

Chapter 4

Being a mother ...

It was 1981 and my second birthday was due, when Jenny decided that I was to be mated and produce a family. She investigated all the GSP kennels and decided which kennel would provide the father. My new mate was to be an American from California with the nickname of 'Hank the Yank'. His real name was very distinguished – *Starlite's Greif von Kazia*.

When the time came, we took a long drive into the countryside. It was summer time and Jenny and I were enjoying our run in her new black and silver sports car. I still



Jenny and I and the new sports car

slid out from under the seatbelt whenever she came to a sudden stop, but this car was very comfortable, and, as Jenny often said, was like sitting in the cockpit of an aeroplane.

As we drove along, the houses became fewer and the gum trees became larger and more prolific. We arrived at a farm, drove through the old gate and up the winding driveway towards the

farmhouse. There were GSPs everywhere and the first one to greet us was Hank, the one who was to be my mate.

Hank was standing by two female GSPs. He was liver and white ticked in colouring, like me. He stood tall and strong and square looking and very much the macho dog, declaring our presence before the owners realised we had arrived. He came over to me, sniffed around and nuzzled up to me.

The owners told us that Hank came from a famous lineage of award winning German Shorthaired Pointers. Hank's father was both an American Field Trial Champion and an American Breed Champion – a Dual Champion. His mother was an American Breed Champion with a number of obedience titles. Hank had sired three litters in England on his way to Australia and he had a son in Bermuda who was excelling in obedience trials. Hank's forebears consisted of 8 Field Trial Champions including three winners of the USA National Title.

Hank would assure a good breeding line, even though I was not what you would

While I was not very keen on the idea, my children were taken off to the vet and the operation performed. They came back bloodied and very unhappy, but it was a passing experience which they would soon forget.

The days that followed were filled with feeding puppies and watching them falling over each other and gradually finding their way around. When their eyes opened, so did their horizons. At first their boundaries were the cage walls which limited us to a small area of grass. When Jenny was home, we were given the freedom of the back yard and the puppies frolicked and ran round with their ears flapping.

After four weeks of feeding I decided I'd had enough. Jenny had to take over the puppy food and look after the little darlings. I longed for the life Jenny and I had previously, where we had each other and there was nobody else to interfere.

The question of names for the puppies was the next step because of their registration papers. Naturally, with Jenny and I back at tennis together, the idea arose that seven names would easily be found amongst the tennis club. Most of the players had nicknames and Jenny's idea was that the puppies would be named after them: McGuigs, Chappo, Bozo, Tits (later to be called Hank junior for obvious reasons), Maz, Wholla and Middo.

The puppies were very well behaved, but not so the horrid little black poodle from up the road.

One day while Jenny and I were at work, the poodle turned up at the cage. He ran up and down the outside and then started digging a hole to get at the puppies. He must have been digging for quite some time, judging by the size of the hole. And when the hole was finally large enough, the puppies started to crawl out to escape, instead of the poodle getting inside.

Jenny and I arrived about an hour later. Unfortunately my children had headed for



I was exhausted after the birth



The children in their birthing box



They were all lovable

Chapter 7

The love affair

Gordon will always have a special place in my heart and I shall never forget his kindness and affection for me. There was a rapport between us which is difficult to explain, since we shared a special love; a love which transcended the normal feelings between a man and a dog.

Gordon lived two doors up from us in Sunnyside Crescent. The name of the street was synonymous with the happiness and friendliness of the people who lived there. The suburb had a very village feel about it, which was echoed in the style of the small local shopping centre (where I was acknowledged and made very welcome), and the lifestyles of the inhabitants. Some people had lived all their lives there while others who were born and grew up in the area, left to travel before returning to settle down with their partner.

It was an old, established area without being stuffy. To me it was days filled with adventures which ranged from morning tea visits to neighbours, to checking out the local butcher for bones. Included in these activities was my time spent with Gordon.

“Liepo!” he would call me affectionately with an excited voice as I wandered along the street towards his place. His greetings were always warm and welcoming. He seemed to understand my needs and he talked to me and my owner, always with concern in his voice.

Gordon’s front garden, where he spent quite a bit of time, was essentially an Australian native one, with sprinklings of pink and red azaleas which were overshadowed by large gum trees. Whenever I arrived with a new bone from the



*Gordon and I on his back terrace
overlooking the valley*

house. This one was a darling and even prettier than Pandora. It played up to all the visiting guests and simply won everybody's heart.

This was getting out of hand; now I had two cats to look after. But not for long. Ian found a home for the little champion and Pandora and I were back together again as mothers without our children. Pandora had a fascination for Jenny's dolls and would play with them on the window seat in the bedroom. She was certainly a very majestic looking cat.



Pandora's baby

Then something happened which Ian hadn't planned on – Pandora came on heat again – and threw us all into chaos. Nobody was quite sure



Pandora playing with her baby on the back deck

what to do. People squeezed through doorways always frightened of letting Pandora out. That was fine until someone came to visit and a few hours later we all realised that Pandora was gone.

The next day as we were sitting on the deck having breakfast, a very

bedraggled looking white Chinchilla emerged from the bushes at the edge of the cliff. Her partner was one of the wild cats, a mean looking animal who quickly dashed away. Our fears were confirmed when we realised weeks later that Pandora was having another litter.

It was a completely different set of kittens to the first lot. These ones didn't have the thick fur of the Chinchilla. There were six kittens and all were white, and as they grew, we realised that there was a streak of wildness in them. This was all very embarrassing for the family and Pandora was rushed to the vets to be desexed. Each cat found a home and one of them, Lollipop, went to Jenny's sister, Lynne. They called it Fish and Chips because it rolled itself up in newspaper. It definitely had peculiar habits,



Pandora used to love sitting in Ian's briefcase