

Paddington's Story – Part 3

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Lola, I decided was fibbing. It had been a week since my traumatic arrival and so far there were no signs my pets were going to get rid of me. In fact, they seemed totally besotted with me, as I was with them. However, with my future still hanging in the balance, I decided it was wise to cement the relationship with as much love as possible, just in case.

And so by the end of the second week, I felt confident enough to stand up to Lola's poisonous tongue.

'Lola.'

She was lying on the deck soaking up the sun's rays. She didn't lift her head or even look at me. 'What pup?'

'Will you play with me?'

She coughed and opened her eyes. 'What? Are you joking or something? I don't play.'

'Why not?'

'I'm a lady and ladies don't do such things.'

'A lady,' I didn't understand why that would stop her playing.

'I've won lots of ribbons and trophies in the show ring,' she boasted. 'I have champion blood lines and I don't play.'

'But my mother and father are champions and my mother played with me.'

She turned her head and glared at me. 'Go away pup.'

'Please play with me Lola.' I was getting desperate.

She coughed and sat up. 'I can't, I don't know how.'

'You don't know how to play?' I sat down and burst into a peel of laughter. That got a reaction I hadn't expected. She jumped to her feet and towered over me.

'If you value your life pup, I wouldn't laugh quite so readily.'

She grabbed my ear in her teeth and yanked. I yelped and pet Sooz came rushing to my aid.

'Lola, will you leave his ears alone. Look what you've done to the poor little thing.'

I pushed my head into Sooz hand, as she removed a piece of fur from my tattered ear. 'Yes Lola, look what you've done to me?'

Grr. 'I've told you pup, keep out of my way.'

I retreated behind Sooz's legs and peered around her ankles at Lola. She wasn't at all concerned by Sooz's words and lumbered off to find another quiet place to lie down. What was it with Lola that she couldn't play? I had to know.

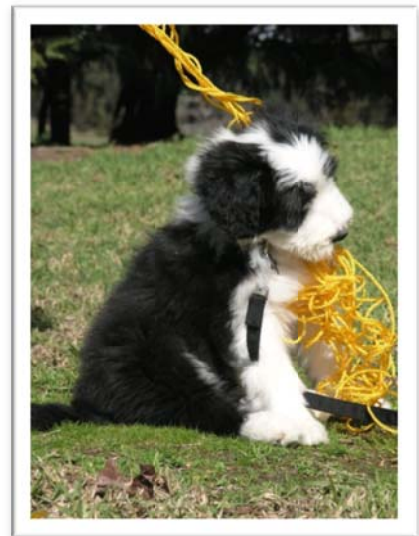
I found a piece of bare skin between Sooz's trousers and socks and sliced my tongue across it. She leant forward to scratch me behind my good ear and I took advantage of the attention and rolled onto my back for a tummy tickle. She eventually rose and left me basking in the spring sunshine with my legs in the air. Except, I didn't want to lie around, I wanted to play.

I rolled back onto my feet and ambled into the room my pets called the indoor outdoor room. Inside were two trampolines, one for Lola and one for me. We used them during the day when we needed to rest. Off to one side was a low plastic bucket full of toys. I pushed my nose through the selection and found a ball with a rope coming out of either end of it. That would do nicely. I picked up the rope end and dragged the ball over to where Lola lay.

She looked at me out of the corner of her eye. 'Get lost pup. I told you, I don't play.'

'Please Lola.' I shook the rope as hard as possible and the ball ping ponged, hitting her in the face. She was on her feet quicker than I'd ever seen her move.

Without further ado, I took off towards the deck with the rope still in my mouth.



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'I'm going to teach you once and for all, I'm the boss around here.'

She had me cornered behind the Palomia tree. But I'd learnt the art of escape when fleeing from the cat at my first home. Lola tried to bluff me into thinking she was going to cut me off on the right, while all along she intended veering to the left. I knew that old trick and called her bluff and as Lola changed direction at the last moment, I proceeded to the right and escaped her teeth.

I still had the rope in my mouth and this hindered my escape somewhat and Lola surprised me. She was agile for her age and swung around fast sinking her teeth into the other end of the rope. We looked at each other down the taut rope, with the ball bobbing in the middle of us.

As her eyes glared at me, I pulled back on the rope and managed to pull her across a section of the deck. I was extremely pleased with my effort and about to mention it to her, when I lost my footing and found myself being dragged back across the ground I'd won.

The trouble was Lola was bigger and heavier than me, nineteen kilos heavier, to be precise, and she was reeling me in so fast, I feared losing my life to her temper. I decided to let go of the rope.

She fell back on her haunches as the rope slackened and the ball hit her in the chest. I was in for it now, I thought, taking a few quick steps backward.

However, instead of attacking, she stood up and shook out her immaculate long coat, while wearing a satisfied expression on her lips. She sauntered past me towards her spot on the patio, with my toy in her mouth, while growling a low throaty warning.

