

A Puppy for Poppy

by RV Staff Writer J.C.

“I’m going to miss you so much, Poppy,” said the tall, gangly teenager. He bent down to hug his old golden retriever farewell. He stood up, hugged his parents, and smiled, trying not to let his emotions get the better of him.

His parents were not quite able to keep theirs under control. They had driven their son several hours out of town to the university where he would soon be living and studying. It was time to say goodbye for now at least. His mother sniffled loudly into her tissue, and his father had a lump in his throat that felt like he’d swallowed a bullfrog. The family hugged and smiled through misty eyes and then laughed.

The boy, now nearly a man, hoisted the last bag onto his shoulder, and grinned. “I guess this is it,” he said. “I’ll see you back home in a month, okay?”

His parents nodded, and they watched as he walked out of sight into the crowds of hundreds of students and parents, all enacting the same farewell scenes around them. The boy’s mother turned to the dog. “Okay, Poppy, time to go back home.”

The house seemed quiet as a tomb without the boy living there. All that week, Poppy didn’t seem interested in her dinner, her favorite toy, or even in her daily walk. Her owners were sad too, but they knew their son would be back to visit. Poppy didn’t.

They offered the dog some of her favorite peanut butter treats. They rubbed her belly. They even let her sit on the sofa, but the old girl just wasn’t her usual cheerful self. Her owners started to get worried. Poppy was an older dog, so slowing down and taking longer naps was normal, but this seemed different.

“What should we do to cheer Poppy up?” asked Dad. “We’ve tried everything.”

“I have an idea, but it might be a little crazy,” smiled Mom. “Without anybody left in the house but us, this place could use a bit of fun. Maybe we need the pitter-patter of little paws around here.”

“You’re a genius,” he said.

It didn’t take long before the pair of humans walked through the front door carrying a big box. Poppy welcomed them home as usual, but when she saw the box, she stopped. She sniffed it. Her long fringed tail began wagging ever so slowly, then faster as she caught the scent.

Dad put the box on the ground and opened the top. A shiny little wet nose popped up. Then two fluffy paws. Next the box tipped over sideways, and out tumbled a mass of wiggly golden silliness.

Poppy was amazed. She wagged furiously. She barked with joy. She smiled, her tongue lolling out as she investigated the surprise. The little pup was not shy and immediately starting yipping and jumping around the older dog.

“That didn’t take long,” remarked Mom, as both dogs went roaring around the house in an impromptu game of chase. Dad laughed.

A few weeks later, the boy arrived home from university. He had missed Poppy and was looking forward to seeing her. When he bent down to give her a big hug, he fell over in surprise as a small golden cloud came racing up to lick his face too.

“Oh my gosh, who is this?” he exclaimed. His parents laughed at the look of shock on his face.

“That’s Pee-wee,” said Dad.

“I can’t believe you got yourselves a puppy!”

“We didn’t,” replied Mom. “This puppy is for Poppy!”

Questions

1. What is meant by “students and parents, all enacting the same farewell scenes”? How would you describe the phrase and the scene in your own words?
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2. Find a simile from the story.
3. What effect did the puppy have on the older dog?
4. The puppy is described in two metaphors; name one.