

Qandi

*by Suzy Hopkins*

When I got divorced my husband got our dog. Since my daughter was working in the animal shelter I asked her to keep an eye out for a small dog. She called and I took my 13-year-old son Mac to see a small orange curly-haired poodle. (Poodles have hair, not fur. That's why they don't shed.) She was the right size and gender but was in heat and had the nasty skin disease called the mange. We were escorted to a little room with a chair. When they brought the dog in she went right over to my son in the chair and put her feet up on his thigh as if saying, "So, who are you?" Not timid at all. SOLD!

I paid the extra cost to have her spayed, since she was in heat, and picked her up the next day. She mostly slept all day in her new bed and waited patiently for her people to come back and get her. When she was feeling better I took her to the vet and treated the mange which was making her miserable. Eventually it dawned on her that this was her new family. We called her Qandi which means made of sugar in Arabic. She played fetch and tug of war with my son Mac for hours. She would get so tired her tongue hung out the side of her mouth. Mac would put the dog in the kitchen where the floor is slippery and throw the sock. Qandi's feet would skid like a car on ice until she could get a grip which was hilarious to watch.

She loved life. When I would say "go for ride" she would leap up four feet in the air over and over until we got out the door. On trail rides she would energetically run ahead of the horses but stay in sight. She was totally obedient which proved helpful when we met other horses with dogs or deer on the trail. She enthusiastically went everywhere we went. Everything was fun to her – horse shows, the park, the pet store. Just being beside me or my son was what she wanted.

Qandi's greatest strength was her patience. One time, while on a trail ride, she ran through some bushes that had god-awful tiny burrs. When I got her home she lay inert on the table for hours while I picked and pulled out over 200 burrs. She never whined or tried to get up.

When she suddenly died I took down all the pictures of her and put them in a box. For a year I couldn't say her name without crying. The silence was deafening, every day, when she wasn't there to greet me when I came in the front door. My son and I never spoke of her again. The memory was too painful.

Her lighthearted and devoted attitude made that first year of my divorce bearable. Some angels come with orange curly hair.