

## **I Found Your Pet**

I found your dog today. No, he has not been adopted by anyone. Most of us who live out here own as many dogs as we want. Those who do not own dogs do so because they choose not to.

I know you hoped he would find a good home when you left him out here, but he did not. When I first saw him he was miles from the nearest house and he was alone, thirsty, thin and limping from a burr on his paw. How I wish I could have been you as I stood before him. To see his tail wag and his eyes brighten as he bounded into your arms, knowing you would find him, knowing you had not forgotten him. To see the forgiveness in his eyes for the suffering and pain he had known in his never-ending quest to find you.

But, I was not you and despite all my persuasion his eyes saw a stranger he did not trust. He would not come. He turned and continued his journey - one he was sure would bring him to you. He does not understand you are not looking for him. He only knows you are out there. He only knows he must find you. This is more important than food or water or the stranger who can give him these things. Persuasion and pursuit seemed futile.

I did not even know his name. I drove home, filled a bucket with water and a bowl with food and returned to where we had met. I could see no sign of him, but I left my offering under the tree where he had sought shelter from the sun and a chance to rest. You see, he is not of the wild. When you domesticated him you took away any instinct of survival out there.

His purpose demands that he travel during the day. He doesn't know that the sun and the heat will claim his life. He only knows that he has to find you.

I waited hoping he would return to the tree, hoping my gift would build an element of trust so I might bring him home, remove the burr from his foot, give him a cool place to lie and help him understand that the part of his life with you is now over.

He did not return that morning and at dusk the water and food were still there untouched. And, I worried. You must understand that many people would not attempt to help your dog. Some would run him off. Others would call the county or police and the fate you thought you saved him from would be preempted by his suffering for days without food or water.

I returned again before dark. I did not see him. I went again early the next morning only to find the food and water still untouched. If only you were here to call his name. Your voice is so familiar to him.

I began pursuit in the direction he had taken yesterday, doubt overshadowing my hope of finding him. His search for you was desperate. It could take him many miles in 24 hours.

It is hours later and a good distance from where we first met, but I found your dog.

His thirst has stopped. It is no longer a torment to him. His hunger has disappeared. He no longer aches. The burrs in his paws bother him no more. Your dog has been set free from his burdens.

You see, your dog has died. I knelt next to him and I curse you for not being here yesterday so I could see the glow, if just for a moment, in those now vacant eyes.

I pray that his journey has taken him to that place I think you hoped he would find.

If only you knew what he went through to reach it. And, I agonize for I know that were he to awaken at this moment and if I were to be you, his eyes would sparkle with recognition and his tail would wag with forgiveness.

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