

"Studding My Dog"

RING

I look up from my dinner. Who would call the Schnauzer Breeder From Hell at suppertime? I check the caller id. It's a local call. No mercy. Had they called from different time zone, I might have considered commuting their sentence...

"Yes." (Hello is too good for this loser. This should be the first hint.)

"Yeah, is this the lady who has Schnauzers? Someone gave me your number... I'm calling about a stud."

Uh huh. This loser doesn't know my name, but wants to use one of my studs? I'm just about to pick up the whistle I keep on hand for obscene callers, when I hear words I hadn't expected.

"I have a stud. I thought you might want to use him."

But of course! Whatever was I thinking? I put down my plate. Time to trade in my salad for some fresh meat.

"You do? Please! Tell me more about him."

"He's got papers. We're charging \$75 but we might take a pup if there's a good one in there.

If my plan is going to succeed, I must first win his friendship. "Oh my goodness, I could never sleep at night having paid you so little. I wouldn't dream of paying less than \$125."

"Really?"

"Absolutely. Actually, some people charge \$150 for studding their Schnauzers." I hear the skin on his cheeks snap into an idiot grin.

"Ok. But for you I'll charge \$125, though, ok? When do you want to use him? Got anything ready now? We'd really like to get some pups outa him."

"You mean he's never been used before?" I let a long moment of silence pass before continuing, my voice grave.

"I hope you've checked him for T.E.S.S."

"What tests? He's got his shots."

"No, I said *TESS* T - E - S - S."

There's a little hesitation in his voice now. "Tess?"

"Testicular Ecstatic Seizure Syndrome." I whisper it into the receiver.

"Huh? What's that?"

"Breeding fits. Kind of like a seizure, except it hits them in the rear first. They sort of lose control. It's an awful thing to see. Awful thing... You mean nobody *told* you?"

"er....no?"

sigh "They never do. You're lucky you talked to me then, eh? I may have saved your dog from a convulsion or worse..." I let that sink in for a moment. First you herd them into the tunnel, then you turn on the light...

"But there's a couple of tests you can do to check for it... easy stuff."

"Yeah? tests?" (He's coming in like a bug to a zapper...)

"You can do them yourself. First you get a female that's ready for breeding, bring your stud in and watch what happens. You have to watch really close...but keep him on a leash so you can get him out of there if you have to."

"Ok"

"Watch your stud real close, and if he starts to chatter his teeth a little, well that's a danger sign. The first thing to start him off in a breeding fit is that teeth chattering thing... are you writing this down?"

"Ok"

"Next thing to do is watch how excited he gets. If he starts scrambling around and won't listen to you, then that's another danger sign. If he does that, get him out there *fast*. Let him settle down for a few days. Maybe a week. Then try again. If he still does it, well, he's gonna need an operation."

"An operation?" I can hear the profit margin calculations being adjusted.

"Oh yeah, you can cure TESS real easy. Just get your dog in right away to the vet for an operation."

"You sure? I mean, operations can be kinda expensive..."

"Not as expensive as buying another dog, eh? Besides, if anybody gets even a *hint* that your dog has TESS, they won't use him. No way. Who wants to waste time on a dog that dies before the job gets done, eh?"

"I never thought about it that way. You got a good point there...."

"Yup. So, this is what you do. You go to your vet and tell him you want him to do a Vasek Tummy operation. Write that down...Va-sek-Tum-my

"Yup, got it. Ok, thanks."

"Wait, for crying out loud, that isn't all!"

"No?"

"If your vet gets any idea that you want to be studding your dog, he's not gonna do it. So, no matter what he says, tell him you don't ever want to stud that dog. **NEVER.**"

"Huh?"

"And don't breathe a word about the TESS. For sure he won't do it then."

"Why not?"

"Vets are funny that way. If they find out you want to fix up a dog with TESS for breeding, they won't let you do it. So they won't do that Vasek Tummy operation."

"Oh. Ok. Now I get this."

"Good. Hey, and good luck, eh? Be sure to call me back and tell me how it went. I like to know about vets who do good Vasek Tummy surgeries. There's lots of people like you out there."

"Thanks. Thanks for your help. I'll be sure to do that."

"No need to thank me" I take out a steak knife and carve another notch in the idiot stick. "The opportunity to help others is the only thanks I need."

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