When I regained normal breathing, and control of my legs, I strolled past her. She had her head and paw resting on a section of the rope and her eyes were closed.

'Don't even think about it pup,' she snarled without looking at me.

Darn, this game looked to be over. However, I wasn't about to give up and went back to the bucket of toys. How lucky was I to have so many to choose from? Rummaging through the range I came upon a flexible ball. That would do nicely, I thought, carrying it out to the patio scrunching it with my teeth. It returned a high pitched squeak surprising me. I pressed my teeth in and out making it squeak continuously. I liked this toy and the noise it emitted.

Lola opened her eyes. 'You really want me to bite you, don't you pup?' she growled. 'Go somewhere else and make that stupid noise, before I get cross.'

'No,' I said feeling brave. 'I want my ball and rope back.'



'No,' her chilling tone scared me. 'Didn't your mother teach you any manners? You can't have it – now go away.'

'Please Lola. We could play tug and have fun.'

'When are you going to learn pup, I won't play with you.'

Pet Pete must have heard the squeaking ball and walked out from the house. I wagged my tail at him and heard Lola's tail thump on the ground and she lifted her head smiling lovingly at him.

I was starting to see how two faced she could be.

'Hello Paddington. I see you and Lola are playing nicely together. Give me the ball and I'll throw it for you.'

If only he knew how she hated me and I wondered how to tell him that Lola didn't play. Before I could try and tell him, he took the ball from me and rolled it along the patio. I'd not seen this game before, but it looked fun and so I chased after it.

I picked it up and looked at him.

'Come here Paddington. Give me the ball.'

I wasn't sure about giving it back to him. What if he kept it like Lola did with my other toy? Lola rose silently to her feet and wandered over to Pete.

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'You want to play as well Lola? Come on Paddington, fetch the ball.'

I stood looking at them both, uncertain. Pete approached me and prised the ball from my teeth and rolled it again.

Okay I get it, chase the ball and give it back and he'll throw it. I liked this game. Pete rolled it again and this time Lola chased after it and got to it before me. She picked it up and ran to the deck with it.

'Come on Lola, fetch it back,' boomed Pete.

'Yes, Lola. We're playing,' I yapped.

'You want the ball you come and get it pup,' she growled.

I was relieved when Pete walked past me and took the ball from her. I followed him back to his throwing position and waited for him to roll it again. I was faster this time and jumped after the ball as soon as it touched the ground.

I howled as I felt teeth sink into my ankle.

'What are you doing?'

'I told you pup, we don't play around here.'

'But Pete's playing with us,' I grumbled, trailing after her as she picked up the ball.

'Lola, stop nipping.' It was the first time I'd heard Pete use a stern voice. 'You okay little fellow?' He bent down to me and picked up my back leg to inspect it.

I sliced my tongue across his hand to let him know I was fine. I wanted to play ball and no amount of biting from Lola was going to put me off.

I showed my enthusiasm by standing on my back legs and placing my front feet against his legs.

I barked loudly at him.

'Getting the hang of it, little fellow?' He laughed at me, while prising the ball from Lola's teeth.

'Okay I'll throw it one more time. Then I have chores to do, or I'll be in trouble with her indoors.'

I wasn't sure what he meant, as I raced after the ball with Lola in hot pursuit. I got to it first, but Lola was determined to take it away from me.

She stood over me and laughed. 'Nobody to rescue you now pup.'

I looked around for Pete, but he'd disappeared leaving me to Lola's mercy.

She dropped the ball and grabbed my ear. 'When are you going to learn you can't win around here?' Her voice was muffled by my fur in her mouth and she spat out a fur ball onto the deck.

'Lola, I don't understand why you don't like me?'

'Pete and Sooz are my pets. In the past it was always, Gromit this, Gromit that, Gromit, Gromit, Gromit, Gromit,' she spat out another fur ball before continuing. 'But when Gromit went to the big kennel in the sky, it was just them and me. And then you came along to spoil it.'

'Who's Gromit?'

'Never you mind.' She sank her teeth into my ear again and I yelped.

Sooz came out from the kitchen and waved a stern finger, while using a firm voice. 'Lola, stop it. This is not acceptable behaviour. Be nice to Paddington.'

Sooz picked me up and cuddled me and kissed me and I kissed her cheek feeling much better. At least Sooz's loved me.

I looked down at Lola from Sooz's arms and jeered at her.

'You can't hide up there forever pup. There will be plenty of opportunity to continue our discussion.'

'Can't we be friends, Lola?'

'It's Lady Lola to you pup,' she murmured.

Turning her back on my plea, she walked back to her favourite spot on the patio and lay down.



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'And my name's Paddington, not pup,' I yapped from the safety of Sooz's arms. I would, I decided, find a way to win Lola over or possibly die trying.