

Forever in My Heart – My Dog Abby

Ming Fontaine

BEFORE YOU READ:

1. Share your experience with having a pet.
2. Look at the title, headings, and photos. What do you think the story will be about?

So Much Joy

Abby was only 8 weeks old when I brought her home. She was a Jack Russell Terrier. She had a long body and short legs. She was a very cute puppy. She made our house into a sweet home.

At first, she was too young for regular dog food, so we fed her milk. We had two cats before Abby came. One of the cats hissed at her. Abby fought back and barked at the cat. Abby was very brave and knew how to protect herself. Abby slept on my bed on my left side. I made a small pillow for her.

Abby brought so much joy to our house. When we had free time, my son and I would take Abby out to the school fields to play fetch. That was Abby's favorite game. Abby could jump very high.

Our Protector

After my son left for college, Abby accompanied me for many years. Abby slept next to me. I never felt scared during the night. Every morning, when I went to work, Abby would walk with me to the door. After work, when I drove home, I could see Abby sitting in the bay window barking. I knew she was telling me, "Welcome home."

One day, when Abby was four and a half, she wouldn't jump any more. Fortunately, my son was home from college. We took her to the vet and found out she had a ruptured disk. We found a special vet who operated on her. Abby's two hind legs were paralyzed. The vet wanted us to help her exercise her front legs, so they would not get numb. We took turns helping her. She couldn't



Abby as a young dog.

stand and only lay on the dog pad for six weeks.

One day, a person knocked on our door. Abby immediately dragged her body to the door. She couldn't stand. My heart ached when I saw her crawling. Abby was still protecting us even though she could only move two front legs. She showed us love and loyalty. That was Abby. After six weeks, Abby started to use a splint to walk.

We took Abby to the school fields. She was so happy to be outside. The other dog owners looked at her with sympathy, but Abby was happy to see her old friends. One month later, Abby started to use her back legs. She was wobbly at first, but she



Abby and Ming's son, Sam.

gradually improved. She used to play with big dogs, but after this operation she avoided them. She was afraid of getting injured again. She sure was smart.

Every night Abby would sleep on her pillow on my left side. If there was any noise in my back yard, Abby would bark loudly.

Saying Goodbye

This peaceful life lasted 10 more years until she couldn't walk anymore. The vet said she had cancer. We took her to all kinds of doctors. Even though she couldn't walk, she still responded very well to us. However, we knew how much pain she was in. We decided to put her to peaceful sleep.

Abby has been gone for three years. But for fifteen and a half years, she made this house a sweet home. Now her pillow is still on my left side. I know in the daytime, she plays with her friends in heaven, and she comes back every night and sleeps next to me and protects me. Abby has never visited my dreams, but I know one day she

will. I will wait for that special day to come.

AFTER YOU READ:

1. How did Abby make Ming's house into a "sweet home"? Be specific. Cite evidence from the text.
2. Make a slideshow to share pictures of your pet(s). Describe what they are (or were) like and your relationship with them.

Ming Fontaine is a student at the Exeter Adult Education Center in Exeter, New Hampshire. She is from Taiwan and is a retired Chinese teacher from Phillips Exeter Academy. She holds a Master of Education degree from Lesley College. Her hobbies include long walks, walking dogs, swimming, drawing, and reading history books.



Abby and Ming. Photo taken on Abby's last day of life.