

DOWN HOME: A dog-gone tale and a broken fence_60203

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Now I know the cost of our dog, Betsy: 85¢.

That's how much I spent to replace the broken plank in the fence, where she escaped into the wide, wild world.

Betsy got out on Friday night, and I could kick myself for not fixing the fence earlier.

We arrived home from dinner, and I noticed the broken board lying in the driveway. I walked over, picked it up and wedged it into place, hooking it on a nail still embedded into the fence frame. "I need to run over to the hardware store and get another board. I'll do that after I change clothes," I thought.

Then I went into the house, got busy with other things and promptly forgot all about it.

I remembered in a flash, about 10 that night, when Joanna asked, "Has anybody seen Betsy in awhile?"

MARV
KNOX
Editor

We all ran out into the backyard, hollering our 11-year-old dog's name. No answer. Moonlight shown through the hole in our fence.

Lindsay got a flashlight and tracked the alley, hollering, "Betsy ... Betsy!" Jo and Molly walked up and down our street, calling for our dog. I jumped in the car and spent an hour and a half driving down every street and up every alley in four subdivisions.

Betsy, who never had strayed more than one house away, left us.

The next morning, I pulled on an old pair of boots and walked the full length of the drainage ditch that snakes behind our house, worried I'd find her body. Later, Jo distributed flyers to every house in our subdivision, and I took them to every home on both sides of the street on the other side of the drainage ditch.

As I walked, I couldn't help but remember great times with our old dog: The little ball of fur we brought home for the girls' 8th and 5th birthdays. How high she could jump when she was younger. The time she learned to ring the bell by the back door to tell us she wanted to go outside. How she loved to cuddle with us on the couch in the evenings.

A couple of times, I started to choke up as I asked people to look out for a small brown-and-black-and-gray Yorkshire terrier/poodle.

Finally, I taped flyers to every lightpost in two other subdivisions. At dinner, through our tears, we prayed Betsy would come home.

Of course, losing a dog isn't a huge tragedy compared to friends fighting cancer, a young friend recuperating from a severe accident, others looking

for jobs. A dog is a dog.

But a dog is a blessing, too. I still got a kick out of Betsy greeting me at the garage door in the afternoon. I loved carrying her around the house early in the morning, when she and I were the only ones awake. Many times, I've thanked God for Betsy.

On Sunday afternoon, I thanked God when a woman who lives about a quarter-mile away called to say, "I think we found your dog."

Betsy's home again. Blessed reunion.

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