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A Far Better Than Good Dog

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She was short and muscular with bowed legs and a wiggle-waddle rhythm to her walk. She had long hair kept carefully groomed so it wouldn't fall across her googly-shaped eyes. Every time someone saw her for the first time they'd remark: **"Did you know she has one blue eye and one brown?"** In fact yes, we DID know that and we even noticed that the brown eye was a bit bigger than the pale blue one. Some times I wondered if her vision was a bit different in each eye, though if she had any vision issues it never stopped her from chasing foolish birds who skittled across her path.



©2012 Robin AF Olson. Jayne Dog.

She was named Jayne Dog, but her friends called her, Jaynie. She was a tawny-cow patterned and cream [Shih Tzu](#)^[1] who was rescued from a dog pound by our intrepid friend, Super-Deb (*my friend and the Vet tech who has taught me so much over the years*). Deb is bi-petual, having not only Jayne but a small clutter of mostly Maine Coon cats (*and a recently adopted, [American Wirehair](#)*^[2] named Tsunami).

Deb's life is focused around working with, caring for and loving animals, though if you asked her she might deny that. Deb is a private person, which makes writing this a bit awkward for me. I hope she'll forgive me as I'm driven to say a few words in honor of Jayne and I can't write about Jayne and not write about Deb, too.

Deb took Jayne to work at Maple Ridge Animal Clinic where she spent the day lounging with her BFF (*Best Furry Friend*), a lovely redhead named Fern (*who happens to be a Poodle, but what can you do*). The two would have sleep-overs when Fern's dad, Dr. Larry, needed a dog-sitter. Jayne also met many of the clients and certainly many of the dogs and cats who were cared for at the clinic. **Jayne, being so mild mannered and well-trained always got along with everyone even if they weren't too sure about her.**



©2012 Robin AF Olson. Jaynie was a party animal, but you probably already figured that out.

I adored Jayne and was lucky enough to be trusted to take her out for walks and even for a drive in my car to the local pet food shop. I never had a dog and my experience with them is pretty limited. I'd love to have one be part of my family, but Sam is allergic and I think my life is insane enough without having a dog, too so I love them from afar.

Jayne was the only dog I ever really got a chance to know. Deb would let me borrow her and we'd walk to the edge of the grounds of a small shopping center near the clinic. It was a park-like setting with a concrete path encircling a grassy lawn. Right in the center of the lawn was a gazebo where local bands would play on weekends.

We'd do a lap or two which gave Jayne time to "do her business," for which I was instructed to keep track of.

"Let me know how many pee-mails she sends and if she passes stool." Deb would say.

"Pee-mail?"

"It's not really urinating, but marking in areas where other dogs have been so she can let them know she's been there...so a pee-mail because it's a dog's way of sending a message."

"Okay then."

On nice days we'd see other people walking their dogs. Jayne was always interested in saying hello and if the other dog was okay with it they'd take turns sniffing each other's behind. I'd say a shy-hello to the dog's guardian (*but refrain from sniffing their behind*) and they'd always remark about Jayne's odd eye color and how surprising it was. **I was never gutsy enough to come up with a snappy comeback about why her eyes were like that. I should have acted surprised and said; "Oh! One of her contacts must have fallen out."**



©2012 Robin AF Olson. A treat after walks.

As we walked along, Jayne would *sniff, sniff, sniff*, stopping every so often to send a pee-mail. I had plastic bags with me because I was paranoid someone would see Jayne pooping, then see me not clean it up. I had to be prepared. I didn't want to be a poop-pariah, but I do admit that woah...I am glad my cats use a litter pan and can't come close to matching what Jayne could produce. The second she was done, I'd grab the poo through the bag, then turn it inside out so I wouldn't get it on my hands. Before the smell would knock me out I ran Jayne over to the trash bin so I didn't have to carry it during the rest of the walk. How do dog parents do this every day?

When we returned to the Clinic I'd report in detail what Jayne did. Deb would nod and say thanks and I was left feeling a bit relieved that I didn't mess up. I'm not used to controlling anyone else when I go for a walk and I often worried I would put Jayne in front of a car by accident when we were crossing the street.

With me, Jayne was often very mellow and sometimes close to inert. I didn't expect her to love me as she did Deb. Deb never needed to put Jayne on a leash except on a rare occasion. Jayne obeyed Deb's every command (*until she was quite old and couldn't hear so well*). Deb felt that leashing Jayne would be cruel and often took her for long walks off-leash in the local parks so Jayne could enjoy just being a dog.



