

## Kimber



We have always adopted dogs from shelters or from people who no longer wanted them. We've always been blessed with the most lovable dogs on earth.

Before I tell you about the most recent member of our family, I have to tell you about events that led up to her joining us.

In 1993, my husband insisted, after just having our beloved Kelley euthanized, that he did not want to go through with that again. No more dogs.

A few months later, my son walked in one day with a tiny little fur ball and said our house was missing something and he thought this was it. He put her on the floor and she walked over, put her head on my husband's foot and he was won over. We could keep her. She was the last of a litter and the people just wanted her given away. She was the sickly runt. They said she was a shih tzu but she looked like a poster child for a Tibetan Spaniel instead. We named her Killer because she had a bit of an attitude.

When she was nine years old we felt she needed a friend to keep her company while we

were gone during the day, so we adopted another family member from the San Antonio Humane Society. We named her Indy. Indy could fit in the palm of your hand but quickly grew twice the size of Killer. She would try to play with Killer but little Miss Killer would keep her at a safe distance. She would tolerate her but would not play with her. She was above such silliness.

The day came recently when our beloved Killer lost the use of her back legs. We gave her glucosamine and baby aspirin. We also made a wheel chair for her and for 6 weeks, she was happy to get around as usual. Then the front legs started to go. I made a sling to lift her so I could help her get around. Then she started crying constantly and I knew the time for her to leave us had arrived. I canceled one appointment because I hoped I was wrong but the next week I knew in my heart that it was not fair to let her suffer. The vet made time for us when no one else would be around and her pain and unbearable suffering was quickly and with dignity and respect, ended. She was sixteen years old. Her ashes sit on the shelf where I can tell her good morning when I get up every day.

Like us, Indy was depressed after Killer died. She slept where Killer had slept. She lost the sparkle in her eyes. She wouldn't look at us anymore. She walked around looking for her Killer. She stopped eating. When I'd leave and come back, she be excited until she would realize that I hadn't gone to get Killer.

So, we made another trip (actually two) to the Humane Society to find her another friend. We checked out several before something, and we don't know what, led us to a dog that we would never have selected. Killer weighed 17 pounds. This one weighs 32. Kimber had beautiful long red hair and this one has short hair. She was not what we wanted. We wanted another Killer.

But Indy saw her and they were immediate friends. Her name was Cloe but we named her Kimber. We were told that she is a shepherd mix but I think she has some Shiba Inu in her as well. We were also told that she is about two years old and that she was left at their front door. Like Indy at that age, she hates anything that is fluffy so toys and diapers that are stacked on the shelf are quickly de-fluffed!

Kimber gave Indy joy again. They play together beautifully and are inseparable. Kimber has been the PERFECT member of our family, too. She sleeps while we eat and, unlike Indy, never begs from the table. She quickly learned to use the doggy door. But the best part is that unlike Indy (also known as Miss Barks-a-lot), she doesn't bark. In the month that she's lived with us, she has barked once. She adores her showers and she loves, loves, loves to have her tummy rubbed.

While making Indy happy was important, we have a grandson who spends the day with us during the week while his parents work and he was really close to Killer. Aiden was a preemie (one and a half pounds at birth) and because of his early birth he has had some issues to deal with. Killer over the past 4 years has been by his side and helped him learn to talk, to walk and just be silly. She also let him know that when he felt bad, he could snuggle with her and all was right with the world again.

When we lost Killer, he would ask about her and explanations about death and Heaven didn't help. In his mind, she was at the doctor's and he wanted her back again.

Kimber immediately loved Aiden. Aiden wasn't too sure about her because she was just the opposite of Killer. He wanted his Killer, not this strange dog. But when Aiden would arrive at our house every morning, Kimber would always meet him at the door and once she saw that he was settled in, she would lie down next to him and go to sleep. They have become close and, when Aiden is having a not so good day, Kimber is always close to accept his hugs and let him know, as Killer did, that all is right with the world again.

Others can have their pure breeds. I will gladly take my precious, loving mutts any day. Without them, as my son so rightly said, "something is missing."