

**Our Family Dog Lady**  
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**(Writing Your Life Stories Group)**

Our family dog was named Lady; she was a wet mouth St. Bernard. Lady was just a puppy when she was adopted by our family, and from day one it was clear that she was a lap dog. Weighing 15 pounds this big round bundle of fur was continually climbing into someone's lap. Curled into a tight ball, while nestled in your lap, it took only a few gentle strokes across her fur and she was fast asleep. As an adult Lady was over three feet tall and weighed 130 pounds, surprisingly she continued her resolve to be a lap dog. Nowadays, Lady was not content unless her head and at least one paw were resting in your lap.

Lady's eyes were very expressive. Not bothering to raise her head from your lap, her eyes were directed upward as she allowed them to dart about the room keeping track of conversation. With a look of ponderance, she would raise either her right or left eyebrow corresponding with the direction of her glance.

She was so strong that each link of her chain had to be individually welded. One end of the chain was attached to a large concrete disk buried one foot below the ground and the other chain end was attached to a reinforced leather dog collar.

A sturdy 8 X 20 foot wooden fence style dog pen was attached to one side of our garage. An opening was cut into the side of the garage wall that led directly to a dog house located inside of the garage. The door of this pen was securely bolted to a 4 X 4 inch post with two robust hinges, and a door latching mechanism that incorporated a large sliding dead-bolt with clasp.

On occasion when our family would drive to the store we would secure Lady into her pen. When we returned home from the store, we would spot Lady sniffing the ground as she wandered about the neighbor's yard located near the end of our street. We would call to her and she would look up in our direction. Recognizing us, she would then bolt for home. When we arrived home there she would be standing innocently in her pen, the door of the pen knocked flat to the ground. She would continue to just stand there looking so innocent, as if she had done nothing wrong.

As a full grown adult dog she was a bit like having a small horse. When she ran, because of her size, her gait was more akin to a lope or a gallop. We had tiled floors throughout our home. My mother double waxed all of these floors on a bi-monthly basis. Consequently, Lady would slide about uncontrollably for the first few days after mom had waxed the floors. Because of her friendly nature Lady could easily become excited and bound off to another room eager to greet someone. However, due to the newly waxed floors she would hopelessly scramble to get her footing as she slid out of control trying to make the turn into the next room.

During cold weather in Michigan she spent a large amount of time in our home with little exercise. Consequently, when allowed outside she would circle the house at least three times running just as fast as she could to blow off pent-up energy.

Lady's love and devotion to our family was unwavering. She was indeed a gentle giant and her memory will remain always in our hearts.