A Lesson Some Dogs (and people) Never Learn

Once upon a time there was a Master who owned a great estate.

He heard about a dog at an animal shelter who was going to be put to sleep.

The Master had His servants fetch the dog and brought it to his estate.

There they cleaned the mutt up and feed it well.

The dog became very happy.

The Master calls the dog into His study where He was working.

The dog did not know what the Master did or what He had.

The Master pets and comforts the dog with His strong hand.

The dog was a black lab with good intelligence.

The Master named him Rebel.

Rebel showed his appreciation by licking the Master's hand which made the Master feel warm and loving toward His new dog.

As the Master explained the rules of the estate to Rebel, He said He loved him very much.

All I have here, is for your enjoyment – the yard is large enough for running and playing.

You will always be fed well.

You can come and sit by My side anytime you want to.

I will protect and watch over you.

These words made Rebel very happy.

I do have a few rules, which you must obey the Master told Rebel.

I have other dogs here that have come to stay with me and you must learn to love them, like I love you.

You must not quarrel with them for there is plenty of food and yard for all of you.

When I bring in new dogs, you must welcome them and teach them what you know about living here.

There's work to do here – which you must do your fair share.

That's about it, the Master told Rebel.

I would love for you to spend as much time with Me as possible; oh, by the way, stay inside the fence – it is there for your protection.

On the other side, there are many dangers for dogs.

I don't want you to have any more hardships.

With that, Rebel ran out in the yard to play.

He was so thankful for the new Master having mercy on him.

Rebel thought:
    You know, I have heard about this place and wondered if it was
        really true.
    I really didn't believe it existed.

Over the next months, Rebel got to know the other dogs – they
    were such a motley bunch.

He couldn't see any pattern in how the Master chose his dogs.

They were different colors, different sizes, different pedigrees, males
    and females and they were from all walks of life.

The only common thread was that the Master loved them all.

Rebel learned from the more experienced dogs, as they taught him
    the ways of the Master.

He learned that some of the dogs no longer appreciated the Master.

Some of them grumbled that the yard was not large enough, and that
    the food was always the same.

The disgruntled dogs discussed that life outside the Master's yard was
    much more exciting.

Each year some of these dogs would dig under the fence and run
    away.

These runaways were rarely heard from again – the general feeling among the dogs who stayed inside, was the runaways were better off.

Nothing could have been farther from the truth; the outside life was cruel because most of the dogs ran in packs.

It was dangerous to be outside on your own.

The food was scarce, therefore most dogs fought over territory and its limited resources.

The only way these runaways survived was by eating piles of food that mysteriously appeared.

Unknowing to the forest dogs, the Master had his servants sneak food to the dogs in secrecy.

The more Rebel talked to the malcontented dogs, the more he questioned the motives of the Master.

The more he questioned, the less time he spent with the Master.

However, when Rebel did go to the Master, he was so delighted to spend time with Him.

He would always stop what he was doing to be with him.

He was always asking how he was doing.

Over time Rebel's mind fantasized about life outside of the fence.

Curiosity gave way to desire, desire gave way to longing, longing gave
    way to lust.

Shortly, Rebel's lust out weighted his desire for the Master.

He heard about escape plans from some of the other dogs.

After some thought, he joined the rebellion.

That night Rebel ran under the fence to what he thought would be
    a glorious freedom from the Master's unbending rules.

Once outside, the dogs experienced problems; they couldn't agree on
    a leader and the group fell apart quickly and each dog went its own
    way.

Rebel found a place to sleep under the stars.

He missed the Master's warm blanket.

The next morning, Rebel was glad to be free; he did not have to
    obey the Master – he was now his own boss.

Most of the forest was under the control of other runaway dogs.

Rebel realized that he would have to join a pack of dogs if he
    wanted to become the dog he was dreaming of.

He searched the packs for one he liked; some packs liked
    taking advantage of others, some were industrious and were
    building estates of their own.

Envy appeared to be in all of the packs.

Some pack leaders made its members lick their paws and praise them.

Rebel noticed that in all of the packs; the evil packs, the envious packs, the religious packs, the longer the dogs had been in the forest, the more sickly they acted.

No matter how much success the dogs had in the forest, they were searching for something that they had while in the Master's estate.

At first, Rebel could not put his paw on what this was.

Suddenly he remembered the happy feeling of love, peace and joy whenever he licked the Master's hand.

He had found pleasure in giving tribute to the Master for his kindness.

He remembered how much the Master's hand meant to him.

Rebel began to lose weight, for he remembered the lonely days before the Master took him in.

After Rebel was gone for a few days, the Master was broken hearted.

Every day he would walk to the gate and call for Rebel, hoping that he would come home.

The Master sent His servants out looking for Rebel.

They found him lying in a small cave, all alone.

All day they tried to get him to come home with them.

Although Rebel was lonely and hungry, he could not admit that he had made a mistake.

He still believed the lies the other dogs had said about the Master.

He thought the Master's rules were too strict.

The servants gave up and returned to the Master without Rebel.

The next day a great tug of war began within Rebel.

On one paw, the forest was a great hub of activity where he could become a great dog.

On the other paw, he saw how disillusioned the forest dogs were, although they did not know what was wrong with them.

The most reckless dogs acted like they had it all together.

Rebel saw what it took for a dog to be truly happy – they needed more than being saved by the Master.

They needed to become under the long-term care of the Master.

The forest was a deceitful place.

It made dogs think that they needed to be on their own to be happy.

Rebel's tug of war went on for years.

From time to time, the servants would ask Rebel if he was ready to come home.

Rebel always resisted.

What Rebel did not know was the Master's estate included all of the property, both inside and outside of the fence.

The forest belonged to the Master.

The runaway dogs were squatters on the Master's property.

The Master was gracious, even though they rejected Him.

He continued to provide for their care, although it was on a limited level.

He let them think that the forest was theirs, yet He owned everything in sight.

He was **Master** of all.   **Adapted from *The Man In the Mirror*, Patrick Morley**

You can enter the Master's Estate only through the narrow gate.
The highway to **the forest** is broad, and it's gate is wide for the many who choose that way.
But the gateway to My Estate is very narrow and the road is difficult, and only a **FEW** ever find it – it is the "**road less traveled**".