

"We Call Her Granny Girl"

Mary Coghill, Breckinridge County

"We know nothing about her, name, age or history. She was picked up as a stray. No one has claimed her and she hasn't been adopted. Her days are numbered. She gets along with people and other dogs, not sure about cats. We are looking for a foster home for her until we can find her a "forever" home."

A co-worker who I soon found out also rescues dogs from shelters, e-mailed this message to everyone on her mailing list, along with a picture of a medium-sized, black dog with four white feet and a graying face, hence the name and the reason she wasn't adopted. I volunteered to take her, thinking later, "What was I thinking?" I soon came to realize that God had sent me the perfect companion. You see, I had lost a beloved pet a few years before and was adamant that I would never let myself in for that heartache again. But I thought, I can give her a home until they find her a permanent one. By the time I arrived home with Ella Mae (yes, I had already named her), I knew she had found her forever home and I, in spite of myself, had a dog.

My rescue friends sent her with everything she could possibly need, including a crate to put her in while I was at work. I couldn't bring myself to put her in it, thinking of her being caged up in that shelter. I returned it unused. Turns out we didn't need it. She was well-behaved, house broken, sweet natured and intelligent. She looked into your eyes when you talked to her and I swear she understood what you were saying. She also seemed to recognize the Hispanic language and would perk up when she heard it spoken.

Turns out she wasn't fond of cats or chickens or terrapins for that matter. She loved to ride and we took many "fun" trips, not going to the vet or the groomer, which she hated. She was scared of thunder and fireworks and would crawl up under my pillow (yes, she slept with me) and shake like a leaf. How I loved that little dog and still tear up when I think about her though she's been gone nearly four years. Her name is the password to open my computer. I still have a little stuffed dog she loved to play fetch with. I can't bring myself to part with it. Yes, I am crying as I write this but it is a memoir of one of my best friends, and worth sharing.

She was as perfect a companion as if I had put in a special order, aside from the heartache bit. I had the pleasure of her company for nearly nine years. And yes, taking her on our final ride was one of the hardest things I've ever had to do. A couple of years ago, a stray cat adopted me. She is an outside pet and I try not to get too attached. Good luck with that, right!!!!

Ella Mae broke the mold, along with my heart, but I consider myself blessed to have had her in my life. What's the Garth Brooks song say? "I could have missed the pain but I would have had to miss the dance."

My point, dear reader, is that if you get a chance and have room in your heart and home for a pet, consider a rescue, maybe even an older, less adoptable one. Go to your local shelter or go online. There are lots of dance partners out there just waiting for someone to give them a chance to love their person unconditionally.