

## When Dinner Guests Arrive

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You invite your boss and his wife over for dinner. You have prepared a wonderful meal and have the table set just right. You want everything to be perfect. Your guests will arrive at 6:00.

After hours of preparing, cleaning, setting, and waiting, your five-month old puppy, Chloe, gives an alarming bark. She scampers to the front door.

The exquisite black Mercedes pulls into your small driveway. You glance at your dusty, plain, burgundy twelve-year-old minivan and hastily wish you had driven it into the garage after you went grocery shopping this morning.

Your company has arrived at precisely 6:00. Chloe must be excited about my boss, you think, as she jumps up on the nearby window, waiting for them to appear. She yips and yaps. Your boss opens the car door for his wife.

Your boss has a rather large nose, broad shoulders, and perfect teeth. His glasses seem too small to fit onto his big face. He is not overweight, but muscular and powerful. He treats you nicely, but expects a lot out of his employees. You want to impress him.

Together your boss and his wife walk down your white sidewalk. You put on a nice smile and open the door with a friendly greeting. Chloe seems to want to be friends with them, too. She barks and rams against the screen door.

Your gray-haired boss smiles at her through the glass. His wife looks uncertain that she wants to come in. She is in her mid-fifties and is slightly overweight. She carries a huge purse and has evidently uses a marker to shape her eyebrows. You open the screen door.

"Hi! Thanks for coming!" you say. They step inside. "Come on in." Chloe barks excitedly. She jumps up on your boss. He chuckles.

"You're a frisky pup," he says, petting Chloe. Your boss's wife looks at it with disgust.

"What kind of dog is that?" she asks, curling her lip.

"Chloe is a Skye Terrier," you say right away. "There was a Skye Terrier in Scotland named 'Greyfriars Bobby,' who survived his master fourteen years and is said to have spent most of the rest of his life lying beside his grave. So I guess they're supposed to be really loyal."

You were trying to make a conversation, but evidently your boss was too occupied with rubbing your dog's belly, and his wife was obviously not interested at all. Chloe has not yet visited the wife, and she decides it's time to welcome her. A sweet yet ear-piercing bark is heard from Chloe, and she runs and jumps

up on the wife. Chloe is a small dog, but she has claws, and you wince as your Skye Terrier rips her lilac colored skirt.

You wince even more at the scream that follows afterwards.

“Lawrence! Get here right NOW! Quit playing with the stupid dog and come HERE!” She kicks the dog away.

“Hey, don’t kick my dog!” you say.

“I don’t care about the thick-headed mutt, I care about my dress! LARRY!”

“Darling, you’re over-reacting. I’ll buy you another dress,” your boss answers calmly, trying to sooth her.

“That dimwit!” she sobs, “It’s ruined! Let’s go, Lawrence, now,”

“No, Sheryl,” your boss answers, “My best employee has made a fine meal for us and has gone to all the trouble to have us over. We are definitely not going to leave.” He smiles at you. You become red and flustered with embarrassment, but you also glow with satisfaction.

“I’m sorry about your dress, Mrs. Wagner,” you say politely, “I’ll put Chloe in her kennel,”

You scoop her up in your arms and start to take her away.

“No, no, no, you don’t have to do that,” your good boss takes over. “Just keep her here. Chloe was just a little excited,”

“Thank you,” you say. You run into the kitchen to get the spaghetti on the table. Chloe is at your heels. You smile and whisper in her ear, “Good girl.” You try to be polite with Mrs. Wagner, but it is so hard, and you felt like spilling spaghetti sauce on her torn dress. But you shouldn’t act like a child, and, your boss is here - you wouldn’t want him thinking you were a klutz!

Well, you’re eating dinner with your boss and his snobby wife. Chloe thinks she’s having dinner with you, too! She sniffs at the table and puts her muzzle on your lap. You grin and slip her some garlic toast. Probably shouldn’t have done that - you’ll suffer later.

But, Chloe seems to be happy munching on something crunchy. She moves on to the next person. Your boss also smiles at Chloe and hands her a spaghetti noodle. She gobbles it down and licks his hand clean.

“You’re such a good dog,” he cooed, “How is Chloe? Such a good dog. Yes she is...” Chloe loves this. But after he finishes, she goes to someone else - the only other person left - Snobby Sheryl.

Chloe’s nose sniffs the table and she finds Sheryl’s ripped dress and starts to bite at it.

“NO!” Sheryl screams. She picks up some of her bread crust and throws it out of the room. “Get out of here!”

Chloe seems to be laughing as she goes and fetches the garlic bread. The crust is gone in an instant. Chloe comes back to play again. But your boss’s wife just doesn’t understand.

“You! Get your silly dog out of here. We’re eating!” she says.

“Yes, I understand that, ma’am,” you reply, getting up, “Come on, Chloe, let’s go.”

You walk out of the room. But Chloe seems to think she made a friend out of Mrs. Wagner, and you watch as your dog lies down and licks Mrs. Wagner’s shoes. She shrieks.

“Chloe!” You say impatiently. “Come!” Your Skye Terrier should have been taught to come before your guests arrived. You kneel down next to Chloe, and, Mrs. Wagner’s legs.

“Excuse me, Ma’am,” you say, “CHLOE!” The dog will not leave. You try lifting her. She weighs almost 25 pounds, which isn’t that heavy, but it’s cumbersome when she’s clawing at you. You finally get Chloe out and put her in her kennel.

“You’ve ruined the evening, Chloe,” you say, trying to hold back a smile at the ridiculous evening.