

The Once and Future King, Arthur Pendragon Hewsgrove, boasts a brown eye patch over his right eye and freckles sprayed across his muzzle. He clocks in at twenty pounds and sports five toes on each paw. The dewclaw is a genetic afterthought, another toe without form or function that the American Kennel Club supports removing. It originally served herding dogs the ability to round up animals quicker by 'nipping' at their ankles through only making contact with this claw and their leg rather than the harder method of biting. It is now defunct, but the extra toe reminds him that he is like humans, he has thumbs.

Known now as a "Pandemic Puppy" he was six weeks old when he installed himself in his own Camelot, a two bedroom in Lincoln Park, Chicago overlooking Belmont Harbor. Little did he know, he would have to be quarantined there his first two weeks in order to keep himself safe from the deadly Parvovirus. Awaiting his booster shot he socialized only with humans. He follows them so closely that his nose presses to the back of their calves. Unable to sleep alone he curls up silently under their bed like a dragon guarding his hoard. He's collected things that show his own tiny agenda: little bits of metal, the cap to a red pen, and papers. Papers everywhere that he has torn from grocery bags and the recycling boxes and spread all around as if needed to take notes on his new environment. His irises are a bright topaz, and he fixes his steady, burnished gold gaze always on his humans.

The rescue his litter came from adopted dogs out of high-kill shelters in Kentucky. According to the papers, his mother was a pregnant Shih Tzu, and his father was seemingly the world's cutest dead-beat terrier not ready to commit. Shih Tzus are more than a hard to spell wannabe profanity, they are also very cute as puppies. Among Arthur's favorite hobbies by far is striding around the block, and when approached by any human sits up on his back feet and waves to them with his front paws. This sends the average pedestrian over the moon. He gamely poses with his constituents for photos but usually he is far too excited for that kind of thing. Coming through quarantine with only his humans he is overjoyed to find more of them in the wild. This causes him to lure people in with a wave and then demands the passerby give him belly rubs.

He has not come through life unscathed though, those first two weeks bonding with humans all over has only nursed his unabating fear of dogs. He's tried socializing but seem to only have interaction with dogs who dwarf him. When they aren't huge, they are testy and even lunge at him. It has only reinforced his deep love of humans. He loves them so much that he tries to deftly weave past their dogs to tithe their belly rubs. What is problematic is how much he loves smells.

When mulled over, the smell spectrum is probably similar to the visual one. They must have similar gradations, nuances. Arthur collects them all with open arms. He is naturally close to the ground being so small and frequently finds the muddiest and puddles that soak his whole paws and through this he is able to curate his collection. One of his favorites is the loamy soil by a large tree that he can dig deeply in burying his nose. This burrowing has resulted in a gray-ish patina on his white paws and beard. This causes him to take on the rakish wiriness of his terrier father, but they must be pursued at all costs. He can make associations with smells from more than three feet and once near them they call out to him. He is a true scavenger and would fare well on a dystopian landscape. His tongue is the length of a hummingbird's and he can easily broker his cuteness for table crumbs he can sweep away with it.

He is only acting out his instincts that have developed alongside humans for years. As his early ancestors in China were warming the laps of Emperors as gifts from Tibet. Beyond that are his ancestors stretching back to more than 15,000 years ago learning to evolve with humans. Descended from grey wolves that had been domesticated it makes perfect sense when you look at the battle-weary arms of his humans as they examine his two sets of teeth still in. Sharp baby canines hook into flesh and give long scratches but most dogs lose them around six months on. In the meantime, he still has his greatest weapons: his baby teeth and his small adorable little body that he can use to manipulate even the stoniest passerby.

He is learning his new responsibilities as King of his block and hopes that his humans will never have to leave what they are calling 'a home office'. He has mastered fetch and tug of war and thinks he'll be ready to be out on the battlefield with his fellows of the Round Table within weeks. Long live the King.