

Matilda's story by Anna Simpson

Matilda was the successor to the throne when our old Kelpie X Kara succumbed to arthritis, blindness and deafness at aged 14yo. Matilda we had from 9 weeks of age during Kara's last year in 2007. We got her for free from a Defence family in Katherine when we lived the Navy life in Darwin. Being Border collie x Lab, Matilda kept us on our toes, especially me the mum, as we also had a 4 month old baby at the time. Eve is now 9yo and Matilda will be 9yo on Feb 16, 2016.

Matilda was a cheeky puppy and would escape often as the fencing up on RAAF Base married quarters in Darwin left a lot to be desired – waist high fencing and a gap of about 20 cm at the bottom – so Matilda would slide herself under and romp around the neighbourhood. I knew where she was because pretty much every second house had a dog or two so they would alert me. I would call her, she would look back and ignore me and carry on her way until she had enough...which could be 30mins later.

She was always the social girl with other dogs and wanted to play. At 9yo she is selective and prefers male dogs but not little ones (she was attacked by a Shihtzu when she was about 1yo, no damage but scared the bejeebers out of her). After our move to WA, (where we lived for 5 years), we had a secure yard however when the gate was left open, she would take herself up to the park up the road. I would sit and wait for her to finish her sniffs because she ignored me until then. Our next dog will go to obedience training for the sake of recall purposes alone.

Matilda is special as she brings happiness and joy to our family. You can't help but love her as she is so loving and gives you kisses. You go to pat her and she instantly expects you to give her a tummy rub. It is just natural for our family to have a dog and cats and since 1993 that has the way it has been. The only thing that annoys me about Matilda is her lack of socialising with other dogs as she would have had so much fun over the past years (after 2yo she started being selective). I still let her sniff other dogs but watch the body language. Give her a person and she's like 'pat me, pat me' which is my favourite thing about her. She is very social with people and that is an endearing quality I think. She loves kids too since she grew up with them.

She also gets on great with our youngest cat Bailey who is almost 10 yo. They torment each other by playing nudge the cat/dog. They sleep close to each other and have a good friendship. Wilson, our 15yo ex YAPS cat, (adopted when he was 8mths old), doesn't get on with her, but there is no aggressiveness really.

Matilda makes me smile when she is actually interacting with another dog as she isn't always a social girl ... it brings me joy to see this even if it is for a short time. I also liked the fact she had concerns for the three 5 week old kittens we fostered during Cyclone Ita last year. Matilda just wanted to watch them and lick their bums; her mothering instinct came into place. These days the only naughty things she does would be if the two cats are close together sitting, Matilda takes it upon herself to be referee and rouses at them. It seems like she is jealous of Wilson being close to 'her Bailey'.

