

rufus.

“Rufus” is a noise that has many meanings. Sometimes when ManMonster makes noise like “Rufus,” what it means is “Come here.” Sometimes “Rufus” means “I am currently petting your head.” Sometimes “Rufus” means “I am happy to see you,” and sometimes it means “I am very upset.” I have discerned many meanings of noise “Rufus.” I am very smart.

Occasionally, ManMonster is making noises with other ManMonster, and in middle of many annoying nonsense noises, ManMonster will make noise “Rufus,” and I will look at ManMonster, like: Why did you make noise “Rufus”? And ManMonster will see me looking and will laugh. I do not know why this delights ManMonster so, but I am happy to delight.

ManMonster makes many noises, and part of my job as Companion to ManMonster is to decipher noises and discern meanings. At first I did not care to discern meanings of ManMonster noises, because why should I bother? I am creature with rich interior life; I should waste time trying to discern meanings of grunts and whines from ManMonster? But now I see that ManMonster is very unable to discern meanings of *my* noises, so if we are to understand each other at all, I am the one who must discern meanings, and since we live in same House, it is better for everyone if *someone* understands *someone*. So, fine. We are companions and I discern meanings.

Here is example: When ManMonster is upset, ManMonster makes noise like “Badog!” This is worst noise ManMonster can make. “Badog!” is for when universe conspires to make life miserable and one is without hope. Many times, ManMonster is very frustrated at situation and makes “Badog” at me, like is my fault universe is unfair. This is very frightening for me to see ManMonster agitated so when I am so small, but I know ManMonster is foolish beast and does not know is not my fault for “Badog.”

Sometimes is my fault. Sometimes when ManMonster is away I discover LittleSoft to play with and things get out of hand and somehow situation occurs where LittleSoft is destroyed. This I know will not make ManMonster pleased, so when ManMonster returns to House I run into otherRoom so ManMonster will not know it was I who destroyed LittleSoft. I am in otherRoom minding business when ManMonster walks in frontRoom, makes noise like “Ohno!”

I walk in, very casual, like, What is reason for Ohno? I was in otherRoom, no knowledge why should be Ohno. I feel small bad for deceiving ManMonster but know it is for ManMonster’s own good. Already ManMonster is upset because of destroyed LittleSoft. If ManMonster knew LittleSoft was destroyed by me, good friend to ManMonster? That would be a very bad situation.

Still, ManMonster is very upset, makes noise like “Badog!” Makes noise like “Whyudo?” I feel bad that in this situation maybe it really is I who is reason for ManMonster’s displeasure. Maybe this time I am Badog. This makes me very very regretful about situation with regards to LittleSoft, because in moment I was not thinking about ManMonster, but as soon as LittleSoft was destroyed I knew ManMonster would not like.

But then I think about how I fooled ManMonster. ManMonster does not know I am reason for destroyed LittleSoft and this is very good. ManMonster does not know this time I am reason for Badog. ManMonster thinks I am Goodog, and thinking I am Goodog makes ManMonster happy so it is good that I make him think this. Maybe, for making him think this, I am Goodog after all? This is question I often ponder. Is better to be truthful? Or is better to keep up appearance, so that others have good thoughts of you, know they can depend? These questions too big for little creature like me. Maybe no correct answers?

ManMonster and I go on morning and evening constitutionals. This is good—see neighborhood, smell many smells, observe other creatures, make waste—this is important. When younger I would make waste in House, but truth is this is not so pleasant, because then waste sits there with you, in House. Is better to make waste outside of House, and now I know is better. Now I make waste during morning and evening constitutional with ManMonster. Is much better this way.

This is sign of big smartness, that I can learn things. I am very proud of this ability. ManMonster is not so smart, does not learn. ManMonster makes waste in House, in special room for making waste. ManMonster thinks if closes door I do not know he makes waste, but I know. I am very smart.

Sometimes I feel like if I do not make waste I will explode, but I know always there will be time when I can go outside and make waste later, and always this is true. ManMonster does not know to wait to go outside. But is okay. ManMonster does not know things he does not know.

During constitutionals I observe many other creatures, big and small. Some creatures have many smells, very interesting. Other creatures have fewer smells, not so interesting. Either way, observing is much pleasant experience for all creatures. I observe front of creature. Then I observe behind of creature. If creature is small like me, creature can observe my behind simultaneous to me observing creature's behind. Otherwise, we take turns. Sometimes when I am observing, ManMonster pulls on constraint and makes noise like "Okaaaay timetago."

