



Once Upon a Time in a Land Far, Far, Away ...

... there were two black and very sad dogs. One was named Tara and one was without a name.

Tara, a sweet and pretty dog lived on the side of a mountain beside a big lake. No-name a hulking mountain dog, lived on the street, on the other side.

Tara was sad because her very best friend and next door neighbor, Rambo, had suddenly disappeared. Her master thought that maybe a leopard had taken Rambo or perhaps he'd swam across the lake to visit some friends and followed a tourist - as dogs around the lake like to do sometimes.

Tara could be heard in the evening howling for Rambo. It echoed across the lake where she thought Rambo might be.

Certainly he could have swam there. After all, Tara had done that herself several times to visit friends. It only takes about an hour of dog paddling each way.

How they loved each other Tara and Rambo. So much so that if just one dinner was served each would eat just one half and leave the other half for their friend. They played all day on the mountain and then slept close to each other as the sun set. True puppy love.

And then Rambo simply disappeared

leaving Tara alone and heartbroken.

Also heart broken was Rambo's family. Mom, (Easy) dad (Shiva) and son (Raj) were missing their Rambo so. But no trace of the boy could be found.

A leopard, no doubt. Had taken him. Just two weeks ago a dog from the house just a stroll away had been taken. Easy game they are too. Also oxen and goats. These animals don't stand a chance when the big cat gets hold of the throat.

Meanwhile, on the other side of the lake, no-name was also heart broken. Just three months before he was living like a king, riding in the sidecar his German master had attached to his motorcycle. What a great master to have. Yes, life was very good for no-name until that fateful day.

As he lay in the entrance to a restaurant waiting for master a 'lady' entered and kicked him aside with her foot. Master, seeing what had happened, kicked the lady in turn. She called the police and he was arrested.

No-name's master had an expired visa, and he was deported leaving no-name right there at the scene of the crime, alone at the restaurant. The incident made the local news. And after three

months he was still there, waiting for his master's return. Now just skin and bones, this magnificent creature was very close to death's door.

It so happened that just then a Canadian fellow entered the restaurant and saw no-name lying in front, alone, sick and obviously hungry (above). He began to feed no name, buying chicken and mutton and buffalo and each day he came to feed him. Ever so slowly, meat started to appear on no-name's bones.

This Canadian had recently left the guesthouse he was staying at. Something about the guesthouse family keeping him up all night. A shame, since the guesthouse had the best view in town and the room was brand new, and cheap too.

But meditation (what he wanted to do) is difficult in the middle of non-stop yacking right outside his door. So he moved to another guesthouse but it was right in the middle of the tourist area. So he kept on looking for somewhere that was more peaceful and quiet.

The view from his guesthouse looked across the lake to the other side. There were just a few houses over there. But the only way to get there would be by boat and no power boats were allowed on the lake. Only the King was allowed

to operate a power boat but even he now was prevented from doing so.

Indeed, you would have to row your way over. And it was a pretty big lake. Maybe that's why there weren't many houses over there.

"Even so," thought the Canadian, "I wonder what it would be like to live over there." And so he enquired if there were any guesthouses to be found on the other side. Indeed, there were two and so he went to see.

He decided to go with two friends he'd recently met, Annie and Helen. They rented a sailboat and were to pick up the Canadian on the shore near his guesthouse. He waited for them on the shore but they seemed unable to make the sailboat come to shore. So he rented his own paddle boat and headed out to see what the problem was. Seems the sailboat was in need of repair and they were unable to steer it very well.

And so the Canadian headed over to the other side by himself. After an hour of paddling he arrived on the shore. Two young boys met him with a "namaste" which means hello in this land far away. The Canadian asked where the guesthouses were. They boys pointed over that way but said "come this way". Strange.

They led him up a winding path to a small house, not really a guesthouse but a private house with some extra rooms that were empty.

The Canadian met Shiva and Easy, the owners of the house and they showed him around the property. The Canadian right away felt at home here.

No wonder, the view of the town across the lake, the view of the mountains beyond the foothills and the beautiful gardens gave such a peaceful feeling that he knew straight away that this was the perfect place for him.

