

Backyard Puppy

by J. Ellis

I don't remember much from the place I was born. It was cramped and dark and we were never played with by the humans. I remember Mom and her soft fur, but she was often sick, and very thin. She had hardly any milk for me and my brothers and sisters. I remember many of them dying, and I missed them so.

I do remember the day I was taken from Mom. I was so sad and scared, my milk teeth had only just come in, and I really should have been with Mom still, but she was so sick, and the Humans kept saying that they wanted money and were sick of the "mess" that me and my sister made.

So we were crated up and taken to a strange place. Just the two of us. We huddled together and were scared, still no human hands came to pet or love us. So many sights and sounds, and smells! We are in a store where there are many different animals! Some that squawk! Some that meow! Some that peep! My sister and I are jammed into a small cage, I hear other puppies here.

I see humans look at me. I like the "little humans," the kids. They look so sweet, and fun, like they would play with me! All day we stay in the small cage, sometimes mean people will hit the glass and frighten us, every once in a while, we are taken out to be held or shown to humans. Some are gentle, some hurt us. We always hear "Aw they are so cute! I want one!" but we never get to go with

any.

My sister died last night, when the store was dark. I lay my head on her soft fur and felt the life leave her small thin body. I had heard them say she was sick, and I should be sold at "discount price" so that I would quickly leave the store. I think my soft whine was the only one that mourned for her as her body was taken out of the cage in the morning and dumped.

Today, a family came and bought me! Oh happy day! They are a nice family, they really, really wanted me! They bought a dish and food and the little girl held me so tenderly in her arms. I love her so much! The Mom and Dad say what a sweet and good puppy I am! I am named Angel. I love to lick my new humans. The family takes such good care of me, they are loving and tender and sweet. They gently teach me right and wrong, give me good food, and lots of love! I want only to please these wonderful people! I love the little girl and I enjoy running and playing with her.

Today, I went to the veterinarian. It was a strange place and I was frightened. I got some shots, but my best friend, the little girl, held me so softly and said it would be OK, so I relaxed. The vet must have said sad words to my beloved family, because they looked awfully sad. I heard severe hip dysplasia, and something about my heart... I heard the vet say something about backyard breeders and my parents not being tested. I know not what any of that means, just that it hurts me to see my family so sad, but they still love me, and I still love them very much!

I am 6 months old now. Where most other puppies are robust

and rowdy, it hurts me terribly just to move. The pain never lets up. It hurts to run and play with my beloved little girl, and I find it hard to breath. I keep trying my best to be the strong pup I know I'm supposed to be, but it is so hard. It breaks my heart to see the little girl so sad, and to hear the Mom and Dad talk about, "it might now be the time."

Several times I have went to that veterinarian's place, and the news is never good. Always talk about Congenital Problems. I just want to feel the warm sunshine and run, and play, and muzzle with my family.

Last night was the worst, pain has been my constant companion now, it hurts even to get up and get a drink. I try to get up but can only whine in pain. I was taken in the car one last time. Everyone is so sad, and I don't know why. Have I been bad? I try to be good and loving, what have I done wrong? Oh if only this pain would be gone! If only I could soothe the tears of the little girl. I reach out my muzzle to lick her hand, but can only whine in pain.

The veterinarians table is so cold. I am so frightened. The humans all hug and love me, they cry into my soft fur. I can feel their love and sadness. I manage to softly lick their hands. Even the vet doesn't seem so scary today. He is gentle and I sense some kind of relief for my pain. The little girl holds me softly and I thank her for giving

me all her love. I feel a soft pinch in my foreleg. The pain is beginning to lift, I am beginning to feel peace descend upon me. I softly lick her hand. My vision is becoming dreamlike now, and I see my Mother and my brothers and sisters, in a far off green place. They tell me there is no pain there, only peace and happiness. I tell the family, good-bye in the only way I know how, a soft wag of my tail and a nuzzle of my nose. I had hoped to spend many, many moons with them, but it was not meant to be.

"You see," said the veterinarian, "Pet shop puppies do not come from ethical breeders." The pain ends now, and I know it will be many years until I see my beloved family again. If only things could have been different.

This story may be published or reprinted in the hopes that it will stop unethical breeders and those who breed only for money, and not for the betterment of the breed. copy write 1999 J. Ellis

Summertime & the livin' is easy



Walk with an Old Dog

by Gayl Jokiel

Because you will not be forever
Hope against time though I may
I paint your picture in my memory
Eyes blue with age, muzzle gone gray.

Because you walked with me in springtime
Puppy-clumsy, running free
As you grew, we grew together
You became a part of me.

Because you shared with me my sorrows
Not understanding, simply there
Often spurring me to laughter
My friend, you know how much I care.

Because the years have slowed your fleetness
Though your spirit still is strong
I promise I will take more time now
So that you can go along.

Because you do not fear the future
Living only in the now

I draw strength from your example
Yet time keeps slipping by, somehow.

Because the day will soon be coming
When I will no longer see
You rise to greet me but in memory
You will always walk with me.

