

THE OFFENDING GESTURE

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Fifth Draft

Fifth Draft– The
OFFENDING GESTURE, or Torborg's Dog; or
the Corn-wulf Revealed; or
the Dog Philosopher;
as narrated by two Jack Russell
terriers, Owff and Yowff.

However what we see is: Three women above, all with identical wigs—blackish with sharp bangs. (Or: They may be dressed a la *Kawaii*— as contemporary young Japanese girls do.) These are the MOONCATS, (The third MOONCAT mainly sleeps, but you can set your clock by her rising rump.)

Below, three more women similarly dressed and wigged. They are seated in three identical black tub-chairs.

The lower three play all the main characters of the play: JACKIE, BLONDI, and of course, NOBLE WOLF. Minor characters as well.

Lights fade for a spooky backlit Prelude:

(We see there are three of them not two.)

((Moreover they are CATS not DOGS.)

~

: So tell me. How did you learn to do this thing?

: I learned it in my own way. It is not for saying out loud.

: So. So you must tell us as we are ze authorities.

: I care not a fiddle.

: So. So tell us you must as the honor and sincerity of your character, if it so be, departs from and constitutes a criminal variance from the law, all of it.

: I care not a hoopsnake for all the criminal variance in the whole, vast land of evening.

: We have ways to make you speak, absurd doggy.

[A mooncat counts once more; once more comes up with two.]

: My people have no flirtation with a rule of law that is law and is subject to rebukes and bakeries of another calendar.

: Shall we resort to the lash?

: I am a proud dog of Finland, and my temper is clean of all your rebukes. Nine....

: You speak our language, dog?

: No, I was counting to the number "nine" to engage my mettle and resist but not entirely the logic of my inner rage.

: Your rage is nothing to ours.

: My leash is not a time lease. It swivels forcefully.

[She swivels in her tub-chair.]

[Now we see another– the third?]

: You must admit the nature of your curious foolhardy.

: I resist no foolhardy, but only the foolish licence to to to admit what cannot be admitted under the tower of nonsense.

: You learned how to make this motion, no?

[Demonstrates the offending gesture.]

: I make such motions as occur naturally to my most majestic doggy nature.

: Admit the crime.

: I admit no malfeasance.

:The crime deepens.

: You follow a specious line of misdirect.

: If you were wise you would fear the strap.

: My own, Tor Borg, fears no strap as of thine. He is, for he is a manufacturer of pharmaceuticals, pharmaceuticals such as the world has not seen since the days of Baghdad and Nineveh.

: Iraq again.

: O a fiddle upon Iraq.

[Two of the three consult. Consult and whisper.]

: Blondi would behave.

: I am not Blondi. I am Jackie. Tor Borg's Jackie.

: Blondi would do otherwise.

: Grrr,

: Blondi would earn the caring stroke and loving dog biscuit.

:I care not a feather for Blondi. I am enraged. Grrr,

~

: Below we see now all three in their respective tub-chairs. Scene with Noble Wolf and Another.

: I am called Noble Wolf. People say bad things about me. But I am

not so bad. People (and Mooncats) possess the mind of a movie doorman and often tell the untruth. Yes they do. This is how one of these untruths happened, not so long ago, in the land of evening, and in other places. Eyewrack and Russia and Ablania. Long ago in the dog's bed of history.

[Another appears, salutes. The salute is returned.]

: Look at this.

: ?

: Look at this. What is it?

: What do you mean "what is it"?

: Look at this. This is a picture. This is called a picture. This is a picture of an insult against you. An insult against all of us, against all of us.

: Looks like the picture of a dog.

[Another growls.]

: Yes, it is the picture of a dog, my leader, my leader, only what is the dog doing in the picture?

: The dog is looking very much like a dog. Why? What is ze implication?

: The right paw of the dog.... What is ze right paw of the dog doing?

: The dog is a dog of Finland for I can see the flag of Finland in the upper hand corner of the photograph. The Finns are friends of ours and I don't see what is the problem.

: Look at that.

: Look at what?

: Look at that paw. The right one.

[Noble Wolf looks.]

: That is not the right paw that is the left paw.

: (Devil take the right and)– in the picture it is the right side because yes it is a picture. Yes Noble Wolf it is the left paw but in the picture it is the right paw.

: What are you trying to say Himmler? (Sometimes I think you have the mind of movie doorman.)

: THAT DOG IS DOING THE OFFICIAL PARTY SALUTE. That is what I am trying to say.

: Himmler you are joking with me.

: Noble Wolf, I am saying that dog is doing the salute of our party.

: Himmler, you are surely joking with me. Why would a dog do such a thing. Why would a dog go to that much trouble to do a salute the meaning of which can surely have no meaning for a dog as such?

: The dog clearly has been TAUGHT do the salute. The dog would not do the salute unless the dog had been TAUGHT to do the salute. TAUGHT by someone. Presumably by someone who is his master. Presumably by someone who is not only his master but who is HUMAN. By someone who is human and we all know what that means.

[Pause. Silence. Pause.]

: What *what* means?

~

[Noble Wolf and his own dog Blondi]

: I am telling you Noble Wolf I am unable.

: But just try.

: I am unable because it is beyond my ken.

: Your ken is boundless.

: (What means "boundless"?)

: But Blondi ...

: But Noble Wolf. I have not the capabilities to do this. In fact I am not even clear about what it is I am. I am supposed to do. To be able to do. To be doing when you speak in such a way.

All your friends Noble Wolf are very busy you must be aware. Working away ceaselessly behind your back. Working towards the leader as they say. But I am a German Shepard and so such a tactic is against my doggy nature.

: But you love your Noble Wolf.

