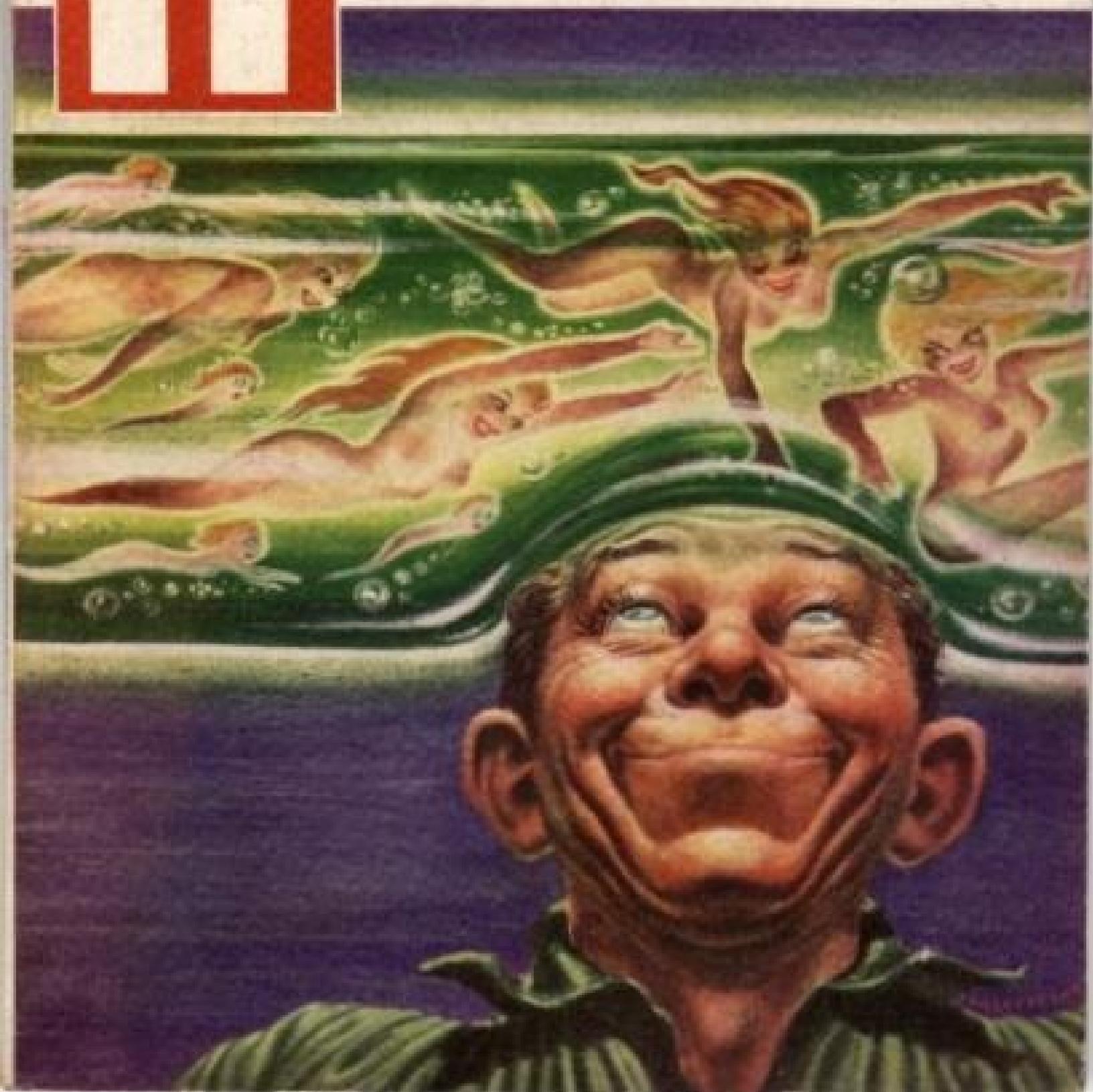


SCIENCE FICTION

FEBRUARY • 35 CENTS

PIPE DREAM

by Fritz Leiber



*** A Distributed Proofreaders Canada Ebook ***

This ebook is made available at no cost and with very few restrictions. These restrictions apply only if (1) you make a change in the ebook (other than alteration for different display devices), or (2) you are making commercial use of the ebook. If either of these conditions applies, please check with an FP administrator before proceeding.

