



PRINCE

Edward Drobinski

PRINCE



By

Edward Drobinski

Copyright © 2013 by Edward M. Drobinski
All rights reserved.

*Inspired by Daisy, the
greatest dog anyone
ever had. I'm not sure if
she can yet read, but
eventually she will.*

Special thanks to Patti Smith, D.H.Lawrence,
David Foster Wallace, George Saunders, Jonathan
Franzen and Tinker-Bell.

Note: Though this book is intended to be for
intelligent children, many teenagers and some
young at heart adults, there are a minimum of
passages (roughly 2%) which would only be of
possible interest to grownups.

Table of Contents

Chapter 1	1
Chapter 2	17
Chapter 3	40
Chapter 4	55
Chapter 5	71
Chapter 6	91
Chapter 7	108
Chapter 8	151
Chapter 9	173
Chapter 10	231
Chapter 11	270
Chapter 12	284
Chapter 13	311
Chapter 14	346
Chapter 15	379
Chapter 16	392
Chapter 17	439
Chapter 18	459

Chapter 1

He couldn't remember how he got there, but here he was alone, locked inside a tiny frigid metal cage in the dark. He was not aware of having committed any crime, being arrested, read his rights, having proper representation, standing a trial of his peers, being convicted, or sentenced. Rather than thinking of what he wasn't, had he known the word, he could have described his situation in an affirmative manner using the term "railroaded." Scared and bewildered he let out a soft, crying yelp and heard the entreaty come back to him in seven echoes. He could barely make out the other cages or their occupants as the early April, 2012 dawns' first feeble light tried to filter through closed green blinds. But his vision was adequate to be reasonably certain that his fellow inmates were dogs, just like him. More intense scrutiny made it apparent that the others were not exactly just like him. Some were furry. Some had short hair. Some were larger. Some were smaller.

He had a unique coat that was deceptive to some. It appeared skimpy to the untrained eye, but it was thick enough to withstand extended sub-zero temperatures and a less than competent attempt at a bite. Its background was as white as fresh snow and seemed to almost "glow" in the night, making it

PRINCE

Page 2

impossible for him to hide anywhere other than in the bright sunshine. His randomly distributed black spots bore no deference to any other shade or color. They appeared throughout his strong, lean body and graceful, handsome head. He was a proud, one year old Dalmatian.

He was also a proud, one year old Dalmatian in severe trouble. He was a prisoner in a place where he and his fellow inmates were kept devoid of sanitary facilities and his keen sense of smell made him uncomfortably aware of this fact. "Ooooooh boy," he thought. "That tan boxer near me must be having stomach problems." He looked at the culprit, who was lying flat on the base of his cage, head on his front paws and eyes impassively open, but seemingly far away, perhaps in a happier time. The placement of the cages got his attention. All the others he could see were right next to and touching each other, but his was separated from the rest by a few feet. He concluded that whoever placed the cages, either considered him special or an outcast. Deciding that the latter was a more likely possibility, he thought; "So, they want to keep me away from everyone else. Do they? We'll see about that!" He analyzed his cage door. He saw that what kept it closed was a silver metal catch, operated by a spring, accessed from the outside. He thought; "If I could just lift that thing a little." He partially put his right paw through the cage wire

PRINCE

Page 3

and his long, hard claws were able to hook into the locking mechanism. "Just one strong pull and I'm out of here."

A noise at the front door got his attention and he curtailed his locksmith imitation. He heard metal rubbing on metal, a screech and with a whoomph the door flew open. In walked two busily chatting, female humans. One of them pointed at him and said to the other, trailing woman; "That's the one we got in last night. He's been trained to fight, so we keep him away from the others."

The middle-aged, minimally overweight, talking woman proceeded to a plastic laminated, faux wood-grained desk and dropped her bag and dirty pale orange quilted jacket. The other, a thin, smiling, older woman walked directly toward his cage and stopped a foot shy. She put her hands on her knees, leaned a bit forward, pushed her dangling, long gray, hair back, looked right at him and said in a childish voice; "Is this the new little terror?" He knew she was speaking to him, but he heard; "Izzutilror," a word not yet in his vocabulary. He looked up at her kind face, opened his eyes widely and excitedly put his front paws up on the front of the cage and wagged his tail wildly.

Her companion, who was now opening wall cabinets behind the desk in order to retrieve dog food, answered; "Be careful,

PRINCE

Page 4

Marian. He's strong, full of Dalmatian energy and he knows how to kill. He's going to be a hard one to place."

Marian walked away from him, pulled a cord downward and the blinds attached to the huge, east facing, picture window magically rose, allowing a full blast of pure sunshine to stream through the single room occupancy dungeon. It was as if spring had suddenly come to a desolate, cruel island. She walked back to his lonely prison and kept her eyes on the spotted dog, while she said; "Debby, are you sure he's pure Dalmatian? It looks to me like he's got some Lab in him. Look at the shape of his head. Dalmatians are more severely tapered."

He thought; "Cut the chatter and get me out of here!"

