

# Docking Maneuver

## A Thursday Prompt Story

*Wilson G. Bear*

Hello, gang, once again it is Rouvin, the blogger who is a dogger. May I never have to type *that* phrase again. Today, I must take care of some housekeeping matters, and that is answering my fans' comments. First, to answer a request from Queenella02, I am afraid a video blog version of *The Rouvin Eye* would be neither practical nor fun for you or for me. I am unable to speak conventionally, and watching me write might be tedious.

Next, I shall respond to HypeRkKat who wrote (and yes, this is a cut-and-paste quote), "*I M A FUR and I dont beleve U R A real retro-morph.*" I suppose making a video blog would remove that doubt. As that is impractical, let us discuss *this*, instead. The server that BlogBlaster runs on records your IP address, MAC address and several other key pieces of data. I have accessed your information and interpreted it. It told me that you are either the Human, Dave Murry of Bayonne, New Jersey using a second-generation iPad to fling your functionally illiterate taunts, or you really *are* a Fur Tiger, living in Davy's underwear drawer.

Finally, to JKenneth, thank you for the suggestion that I use the term *theriomorph* to describe persons with my condition. Interesting, I shall take that under advisement. I suppose one could use the word to describe any Fur, but the usage seems particularly apt for retromorphs.

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Several weeks ago, as is my wont, I was sitting on the sofa with my parents. We were watching videos of animals, and the network ran a piece on what they called *dock jumping*. The participant would await a signal, run the length of a platform, attempt to catch a thrown toy or lure and splash down in a large pool of water. The object was to clear the longest distance. I was enthralled. Running, jumping, swimming: three things I love doing (it is true, Gentle Reader, I am not always a *geek*).

I asked my parents if it would be possible to participate in such an event. A nearby Town Fair hosted an event in a few weeks. We found a training facility only two miles from the University Campus -- a short drive from home. Mam and Da were enthusiastic, especially my Father, who enjoys finding activities we can share.

We arrived at the training facility late on a hot, humid Wednesday afternoon. There were only a few cars in the lot; Da mentioned the trainer told him it was a slow day of the week. We found Elin, the trainer, in the office of her house; she was somewhat surprised that my parents were Furs, and even more so that I was the same stock -- *breed*, to use the Human term. My father did not introduce me as his son; Humans are generally ignorant of retromorphs and we try not to confuse them more than necessary.

The trainer was pleasant and brisk. We -- my parents -- filled out the legal paperwork and got down to business. Elin had asked Da to bring a 'favorite toy' to chase. Hardly necessary, but he had brought a rubber dumbbell someone had given us when we moved in. Elin noticed that it was unchewed (oh, *please*, I prefer rawhide and those swine ears are a delight) but she shrugged and we proceeded to the dock. The dock was a wooden structure about two meters off the ground, two-and-a-half wide and twelve or so long, and carpeted. A plastic curtain ran up the side by the stairs. "So, first up, does Rouvin like to swim?"

"Oh, he does," Da answered.

Mam tried to hide a smile. "It is all we can do to keep him out of the pool at home." True enough, I already spent enough time in the pool today. It was hot, I cannot sweat and panting all day is *not* good exercise.

"Well, here's the drill. Take him off leash," she glanced at my collar and frowned, "He *has* a leash, right?" Da produced one from a pocket. "Well, hold the toy over his head and run with him down to the yellow line. When you cross the line throw the toy out over the pool and we'll see if he follows it in."

Da nodded. We walked to the starting line and waited. Elin shouted, "Go!" and we raced like mad things to the deadline. Da tossed the dumbbell in a flat arc that brought it to the far side of the pool. I hit the edge of the dock and sailed after the toy, making a most satisfactory splash. I snagged the floating toy and wheeled around. Finding the stairs in the pool, I ran back up to the deck. The trainer fiddled with a computer monitor and ran a video feed from a camera over the pool back to the beginning. She watched it three times, shaking her head.

"Is something wrong?" Mam sounded concerned.

"You said he's never done this before?"

"No. We just found out about it a few weeks ago."

"Hard to believe. He's a natural, first dog I've ever had pick it up so fast." She stooped a little to get to my eye level. Did you like that, Rouvin? Wanna go again?"

I made the little yip that means, "*Let's go!*" in our Natural Tongue. Da translated for the Human, but I think she interpreted it correctly.