This work is in the Canadian public domain, but may be under copyright in some countries. If you live outside Canada, check your country's copyright laws. **If the book is under copyright in your country, do not download or redistribute this file.**

Title: Love and Moondogs

Author: McKenna, Richard [Richard Milton] (1913-1964)

Date of first publication: February 1959

Edition used as base for this ebook: If, February 1959 [Buffalo, New York: Quinn Publishing Co.] [first edition]

Date first posted: 2 December 2017

Date last updated: June 4, 2018

Faded Page ebook#20180612

This ebook was produced by Al Haines

Publisher's Note: As part of the conversion of the book to its new digital format, we have made certain minor adjustments in its layout.

Love and Moondogs

BY RICHARD McKENNA

*"The true dog, madame, was
originally the golden jackal,
Canis aureus ... He must love
and be loved, or he dies."*

The headline on the newspapers stacked in front of the drugstore read "RUSS DOG REACHES MOON ALIVE." A man in a leather jacket stopped to scan it.

Across the street, frost lay crisp on the courthouse lawn and the white and tan spotted hound put up his forepaws on the kitchen stool as if to warm them. The four women were too busy hauling down the flag to notice.

Martha Stonery in the persian lamb coat paid out the halyard. Monica Flint in the reddish muskrat and Paula Hart in the brown fox caught the flag and folded it, careful not to let it touch the wet cement. A postman and the man in the leather jacket stopped on the sidewalk to watch.

Martha, plump face grim under pinchnose spectacles, fastened one halyard snap to a metal ring taped and wired to the dog's right hind leg.

"Hoist away, girls."

Monica, Paula and Abigail Silax in nutria hauled in unison while Martha held the flag. The hound scrabbled with his forepaws and barked frantically. As he went struggle-twisting upward he began to howl in a bell-like voice. The women grunted with effort. People were coming across the lawn and pale faces moved behind the courthouse windows.

"Two block," Martha said. "Vast hauling and belay."

She pulled the kitchen stool nearer the flagpole and climbed on it to face the small crowd across the shelf of her bosom. Cars were stopping, people streaming in from all sides. Martha patted her piled gray hair and made her thin lips into a parrot beak.

"Fellow Americans!" she cried above the howling. "Our leaders are cowards and it is time for the people to act before the Russians come and murder us all in our beds! We, the United Dames of the Dog, hereby protest the Russian crime of putting a trusting, loving dog on the moon to starve and freeze and smother and die of loneliness! This dog above our heads cries out to the world against the Russian breach of faith between dog and man. He will stay there until the Russians bring their dog home safely or make amends for their crime!"

"Like hell!" said the man in the leather jacket, moving in.

"*Martha!*" Abigail shrieked. "He's taking it down!"

Monica pulled at his wrists. Paula slapped and scratched at his face. "You brute! You coward!" they shrilled.

Martha jumped off the stool and kicked him. He backed away, bent and holding himself.

"Look, ladies," he gasped, "for God's sake—"

"Here now, here now, this is county property," said a fat man in shirtsleeves with pink sleeve garters, pushing through the crowd. "What's all this? Take that dog down, somebody!"

"Never!" Martha snapped. She put her back against the halyard cleat, unfolded the flag and draped it around herself. A loose strand of gray hair fell across her face.

"If you're so big and brave, go bring down the Russian dog," she told the fat man coldly.

"Now *listen*, lady," the fat man said. The *Clarion* press photographer was sprinting across the lawn.

