

The Hungry Games



I'm Digit. I'm a schnauzer. My people, especially Karen, say I'm the best dog ever. Waggy tail!

I like to eat. But my people don't always have my food ready. That's when I have to play The Hungry Games.

My people are sitting in one of the schnauzer rooms, the one with the good view of the front door. They are staring at the big screen where things move around and make sounds but aren't real because they don't have any depth or any smell.

Usually it's boring and puts me to sleep. But sometimes there's a dog on the screen. Ruff! Or a cat! Ruff ruff! My favorite is Meerkat Manor. I'd like to meet a meerkat someday.

My stomach reminds me it's time to eat. I approach my people with a waggy tail.

"Oh, it's nice to see you too," Karen says.

You'd think she spoke schnauzer better after so many years. I look at them more intently.

My wise teacher Ziggy, from back when I was a little puppy, taught me many things. Like the importance of lying in sunbeams coming through the window. But he also taught me how to use the Doggy Force - how to make humans do things.

I stare at Karen and use the Doggy Force to tell her it's dinner time.



"What do you want?" she asks. "Is it puppy play time?"

No, I think. But I decide I will allow a few minutes of puppy play time. But no "Rrroooooo" of enthusiasm.

Mr. Manatee is soft and shakeable. He is one of my best friends and a charter member of the Schnauzer Club. I chase him around for a while. Manatees like being chased, just like squirrels.

My stomach grumbles. I stop and stare at my people.

"Do you want to go for a walk?" Karen asks.

I would like to go for a walk and smell some smells. It's one of my favorite things to do. But not my very favorite. Especially when it's dinner time. That's more important.

I point my head toward the kitchen, the source of all good things except for takeout, which comes through the front door.

"Do you need to go outside? Is it puppy business time?"

Now I'm getting impatient. Dogs aren't known for their patience.

Karen gets up and opens the back door. "Go on, do your business."

I stay put, paws planted on the slick floorboards.

"There might be a squirrel out there."

Squirrel? I rush out the door when she opens it, into the warm backyard and the smell of grass and trees. I bolt past the first tree. No squirrel. And reach the second tree. Still no squirrel.

Where are the squirrels? I pee and trudge back.

Karen closes the door after me and heads back to the room with the big screen.

"Ruff." I stare at her before it's too late. We were in the right room, the kitchen. So close!

"What is it?"

I lead my person to the doggie bowls against the kitchen wall.

"Do you want some water?"

"Ruff." No, I want food.

She pours some fresh water into my water bowl.

I look at my empty food bowl next to the water bowl, then her. "Ruff." I can't make it any clearer.

"I gave you some water."

"Ruff."

"Oh, you must want some dinner."

My ears perked up. My favorite word. Second favorite, after chicken.
Waggy tail!

"But it's not time yet," she says.

Of course it's time. I'm hungry. "Ruff." I follow with a squeaky noise.

She smiles. "Do you want some oil for that squeak?"

I don't have time for this. "Ruff."

"Okay, you can have your dinner."

At last! "Squeeeeeeak!" Extra waggy tail! My legs prepare to run as soon as she fills the bowl and puts it down.

She opens the dry food container and pours a modest amount of kibbles in the bowl.

Dry kibbles are boring. It's meat that makes the dinner.

She opens the refrigerator and pulls out a can of meat.

"Rrroooooo!"

She spoons some meat into the bowl. The tap tap tap of the spoon against the side of the bowl is very exciting.

"Rrroooooo!" I remind her how hungry I am.

She adds another spoon, then puts the bowl down on the floor.

I run to it as fast as I can. Hooray!

I dig in.

The Hungry Games are over.

For now.