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**STORIES FROM
THE WORLD
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**AXIS MUNDI
TORTUGO**

STORIES FROM THE WORLD

SHEPHERD GETS HER NAME



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Dog's head rose slowly out of the tall grass in the Meadow. She saw two creatures walking over the River Bridge. Her body quivered and her ears strained forward. She recognized Old Man, and her mouth fell open. The stick she was carrying dropped to the ground. She burst into a sprint and galloped wildly across the Meadow.

Old Man saw her coming and laughed. Dog ran as fast as she could and pulled up sharply in front of them. She stared at Dink while she spoke to Old Man.

What is it? asked Dog.

Old Man thought for a moment. She is a human, like me. But she is young and



inexperienced. She is like a puppy.

Dog looked at Old Man and tilted her head to the side. Her great tongue fell out of her mouth and bobbed up and down as she spoke.

Like a puppy, you say?

Yes, she is very much like a puppy.

Dog schlapped her tongue back into her mouth and nodded to Old Man.

I understand completely.

She turned to Dink and said, Would you like to throw a stick for me to fetch?

Thank you, I would like that very much, said Dink.

Dog sprinted away and found a beautiful and smooth stick. She charged back to Dink and dropped it at her feet. Dink threw it a few yards away. Dog sprang after it and returned in seconds.



Dink then threw the stick over a little brook. Dog leapt over the brook in a single bound and tore through the water on her way back, splashing it everywhere and shaking her coat wildly.



The third time, Dink pretended to throw the stick in one direction, but hid it behind a rock. Dog raced here and there until she found the stick. She shook it and growled with pleasure. Then she returned to Dink and sat next to her. She was panting and her great tongue blubbed up and down.

Oh, that was fun, said Dink. Can we do it again?

Again? said Dog. How many times again?

Dink thought for a moment. I guess as many as you want.

Dog's mouth fell open and the stick dropped to the ground. She closed her mouth and tilted her head to the side again.

You are my best friend. We will play many games together, and I will protect you always.

The hair stood up on Dog's back. She snarled and bared her fangs. Old Man and Dink shrank from her appearance, though they knew they were safe.

You have only to call my name and I will come to your aid. If I cannot run I will walk. If I cannot walk I will crawl. If I cannot crawl I will have given my life to protect your.

I tell you this: nothing will harm you, as long as I am alive.

Dog looked at Old Man. I choose her.

Old Man nodded solemnly. Well chosen, Dog. And now, I name you Shepherd, for you are Dink's friend, guide, and protector.

Shepherd panted loudly and smiled.



Old Man bent over and whispered in Dink's ear.

You are the luckiest girl in the World.



SPECIAL OFFERS FROM THE WORLD

For Quiet, Clever Children

WANTED: HUMAN PUPPY!

Experienced mother dog seeks young human
— for lifelong companionship. —

QUALIFICATIONS:

- Must enjoy throwing sticks
- Experience unnecessary
- Muddy shoes acceptable
- Occasional foolishness expected

BENEFITS:

- Unlimited games
- Excellent listening
- Warm companionship
- Round-the-clock protection

SALARY: None. This is a friendship.

IMPORTANT: The dog chooses you.

THE NEVER-ENDING FETCH CLUB!

How many times again?
As many as you want!



Membership dues:
one reasonably good stick.

DO YOU SPEAK DOG?



A field guide to what dogs say
with eyes, ears, tails, noses, and paws.

THE GREAT MISSING STICK MYSTERY!



Can you spot the hidden stick
before Shepherd does?

