



SABBATH REST. MAY 2026

It was bank holiday Sunday. I'd been out and the dogs home alone all morning. 'Excuse me.' A young woman approached me, politely, pointedly, asking if I was aware that it was really unkind to be out with dogs in temperatures of over 25 degrees.

I hadn't really wanted to come out at all, but this is a lovely town, and not every lovely town has a Spring Festival with lovely things on sale and a square lined with many and various things to eat and drink and free music – 'so go enjoy'. Never mind the dogs, though, it's not all that kind on me to be out in temperatures knocking 30. So a stroll around the stalls and a quick whizz into a blissfully chilly M&S, and home. An iced drink and a magazine and the shade of the garden, where it was marginally cooler.

No-one has told this dog it's too hot for dogs. Well, I have, but I'm clearly not reliable. If I'm outside without a trowel, then obviously it's so I'm available to play. She sits just within my eyeline and explains, politely, that Something Needs to Happen. She doesn't bark, or whine, but there's a register she has which is very cute, very funny and for both those reasons impossible to ignore.

Let's say a cuddle for starters. She's a little bit big for a lap dog, but she likes a bit of a cuddle. Then she's off and I'm back to the mag. Then she's back, tail wagging, eyes bright. 'What do you want?' she knows enough about those noises in that order to click into 'what **do** I want?' and trots off. Comes back with the piece of antler she likes to chew on. Bit of a pull-tug game then she lets go and raises her eyebrows - honestly. So I throw it for her. After two or three goes at this she runs inside, and I get back to the magazine.

Then she's back, with the pull toy. We play the whose-going-to-let-go game for a bit, and I win - or she lets me, who knows - and I chuck it. Tug, pull, throw, fetch, a couple more times, and she's back into the house and I'm back with the mag.

I'd been out in the morning delivering a service on the work of the sabbath - rest, gratitude, appreciation of the fundamentals. Dog is teaching me just how rarely I sit me down in my garden, not to eat, not to work, just to enjoy the being in it, with her.