: Of course I do.

: Does not your Noble Wolf love his Blondi?

: Of course he does.

: And he would do whatever he can to please his master.

: Of course I would.

: Then does it not follow that you would comply with my request.

: I would comply with Noble Wolf's request if I could understand the meaning of the proposition.

: This is not about a proposition it is about following a simple command.

: --

: A simple command that means in order to please Noble Wolfie it is necessary for you to attempt the Nazi Party salute.

: But that is what people do. I am not one of them.

: But Blondi.

: Don't Blondi me. This is scandalous.

: Oh Blondi.

: Why don't you be a good master and scratch my head.

: I often scratch your head.

[Silence. Pause. Silence.]

: Not enough these days. Do you have other dogs?

: I have serious matters on my mind.

: You have another dog.

: Serious matters that you would not understand. Serious matters pertaining to Winston Churchill.

: You have another dog. Admit it.

: Blondi. Oh Blondi.

: Was not my fur luxurious enough?

: Oh Blondi don't say it.

: Was not the feel of my ears enough to please you?

: Oh Blondi please do not doubt me.

: Admit it admit it. You have another dog.

: No. Never. No.

: An English bulldog with a face like Winston Churchill.

[Pause.

Yes a bulldog, a bulldog, a bulldog!

: What would I do with a bulldog.

: You would prefer it to me. (You would teach it tricks that are beyond me.) You would teach your loathsome bulldog how is the correct way to salute.

[Does so inadvertently.]

: I would not.

: You would too.

: I would not Blondi.

[Pause. Silence. Pause.]

: Accursed be the name of Martin Bormann for ever giving me to you.

[Pause of Blondi rage.]

May you and your gorgeous bulldog go and be gone to Iraq. Land that Churchill created out of sticks and bricks and chewing gum. Out of turds and shits and sunfish. All to appease a somebody nobody with a nonsense rag hat. We Germans should be beyond such things but. And you have let me down Noble Wolf with your insatiable preference for the ears of other dogs.

: That is simply not truth. Blondi. That is more than farfetched. That is simply not of a truth.

: I should walk all my sad eyes to the moon, home of my disgrace.

[Mooncats vocalize in a teasing way to the music of Gorecki's *Miserere*.]

~

[Blondi and Jackie (the dog of Finland). The latter shows to former how to do it.]

: No no no. Like this.

: But no—

: Yes no. Believe. Like this.

: But I cannot move my paw that far up.

: You're trying too hard. Just flip it.

: But. Won't stay.

: You're trying too hard. Just flip it.

: But. Won't stay.

: Try again.

: Ach.

: Try again.

: Ach.

: Once more. Try it again.

: Ach. Ach.

: Be disciplined. Once more.

: Ach. Damn paw.

: You're trying too hard. Just flip it.

: But. Won't stay.

: You're trying too hard. Just flip it.

: But it just won't.

: Try again.

: Ach.

: Try again.

: Ach.

: Once more. Try it again.

: Try again.

: Ach.

: Try again.

: Ach.

: Once more. Just flip it.

: Ach. Damn paw.

: You're trying too hard. Just flip it.

: But it just won't.

: Try again.

: Ach.

: Try again.

: Ach.

: Once more. Just try it again.

: Ach. Ach.

: Be disciplined. Once more.

: Ach. Damn paw

[Pause. Bonk. Pause.]

: Blondi. You are not very. Convincingly abled. In the left front foot department.

: Jackie. My feet end in paws which obey the higher fiction.

: ?!

: Which obey the higher fiction which is why they are always trying to outleap off the earth's sorb. They aspire higher. They are working towards the true leader of pause.

: Paws you mean.

: Paws I said.

: Pause you said as in the pause of now here wait a gosh darn moment.

: I darn well did not. You darn well did too.

: Did not.

: Did too.

[Jackie does the salute.]

: There you go and do that thing again. Gesture which in the context of you doing it I would find awful and offensive. If I were a human type being and so forth. Because.

[Both dogs doth recollect themselves to themselves and sing a portion of the Mooncats' Ballad. The Mooncats join in, but more convincingly.]

~

[Scene. About Gestures. All three Mooncats: they take turns.]

: Some gestures are correct; and some are not. Some gestures are honorable and pleasing to the public; and some are not. Some gestures carry a maximal joy, and are pleasing to contemplate; some

are not. Some gestures remind us of the nobility of our people, and their illustrious past; some are not. Some gestures contain the weight of the leader–

(All three: In this case, *me*, Noble Wolf)

... and his responsibility; these gestures remind us all of the meaning of gestures in general and the difference between those that do and those that do not carry the weight of an awful significatatata– an awful significance. And some alas. Some alas are defective in this regard and suggest things which do not face it *lie doggo*; and hence squirt about doing that which is suggestive of that which possesses a bad smell and as such must be ... sent into exile or be made to suffer a worse fate than that. All in the name of the rightful gesture the doing of which clears the air and makes all once more correct and wise and lovely and unpolluted; and some are not.

~

[Jackie and Another (perhaps the Corn-wulf). Nearby is Noble Wolf, silent and brooding.

: Don't tell Blondi but I have a crush on her.

: --

: Because I don't want her to know.

: --

: Because the revelation would cause me no little embarrassment.

: --

: Sheesh. Even to think about such a revelation causes me a discomfort.

: --

: Sheesh. I am just as embarrassed now as if I had made a full revelation to the. Hmmm. To the world at large.

: --

: Does this mean? Or: No....

: --

: Does this mean that by ...

: --

: No it cannot mean that!

: --

: Or can it:

: ?