George Stonery was tall, thin, stooped and anxious in a gray business suit.

"I came as soon as I could," he told Sheriff Breen across the scarred, paper-littered wooden desk. "I was away checking one of our warehouses."

"You can make bail for her in two minutes, right across the hall," the sheriff said, scratching his jowl. "She wouldn't make it for herself, said we had to lock her in our sputnik."

"Where is she now?"

"In the sputnik."

The desk phone rang and the sheriff growled into it, "Hell you say. State forty-three just past Roy Farm? Right. I s'pose you already heard what we had on the lawn here this morning?"

The phone gave forth an excited gobbling. The sheriff's red eyebrows rose in disbelief and his heavy jaw dropped in dismay. He put down the phone.

"That was city," he told Stonery. "Complaint about a dog hanging by one leg from a tree just outside city limits. But it's going on all over town too—dogs hanging on trees, out of windows, off clotheslines—every squad car is out. Your old lady sure started something!"

"What did she *do*?" Stonery asked in anguish.

The sheriff told him. "Kicked a big fat deputy where it hurts, too. Maybe we ought to hold her after all. She says she's president of the United Dogs of something."

"United Dames of the Dog," the thin man corrected. "They hold meetings and things. She started it when the Russians put up their second sputnik."

"Well, I hope none of them dames lives out in the county," the sheriff said, rising. "You fix up bail, Mr. Stonery. I got to send out a deputy."

Walking past the flagpole with her husband, Martha Stonery wore an exalted look.

"All over America dogs will cry out in protest against the Russian crime," she said. "I have kindled a flame, George, that will sweep away the Kremlin. I, a weak woman...."

She insisted on driving herself home in her new station wagon.

Sirening police cars passed Stonery three times as he drove home in the evening. Outside the tan stucco ranch-style house on Euclid Avenue, cars blocked the driveway and a crowd milled on the lawn. Stonery parked under the oak tree at the curb and got out.

Martha stood in the living room by the picture window and harangued the crowd through a screened side panel. Centered in the window her spaniel Fiffalo writhed, hanging by a hind leg from the massive gilt floor lamp and yipping piteously. Martha had on her suit of gray Harris tweed and her diamond brooch.

"... moral pressure the Russians simply *cannot* resist," Stonery heard her shouting as he joined the crowd. "The men talk, but the United Dames of the Dog are not afraid to act. Putting a dear little dog on the moon to die of heartbreak!"

Several young men near the window scribbled on white pads.

"How many members do you have, Mrs. Stonery?" one asked.

"The U.D.D. is bigger than you think, young man. Bigger than the Russians thank, for all their spies and traitors!"

Stonery sidled in and tried the front door.

"She locked it," one of the reporters told him. "The cops went back for a warrant. Say! You're Stonery!"

"Yes," the thin man said, flushing. A press camera flashed and he put up his hands too late to shield his face.

"Give us a statement, Mr. Stonery, before the cops come back," the reporters clamored.

Stonery backed off, waving his hands. "Please, please," he said.

"She cracked?" a reporter asked. "When did you first notice?"

"Please," Stonery said. "Yes, she's upset. Her oldest son went into the state penitentiary in California last week. She's very upset about it."

"He kill somebody?" the same reporter asked.

"No, oh no ... just armed robbery ... please don't print that, boys."

"Here come the cops back!" someone shouted.

Two policemen crossed the lawn, one waving a paper. "Here is our warrant of forcible entry, Mrs. Stonery," he called out. He began reading it aloud.

"The U.D.D. will not shrink from any extremes of police brutality," Martha cried sharply. Fiffalo struggled and yelped louder.

The second policeman smashed the lock with a ten-pound sledge. The reporters swept Stonery into the house with them. One policeman untied Fiffalo and held him in his arms. He strained his head back and away from the spaniel's whimpering kisses. Martha glared selflessly while flash bulbs popped.

Stonery pulled gently at the other policeman's sleeve.

