .

***(HE howls the middle vowel.)***

. . .came the words that are so unbelievable they make me laugh.

***(Scratches ear with hand again while at the same time shaking his leg in the air.)***

She said, "A curse! A curse upon you, dat you vill know the pain of da dog and da relief of da fire hydrant!"

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