

# No Kiss For a Dying Man

By Mark Edgemon

Bap was scared. She could smell death on her master, who was also her protector. She had been with him now 4 years, since her master rescued her during a rainstorm, when she was separated from her first masters.

Her master was an overweight loner, who had no one in his life except Bap, his cocker spaniel. He didn't want to be a loner, but he had a bad self-image problem and believed no one would want to spend time with him, so he found ways of making that self-fulfilling prophecy happen.

Her master was beginning to smell bad to Bap's sensitive nose and she knew that she would be alone soon. Her master was tired, and was unable to go to the store and buy food for them.

Bap would spend most of her time at his feet and would only leave him long enough to use the bathroom. The power had been cut off because her master couldn't afford it, so he had left some windows open to let in the fresh air. One window that had been left opened was the one in the bedroom. Bap learned she could jump out that window on to the central heat and air unit, then jump on to the concrete block it was resting on, then on to the ground, reversing the process when she wanted to get back in.

Bap was losing weight and energy because of not eating, so she got creative and started eating grass and occasionally, the food in the bowls of neighborhood dogs, which was sometimes dangerous.

After several weeks the smell was unbearable for Bap, but she was determined not to leave her master's side. Sometimes, Bap would go out on to the front porch and bark for hours to get someone to come and take care of them, but no one came.

After several hours, she would go back inside to keep her master company.

One day, Bap was awakened by the sound of her master gasping. She was startled and scared and didn't know what to do, so she started barking in a high-pitched voice and frantically jumped up and down. Suddenly, her master stopped breathing. Bap gripped his shirtsleeve in her mouth and started to pull on it to wake him up, but nothing happened.

Bap jumped off the bed and out the window. She went to the front porch and started barking and howling with all her might. This time the whole neighborhood noticed, but no one came to see what the problem was. The neighbors were more mindful of their own concerns and didn't want to stick their necks out for someone they didn't even know.

After awhile, a fire truck drove in front of the house. Bap jumped off the porch into the truck's path.

"Get out of the way," the firemen cried, but Bap would not move. The fire truck kept inching forward trying to force the dog out of their way. One fireman cried out, "Just run the dog over!" but the driver saw the agitated state the dog was in and thought something might be wrong.

He stopped the truck, got out and went to the front of the vehicle. The dog jumped up and down more excitedly, and then ran toward the house. She did this repeatedly until the fireman followed her to the window above the air conditioning unit. The fireman put his head inside the window in hopes of discovering the problem.

The fireman called out several times to the motionless body on the bed and after seeing no response, climbed through the window and examined the body more closely. There was no pulse. He had been dead for over an hour.

The fireman walked out the front door and called dispatch for an ambulance to take the body to the morgue. While he waited for the ambulance, he called the station to run a background check on the deceased. He wanted to contact any relatives. The results came back negative.

When the ambulance arrived, the paramedics put the body on a stretcher and carried him outside and placed him into the back of the ambulance. The neighborhood people gathered in front of the house, watching the body being removed, saying all manner of negative comments about the loner, who no one had cared to get to know.

Bap was watching everything and didn't understand much of what was going on. She did know that her master, her best friend was dead and they were taking him away. Right as they were shutting the ambulance door, Bap jumped into the back and slowly walked up to her master's face and whined. Bap was grieving as hard as her little soul could.

One of the fireman grabbed hold of her back legs to pull her outside. Bap slipped out of the hold and went back to her master's face, bent over him and gave him a single lick on the face, before the fireman grabbed hold of her and placed her on the ground outside.

As the ambulance drove away, Bap's eyes filled with tears. She was alone once again. She didn't know what to do. She just stood in the street, looking in the direction where the ambulance had disappeared.

The neighbors talked about calling the pound to come and get the loner's dog. As someone pulled out his cell phone to call information for the number, a hand suddenly covered the cell phone keypad. It was the fireman, who had first answered Bap's urgent cry for help. "Ill take care of it", the fireman said.

With that, he picked up the cocker spaniel and took her back to the station.

The firemen adopted her and she became the station's mascot. She was sad some of the time and had nightmares about her loss, but the rest of the time, she was loved, so she was happy.

Bap...whose name is now Lady, rides the fire truck to every call for she now had 10 owners, who delighted in her company.

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