

AN EMOTIONAL BOND BEYOND SPEECH

A tribute to Austin

By Vivian Fishco

Even though your picture showed us you are beautiful, with the kindest face imaginable, at first we were not sure about you.

Had the weeks you spent fighting for your life in the Tucson desert left you untrusting, bitter and aggressive? Could you ever trust again or feel secure? Could you love us as we wanted to love you?

We did not know, and the decision to open up our hearts to you was difficult — until we met you face to face on that beautiful day, January 13, 2006.

From the moment you arrived at our door, there was no doubt. You instantly became our dog — more accurately, Dan's dog — and from that day on you have given us nothing but kindness, love, and loyalty.

You had a choice, you know. When your foster parent brought you to us, you could have thrust your head in the air and refused to leave her side. But you didn't.



Vivian, Dan, and Austin live in Prescott, AZ.

You laid eyes on Dan and right away, you knew where your heart was.

You sped past me at the front door, ran to his chair, licked his face, and committed to being his best friend for life.

For that, Dan couldn't be happier.

Thank you, Austin, for loving Dan even though the stroke he suffered 12 years ago left

him unable to speak to you. That does not seem to matter because you two have developed your own unique communication.

I believe you fully understand the sounds Dan directs to you, and I know he understands that each of your sloppy licks says, "I love you."

Though you might prefer that Dan run with you and play Frisbee, you never let him know that his best effort at La-Z-boy tug-of-war is far below your natural athletic prowess. You seem so appreciative of every gesture of attention.

Thank you, too, for being so careful as you walk protectively at Dan's side, never cutting in front of him or getting in the path of his feet or his cane.

Though I am mostly on the sideline of this canine-human love affair, I am delighted that you have accepted me as a part of your and Dan's love pack.

We are so happy, Austin, that you have graced our lives. You are the living, breathing definition of unconditional love, and we are eternally grateful that you adopted us.

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