

A Christmas Story

She had never been able to have puppies, she had tried so hard to mother every fluffy thing she saw, slippers, woolly socks, kittens and even chickens had been used as substitute offspring but none had ever been able to stay with her. Clothes had quickly been returned to their owners, kittens went back to their own mothers and everyone seemed to think she would eventually harm the chickens so she was shut away from them. Time had managed to dull her ache to be a mother, she was twelve now and even if she did get friendly with the new farm dog and this time it worked, she really was too old to be bringing a litter into the world.....

The puppy was dehydrated and its chances of survival were slim, her mother had died shortly after she was born, she had been a young fit dog and her death had been both a tragedy and a shock to her owners. They had done everything in their power to keep her alive but fate seemed to have decreed that healthy or not she was only to produce one puppy and would not live to rear it. The vet had done all he could but advised the owners to let him put the puppy peacefully to sleep as it was so frail the chances of survival were slim, and even if it lived it was possible it would be permanently damaged.....

The cow struggled to give birth to her calf and the vet worked almost as hard as she did to bring the little chap into the world, a grand, fit, healthy bull calf and the mother was soon encouraging him to his feet for his first suckle. The vet commented on how much luckier the calf was than the puppy that had been in his surgery that morning, the farmer was only half listening until he heard the words, no mother and won't survive.....

The family were upset to part with the puppy but happy that there was a chance it could survive if the farmer's plan worked, they had been promised that they could be involved with the rearing and training of it and could take it for as many walks as they wanted, providing it lived.....

It was Christmas eve and it was the only Christmas present the elderly bitch could ever have wanted, a puppy of her own, one to rear and to love and one that no-one would take from her. The farmer's wife kept giving the puppy milk from a bottle but the puppy preferred to look for a more natural source, within twenty four hours the bitch had the first signs of milk and by the New Year the puppy was full and contented and cuddled up to her new mother..... Christmas morning and just a one year old, the puppy receives a present, a gift from the owners of her natural mother, a name plate to take pride of place, and why not she died giving her puppy life so it was only right she should be named after her. But her gift was not just of life to her puppy it was one of a new beginning for her foster mother, of hope for her owners and the spirit of giving to the farmer and his wife.

Every dog gives we only have to look for the gift.

Barbara Sykes

