

TOBY

By Cindy Peters

My husband Randy and I had been married for about two years. I knew that someday we wanted children but, in the meantime, we were career-orientated and trying to make a living. Yet somehow our household felt empty and lifeless.

Then one day I decided to drive out to a farm to visit my friend Janet. Their poodle had co-mingled with a border collie. As a result, there was a litter of two puppies. One was a charcoal black poodle- looking puppy. The other was a fur ball with collie colors of brown, white and black. He looked like Benji from the Disney movies. Well, it was love at first sight and I brought the fur ball home.

We lived in a small apartment at the time. I laid down newspapers with food and water in the closet of a bathroom. Randy was less than pleased when I told him about the latest addition to our family. He stormed into the bathroom ready to rid ourselves of this intruder in our lives. As Randy reached down to grab him. The fur ball was surprisingly not afraid and licked Randy's fingers. Well, after that Randy was hooked and fur ball was here to stay. We named him Toby.

Toby whimpered that first night until we made him a bed on the floor next to us in the somewhat larger closet of a bedroom. Toby was not eating or drinking water. So, I quickly brought him to a veterinarian. To my astonishment Toby only weighed three-quarters of a pound. He looked much larger due to his ample amount of fur. Toby was riddled with worms. Then we started the long process of de-worming him. He also received his shots. Each day Toby grew and flourished. At a year old he made it to 20 pounds.

Toby's lineage from a poodle and border collie made him extremely smart. The Vet thought that Toby had the intelligence of a three-year-old child. Toby knew multiple words and hand commands. Out of a class of 30 Toby was the Valedictorian of his class. However, this did not cross over because once he was home, he ruled the roost. Toby refused to be locked out of any room as he could turn the doorknobs with his paws. When he was upset with us, he would drag out the shoes from the closet and disperse them throughout the house or unroll the toilet paper all over our home. He refused to use the backyard as a toilet. He would escape the back-yard fence by digging a hole underneath it. So, we were forced to walk Toby three times a day to do his business. Once he stayed overnight with my friend Gini. He managed to break the leash, walk several miles across busy streets, and wait for us on our front porch steps.

I did everything for that dog. I fed him, bathed him, brought him to the Vet, walked him and brought him to Dog Obedience School. Yet he was Randy's dog. How a dog picks his master is a mystery. By the hour Randy and Toby would play a game called "Shoot the Doggie." Randy would squirt Toby with a water bottle as Toby would try to jump, dodge, and hide from the water. Toby would sometimes hide under a chair and peek out from the cuff of a chair until the coast was clear. Who can explain the magic chemistry between a dog and his master? With Toby he was truly special and our best friend.