


# Is there any day more perfect than dog day?

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By Guiding Eyes

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by Guiding Eyes graduate Deni Elliott

Like Christmas, but only better. We wait. We anticipate. We worry. Most of us dream for months in advance about who our new partners might be.

Male or female? Short coupled or tall and leggy? Yellow or black or maybe a German shepherd dog? If so, long-haired or not? If humans could be so open to variation in the acceptance of our human mates, the world would be a far more civilized place.

Dog day morning, breakfast is noticeably quiet. We sip coffee and pick at the enticing breakfasts that we would normally wolf down. Today, we don't talk so much. We listen. We hear snatches of conversation. We hear silence where our instructors sit at breakfast. We wonder.



We hear that instructors are meeting one last time to review the matches. Separately, we wonder why. Are they changing my match at the last minute? Was it because I showed something I didn't intend on yesterday's Juno run? Do they think now that I am too assertive? Too passive? What if they decide that NO Guiding Eyes dog is right for me? I have been palming and massaging the leash they gave me two days ago. Partly out of nervousness, but also to make it soft and inviting for my new partner. Can I possibly leave here with no dog attached?

We assemble for the meeting. Who will be called? In what order? All random it seems. We squeeze one another's hands or touch knees in support as our names are called. We sit in hushed silence. We listen for each person's new partner as we try to wrap our minds around what we have heard about our own.

Gender. Breed. Name. Both too much and too little information. We've each been handed a well-wrapped box. It's enticing, but we are blind to the contents. Knowing some outside dimensions is hard when we can't possibly guess what, or in this case, who, will be on the inside.

Soon, we are each sitting in our dorm rooms. Straining to hear the pad of people and dog feet in the hall.

Are they walking past my room?

No. Stopping.

Here. Now.

The familiar voice of the instructor. The unfamiliar armful of body and fur. The warmth of connection. The wet tongue. Longing fulfilled.

You are my present. You are my future. Please love me. I will love you. I promise.

No moment is more intimate. No introduction more overwhelming. Hard work is ahead, but anticipation is done. We are together and about to move into partnership.

No messages on the Guiding Eyes grad list elicit more congratulations and high fives than messages about dog day. We all know the gut-wrenching anticipation and the happy tears. And every one of us now settled in a happy partnership lives in denial that we'll ever wait in anticipation of dog day again. But, as clients share the joy of dog day, we vicariously enjoy each team's special moment of meeting. As with all relationships, time brings comfort through familiarity. But, who would ever forget the thrill of love at first sight?