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Mom was driving and Dad was holding our little guy with a large towel. Wilson was shaking and continued to stare at Dad. He was confused. He was a 16 years old, 21 pound Jack Russell terrier with special autumn colors surrounding his face.

Over his last year, he had developed cataracts, disorientation, loss of hearing and muscle spasms. Born at the beginning of the century, he was the center of a family that had grown up and growing older.

From the car, we entered the hospital and headed for the “comfort room.” Much of the room was a brown marble with a water fountain and a picture of the “tree of life.” For all to see, he was a little guy who had grown old.

A board was pulled out of the wall and Wilson laid on it. Dad said warm words and Mom gently touched him. Two tubes were placed in his paws. One was a tranquilizer and the other a terminal chemical. Dad looked at him eye-to-eye and nose-to-nose. With the first injection his eyes were aglow and he remained peaceful and the second his eyes went straight up into his brain. He moved on to another dimension. The Veterinarian was so kind and she said that she believed that there was a heaven for animals. She hugged both of us and said that he looked as if he was well cared for. He laid there as if he was peacefully asleep. We wailed. Both of us made long guttural sounds. There was pure grief. We left by a back entrance and I looked back at Wilson. He was still asleep.

Puppy mills are cruel. Most dogs are raised in wired cages and fed infrequently. Little females become continually pregnant. The room temperature varies and the dogs suffer. The sick ones die. Many animals are mistreated by some humans, but these animals are meant to live with people. They become pet children.

Wilson had about 8 weeks with his mother, brothers and sisters. Then he was shipped off to a pet store. At the puppy mill, he heard dogs cry and bark all day and all night. Wilson was lost and confused and tried to stay as close to his mom as possible. He lived on a wire floor and it hurt his paws. He was continually hungry. The pet store treated him much better and he was able to sleep next to a daschund. Soon Mom saw him and took him home.

Wilson was afraid. However, it was late in the day and he hid under the bed. At night he slept with Mom. He had a very bad disease and he needed strong medicine, but he became better.

As the second day dawned, he started to roam around the house, but he would still dive under the bed and the couch. He soon encountered not only Mom and Dad, but the cats. Ellie had been the leader of the animals and Annie hid in the basement. A big hog had rolled over on Annie.

Soon there was a fight. Ellie had been the leader for some time and she was not going to give up her power. Annie was afraid and jumped up on the dining room table. Unfortunately, there was a real bad time filled with tension.

Annie ran to the basement as she had so many times before and hid. Ellie was the top of the stairs and Wilson started running upstairs half crying and barking. It was his first time that he gone upstairs. Unfortunately, Ellie no longer had claws in the front and she was vulnerable to continue her alpha status.

As Wilson was ready to bite her and hurt her, Dad stepped in and grabbed Wilson. Ellie headed for the basement.

Soon thereafter, he discovered the lay of the land. Dad and Mom lived in a three story with woods that surrounded three sides. Wilson loved to bolt out of the house. He had a viscous growl and attack for those that wanted to come in the house. If they were acceptable, our guy would jump on their laps and licked them all over the face. Most humans were not entirely appreciative of his friendship, but endured.

As time went by our guy started learning how to deal with the cats and people. Other dogs would be a problem for him for the rest of his life. One time, he visited another dog. They ran around in Mom's friend's backyard. His playmate was a daschund and Wilson and his friend play bit each other and ran after each other intensely for an hour and then fell down in deep exhaustion.

There were a few other times when he would take a walk with another dog. It was best if they kept walking.

One time a big dog went walking by. Wilson burst on to the scene and attacked him and the very big dog tossed our pet-kid over and over. Wilson backed off but still growling. However, the anger would turn to fear and he headed toward the house. It was a dog day afternoon

Wilson had a routine. He first slept in the kitchen and two baby gates kept him in the kitchen. There he had a basket with blankets to lie in and toys to play with. He also had a tick-tock clock that could be like his mother's heart beat. However, he did get mad at times so he would scratch the wood, rip up the linoleum on the floor and tear down the wall paper. It became apparent that Mom and Dad needed to make some repairs and later, he would stay with Mom in her bed. He would lie at the edge of the bed or under the covers depending on his mood. After he got up, he would eat his breakfast and the food for the cats. So

Mom or Dad would stay at the food fest and allow each animal to have their share.

