

Pluto's story by Melanie Reynolds

His name was Pluto, six years old, French Mastiff and 40kg of muscle. I was too terrified to even pat him when we were introduced; he wasn't the kind of dog you would mess with. My partner, his master at the time, said "This is Pluto, he has the biggest heart". AND biggest teeth I thought. He was a protector. But this guard dog does in fact have the biggest heart and softness soul. He loves children, likes to wear a blanket on cold nights, and follows you around after a bath until you rub him dry with a big soft towel.

Fair enough he thought my two cats were for dinner when they first met, especially considering my very friendly cat Chase had never seen a dog, and casually walk over to introduce himself.

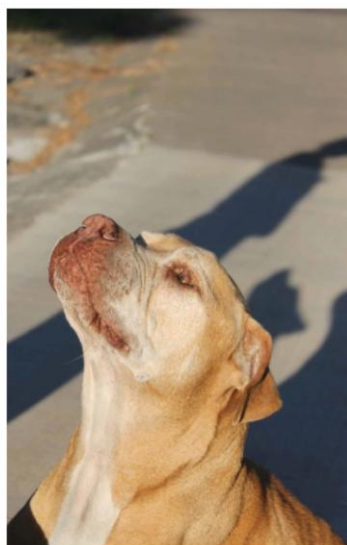
After some training Pluto and the cats ate dinner side by side, and wherever Pluto went, Chase went to, sharing his bed and lying in the sun together. Whenever other dogs came to visit, Chase would casually walk up to them rubbing against them, knowing he was protected by Pluto's presence, the Alpha in the pack.

After my partner and I split, I fought for custody of Pluto; I couldn't bear to be without him. I slowly became his master, his job was to protect me, and my job was to love & care for him (not a very tough job), we relied on each-other. When the adoption was final, I drove my brand new ford sedan to dealership and traded it in for the same model in a hatch back.... room for Pluto. My accountant says it was the worst decision I could have made. But every weekend when Pluto and I drive to the river to explore and swim, I smile knowing it was the best decision I ever made.

Pluto is twelve now and still patrols the yard, proudly protecting me. I admire him as I watch him pass on his knowledge to his one year old puppy apprentice Eva. The new addition to the family from YAPS, which Chase is yet to approve of as she is now the one who gets to curl up next to Pluto on his bed.

Eva's story by Mel Reynolds

Light Amber eyes stared up at me from the YAPS website..... I didn't realise then, but this little rescue puppy named Eva was destined to bring light, energy, entertainment and friendship to my home. The first time we met, she was the only pup sitting quietly against the chain wire fence enclosure while all the other dogs with her and next door where running laps and barking. I'll never forget when she looked up to me with those eyes, as if she knew I was coming and she was waiting there for me. She appeared



to be a new soul, but she knew where she belonged – with me.

The next step was to introduce her to my much loved protector, and best friend Pluto, my 11yo 40kg French Mastiff, who has been a lone dog most his life, and his best friend, my cat Chase. Pluto isn't what you'd call social when it comes to other dogs, but the friendship between him and Eva was instant and natural. Eva has been with us a year now, and every day she surprises me and fills me with happiness. Yes, she's still a big puppy, has dug many holes, eaten two hammocks, countless shoes and at least one cactus. But her endless energy and happiness has provided Pluto with a friend for life, my cat with an entertaining love/hate relationship, and me with a loving puppy guard dog apprentice, who is the most loyal, playful, willing to please and funny dog I have met yet.

I am certainly one of the lucky ones.