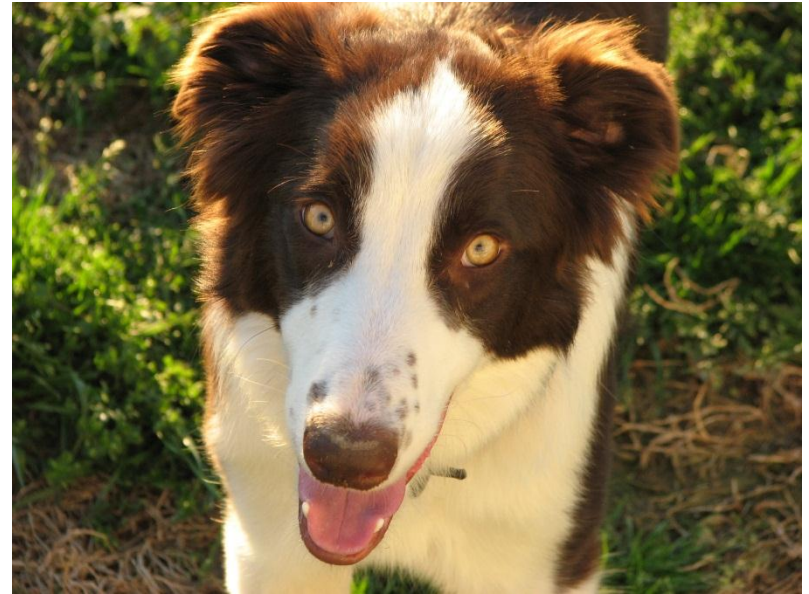


MY VALOR INSPIRATION DOG

MICMAC

- Micmac was bought off of a working rodeo ranch by a single Mom with a toddler and a Shih Tzu
- He was reportedly a “bargain puppy” because of his coat color
- For the first month of his life, I’m told that Micmac was either locked in a the basement in a laundry room, chained out on the porch, or left with the toddler, unsupervised
- A friend of mine happened to be the grandmother of the person who had Micmac, and convinced her that she did not have enough time to raise and train a Border Collie puppy.
- I remember when my friend brought Micmac to me and I peered into the car in the crate to see him. He gave me a low growl and barked at me. My stomach said “no!” and I even voiced those concerns to my friend, but she told me “If you don’t take him, he can’t go back and he can’t stay with me”
- And so, I adopted him.
- On our first day (which happened to be at an agility trial at my house), I asked a few people if their dogs were friendly with puppies, and they assured me they were. Not once, but twice, a dog who was “billed as friendly” turned on Micmac and attacked him. I had to dive in and save him. I remember thinking how foolish that was and how stressed he probably was, but I also remember the look in his eyes when I did rescue him – his eyes said “thank you” – and I think it occurred to him that he had met someone who would be there to protect him.
- Our journey after that included lots of socialization, handling, and bonding exercises. I used many of the techniques in the Control Unleashed program and added a few of my own.



- Still, Micmac was very afraid of someone coming up suddenly behind him, or a sudden noise, or a hand reaching over his head.
- Vet visits were very difficult, and required a muzzle. Many vet visits involved Micmac emptying his bladder, and scraping his nails across my legs, clamoring to get away from the vet.
- It soon became clear that Micmac trusted no-one at first, but would decide if the person was trustworthy based on their behavior. Eventually, he had a list of “trusted people” and seemed to remember them.
- I’ll never forget him meeting a friend of mine, Danielle, whom I instructed not to pet him (that he was afraid of out-stretched hands). She sat on the ground and sat on her hands. Micmac went right up to her and began licking her face. It was as though he was trying to tell her – thanks for understanding how to greet me.
- Micmac is almost 2 years old now, and has been learning agility skills for recreation, confidence building, and an outlet for his energy.
- I’m not sure it will ever be a reasonable expectation for him to endure “being measured” at a trial.
- Micmac is very sensitive to the cumulative effect of stressors and I am certain a trial environment could put him over threshold if he were off leash and asked to perform. And so, once again, a dog near and dear to my heart loves to play agility with me, but won’t be able to do so in the conventional trial format. Each obstacle he conquers is a triumph in confidence and a hallmark of his trust in me. However, our progress will probably only ever be seen online...and I’m o.k. with that....because it’s the best thing for Mac.

