

Pelle

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676-023

1

Once in my grandma and granddad's kitchen my mum had a funny idea:

"Wouldn't it be nice if our family had a dog?"

Yaaay, we're gonna get a dog?

Yeah

I don't think dad'll want one.

2

In the local Sunday paper there were quite a few ads with "puppies for sale".

If – purely hypothetically – we were to decide to get a dog, which race should it be?

You oughta get yourself a little terrier.

No. Rather a family dog such as a labrador.

My granddad thought my grandma had much too big a say.

But it can't be too big a dog.

It should be a cute dog.
How about a dachshund?

3

We reached a compromise, the name of which we couldn't agree on.

It's a "Danish-Swedish rat dog."

They call them a "Danish-Swedish farm dog."

Grandma was very frightened of mice and rats.

In English it's called a "fox terrier".

But what kind of dog is it?

I still don't think dad'll want one...

4

I'll just phone Finn and talk to him about it...

...

Well...

You just have to remember that quiet and regularity...

... are required to have a dog.....

And of course it needs raising, a dog.

You have to walk it every day.

I'll do that!

5

What did he say?

Oh not much. Just "Good lord".

No, my dad certainly didn't buy that idea.

But

Then my mum made a scary decision.

Let's go look at some puppies...

6

Suddenly we were going to see a family who had a whole box (!) of puppies of the race fox terrier (?), with the idea (?) that one of them was going home with us (!).

They jump a lot...

Ha ha ha ha ha

Aren't they cute?

This one looks sturdy...

The dog race turned out to be of a type that jumps very high. Jumps up and tries to lick people's faces. Not a particularly good first impression, I thought.

7

We were given a brief explanation by the guy who owned the dogs.

Well, we cut off the tails at birth...

It's a dog that's been used for fox hunting...

And inside a fox's den it'll wag its tail so forcefully that it'll actually break its tail...

Suddenly my mum took out money and began paying the scary man.

So now it was reality, with or without dad: We were having a dog.

8

Going home in the car, the puppy threw up several times.

Phew, that stinks.

EEEEW, it got on the seat.

Maybe we could call it "Pelle"...?

There! Quiet when we're driving!

– Like the then popular animated cartoon "Pelle Tail-less" about a cat with no tail.

9

I think Pelle had been given a substantial breakfast at his own family.

Aw, mum, he threw up again.

Of course we wanted to hear our dad's opinion of the now concrete dog.

At the time no-one could know that he would be the one who ended up spending the most time with Pelle.

Look, dad, isn't he cute?

No.

10
However, the lack of enthusiasm from my dad was inversely proportional to the reaction from my school.

Ordinariness
House built after 1960
Pets
Car
Aberration

Soda Stream
Commodore 64
Colour TV

On the first school day after the dog acquisition I was hugely proud. Pet owners receive easy respect points from their classmates. We used to have neither car nor pets and so were in a deeply bizarre situation. But now: a dog!

11
After a pretty short time my family lost interest in walking the dog.

Who's gonna walk Pelle?

Not my dad, because it's not his responsibility.
Not Jacob, because he's kind of little.
Not my mum, because she's going to work.
Not Anna, because she's just going to...
Not Johan, because he... er...

Instead the dog was let into our fenced-in garden. This became the permanent solution to the walking.

12
I played with a boy from my class called Peter.

Ha ha, look at its dick!

He was a vicious tease.

Yeah... heh... heh

Let's try and jerk him off.

Er... ah... I'm not sure.

Eeww, look, it's all crimson!

Why don't we go upstairs and play with lego?

Peter had a dog himself. But he only wanted to experiment on ours.

13
My cousins had gotten a dog too.

It was a beagle, a cute little puppy.

I was a little jealous on Pelle's behalf as Bess, the puppy, undoubtedly was more charming and cute than Pelle.

The families got together, and Bess was being officially introduced to the older Pelle.

Oh no, no! Stop him!

NO! PELLE STOP!

14
Once in a while the family went on vacation. Vacation from school and work.
Vacation from the dog.

Pelle was sent to Langeskov where grandma and grandda lived.

Pelle liked their garden which was full of trees and mysterious corners...

... as well as a 25 metres tall silo which bathed a part of the garden in permanent darkness.

Are you looking forward to minding Pelle?

Sure, we think it's nice when Pelle visits us.

15
Granddad in his favourite chair with an afternoon beer. A lit fireplace. Pelle half asleep by his side.

Ahhhhhh

Pelle was always on perfect behaviour in Langeskov. It was as if the dog and Langeskov had entered a pact.

16
After a stay in Langeskov, Pelle was a little changed. His raising had taken a turn for the better.

Well, it's been a bit of a job taking care of Pelle.

We really had to work on him...

– Taking care of a dog takes quiet and patience, attention and consistency...

... and a whole host of other things that our family would never stand a chance of living up to...

17
Vi outgrew Pelle. Personally I developed a cool ironic distance to the dog in my teenage years. I got interested in other things.

art
basketball
hiphop
graffiti
karate
skateboard
girls
comics
alcohol
racing bikes
heavy metal

– and stuff like that. What do you do as a teenager? You just hang out. Talk. Do nothing. One of the things we did was visit this old man called Eriksen.

What's up, Eriksen, are you horny today?

What's that?

18

Or we would go see Michael's uncle who was an early retiree who drove a mobility scooter but who had a huge porn collection.

Can't we see your dirty movies, uncle?

No, but you can have a soda.

Thanks, uncle, but can't we see your porn films too?

Alright then.

19

growl growl
woof woof waf
woof woof woof grrrrr
grrrr woof-woof woof waf woof
woof-woof waf waf woof
woof waf grrr
woof growl

When we had teased Pelle for about six years, it got some kind of insane. My family had moved from Funen to Aarhus. The dog wasn't supposed to go with us: Pelle was to be put down in Middelfart before the move. My parents tried the first time while we were still living on Funen. They both took Pelle to the vet and tried to have him put down. But they had to bring him back home again. Unexpected feelings for the animal stopped them.

20

So our rabid dog came with us to Aarhus. Here another destruction was attempted. The agreement was that while Jacob was at school and Anna and I in high school, Pelle would go to the vet.

On our way back from the high school, Anna and I talked about how weird it would be to come back home to a dog empty house.

We came home and met our dog in the hall – wagging and alive. I think I was rather too nonchalant about that.

What the hell?

You're still alive?

21

We should have known that a dog would be a bad idea. We could have just done a little survey:

Optimism:

Scepticism:

Jacob

Anna

Johan

Mum

Dad

Grandma

Granddad

But now we had the dog and we were stuck with him. Until we actually managed to have him put down. The vet gave him an injection of poison under profusive tears from both my parents – even my dad who inadvertently had grown attached to Pelle.

Me, I was hard as nails.

I thought.

Only in the evening, as I was lying in bed, I cried.

But I kept that secret of course.

22

Later on my granddad had one of his agitated visions – in a monologue full of dramatic pauses. This is his opinion of Pelle's destruction:

I think you made the right decision...

Although it is your own fault that Pelle turned out the way he did.

As a family you are completely unfit for owning a dog.

Minding a dog takes quiet and regularity.

And under no circumstances can you tease it.

Johan and Anna destroyed Pelle with their taunts...

– Just as they have destroyed Jacob!

Bio: Johan F. Krarup (b. 1976) has done several mini-comics and will do several graphic novels. He works at the studio Over Floden. He has just had one pet in his life.

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