While she poured dry food into plastic dishes, Debby said; "That's what the people who brought him in last night said. I don't really know."

Marian took a double-length chain leash from her light blue, quilted jacket pocket and chirped; "I'm going to take him for a walk."

He understood "walk" well enough and anxiously pawed at the closed door, while standing on his hind legs.

Debby liltingly replied; "I don't think that's a good idea."

PRINCE

Page 5

Marian said; "That's ridiculous. He can't sit in there forever." She reached for the latch and asked; "What's his name?"

Debby shrugged and sarcastically said; "Killer."

Marian looked down at the anxious, tail wagging puppy and said; "I think I see the outline of a crown in the pattern of some of his spots. I'm going to call him Prince."

Prince still didn't know what all the conversation was about and his stomach was gurgling. "Please, please open the door before we're both sorry."

Debby said; "Okay, take him at your own peril. Just let me give him some food before you leave. At least this way he won't be desperate to take off after any edible prey."

Marian opened the latch and attached the double length chain to his deep blue, leather collar. Debby put a dish full of lamb and vegetables on the floor near him. He was torn between his conflicting needs to escape, eat and relieve himself. He chose eating and wolfed down the contents of the bowl, then instinctively ran to the closest door. Marian had to take five long, quick steps to keep up, her right leash hand stretched to the maximum. She hoped it remained in its socket.

She stood with him at the door and reached down to pat his head, getting his attention. He looked up with big brown eyes, as if to say; "What's wrong now?"

PRINCE

Page 6

Marian touched his nose and said; "Prince." He kept looking and she repeated the procedure. He liked the sound. She opened the door and he bolted out of it, stopping near a close-by cottonwood tree, squatted and thought; "Whew, just made it."

Now that he had eaten, answered nature's call and was substantially free, Prince stood still and gazed at his new world. Marian began a steadily paced walk after he was through with his "business," and as a result, Prince had to curtail his visual, wide ranging inspection of the great outdoors. To avoid being unpleasantly yanked by the collar, he bounded to get at Marian's side, happy to be here with her. He raised his head and saw her hazel eyes concentrating not on him, but focused diligently on the road ahead. His feelings were momentarily hurt, but he acknowledged that pragmatism had its place on a road with no shortage of obstacles. He didn't realize that he was ahead of many humans in this regard.

They were on a thin dirt path in well-mowed grass, just beginning to display its first signs of seasonal greening. At times he was on the tiny trail created by other canine escapees from the "Corrales Humane Shelter," and at times she was. In a very short time they reached a wider dirt path bordering a ditch, which contained slow moving, muddy water and they made a right turn. Prince desperately needed a drink and started to

PRINCE

Page 7

descend the bank. Marian remained on the higher ground, but stopped to allow him his requirement. He drank heartily, with his front paws in the edge mire and entertained the notion of getting totally soaked, but decided not to, at least not yet, only a few minutes since walk commencement. He glanced at the sun's position, still so close to the eastern horizon and thought; "There's still a long day ahead of me."

He knew that he would have to shake off any water that was retained by his thick coat and might get some on her. The sunny April morning was warm enough for him to get wet, but Marian still needed a jacket and probably would not appreciate moisture on her unprotected face or blue denim pants. Warmer weather would steadily be coming and Prince didn't want to risk offending his companion before the heat's arrival.

He tried to elevate, but quickly discovered that the bank was steeper than his thirsty, non-inspection first indicated. It was easy to go down, but impossible to get back up. He tried a few times, each one resulting in a quick slide back down. With wide, worried eyes he looked up at Marian. She was watching his antics and also keeping an eye out for other dog-walkers. She was concerned that the little trained fighter might attack an unsuspecting human or canine approach. She tried to lead him away from his successful point of descent to a successful point of ascent, but he stubbornly stayed there and

PRINCE

Page 8

kept trying, despite messy failure after messy failure. After he was exhausted and hopeless, he followed her lead and soon came to a spot where the bank was more graduated. He easily climbed up and felt enormously relieved. He looked up at her face as she kindly laughed at him. As smart a dog as he thought he was, in a matter of minutes Marian, without speaking had gently taught him two big lessons. The first was; "Trust your companion." And the second bit of previously unknown wisdom was that; "You don't have to come up the same way you go down."

They continued walking and Prince stayed on the path for the most part, but made frequent short excursions into the brush when his nostrils detected something of interest. Marian was glad to accommodate his willfulness as long as he went slowly when off the beaten path, as she could easily trip over unseen hazards hidden in the tall, dense foliage. He had a tremendous advantage over her in this regard, as if he stumbled on one paw, he could easily remain erect on the other three. On the other hand, if Marian lost the full use of one leg, it would be quite a task to remain standing and moving on one. It would be akin to hopping on a pogo stick, which could be hilarious fun when done privately at home, but not something one necessarily wanted to display to the whole outside world. She led him across a rusting iron bridge, which held the last vestiges of red paint, traversing the water and she tried to lead him back in the

PRINCE

Page 9

direction from which they had come. He didn't want to go back to the shelter and he sat down, showing passive resistance. He looked at her face, currently encircled by the sun's glow behind her, shook his head negatively and if he could speak, would have said; "No. No. No!"