Then it was time for a walk. He often walked a few blocks or many. He was continually spotting his territory and would walk and walk. At times, he got so tired that he just sat on the ground. Mom was very tired too so she was happy to stop. When he got back home, he would go room to room to check for any enemies to the house. However, we got mice and he did not know what to do. So he avoided them. It was just too much work and that was the cat's job. One mouse died and he smelled up the house. It didn't bother Wilson or the cats. We finally found the mouse had died in a designer bottle, had jumped in and could not get out.

After that, a company came out and fixed the problem. However, there was a wood pecker that continually put a hole in the outside wall of the house. Wilson would bark once in awhile, but we had to have the outside wall fixed and he came back and we would pound on the inside wall. That worked.

There were the Does and their fawns. They would park themselves in the front yard and after awhile would come Mallards, flocks of wild turkey and raccoons. One afternoon, a raccoon and her pups were on the back porch. When Wilson came out the pups were hanging on the edge of the porch. Wilson came over to beat up the Mother raccoon. This was his territory. The mother swatted him a couple of times and he headed inside and barked about his displeasure to Mom and Dad.

He did not go into the basement which needed just a few things to make it a fifth bedroom. He got the message that he was not wanted there.

However, he had the supreme ability to sneak a leak and then he would head in some opposite direction. He hid his guilt and was surprised when someone found him out. He looked so innocent.

However, there were two projects that took a long time to spot by his parents. First, there was a chair in the dining room that absorbed urine. It was a parquet wood floor and after many times it was hit with Wilson's "sneak-a-leak" the wood blackened. The cost of the repair would be more expensive than putting a new carpet down. Thus, there was a change and then Mom decided that she wanted a new change. So the new carpet was installed along with stately baby gates to ward off Wilson. So he headed to the back of the couch in the living room. There he urinated on the white drapes. Thus, the drapes became white and gold. Dad accidentally discovered it and called for Wilson. The dog was gone. The drapes were cleaned and when Mom and Dad put them up they no longer hugged the floor. They were too short. He urinated on the couch, but that could be dry cleaner.

So some French doors were placed in the two entries to the living room. The only way Wilson could get in was to wait until others enter. However, the living room remained both cleaned and decent.

What also helped was that his parent's discovered an orange bottle and the liquid inside easily cleaned the urine and feces. In many ways, that solved a lot of problems.

Wilson loved to chew. Most of his toys he chewed and he searched the house for other things. Mom had a purse that she loved and he chewed it up. Dad had a pair of boots the he had for years and spent a lot of time having them fixed and shine. The shoes got chewed. A nice leather wallet with room for checks and credit cards was literally destroyed.

Wilson's favorite toy was a one eared bunny rabbit. The bunny was small and Wilson loved to nibble on it and also has sex with it. You could see him "eye hump" his girl friend and then after getting things arranged, he began to become intimate. This went on for many years. However, one day his genital got stuck in a pocket of the toy. He could not become disconnected, so he barked and cried. Mom was in the other room and two of her friends came to the rescue. For awhile, his love life went spiraling down. Then he approaches his toy again and he became sexually active. Further, he never humped humans and the family was very happy to have his lover back. He was monogamous.

Wilson loved to watch television and would bark if a dog barked on TV or barked when a phone rang on the telly. One time, both Mom and Dad went on a trip and he stayed in a dog motel. There he had his own place with toys, and a television. Then, there was a play time for all the dogs except our guy. He did not grow up with other dogs so he stayed in the corner. He did like to fight cats, but dogs were the hardest, because he was so small. He had a long week-end. He did not like to travel and therefore he would shake and shake in the car riding. Almost, all of his life was spent in his home on the top of the hills of a mid-size city.