: Have I by mentioning this matter to you. Have I (I have!) Made a general revelation to the world at large Ah yi Ah yi Ah yi of the fact that I have a crush on Blondi?

: --

: If I have done this I am ruined.

: --

: If I have did such a thing I am *doomed*.

: Domed? What did you say? Domed?

: Domed?

: What did yes did you say? *Domed?*

: Domed? I did not say domed. Why on earth would I say *domed?* I have no idea what you are talking about. Ha!

[Does the Offending Gesture.]

: --

[Does it again.]

: Ha!

: !

[Does it again over and over and.]

Ach. The repetition of the gesture makes it in effect ridiculous.

: (What are you talking about?) I did not do nothing. I was merely giving voice to my despair at the consequence of my unfortunate and unintentional revelation concerning the er a matter which should not have been revealed.

[Does it again.]

: You did it again.

: I did not.

: You did too.

: I did not.

: You did too.

[Silence. Silence. Paws.]

: (Perhaps she has not heard the revelation of which I was so embarrassed. The one concerning which the less said the better. Perhaps so. Perhaps this is the case. If this is true then I am not doomed. And perhaps then I am not even ruined.)

: What are you mumbling?

: I was not mumbling anything.

: You were speaking in a low, disingenuous voice, as though concealing a something (nothing?). Perhaps a REVELATION which you may have made in error, which now, in retrospect, causes you no little embarrassment.

: --

: That is the case is it not?

: --

: Come clean. It is evench that you are hiding something. It is evench you are hiding a thing about yourself which you have done which you ought not have done.

: (Faugh. I am found out.)

: What is the source of this bad consciouneth that is causing you to behave in this manner?

: (Faugh. I am found out.)

: ?!

: (Faugh. I am found out,)

: Perhaps we should take this matter up with the authorities.

: --

: Perhaps we should take this matter up with the authorities, and our authorities at the embassy in Helsinki, our authorities are able, are able and more than willing to take up the matter with your authorities. We will get to the bottom of this. We will get to the bottom of this.

: (Faugh, I am found out.)

: WHAT ARE YOU SAYING?

: --

[Paces. Stares at the other. Paces.]

[Does the offensive gesture once more. Completely unaware.]

(Perhaps I have become the corn-wulf.)

: I shall make the telephone call. (No. I am the corn-wulf.)

: Faugh, I am ruined. I am domed er doomed.

: I am making the telephone call, which will get us to the bottom of things.

: Faugh, I am ruined. I am doomed.

[Both stare: For a time Jackie out, and the Other at Jackie; then the reverse: The Other out; Jackie at the Other. Noble Wolf remains silent and brooding. End of scene.]

~

Scene: The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Helsinki. Two FINNISH Officials and one GERMAN, formally attired. Two SS Officers and one FINNISH officers are in uniform. Six in all.

German1: And then there is this.

[Look at a picture.]

[Pause. Silence. Pause.]

German2: And then there is this.

[Look at this.]

GERMAN3: And perhaps we must also examine this one.

[FINN3 looks puzzled.]

FINN1: Why? What is the meaning of this?

GERMAN2: Do you not see the picture?

FINN2: Yes, I see the pictures. And so?

GERMAN1: What is the picture a picture of?

FINN1: It is a photograph* of someone or something ...

GERMAN3: It is a photograph to be sure....

GERMAN1: And do you see what is represented in the photograph?

FINN2: An animal.

FINN3: An animal I think....

GERMAN3: An animal / *think* [snidely].

FINN1: What is the problem? I see no reason to make an issue of this.

GERMAN2: What is the dog doing?

FINN2: (What is the dog doing? Ha! What an extraordinary question!)

GERMAN3: WHAT IS THE DOG DOING. I ask you a* simple question.

FINN3: (What means "dog"?)

FINN1: I am sorry. I do not see what the problem is.

[Pause. Silence. Silence.]

GERMAN1: There is, in the photograph, an animal, is it not the case?

FINN1: Yes, to be sure. What of it?

GERMAN2: And the animal is a dog, is it not?

FINN3: (What means "dog"?)

FINN2: (Be quiet, fool.)

FINN1: Yes, the animal looks like a dog. What of it?

GERMAN3: Yes of course the animal is a dog. That is totally evenh er evident from the appearance. Dogs look so. [He does the dog.]

FINN2: (I still don't get it. I still don't get it.)

GERMAN2: It is indeed a dog. Indeed it is a dog. We have

established the fact no?

[A sort of impasse has occurred even though in the face of an apparent agreement.]

GERMAN1: Now what is the dog, the dog in question, doing?

FINN3: [In consternation: (What means "dog"?)

FINN1: This is what dogs do, in other words as a dog does, scratching, lolling her tongue, gazing up at master, presumably the master, with the unconditional affection and respect that it is in the nature of the dog to exhibit. In all this the dog seems to be performing, in a perfectly natural fashion, all the traits one would expect to find in such a beast, *canis familiaris*.

I have an uncle in the North who raises a splendid sub-species of dog, and has interbred them with the wolf that is native to that snowy realm, and the result is a most remarkable animal, various in skills and utterly beautiful to gaze upon, and unutterably soft to the touch.

[The FINN strokes something he has in his trouser pocket, presumably something of an unutterable softness. He does this for some time becoming apparently lost in reminiscence. All the others watch this as though almost hypnotized.]

GERMAN2: This dog belongs to a citizen of Finland, one Tor Borg, a manufacturer of pharmaceutical products.

FINN2: That may well be the case. It can be determined* easily.

GERMAN3: We have discovered the animal's domicile and it is the house of one Tor Borg....

GERMAN2: A manufacturer of pharmaceuticals here in Helsinki. That is a fact.

