

My name is
Eric



..... and this is my story

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CHAPTER 1

My name is Eric and a piece of gilt edged, important looking paper says I am a male Pomeranian of retired champion and show dog bloodline, place and date of birth, a remote dog breeding farm, deep inside rural New South Wales, Australia on the 16th of Dec, 1997. I thought I would live and grow old in that idyllic farm with its acres of space and rolling hills. So how on earth did I end up in a concrete jungle and a city state called Singapore thousands of miles away? This is my story.

I arrived with two other squirming, squealing siblings forcing our way out of our mother's tiny panting body without mercy. In revenge for the pain we had caused our poor mother, Nature thrust us unceremoniously into a sudden burst of white searing light to which our half closed eyes were unaccustomed and our frantic squeals rose higher, to protest this sudden eviction from the shadowy peace and calm of our mother's womb. And that was that, suddenly, without warning of what to expect, we were deposited into a frightening new world outside that safe haven.

A blurry sea of faces circled around us and shrieks of "Oh look, they are gorgeous, especially this one!" pounded our ears.

Good Gracious, did these human giants have to speak quite so loudly, protested my delicate new born ears. Indignant at this sudden intrusion into my quiet world, I filled my tiny lungs with as much air as I could and shrieked back as good as I got and a small sweaty hand reached out to gently stroke my ears. It smelt of chocolates and candy floss and, to my surprise, a great calm flooded my tiny, flushed body, from this simple gesture.

It was as if some kind of magnetic power flowed between us and I felt loved, strangely reassured and protected. I didn't know it then but this was my first contact of what would be a life long love affair with humans and it made

me feel safe and comfortable in an increasingly perplexing world. I decided I was going to like these ungainly, loud mouthed giants after all!

I spent the first few exciting days of my life getting to know a world that was filled with all kinds of strange sounds, sights and smells of life itself, in a curious mix of humans and animals on the farm. After the first week, I decided I liked humans a whole lot better, animals had their own hands full having to protect and fend for themselves and didn't have a lot of time left to care about other animals, humans, on the other hand, seemed to make caring for us, animals, part of their vocation in life!

Of course I learnt later that the care extended was not for free and had strings attached, but when I was just a week old, I could be forgiven for not knowing any of these things and having such a simple view of people, motives and life itself! To me, the farm was my home and the people who owned and ran it were my family. Later, I made up for lost time really fast by being suspicious of everything and everyone!

I didn't know at the time why my "family" had so many dogs and they all looked so different. I am long haired and round like a powder puff and I have all kinds of people crowding round me screaming "Oh, look, he's so cute" till I got sick of the word "cute."

But there were lots of other puppies who looked positively ugly, big bulging eyes and flat, round and knobbly faces with just two holes for noses and others who were almost hairless and thin with their tails lopped off but people seemed to want them. The family in the compartment next to ours had six of the hairless, thin puppies with no tails and yet I hear people drooling over those ghastly specimens with comments like "Look at those legs and that posture, already showing the beginnings of perfect breeding and markings!"

Then one day a man came and took all the six puppies away in a large cage and I never saw them again. Their

mother cried and whimpered for a few nights looking for them and even when she was taken away from the pens for nursing mothers, she came back to look for them several times till another family took over the place. That made my mother nervous and she started to keep us closer to her and cuddle us at night more tightly as if she was afraid that we were going to be taken from her too. She seemed to know something about the whole set up at the farm that we mercifully had no clue to.

People always seemed to be coming and looking at us and all the other puppies and sometimes we heard disturbing conversations like “this crop of puppies are the best and suitable for export.” It was only later that I learnt that Bill, the big, ferocious looking man who owned the whole place and all of us was a dog breeder and we were mere “commodities” to him. Our births were carefully planned and matched and we were born just to be sold as domestic pets in distant places, the stronger and more fit we were, the further we had to be sent away!

Although my two sisters and I had no shortage of admirers, I had one very special secret admirer, she was Sue, Bill’s eight year old daughter, who was not supposed to play with us but she did anyway. Everyday as soon as the bright yellow school bus dropped her off, she would dash over to our pen, red pigtails flying and spend at least an hour or so cuddling me and tickling my belly till I collapsed in a tiny heap of puppy giggles and flailing small legs. She loved all the other puppies as well but I was her favorite.

Once, when my mom wasn’t looking, she even put me in the pocket of her school tunic and smuggled me into her room and just in case I missed the warmth of the puppy pen and my mom’s tight cuddles, she made a little nest out of her blankets for me to crawl inside. I think this was the origin of my lifelong penchant for crawling into soft fluffy blankets as a substitute for my mom’s safe furry paws! Anyway, that was the first time I had ever spent a night away from Tracy, my mom, and next to her, I loved Sue the

most. She always smelt of chocolate and sweet candy floss and reminded me of the small sweaty hand that had stroked me reassuringly my first few hours in a bewildering world.

When her father discovered her secret trysts with me, he got really mad and banned her from the puppy pens till she agreed to follow the rules. Snippets of their disturbing conversation still haunt me today.

“What did I tell you about not getting too attached to any of the puppies?” Bill thundered. “It’s better for everyone this way because you know that sooner or later, they all have to go! We’re running a business here, Susan, and not a pet sanctuary!”

“Go?” I thought to myself. “Where are we going?” God, I was so innocent and clueless in those days that I didn’t know anything! I thought life could continue, lazy and idyllic like this forever! It didn’t even occur to me that I had to be born for something!

But Sue didn’t care what her father said, she continued her daily visits and we became so close sometimes I forgot she was a human and not a dog! I didn’t get along with my two sisters; they were competitive and could be real bitches, like their namesakes! If I wanted something, they would immediately decide they wanted it too and a fierce battle of wills would ensue, even at that tender age! I think they are the reasons I developed a lifelong phobia for other dogs and to this day, I cannot behave civilly towards another dog, there’s always this feeling that I have to compete and fight to win.

But Sue was different; she never fought with me or competed with me for anything. Instead, she petted me, gave in to me, spoilt me silly with treats and let me do whatever I wanted! Even if she started out by objecting to something I wanted to do, I could always manipulate her till I got my way and I swear Sue is another reason why I am today an expert on manipulating humans to get what I want from them!

But maybe she spoilt me so much because she knew that