

The Taming of the Kat Dog

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Hi. My name's Bianca and this is the story of how my sister and I found owners. We're dogs, you see, and dogs need owners. Not just any owners either. Dogs need the right owners. This story is about how we found ours.

My sister is called Kat, except it's Kat with a K not a C, because it's short for Katherina. We're pedigree Tibetan Terriers, which means when you buy us you get a history of all our parents and grandparents and great-grandparents and great-great-grandparents and ... well, you get the point.

I have a creamy-white coat and a button nose so cutie-scrumptious you could pop it on a cupcake and gobble it up. Kat's coat is black with a patch above her eye. Her nose is OK ... just not quite as snoodily-gorge as mine. Although, to be honest, it's not her looks that let her down. She could have been every bit as lovi-chumable as me if she wasn't so growly, bity, chew-the-wrong-thingsy and wee-where-you-shouldn't-y.

Kat is a bad dog.

Mrs Minola used to say that I was a Tibetan Terrier while Kat was a Tibetan Terror, and while I was pedigreeable, Kat was Pedi-disagreeable.

Mrs Minola is the lady who fed us and looked after us when we were very young but she wasn't a proper owner because she was always planning to sell us. She was the one who put an advert in the newspaper.

People would come to her house every day to see us. And everyone who came said how cuddi-yum-tum I was. Then Kat would walk in and do something naughty like bark so loudly that Mrs Minola spilt the tea ... or rip a newspaper to shreds ... or wander into the living room with Mrs Minola's best begonias between her teeth. Mrs Minola could have sold me easy-peasy but she said if she did that, she would never be rid of my naughty sister. She said she would not sell me until Kat had been sold first.

I didn't mind this all that much until I met Lucy. She was seven years old then and looking for a puppy. When she saw me it was puppy love at first sight. Then love at first tickle-behind-the-ear. Then love at first sneakily-giving-me-a-biscuit-when-Mrs-Minola-wasn't-looking. Lucy and I were destined to be together. That's just how it is when you meet your owner. You just know.

I really didn't want Kat to ruin it but still she came in with a toilet brush in her mouth and toilet paper wrapped all around her legs. Lucy thought this was funny until Mrs Minola explained her rule about selling Kat first. Lucy's parents made excuses about having parked on double yellow lines, but Lucy whispered in my ear, 'Don't worry, Bianca. I've got a plan. I'll be back. You're my puppy. OK?'

I couldn't have been happier hearing those words and I ran around in circles barking like mad while Kat went off to see what flavour the toilet water was today.

That night I was worried I might never see Lucy again so imagine my happy-joyiness when Lucy came back the next day! This time she had a boy with her. I heard her tell Mrs Minola that this was Peter, her older brother and that he had recently got enough birthday money to buy a puppy too.

This didn't seem like much of a plan to me. I had seen plenty of boys scared off by Kat's bad-behaviourings before.

Kat came in all growly-grumpy with a peskifarious look in her eyes.



Peter asked Mrs Minola her name and she said Kat and he laughed and said, 'What? A dog called cat?' This annoyed Kat so much that she knocked over a vase.

With speedy-whizz reactions, Peter leapt up and grabbed the vase to stop it smashing, which was really amazing to see. Then, even more unbelievably, he said to Kat, 'What a clever dog. How did you know I needed help practising my goal keeping skills?'

I've never seen Kat looked as confoundi-fused by anything but that didn't stop her pulling her next trick of doing a wee on the carpet. Except Peter saw what she was about to do and - as quick as a rabbit at a greyhound party - he dived down and scooped her up so that her wee went in a pot plant. Mrs Minola didn't look best pleased with that but Peter said, 'What a clever dog. How did you know that plant needed watering?'

That confusilounded both of us but before we knew what was going on, Peter had agreed to buy Kat, which meant ... that's right ... Lucy was allowed to buy me!

And that's how we got owners. Except that isn't the end of the story.

Kat and I went with Peter and Lucy to our new home. Lucy had made me a super snugly-warm bed-basket in her room so we could be together first thing in the morning and last thing at night. Peter put Kat in a kennel outside and we both had food bowls with our names on in the kitchen.

The problem was, Kat was still Kat. Which is another way of saying Kat was still a right old tricksi-pickle. Which is another way of saying Kat was a bad dog. Over the next few days she did lots of awful things:

She stole a whole packet of chocolate biscuits ...
She chased a man delivering a leaflet about pizzas ...
She scraped some wallpaper off the wall ...