"May I come along, officer?" he asked. "I'm her husband. I'll have to arrange bail."

"Not taking her," the policeman said. "No room left in the pokey. Since two o'clock we been arresting the dogs."

The bellboy put down the silver bucket of ice cubes, pocketed the quarter and went out. The skinny secretary put a bottle of whisky beside it and turned to that fat adjutant sprawled shoeless on the bed.

"Looks like Governor Bob'll be a while yet, Sam," the secretary said. "Shall we drink without him?"

"Hell yes, I need one, Dave," the adjutant said in his frog voice, wiggling his toes. "Bob must be having himself a time with that Stonery dame." He chuckled and slapped his belly.

The secretary tore wrappers off two tumblers and clinked ice into them. His rabbit face with its spectacles framed in clear plastic expressed a rabbity concern.

"It ain't for laughs, Sam," he said. "It's like the dancing mania of the Middle Ages, ever hear of it?"

"No. D'they string up dogs by a hind leg too?"

"No, only danced. But it was catching, like this is. My God, Sam, it's all over the state now, U.D.D. women running in packs at night, singing, hanging up every dog they can catch. Sam, it *scares* me."

He splashed whisky into the two glasses. The adjutant belched, sat up in a creaking of bed springs, and scratched his heavy jaw.

"You're thinking they might start hanging up us poor sons of bitches, ain't you?" he asked. "Hell, call out the Guard. Clamp on a curfew." He reached for a glass.

"Yes, and the Russians'll fake pictures of your boys sticking old women with bayonets," the secretary said. "Governor Bob couldn't get reelected as dogcatcher, even."

The adjutant drained his glass, lipping back the ice, and whistled his breath out through pouting lips.

"Good! Needed that," he grunted. "Dave, Bob's got that Stonery dame by the short hairs, he'll swing her into line. Just that about her boy in the state pen out in California is enough. Brown would do Bob a favor and spring him. Or the papers here would splash it. Either way."

"I know, I know," the secretary said, sipping at his drink. "We'll see, when Bob gets here. Meanwhile, as of yesterday we had thirty-three thousand seven hundred twenty-six dogs in protective custody and God knows how many more under house arrest. Sixteen thousand bucks a day it's costing us—"

He broke off as a knock sounded on the door. He hastily tore the wrapper off another glass and splashed it full of ice and bourbon. The adjutant padded to the door and opened it. The governor, a stout, florid man in a gray sports coat, came in and sat stiffly on the edge of the bed. The secretary handed him the drink and he gulped half of it before speaking.

"No smoke, boys," he said finally. "She give it to me just like she does to the papers. We got to go to the moon, or make the Russians do it, and bring that poor, dear, sweet, trusting, cuddly little dog back to Earth again."

"How about her kid out on the coast?" the adjutant asked.

"She spit in my eye, Sam. Said she was just as brave to be a martyr as the dogs they string up. Why, she even told me about another boy of hers, living in sin with a black woman down in Cuba, and dared me to give that to the papers too."

"She sounds tough as she looks."

"She's tougher," the governor groaned. "Like blue granite. I felt like I was back in the third grade." He handed his empty glass to the secretary.

"What did you finally do?" the secretary asked.

"What the hell *could* I do? I want that U.D.D. vote, it must be a whopper. I wagged my tail and barked for her and said I had an idea."

"And now I got to think up the idea," the secretary said, still holding the empty glass.

"No, I thought it up on my way back," the governor said. "I'm going to fly to Washington this afternoon."

"Not the army, for God's sake," pleaded the adjutant.

"No, I'm going to dump it on the Russian embassy. Damn their black hearts, they started this. Hurry up with that drink!"

"Watch out you don't lose your donkey for sure and all," the adjutant said. "Them Russians are smart cookies."

"They'll have to be," the governor said, reaching for the fresh drink. "They sure ... as ... *hell* ... will have to be!"