She wasn't certain of a plan of action, as other dogs she had walked had already received some degree of training and would not display an out and out refusal to obey. She tugged at his chain and managed to move his neck. He made a low growl. She nervously looked at her wristwatch and it told her that she had no more than ten minutes to get Prince moving in her direction, or she would face the likelihood of being late for work. This was not a gigantic obstacle to most, but she was a college professor and the class would leave in her absence, effectively transforming a few minute's piece of tardiness to an hour's worth. Worse, she could envision a command performance before the wrinkled, paper encrusted, financially oriented Dean. After assuring the tight lipped smiling, affable "Dean Concern" that she was indeed quite all right, she would be required to sit through a generalistic dissertation on the morality of being a responsible, timely citizen, while she forfeited her lunch hour for the vast enlightenment. Assuming she managed not to regurgitate the lunch she had not eaten on "Dean Pedantic's" busy, but neatly and properly arranged desk, she would be then

PRINCE

Page 10

benefitted by hearing the "secret" of how some parents and students might make the case that their tuitions should be reduced because of no-show professors. The tedious show would continue until she penitently showed concern, indicated unfortunate agreement, sympathized with and prattled understanding of his delicate, difficult position, promised to no longer sin, genuflected thankfulness for "Dean Dullard's" precious time and his kind consideration and was grateful and appreciative for the "New" wisdom she had just gleaned for the third time this semester.

"Yuck!!! And all this just because this little monstrous ingrate would not move in her direction," she thought.

She again tugged at his chain and Prince looked at her with a hint of indignation in his expression, as if to say; "You've got to be kidding." Marian stared at him and showed that she was annoyed by shrugging her entire body and lightly stamping her foot. Resigning herself to a command performance before the Dean, which she decided had humorous potential, especially if she finished his predictable sentences for him, she sat down on the ground next to proud and willful Prince, saying; "Maybe you have the right idea." The two viewed the dirty ditch water, which ran slowly and made the only sound audible to them, as it tumbled over the bed's rocky obstacles, happily gurgling, either in defiance of or amusement with the tiny, unsuccessful road

PRINCE

Page 11

blocks. The stream knew it was on its way somewhere unknown to it and couldn't be stopped.

When his mind tired of the persistent, habitual water flow, Prince turned to Marian and was confused. She was still eyeing the stream with a dreamy, contented and subdued expression. He was accustomed to humans pulling him around and using sticks to get him to do their bidding. His response to that type of treatment required no brainwork on his part. Instinctively, he deferred to the biggest stick, not seeing any choice in the matter. But, once out of harm's way, he would do his best to thwart whatever wishes the stick-holders displayed. He convinced some of his fellow gladiators to work as a team. One would create a diversion, like pretending to be after a mouse inside the house. When the guard investigated, Prince and the others would supplement their rations, with refrigerated people food and no one would know the better. Unless his friend Ramon was on duty, when no one was watching he'd do his business on the kitchen floor. All his brother jail-mates had access to the kitchen, so nobody could be sure of the culprit and no one would dare hurt any of the dogs because they were worth money. This was the dim, green paper; "guiding light" which dictated the ugly lives of the sweating, three day unshaven, bald-headed men who thought that they owned him and his fellow sufferers. Prince would watch and secretly laugh as one of his low-ranking

PRINCE

Page 12

captors performed his clean-up job, often gagging in the process. Prince was proud to be a stink-making subversive.

But, none of that seemed to apply this morning. Her tugs were gentle and now she seemed to be almost deferring to his wishes.

He looked into her eyes, getting her attention back from the turbulent ditch. She sighed and he thought he detected a note of worry. He stood up, rubbed his face against her cheek and took a step back toward the dreaded shelter. Marian eyed him curiously, stood up, rubbed his head and followed him back where she wanted to take him.

After covering half the distance, straight down the clear, even path, she said; "You are a strange puppy." He didn't know what she had said, but correctly assumed she was talking to him. He couldn't quite put a paw on the tone of her voice, but was somewhat concerned that it might contain a bit of misplaced misunderstanding. Prince turned his head back toward her, furrowed his brow and squinted his eyes as if to say; "I don't understand. Isn't this what you wanted me to do?"

Marian stopped, reached down and ran her free hand along his back, still home to a bit of drying mud, simultaneously saying; "But a very special, nice one."

They continued on their short journey, along the dirt path, over an unpainted, iron bridge spanning the water and through the tiny trail in the burgeoning grass, to the black painted,

Thank You for previewing this eBook

You can read the full version of this eBook in different formats:

- HTML (Free /Available to everyone)
- PDF / TXT (Available to V.I.P. members. Free Standard members can access up to 5 PDF/TXT eBooks per month each month)
- Epub & Mobipocket (Exclusive to V.I.P. members)

To download this full book, simply select the format you desire below