GERMAN3: The name of the dog is said to be "Jackie", pronounced "Yakkee".

FINN3: (What means "Yakkee"?)

FINN1: Jackie?

GERMAN2: No, Jackie, pronounced in the German way. It is "Yakkee".

FINN2: But the dog is not a German dog.

GERMAN1: The dog is not a German dog but we have ascertained that it is called "Yakkee" by the owner one Tor Borg who resides in Finland. Helsinki to be precise.

[The two FINNISH officials hold a little session in private to discuss the implications of this revelation. The GERMANS wait patiently for them to be done.]

[Silence. Silence. Pause.]

[The FINNS look up coldly.]

GERMAN1: We wish to lodge an official protest.

GERMAN2: We wish to lodge an official protest on behalf of the Third Reich, and we demand an explanation of this matter.

[Silence. Icy pause. Silence.]

FINN1: What matter are we talking about?

GERMAN2: The matter of the offending gesture. This dog.* The dog of one Tor Borg, a citizen of Finland, and a manufacturer of pharmaceutical products.

German1: This man, Tor Borg, has apparently trained his dog....

FINN1: Jackie...

GERMAN3: A dog by the name of *Yakkee*, spelled J-A-C-K-I-E, to imitate in a mocking and suggestive manner the salute of loyalty of the Third Reich.

[The GERMANS demonstrate the salute.]

GERMAN3: This we find outrageous.

GERMAN2: We demand an immediate cessation of this behavior.

GERMAN1: The behavior of the offending gesture.

[The FINNS hold a brief and private confabulation.]

[Pause. Silence. Pause.]

FINN1: There is nothing offensive about the behavior in these photos.

FINN2: She is merely raising a forepaw...

GERMAN1: She is merely raising a forepaw yes, but.

GERMAN2: The rumor we have heard is that she only does this offensive behavior at the command of Tor Borg himself who it is said has only to utter the phrase "Heil Hitler" and the dog responds in this way, making a laughing stock of all concerned.

FINN1: The dog does not appear to be making fun of anyone.

FINN2: All she is doing is raising one forepaw.

GERMAN3: The intent is offensive hence the gesture is offensive.

GERMAN1: We want it to stop.

GERMAN2: The relations between Finland and Germany, we might add, are at stake.

GERMAN1: We regard this as a very serious matter.

GERMAN2: It is not a matter to be taken lightly.

FINN2: What do you want us to do?

FINN1: What indeed!? Is the German State so offended by a foolish animal? That cannot be. Such a supposition is ridiculous. Why are you demanding that we take action against a dumb animal, an animal that has no idea what such an action might symbolize? Such an action would be ridiculous at best, monstrous if taken seriously... and seriously proposed.

GERMAN3: Do not pretend to be so naive.

GERMAN1: Actions that are seemingly meaningless can be interpreted in such a way that is far from innocent.

GERMAN3: This animal and his or her offending gesture may well become a symbol, a very powerful symbol for those that wish to belittle the Third Reich and denigrate her achievement.

GERMAN1: Such an offending gesture, seemingly innocuous as it may appear to some, may be used by our enemies as a powerful symbolic weapon in their attempts to mock our actions and make us appear ridiculous to all those who have not yet made up their minds.

GERMAN2: The propaganda war is as important as the war of guns and killing.

GERMAN2: Finland cannot pretend to be so innocent as not to understand what we are saying.

[The FINNS discuss the matter.]

FINN1: We shall take up the matter with Tor Borg's dog.

~

[The FINNS and Jackie.]

FINN1: The Germans have demanded, in order to maintain sounds diplomatic relations, that we discuss the matter with you.

: --

FINN2: And so?

: --

FINN3: What do you have to say for yourself?

: --

FINN1: This is an important national security matter. Much depends upon the successful resolution of the problem.

: --

FINN2: Do you understand what we are saying?

: --

FINN1: It is very important that you understand* what we are saying.

FINN3: Do you? Do you understand?

FINN:2 It is very important that you understand the meaning of every word we are saying? Do you?

: --

FINN2: Perhaps she understands.... What do you think?

FINN1: I think he must understand. After all we have explained the matter in great detail. We have explained how the making of this seemingly innocuous gesture has come to be viewed by some, albeit not by all, but by some nevertheless, as a serious matter, as it is evident to some that his gesture is of a very obnoxious and offending sort, at least when it is performed like so.

[He does it.]

[Jackie shows some interest.]

Like so. [Does it again.]

And like so. [Does it again and again.]

Because it is in the nature of the offending gesture that what is offensive about it is that when it is done properly and correctly it is done by beings, usually a mass of multitude of them, yes, who are united by an intense emotional commitment to an idea, an idea that unites them. Furthermore, when such an honorable and exemplary action is done, it is done by beings who are *human*. As a corollary

to this proposition, the same gesture when done, in obscene solitude, by a being who is not human acquires an offensive quality such that it becomes an offending gesture and as such ...

: (What means "human"?)

FINN1: And as such ...

: (What means "human"?)

FINN1: And as such ...

: What means "human"?)

~

[As the Mooncats sing from Gorecki's *Miserere* Blondi and Jackie intently listen for some time from below.

Jackie: Stop singing and come down here.

Blondi: --

: There is something wrong but I don't think they can help.

: Help with what?

: Help us to understand the problem. Oh how I love those mooncats, oh how I love those sweet mooncats when they sing and yowl and roar....

: What means "understand"? I do not do that. I love Noble Wolf and he scratches my head and tugs at my ear flaps ...

: I love Mister Borg and he also scratches my head and tugs at my ear flaps ...

