

I Have Sinned ... A bad day in the life of a young retriever by Freddie

I am writing to explain why I have been dragged along by the scruff to Howard for more training. . Pack Leader says I have sinned SO greatly that I need to go to something called "Confession" but I really cannot see what I have done wrong as it was all such great fun!!! Let me tell you about it.

I was sitting quietly in my land rover whilst pack leader, my mother Lizzie and my cousin Katie were having a ball chasing dead and running pheasants and what's more they looked as if they were getting praised for it. Life is very unjust !. Well, having sat in the land rover puffing my cheeks out for most of the day, suddenly pack leader came and said "Right Freddie, it is your turn now" Oh I just quivered with excitement and we went and stood in what she called the ' little wood' and all these birds fell about us. Sometimes we had to dodge them as they looked to be falling on our heads. Sometimes when they did not lie still pack leader said 'fetch' and I was allowed to chase and catch them. It was so glorious as she was so pleased with me when I brought them back.

After a while a loud whistle sounded and the banging stopped. A man came and told pack leader that he had something called 'two partridge' so I was told to hunt and in next to no time found these two silly little brown birds hiding in all these brambles. They were very easy to carry yet she and the man were SOooooo pleased. We then walked to the other end of the wood where another man wanted to talk all about his 'pheasants' and what we had found and where. It took a long time to satisfy this man that I had been a clever boy and picked them all up and I got very bored so wandered off into some nearby brambles where I found some birds that could fly. Oh the ecstasy!

Well it was all their fault you see as they took me off a couple of woods away into something pack leader later said was the 'next drive' where I found a lot more, heaven! I did vaguely hear a whistle telling me to come back but it was all much too exciting to leave and return to that boring man with the 'talk' so I kept going. In time all the birds disappeared but I met up with some really fun people all beating their sticks and shouting and stamping through the brambles. They seemed to be chasing pheasants too in a funny sort of way so I thought it a good idea to stick with them. Actually, on reflection, they were not exactly pleased to see me but I made a fuss of someone known as 'keepers girlfriend' who says I am so lovely I can do no wrong and since I was all alone I had no choice but to stay with them. There were mutterings about shutting me in a barn. I did not like that idea at all so just ran faster when they tried to catch me so they had no option but to take me with them to scatter the few remaining birds in every direction known to man. I heard a lot of 'words' that I had not **ever** heard from pack leader !!

Having got very hot and tired and feeling as if I had outstayed my welcome, I found the most glorious and enormous muddy puddle and there I stayed to wallow until I was refreshed. Keeper said I looked 'filthy' and I was going to be 'in for it', whatever that meant

Oh yes, I remembered at that point that I really should be with pack leader and oh panic, where was she? She was impossible to find because she had been tearing around the woods like Tarzan looking for me. The land rover was gone, as she had also been doing a tour of the County. Eventually, after the whole world and his dog had been out looking for me I heard the engine and raced towards it in exhaustion.

It was two days before 'she' could bring herself to speak to me again, that was so awful, so was seeing her on her knees in front of Keeper pleading for forgiveness. I thought he was going to hit her with his stick! However, his girlfriend still thinks I can do no wrong, such a nice lady, I wish pack leader felt the same. It took her two strong whiskeys that night to calm her down.

None of it was my fault you see. If the boring man had not stopped to 'talk talk talk' pack leader would have been looking after my welfare. She keeps telling other people 'never let your attention slip from your dog' but the trouble is she just does not practise what she preaches. I think it is she who really needs to go to Howards and learn how to look after me!

Freddie