

What makes a Dog?

Ever since he could remember, even from those dimly distant times in the shop, he knew he was destined for something special. It was no coincidence that he was a 'goD'. Why, the brightly coloured sign even said so. At that stage in his young life he couldn't quite make out the other words, but that one definitely stuck.

He was the spitting image of the little statue on a plinth near the cash register. Sleek dark coat, eyes of gold. Regal bearing. Untouchable. Make no mistake: he was Extraordinary.

He was used to being admired by the scurrying shoppers. In fact, he quite enjoyed the attention. The insistent tapping on the glass, not so much. Like a snooty waiter, he became expert at ignoring the noise. Let them tap, he thought to himself imperiously. If I had opposable thumbs like these idiots, I'd put them to much better use.

But as the weeks passed, and his companions disappeared one by one, doubt crept in. As special as he was, didn't goDs also need a pack? The statue, now chilly and remote, started to haunt him.

While considering this unpleasant reality, he becomes aware of a thin-faced boy, shyly peeking from a distance. Eyes a murky green. Week after week, the boy kept appearing, edging a little closer to the glass each time.

After an almost unbearable amount of pondering, the day finally arrived. His day. He was stuffed unceremoniously into a clunky plastic crate, adorned with an abnormally large red ribbon. His confidence rebounded. He knew what this meant - he'd seen it many times before. Like a king entering his palanquin, he was going to fulfil his destiny, heading to new lands and luxurious surroundings of gold, grapes fed to him lovingly, lording it over his new subjects, ready to pander to his every whim...

After much jostling and whispering, he comes to earth with a thud. Squinting in the light, he emerges cautiously, ready to behold his Majestic New Life.

Wait. This wasn't the lavish gold palace he expected, darting nervous glances around the room. This was dustier, barer, more modest. Not a grape to be seen. Where was his plinth? His old self would have turned up his nose and scuttled back into the dark plastic cave. But goD or Dog, it didn't really matter anymore, as he gazed into those familiar boyish green eyes, now transformed into shining emeralds. 'Hello there', the boy murmured with a soft smile.

Realisation flashes with a jolt. He may have been the gift, but every part of him knew instantly that he was about to receive so much more. All he needed to do was accept his new-found pack of one. In that moment, he felt a surge of love and adoration more powerful than he had ever thought possible. Almost ~~goD~~ Dog-like.