



Pudge's Game of Chase

When Pudge was still a little puppy, he occasionally escaped the house by squeezing past me as I walked out our front door. Frightened by the neighborhood traffic, I would try desperately to make him come back inside immediately. But Pudge thought my desperate dashing towards him on the front lawn was the start of some game.

He'd spread all four of his legs out, lowering himself close to the ground, never taking his eyes off me. If dogs could smile, I'd swear he'd be smiling as he prepared to launch this "game." As soon as I'd get within ten feet of him, Pudge jumped up and sprinted forty or fifty yards into the next yard. There, he'd stop, spread his legs out again, and wait for me to be just ten feet away once more.

"Pudge, come here," I'd coax as I got closer, and then he'd be off again.

He'd dash to the end of the street, stop, and wait for me to catch up. I was already late to work, and a game wasn't what I wanted to play right now. "Darn you, Pudge! I'm going to be late to work."

Off again, he'd eventually make his way to the park. On the thick grass, he'd spin around, just waiting for me to close the gap. By this time, I was always breathing hard, and Pudge was barely panting. "No dinner for you tonight, Mr. Pudge!" I'd wheeze. I would never NOT feed him, but he didn't know that!

The furthest he ever ran was to the vacant lot where there's now a convenience store. "I'm going home, Pudge. I'm not going to chase you anymore, Mister!"

Eventually, I learned that walking away from him was the only way to get him back inside. Once he realized I wasn't chasing, he'd happily follow you all the way home and right back in the front door.

We don't play that game anymore. He outgrew it...thank goodness. Now he snuggles at your feet and loves it when you scratch his ears and say, "I never want to be without you, Mister Pudge."