

Man's Best Friend

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A man is sitting in a park, his dog at his feet. He watches the people rush by him, totally withdrawn from society.



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I patted the dog at my feet, its silky brown hair was starting to mat. She looked up at me with those beautiful brown eyes that said so much to me. A little boy with curly blonde hair ran up to her stroking her and pulling her ears, all the while squealing with delight.

"Come on honey," his mother called "You're scaring the dog, it'll bite you!" She warned.

"She wouldn't do that," I smiled as she licked his face gently.

"What's her name mister?" he asked.

"Rose!" I yelled to my sister, who was busily chatting with friends at the school gate. "Are you coming or what?"

"Hold your freaking horses Ben!" she yelled back, flicking me the bird, and turned back to her friends. But there was no way I was going to wait for her again! Mum and Dad would be pissed that we didn't walk home together but it's not like we walked on the same side of the street anyway!

I was almost home when I started to hear panting behind me. I turned around and found a huge black dog was following me about fifty metres behind.

Don't panic, I thought to myself, Stay cool. Don't run!

I quickened my pace and tried to act normally. But then it barked so I ran helter skelter for home. I was not one hundred metres away when it came up right behind me and I could feel its pungent breath on the backs of my knees and it kept gaining on me, and gaining on me, and gaining on me. When I was just about at my front gate it took a nip at my back pack. A rush of adrenaline kicked in and I made it through the gate unscathed and then to the front door. Just as I closed it I felt the dog crash up against it.

"Thank you God!" I exclaimed, panting heavily.

"That you kids?" Mum called out.

"Yeah Mum, just gonna do some homework," I lied and hurried into my bedroom. I sat down at my desk and caught my breath. I really wasn't used to running...

A few minutes later I heard some squealing and barking and realised I left Rose alone to face that monster of a dog. But she was okay, she came bursting in swearing and screaming at me.

"You asshole! You left me by myself! That thing bit me!" she cried showing me the scratch on her finger. She was such a drama queen!

"Hey!" Interrupted Mum "What's going on here?"

"This jerk," Rose dobbled me in, "left me to walk home *by myself* and that bloody dog outside bit me!"

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She showed mum the scratch and Mum took her her into the bathroom to clean it. I followed.

"Mum!" I whined "She wouldn't come, she was talking to her stupid friends again and being a total bitch!"

"Did you hear that Ma? He called me a bitch!"

"No! I said you were being a bitch!"

"Enough!" our mother roared, "Benjamin, you should never leave your sister to walk home alone!"

Rose snickered at me "And you Rose, you never make it easy on him, so from now on as soon as school ends, you are both to walk home straight away or will i have to make you catch the bus?"

Rose and I both begged her not to do that, the bus was the last place on Earth you'd want to be.

"Well," she bargained, "show me you can co-operate and shake hands."

"As if!" I scoffed.

"And my hand is too sore because i got bitten by a dog! And who's fault is that i wonder?"

"Alright!" Mum put on her big voice again "Both of you are to stay in your room until you can shake hands!"

We both started in different directions but mum grabbed both of our ears and dragged us into our room and slammed the door shut. Rose looked me up and down with an expression that said "I'm mighty pissed!" so i ignored her and put on my headphones and fell asleep listening to my ipod. I thought i heard something strange, but i dismissed it as Rose trying to sing.

I woke to mum ripping out my earphones and yelling "Wake up Jeff!"

"Where'd your sister go?" she quizzed. I looked around and noticed she wasn't there.

I shrugged. "Dunno, don't care."

"Damien i think she's run away," she said to my dad.

"But," i interrupted "her things are still all here. She probably went to see her friends or whatever."

Mum then ran to the phone and called all of Rose's friends, she phoned my Nan, and my uncle too, and even the shopping centre. Rose is pretty well known down there, But no one had seen her. dad then called the cops, but they couldn't do anything for another 24 hourse.

We all hopped in the car and went searching for her. Mum wouldn't have been able to see a thing cos she was crying so much and Dad just looked like a zombie. But i looked. I searched. I was feeling guilty, it was most likely my fault if she'd run away. We searched for hours and looked all over the place but we never found her.

That night when i went to bed, i couldn't sleep. I lay in my bed thinking about the events that led up to that moment and how i might have stopped it. But then something strange happened. Something licked my hand. I jumped up and clutched my blanket to my chest and peered down at the little brown dog who was staring up at me. It's head tilted to the side. It blinked its little eyes and continued to stare. I had no idea where the dog had come from or how it got into my room, but i was glad it wasn't the monstrous black beast from before. I

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let it sniff my hand. It puts its paw on top of my it as if expecting something, then ran off and hopped onto Rose's bed.

"Hey!" I whispered loudly, it just blinked at me again with a bored look, and curled up and went to sleep. I watched it until i too was sleeping. There was something familiar in those borwn eyes, but i had never seen that dog before in my life.It was still there when i woke up and from then on it never left my side.

Dad called the police, but they never found my sister. The policeman even came to our house to tell us she wasn't anywhere to be found. Mum and Dad collapsed in a heap on the lounge and cried into each other's shoulders. The little dog sat at there feet and licked them and scratched at there legs. It looked up at me apologetically and scared at the same time and then i realised...

"Mister?"

"Her name is Rose," i ansvere, my voice quivered as i tried to hold in my tears. The little dog turned to me and licked my hand. She held up her paw which i pushed away. She barked angrily and held it out again.

I finally shook hands with my sister, that little dog.

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