: No I do not do that "understand" business. Pfckff. I am by nature very easy going, and am not concerned about such things as any old "offending gesture" which you are so good at. Moreover I am sweet and loveable.

But Noble Wolf will want me to learn how. And if I am not able I fear the outcome. I fear all will come to a very bad place.

: Oh how I love those mooncats. I love how they sing and scat and

roar.

[Mooncats sing and scat and roar for a time.]

~

[Jackie and Blondi on the moon. Indifferent and out of sorts as the mooncats have not troubled to appear. Blondi is suspicious: Perhaps there is no darn thing as no mooncats in the first place.]

Jackie: Why are you so troubled?

Blondi: Perhaps there is no darn thing as no mooncats in the first place.

What is the point of such a long and difficult voyage if no mooncats are there otherhow?

: Sometimes Blondi life does not behave as we would like.

[Does the offending gesture.]

: Noble Wolf will be disturbed when he finds out what we have done.

: Noble Wolf will admire your passion for the truth.

: --

: He will admire your passion for the truth, and your disciplined resolve in the ... in the act of working towards that truth even if, even if you do not have a clue as to her true nature.

: Do you think so? Do you really think so?

: I do think so. I really do.

[Pause. Paws. Pause.]

Yes, no, believe, like this.

[He does it.]

: But can I move my paw up that far? No I can not. I cannot.

: You're trying too hard. Just flip it.

: But it just won't.

: Try it again.

: Ach.

: Try it again.

: Ach.

: Once more. Just try it again.

: Ach. Ach.

: Be disciplined. Once more.

: Ach. Damn paw.

: You're trying too hard. Just flip it.

: But it just won't.

: Try it again.

: Ach.

: Try it again.

: Ach.

: Once more. Just try it again.

: Ach. Ach.

[Paws. Pause. Paws.]

: Well some other dogs also cannot do this either.

: Noble Wolf will have me shot.

: Dogs like Lassie and Wuffles.... No they can not.

: Wuffles?

: Churchill's bulldog– Wuffles (Psssh. There is no such thing as no "Wuffles". I just made it all up. From tip of tooth to tip of tail.)

[Paws. Paws. Paws.]

: I do not like Lassie much. I really do not like Lassie. Lassie is such an ... such an American.* She is always grinning, and she is always sweet and compliant; and she is always saving her idiot of a care-giver from situations that are so laughable as to be ridiculous, like the situation of the canary on the bull's nose, yes like that one.

: Lassie is only a creature of the moving picture world ... she is not real ...

: I like King Kong much better and my master Noble Wolf likes King Kong very very much. Especially when he does that thing he does, you know? the thing he does of pounding upon his chest with his furry mitts and so makes all around to jump and shake and bump and bamp and bemp and bomp. It makes my breath to catch and for a moment to stomp, I mean *stomp*, er, I mean stop in the sense of coming to a rest ...

: --

: And now you are going to gad and gaud and gaff me by mentioning Winston Churchill's big dog ... I know ... I know ... I know.

: (No I was not. No I was not.)

: I do not like to hear of Wuffles because I am a good dog, a good dog doing my job.

: - ?

: Noble Wolf does not like Wuffles, I mean Winston Churchill, so I must not hear of Wuffles. Working towards the leader is what you do when you do not quite know what the leader would have you do and. But. But because it is part of your job. This is what you must do. It is hard. It is very difficult. I can't stand it myself. * But like I say it is part of my job which is why I must do it even if half the time I don't know what I am doing.

: It sounds very difficult.

: Noble Wolf will have me shot.

: I have a question for you then.

: --

: Why doesn't Noble Wolf tell you simple tell you simple what he wants you to do?

~

Blondi: Well let's go back to Yarth.

Jackie: Okay.

[They go back to Yarth.]

[Pause for scratching and grooming.]

Blondi: Just look at Wuffles.

[He does the bulldog.]

: All bulldogs are that way. All bulldogs are bulldogish.

[He does the bulldog.]

: That's not how they are.

[He does another, more intense, bulldog.]

: That's not how they are.

[He does another, even more intense, bulldog.]

: That is certainly not how they are.

: Okay okay.

: I am just speaking of a truth.

: Okay okay.

[He stops himself from doing the bulldog.]

[The other does a perfect bulldog.]

: Wow

[The other does an even more perfect bulldog.]

: Wow wow

[Suddenly serious.]

: Do you think Wuffles believes in Santa?

: !

: Do you think Winston Churchill believes in Santa?

: Do you think Noble Wolf believes in Santa?

: I think he must.

He must mustn't he. I think he must.

[A pause for scratching and grooming.]

: I think he loves the Noble Claus but is not so fond of Winston Churchill. But that is a complicated business perhaps. Perhaps having to do with Wuffles the dog of Churchill.

: Wuffles waffles. Psnit.

: Wuffles is a bad animal perhaps.

: That must be.

: Noble wolf wants to attack Churchill's toy.

: And what toy would that be?

: A place in the Middle-east called *Iraq*.

: Ear-wrack? Ear-wrack? What means that?

: Something like a waffle I suppose. A something/nothing made of sticky parts that keep falling apart.

: ?

: What is the point of baking a cake if it must only fall apart?

: Ask wuffles....

: I am asking you Blondi as Wuffles is not in evench. Not in evidence.

: How can I speak as though I am in evidence. I am not Wuffles.

: You can of course make believe you are as certain Wuffles.

[a pause for dog reflection.]

Are you doing what I requested.
Are you make believing you are him–
the one called "Wuffles"?

A certain bulldog of hideous aspect.

[Tries hard but no.]

: I cannot.... I just cannot.

Jackie, oh Jackie.

Air-wrack is a puzzle.

[Grimaces.]