One night, a tiny dog came to our door and she was very afraid. This time, Wilson was very friendly and Dad took the dog inside. The little dog lay in a small basket with a blanket. She was hungry and had identification tags. Wilson wanted to play with her, but she was tired. Mom called the number of the identification tag. The owners were there soon thereafter. The little dog kind of liked Mom and Dad rather than the owners, but then he went with them and he was happy.

One early morning, Mom and Dad had come back from out of town. They were tired and they spent a lot of time looking for their SUV. It was a black car and the airport parking lot was filled with cars like that. At 2:30 AM, they walked all over the large airport long term parking. Mom would hit the remote hoping that one of the cars would light up. They finally found it.

By the time, they got home, Wilson welcomed them. He got back to the house from his stay at the pet motel Dad took the suitcases up the stairs and placed them in Mom's room. Dad then turns around and headed downstairs. Wilson jumped in front of him and Dad fell down the stairs. He hurt his back and broke his right leg. Wilson licked him on the face and headed toward Mom. An ambulance arrived within minutes and Dad headed to the hospital.

You could hear loud barking from Wilson outside on his leash in the front lawn. Wilson kept barking and barking. So Dad hobbled with his foot with the brace to see what was wrong. Ellie who lost her leadership role was stretching and our guy on his leach was trying to get to Ellie. Ellie was just a few feet from Wilson him trying to make him mad. It worked and Ellie would stretch and yawn and made anti-social moves. She was taunting him. She knew that she lost her leadership, but Wilson had lots of trouble being the leader.

Ellie would bug him and Wilson would take off chasing after her. She would then jump on top of a counter and just out of reach and Wilson went bananas.

In the midst of all this Annie stayed in the basement and hid. In the morning, she would go upstairs to eat, but she remained alone. She

would rub up against Wilson, but he did not show her affection. She was lost and alone and stayed by herself.

It was shocking when Mom and Dad woke up on a Sunday morning and their oldest son had taken Ellie because she had died and the son placed her body somewhere and any further information would remain forever lost.

There was a loss in the family, but things had become quieter. Annie was in the basement and Wilson had the top two floors. Sometimes, Dad and Wilson would sit in living room with the lights off. Dad would put his arm around Wilson and watch the electric fireplace. Here were two heads, one larger and a little head staring into the simulated flames. It could be just a little different, with Mom. He would lie next to her and they would watch television and /or Mom would play her video game.

It was now time to figure out a life for Annie.

The top floor got new carpets in two rooms. The first floor had French doors and baby gates to protect the dining room and living room. The kitchen and den had laminated floors that were tops for resisting urine. The dining room had a new carpet. The basement had a new carpet too. It was soaked with urine. However, special chemicals were used to clean and cover it.

Annie sat in the car as Dad went with her and they headed for the vets. Annie was so trusting and Dad was crying. Dad gave Annie to a vet tech and then Annie looked back totally surprised and confused. Dad ordered her ashes to be placed at home along with the ashes of the other pets.

Annie appeared to sleep, hide, eat and urinate in the basement. It was a lonely existence. She slept most of the time and she continued on in another space and time.

There may have been other options but Toby cats were so available. No one or few would want Annie and she was lost and overwhelmed by life. Thus, we made the decision.

Wilson had problems and we hired an animal trainer to work with him. He did not get it or he did not want to get it. So life went on. The animal trainer was really in the house to train the humans who were inconsistent and very loving to a dog that loved them, but also loved the freedom of doing what he wanted. Mom and Dad also hired an animal psychic who “talked” with Wilson.

She also told them that Wilson was wondering what it is like to be an animal. She said, he was uncertain what dogs really do. He wondered a lot about life and how he could go on with his health.

What is dogdom? What happens when he dies? Do dogs place on the planet really make it a better place. What was his astrological sign? Mom and Dad looked at each other and thanked the psychic on the other end of the phone.