This is very unnecessary and irksome. Perhaps ManMonster thinks I am done observing? If so, is very illogical notion, because if I am done observing, I leave, and there is no reason for pulling on constraint. If there is more to observe, I will continue to observe, and so also here is no reason for pulling on constraint. But ManMonster does not understand this. Sometimes I feel like if I were to be ManMonster and ManMonster were to be creature, I would be very more diligent in regards to trying to understand desires of creature. But also there are some things ManMonster does that I am not so proficient at, like opening doors, so maybe I would not be so good at being ManMonster after all? Perhaps it is better that I am creature and ManMonster is ManMonster.

One time, during nighttime constitutional, I observe faraway creature, very strange experience. This creature has no ManMonster, has no constraint. It is a large creature, brown, and it looks at me from across much area. I look at LargeBrownCreature with big wonder. Where is constraint for LargeBrownCreature? Where is ManMonster for LargeBrownCreature? Does LargeBrownCreature have Companion? Does LargeBrownCreature have House in which for sleeping? Who opens doors for LargeBrownCreature? Who puts food in dish? I wonder if

LargeBrownCreature looks at me and thinks me foolish for being constrained by ManMonster. Maybe LargeBrownCreature thinks there is no need for ManMonster. Perhaps LargeBrownCreature thinks I am very much not smart. This angers me, so I make noise at LargeBrownCreature. LargeBrownCreature runs off, unconstrained, and ManMonster makes noise like, “Comon Rufus. Lessgo.”

Next day, food in dish tastes different to me. Not bad. Just different.

One day, much later, during morning constitutional, I am observing creature—small, like me, with white hair; smells strong, been many places—and I notice this time that ManMonster does not pull on constraint. Instead, ManMonster is making noises with other ManMonster attached to constraint of LittleWhiteHairedCreature. This other ManMonster is tall and skinny and smells of much body movement. Both ManMonsters laugh and make many jovial noises. I look up at ManMonster, like, Okay, I am done observing this creature now and ready to observe other situations. But ManMonster does not pay attention. ManMonster is laughing, making very exuberant noises and sounds at TallSkinny.

Later, TallSkinny appears at House. This is very good because TallSkinny has smells of LittleWhiteHairedCreature, which is very interesting to me. I jump at him and observe all smells. TallSkinny makes noise like, “Oh! Helloggenn!” and ManMonster makes noise like, “Rufus! Dow!” ManMonster and TallSkinny make noises at each other and leave House through door. I try to go with, but ManMonster closes door before I can get out. ManMonster often forgets that I cannot open door, so if he closes door when I am inside then I must stay inside. I try to remind ManMonster I am still inside by making many loud noises, but ManMonster is distracted by TallSkinny and does not come back to let me out of door.

On this night, ManMonster does not return until very late. Is not bad thing ManMonster returns to House so late. Just observation.

Next thing is, TallSkinny appears at House many times. Sometimes TallSkinny appears and then both ManMonsters leave. Sometimes TallSkinny stays and both ManMonsters sit on BigSoft and look at Noisy flatBox and laugh. If there is one thing I have discovered about

ManMonsters, it is that ManMonsters love to look at Noisy flatBox and laugh.

Sometimes, TallSkinny comes over with LittleWhiteHairedCreature, and ManMonster makes noise like, “Dubbedate! Dubbedate!” ManMonsters look at Noisy flatBox while LittleWhiteHairedCreature and I run from frontRoom to otherRoom. This is very thoughtful of ManMonster, to spend time with TallSkinny so that I can run from room to room with other creature. It occurs to me: How nice! ManMonster has found a companion for his companion! I know is not always easy for ManMonster, to have so many in House, because sometimes ManMonster becomes very agitated at TallSkinny and much shouting occurs. Other times, they wrestle and nip at each other, and I cannot discern if is playful or if is angry.

On one night, when ManMonster and TallSkinny are looking at Noisy flatBox, LittleWhiteHairedCreature goes into otherRoom and jumps onto otherRoom BigSoft. This is very inappropriate. I know this. I make noise at LittleWhiteHairedCreature to suggest, Hey, maybe you should not be on that? Maybe ManMonsters will not like? I run to frontRoom to alert ManMonster of situation. I make many noises to indicate, There is creature on otherRoom BigSoft! I know creatures should not be on otherRoom BigSoft, only frontRoom BigSoft. But ManMonster is unconcerned. He makes noise like, “Quiii Rufus!” I look at ManMonster. I look at TallSkinny. Both just sit on frontRoom BigSoft and look at Noisy flatBox.

I go back into otherRoom. LittleWhiteHairedCreature is burrowing into BigSoft. I think, Maybe is okay? Maybe this time creatures are allowed on BigSoft? I jump on BigSoft. Is nice. Is soft. Everywhere is smells of ManMonster. I lie down. Amazing feeling. Feels like I am surrounded always by embrace of ManMonster. Feels like a House inside of House. I have very much joy and I look over at LittleWhiteHairedCreature also on BigSoft and I see DISASTER. LittleWhiteHairedCreature has made waste. On top of BigSoft. This I know is bad news.