What am I to make of an object akin to a waffle that keeps falling
apart? No I cannot fathom.

Even if I were Wuffles I could not follow the leader to the end of this
conundrum. Mumums.

Wuffles waffles. Psnit.

[Pause for more doggy reflection.]

: Perhaps we should go back to the moon and ask the mooncats.

[They go back to the moon where the mooncats are singing.]

Blondi: Hey mooncats stop please.

Jackie: Stop and tell us what is the point of baking a cake if it will only fall apart?

[Mooncats confer.]

Mooncat: You are talking about Ear-wrack?

Blondi: Yes we are.

Mooncat: Ear-wrack is shaped like a waffle-iron but that nothing to do with waffles. Wuffles love the place because it is the, it is the Eye-wrack that was creatured by his master one Winston Churchill. Ear-wrack did not work, and does not work, and will not work in the future because however you call it, name it, denominate it, Eye-wrack, Ear-wrack, whatever, is a wreck. She cannot be saved because she is not one thing, as you can see clearly from the moon. If you think otherwise you are both foolish hounds, and your pockets are not full of soft wolfish fur, but of sunfish, shits and turds.

[Dogs confer.]

Blondi: Why then what must* be done?

[Silence. Silence. Silence.]

[The mooncats sing for a time as the dogs return to sad Yarth.]

: Do not do the offending gesture, please, in front of Noble Wolf.

: Why should I not do the gesture? I do not do the gesture to be a nuisance. I do the gesture as it gives me a please, a pleasure in the left front foot department (Evench, er, even if Tor Borg is not near by).

: Noble Wolf might not understand.

: Perhaps we can explain my behavior in such a way as to calm his fury.

: Noble Wolf listens to what I say but I am not sure he will understand your behavior.

: My behavior cause me great joy. My behavior in the left front foot department is not intended to be an offensive gesture.

: Noble Wolf sees threats everywhere, and especially from the you-know-whos.

: I am not a you-know-whoish dog. I am a dog of Finland.

: But the German authorities at the embassy in Hellsome-inky perhaps have the will of his mind with surmises.

[Far away the mooncats sing in a teasing fashion the Hell-Some-Inky song.]

Helsinki, Blondi. It is Helsinki.

Blondi: Hellsome inky.

Helsinki, Blondi. It is Helsinki.

Blondi: Hellsome inky.

Helsinki, Blondi. It is Helsinki.

Blondi: Hellsome inky.

Helsinki, it is called. (In the speech of the Finns.)

Blondi: Hellsome inky.

Helsinki, Blondi. It is Helsinki.

Blondi: Hellsome Inky.

Helsinki, Blondi. It is Helsinki.

Blondi: HELLSOMEINKY, JACKIE.

[Jackie does a perfervid instance of the offending gesture.]

[Even on far away Luna the mooncats are astonished and cease their mooncatish music.]

[Blondi scowls and darkens.]

[Jackie does the offending gesture as he simply cannot stop himself.]

[Paws. Silence. Pause.]

: Jackie, if you perform the gesture that he will find offensive. If you commit that act in his presence he will

[Mooncats sing: He will will he not? He will! He shall! He will shall he not? He shall will he shall he not? And the act shall will have been done did!]

Launch the invasion of Finland and the cause of the destruction of all the people of that place; and that will be the finish of the Finns. For good. I say for good.

[Both dogs scratch and groom themselves. This diversion allows them to think on the question of what is to be done.]

[Pause. Silence. Paws.]

[By way of disambiguation the mooncats begin once more to sing from the *Miserere* of Gorecki.]

Jackie: Hey mooncats stop please.

Blondi: Stop and tell us what is the point of baking a waffle if it will only fall apart.

: That's it. That is it.

: What's it? Psnit.

: Noble Wolf must be retrained to point his rage not at me [involuntary offending gesture] and innocent Finland. But at waffles, er, Wuffles and Ear-wrack.

[Mooncats stop to think this over.]

[Silence. Paws. Silence.]

: You mean Eye-wrack.

: I mean Ear-wrack.

: You mean Eye-wrack.

: Mean Ear-wrack.

: Mean Eye-wrack.

[This pointless exchange may go on for quite a time as if in who's
whilome.]

Jackie: Let us go back to the Land of Evening to decide the matter,

~

[Jackie remains hidden in the shadows while Blondi greets her
master.]

Noble Wolf: Blondi, where have you been? We've been looking every
the where.

Blondi: Oh how I love those mooncats. I love the way they sing and
warble and roar.

: I had thought a corn-wulf had up you snapped.

: What's a corn-wulf?

: A corn-wulf is she who hides in ze wheatfield, and ze corn-wulf he
must, when the farmer cuts a swath, the corn-wulf must jump, quick
quick, into the next swath in order not to be found out.

: And then?

: The farmer cuts another swath, and the corn-wulf must again resort to a violent jump, and so forth and so forth and so on.

: And then?

: At last the farmer approaches ze very last sheaf, the last one remaining in the whole field. Hiding there is the corn-wulf.

[Jackie is following this intently.]

Blondi: And then?

Jackie: And then? [Noble Wolf does not notice the duplicity.]

Noble Wolf: And when the last sheaf is cut, the corn-wulf is revealed; and horror horror he pounces upon the poor farmer and up him eats yes gobble gobble. Him all up. Like a tasty cheese. Like a tasty cheese muffin.

Blondi: Waffles.

Noble Wolf: Waffles, what do you mean "waffles"?

Jackie: Psnit. Wuffles.

Blondi: Wuffles, I meant Wuffles.

Noble Wolf: But you said waffles.

Blondi: Waffles was not what I meant.

Noble Wolf: But you said waffles.