All the folding chairs were taken. Extra women stood in the aisles and along the side of the hall. Martha Stonery bulged over the rostrum in blue knitted wool and a pearl necklace. Seated around a half-circle of chairs behind her, pack leaders and committee chairwomen smoothed at their skirts. Monica Flint in dove gray sat at the organ.

Martha pounded with her gavel so hard that her pearls rattled.

"Everyone will please stand while we sing our hymn," she said into the resultant hush. She nodded to Monica, who began to play.

"I did not raise my dog to ride a sputnik, I will not let him wander to the moon...." The song was a shrill thundering.

Martha beamed across her bosom as the crowd settled itself again.

"I have a most thrilling announcement to make before we adjourn, girls," she said, "but first we will have committee reports. Paula Hart, will you begin?" She yielded the rostrum.

All the reports were favorable. The U.D.D. was getting four times as many column-inches in the state press as the Russian moonship. It was on TV and radio. A *Life* team was coming.

Changes were recommended. Vigilante packs were not to carry hat pins any more. Two policemen had lost eyes and the police were being ugly about it. A bar of soap in a man's sock was to be substituted. More practice on the clove hitch was needed. Too often, in their excitement, the pack ladies were only putting two half hitches around the leg and the dog could struggle out of it.

Martha came back to the rostrum to read the honor roll of those whom dogs had bitten or policemen had insulted. Each heroine came forward amid cheers and clapping to receive a certificate exchangeable for the Bleeding Heart medal as soon as the honors committee could agree on a design and have a supply made up. Martha shook the hands, some of them bandaged, and wept a few tears.

"And now, fellow U.D.D. members," she said, "I will tell you my surprise. Tomorrow morning I have an appointment with someone coming from Washington!"

A sighing murmur swept through the hall.

"No, not *Eisenhower*," Martha said scornfully. "A man from the Russian embassy, a Mr. Cherkassov."

Applause crashed shrilly. Women wept and hugged each other.

"They want to make peace," Martha shouted ringingly into the tumult. "We've won, girls! Sally out tonight and don't come in until the last dog is hung! We'll show them what it means to challenge the massed U.D.D.-ers of America!"

The state police cordon kept the 2200 block of Euclid Avenue free of reporters and idle gapers. The state car drove up at 10:00 A.M. and parked under the oak tree. Mr. Cherkassov and the two TASS men got out.

Mr. Cherkassov was stocky and crop-haired in a blue suit. His broad, high-cheekboned face, with snub nose and an inward tilt about the eyes, managed to seem both alert and impassive. Carrying a pigskin briefcase, he led the way to the Stonery front door.

He stepped on the doormat and pressed the bell. The doormat whirred and writhed under his feet and he stepped back hastily. Martha Stonery, regal in maroon silk, four-inch cameo and piled gray hair, opened the door.

"Don't be afraid of the doormat, Mr. Cherkassov—you *are* Mr. Cherkassov, aren't you?" she asked sweetly.

He nodded, looking from her to the doormat.

"Your weight presses something and the little brushes spin around and clean your shoes," she explained. "I expect you don't have things like that in Russia. But *do*, please, come in and sit down."

The three men stepped carefully across the mat on entering. In the oak-paneled living room, Paula Hart waited in black wool and pearls with Monica Flint, who wore white jade and green jersey. Martha and Mr. Cherkassov made introductions back and forth and the men bowed stiffly. Then Martha sat down flanked by her aides on the gray sofa facing the picture window. The men sat in single chairs and rubbed their polished black shoes uneasily against the deep-pile gray rug.

"Madame Stonery, I have come to justify moondog," Mr. Cherkassov said. His voice was deep and controlled.

"Two wrongs don't make a right, Mr. Cherkassov," Martha said, raising her head. "You needn't bring up Hiroshima. We already know about those thousands of little black and white spaniels. Besides, I saw a *Life* picture where you sewed a little dog's head to the side of a big dog's neck."

