

## Jasper

Jasper was my very first dog in my married adult life. My parents had adopted a Yorkshire Terrier named Goliath as a favor to a colleague of my Dad's who was not able to care for the dog, and so my Dad finally got the pet he had always wanted.

Goliath was a small, perfectly proportioned, well-groomed and well-mannered little dog who was about eight or nine years old when my parents adopted him. He was our family dog, extremely protective (especially for his size). He weighed about 9 pounds. He was feisty, clever and manipulative. My Mom liked him, but my Dad absolutely adored this little dog. When Goliath died some years ago, my father grieved deeply and, in a way, never recovered from the loss of his one true and best friend.

Throughout college and Grad school, I never lived in a place that permitted dogs. So when I moved to New York, Norm and I found a wonderful apartment that permitted pets. I was in bliss. I thought a Yorkshire Terrier would be the perfect pet for apartment life in Manhattan.

We didn't know much about shelter or rescue dogs at the time. We had rescued dogs ourselves, but weren't really familiar with the concept of animal welfare organization, shelter, rescue groups, etc. We were young, fresh out of Grad School and living in NYC. We had moved to further our career goals and to live in a place that offered art, music, theatre, dance, great museums, restaurants and superlative shopping!

We had looked at dogs in pet shops and responded to some ads in the local newspapers and magazines. One day, I happened to go into a pet boutique, which sold pet products and accessories. I noticed that in a medium sized crate there was a rather large Yorkshire Terrier all by himself. As I recall, there were no other pets per se in the shop. I inquired about the dog, and the sales person said that he was a "boarder." Meaning that his family left him there, was not planning on taking him back, and was hoping that someone who came into the shop would adopt him. So, this large boned dog with long, silky hair and beautiful brown eyes, was available for adoption. Thus far, he had been there for several months and no one had even expressed interest in him – let alone wanted him. I asked if I could hold him and walk him in the shop. He was friendly but shivered slightly in fear of a stranger. As I held him, he licked me. We connected. He was a very sweet little dog, and I; of course, I fell in love with him immediately. Actually, I don't think I've ever encountered a dog that I didn't fall in love with at first sight!

Anyway, Norm and I returned to the shop the following day. I had described the dog and his situation in detail, and Norm knew how much I wanted a dog of our own. We met Jasper, walked him around the store on leash and played with him in a small room in the back. Jasper had recognized me immediately and was very happy to see me. He seemed to like Norm a lot, too. We bonded as a family. However, we left the shop still not certain as to whether to adopt him. We decided to take the time to think more carefully about the overall ramifications of a decision to adopt this dog. We would have to walk and play with him. We would have to feed and house train him. He wasn't the "perfect"

Yorkie of my dreams – but he was sweet, smart, playful and affectionate. And he was in need of a real home – no dog should have to live in a crate in a store!

We decided that evening to adopt him and made plans to pick him up and bring him home with us the next day. We called the shop owner to let her know we would be taking this little guy home with us. We enlisted her aid in locating all the items he would require, leash, collar, id tag, travel kennel, healthy dog food (dry & wet), food and water bowls, toys and anything else he might require. Norm and I discussed male dog names, and I preferred something with a British literary bent. Thus, the little “boarder” dog became our “Jasper.”

We picked Jasper up. He was happy. We were happy, albeit somewhat apprehensive. He exited his store “crate” for the last time and never looked back. He was no longer a castoff, a liability He belonged to someone who would love and care for him for the rest of his life. He became a member of our family.