Well, that was a bust. We keep trying and falling down. When Wilson was tired, he wanted to be next to one or the other parent. He would put his nose on the human and give them a quick lick.

When he was charming, he incredibly loved. Supposedly, he was as smart as human of 3 years old. We probably paid around 15 thousand dollars to redecorate from the ravishes of Wilson the biggest cost was the laminate floor which is just excellent. Much of the rest may have

been avoided with the laminate floor. It is just right for urine and feces. It is easy to clean up and not smell or stain. Further, the orange bottle of oxy something did an excellent job of rehabilitation. The floor had a wood appearing decal that did not stain.

How much would you pay to have a pal that you can hug and sleep through that terrible storm? Dogs like to cuddle. They talk with their bark, tail, and body. They can't put into words, how wrong they think you are, but you sometimes get the message. Getting up in the morning, he would help guide you to the kitchen to food.

Wilson was not always appreciated. The dog groomer gave him a C + when cleaning him up! Mom and Dad felt bad, but did not want to change him. That was the rub. The parents needed the therapy as well as the dog. It was just another manic Monday. It was a dysfunctional family living in the global village called America.

When Mom and Dad would have a serious talk and Wilson was not involved, he tried to interrupt. What was going on? Was this conversation about him? The cats were lost and gone. So what are they talking about? Sometimes he would bark. Another, he would put his nose on one or other parent.

After awhile, he would go lie down and think perhaps about new adventures.

Wilson was slowing down. He could hardly get on the couch in the den. He would lie on his back and Mom and Dad would rub his tummy.

He no longer took long walks. However, he did enjoy moving about the house and climbing the stairs. Then it happened. An old dog learned some new tricks. Ally and Buddy arrived in the house. Both were small

cats and they were feral. A neighbor collected stray cats and had them neutered and all the other necessary procedures that went with living with humans. As they roamed the house, Wilson was still the alpha. Buddy liked to stay inside, and Ally was out or on the screened back porch.

The cats wanted run around the house and Mom and Dad bought two commodes. That means a high place in the house that each cat had one. The furniture had round tops and there they could lie.

However, they wanted to lay with Wilson. Nope. They tried every kind of strategy and he would yip. Mom and Dad would then remove the cats. There were still things to do. If Wilson would get up and they would move toward him, and one or the other would stimulate them to move to another a number of plants that acted as a forest behind a corner chair in the den. Lost in the woods, Wilson would go in one side and they would quickly move out the other side. When he went on a walk with Mom, the cats would follow.

All the leafs are brown and sky was gray. It was football time and on Saturday afternoons. At that time, Wilson would become a “hawk” dog. Like Mom and Dad he supported the Iowa Hawkeyes. When Iowa was winning and scoring a touchdown, Iowa fans were yelling on the cable television and Wilson would jump in the air. Sometimes Mom would go out of the den because she was so excited. Wilson went with her. It was all exciting except for the cats who did not like football.

Toward Thanksgiving, Iowa would play Nebraska. Mom and Dad grew up in Omaha or surrounding areas, so on this special day they were still Hawk fans but ambivalent ones. Nebraska had a terrible situation until the 50's where they had Bobby Reynolds who won some games. Then

sometime in the 60's a fellow (Coach Bob Devaney) from Wyoming put Nebraska on the map followed by Dr. Tom Osborne and Coach Frank Solich. After that there were many controversies for the next two decades.

Iowa was generally at the bottom until 1979. Coach Hayden Fry turned the team around. He also changed the uniform and painted the opposition locker room Miller-Baker pink. It is a color that can make some folks drowsy. Whatever, Fry in his 3rd year beat Nebraska on a cold and gray day? After that both Fry and Kirk Ferentz had winning seasons and a bowl games. Iowa City is really a university town, and football player gets to be a "RockStar." Ferentz has become the Dean of the Big 10 and have all new facilities.

Nebraska's team hails from Lincoln. It is more like a university near the city and is not necessarily intertwined. However around "R" street where there is the Beta Theta Pi fraternity house the campus comes alive.

