

The Wait for the Inevitable

The same routine every day.

The same boring lifestyle every day for 24 hours, seven days a week, thirty days a month, 365 days a year, for the past eleven years.

Wake up

Eat

Schoolwork

Eat

Nap

Go to the shops

Shower

Sleep

Visiting the shops was the only half decent time of the day. It was my only contact with the outside world. My only opportunity to see people other than my mum, tutor and doctor.

Say hello to the cashier lady. Wave at the elderly man in the wheelchair. Watch the school children play: skipping, braiding each other's hair; squealing while they push each other to crazy heights on the swing set.

With the window of our rolls Royce down, the strong winds smashed against my face and wildly whipped my hair around my eyes. As we drove over the bridge, the first thing that hit me was the salty air. I averted my eyes down to the aqua blue sparkling ocean water. Seagulls glided through the air while surfers surfed the six-foot waves.

The sudden sound of the indicator snapped me out of my daydream. Why were we turning? We always go straight... I knew this route like the back of my hand.

"Mother, you took a wrong turn."

"I know," she replied confidently, not taking her eyes off the road.

Minutes later we arrived at a place I only dreamed about.

The dog pound.

I looked at Mother, my heart was thumping out of my chest. Before shutting the car door, she turned to me smiling and said:

"Come on, let's go get your new companion."

Dogs, Dogs, Dogs. Everywhere you looked there were dogs. Dogs of all breeds, sizes and colours. Fluffy dogs. Furless dogs. Dogs with three legs and even dogs missing an eye. Tears prickled at my eyes as I walked past them all, listening to their scared whimpering, and looking into their fearful eyes that begged 'take me home, please.'

How was I supposed to pick one when I wanted to take them all?

Eventually my eyes fell on a little dog sitting by itself in the corner of the pen. It was shaking from anxiety and I just wanted to pick it up and smother it with kisses. It was small and white with a brown patch over its' right eye. Smiling, I glanced at the information plaque attached to the cage.

"Gobi..." I whispered under my breath. On cue, her spotted ears pricked up. My heart melted and I turned to Mother, stating:

"That one Mother. I want that one."

It was fair to say that my life was not the same dull routine it was before we got Gobi. She came out of nowhere and won us over with her cute little face, but at the same time she completely turned out life upside down. We would find our shoes in all sorts of places, she tended to escape and had a very bad habit licking all over your face.

Although she was naughty, she was the best friend I never had. My favourite time of the day quickly became when I was allowed to walk her down to the river at the back of our property. I would throw sticks in it for her to fetch, and every single time she would bring them back. Gobi also liked to play with balls, which is what we did every night to tire her out before bed. And then, she slept at the end of my bed and woke me up by licking my face. I had only had her for a couple of months, but I already loved her with every inch of my heart. And for once I was hopeful for the future.

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“Ms Reynolds, I’m sorry but your daughter’s not getting any better. The tumour has spread too much, she’s not going to get any better.”
Upon hearing this, the reality of the doctor’s words hit me like a dozen trucks at once. I couldn’t breathe and my sobs echoed through the reception room. All I could think about was: “I’m going to die.”
Suddenly, the door flew open and there stood my mother, her expression emotionless; I could see the pain, the sorrow, the shock in her eyes. She collapsed onto the floor next to me, embracing me tightly.
And so, we cried together.

With every day that went past, the wait for the inevitable seemed to be getting closer. It was almost like a finish line to an extremely long marathon. Only the end wasn’t victory. It was death.

Gobi wanted walks. She would come to me with her lead in her mouth.
She wanted affection. She would lick my hands, my arms, my face.
She wanted to play. She would come running over with her toy and would lay it at my feet.
But I didn’t have the energy to do any of that.

My life fell back into the same boring routine it was before we got Gobi.

Wake up
Eat
Sleep
Cry
Eat
Sleep

I wasn’t allowed to leave the house. I felt like I was going crazy.

And so, it was one night that I decided I had to get out of here, even if it was for ten minutes I would take Gobi down to the river, for the last time.

I quietly snuck around the house and as silently as I could, I opened the front door. It creaked open with a groan. I listened for any sort of stir from Mother’s room; there was none. With my best friend beside me, I quickly disappeared into the night air.

It was a clear night. The stars shone so brightly it was almost like someone tossed diamond dust in the sky. The moon was beautiful, big, bold. Mist danced off the river, and an owl hooted in the distance. I giggled and threw a stick into the freezing water, Gobi chasing right after it. I laughed as watched her bounce around in the water, but then something overcame me. My head was spinning

and I couldn't see straight. It was like my body was shutting down, like the organs inside of me were shrivelling up. I tried to scream as I collapsed to the ground but nothing came out. I realised this is what dying feels like. As I passed out, I saw Gobi sprinting like lightning, back towards the house.

I woke up back in my bed and there were multiple people surrounding me.

"M-Mum?" I croaked, and realised she was standing at the end of the bed, her back heaving. Her face was buried in the arms of... a doctor? The sound of my voice made her cry louder, harder.

I realised someone was missing.

"Where's G-Gobi?" I whispered, my voice raspy.

"She's right here sweetheart," someone said, lifting her onto me. I tried to memorise her face as much as I could, her chocolate brown eyes, her patch over her eye, her spotty ears. I felt my breaths getting shorter and shorter, and I started to cry.

She licked the tears off my face like the cutie she is, and I knew her face would be the last one I would see. So, before I shut my eyes for the last time, I whispered:

"I love you, Gobi."

Time of death: 5.06am.