Dug up three of the plants in the back garden and barked from half past three until half past four in the morning, even though she knew Lucy's mum had an important interview the next day ...

She hid the remote control so well that Lucy's dad had to order a new one and, while they were waiting for it to arrive, we were stuck with a fishing channel. Then, when the new remote control arrived she tore up the packaging and made a right old scrappy-mess ...

She weed just about everywhere ...

But the final straw was when she did something disgusti-pooling on a brand new rug ...

Lucy's parents were not best pleased but they couldn't do anything because Peter had bought Kat with his own money so it was up to him. If I had been Peter I would have sent my sister to the big kennel for unwanted dogs, but he didn't do that.

The day after Kat did the disgusti-pooling thing on the rug, Peter and Lucy called us down for dinner. Both our bowls were chocker-liciously full of rabbit, which is my favourite food, although it's the kind of rabbit that comes in a cans rather than the kind you have to chase around a field.

I got straight down to gobble-vouring it up but, as soon as Kat was about to get stuck-tucked in, Peter snatched up the bowl and said, 'Who gave my Kat this ready meal mush? This food is not good enough for my pedigree pup.' He took away the food but then he didn't give her anything instead and she had to go bed belly-starving.

The next day, Lucy's parents suggested we all go to the park. Kat loves the park because she can run around and fetch sticks and bother ducks. Peter put her lead on and led her up the path. Kat turned right out of the gate towards the park but Peter said, 'No, not that way. The park is this way.'

That struck me as odd because the park is to the right not the left, but I was still waiting on the doorstep for Lucy so I watched as Kat turned left.

Except then Peter said, 'Oh you daft dog, the park is to the right.' So she turned back again but he swapped his mind again and he kept doing it. Left right ... Right left ... Left right ... until Kat didn't know which way to go.

When we finally got to the park, Peter said to Kat, 'Do you want me to throw you a stick?' Kat barked a kind of 'Oo yes, please' kind of a bark, except Peter must have misunderstood because he said, 'No, you're quite right, throwing sticks is a bit pointless, isn't it?' Then he did an awful thing ... I can hardly bring myself to say it ... he snapped the stick into little bits.

This kind of weirdy-oddness went on for a few days and I was beginning to think that maybe Peter and Kat were well-suited because, although Kat was a Tibetan terror and pedi-disagreeable ... Peter was a bit the same.

Not that this made any difference to Lucy and me. We were the best most compati-perfect dog and owner ever to have lived ...

Or so I thought.

You see, the next day, we were all down the park: Lucy and me, Peter and Kat. Kat was busy bothering ducks and I was rolling in leaves when I heard Peter say to Lucy, 'Do you know what Lucy? I think my dog is much better trained than yours.'

Lucy laughed. I would have laughed too except dogs can't laugh so I carried on lying in the big pile of leaves and listening.

Lucy told Peter that he was mistaken because her dog was well behaved and never did any of the bad dog things that his did.

Peter said, 'I didn't say my dog was better *behaved*. I said she was better *trained* - and I can prove it. Let's both call our dogs and see which one comes quickest. If Bianca comes to you quicker than Kat comes to me then I'll buy you an ice cream. But if Kat is the first to get here then it proves she is better trained and you have to buy me one.'

Lucy agreed to the bet and they shook hands, which is what humans do when they want to show they're being serious. Then they both shouted our names.

'Bianca,' called Lucy.

'Kat dog,' yelled Peter.

I was really looking forward to getting that ice cream for Lucy, because I knew that there was NO WAY Kat would come running, not when there were perfectly good ducks to bother. I looked over my shoulder to see whether she had even heard but as I did - you'll never believe this - Kat boundy-ran straight past me.

I couldn't believe it. She was doing as she was told. I started to run too, but there was no way of catching up and she reached Peter before I got to Lucy. Lucy was confoundi-fused too but, to my relief, she wasn't upset.

She didn't mind buying Peter an ice cream. She even made it one with strawberry sauce and got one for herself too. Kat and I did our big puppy eyes thing so Peter and Lucy broke off bits of their ice creams for us.

It tasted SO nice. While I was licki-gobbling it up, I glanced over at Kat happily eating her ice cream. That's when I realised I had been wrong about her. Kat wasn't a bad dog. She just needed an owner who understood her, which is all any dog needs. It is what I have with Lucy and it is what Bianca has with Peter. And now we are all one big happy family and I can tell Kat is happy because she hardly ever wees on the rug ...

Except on very special occasions.