



kill". They would have torn Toby to pieces, had he not been rescued by Jane who happened to be walking past at that moment. Toby says: "Jane brought me close to her bosom and we have been inseparable ever since. Do you have any bread?"

When Jane and Toby emigrated to Australia, Toby's journey was not an easy one. He was caged in a small tomb, not bigger than a hat box; transported in darkness within the belly of a roaring bird that flew relentlessly across many seas. Some uniformed-humans who were also within the belly of this big bird took great pity on him in his imprisoned state. They took turns visiting him in his decompression chamber. He was only allowed water; nil-by-mouth and was only able to do pees and poos in the box.

Upon arriving in Australia, Toby was held under quarantine for four weeks. He was only given access to one tree to pee on, twice a week. Toby attributes his skill in urine-withholding to this time. "The tree smelt amazing by the time I left" Toby said. "I had practically written my memoirs on it."

Toby is six and a half. His birthday is thought to be August because his biological-human, Shane believes that he is a Leo. He has incredible bowel control, and can urinate up to fifty times in one walk. "He's got the strongest holding power of any animal I have ever met." Adopted-Uncle Greg says.

Toby works as front-of-house and armchair warmer for the family business. Biological-humans Shane and Jane clearly adore him; their lives are intertwined. A painting of Toby has pride of place on one wall in the dining room and Toby's possessions are deliberately positioned in his favourite places. Growing up in a tavern in Essex with Jane, Toby learnt social skills. He knew right from wrong; although he was lively company at the tavern during peak hours, Toby would sit for hours in silent solitude, thinking. Toby is a food hoarder. He says it is a result of his beginnings, on the streets of London. When fed, Toby likes to take the choicest piece of meat from the bowl and hide it. Nonetheless, he is undeniably generous at heart; has been known on occasion to bring a tender delicious chicken-neck to his adopted Uncle Greg. Greg was hungry, and needed a good feed — it was as if Toby knew.

Toby's relationship with his adopted-Uncle Greg (pictured) is one of bachelorship. They understand each other. Greg looked into Toby's eyes on the day of their first meeting and they both knew at once that there was a brotherhood there that would not be interrupted by DNA or 'No dogs allowed' signage. Toby has his own bedroom when he comes to stay with Greg. Greg sleeps on the floor in the front room of his apartment while Toby luxuriates on the bed. It's how they both like it. Toby is allowed to steer Uncle Greg's car along dirt roads, right out in the bush. It

took a while to learn how not to sound the horn in the car, but Toby is nothing if not determined. The pair attend music festivals in Goulburn. Toby once wandered off and Greg was unsure of his whereabouts. He looked across the stage of the band and saw Toby sitting beside the drummer onstage. "He has good taste," says Greg.

Although Toby's life in Braidwood is almost entirely happy, I can't resist asking about the night of his kidnapping. Toby gets a far-away look in his eyes as he recalls the event ...



Dog tales

Kristy Moyle speaks the Queen's doglish

AS I SIT AT THE TABLE on the balcony of TorPeas restaurant, I notice a human holding open a car door and talking to its interior. "Do you want to get out?" the human asks the seemingly empty car.

As if in reply, a short, well-built two-toned Jack Russell materialises from nowhere. He sniffs thoughtfully at the front tyre of the utility and looks up at the human, named Greg, considerably awaiting Greg's next suggestion. The two of them seem to agree that walking toward me is their next good idea and so they do; although, Toby makes a point of checking the wee-mails on the nature strip before sauntering over to join the interview.

Looking at Toby, you could be fooled into thinking that this well-kept, clearly well-fed and altogether cool-cat of a dog has lived on Easy Street his whole life. The truth is startling, but certainly makes for an interesting read and is only somewhat embellished by the author.

According to his biological humans Shane, Jane, and his adopted Uncle Greg, Toby started his life as a homeless, pedigree puppy living rough on the streets of London. One fateful day, Toby was travelling through Essex, London when he was set upon by a pack of stray alley cats (pictured). They were feral; "high on the 'nip and out for the

The story of Toby's kidnapping:

WHEN JANE AND SHANE REALISED that Toby was missing, the whole of Braidwood went looking for him (okay, 20 people) in their cars. A very distraught Jane put up posters, desperately searching for any clue as to his whereabouts. Greg, Shane and Jane searched endlessly, asking anybody who could possibly know and driving all over the region.

Toby was found at 3.00am near Tarago, freezing by the side of the road; a dog, lost. He was taken fifty kilometres away, near Tarago and dumped. Heroically he returned at the crack of dawn the following day; he had been missing for 24 hours.

He was found by Miss Roma, a "wise old bush bitch" female cattle dog cross extraordinaire. Miss Roma had a gut instinct that Toby would be near Tarago; she insisted that her human companion drive her fifty kilometres north. The pair found Toby, pointing in the direction of Braidwood, but completely unsure of how to get back home.

Of this experience, Toby is reluctant to speak of his kidnapers. He remains eternally-vigilant; unlikely to get in another car, regardless of chicken necks or even scotch fillet.

"I thought it was this great big adventure" Toby says. "I slept out with these chickens and they had so much gossip, and poo. I painted their chook house roof red, so to speak, but soon realised that there was something wrong. My inner-canine told me so. I let my paws lead me back out



towards the road. Miss Roma found me there, travelling in her human's ute."

"I think Toby fancies me," says Miss Roma "But I'm far too committed to my future career as a private detective to think of romance." Miss Roma has a large number of business cards urinated on the telegraph poles on Braidwood. She is also considering a future career in telepathy, but the pay is not very good.

Toby has lived a full and at times very dramatic life.

He has no fear of any dog. He diffuses any situation and uses his English class, his street smarts and his unfailing trust in the universe to get him through the tough times. Greg thought initially that 'TorPeas' was called 'Toby's'. Toby believes that it was simply a typo that resulted in it being anything else.

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