Firstly I am paralyzed with fear. What to do? Alert ManMonster or no? I am Companion to ManMonster and I know I should alert of all situations inside of House, but this is news ManMonster will very not like. This is Badog kind of news. It occurs to me, maybe if I don't alert, ManMonster will discover later, will not know who made waste on BigSoft. Maybe

ManMonster will think *he* made waste on BigSoft and then forgot? But downside is maybe he will think *I* made waste on BigSoft! This is worst-possible scenario, very much bad to imagine. I realize now I must alert.

I run into frontRoom, make many loud noises.

ManMonster makes noise at me like, “Rufus! No!”

I run back into otherRoom and then back into frontRoom, making noises all the way, as if to say, Come! Look in this room!

ManMonster makes noise like, “Rufus! Quiiiii!”

TallSkinny makes noise like, “Quiiiii, Rufus!”

Consequently, I am very even more upset, because now TallSkinny thinks he can make noise “Rufus” at me? We are not companions. I do not know this other ManMonster.

For review: TallSkinny brings other creature into *my* House. TallSkinny’s companion creature makes waste on *my* ManMonster’s BigSoft. Now I am trying to alert ManMonster, because I am smart, and now for this I am considered nuisance. I am considered Badog. Is all very very upsetting. I am much alarmed if this is to be state of things. I keep making noise.

ManMonster gets up off of frontRoom BigSoft so that I will know he is serious. He makes noise like, “Rufuuuus...”

I run back into otherRoom so that ManMonster will follow me. But instead ManMonster closes door between rooms. This is bad. ManMonster knows I cannot open doors!

At this point in situation, I am much exasperated that ManMonster does not understand me. I work very hard to discern meanings of ManMonster noises but ManMonster makes no effort to discern meanings of my noises! Why should this be? Things would be very easier if I could make noise to ManMonster and ManMonster would think, “Oh, I understand. My companion means to tell me that other creature has made waste on my BigSoft. How wonderful that I have Companion to tell me such things and how wonderful that I can understand!” Instead I make noise, and ManMonster thinks, “I do not understand. I do not like noise. Noise is bad. Surely there is no reason for Companion is making noise. Surely he just

makes noise because he does not know I do not like. I must scold him! That is best solution!” Is exhausting.

Later I think back on this and I feel bad. Is not ManMonster’s fault he does not understand. ManMonster cannot discern meaning. Only I can discern meaning. I am smart. ManMonster is not so smart. Is not ManMonster’s fault.

But now I am trapped in otherRoom with waste of other creature. This is a terrible situation. I make many noises. I scratch at door. LittleWhiteHairedCreature makes noises as well. I am much pleased that LittleWhiteHairedCreature has now decided to contribute, but also I know all this is LittleWhiteHairedCreature’s fault in first place, so LittleWhiteHairedCreature is not in clear yet, as far as my book goes.

ManMonster opens door. ManMonster is furious. He grabs constraint and pulls hard. He makes noise like, “Rufus! Watt!” Sometimes when he makes noise “Rufus” I know it is good, but this is not good “Rufus.” I am very scared of what ManMonster might do to me when so angry. But then ManMonster smells, and I see that he is observing. He goes to BigSoft. He sees waste. Makes noise like, “Jooooooooooooe!”

TallSkinny walks in, observes waste on BigSoft, makes noise like, “Oh! Hoodiddis?”

ManMonster makes noise like, “NahRufus. IdinkLadybug.”

TallSkinny makes noise like, “Ladybug? Joodoo? Oopsie.”

Now ManMonster is very upset. “Oopsie? Oopsie?!”

TallSkinny shrugs. “Relaxisaccident! Snahbigdeal. Chillowwww.”

And ManMonster makes noise like, “ImnahmaddabouddaLadybuhh. Buhyucuhbee alilmorsorry.”

“Aryuseriosrighnow? Doyuwamme tocleenutup? Aryudatbigababy?”

“Imnotbeanababy towanyuta cleenupaftaryorowndawwg!”

TallSkinny makes very serious demeanor. He makes noise like, “Whaddis relly bout?”

After this event, TallSkinnyManMonster does not come back to House so much. LittleWhiteHairedCreature does not come back to House so much.

In theory, is not so bad. Is more time for me and ManMonster. More time for long constitutionals. More time for ManMonster to throw ball for me to retrieve.

But ManMonster does not want to go on long constitutionals. ManMonster does not want to throw ball for me to retrieve. All ManMonster wants now is to sit on frontRoom BigSoft and look at Noisy flatBox.