Mr. Cherkassov looked at his stubby fingers and hid them under his briefcase. Paula and Monica nodded accusingly and one TASS man made a note.

"We do not believe it is a wrong when a greater value prevails over a lesser," Mr. Cherkassov said. "Moondog sends us information that will hasten the time of safe space-travel for humans."

"And who might *you* be, to say which value is greatest? Space travel is moonshine, just *moonshine*!"

"I do not understand your word, madame. If you mean impossible, I must point out that moondog has already crossed space."

Martha clasped her hands in her lap. "That's what I mean, grown men and such *silliness*, and the poor little dog has to pay."

Mr. Cherkassov spoke earnestly. "Forgive me if my ignorance of your language causes me to misunderstand, madame. We believe because man now has the ability to cross-space he therefore has a *duty* to all life on Earth to help it reach other planets. Earth is overcrowded with men, not to speak of the wild life that soon must all die. We believe that around other suns we will find Earth-like planets where we can plough and harvest and build homes. I cannot agree that it is silly."

Martha flung her head back.

"Well, it *is* silly. Who'll go? All the men who do things will run away to them and then where will we be? Oh no, Mr. Cherkassov, that gets you nowhere!"

"Your pardon, madame," a TASS man interrupted. "What kind of men will run away?"

"The sour-faced men who fix pipes and TV and make A-bombs and electricity and things."

"Oh," said Mr. Cherkassov. He drummed on his briefcase. Then, "Perhaps only Russians will go, madame. You could pass a law. I must confess to you, we might have sent a man to the moon, but we feared the propaganda use your country might make of it."

Martha made her parrot mouth. "You should have sent a *man*!" She chomped the last word off short. Paula and Monica nodded vigorously.

Mr. Cherkassov stroked his briefcase. "Moondog's mistress wished greatly to go. One might say moondog saved her mistress' life. Is not that a value to you?"

Martha stared. "Did you dare think of sending a poor weak *woman* to the ... to the *moon*?"

"Russian women are coarse and strong," Mr. Cherkassov said soothingly. "A large number of them, among the scientists, did volunteer."

Martha sat bolt upright and made her parrot beak again. Her fat cheeks flushed under the powder.

"No!" she snapped. "I see where you're trying to lead me and I won't go! You should have sent the hussy! It is *immoral* to sacrifice a loving little dog just for a careless whim."

Her two aides gazed admiringly at their chieftainess. "Think of it, just for a whim!" Paula echoed.

Mr. Cherkassov's fingers traced an aimless, intricate pattern on the briefcase and he crossed his ankles.

"All dogs are not loving in the same way, madame. Tell me, how do you know when a dog loves you?"

"You just know," Martha said. "Take my little Fiffalo—and I just know he's so miserable now away from me in that dreadful concentration camp and it's all your fault, really, Mr. Cherkassov—when I pet Fiffalo he jumps in my lap and kisses me and just *wiggles* all over. That's real love!"

"Ah ... I perhaps understand. What does he do when you speak sharply to him?"

"He lies on his back with his paws waving and looks so sad and pitiful and defenseless that my heart melts and I feel good all over. You just *know* that's love, when it happens to you."

Monica dabbed at a tear. Both TASS men scribbled.

"I think I may see a way to resolve our differences," Mr. Cherkassov said. He put his feet side by side and leaned slightly forward, gripping the briefcase on his knees.

"What do you know of the history of the dog?" he asked.

"Well, he's always been man's best friend and the savage Indians used to eat him and ... and...."

"The true dog, madame, was domesticated about twenty thousand years ago. He was originally the golden jackal, *Canis aureus*, which still exists in a wild state. Selective breeding for submissiveness and obedience over that long time has resulted in the retention through maturity of many traits normal only to puppyhood. The modern pureline golden jackal dog no longer develops a secret life of his own, with emotional self-sufficiency. He must love and be loved, or he dies."

Monica sniffed. "What a beautiful name," Paula murmured. Martha nodded warily.

