

## JUNK YARD DOG

“Why can’t we, Mom? Angie just got one. A little white one. He’s really cute.”

Sue paused wiping her hands on a dish towel. She stared at her six-year-old daughter. Scoot, as she was nick-named had silky blond hair, cut in a short bob. She was tall for her age and stared up at her mother with large, luminous green eyes. In common parlance, Scoot was adorable.

It was difficult to say no to her. For anything.

“Scoot, we’ve talked about this before.”

“But, Mom....”

“Scoot, remember,” Sue turned and started unloading the dishwasher, “we’re saving for a house. A house with a yard. Then we can have a dog.”

Scoot looked disappointed and walked away, head down.

Eight months later, Sue and Scoot were moving into their first house. A house with a front yard, back yard and a fence.

Sue stared with satisfaction out at the yard. Not big really, but a little landscaping, nice, and joy of joys, a real slump-stone fence on each side, about five feet tall. Plus, there were large wooden gates with latches on each side. She sighed and slumped down on a green metal yard chair. She had ordered a set to go with the new glass topped table. They would be able to have real barbeques out here. Right on! She smiled to herself. Patience is its own reward.

The dog discussion was back in full force. Sue was reminded frequently of her promise. Her ex-husband, Billy Bob, started to appear at the new house and join in the discussion.

“Don’t want no little, yappy dogs. Hate them things. Just want to drop kick one a ‘em across the goal post of life.”

Sue rolled her eyes.

“Need a real dog, hunting dog, dog ‘wit bones on ‘em.”

“Yah, Billy, and who exactly is going to be the one to take care of this here hunting dog? Ah, I know, me. No. No big dogs. I’m the one who’ll end up picking up the dog poop, so, the less, the better.”

“Ha,” Billy Bob replied. “Yappy dogs. Bah.”

For weeks, Sue searched the internet for deals on dogs. There weren’t any.

“Golly, two hundred fifty, four hundred dollars for a puppy. Geeze, what are these people thinking?” She sighed and kept looking. This was getting discouraging.

One day Sue and Scoot got home from school. Billy Bob’s old white pickup truck was parked in front of the house. He had taken to letting himself into the backyard. Sue didn’t really mind but wondered what was up. Through the living room glass slider, she could see him sitting out at the backyard table smoking a cigar. Something was running around in the yard.

*What in the world?* Sue opened the slider and heard barking. A large, brown dog barked and ran toward her. She darted back behind the slider. Billy Bob laughed.

“He won’t hurt nothing. He’s just a big puppy. Razor, come here boy.” The dog ran toward him and sat. Billy patted his head. “See, just a big baby. Come on out here.”

Sue approached cautiously and sat. The dog approached her, tail wagging. He licked her hand. Razor was a large, brown, short-haired something. A mix of boxer and who knew. He wasn’t full grown yet, but had big feet and was all wiry muscle, probably 75 pounds. Definitely not a little, yappy dog. A big yappy dog.

“Well, he seems friendly,” she ventured, cautiously. “But where did he come from?”

“He was from one of the guys at the cigar shop,” Billy took a puff and blew out smoke.

She frowned.

He leaned forward and whispered, “They were going to have to put him down.”

Billy nodded and puffed on his cigar again, smiling. Scoot came out and started to oh and ah over the dog. Razor wagged his tail more and began to run in happy circles.

Sue sat and contemplated, *A lot bigger than I wanted of course, but he seems friendly enough, so....* She left Scoot with her dad and went to the pet store to get pet food.

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The next few weeks proved to be more eventful than Sue had expected. Razor ate a lot of food, left massive poops and started to dig up the backyard. Sue got a shovel to pooper scoop and even Billy Bob helped with some of the cleanup. Problems started when Scoot let Razor in the house.

Sue discovered this when she found her best camera on the floor of the living room. It had been chewed to bits. The bite marks went through both the leather case and into the metal. She picked up the camera and looked at it with amazement. Incredible.

The digging in the back yard continued as Razor systematically destroyed all the landscaping. Sue shook her head. Both house cats were hiding under her bed and would only come out to eat and use the litter box. Sue kept assuring them that the dog was just a puppy. Neither were buying it.

The piece de resistance came about the second month of dog ownership. The next-door neighbors, Bill and Joan Barnett were 'house proud' as some would say. A retired couple, their house and their yard were their castle.

Although Sue had been over several times for coffee, the pair had never invited her into the sancto-sanctorum, the backyard pool. Sue tried to have no hard feelings over this. Instead, she choose to not complain and maintain good neighbor relations. It had not been a good week, dog wise. Razor had gotten into Sue's closet and managed to find not one, but two pairs of new leather shoes. He chewed up one shoe of each pair. Then, somehow, who knew how, he got out the gate and started to bark at the mailman and chase him down the block. The man was terrified, and Sue was still not sure there wasn't going to be a formal complaint. Good God, what next?

What next came the very next week with an ominous knock on the front door. Sue was home alone working in her office. Hearing the knock, she went and peeked through the spy hole. It was her next-door neighbor, Bill. This was not a good sign. He never came over. She opened the door cautiously.

"Sue, you got a new dog?" Kind of a question, of course, he already knew the answer.

"Well, yes, Bill, my ex brought him over for Scoot..."

"Sue, that dog crawled over the fence and got into my back yard and started tearing stuff up."

"I, I, ah..." Sue stuttered. *He got over the fence? Unbelievable, it's five feet high!*

"Sue, here's the thing," Bill peered at her with a manical gleam in his eye. Bill was an old union guy retired from the local brewery. "That dog gets into my yard one more time, I'm going to shoot him. Then I will drag his cold, dead carcass over here and leave him on your front yard."

She stared at Bill, open-mouthed.

"Ya get me, Sue?"

She nodded dumbly.

"Good, I am so glad we understand each other."

With that, Bill turned on his heel and stomped back home.

Sue closed the door softly and went back to her office, slumped in her chair, staring into space.

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"Billy, it's Sue."

"Yeah, Sue girl. What's up?"

"The dog has to go, Billy."

"Go, go where? Where should he go?"

"Don't know, don't care. You brought him here, you take him back."

"But, but, I told you what was going to happen to him...."

"Don't give me anymore information, Billy, come and get the dog."

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“But where did Razor go Mom?” Scoot looked at her mom with beseeching eyes.

“Your dad had to take him back Scoot, where he got him. I’m sorry, the people wanted him back,” Sue lied. Scoot looked like she was going to tear up. “But,” Sue added quickly, “look at this.” She opened her computer screen to a site and pointed to a picture. It was a picture of a little, black puppy with curly hair.

“Look Scoot, he is a little older now, but not much and the lady is willing to sell him to us. A little cocker spaniel. Just our kind of dog.”

“Really?” Scoot looked open-mouthed at the picture. “When do we get him?”

“We go pick him up this weekend. And I will let you pick out a name. What do you think it will be?”

Scoot got serious and thought hard.

“Would it be okay if we called him Razor too?”

Sue laughed with relief.

“If that would make you happy, we’ll call him whatever you want.”

The two sat and looked at more pictures of prize cockers. She marked the calendar in big letters,  
Pick up Razor!!!!!!

The end.

