

Fairy Tale – Kennel Land

Once upon a time there was a very proud Dalmatian named Richard who married a Golden Retriever named Ella. Together they lived in Kennel Land and together they chose to start a family. Richard the Dalmatian worked hard to make his part of Kennel Land look good. It was important to him that everyone thought him to be the purest bred Dalmatian of all. Only the best of everything would do. He carefully chose just the right house in Kennel-Land, with just the right spouse, with just the right rules, in just the right place. Ella the Golden Retriever just wanted to be loved and feel secure. She was loyal to the core and would never think of going against Richard the top dog in their little part of Kennel Land. So they started their life together, but Richard had a secret that not even Ella knew.

Soon came their first little litter of pups. First came *Hopeful* and then later came *Champ*. From the very start Richard the Dalmatian made them perform. They were show dogs of course, both acting like Richard. *Hopeful* however was more like Ella and *Champ* more like his dad. *Hopeful* wanted to perform in the show but just never measured up. He left the Kennel as soon as his training school was out. *Champ* was indeed a champ just like Richard intended. The more he won in the shows the more Richard applauded his heir. But Richard had a secret that not even Ella, *Hopeful*, or *Champ* knew. That secret drove Richard to set up the rules. No talk of the past. No failure allowed. Only the best would do for the purest bred family in Kennel-Land. Everyone knew their place and no one ever went against the rules.... Richard's rules. And that was the number one rule, Richard ruled. But Richard had a secret.

Five more years went by and they had another pup. This little pup was like the runt of the family. He didn't look like a Dalmatian and not like a Golden Retriever. How did that happen they asked? A Border Collie, how could that be? Something must have happened at birth to make him so small and so different. But it didn't matter to Richard. Perform or be shamed. Conform or feel pain. Do what I say and you'll feel like you belong. They called this pup *Davey* and no one knows why.

Richard spent his time with the older dogs. They were the ones that could run with him and make him feel like a real big dog. Ella was loyal and true, never rocking the doghouse or arguing over a bone. *Hopeful* and *Champ* went on with their lives...always performing in the shows Richard would find.

Davey raised himself in that part of Kennel-Land. He was always alone. He just didn't fit in. And he just didn't seem to be wanted by the rest of his canine clan. Sometimes that was really okay cause he got to go exploring all over the woods and swamps of Kennel-Land. One day he would be an explorer's scout dog, and the next day a pirate's friend swimming in the creeks of Forbidden Bog. But there were drawbacks as well. Even as a little pup there were older girl dogs sniffing around. It made him feel used and confused. And in that little part of Kennel-Land Davey the pup exercised some curiosity of his own a couple of times and did some sniffing around. Now Davey had a secret of his own; a secret that made him believe he was a bad dog whom no one could love. Davey was about one and a quarter dog years old.

Five years later one more little pup was born to Richard and Ella. He was not like *Hopeful* or *Champ* so they called him *Fab*. He was Ella's favorite. The clan was complete. One by one the pups grew up and performed in shows. Davey did well until he got hurt and injured a paw. Until then he had tasted the glory and praise of other dogs when he performed in the shows (especially the praise of girl dogs). One girl dog became his friend. She dumped him once and then they got back together. Davey liked her because when he got hurt and could not perform she did not go away like the rest. But even this pretty Lassie wanted to sniff more than Davey was comfortable doing. He broke off the relationship and moved on to the next school.

Then it happened. Davey's big chance came at the end of doggie high school. Champ's coach from the dog college known for its great shows called Davey to come and pick up where Champ had left off. But Davey had hurt his paw and would never be able to run in a show as he had done so many times. So Davey went to the school but soon dropped out and went to work just like a normal dog. Davey liked being normal, but Richard did not. So Davey got into another dog school many miles away, far from the rules of Richard and the place where Richard ruled.

Soon the shows were over and each pup went on to shows of their own each winning and trying to show Richard and Ella that they were worth all the trouble and were the purest bred offspring of all. In time all would start little families of their own. But Richard had a secret that none of them knew. And Davey had a secret of his own.

Davey was confused in this part of Kennel-Land. He could no longer perform in the shows so he didn't know who he was or why he was here. He even thought of running out in front of a car and ending it all. But what if it didn't? He even cried out to the creator he didn't believe in, cursing him and denying Him at the same time. He even went to a dog psychologist who told him he was confused. Didn't Davey already know that? Well he was confused about who he was. And a friend named Ray turned out to be gay. That messed with Davey's mind. Then Davey's boxing coach turned out to be gay and then another coach after that. They all tried to get Davey to be gay, but Davey said, "no."

