

RAINBOW BRIDGE RETURN

- by Joy LaCaille

The little dog arrived at the Rainbow Bridge, and a pack of dogs rushed up to greet him. He braced himself, expecting a fight, but this was the first pack that wagged their tails and kissed him instead of attacking him. It was beautiful here, and everyone was nice to him. None of them had been born in a puppy mill, like he had, and used for dog-bait fighting and left to die in a shelter because he was a mix-breed battle-scarred cur and wasn't cute. They explained why they were waiting for their humans who loved them. "What is Love?" he asked, and God let him go back to earth and find out.

Warm, and dark, he squeezed in with the others and waited for the day to be born. Scared, he held back as long as he could, but finally got dragged out, by his hind feet. Hands without fur held him gently, and rubbed him dry and opened his mouth and guided him to a warm nipple with milk. He didn't get a good hold on it, because one of his big fat brothers pushed him aside. The human hand moved the other puppy to another nipple, and held his body, so he could drink. "Ahh, that's better," he thought, and drank until his jaws got tired and he curled up to sleep next to his warm hairy mother. "I remember this," he mused. "Too bad I'll have to grow up to be hit, left out in the cold and rain, and used for dog-bait fighting, and die as an unclaimed rescue dog. I remember what it is like being a dog." he thought sadly.

That night, he crawled up to his mother and tried to nurse, but he kept getting pushed off to the side. When they were full, the big brothers and sisters got their bottoms cleaned and he finally latched on to a nipple, but the human hands weren't there to hold him up, and there wasn't any milk in any of the nipples, anyway. He was weak and so tiny. It was even hard to stay upright, and he fell over on his back and couldn't right himself. So he began to cry, and suddenly the human hands were there, holding him up and putting a rubber thing in his mouth. It didn't taste or feel like mother, but it was warm and made the ache in his tummy go away.

He was having trouble breathing as his lungs weren't fully developed, because he had waited too long to join the others in the womb, as he took one last romp at the Rainbow Bridge. He could feel the heartbeat of the human who had laid him on her chest and covered him with a soft cloth, keeping him warm, and soothing his bony body with gentle circling touches. He kept thinking of his new friends who had been so nice to him at the bridge, and asked God if he could go back. God said, "Yes, but not just yet. You wanted to experience Love."

So for several hours, (seemed like days, but it was dark and he couldn't tell what time it was), the human supplemented his feeding and let him experience the warmth of his mother's body and tongue, and the pile of warm soft littermates. He got weaker, and the human held him more often, leaving the littermates to sleep in a pile while he got caressed, kissed, and got to listen to the heartbeat which was strong and loving. Finally, God came back and asked, "are you ready to come back to the Rainbow Bridge?"

"Yes", he responded, with a little sorrow, because the human didn't want to let him go and was crying.

He pushed the air out of his lungs and floated back to the Rainbow Bridge and looked back at the human, who was still crying and holding the limp body that he had borrowed for his trip.

"Thank you, god" he said. "Love is beautiful, and I will wait near the Bridge and let the human know, when she arrives, that I loved her, too."

FOR ALL WHO HAVE LOST NEW PUPPIES