

HOMELESS IN PARADISE

September 18, 2015

Column #49



IF ANIMALS COULD SPEAK. . .

What might our homeless dogs and cats say?

By Wanda Sue Parrott

WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE between being a homeless dog or cat and belonging to a homeless person?

The former includes feral animals, strays and left-behinds forgotten or abandoned by humans, often because owners can't afford pet food.

The latter are like Charlie, the spoiled little Papillon pooch who lives with a homeless grandmother I've called Jill in past columns. His home is wherever Jill is, be it on a friend's cozy couch or in the freezing midnight brush of Laguna Grande Park in Seaside.

Jill says, "He's my baby" which translates to "bosom buddy."

In Dog Speak, Charlie might call Jill his "Alpha Female Bitch" or "Doggie Mom."

Pets As Surrogate Children

Charlie, who is warm, cuddly and loving, weighs about the same as a 6-month-old infant. He is wheeled in a baby stroller or carried like a papoose in a pouch. Or, depending on whether Jill is walking or riding her bicycle, Charlie is hung over her shoulder in a tote bag, slung across her back in a book bag, or worn against her breast next to her heart in a canvas baby carrier.



Most homeless women prefer dogs as pet companions because they are easier to control than cats. However, some women live on the streets with one or more cats. Cat Speak for humans who prefer felines is "Cat Mom," even if the surrogate parent is male.

No Pets Allowed

Jill is a role model of homeless persons who love their pet-kids enough to sacrifice their own comfort to keep their human-animal family bonded.

“I wish I could have a room of my own,” Jill says, “but agencies that provide shelter won’t allow Charlie. He’s my therapy dog, but he wasn’t prescribed by a doctor, so he ain’t allowed in programs that offer temporary, permanent, or transitional housing. If I was blind and he was a seeing-eye dog, I might qualify.”

For survival, Jill says they couch surf. “But we leave very early, so we don’t interfere with my friends’ breakfast and morning coffee.”

They share meals from dumpsters and restaurants that sneak them leftover food just before closing time. “They ain’t supposed to give it away. They’re supposed to throw it away,” Jill says, “but they love Charlie and so he shares his chicken with me.”

Jill receives a disability check at a post office box and panhandles subtly, not by waving a sign but by cooing up to sympathetic people—like me. Recently she tried to persuade me to buy beer. “It’s only



\$7.99 for a six pack and I can pay you back when my check comes next week. Leave it by the fence and I’ll pick it up in an hour.”

“Don’t count on it,” I said. Later, my gardening shoes vanished from my yard, raising two questions: How believable are women like Jill? Do dogs become alcoholics like their pet parents?

Homeless Animals Are Victims Of Men

Chances of homeless people and their pets being separated are high. What happens to animals that lose their owners? They become truly homeless.

Tom Williams, publisher of Cats Confidential newsletter, founded Grey Rocks Sanctuary for homeless cats. Proceeds from his newsletter’s \$18 subscription price provide food and shelter for felines. This prayer, excerpted here, appears in the August 2015 edition. For a full copy, send a #10 self-addressed stamped envelope to WR Publishing, 1509 Caroline St., Chattanooga, TN 37409, phone 423-821-8130. Donations are optional.



Prayer of a Stray Cat

Dear God, will you please send me someone who’ll care!

I am tired of running and sick with despair.

My body is aching, it’s so wracked with pain,
And, dear God, I now pray as I run with the rain
that someone will love me and give me a home,
a warm cozy bed that I call all my own...

They have chased me with sticks, and hit me with stones,
while I run on the street as I’m looking for bones.

I am not really bad. God, please help if you can,
for I have now become just a victim of man...

I have got so much love and devotion to give
that I’m praying you’ll give me a new chance to live.

So, dear God, won’t you please, PLEASE answer my prayer
and send me somebody who really will care!

(Author Unknown)

This canine prayer excerpt is from Thornbury Veterinary Surgery, British veterinarians, at:
<http://www.rowevetgroup.com> .



A Homeless Dog's Prayer

'Tis the night before Christmas and all through the town,
every shelter is full--we are lost, but not found,
Our numbers are hung on our kennels so bare,
we hope every minute that someone will care...
They dropped us off here and they kissed us good-bye...
"Maybe somebody else will give you a try."
So now here we are, all confused and alone
in a shelter with others who long for a home.
We lie down to sleep and sweet dreams fill our heads
of a home filled with love and our own cozy beds...
We count on your kindness each day of the year;
can you give more than hope to everyone here?
The shelter that cares for us wants us to live,
and more of us will, if more people will give.
(Author Unknown)

Food And Shelter For Pets Without Persons

Since 2008 the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA) of Monterey County has operated a pet food pantry. In collaboration with Meals on Wheels, pet food is delivered to families that otherwise could not afford to keep their pets. Details at <http://www.spcamc.org>.

Peace of Mind Dog Rescue in Pacific Grove, <http://www.peaceofminddogrescue> , and private donors, donate food to Hope Center, a Monterey food pantry that provides families with food and pet food. Details at <http://www.hopecentermonterey.com>.

The Gathering Place provides free lunch and pet food to homeless women every Tues. from 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m., at the Moose Lodge, 555 Canyon Del Rey Rd., Del Rey Oaks. Details at: <http://www.thegatheringplacemonterey.org/contact-us/>.

Needed next is an apart-by-night-but-together-by-day overnight gathering place for pets of homeless women who will participate in the I-HELP for Women program starting in November. Ideas, anyone?

###

Photos of pets from Google Free Image search; used for illustrative/educational purposes;
no copyright infringement intended.

Contact Wanda Sue Parrott at 831-899-5887 or amykitchenerfdn@hotmail.com.