Blondi: Wuffles, I meant wuffles.

Noble Wolf: But you said waffles.

Blondi: Waffles was not what I meant.

Noble Wolf: But you said waffles.

Blondi: Wuffles, I meant Wuffles.

Noble Wolf: But you said waffles.

Blondi: Waffles was not what I meant.

Noble Wolf: But you said waffles.

Blondi: Wuffles, I meant Wuffles.

Noble Wolf: But you said waffles. Bad Blondi. I fear you are become an instance of the corn-wulf!

[Blondi and Jackie confer while Noble Wolf chuckles at his own wit.]

Noble Wolf: Did I ever tell you my favorite joke? The one about Hermann Goering? It is night and Goering is getting sleepy, so he ...

[Cackles.]

So he thinks to put on his night shirt before getting into bed, so he ...

[Cackles.]

; so he thinks to put on his nightshirt, but it occurs to me, er to him, that he must, no, he must first....

[Cackles.]

He must first remove his uniform, with all the glittering medals and sashes, which of course is no easy matter....

[Cackle.]

Aside from which he does feel very comfortable without his glittering medals and colorful sashes, but as he is getting more and more tired, he....

[Cackles.]

Slowly begins to unbutton his elegant uniform, but, he is surprised to discover underneath that uniform another identical one and he....

[Cackles loudly.]

Realizes that underneath his uniform there is another one, and so forth and so on, each one complete with a field marshal's baton.

[Paws. Paws. Paws.]

Indeed, it is uniforms ALL THE WAY DOWN.

That is my favorite joke.

It is a very funny joke.

[Mooncats move around uneasily.]

See, even those beasts there are in love with me because of my joke. (Why does nobody ask me how I learned to speak? It is a mystery to me.)

[Silence. Silence. Silence while Noble Wolf glows.]

[Jackie cues Blondi.]

Jackie: (Churchill's bulldog Wuffles has made fun of this joke.)

Blondi: Churchill's bulldog Wuffles has made fun of this joke.

(Churchill's bulldog Wuffles has made fun of the way you speak.)

: Churchill's bulldog Wuffles has made fun of the way you speak.

: (Moreover
Churchill and Wuffles sit at a long table in the you-know-whoish
quarter of Baghdad in Ear-wrack.)

: Moreover
Churchill and Wuffles sit at a long table in the you-know-whoish
quarter of Baghdad in Eye-wrack.

: Ear-wrack.

: Eye-wrack.

: Ear-wrack.

: Wrack whatever thinking up jokes about you and King Kong and how
the American dog lassie is more perfect than Blondi. Than Me!

[Noble Wolf cannot believe his ears.]

[Scene bonks out.]

~

[Noble Wolf and Blondi are looking at a map. Mooncats and Jackie are
looking over their shoulders.]

Noble Wolf: Wuffles has the mind of a movie doorman.

Now
there are two ways to get to Iraq– one is through Ablania– home to
the fezzes and skirts of the Ablanians:

But

The Ablanians are fierce fighters, and the Ablanians are sons of the eagle.

Jackie: (Also they have a saying: "A stolen clock is worth more than a normal clock".)

Noble Wolf: My word!

Jackie: (Also, they have a saying, I am sorry about your father's nose.

Also they have a saying, "Why are your sheep looking at me that way?")

Noble Wolf: Why are they indeed!

Jackie: (Also, they have a saying, "Go away your dog is already dead.")

[Blondi shudders to think and Noble Wolf reassures her.]

Noble Wolf: Okay okay okay— we shall not invade Eye-wrack by that way— the Ablanians are too ferocious. And we shall not bother with invading Finland at all! [Jackie stifles a gesture]. We shall invade Ear-wrack by way of....

[Mooncats, Blondi and Jackie are in suspense!]

We shall to Badge-gad by way of Russia.

Jackie: (Baghdad.)

Blondi: (Badge-gad.)

Jackie: (Baghdad.)

[This goes on for time till the scene bonks out.]

~

Jackie: We have saved Finland and Mister Tor Borg my master.

Blondi: We have saved Finland and all things Finnish....

[Mooncats sing for a time.]

[Scene bonks out.]

~

Lights fade for a spooky back-lit Postlude.

[Mooncats accompany (softly) Noble Wolf and Blondi– Jackie has swivelled out and is nowhere to be seen.]

: All this is difficult for me to understand.

: Of course: You are a dog.

: I *am* a dog for Pete's sake and my nature is not a mystery to me as yours seems too be to you.

: Of course Blondi of course you are yes you are a dog for Pete's sake ...

: And as I am a dog I am the expression of my nature and that nature is not a mystery to me as yours seems to be to you, Noble Wolf, whom I adore.

: And that is why I love you Blondi.

[Paws. Pause. Paws.]

: If this is why you love me, if this is truly why you love me, why do you trouble me with all this ... this ... this mystery of the offending

gesture and the corn-wulf and uniforms-all-the way-down and badge-gad ...

: Baghdad [Jackie swivels.]

: When I present this matter to you it is only to suggest that it is no mystery at all.

: This mystery of the offending gesture and the corn-wulf is I confess quite beyond my doggy nature and so it all I can do not to scramble off into the dark of the night, howling. Howling with ear flaps flying this way and that as though there were a problem with me, as though my doggy nature has somehow come undone and was as a thing unknowable and absurd. * Can this be? Can this be? Can this not be?

: Oh Blondi do not despair, do not suffer so, all for a little gesture.

: And there you go again with that talk of a gesture, which is a concept difficult in the extreme, difficult in the extreme, for me to grasp as I am the complete expression of myself. And there is no more of me left over.