Davey had heard that dog-psychologists could help. Dr. Know A Lot had the answer for Davey. Davey just needed to get sexually active and discover that he was actually straight. IT was obvious to Dr. Know A Lot that Davey was not gay. So the good doctor coached Davey on how to really sniff around and hook up with some girl dogs on campus and off. So Davey went at it and found that it wasn't that hard to actually do. In dog years Davey was about two and a half. I think that is about 20 in people time. And so Davey's life began to revolve around sniffin', lookin' and hookin', but it never really helped know who he was or why he was there. And although now he was performing like a real dog as Richard the Dalmatian might think, Davey felt used and confused... and dirty and just not right.

The doubts were still there that could not be erased. At Mardi Gras in New Orleans Davey got into some real 150 proof dog juice on Bourbon Street in the French quarter. Davey passed out. Someone picked him up and carried him to a dark place. When Davey woke up his heart stood still. There was a male dog performing oral sex on Davey. How could this be? Then Davey barked and stopped the male dog from doing any more than he had already done. Davey left, raped to be sure, but relieved as well. Why? Because it ended his doubts about his gender identity. He might be used and confused when it came to the female dogs, but he had no desire to be with the male dog at all. All doubts were erased. Davey was a straight, used and confused Border Collie still trying to live in a part of Kennel-Land where Richard's rules didn't rule or work. Or did they?

Wasn't Davey a dog among dogs for all he had done...with all those girl dogs? Davey knew better, but could Richard be right? If Davey could just change arenas he could continue the fight. What fight? The fight to prove to Richard that Davey was as good as Hopeful and Champ and worthy to be praised. So Davey tried the business world that Richard lived in. He was climbing the ladder of success like Richard had done. But Davey found no joy in anything he was doing under the sun. The girl dogs were still there and the job was real bright. But Davey's insides were a terrible sight. He quit the job, just walked out one day and entered a new world where he thought he would stay.

Davey became a Marine dog and excelled at his job. He enjoyed what he was doing and got to fly in some jets. Not many dogs get to fly combat type jets. And not many dogs get to call themselves Marine dogs, not even Champ or Hopeful did that. Richard's rules seemed to work even where Richard

didn't rule. Or did they? Davey was still empty inside. He didn't know why he was here or what his purpose really was. He kept on drinking that 150 proof stuff week in and week out, but the questions still lingered.

One of the best days of Davey's life was when he finished his last training flight and passed that last flight. He drew the toughest examiner on the base the commander and best pilot of all. The flight went so well that the commander took Davey aside and told him so. "*Lieutenant Davey,*" the commander said, "*I just want you to know that you have your shit in one bag as they say! Great flight!*" It was as if Richard the Dalmatian had said those words to Davey. Life felt good. Richard's rules seemed to work.

That Friday night Davey went to the Marine dog officers club just to chill out with his friends. There was a weekly dance there as well but that was not why they were there. Then it happened. Davey looked at the entrance to the room and there was Debi, the most beautiful girl Border Collie he had ever seen. Davey jumped out of his Marine dog chair and walked over to her. "Hi my name is Davey. Would you like to dance?" And so they did. And then they talked. And then they ended up at Davey's place together.

What Davey didn't know was that Debi had never willingly slept with a male dog before, at least not unless they first got her drunk with alcohol. Later he would find out that she just didn't want to be alone and that she somehow thought Davey was a different kind of dog. They really did hit it off. But Davey was under orders to ship out to another state. They dated for a week and then he left. But Davey couldn't leave her. He turned his TR6 around and went back to ask her to come with him. To Davey's surprise Debi's mother answered the door and was not pleased to meet Davey. They took the phone off the hook and did not tell Debi that Davey was there. Davey kept trying to call but the phone was busy. About midnight he tried one last time and Debi answered. She soon met him and they decided to get married. They knew each other only 3 weeks when they both woofed "I do."

So a few days after that they were off to North Carolina and a new life together. One problem though. Debi was a Christian Border Collie and Davey was not. Davey tried to convince Debi that her faith was foolish or unnecessary. But Debi began to draw close to her God and now Davey liked what he saw in her. He wanted her God and soon became a Christian Border Collie as well. Now Jesus rules.

Without knowing it Davey was breaking free from Kennel-Land and Richard's rules and Richard's rule. They had their first litter of pups. People call them twins. Davey began to grow in his faith and desired to know God better and to learn more. They decided to get out of the Marine Corps and go to school so Davey could study the Bible and learn. So off they went to Portland, Oregon far away from Kennel-Land.

Richard the Dalmatian would not visit them there. He didn't fit in a land without a kennel and the safety of his rules and rule.