We made two more runs, and each time I landed farther out into the pool. The Scales bred my forebears to hunt with speed and agility. Millennia on, we are still very fast and excellent jumpers. And, I *love* splashing water!

Elin brought us back to her office. "Seriously, there isn't much more I can teach him. I won't take your money for training that Rouvin doesn't need; he's ready for competition right now. Look, we have a trial competition next Saturday, and the town fair starts the following Thursday." She looked at the papers on her clipboard. "Wait, he's twelve years old?"

"Ah, yes he is," my father acknowledged.

"That qualifies him for Senior Dog class in competition. There are a few perks, handicaps and all that..." She ruffled my ears. "He doesn't look like a twelve-year-old."

"Oh, he is," my mother nodded. No need to mention I could live three times that long.

My parents arranged to bring me back for the trial competition. I would be pitted against many dogs in my size class, but probably not my age group, and certainly none sharing my other qualifications.

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Saturday was a perfect day for the trial competition. The sun was high, with a few fluffy white clouds in the blue sky. Elin and a man she introduced as her husband, Bud, conducted the trials. Bud personally greeted each contestant dog. He crouched down and petted most of us; some he shook paws. He looked at my paw (I knew that Humans usually reach for the right paw), examining my unusual digits. "He can walk okay on these?"

Da nodded. "He gets around fine. It is a... genetic mutation." Technically correct. But for an accident of my DNA, I would be just another pre-teen Fur.

Bud shrugged. "As long as he can run, jump and swim. Elin says he's pretty impressive; I can't wait to see him jump."

During the reading of the rules, I tried making friends with some of the other contestants. A few were openly hostile; two were fearful dogs and backed away from me but most were friendly. Two German Shepherds wanted to play rough and tumble games but the woman holding their leashes pulled them off.

I jumped fourth in order in the first elimination. When Elin and Bud reviewed the recording, I came in a very close first, ahead of an intense Labrador Retriever. In the second jump, I came in second place, but still qualified in the top three. In the last run, I came in first, again by a very narrow margin over the Labrador. My prize was a tacky plastic rosette on blue ribbon. I could not have been more proud.

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After the trial, I did not need to convince my parents to bring me to the Town Fair. There was an entry charge, which I paid online with a little of the proceeds from the advertising on my blog. Since I was participating in the diving competition, the association allowed us onto the fairgrounds despite their usual pet ban, and my parents brought me through the front gate. As the organizers had scheduled our first jump for Friday afternoon at 3:00, we would have some time to see the sights; a new experience for me. Some of the attractions were almost *boring*; the Better Living Center and tractor pulls did not do much for me. We toured the livestock barns and I made friends with a few horses and a hairy herding dog. The food courts were infinitely more interesting with a thousand new smells.

When my mother excused herself to use the sanitary, my father bought me a corn dog. I had read of them for years and knew the components, but had not yet tasted one. He purchased two, and we went over to the condiments. Ketchup? I like ketchup since it is sweet and mildly spicy, although I would have preferred barbecue sauce. I nodded my head, after glancing around to see if any Humans were watching. Da applied the red sauce and looked back. He pointed to the yellow mustard and made a face. I shook my head, but he knows I do not care for it. Brown mustard? I cocked my head -- just a little. The first bite was not bad, but it was almost an effort to finish the thing. There are some dreams one may pursue with hope, but to finally experience them may be anticlimactic.

Mam had the leash for a while when Da went to view an exhibit which we were not keen to share. After the fiftieth Human child (and perhaps the twentieth adult Human) petted me, I let my mother know there was something I needed to take care of. There was a pen near the diving pool reserved for participants' sanitary needs. As I was walking in, a female passed me on her way out. Her scent was unfamiliar but in appearance, she might have been a relative. We shared upright, triangular ears, the same basic body shape, the curved, brushy tail, the sandy yellow-over-white coat. We stopped a moment to stare at each other, and I noticed her distinctive forepaws, with lengthened digits and pronounced dewclaws. She was, like me, a retromorph. The only question was, did she have normal intelligence for a pet or was she a rarer mutant like myself?

Mam made the little chuffing sound in her throat that is the Natural Tongue equivalent of "*Pardon me*" or "*Attention, please.*" The Fur woman leading the female retromorph paused and turned. It was uncanny. She might have been another *Kalef K'Naani* like my family, but her smell was not right. Her scent and her retromorph's implied that they were closely related; cousins or mother and daughter. Mam asked tentatively, "Your daughter?"