Wilson had a Hawkeye sweater and was kind enough to wear it and watch the game. Although, Iowa probably has one of the best facilities, Nebraska has money for more recruiters and thus their success is generally guaranteed. Iowa is still one of the smallest universities so their wins are very special. Further, there are now two good university in the state. So recruiting is a challenge.

The Iowa – Nebraska game is generally played around Thanksgiving.

Thanksgivings were generally casual. Mom would warm up some stuff on the micro-wave and everyone would eat in the dining room. The lights were dimmed a bit and Mom and Dad sat near the kitchen with

the baby gate. Where the food ended up arose a picture phone with one of the sons from California. Then the other a cell phone was on the other side. Each had one son on the devices. The second son was in a western state. For ten to fifteen minutes the family had dinner. Wilson would first go to Mom and grab something to eat and then over to Dad. He would go back and forth.

Wilson finally got stuffed and headed for the couch where he would go to sleep.

At Thanksgiving, Dad had developed a tradition of listening to SMILE. It was created by Brian Wilson. However, Mike Love, the late Carl and Dennis Wilson, Bruce Johnston, Alan Jardine, and David Marks made their own contributions.

SMILE is a rock symphony of a little boy riding on a bicycle way up in the sky. He is riding through time and space. What he is witnessing is the human victories and tragedies of Americana. He starts with Plymouth Rock and is able to get all the way to Hawaii. The symphony ends with “Good Vibrations” and “You’re Welcome”

Wilson was named after Brian and Carl Wilson of the Beach Boys. He was not named after the president who did not like Black people. The Beach Boys are “America’s Band.” They have sold a quarter billion albums, 25 #1’s from all over the world. They are the biggest selling band and concert band favorite that started in the USA.

Mom was crying as she got behind the wheel of the car. Dad was holding our little guy wrapped into a towel. Dad was crying too. Wilson looked up and he was confused and scared. Dad held him so very gently and yet firmly.

As the car backed out of the drive-way, the three drove up the street into forever...

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ANIMAL HOUSE

Wilson usually lived with other pet-kids and he didn't like it. However, we do want to tell you about them. We also got other animals before and after Wilson.

SNOOPY- He was one of the first kids that we had. He was a big golden brown male cat. We foolishly had all of his nails removed. He was big, slow, and loving. However, he got in many fights and he did not have much to protect himself. Cruiser would pick on him and Snoopy would cry. When he was dying, he picked a particular place in the basement. Spread out and died.

SCRUFFY- This fellow was Snoopy's brother. He lived with us in an apartment on the furthest east side of Nebraska. Scruffy was the dominant cat. One night a feral female cat came into the apartment and she dominated both of the boys. Finally she left the place. Mom and Dad gave her some food. Scruffy jumped from the second floor apartment on to the earth and headed for the woods and disappeared.

GROVER- What can you say? Snoopy was now alone and we got Grover. She had a litter when she lived with us. Her most remarkable talent was that she would face a raccoon in a fighting stance. In a micro second she would scratch the nose of the raccoon and the animal would run off. When she had her babies, Snoopy located himself as far away as possible. We lived in a winterized cabin on the Missouri River.

Through our front window, we could see the state of Iowa. I-29 was not far away, but we could not see it because of the forest trees.

OSCAR AND ERNIE- came together. We were living in east central Iowa, not far from the Wisconsin border. We lived on a no outlet street with a vast green space in the back. There was a creek where the boys loved to play. Ernie chased rabbits and usually they could outrun him. Once in awhile, he would sleep in the street. Oscar was smaller and stayed around the house. When she died we buried her in the back yard.

CRUISER- This cat was an alpha male. He tried to beat other animals as well as humans. He was mean especially to WENDY. He had her cornered once and I grabbed him and threw him across the yard. He seemed surprised and tried to scratch me when he could. I can't think of a more miserable animal that we had. We moved about 15 times. In our next move, CRUISER turned into a wimp. He was hiding here and there. This house had a weeping willow in the backyard, a pond and a back porch with a greater ceiling. There is more to CRUISER, but let's leave it there.