In past, Noisy flatBox has made ManMonster much jovial, but now ManMonster is very saddened. At first, I think ManMonster is still upset about creature making waste on otherRoom BigSoft, but upon continued reflection, this does not speak to true situation. Waste has been removed from otherRoom BigSoft for very long time now, and ManMonster still sleeps on otherRoom BigSoft, so this cannot be concern. Sometimes even ManMonster allows me to sleep on otherRoom BigSoft with ManMonster, which was never allowed before. Very clearly ManMonster is no longer upset about soiled BigSoft. So what is reason for ManMonster to be continued upset? Is mystery.

ManMonster has female ManMonster friend who sometimes comes to House, brings food for ManMonster, takes me on constitutionals. FemaleManMonster is friendly, has many good smells, but is not same as ManMonster.

Sometimes, ManMonster and FemaleManMonster sit for very long time, make many hushed noises. FemaleManMonster makes noise like, “Ushud avvaparty. For yur birdday.”

ManMonster shakes head, makes noise like, “Imnah innamood.”

FemaleManMonster scratches ManMonster’s back, makes noise like, “Uwillbee. Ipromiss.”

One night, there is big gathering of ManMonsters. At first, is fun. Everyone wants to pet. I jump up on ManMonsters and they laugh and dance with me. Many delicious foods are dropped on floor and I am able to eat them.

But more and more ManMonsters begin to congregate. Soon, noise becomes unbearable. There is no space to roam—everywhere is foreign ManMonster legs. Strange ManMonsters I do not know pick me up and pull

on me. I make noise, like, Put Me Down, but StrangeManMonster does not comprehend. I kick and scratch and StrangeManMonster drops me. I look for main ManMonster, *my* ManMonster, but do not find. I think, Oh, he is gone forever, and get very sad and scared. I look for FemaleManMonster, companion to ManMonster, but do not find. I even look for TallSkinnyManMonster, but do not find. Is this my life now, forever? In crowded House, surrounded by StrangeManMonsters I do not know? I become quite certain that this is my life now, forever.

Now, when I am thinking about this, terrible-on-top-of-terrible thing happens. I make waste in House. This is very unlikely event to occur because I am not one to make waste in House—everyone knows this about me—but is overwhelming, so many ManMonsters. When it is happening I truly do not know it. I look down and see waste and I think, Who made this waste in House? Then I know: I made waste in House.

One of ManMonster's ManMonster friends sees me and shouts many noises. ManMonster runs over: "Ohnonononononowhyyyyyyy!!" I am very relieved that ManMonster is not, as it turns out, gone forever, but also at same time I am very ashamed.

ManMonster grabs constraint and pulls me to door. ManMonster opens door and takes me outside like maybe I want to make waste again. I do not. Waste already made. This is very obvious. ManMonster goes back inside. Closes door. I scratch at door, so ManMonster will remember that I cannot open door, so that ManMonster will come back and open door for me, but door does not open.

I look up at sky.

I hear howling of distant creature.

I think about LittleWhiteHairedCreature who made waste in House and then did not come back to House. I think about how after LittleWhiteHairedCreature made waste, TallSkinny did not come back to House. I wonder where they went. Is this where now I must go? I know, if so, is very appropriate. Is what I deserve. Already, ManMonster was very upset. ManMonster did not also need for greatest companion to make waste in House. This is betrayal at worst possible time. Now I truly know what it means to be reason for Badog.

I think about LargeBrownCreature, who had no ManMonster companion and no House. When I saw before, from across much distance, I wondered how it was like to be LargeBrownCreature with no constraint. Now I feel bad to have wondered. Now I know. Is not good. Is not very happy to feel like this.

ManMonster opens door and I am much relieved. He sits down on step next to me. He makes noise like, “Ay-yi-yi...” I am very ashamed to have made waste in House—I know when I did this I was not a good companion—but also I do not want to be a creature who is not allowed back in House. I look at him and make face like, Please do not condemn me from House. I can be a very good companion from now on. I will be always good to you from now on. I know ManMonster is not always smart about discerning meaning, but hopefully this time he will discern.

ManMonster scratches my back and he makes noise like, “Rufus rufus rufus.” And I know that noise “Rufus” can mean many things. Sometimes “Rufus” means “I am happy to see you” and sometimes it means “I am upset,” and this time I discern that it means both things at once. Somehow this time when ManMonster makes noise like “Rufus rufus rufus,” it is like all the other Rufuses combined together. It means all the things. It means “Well, here we are.” And it means “Yep” and it means “Why?” and “What do we do now?” It means “Goodog” and it means “Badog” and it means “Let me scratch your back for you.”

ManMonster makes noise like, “Rufus rufus rufus,” and he scratches my back and I love him. I love him with everything I am. I love him like he’s a part of myself.