The tall Dog woman seemed flustered for a moment, then relaxed. "Oh, yes. Your son?"

"Yes, this is Rouvin. Today is his first real competitive jump."

"Ah. This is Enoree. This is her second year dock jumping. She -- *we* -- read about it on line and wanted to try it, so here we are."

Enoree and I were getting to know each other, and we quickly realized we had more in common than strange paws and a sandy color. I really had no easy way to communicate this to Mam; the Natural Tongue was quite limited when it came to abstract concepts. I did get across what I wanted her to know.

Mam flashed Enoree's mother her best smile. "Enoree *read* about it."

For the edification of my Human readers, most Furs do not blush. Blood runs to the face and the capillaries open up and whatnot, but you are not going to see that under the hair, although I have met folks whose ears turn pink. Mam has a student who is a hairless variety of Cat; I suppose *she* could blush. We do exude a telltale scent -- which is why Furs generally do not lie. "Yes, she did. She spends so much of her life on the network, and her father and I thought..."

"We saw it on a video, and Rouvin would not rest until we signed him up. I am Re'ut, by the way.

"Danna." She watched Enoree and me for a moment. "I think they have made new friends." We grinned and wagged for our mothers. "Well, best luck for you."

"And for you. We shall see you at the dock."

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Da brought me to the diving event at half-past two for the judges' reading of the rules and the other *minutiae*. We listened attentively as we did not want the judges to disqualify us on a technical foul. A veterinarian walked down the line and checked each dog for problematic injuries of wounds. When he got to me, I cooperated and turned so he could reach my other side. I lay on the ground and rolled over partially so he could check my belly. "He's good about being handled. Not fixed though, huh? How old is he?"

"Twelve, last spring," Da told him.

"Twelve? I'm seeing five-year-olds who aren't as healthy as this guy. What's your secret?"

Da gave the Vet the paws-up gesture. "Perhaps he selected his parentage carefully."

I was already watching the Vet's face, so I noticed when he stared at Da, then looked back at me. "Is his Dam or Sire still living?"

"We both are, and doing quite well, thank you."

The Vet nodded and ran his hand down my foreleg. "That explains his unusual forepaws. I've done some reading; I recognize him for a retromorph. I never thought I'd meet one, though."

"What is the Human idiom? 'It happens in the best of families.'"

The Vet smiled and rubbed my shoulders. "I guess so. He's in perfect shape, good hips and knees." I had better be; I am one of the fastest in my class at the Dog Park. "He should do well on the jump." He shook Da's paw and moved on to the next contestants.

Enoree and her mother were three pairs behind us. I noticed the Vet examined Enoree's paws carefully, too, then looked back at Da and I. He did not mention our mutual mutation, but he did say, "She looks a lot like that boy over there. Are they related?"

Enoree's mother glanced at us and shook her head. "No relation. We met Rouvin just today." She waved and Da waved back.

The Vet nodded. "Well, good luck with the jump." He gave Enoree a rub that ended with a scratch at the base of her tail, which she wagged madly. I was *so* jealous! "She's in fine condition for ten; she should do great." He moved on down the line.

Da crouched down a little. "Mam said you made a new friend today." I affirmed his statement. "Danna and Enoree are Congaree Dogs. Humans call them Carolina Dogs." He continued in a low voice, in case any Humans were paying attention, "Danna works with me at the University; she teaches Fur History." I knew the position of my ears and the cocked angle of my head told him I was interested. "I hope you like them; we are going to get to know them better." I went electric, but he gave me his secret smile, and I knew not to pursue it. Yet.

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At three o'clock, the loudspeakers -- *too* loud, if you ask me -- announced the first competitive jump. They herded the last of the 'family dogs' -- the folks who just wanted to try it and had not signed up for the competition -- off the stage and out of the pool. I could jump four times this weekend. The first two days would provide elimination matches to reduce the size of the field down to fifteen and then to ten, with a final elimination Sunday afternoon, a few hours before the last five competed for the championship.

We were slated seventeenth of a field of thirty-two. It took almost forty-five minutes to get onto the deck, and we were behind the curtain while three other teams performed. During the wait, there were three dog fights and the judges eliminated one team was completely for hostile behavior. I looked over my shoulder at Enoree and gave her a wag; she reciprocated with a grin and a play bow.