WENDY was the smartest kid that we had. She really knew humans. She was grey and had big eyes. When you petted her and held her, she would put her paw on your nose. Wendy lived in peace and slept with Mom. When Mom had long hair, Wendy buried herself in Mom's hair. Mom was continually washing her hair.

When we finally got to bed, one son slept on a bed roll and the other slept on the other on same. Mom and Dad were in bed. Wendy was in the bed, and Maxwell slept at the edge of bed with part of the covers over him.

MAXWELL was the most sincere. He had the face of a cocker spaniel and the size of a large poodle. He lived in three different houses. He liked to lick Wendy's face. She liked to be licked, but Maxwell clobbered her face with saliva. So she was a bit ambivalent, but never tried to stop him. Max in one house was trying to get in the house and we would call him to the back door for the back porch. He got lost and ran straight into a screen. It was a disaster.

On a Saturday night, Max was pacing and coughing. He went back and forth and did not want to come to bed. We patted him on the head and we fell asleep in our bedroom.

Max died on the landing and Wendy went over to him and put her paw on his nose and ran down stairs. Our oldest son wrapped him in an old blanket and in the middle of the night took him somewhere of which we do not know even today. We have ashes of many of our pet kids. For Maxwell, we have a few of his toys that we put in a special box.

BUDDY was a gray cat and smaller than most. He stayed around the house and in the woods in back. Buddy along with his sister ALLI were continually moving into the house and back. Both followed Mom when she took BENSON BRADFORD on a walk. So there was the four of them. When Benson saw another dog, he went bananas.

He jerked so hard that he hurt Mom's shoulder. He once ran after dog that is outlawed in some states. His name was LINUS and he was a white pit bull. Benson has a small gash in his side from the fight. Linus won the match. Benson still has a scar today. However, he did his job defending the territory of Applewood Hills.

BENSON BRADFORD SNELL could not replace Wilson but he sure comes close. After Wilson died, we waited about 6 weeks. A neighbor stopped by and hugged Mom because she was crying. Benson is a good dog, but charming humans is something that he is learning. When Wilson was alive, he was an administrator to all those people who could come in and fix things. Sometimes he would get close and other times he stood his distance depending on the situation.

Benson came from the humane shelter. He looks beagle, but he has some other ancestries. The shelter said they found him on a highway here in greater Cedar Rapids. There was a picture of him on the internet so we took a look at him. We bonded quite soon. The shelter people said they believe the previous folks were not Mom and Dad's. He was dumped on the side of the highway.

Today, he does not try to run out of the house. Wilson would make a bolt from the door. If Mom has a leash and will take him out (along with the cats) then he is ready to go. We now have lived with him for close to almost two years. At 9 PM he wants to go to bed. He sleeps under the covers and or at her side on the bed. He snores and loves to cuddle and sleep from 9Pm to mid- morning of the next day. He sleeps during the day or plays with the cats. They so want to lay with him, but he won't have it. You can also hug him cheek-to-cheek after he gets to know you. During the day, he makes his rituals around the house to check for strangers and witch ghosts . Rarely he will bark at the television when a dog is barking on television.

He really knows how to beg and when he is done getting what he wants he turns his head to the right and then to the left. After that he sheepishly leaves you. There is a forest of plants in the den and the cats

hide there. Benson goes in there and gets lost, by that time the cats jump up to a piece of furniture which is much taller than Benson.

The three dogs have lived one at a time for nearly 25 years or more. The death of each is a death of a close family member. So this book was written for WILSON and his many other pet kids.

ALL OVER THE USA

And so it goes. There are domesticated animals that live in among us (9 billion humans.) Some are shivering in the cold hoping to die and some are filled with riches. A multi-million to billion dollar industry has developed to help live with animals. . Dogs are good for you if you know what you are doing. They want to cuddle and so do humans.

We are a match for each other. So, Wilson's spirit is swimming away to sea of life and Mama is crying.

THE END
