

## A Bond Thicker Than Blood

Three weeks before Thanksgiving of 2013 my husband and I adopted the sweetest little puppy. At five months old our little girl had already had two foster homes and a home that hadn't worked out, but for us she was absolutely perfect, smart as a tack and instantly loving and ready to give kisses. We named her Lieutenant Barkingsdale and she instantly became a part of our family. A year went by very quickly and we soon realized that Lt., a very high energy dog with incredible intelligence, needed to be engaged more than just romping around with Mommy and Daddy, running around at the dog park or taking long walks.

After much consideration we decided to adopt another rescue dog, but it couldn't be just any dog, we needed a dog that would be the missing part of our family. Once again we started looking at the A Forever Home website. We had a vague idea of what we were looking for; a dog the same size and temperament as Lt., one with their own personality and most of all the new dog would have to get along with Lieutenant.

So the search began. There were several options, there always are more dogs than my humble home can fit and the one that seemed a perfect fit was adopted before I could leave the web page. Another dog looked to be a good fit as well, but the owner hadn't decided if he wanted to surrender him or not.

Then we found her. Her name was Lucy and as fortune would have it she was being fostered by the same couple who had fostered Lieutenant. After several emails back and forth we decided to make arrangements for Lieutenant to meet Lucy and see what she thought.

It was the end of January, but warm enough to let the girls outside in the backyard to get to know each other. After the initial meet and greet Lt. seemed rather shy, but then the play bow happened, Lt's eyes lit up and the two were off running around, taking turns chasing each other, tagging one another and wrestling with each other. Eventually Lt. brought her new friend over to meet Mommy.

Lucy was whipcord thin, every rib showing long legs that went up into her spine and two mismatched eyes, one of ice blue and the other a deep warm brown. I only had a few moments to try to pet her and get a read off of her before they were off running, jumping and playing. In the few short minutes that we were there the two girls exhausted themselves. As we said our goodbyes I still hadn't figured out how I felt about Lucy, but it was obvious from the sleeping dog in the back seat that a connection had been made.

On the way home we traded names back and forth, and for the rest of the day we discussed whether or not adding a second dog to the family would be a good decision. My husband filled out the adoption papers and waited for me to make up my mind. Finally I looked at Lieutenant, happily sleeping on her mat near my feet and said yes.

Lucy became ours the day after Valentine's Day and we decided to rename her Artemis Dax, a new start deserves a new name. She was a little timid at first when she came home, but her friend was there and that made it okay.

Over the next few months we watched this timorous sweetheart of a dog blossom and open up to us petal by petal. The first level of trust was to her new sister. Lieutenant and Artemis quickly became inseparable. Artemis would follow Lt's lead, taking a submissive role in everything except at the dog park. At the dog park she became alive, running around chasing, playing and barking at other dogs. At the vet's office Artemis would protect Lt. as if to say, "I've got this, I've been to the vet a lot and I won't let them hurt you."

And she was right our new baby had been through quiet a lot in her first two years. By our count she had 'lived' in seven different places since being rescued from the streets as a puppy. Every time I had to drop her off at the vet it tore my heart, but seeing her mismatched eyes light up when Lt. and I would come to pick her up was very rewarding.

As the months passed she opened up to us more and more, showing us love and trust by allowing us to pet her, listening to our commands and obeying, and the best rolling over and letting, not just me, but my husband pet her belly.

Then there was her sister, For sisters they had become. Everyone asks if they are siblings, or the same breed, for they look so much alike, they play and protect each other and even check in with one another when in a new situation, but they aren't related, not by blood, but they are related by a bond that is even stronger.