

It's a Dog's Life:

There's a very wealthy little dog in New York. Her given name is Trouble but she goes by Princess. When her human owner died, the dog inherited the tidy sum of twelve million dollars. That's a lot of money for one little dog. That's a lot of money for a small city. But we live in a world where the money one has accumulated is sacred. You can do with it what you will. You can build a school, you can fight the global pandemic, you can buy an election and you can open a bank account for your dog.

We also live in a world where you can sue for just about anything. It turns out that one of Princess's former nannies is a lady who is angry over the number of times that the little cutie bit her. Dozens of bites she says, leading to ongoing pain and a permanent wrist brace. The two sides dog/human have gone around about this before. The Courts decided that Workers' Compensation is where to go for relief since the lady in question, the injured party, was an employee of the dog's owner. This doesn't sit well with the lady wearing the wrist brace. Her son doesn't like it either. He has announced that he and his mom are "going to get some of that dog's money." You just gotta' love a world where nanny, son, dead millionaire and pooch can slug it out in the press prior to slugging it out in yet another court.

I wonder if Princess is following any of this. Does one of her crew read her the papers? Does she recognize herself on the six o'clock news? Does she even know that she's rich? I guess part of the happiness of being a dog is that, regardless of your social standing, you can still bite the hand of the next human dumb enough stick it in front of you. Ah, the simple pleasures. Wealthy or poor, smart or not, large or small, you can always bite someone.

If you walked past a human, let's say at the grocery store, and she bit you, how do you think it would go down? Let's say you're only the latest in a long line of her victims. "There she goes again, bit another one. That man must have gotten too close." I suspect our pursuit of the human biter would be a good deal more rigorous than the treatment Princess receives. Certainly a home visit from your friendly shrink. Maybe even prison time or an extended vacation at the rest home. Surely a stern reprimand from a relative. Whatever, it's highly doubtful that the world would do nothing. It's beyond doubtful that someone would give you twelve million.

But then humans are not tiny, white furred, big eyed, wet nosed love bugs. Except for my uncle Louie, that is. But he's another story.

Perhaps we cut the Princess so much slack because, by all accounts, her now deceased owner was a notorious biter herself. In the figurative sense, of course. She's the multi-millionaire charmer who said, "Only little people pay taxes." She said that just before she went to jail, for not paying her taxes. With an owner like that I guess the Princess didn't have much of a chance at a pleasant disposition. We all like to point out how dogs and their owners look alike. Maybe they behave alike too.

The deceased knew how to spend money. At one point she owned the Empire State Building. I wonder if Princess will follow suit. From the dog's point of view what do you spend twelve million on? How many bones can you bury? How much baked chicken and steamed veggies (the dog's regular diet) can you eat? How many pairs of those goofy dog booties can you wear? It's a safe bet that even if the dog lives another ten years (she's eight now) she'll spend only a million or so. That leaves eleven million, wisely invested, earning interest for all those years. Let's be conservative and say she'll die with thirty-seven million in the bank.

When Princess leaves a will how do we know what she really intended? I know, there are trustees and all that but how do we know what Princess's final wishes will be? Did she really want to leave ten million to that lady she bit? I think not! Can we be sure that a cool five million goes to PETA but not ASPCA? Does the will need to have her paw print on it or are we just trusting the lawyers all over again. After all, it was the lawyers who arranged for a dog to inherit twelve million in the first place.

Maybe it should be a sort of Living Will. We could line up a bunch of pictures for Princess to look at. There would be pictures of Organizations, pictures of other pets, a picture of the mail carrier, whatever. Then we hold up a bunch of money in front of each picture, one picture at a time. When she barks her happy bark she'll be telling us, "Yes, that one for sure!" Conversely when she snarls her naughty snarl she'll be saying, "No way. Not a penny for her!" It's a great idea for a reality TV show. Maybe "Princess Heirs" or "Dog for a Day".

Oh well, who am I to say what's to be done with someone else's money? In this case, indeed, it's a dog's life.