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The Puppy Primer

SECOND EDITION

PMC

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INTRODUCTION

Good Puppy Owner! Gooooood Puppy Owner! How clever of you to start now on your puppy's education! You should feel good because you are caring and committed enough to take responsibility for your new dog's welfare. As you know, there's more to your puppy's well-being than physical health; your dog's behavior will influence the quality of life of everyone in the family for years to come, whether they have two legs or four.

The Puppy Primer is designed as a six-week training program to start you and your puppy off on the right paw. Each chapter includes *Special Topics* (Housetraining and Crate Training for example), *New Exercises* (like the steps of Come, Sit and Down training) and *Practice Makes Perfect*, (the second or third steps of an exercise, so that your pup can begin to master the behavior.)

Inside this book you'll learn how to humanely and effectively teach your pup how to pay attention, to follow the "house rules" and to be a joy to live with. You'll learn how positive reinforcement makes training fast and fun. Along the way you'll expand your ability to teach your dog good habits (rather than just correcting bad ones), and manage the home environment such that it's easy for your puppy to do the right thing.

While your pup is maturing, remember, Lassies are made, not born. Your dog didn't come into the world with the ability to understand English or to know the social conventions of our culture. By the same token, you were not born instinctively knowing how to train a dog.

Dog training involves skills that anyone can learn, if they are willing to invest the time and energy. The person who trained the television star Lassie had to master those abilities just like the rest of us! We all start from the same place.

We are delighted that you chose to begin this journey with us! We hope that raising your pup involves the whole family—dog training works best if everyone is consistent in what is communicated. You'll get the most out of this book by reading it one chapter at a time and working for one week on the exercises in each chapter before moving on. However, don't hesitate to use the book in the way that works best for you—perhaps looking into a "special topic" that you'd like to know more about right away. Ideally, go through an exercise when you can get up right away and practice what you've read. Most importantly, have fun! Training can and should be equally fun for you and your dog—isn't that why you got a dog in the first place, to add happiness and joy to your life? So read on, and look forward to creating a great relationship with your new best friend.

[Note: Rather than calling your puppy an "it," or using the awkward "s/he," we have elected to alternate between "he" and "she" in the text. We are grateful that there are only two sexes!]