

# The American Dog's Dream

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I knew enough about humans to know that they were beastly natured people - mean, cruel, and bossy. They did things to me that I will never forget, but I wish I could. I didn't have a name, and I didn't even know who my parents were. I just woke up one day - in a cage. I had no food, no water, and no idea where I was. They had zip-tied my kennel shut. Every moon, when no one was around, I chewed on the kennel, and every morning, the big man smacked me and threw me back into the cage. I was about two feet tall and very skinny from the poor diet I was fed. I wanted to go anywhere but there, anywhere. One night, I worked with all my strength and managed to get the zip-tie off. I opened the cage and ran, ran as fast as my legs could carry me.

I found myself at the door of a house that I didn't even know. It looked like a nice house, but who was I to judge? When the humans did not open the door for a long time, I got kind of worried. "Maybe I will never have a life," I thought to myself. I saw two young children. One was a boy; the other, a young girl. They were yelling to their parents inside of the house. Luckily, from the three or four months I was with my previous owner, I had picked up on the human's tongue.

They said, "Mom, Dad, it's a mutt!" instantly insulting me. How dare they call me a mutt! I am no mutt, I am a pure breed...I thought. I muttered quietly to myself. The children started oohing and aahing at my glorious stature. They started to come at me with their big hands. My instincts kicked in, and not a moment too soon. I jumped and ran away, cowering under a tree. I would never go near those sick humans ever again. I knew from my past experiences that those hands could cause pain.

Well, after I had suffered my minor attack, they put out some food for me. Completely starved, I ate hungrily, but I was still very hungry after I finished the meal. When I scratched on the door to get more food, they wouldn't let me have anything. Did they want to hurt me too? I didn't think so, but I couldn't trust anyone. I turned around on the porch, confused as ever, and fell into a deep sleep.

I woke up. "What was that?" I looked around the darkness. The hard concrete of the porch was not very comfortable to sleep on in the cool summer night air. There it was again. I knew that sound, but I couldn't put my tongue on what it was. I sniffed the air and caught a whiff of something familiar. A coyote! I instantly sprang into action. My legs moved as fast as they ever did before. The wind whistled in my ears as I ran lightning bolt fast. I didn't see anything, but I was running and barking in the direction of the howling. I stood in their back yard barking towards it.

The father came out of the house with a flashlight, yelling, and screaming at me to quit barking. Instantly memories of my old home flooded back to me. I remember when my old owner beat me. He carried a flashlight and yelled just like this new man. It scared me, so I ran right back up to the front yard and cowered under the tree. I didn't even get close to any of them the next morning. I just sat under the tree all day, and didn't do a thing. This went on for the next couple of weeks. I started to catch on that they didn't want me to bark at any old thing that I smelled or heard. Yet, I felt it was my duty to protect them from the things that I knew were in the dark shadows.

They started to call me "Hank." I wasn't too fond of it, but hey, what was I going to say to them? The family slowly showed me that they wanted me to stay. I started to let my guard down and let them get close. The kids taught me how to behave and perform tricks, or at least I let them think that they taught me. I now sleep in a little dog house in the back. It is very windy here, and I get cold occasionally. In the morning I always see to it that the adults and children get out of the driveway safely. I escort them out of the driveway, make my rounds around the house, and go back to sleep. When they get home, I wait for them to press the button in their automobiles that opens the big door that they drive into. After that, I make my usual circuit around the house, chase the occasional rabbit, and go to sleep. I repeat the process in the morning. Man, I have a good life here, don't I? I'm living the American Dog's dream, to have my own place, and do what I love, protecting people. I think I might stay awhile... wait, what was that? Oh, that coyote is gonna get it!