

The Last Look

I sat down with my micro-point pen with a heavy heart. Strong affection always involves pain and sorrow; that is a universal truth. All that we are is the result of our feelings and emotions. Humans soon build up relationships with those around him, but the relationship I am going to speak about is of a rare nature.

One day when my husband brought me a biscuit box with holes all around, I grew impatient to look into it. My husband is a person bitten by the pet bug. Very often he would prod me asking for my permission to bring in some kind of pet. He had no specific taste for one kind of pets, but his fancy embraced all kinds of animals. We have dogs,

birds, fish and turtles in my place. For sure this was going to be another Trojan horse added to the mini zoo at home.

However, it is his policy to get my consent before he brings in any pet, yet this time it seems, he has violated the policy.

"Dill. It's for you on your b'day." He offered the box with both hands.

I suddenly remembered it was my birthday and my heart melted and filled with immense gratitude and love for him for proving to be a loving husband once again.

"What is it?" I asked inquisitively.

"Here, you see for yourself."

I knew this type of birthday present would not survive very long without oxygen, so I decided to open it at once. Immediately I was bitten by the pet bug too, having seen

what was inside. It was a fluffy ball of black fur.

It was a black lion shepherd pup of about two months. I forgot all my worries of feeding and looking after



the bunch of dumb friends at home. I caressed him under his chin. Those expressive, tiny, blue beads of eyes stared at me and I fell in love with them at once.

"Is it male?"

"Yes," my husband replied.

"Let's call him Nero," I suggested.

Thereafter for the next few weeks I had to play the role of mum for him

as he was too small to be left

alone at night. I

had to keep him

in my bedroom

making

sure through the night that he was warm and cozy. The first task of my children on their returning home from school was playing with Nero or carrying him around. Though I knew how hard it was to resist the yearning to cuddle him, especially for little children, I often shouted, "Put him down, don't carry him all the time. Or else he will not grow well"

"Nero, come"

"Nero catch"

"Nero ripped my doll into pieces"

"Nero is chasing the cat"

"Nero can jump high"

"Nero, roll over."

These were the words commonly heard in the household. 'Nero' became the most called name at home. Time went past very soon, Nero was the healthiest and the most mischievous little puppy I had ever seen until I noticed that he was losing hair around his eyes. The doctor said it was a condition that occurs as result of vitamin deficiency. Despite the fact that he was given all the recommended medicine and care, Nero started to look paler and paler. It was heart breaking to see the bundle of

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Nero was admitted to the vet hospital. It was followed by three days of treatment with both my husband and me staying with him three nights in turns. Ultimately the doctor asked us to take him home. Anyway, we had already made up our minds to face the worst possible outcome.

Nero was still with us. But he seemed to have lost his usual vitality and speed. He would not follow me everywhere I went as he used to do. He would rather sit all day and play with the rubber toys we had brought for him. He no longer enjoyed his shower although shower time was

his favorite time. We all had to undergo the suffering of watching him get weaker and weaker each day. At last he stopped eating and we had to feed him fluids with a syringe. My children seemed to miss him even more than I did. I tried to pretend that everything was going to be alright and concentrated on my routine activities.

In a couple of days, we took him again to the vet. He was administered saline transfusion. To our great delight he showed some signs of improvement. He started to walk around a little more, tried to respond to our commands and drank a little water. Nero seemed to have brought immense joy to our household again.

Thousands of flowers bloomed in my mind. We all looked so happy. We seemed to laugh for the most unlikely thing to laugh for. We probably had forgotten to laugh for the last few weeks. My family was regaining the lost happiness. After all the blues, at last I had a good night's sleep. I did not have nightmares that woke me up with illusions of uncertainty and death.

It was a beautiful Sunday morning and I woke up a little late as it was usual to wake up a little late during the weekend. I wanted to sip my cup of tea and go to see Nero after that. I knew, for my husband and children it was a little too early to

wake up on a Sunday.

To my great surprise and joy suddenly Nero appeared in front of me wagging his tail feebly. His eyes tried to tell me something. I was overjoyed to see his improvement.

Scared he would exert himself too much, I told him to go back to his sleeping place until I came to see him with his bowl of milk.

Obedient to my command, Nero turned back, but once more looked at me with those expressive beady pair of eyes. Those eyes wore an expression of gratitude that I never could forget to date.

I happily prepared his bowl of milk and checked if my children were up to break the happy news. Since they were sleeping soundly, I took the bowl of milk to Nero whom I found to be comfortably lying on the cushion. I called out to our little bear cub, but he lay motionless. I peeped into his eyes, but those eyes were unusually expressionless and lifeless. Our little bear cub left us leaving wonderful memories and an ineffaceable void in our lives. Years have passed by. But my little bear cub lives snuggled up in a deep corner of my heart.