Finally, Da and I came out on the platform. Mam wisely watched from a little to my left; she knew better than to stand too close or right in front of my flight path. At the whistle, Da and I scrambled down the stage and Da released the dumbbell as he toed the line. I hit the end of the platform, but I think I miscalculated my position. My left hind foot scabbled for purchase and I only felt the edge as I sailed away from it. I landed with a big splash, but as I looked around, I was not as far out as I thought I should be. I dove to the bottom of the tank and came up under the dumbbell, clutching it in my teeth. I walked up the steps to the platform, shook the water out of my coat and looked up at Da. He gave me the paws-up and we went back to the judges.

"Eighteen feet, seven inches," the judge announced.

"That is fine, Rouvin." He reattached my leash and we descended. I jumped four inches farther my first try in training. I sat and waited for Enoree to jump.

My new friend had an odd jump. She hurtled across the platform with her mother, but at the end, she seemed to hunker down and bunch up her body. Suddenly, she sprang from the artificial turf and across the water. The run-up may have been strange, but her performance was excellent. "Twenty-one feet, two inches."

It took another hour before the final tally was in. Enoree finished third, behind a Greyhound and a Border Collie. Fourth went to the Labrador from the Training Center. I actually made fourteenth, just ahead of a black Standard Poodle, who would also be jumping again on Saturday. It was not a total loss; I accomplished what I came to do. Mam towed me off and we walked back to the car.

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On Saturday, the weather was overcast but still warm. We left the house a little before noon according to the clock near the back door. No one has ever asked my parents why they have a time and temperature clock outside the door, or why it is at waist level to an adult. It is for my personal use, of course. I cannot carry a cellphone and wearing a watch would be clumsy.

Since my entry fees also paid for our admission to the fair (mine was free, of course), we walked around again and saw some of the exhibits we missed Friday. We visited a petting zoo consisted of animals the Humans consider exotic. Seriously, we used to live next door to a family of Alpacas at home. Nice parents, but the children were monsters. The zoo had an Australian Shepherd who was a bit of a character, even if she was a

regular dog: very friendly and a lot of fun to play with. Some Human children thought she and I were the exhibits and we had to submit to excessive petting. My parents could barely drag me away.

Mam and I passed a stand selling Thai food. The Asian food in the Human world is similar in many ways to the food available in most of the Fur world. Noodles or other starch, vegetables and meat (for the Carnivores and Omnivores) with some sort of sauce or gravy is standard. The spices are different, but as they say, variety is the spice of life. Mam bought a combination box and gave me a little Pad Thai Noodles and some Cashew Chicken and Vegetables on a paper plate, along with a whole skewer of grilled garlic chicken. Heaven must taste like Bangkok.

The Public Address system told us to head to the dock area for our next competition. There were fewer than half as many teams as there had been on Friday. The Poodle and I exchanged pleasantries from our places at the back of the line, but then he spotted a squirrel on a waste bin and I lost his attention. I spent some time mugging for the Humans in the audience and keeping an eye on Enoree. She jumped third and kept her place for the next round. The Labrador came in first and the Greyhound was second again. The Border Collie followed up in fourth place.

I realized what my error had been the day before, and took action to correct it. I may have overcompensated because my jump did not feel right this time, either. I think I started my launch too far from the edge and I expended too much flight time over the dock instead of the water. I splashed down a depressingly long distance from the pool wall. Still, I ranked seventh and moved on to the next elimination on Sunday.

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Sunday was a bit cooler but the sky was a perfect, crystalline blue (yes, I can see color just fine). Da and I visited the rest of the livestock exhibits and stopped to greet two of the horses I had met Friday. They were getting ready for the pulling competition but still had a few moments for pleasantries. They probably lived with dogs, as my presence did not bother them at all and they were quite at ease -- even friendly. I suppose weight pulling is the Equine equivalent of dock jumping. I knew Humans used horses for racing, but a Greyhound I frequently played with at the Dog Park used to race for a living, too. He was the only dog I knew who could keep up with me at full speed, but he was rather old.

Da split something called a *fajita* with me; grilled beef with peppers and onions on flatbread. It was much more satisfying than the corn dog. There was a cluster of children at the milk bar, mostly Humans but with a young Raccoon girl and her even younger brother. They all had to stop what they were doing to cluster around and pet me. The things I must do for my public.

