

## **TERRORIZED BY A LURCHER**

© Catherine L. Wolfe

Several years ago, 3 of my beloved dogs died in one year. They were all 17 years old, and I was crushed. More accurately, I was devastated. So much so that I suffered broken heart syndrome and ended up in the hospital with heart failure. Losing them all was just more than I could bear. During my recovery (I'm fine now) I spent a lot of time thinking about how much my dogs mean to me.

When I got out of the hospital, I couldn't stand being in my house without them. I was going to end up in hospital again if I didn't distract myself...so I adopted a 7-month-old rescue puppy - not to replace my beloved dogs, just to distract myself. I named him Sherlock Holmes and, unbeknownst to me, he is a Lurcher. A better name may have been Fagan, but I digress.

If you haven't heard of Lurchers, they were bred by poachers to steal things and oh my goodness, do they ever! Technically they are a cross between a greyhound and a herding dog. However, the term has also been used to describe dogs with an irresistible drive to steal – everything – regardless of their breeding. I use the term here to describe Sherlock's character and not his breeding.

Sherlock is part poodle and part border collie - 2 of the smartest breeds - which means that his IQ easily exceeds mine. He looks like a full-blooded black standard poodle. He's very handsome and he knows it.

The first night that I had him I got into bed and sat on my stapler. He had stolen it from my desk and hidden it under my comforter. Then he became obsessed with the bathroom. For some reason he decided that its contents were misplaced and belonged in my living room. Thereafter he dedicated himself to rectifying the problem. Every day he industriously moved as many bathroom articles as he could into my living room. He was forever running by me with the shower mat and the metal drain cover for the shower. It aggravated him to no end that I returned everything to the bathroom. He so adamantly believed they were misplaced that he would try stealing them from me directly. On one especially notable occasion tried to swipe the shower mat from underneath me while I was showering! He even went so far as to get right into the shower with me, push me to the side with a body check like we were hockey players, and then tried to rip it away from me. I must say however that I do have my pride and in that instance I clung to the shower mat and was victorious in keeping it in the shower. We actually had several donnybrooks in the shower as I fought to retain my shower accessories.

As I was doing things around my house it was not unusual for him to run past me with things like a 12-pack of toilet paper, the toilet plunger, my hair dryer, various hair products, slippers, etc.

He eventually tired of the bathroom contents and moved on to the kitchen. His obsession there was to move everything from the kitchen to my bed. One night I found an apple and then the next night 7 apples in my bed. At different times I have found potatoes, boxes of pasta, tomatoes, and his favorites – carrots. Most recently I arrived home from shopping and set my grocery bags on the floor *briefly* as I was putting things away. I went to bed not long afterwards and discovered that he had stolen a bag of frozen peas, ripped the bag open, and thrown the peas all over my bed like confetti. Other foodstuffs that he has pilfered which ended up in my bed include a frozen pizza, a bottle of catsup, a bag of celery, cantaloupes, cucumbers, bottles of salad dressings, crackers, etc.

All of that is to say nothing of non-perishable items such as hammers, screw drivers, wrenches, fingernail clippers, makeup, as well as a box of new security cameras waiting to be installed, as well as sundry shoes, clothing, earrings, makeup, and anything else he can get his mouth on.

Sherlock is also a masterful pickpocket. He is so stealthy that he has occasionally fleeced me, making off with my wallet, cash, car keys, and cash without my noticing.

Nowadays Sherlock spends much less time during the day rearranging my home, choosing instead to operate nocturnally while I sleep. That way I don't interfere with his labors so he can get a lot more accomplished. So, annoying I am. At night I hear him running around, carrying things, dropping things, dragging things, destroying things, playing with things (everything's a toy to him), knocking things over, things falling off the kitchen counter, things falling off my bathroom stand, etc. One night he was on a binder and got carried away. He attempted to pull my comforter right off me and only when I put up a fight did he relent. He did, however, grab a shoe on his way out of my bedroom.

On one occasion he nearly caused me to be arrested and/or involuntarily committed, and lest you think I am joking, I most assuredly am not. It was one of the biggest embarrassments of my life.

Sherlock had grown weary of my continued interference with his work. In order to work unhindered by me he adopted a nocturnal lifestyle. It allowed him to work all night without interruption. For me it was a pain because every morning my home was completely disorganized and it took me about ½ hour to put everything back in its place.

One morning, I got up and went into my living room. No surprise...it looked like it does every morning - like a giant had picked my home up, turned it upside down, shook it, and then put it back down. Since I was working on a project with a looming deadline, I didn't have time for the usual morning clean up - just had to get right to work. After about 1 1/2 hours of intense work and concentration, something hit the back of my head and dirt flew all over my desk. Startled, I swung around to see Sherlock standing perfectly still in the middle of the living room. As I took in the situation I was dumbfounded. He had taken all

my houseplants (I have a lot) out of their pots and shaken the dirt off their roots. In his mind I am sure he viewed his actions as a liberation of the plants so that they were now "free-range!" My entire living room was covered with dirt and de-potted house plants, in addition to the usual shower mat, and other bathroom contents/paraphernalia

My darling old dog, Audrey, who is hard of hearing and losing her eyesight was sound asleep on the sofa, covered in dirt as was everything else in the living room. I was so exasperated that instead of cleaning up immediately I decided to preserve my sanity and get out of the house to do some errands. When I returned home UPS had left a package at my front door. I brought it in and got back to work, ignoring the insane mess until later when I would have the time and energy to undertake the massive cleanup.

After about 10 minutes my dogs started barking hysterically indicating that someone had come to the door. I went to my kitchen window to see who it was and there was a police car parked in my driveway. It was parked so as to block any escape I may try to make in my car. That is standard procedure when the police believe they will be taking someone into custody – by arrest or involuntary commitment. At that point I realized that they had come for me and that I was in serious trouble. Being a law-abiding citizen I was shocked because I hadn't done anything to warrant an arrest.

I didn't see anyone but just then I heard pounding on my front door. I went to the front door but nobody was there. Then I heard pounding on the living room window. I went to that window but nobody was there. Then I heard pounding on my bedroom window. My bedroom was dark and there was light from a flashlight dancing about the room. Very odd because it was late morning. I threw back the curtain and there was a police officer. He yelled "*Are you Cathy Wolfe? Are you OK?*" I told him I was fine and asked what this was all about. He said that the UPS driver had looked in my front door when he delivered my package and was alarmed by the state of my home. He was afraid that there had either been a violent altercation and it was a crime scene, or the resident was suffering from some sort of condition, mental and/or physical, that was so serious that he/she was unable to care for him/herself. He was so worried that he called the police to do a **welfare check!** The officer was very courteous and chatted me up to determine if I was mentally competent. Fortunately, he concluded that I was, albeit odd, and then went on his way.

That incident only confirmed my belief that if you are going to own a Lurcher you need to leave your pride at the door because if you don't Lurchers will steal it.