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A few times I had the special privilege of taking Jayne for a ride in the car. I was always extra careful with her because I couldn't screw up and end up having something bad happen to Jayne while she was in my care. I knew Deb trusted me but I didn't want to face her if I hurt her baby.

Jayne couldn't jump into my car but the minute I opened the door she tried to. I'd lift her up, noticing how sturdy she felt in my hands. I placed her on the passenger seat and closed the door. As I entered the Driver's side, within a second Jayne had moved off her seat into my lap. That's how Deb and Jayne travelled, so it was only right that she sat in my lap, too...even if there WAS a perfectly empty seat next to her.

The big difference between me and Deb is Deb doesn't have a gut. I do. Add being short to the mix, which forces me to sit rather close to the steering wheel and all of a sudden it's a bit of a tight squeeze for Jayne.

But Jayne didn't care.

I thought it was hilarious trying to drive with Jayne glued to my lap. At first I tried to move her back to the passenger seat when I stopped at a light but she always came right back. I realized that the only way I could turn the steering wheel was to do it one-handed because I didn't want to catch Jayne up in the wheel. Let's just say it's a good thing there weren't any Police following us or I would have been pulled over for drunk driving or DSZYL (*Driving with a Shih Zhu in Your Lap*). Jayne wanted to sniff the air and snuggle so that's what she got. No matter the temperature outside I always had the window open, just enough so she could catch the scents as the warmth of her body radiated into mine.

I loved having a chance to pretend I owned a dog and even moreso that she was such a COOL dog. I also liked that strangers would talk to me when we were together whereas if I was on my own they'd just ignore me.



©2014 Robin AF Olson. Just before Fluff grabs Jayne's leash and takes off

One day Super-Deb came over. I can't even remember exactly why, but I remember she had Jayne with her. She thought my cats would be scared and said she'd leave Jayne in her car. I thought they needed a little shakeup so I invited Jayne to meet everyone. I wish I had it on video because Jayne met Fluff Daddy. Fluff used to live with a small dog and of course Jayne had lived with cats most of her life. **Jayne and Fluff locked eyes as Jayne suddenly sprang to life. Excited, she pressed her front legs flat against the floor, then lifted her hind end up, urging Fluff to play with her. I never saw Jayne quite so lively and Fluff surprised us by grabbing Jayne's leash in his mouth. He tugged hard pulling Jayne around the room.** She thought it was a hilarious game while Deb and I stood there dumbfounded. I think the two would have been BFFs had they been able to meet more often than that one magical time. **Of course my other cats couldn't wait for Jayne to leave.**



©2012 Robin AF Olson. With mama.

Jayne only seemed to get excited around Deb, but she honored me once when I entered the clinic by perking up when I called her. She ran over to me and stood on her hind legs reaching up for me, wagging her tail with everything she had. I almost cried. Even though I'd known Jayne for many years and had lots of good times with her I wasn't part of her pack. In that moment I was. It meant a lot to me to be accepted by her. **She didn't do that to just anyone.**

Jayne got certified so she could travel with Deb to hospitals and nursing homes, where I'm sure she charmed everyone she met. I wonder what she thought about all the fuss.



©2012 Robin AF Olson. *I have a home, indeed.*

A few days ago, after a very long, loved, life, Jayne's heart started to give out. Super-Deb knew it was coming. Jayne had been to the cardiologist last autumn and Deb got the news about Jayne's dire prognosis. With treatment Jayne had a few more good months, but after spending the day at the groomer with her friend Fern, Jayne was cranky in a way Deb had never seen. Her breathing was labored. Something was very wrong.

Though Super-Deb and Dr. Larry, Dr. Mary and everyone at Maple Ridge tried to help there was nothing more that could be done. Over the years Jayne had become much more than just Deb's dog. She was their dog, too. In a way, if death could be considered a "good death," Jayne was lucky because she had one. **She was surrounded by love when she needed it most. Everyone who was with her knew her and loved her. Together they helped Jayne find peace as her family began to mourn.**



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Here's to you Jaynie. You were a great, far better than good, dog.

I hope that from the Rainbow Bridge your one brown eye and one blue eye can see all the people who's lives you've touched and who are so grateful to have known you.



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