After four years of studying and two more pups in their quiver, Davey and Debi were needing to move on to a new place. Davey had become ill at the end of the school journey so they went back to a place of safety and support. Debi's family offered such a place. It seemed for a time that God had forgotten them but then as always He proved His goodness and control. Davey had left the Marine Dog Corps and now joined the Lord's army to serve a new master where Jesus rules. One time Richard and Ella visited Davey and saw that he was working like a common dog and getting dirty and was dirt poor. Richard told Davey that he was a failure if he didn't provide better for his tribe. Davey was free or at least stretched his wings because he told Richard that he now lived to serve Jesus and Jesus's rules would have to rule.

Davey and Debi planted a doggie church of sorts in Indiana. Things went well until Davey learned of a girl dog, Laurie who had been sniffed out by her father. A lot of problems went on, but people got help and we all grew closer to God.

God then moved them to another church in Michigan where Davey was the assistant pastor instead of the top dog. This place really went to the dogs and even people got hurt there. They ended up making Davey top dog. But Richard visited there and saw Davey's name on the big sign out front. Richard's rules seemed to be working for Richard since Davey seemed to be performing well again...even if he was a religious dog.

On Mother's Day, 1993 Richard and Ella actually visited the church. Richard's last words to Davey were, "Great message. I am proud of you. I love you." Two weeks later Richard died. He left a hole in Davey's heart. Richard had a secret that not even Ella knew, and Davey had a secret of his own.

Soon our oldest pups went off to college. They both ended up at a place called Moody in Chicago. That's an odd name for a dog school isn't it? Keith married and moved away and RJ married soon after.

A crisis arose at the church and Davey followed God and resigned. It is so odd that even churches can go to the dogs and become like Kennel-Land and have rules like Richard's rules and people rule rather than God.

God led Davey and Debi to Illinois. There God used them to take a church that had gone to the dogs and to help it become a safe place to which the hurting will turn. Davey and Debi helped make it a place where the dogs who are part of the community there love lost and hurting dogs like only a dog can love. Homeless dogs come and find food and love. Abused dogs come and find safety and a place to heal. Addicted dogs come and find freedom. Cutting dogs find love.

But how broken can a dog be and still be rescued by God and doggie type love?

In 2005 Davey went to a Rescue Mission and trained in a program that helped bring inner healing and freedom to other dogs. Davey began to train a few other dogs to counsel and lead dogs in this. Then Debi decided to go through the process to grow and deal with a few issues. It soon became apparent that when she was nearly two (in dog years) that she had been coerced and raped by a youth leader dog. This ritual abuse lasted almost 3 people years. Then this dirty dog dumped and discarded her. She turned to alcohol to numb the pain. She was soon raped again...and again. Well she found healing from this past sexual abuse. The only glitch was that Davey ended up doing part of the counseling with her. When they were away in doggie Mexico her memories came back. Davey led her through each one as God exposed the false beliefs and lies and replaced them with truth and healing. But now Davey was traumatized by what he saw and experienced through Debi's eyes and was struggling to carry on his own duties. Davey even searched through Kennel-Land until he found the big dog that had hurt his Debi. He wanted to kill this giant, Dirty Dog, who was bigger than life. Dirty dog, a very successful business dog and church leader, was living in Atlanta, not too too far away. But Davey didn't kill the giant. Davey confronted him with the truth of what he had done. Dirty Dog was still a dirty dog and would not respond. But Davey felt good inside that while he wasn't there to protect Debi when she was younger, he could protect her now.

Davey and Debi shared this journey with the church. Many women came out of the wood work and said, "Me too!" "Please help me." And so have male dogs come and sought the freedom that only Christ can bring. A few others threw stones on their way back to Kennel-Land. Both Davey and Debi come alongside dogs of both genders and help them find freedom.

Well a lot has gone on and some healing has come, but that is why Davey is on the ultimate journey.

One of their older sons has divorced and both Debi and Davey have been devastated at the loss of a daughter in law and the aftermath of the affair and divorce. The church is barely surviving right now and paychecks are scarce. Yet God has Davey and Debi on a journey. This week He has Davey on The Ultimate Journey.

Richard's rules do not work even when they take on Christian garb or disguise. Richard had a secret. His secret? He was a bastard, not a Dalmatian at all; and didn't want anyone to know. His mother kept the secret and both took it to their graves. Not even Ella knew. He kept in contact with a family that Davey and his brothers never got to know and lived two very separate lives robbing his sons of knowing some very special people in his life... Davey never knew.

Richard had a secret, and Ella never knew. Davey has a secret of His own. But Debi knows the secret and loves him just the same. Debi knows every dark part of Davey's past, no secrets from her, and that frees him from all shame. She loves him like only a dog can love...and of course like only God loves. And so Debi and Davey live graciously ever after ... one day at a time. And Davey is a dog-man after God's own heart, and loves the broken and the hurting like only a dog and God can do.