The third elimination came up at 11:00. The ten of us who made it to the semifinals would see our number reduced to five for the final match. Jumping seventh, I knew I would have to buckle down and perform my best or I would never make it to the last test.

I watched my competition perform. The Labrador thundered across the deck with his usual precision and sailed across the pool. There was an almost mathematical precision to his run-up and it paid off: he retained his lead position. The Greyhound started with a very fast run, but once he left the dock, he seemed to scramble in mid-air. He landed much too close to the dock to stay in the competition. Enoree came third. Again, her graceful stride halted suddenly and turned into a hunch-and-spring. She flew in a high arc and hit the water hardly displacing a drop. It was beautiful to watch, after that almost painful stutter. The judges' reaction suggested she had done quite well. The Border followed her, but his performance was lackluster. I believed the Collie was becoming bored with the whole thing.

More dogs took their jumps, as Da and I moved forward. Finally, in sixth place just before me, a Dalmatian with heterochromia took up her spot on the start line. Her track down the dock was perfect, but her angle was too severe and she lost a foot or so hitting the water. Da ruffled my ears and pocketed my leash. I could tell he was as nervous as I was. He crouched next to me and whispered, "This is it, Rouvin. Do the best you can but win or lose, your Mam and I are proud of you." I took a deep breath, let it out and took another. I looked out across the

water and set my sights on a spot on the far side of the pool. I had to make up for my shortcomings so far; the finals allowed only a very limited group.

Humans have an expression: "Do or die." Up to this point, I was moderately successful because the elimination process left fairly large pools and I could afford to be a little lackadaisical. This time, seventh place was not going to cut it. I could only allow four other dogs to outperform me, or I was going home empty-handed. I faced down that spot on the wall and tuned out all the other distractions. I heard only the blast of the whistle and we were off, Da matching my speed as best he could on two legs, hurling the dumbbell as we crossed the deadline. I felt the toes of both hind feet grasp the edge of the artificial turf and *push*. I did not look down, keeping my chest up and my gaze set on my target.

Mam was toweling me off and talking enthusiastically. Enoree's mother was chatting excitedly with my father. My head was buzzing like... something... that buzzes a lot. Suddenly the events of the past minute or so started to play back in my mind, but in slow motion. It was as though my memory was catching up to my shifting attention. I had hit the water with my forepaws after a long, shallow curve. Like Enoree, I had hardly splashed at all. I had not thought to see how far out I was, I just swam down and retrieved my dumbbell. Once I mounted the submerged steps, normal time seemed to take over and I came back to reality. Was this what it meant to be 'in the zone'?

The last three dogs finished their dives and the judges announced the results. "Nineteen feet, seven inches." I had come in third! Not fourteenth or even seventh place this time, but a very satisfying third place finish. We were moving on to the finals.

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At 3:00 Sunday afternoon, five dogs and their handlers stood behind the curtain of the diving dock. Some Human was blathering over the Public Address system, but I managed to tune it out. The Labrador sat next to his owner in the first position. Enoree and I chatted as best we could in the second and third spots, and a Chesapeake Bay Retriever and a German Shepherd brought up the rear. The Labrador and his owner took their places at the starting line. At the whistle, they charged down the glide path, the Lab making a perfect launch from the edge. He splashed down with his retrieving dummy in his jaws. "Twenty feet, eleven inches," the loudspeaker announced. I had my work cut out for me.

Enoree and Danna moved up to the line when the judge signaled them. Enoree shook herself and looked back at me over her shoulder, her tail wagging. I tossed my head and returned her wag: "*Good luck, friend.*" The judge blew her whistle, and mother and daughter tore off down the runway. Danna tossed the silly rubber bone into the pool and Enoree made her odd hunch and leap. She seemed, to me, to float out over the water and land in a smooth dip rather than a big splash. "Twenty-one feet, eight inches." Impossible; she had made the longest jump of the entire contest -- and made it look *easy*. The audience cheered and roared their approval. As she and her mother passed me on their way to the stairs, Enoree kissed my cheek with her tongue.

