

# Stories of LOVE

My name is Winston. That's me on the right, the handsome Golden/Chow Mix. Many months ago, I was lost . . . scared . . . cold . . . alone . . . and afraid. I wasn't even three-months-old when the nice man found me. I was just wandering on a farm. He called me a "stray" and took me back to animal control. I waited for several days and was told I was going to a new place called the Atlanta Humane Society (AHS).

As soon as I arrived, a doctor looked at me. He said I was healthy and ready for surgery. I am kind of nervous by nature. I just don't trust these people . . . even if they are nice. They say that's why my fur is starting to fall out. Stress and my cough. The noises here scare me sometimes. People come to visit, and I crawl real far back in my kennel and try not to look them in the eye. I hope they just go away.

This nice lady came by. I took to my corner but she kept petting me and saying nice things. She said she was my foster mom and was taking me home. I was so scared the car ride home; I didn't make a sound.

Her home is THE BEST. I set one paw outside my crate and you know what I saw? A DOG! A big, furry sister just for me! I figured the best way to say hello was to chew on her tail. I know we're going to be best friends.

My fur is falling out a lot. My face is almost bald and my skin is cracking and bleeding. My foster mom puts special medicine on me every day to make it better. I really like her. She takes me to work with her every single day, and I just sleep on her lap. She calls me the perfect lap dog.

I get these baths every week, too. The shampoo smells funny. My foster mom says it's to help my fur grow back. She puts special medicine on me, too. I have really big bald spots everywhere, but my foster mom tells me I'm the most handsome boy she's ever seen.

One day, my foster mom came home crying. My foster dad hugged her and said everything would be OK. She was saying big words like "urinary incontinence" and "lifetime of medication" and that word I don't like . . . surgery. I think this is because I pee everywhere. I try not to, but I can't help it.

I start taking more medicine. My foster mom tells me I'm doing so good! When I go outside and go now, I get a treat! I can't believe I can actually go outside! My foster mom says I'm such a good boy. It took a really long time, but I'm all better! My foster mom and dad said it was time to celebrate with something called a "professional carpet cleaner." I'm not sure what that is, but the house sure smells nice now!

My fur has all grown back and I'm able to go like a big boy. It took seven long months. But my foster mom never gave up on me. We went back to AHS today. My foster mom started crying again. I got kind of nervous. She is giving me extra hugs and kisses today. She tells me it's time to make it "official." She signs some papers and said she's now just "mom." I don't understand . . . she's been my mom for seven months! But I'm glad she's so happy.

I think back to that night on the farm every now and then. It's almost hard to remember that feeling of being alone and scared. My life is so happy now. Every night, I crawl up on my mom's lap and sprawl out for my belly rub. She laughs and calls me the 50-pound lap dog. But mom's lap is the first place I ever felt safe. So forever and ever . . . it will be my favorite place to be.