

“KING GUMDROP” by Alexander Lee-Rekers (StageMilk, 2025)

NATALIE is talking her daughter-in-law through the process of caring for her prized, pampered dog.

NATALIE: So: he needs a walk in the morning and a walk at night. If he doesn't get both, he'll whine and wake your neighbours. Breakfast is a cup of dry food, dinner is *half* a cup but wet with the water stirred through. No treats. Nothing from your dinner plates because garlic upsets his tummy.

And feel free to send me an update every now and then. You'll never bother me with a little note about how he is, or a photo or two when you walk him or feed him. If you don't, I'll start to worry—and I'm on this trip to relax...

Thank you, dear. I think the two of you will have lots of fun.

Performance Notes:

- *What is the relationship like between Natalie and her daughter-in-law? Friendly? Cold? Fraught? There's plenty of room in this scene to play with the subtext of this exchange. This could just as easily be a cruel exercise in status as it could be a heartfelt and grateful handover of a beloved pet.*
- *On that subject: what is King Gumdrop like? Is he a big dog? Is he small and yappy? Aggressive? Does he like Natalie's daughter-in-law? Does she like him, and treat him to goodies the minute Natalie leaves?*
- *Think about the objective of this scene, and be as specific as you can. The dialogue might be about a pet, but an objective has to include the scene partner. So what does Natalie want from her daughter-in-law in this scene? To enlist her help? To ask for a favour? To make her feel small or useless? It's completely up to you.*