

## One Great Day...a Dinky Story

I carried her up to bed tearfully. She usually waited at the bottom of the stairs for Bill, but she wanted me to help her instead. This was after I came home from school after my night class and found her asleep in the family room in her favorite spot, in front of the TV. I think she chose that spot because she knew we could always see each other.

We were thankfully, privately alone. I held her head in my hands, scratched the favorite spots on her neck and painfully, very painfully told her goodbye.

In the morning, we all got up together and I carried her downstairs. We all went down to the barn together. She looked good! She looked better than she had all week and I was more than surprised since it hadn't been a good night. I did my morning barn routine...feed, muck, and pet while I kept my eye on her and she kept her eye on me.

She watched me the whole time with her head poked into every stall while I worked. She never did this before. She usually came in the barn after exploring the yard to catch up on what happened overnight and then crashed on the floor for a snooze before we would go up to the house for her breakfast. She stopped going to the barn in the morning months ago instead choosing to sleep in and have me wake her for breakfast later.

Everything was wonderfully normal but I couldn't stop thinking of how the day would work. When would the vet come? When would we be feeling all of those indescribable emotions that come from loss were my nonstop thoughts.

Once the barn was finished, we walked back to the house at our normal pace. There isn't a good name for it but it's slower than the stroll. But she looked good! I offered her some breakfast and she was interested and took a few bites. I was surprised. She looked good! After everyone finished eating, I announced that I had my coffee which signaled that it was time to go to the front gate to get the morning paper.

Coffee in hand, the five of us we went out to dark gray skies and light drizzle. I didn't want it to be like this. It made me cry. The weather outside matched how the whole week went. I was so sad. The anticipation was almost overwhelming. It was too early to call to see what time the vet would come. Our walk was normal and I was grateful. Somehow, she looked good! She looked stronger and very alert as she sniffed the air and the ground, checking out the world.

I wanted her day to be normal, so I tried my best to do my morning routine... get more coffee, check my emails. Normally, she would lay down next to my desk and go back to sleep until lunchtime. But not today. She lay down underneath my desk wedged between my feet so that my ankles hugged her. I pet her and cried. But she didn't go to sleep. I got up and she came with me. Everywhere I went, we went together and she did not sleep. She watched me and I watched her. She looked good. She was looking better! I was happy, afraid to be hopeful and so very so sad. It had happened before, the rally. From the countless times, she was called the miracle dog by her vet.

I called the vet's office and found out that he would call me around lunchtime to finalize a specific time. Waiting made me frantic so I vacuumed trying to do something and make the world feel less like chaos. And she wouldn't sleep. She kept watching me. Not panting, or looking sick with her eyes closing and growing slanty long as if she was Chinese. She looked like that almost the whole week.

I was beginning to think that this wasn't the right day. The dark clouds had cleared and the sun was out with just a light breeze. This was a good day and so we started to spend it like one. We did everything we liked to do together, peacefully, knowingly and alone.

We took a walk on the trail as far as she could go. I had my coffee as she took in the world in her Dinky way... take a few steps ... sniff the ground.... look up and sniff the air, breathing in the light wind and the life of the world. She reminded me of someone smelling the aroma of their favorite food. She loved food.

She looked great! I stopped feeling so sad and began to hope for a great day.

On the way back to the house, she kept looking back as if trying to memorize the details of our walk and our day. She kept looking at me, answering my questions as we chatted with varying velocity of her tail. She was so beautiful, happy and oh, so endearing. She looked great! We were given one last day to share and it was a Great Day.

Dinky died the next day, Saturday morning, April 26<sup>th</sup>, 12 years and 10 days after I found her.

