





**WE
LOVE
TO MY DOG**

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PEOPLE CALL YOU BEAUTIFUL. THEY EXCLAIM THINGS LIKE, *“Wow! That is one good-looking pooch!”* I THANK THEM AND AGREE, BUT THEY DON'T KNOW HOW TRULY BEAUTIFUL YOU ARE. THEY COMMENT ON YOUR EYES, BUT THEY DON'T REALIZE HOW POWERFUL THEY CAN BE – HOW YOU CAN USE THEM TO COMMAND ME TO DO THINGS LIKE LET YOU HAVE THE LAST BITE OF MY VEGGIE BURGER (EVEN THOUGH I REALLY WANTED IT) AND CONTORT MYSELF INTO HUMAN ORIGAMI JUST SO YOU CAN FIT NEXT TO ME ON THE COUCH.

They're right of course; you *are* beautiful – but there's so much they can't see in a passing moment, and those are the things I love best of all.

I love the tufts of mini Sasquatch fur that poke out between your pads and how I have to fight the urge to tickle them when you're napping (you're welcome).

I love your top lip that gets caught in an Elvis impersonation and that one tooth on the bottom that juts out even farther than your massive under bite, prompting people to constantly ask if you've left a bit of your lunch behind.

I love that I wake up before you and when you hear my voice, your tail thumps like it's going to fall off and doesn't stop until I get on the floor and we do our morning hugs. Some people don't believe it—that you hug like a human—but your chin on my shoulder and a full body lean begs to differ. And if I dare do something else before I give you your squeeze, like—say—use the bathroom, I am always completely amused by the grumbling that rises from your offended throat. I know you're being

serious, but you have to admit—it's a little hard not to laugh.

I love to make sure you're warm enough at night and willingly scootch over to make more room for you in bed. My favorite is when you poke your head out but leave the rest of your body under the covers. It makes me happy that you have figured that out (you're so clever) and even happier when you start snoring in my face. I don't even mind your doggie breath; now THAT'S love! I (mostly) love that you not always need to be touching me while I work on the computer, but also, that you've decided I should pet you constantly. Even though I'm pretty sure I'm getting the short end of the stick on this one, you've made me an incredible one-handed typist.

I look forward to fall and winter, for those are the seasons of hoodies, puffy vests, and jackets. When you see I've got one on, you toddle on up, scratch at my chest, and I zip you up. Sometimes you stick your head out and enjoy the ride and other times, you'll snuggle down against my belly and I just end up looking strangely

pregnant. There is nothing better than those hours when I can feel your tiny heart beat against mine. People say you're spoiled, but I say I'm getting my time in with you while I can, for I know that one day, I will not be able to.

I love that I can tell what time it is based on where you're lying because you follow the sun: if you're in the backyard, we still have the whole day in front of us. If you're on the front porch, it's lunchtime. If I find you in front of the bookcase, I've only a couple hours left to get work done, and the closer you get to the bedroom, the closer it gets to your dinnertime. You soak up the warmth with a smile spread across your face, your blonde fur baking while your amber eyes melt in pure bliss.

Sometimes, when things get too stressful, I take a break and lay with you. You're right – you should never be too busy to stop and enjoy the simple things. And looking on the sunny side of things doesn't hurt, either. You know, there are days I contemplate what horrible things people did to

you and what atrocities you survived before we met. I know I'll never know about everything that happened to you and it simultaneously makes my heart break and overflow. I cry over the fact that I couldn't protect you from it and that you can't tell anyone about it, yet I rejoice and marvel over how you somehow made it through the worst of humankind and arrived at the doorstep of my soul, ready for love. People don't know that you let me help you tend to your broken spirit and we learned to trust each other, and that's really what they're seeing radiate from you when they stop to chat during our outings. Your true beauty is your ability to survive without letting the past destroy your future. I love you best of all for that.

I don't know what I did to get so lucky, but here I am in the presence of greatness. And even though I try to tell you this in different ways, I just wanted to take some time to spell it all out: I adore you, my sweet dog. And yes – they're right. You are beautiful. ✧

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