: But Blondi, that is why I love you, because you are the complete expression of yourself, and there is no more of you left over, and no more of yourself when you are done, in the miracle of a moment, a gestural moment, being yourself and after all is said and done and the matter is closed once and for all, once and for all, once and for all, my dear Blondi, so come let me stroke your head.

: Pfaff– I am not now in the mood.

: Poor Blondi, do not be a sourpuss.

: Pfaff– I am not now in the mood.

: Poor Blondi, oh poor Blondi.

: Pfaff– I am not now in the mood and that is the meat of the matter.

: Oh poor Blondi, oh poor Blondi, you are the best German type Shepard ever.

: Pfaff, pfckff! Pfaff, pfckff! I am now suspicious as to the precise nature of your intentions.

: Oh no my dear, dear Blondi.

: I am suspicious and would like to run away into the Black Forest. (I am like even to run away to Hellsome Inky!) I am like to howl. Further, I am like to growl.

For

what you are saying, Noble Wolf is something like this:

Let the radius vector measure the time, beginning at the outermost point, at the instant when the dog's nose touches me, and proceeds inward. Let each coil of the spiral represent the transformation of the motion from one ether to the next. At the end of the period of time represented by one inch of the radius, all that infinite series of transformation will be complete. Now let us suppose that the inner series of coils of the spiral, which instead of being endless, is beginning less in terms of the coils, to represent operations governed exclusively by final causation, and is therefore purely mental.

Finally, at the innermost end of the spiral will occur my volition to let the dog out.

: No, Blondi, no.

: If the dog is to be let out, the door must be opened; if the door is to be opened, I must open it. But if I am to, I must go for it; if I am to go for it, I must walk, if I am to walk, I must stand; if I am to stand, I must rise; I had better put down my writing thorn and stop thinking, and because you cannot get it out of your head, it is as it is. I am thinking about the bogey of the offensive gesture. And so on and so

forth.

: No, Blondi, no.

: And so the dog will not go out; and if the dog does not go out, and if the dog is not let out the door you know what will happen!

: No, Blondi, no. All I ever have to say to anywho other than you is "No, no, no, no, NO, no...."

[Scene bonks out as the mooncats softly sing "Hellsome Inky". In the dark:

Blondi: (What means "dog"?)

Jackie: (What means "human"?)

[We hear someone turn on a faucet.]

[Lights up on Jackie and a mooncat:]

From the moon's point of view Noble Wolf is no corn-wulf, but Russia is. And so in Russia he fails. Up he is snapped. He does not even get close to Eye-wrack (Ear-wrack). Years and years later, another Party of No (some indeed Grand Old Party of No) tries again. Tries to stop an offensive gesture in a place where none can be found, because it is the wrong place at the wrong time. And so there is no offending gesture— only an empty one,

Some other wolf finds his pockets full of sunfish, shits, and turds.

[We hear someone turn off the faucet. Scene bonks out.]

Blondi: (What means "dog"?)

Jackie: (What means "human"?)

End of Play.

Mooncat's ballad ~

We mooncats are the cat's meow
Hurrah for mooncatocracy
Hurrah for mooncats ah yi ah yi.

Hurrah for mooncatocracy!
Bonk we in bonk we out ah yi.
Down there arf dogs arf dogs crazee.

We mooncats are the cat's meow
Hurrah for mooncatocracy
Hurrah for mooncats ah yi ah yi.

Bonk we in bonk we out ah yi.
All is bonk all is bonk ah yi ah yi.
We move our paws our paws move free.

We mooncats are the cat's meow
Hurrah for mooncatocracy
Hurrah for mooncats ah yi ah yi.

All is bonk all is bonk ah yi ah yi.
Our gestures all so easy free.
Behind the moon we go and glee ...

We mooncats are the cat's meow
Hurrah for mooncatocracy

Hurrah for mooncats ah yi ah yi.

Goes behind us mooncat happy.
Our gestures all so easy free!
Hell some inky hell some inky....

We mooncats are the cat's meow
Hurrah for mooncatocracy
Hurrah for mooncats ah yi ah yi.

Hell some inky hell some inky.
Dogs are dumbos dogs are funny
What they do why ah yi ah yi?

We mooncats are the cat's meow
Hurrah for mooncatocracy
Hurrah for mooncats ah yi ah yi.

Why do the dumb they do ah yo ah yi.
We moonish cats care not to be
So Noble – ish as that Wolfie.

We mooncats are the cat's meow
Hurrah for mooncatocracy
Hurrah for mooncats ah yi ah yi.

Earwack Eyewrack all so crazee;
Corn-wulf, Wuffles all so crazee
Blondi Jackie the same to mee!

We mooncats are the cat's meow
Hurrah for mooncatocracy
Hurrah for mooncats ah yi ah yi.

We marvelous mooncats ah yi
Are not pleased with no damn crazee
Offending gesture no siree!

We mooncats are the cat's meow
Hurrah for mooncatocracy
Hurrah for mooncats ah yi ah yi.

Are not pleased with no damn crazee
Offending gesture can't they see
What they wish for flies up ze tree;

We mooncats are the cat's meow
Hurrah for mooncatocracy
Hurrah for mooncats ah yi ah yi.

What they look for slinks up the tree,
What they wait for bonks up ze tree!
Hell some inky hell some inky.

We mooncats are the cat's meow
Hurrah for mooncatocracy
Hurrah for mooncats ah yi ah yi.

All you dogs of Yarth so sleepy;
All you dogs of Yarth so creepy;
We mooncats sing ah yi ah yi!

We mooncats are the cat's meow
Hurrah for mooncatocracy
Hurrah for mooncats ah yi ah yi.