



# CHAPTER ONE

the chugg family

Hello! My name is Chico. I'm a small dog, mostly white with a few brown spots. I live with a family called 'the Chuggs'. The Chuggs are no ordinary family, they live an exciting life together, having fun and adventures every day but it wasn't always like this. I remember the day I first met them.

I'd been in a pet shop for almost a week and was really missing my brothers and sisters. They'd been sold within the first couple of days but I was still there. I just couldn't understand it. When people came into the shop I'd jump about excitedly barking at them so they'd notice me and see how lovely I was. I'd wag my tail madly hoping they'd choose me, but they *always* chose my brothers and sisters who sat there quietly. Perhaps I was doing it wrong? Maybe I needed to be calmer, so I decided the next time people came into the shop, I'd sit quietly and see what happened.

It was early one morning, I was just settling down for a nap after breakfast when a family came in chatting and laughing. It consisted of a boy and a girl who looked very alike. They had the same shaped face and features. Their eyes smiled in the same way as they talked excitedly about all the pets in the shop. Their mum and dad looked friendly, and I liked the way they leaned their heads together as they spoke to each other.

From the little 'oohs' and 'aahs' as the children looked at

the hamsters it was apparent that they were going to buy one. I was feeling very lonely and wishing they would buy me instead. I decided I needed to grab their attention, so in spite of my previous decision to sit quietly, I started to bark and jump around...

As I did so I knocked over my water bowl, which caught the edge of my food bowl making it flip over and land on my tail. Ouch! It really hurt! I let out a loud howl and ran round and round trying to lick the end of my tail where the pain was coming from. With all this noise the little girl spotted me.

“Oh Mummy,” she said. “Look! Doesn’t this little puppy look cute? Look how he’s running round and round. Isn’t he funny?”

As she came up to me I realised that now I’d got their attention I’d better be on my best behaviour so I stopped chasing around, went up to her and wagged my tail. I started to lick her hand as she went to stroke me.

“Ah! That tickles! Look mummy isn’t he cute? Can we buy this puppy instead of a hamster?”

“Now hang on a minute!” said the dad. “We agreed you could both have a pet, but a dog? That’s far more responsibility than a hamster! You’d have to take him for walks and play with him every day, and what about holidays? We’d have to go places where we could take the dog as well or put him in kennels. And I saw what he was doing just then, he’s a bit excitable isn’t he? If we got a dog wouldn’t it be sensible to get one that’s a bit calmer?” I could see he was looking concerned.

“Oh, but we would look after him properly!” chorused the children, “He’s calmer now and he’s *so* cute! Look... he likes us!”

I was trying very hard to sit still now and wagging my tail as fast as I could, forgetting all about how much it hurt. This looked like it would be a lovely family to live with and I was really hoping they would buy me. The mum had joined the children and was stroking me while I wagged my tail and licked her hand.

“Oh, Harry, look at him! He really is cute isn’t he?” she remarked. “He may be a bit lively, but he’s got character and he’d be such good company for me and the children when you’re working late.” Dad looked at me and could see he was fighting a losing battle, even mum had fallen for me, so I looked up at him jumping and wagging my tail to show that I liked him too.

“What would we call him?” asked mum.

“Oh, I know,” shouted the boy, “what about ‘Chico’ after the dog dad had when he was little.” I guess he was thinking this might help persuade dad to buy me.

“Chico was a Jack Russell dog, too, wasn’t he Dad? You always said what fun you had with him when you were little...” Dad looked more closely at me.

“Come to think of it, he even looks a bit like my old Chico.” He said with a smile.

“Chico it is then!” said mum. “I think it really suits him.”

Yes ‘Chico’ ... I liked it as well. Now I’d got a name I was already beginning to feel part of the family. Dad finally gave in.

“Oh, Okay. I suppose we could give him a try, but he can’t be allowed to get into mischief! If *you* don’t look after him properly...” dad said looking at the two children, “he will be coming straight back to the pet shop!”

After dad had paid and the children had chosen a basket