

Shelter Dog

The loss of a friend can be terrible. You deny what had happened and then realize they're gone. People love their friends and their friends bring them joy. My joy and my lifetime friend was our miniature schnauzer named Fritz. When Fritz died I felt no more joy. I felt empty and lonely.

During the summer after his passing it was harder than ever to find something to do. Last summer at that time I would be playing soccer with him, or throwing a ball to him in our backyard, but now that was not possible. All I could do was hope something enjoyable would happen to me like such as a trip to Kings Island or a sudden vacation. None of that was likely to happen, so I settled for a waste of time trip to Target on the especially monotonous days.

It was on one of those dull days that I was with my dad in Target. I spotted a book at the dollar area entitled *Puppy Care for Dummies*. I bought the book to read about how to prepare ourselves for our inevitable puppy. This gave my dad the idea to go to the animal shelter for something else to do that day.

We arrived at the shelter and entered the dog area. The dog area was remarkably cared for. Every dog or puppy got its own cage with a suitable toy, two clean food bowls, and a comfy donated blanket to lie down on. Every dog looked healthy, though some were uneasy. Every dog was clean, but not every dog would be adopted. Some would be put down in a few months according to number of cages needed for new dogs that would be put up for adoption.

While strolling along the rows of cages I wandered into the puppy and young dog area. I went up to a few cages and examined each dogs' personality by putting my fingers through the metal cage front and seeing what they did. I finally got to the second to last cage and saw a very distinctive young dog. He was about 6-9 months old and was given the name "Derby" because it was the name of the road he was found on. He was Black with

light brown on his tail, muzzle, eyebrows, and paws. The information card said he was probably Pug/Chihuahua mix but he looked more like Rat terrier/Chihuahua mix because he was only 13 pounds. I noticed he'd been there for an incredible 4 months, considering that all the cages at this time were filled. He was resting at the back of the kennel. I put my fingers in the cage to pet him and was surprised at how fast he came up to me. **Having not been cared for in so long, he enjoyed being petted like it was all he ever wanted.** He rolled over on his back while I was petting him and made a groaning sound of pleasure and contentment. I went to show my dad and we got him out to play. He showed us a toy and we played tug-of-war until he let go then I would throw it for him. My dad called my mom to tell her of our discovery. She came and learned to love Derby too.

The next day we all returned to see Derby and made our choice to adopt him. He was fixed and given to us in a week. When my mom and I came to pick him up we put him in a cage in the car to prevent car sickness like what my booklet had suggested. After we forced him in the cage he cried, whimpered, and shrilly barked for about 10 minutes on our way home. I let him free and he jumped immediately on my lap and continued to whimper until we got home. I could tell he was nervous, so I put my arm around him and let him know that I would never let anything bad ever happen to him again.

Today Derby is the smartest, most playful, and excited dog I know. He doesn't think bigger dogs are stronger than him and doesn't appreciate when they get in his "personal space". **He knows too many tricks to count on two hands and is full of surprises.....**

Derby is our amazing shelter dog.