Da turned and stared at the receding team. He shook his head, and when he noticed I was watching him, he gave me the paws-up. We approached the starting line. I had work to do. I had something to prove to Enoree, the judges, the other dogs, myself. Da unsnapped my leash and returned it to his pocket. He crouched next to me, his long ears aside mine. "We are proud of you Rouvin, never forget that. Win or lose, you are our son and you are the best thing that ever happened to us." Mam stood by the edge of the curtain, a beach towel with a ridiculous pattern of some creature from a Human myth on it, part Human and part fish. I wished I could speak, to say something, *anything*. I rubbed my head against Da's shoulder and yipped, "*Let's go!*"

The judge placed the whistle to her lips and I tensed. That spot. That spot on the far side of the pool. I was going to land with my nose the length of my tail from that spot. The sounds of the fair faded from my ears. The sun seemed to hide behind a cloud, illuminating only that one, glowing, imaginary spot on the wall of the pool. Once again, the world slowed almost to a stop. I breathed deeply, twice, and crouched at the starting line. I heard my heart beating, but it seemed faint, distant and slow. When the whistle blast came at last, I loped away from the

line, each step longer than the last, bounding away toward the water. My paws hit the edge precisely, and then my rear feet caught the last of the artificial turf and pushed away. I was launched.

The water passed below my chest, rising slowly to receive me. I plunged below the surface at a shallow angle, almost as neatly as Enoree did. My muzzle created a bow wave as it parted the waters and rose above my eyes. The wall, with my spot, seemed so close, certainly closer than I had ever seen it before. I must have been out there for a while; I heard the whistle blow again and Mam and Da were standing on the deadline, waving their arms. I sheepishly fetched my toy and dogpaddled for the pool steps. Mam covered me with the silly towel and started rubbing me down, stopping to hug me. "Twenty-one feet, six inches," the speaker bellowed.

When we got back to the ground, Danna was waiting for us with Enoree on her leash. We barked, wagged and spun in little circles like manic puppies. We waited and watched as the last two dogs jumped. Good performances, but it was clear they were not serious competition. We were, along with the Labrador, recalled to the stage to receive our ribbons: Enoree's blue, my red and the Labrador took the white third-place satin.

Our parents treated us to soft-serve cones in paper bowls. I did not get sweets very often, so that was a special event in its own right. The 'adults' sat and talked shop as teachers did when they got together; Enoree and I rolled in the grass and entertained passing children. As Danna gathered up Enoree's leash and rose to leave, I saw Mam hand her something written on a napkin.

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When we got home, I booted my computer and sat at my modified keyboard. I glanced at my blog. *The Rouvin Eye* attracted a moderately large readership, and my regulars and passers-by posted comments in the forum. There was an unfamiliar ID next to a comment. **RiverGrrl08: Sent you a PM.**

I opened BlogBlaster's message center, and amidst the usual chatter, I found what I was looking for, the Personal Message from RiverGrrl08. *R -- Your Da has something to tell you. Good things -- E.* The message on the napkin Mam gave Danna.

My parents were sitting on the couch watching a video; I caught Da's eye and pointed to my screen. He exchanged a glance with Mam and they paused their video. "Well, you know the Cobolts moved out last month."

I had brought up my notebook application. I typed, "Yes. And they took their SOB Tyson with them."

Da frowned. "*Ahem.* Yes, just so. The house has just been sold, and the new family moves in next month."

"So, we get a new set of Humans living in the lot behind our house."

Mam shook her head. "That is just what I am saying, Rouvin. The new owner teaches Fur History at the University."

I went electric. I was so excited I could barely type and had to backspace twice to correct a five-character name. "Danna?"

"Danna. And of course, her daughter..."

It was going to be a wonderful Autumn.

~ Epilogue ~

Da modified the fence behind the house. He installed a gate with a latch that Enoree and I can operate with our paws. Danna and her daughter Enoree were frequently guests in our home and my parents Re'ut and Sayid and I



visited them just as often. During one particular visit, while our parents chatted, Enoree and I sat shoulder to shoulder in front of her computer. She typed, "Mother, may we please use the big screen?"

Danna gave us the paws-up and Enoree switched her computer to use the large wall television. "Rouvin and I would like to try a new competition next year," she wrote.

"Well, what is it?" Danna asked.

Enoree changed the feed to a RubeTube video. A dog stood on a platform. At a command from its handler, the dog raced to the end of the platform and dived off it. The camera followed the dog into a pool -- that had to be fifty feet below the edge.

All three parents responded in unison: "No, *no*, **no**!" while Enoree and I chuffed like a couple of maniacs.

It was enough to make a *dog* laugh.

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