

Dear Miss Puddles

Letter #7 - "Our Chihuahua Believes He Is the Sovereign Lord of the Underworld"

Our four-pound Chihuahua, Bones, was born on October 31, and we are beginning to suspect his birth certificate was signed in brimstone. Bones possesses the body of a teacup canine and the soul of a vengeful mythical beast. He spends his days stalking the living room perimeter, emitting low demonic rumbles at passing leaves, furiously barking at Amazon delivery drivers, and glaring at guests with glowing, unblinking eyes. Last week, he stole a decorative velvet pumpkin, dragged it beneath the sofa, and guarded it like a dragon hoarding treasure. Yet, the moment night falls, this little terror crawls under the duvet, burrows against my feet, and slumbers like a sweet, purring heating pad until morning. We love him fiercely, but with Halloween approaching, we fear his protective, hellbound antics will terrorize the entire cul-de-sac. How do we manage a four-pound guardian of the underworld?

— Haunted on Medinah

Dear Haunted,
You have a Chihuahua. He weighs four pounds. He believes he is the demon hound Cerberus guarding the gates of Hades. Born on All Hallows' Eve, Bones takes his natal zodiac of dark chaos very seriously.
Over the years, I have observed that humans consistently lose arguments with animals weighing under fourteen pounds. Small dogs do not recognize physical dimensions; they measure themselves purely in audacity and volume. Bones is not malfunctioning; he is simply operating as a four-pound Director of Perimeter Security who happens to love you with terrifying intensity.

Suggestions

1. Establish a Formal Stand-Down Protocol. When Bones begins his demonic low rumble at an incoming mail carrier, do not shout "QUIET!" repeatedly from across the room. Approach him calmly, make firm eye contact, and issue a clear directive: "Thank you, Lord Bones, perimeter secure! Stand down, Sergeant." Small dogs respond remarkably well to bureaucratic protocol and solemn recognition of their authority.

2. Enact a Pumpkin Treaty. Bones has not stolen your decorative velvet pumpkin; he has liberated it for a higher purpose. Do not engage in a forcible repossession. Place a designated velvet pumpkin by the front entryway with his name written in permanent marker. Dogs respect ceremony.

3. Reframe the Trick-or-Treater Invasion. On Halloween night, Bones will interpret costumed neighbors as an invading legion of goblins. Position him in a secure, elevated throne room, such as a padded armchair behind the screened lanai, where he can monitor the realm without launching a physical assault.

Continued



4. Divert the Hellbound Energy. A tiny emotional pirate with no occupation will construct his own chaos economy. Provide Bones with scent-based enrichment and hidden treat puzzles. A Chihuahua with an occupation is a Chihuahua too busy to destabilize the neighborhood.



Miss Puddles' Bonus Holistic Tips:

- Lavender calming wipes applied gently before dusk can help soothe a high-strung canine guardian during spooky seasonal shifts.
- Puzzle feeders are exceptional for dark intellects. Hide a puzzle feeder beneath a second puzzle feeder to create a puzzle feeder ouroboros that occupies his supernatural mind until at least Thursday.
- Hydration and temperature management remain essential in Magnolia Point. Serve pet-safe frozen treats on proper plates; he may be hellbound, but he has earned royal service.

EXTRA BONUS - Field Notes:

Dear Haunted, I reviewed your doorbell camera footage. My observations:

A delivery driver carrying an oversized package approached the porch on Tuesday. Bones met him at the front window, standing on his hind legs, ears pinned back, emitting a vibration that rattled the glass. The driver backed down the walkway slowly, without making eye contact, and left the package behind a hedge. Bones watched him depart with deep satisfaction, convinced his tactical curse had worked.

Later that evening, a neighborhood raccoon attempted to inspect the patio trash container. Bones unleashed a series of piercing shrieks from behind the glass that sent the raccoon scrambling up the nearest oak tree to reconsider several of its life choices.

Even the neighbor's terrier, a dog with zero respect for property lines, made one exploratory stroll past your lawn, caught sight of Bones glaring from the window sill, and left noticeably faster and considerably more thoughtful.

- STORY, PHOTOS: EDITOR