He enquired if it would be possible to rent a room and the owners said "yes, we would love for you to stay here with us". The told him they had a young son and also a dog. But the dog had disappeared a week ago.

Yes, this was the home of Rambo. Rambo's best friend, Tara was hanging around the house in hope that Rambo might return. So sweet and so lonely was Tara, missing her friend so much

she was.

And so the Canadian took a room at the guesthouse on the other side of the lake. The area is called "Anadu", which means "peaceful". How perfect was that?

The Canadian returned to the other side to pack up his things. But before he left he made arrangements with a waiter at the restaurant where no-name waited.

He gave the waiter some money and the waiter promised to buy meat each day and feed no-name for a couple of weeks more. After that, no-name would again be wondering where his next meal would come from. This concerned the Canadian but what to do?

The Canadian returned the next day to Anadu and settled in. What a fabulous place this was. Like a dream really. There were stone paths between garden walls that led here and there on the mountain-side. There were many kind of birds singing and flying about. Sheep and goats and water buffalo were everywhere and all were singing their animal songs hap-

pily in the warm sun that rose each day above the mountains.

In the evening Shiva cooked dinner over on open fire as he did every night. As night fell the lights from the town twinkled and the stars shone above. Moonlight reflected across the lake. "Never Never land really does exist" thought the Canadian."

There were only about 50 houses on this side of the lake, no roads, no store, no internet, nothing. But what there was no shortage of was dogs.

Every house had one, or two, or three. They visited each other, traveling the stone paths. And at night they talked to each other. It only took one to get the conversation started. And then they all joined in. Each had their own unmistakable bark or howl. What a hilarious thing it was to hear.

That night, over dinner, the Canadian told the family about no-name. Easy started to cry. "Bring him here" she said.

"Really" said the Canadian. "The dog is



in very bad shape and not very well” he replied. “But I think he’s a magnificent creature and will be so beautiful when he’s feeling better”. Again, Easy repeated “bring him here, he can live with us, no problem”. Oh joy.

Neither Easy nor Shiva had any idea no-name was a mountain dog. But indeed

up and came over to them since he knew the Canadian from previous encounters.

They tied a rope around no-name and off they went to the boat. But no name would only walk a short distance and then stop. And so Raj would push him along while the Canadian pulled on the other end. This worked well and they

beside the boy.

Tara, a little scared at first since no-name is sooo big, took to him quickly. Soon they were playing. You could tell that Tara was feeling much better now. Oh joy.



he was. The perfect dog for Shiva who had, for a long time, been a mountain guide. “This might just work out really well” thought the Canadian.

Yes, what a perfect match it would be but would it be possible to get no-name over to the other side and even if they could get him over, would he make trouble or run off? These questions would soon be answered since they decided that in the morning, their son and the Canadian would take the boat over and try to get no-name to come to Anadu.

The next morning they paddled over. They pulled the boat up and walked to the restaurant where no-name was sure to be. And there he was, curled up on the side of the road across from the restaurant, beside the bikes for rent. He got

finally reached the boat.

The Canadian carried no-name into the boat and off they went. He was a good boy on the way over, mostly just standing there looking out over the water.

When they reached the other side there was no need for pulling and pushing the boy. It was as if he knew this was his new home right away. Without prompting, he followed the two up the path to the house where Shiva, Easy and Tara were waiting.

It was more like a home-coming than an introduction. Right away, no-name settled in to his new surroundings. After some exploration he lay down in the shade overlooking the lake and his old “home”. And Tara, well, she lay right

In this land far away many of the people don’t treat their dogs so well. But Shiva was a true dog lover. On no-name’s first night he made a bed for him and even covered him with a blanket to keep him warm since there wasn’t much fur on the boy, a result of the disease called mange. Oh yes, Shiva loved no name very much and took very good care of him. And no-name loved Shiva too. Indeed it was a most perfect match.

Rambo never did return but Tara now has Rambo II to love. And Rambo II has Tara and Shiva and Easy and Raj to love. And they all have Rambo II to love. And without a word of a lie, each and every one of them lived very happily ever after.