"But, madame, there is also a kind of false dog. Certain Siberian tribes slow to reach civilized status also domesticated the northern wolf. *Canis lupus*. This was many thousands of years later, of course, and in the false dog

the effect of long breeding is not so evident. He is loving as a puppy, but when he matures he is aloof and reserves his loyalty to one master. He is intensely loyal and will die for his master, but even to him he will display little outward affection. Perhaps a wag of the tail or a head laid on the knee, not too often. No others except quite young children may pet him at all. To all but his master he displays a kind of tolerant indifference unless he is molested, and then he defends himself."

"What a horrible creature, not a dog at all!" Martha exclaimed.

"Not culturally, you are quite correct, madame," Mr. Cherkassov agreed, shifting his hold on the briefcase and leaning further forward, "but unfortunately he is a dog biologically. Some wolf blood has crept into most of the jackal-derived breeds, you know. It betrays itself in high cheekbones and slanting eyes and in the *personality* of the breed. The chow, for instance, has considerable wolf blood."

"Chows!" Martha beaked her lips again. "I despise them! No better than cats!" Paula nodded emphatic agreement.

"But your little Fiffalo, as you describe him, is probably of pure *Canis aureus* descent and very highly bred."

"I'm sure he is. Blood will tell. Monica, haven't I always said blood will tell?"

Monica nodded, her eyes shining. Mr. Cherkassov shifted his position slightly, nearer to the chair edge.

"Now moondog, Madame Stonery, is of the *lajka* breed and has even more wolf blood than the chow. If you brought her back to Earth she would just walk away from you with cold indifference."

"Not *really*?"

"Madame, you know the wolf traits only as you find them tempered with the loving jackal traits in such dogs as the chow. But a *Russian* dog! If you were to hand moondog a piece of meat, do you know what she would do?"

"No. Tell me."

Mr. Cherkassov leaned forward, his slanting gray eyes opening wide, and dropped his voice almost to a whisper. "Madame, she would *bite* your hand!"

"Then she doesn't deserve to be rescued!" Martha said sharply.

Mr. Cherkassov straightened up and began stroking his briefcase. "In one sense she is not even a dog," he suggested.

"No, she's an old wolf-thing. Like a cat. Dogs are *loving*!"

"Perhaps not morally worthy of your campaign?"

"No, of *course* not. Mr. Cherkassov, you have given me a new thought ... I hadn't realized...."

Mr. Cherkassov waited attentively, his fingers tracing another pattern. Paula and Monica looked at Martha and held their breaths.

"... hadn't realized how that subversive wolf blood has been creeping into our loving dogs all this long time. Why ... why it's miscegenation! It's *bestiality*! Confess it, Mr. Cherkassov—that's one way you Russians have been infiltrating us, now isn't it?"

Mr. Cherkassov raised his sandy eyebrows, and a frosty twinkle shone in his tilted eyes.

"You must realize that I could hardly admit to such a thing, even if it were true, Madame Stonery," he said judiciously.

"It is true! Go back to your Kremlin, Mr. Cherkassov, and shoot every wolf in Russia to the moon. I'm sure the

U.D.D. won't mind!"

Mr. Cherkassov and the TASS men stood up and bowed. Martha rose and sailed ahead of them to the door. Hand on knob, she turned to face them.

"Our meeting will be historic, Mr. Cherkassov," she said. "I have forced you to betray your country's plot to undermine our loving dogs. You may expect from the U.D.D. instant and massive retaliation! An aroused America will move at once, to set up miscegenation and segregation barriers against your despicable wolf blood!"

Paula and Monica stood up, each with her hands clasped under her flushed and excited face. Mr. Cherkassov bowed again. Martha opened the door.

"Goodbye, Mr. Cherkassov," she said. "You will, no doubt, be liquidated in a few days."

Mr. Cherkassov stepped carefully across the doormat.

END

[End of *Love and Moondogs*, by Richard McKenna]