

The Wong Way

Mr Wong is a practising solicitor in the Hongkong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR) of the People's Republic of China (PRC). Because he is a solicitor, he is very proud of his position in society. He wears only the latest fashionable clothes, which he purchases at a very fashionable departmental store, the same fashionable departmental store from where he purchased all of the furniture for his home. Solicitor Wong lives on The Peak, a very fashionable part of Hongkong. He lives in a house. He is married to a former teacher of the English language. He has a teenaged son who attends an international school. He is the proud owner of a white Rolls-Royce, which he purchased, second-hand, about 8 years ago.

The following are just some of the things that Solicitor Wong does; and, the reasoning (or lack of it) for his actions.

Solicitor Wong tried very hard to control his ire when his son, Nickolas, was out of sorts. The solicitor-socialite, as he liked to be known, had learned that losing his temper with his whiny son only exacerbated a trying situation. At home with Nickolas could, at times, be very difficult. If the solicitor took the hard line with his son, Nickolas would go crying to his mother – and Solicitor Wong would be accused of being an uncaring father.

It was becoming more and more difficult as the young lad became more and more demanding. Peace and quiet were no longer possible for Solicitor Wong on most evenings as Nickolas jabbered, almost incessantly, at the dinner table. The mental question was posed to the solicitor: How could Nickolas be kept quiet, allowing Solicitor Wong the opportunity to think about *'other'* important things? The remedy to Solicitor Wong's problem was staring him in the face, as it turned out, for there, on the wall of the bedroom of Nickolas, was a photograph of Lassie, the fictional collie dog character and a stage name for several dog actors. Lassie had been very popular in the films in the 1950s and most children loved to have photographs of various versions of the collie dog character. Solicitor Wong, one evening, said he admired the collie and thought that it was, indeed, a very good-looking animal. *'Would you like to have a dog like that one?'* he asked his son. Nickolas, almost, fell off his chair: *'Would I!'* the teenaged boy yelped. *'I would love you forever if you bought a Lassie for me.'*

And so, a fortnight later, at a cost of \$HK15,000, a pedigree Lassie took up residence at the home of Solicitor Wong. For a male graduate of The University of Hongkong to have *'arrived'*, so speak, he

should be in possession of a Rolls-Royce, a house on The Peak or Jardine's Lookout, a wife, having, also, been a graduate of The University of Hongkong, a son – *'Have sons and my life is, now, complete; without office, my body is light (;),'* and a very visible, socially acceptable pet. A socially acceptable pet had to be a dog, especially on The Peak, because a socialite can hardly walk a cat or a bird. It has to be a well-groomed dog. It was hoped that the new addition to the Wong Family, in the form of a young Lassie, would result in peace and quiet, returning to the home of Solicitor Wong. But it was not to be forthcoming. On the second evening after Lassie had been brought home, there was pandemonium in the house because Lassie, having been in the garden for part of the day, was dirtying up the white carpeted home, jumping on and off the expensive, Lane Crawford, furniture, with Nickolas, running after the collie in a game of *'Catch Me If You Can'*. Judy, on seeing the disruption, taking place in her home, was running round the house, barking out orders to the 2 Filipina maids to chase after Lassie, armed with a bucket of fresh water and a sizeable collection of towels in order to clean the carpet and the furniture as and when required. But, invariably, Lassie won the day: He could not be caught. His dirty paw prints were everywhere, from the bedrooms, to the living room and, even in the toilet where he had tasted the water in the commode. In order to save the house from the invasion of this vivacious puppy, it was determined that a cage would have to be built in order to house the animal so that it could, no longer, run round the house, dirtying everything with which it came into contact. Nickolas was told that he could play with Lassie, but only after eating dinner and provided that Lassie stayed in his cage; and, of course, provided that Nickolas did not make too much noise.

With Lassie contained, The Peak house returned to some semblance of normalcy ... until one summer's evening, that is. It was just after the passage of a typhoon, which had taken 3 days to wend its way through Hongkong, that a horrible discovery was made at the home of Solicitor Wong. During the time that Typhoon Carmen swept through Hongkong, Lassie was kept in his cage. After the typhoon was downgraded to a tropical storm, having touched down in Guangdong, it was decided that Lassie could do his *'business'* in the handkerchief garden, abutting the living room. Nickolas picked up his puppy and carried him to the garden. As soon as Lassie was in the garden, he ran round it as though being chased by a vicious, giant predator. Round and round the garden went Lassie – while Solicitor Wong, Judy and Nickolas stared in utter amazement and disbelief. *'He is mad!'* remarked Judy. *'You have purchased a mad Lassie. Why didn't you check, first, before paying \$HK15,000 for this mad mutt?'* Then, she signaled to Nickolas to come into the house where she clothed him in a transparent, throw-away coat of thin-film plastic. She donned the same garb and, then, handed Nickolas a pair of white gloves, she, fitting herself with a similar pair. On returning to the garden to view the antics of Lassie, the puppy stopped running and looked at what it determined to be an invasion of the white things – Nickolas and Judy, dressed in their coats and sporting white gloves. Lassie snarled, his tail lowered in the classical stance of canine, preparing for a fight. Judy screamed in fear. Quickly, she gathered up her son as Lassie charged for the running pair. The door slammed just in time as Lassie reached it.

Judy demanded that Lassie be put down because it would be unfair to saddle any family with a mad Lassie. Solicitor Wong, on this occasion, was calm and explained that the puppy had never seen a pair of humans, dressed in such a way, and had, mistakenly, thought that Nickolas and Judy were invading the dog's territory. *'Dogs are territorial animals,'* Solicitor Wong explained. *'I don't care! I want that mad dog out of my house – now!'* Judy adamantly rejoined.

Solicitor Wong's clerk was only too happy to take Lassie and that arrangement was made the very next morning of the foiled attack by Lassie on Nickolas and Judy. In fact, the clerk agreed to reimburse Solicitor Wong half of his cost for the puppy. And so, that evening, Solicitor Wong, was forced, once again, to sit at the dinner table and listen to the whining of his son. Solicitor Wong recalled the famous poem of Robert Burns, composed in 1785, and the penultimate verse:

But little Mouse, you are not alone,

*In proving foresight may be vain:
The best laid schemes of mice and men
Go often askew,
And leave us nothing but grief and pain,
For promised joy!*

.....*yaW gnoW ehT*

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