



# The penny drops

**Anna Webb** is startled when she finds herself with a well-mannered, practically perfect Prudence.

**S**igns that the training penny had dropped first showed themselves when Miniature Bull Terrier Prudence hit 19 months. There was a glimmer of hope that, at last, Prudence was making positive behaviour choices in certain situations all by herself. She was opting for a more cooperative approach.

I stood aghast at the bottom of the stairs when Prudence, who was on the landing, computed that, as the water was running, I wanted to have a bath. On her own volition, she decided to return and sit nicely in the bedroom watching TV with English Toy Terrier Dexter, while blanking cat Gremlin, despite his attempts to get her to play their favourite game, 'Battle of the stairs'. This game generally creates total havoc and delays any chance of me getting into the bath — certainly before it goes cold!

Overnight, it was like Prudence had swallowed an 'almost-perfect' pill. Her annoying sideways lunge on walks almost stopped — she used to be like a bulldozer

**"Her annoying sideways lunge on walks almost stopped — she used to be like a bulldozer checking out anything and everything."**

checking out anything and everything. Her tune changed and now she's mostly choosing to play my game, which is walking together and forwards. Eureka!

The new Prudence is causing shockwaves with both Dexter and Gremlin. The new Prudence is watching her manners with Dexter; she's being so polite, and sometimes maternal, thoroughly cleaning his ears before bed, to make sure they're in good working order for the night shift.

Dexter, with over a year's manning-up time under his belt, has become quite a little Lord Fauntleroy. He's assumed the role of bellboy, heralding the postman's arrival, the binmen's approach, and any delivery, whether it's ours or the neighbours'. Prudence never barks with him; Dexter does the talking.

Lately, Dexter's barking has reached Napoleonic proportions, and is usually



Dexter and Prudence snuggle up.

## ABOUT ANNA

Anna Webb is co-presenter of BBC London's 'The Barking Hour' and also appeared regularly on 'The Alan Titchmarsh Show'. She recently moved out of London to enjoy an alternative lifestyle with her pets. Find out more at [www.annawebb.co.uk](http://www.annawebb.co.uk)

totally inappropriate. It's driving both me and Prudence to distraction. I try not to reward it with any type of exclamation, but Prudence takes charge, telling him to 'shut up' by nudging him with her big nose — and he listens! Could Prudence be backing me up with a bit of teamwork, rather than making matters worse by chasing Gremlin?

The worst of Dexter's newfound confidence is being directed towards his arch-rival Gremlin. Relations between the two had dramatically improved, so much so that they'd sleep on the bed together, but this sudden gobby behaviour from Dexter has upset Gremlin. Prudence, on the other hand, has taken ages to understand that

Gremlin will always have the upper paw. Gremlin is so clever at dog training that he has taught Prudence the status quo in their games — that it is all about Gremlin winning and beating her up. He's guided Prudence on how their friendship must be based on manners and respect.

Could there be a dawning of maturity in young Pru? I certainly hope so!



A round of 'Battle of the stairs' begins.



The three amigos.