

***This story is dedicated to Lee and Ernie Swanson and their Yorkshire terrier named Tara. Tara had surgery for collapsing trachea and is now a success story. Today Tara runs and plays without effort and leads a normal life.***

# **Tara**

***By Donna Schmack-Rose***

***Twilight had already set and the dark of night began to envelope the land. Lady Lee and Lord Ern were returning home from a 5-day journey to visit friends. They were at their journey's end and from a distance they could see the lights of the castle beckoning them home.***

***Lord Ern and his wife could see the faint outline of the King's men slowly walking their horses across the drawbridge two by two. Even from a distance, both could sense something unusual was happening at the castle.***

***Lady Lee turned to her husband with a puzzled look on her face, "My dear Ern, what is going on this eve?" "I don't know my dear, but let us find out," said Lord Ern as he gently urged the two brown mottled mares forward. The little carriage jerked slightly and both horses moved into a trot towards the castle.***

***Lady Lee and Lord Ern stood at the entrance into the castle ballroom and took in the enormity of the scene in front of them. The Kings men were carrying in yorkies and the servants were scurrying to help get each little charge settled into an area with blankets and fresh bowls of water. Lady Lee spotted Lady Donamerry helping an aged yorkie up to get a drink, and she moved swiftly to Lady Donamerry side asking, "My lady, what is happening?" Lady Donamerry gave Lady Lee a quick hug and said "Lady Lee, I am happy to see you...we need your help. The King has rescued Prince Kristopher from the evil Ludwig, and he has brought all of the yorkies that were imprisoned in cages. We must help the King's men get these yorkies settled in. Many are starving and thirsty and need our aid. Come, help me over here." Lady Donamerry turned to the aged yorkie she had been helping and said gently, "Happy, I must help the others but I will be back to tend to you." Lady Donamerry grabbed Lady Lee by the arm and pointed, "Look, there are two more yorkies that were just brought it, let us start our help there.***

***Lady Lee knelt down in front of one of the yorkies. She could tell that the yorkie was still young, just a baby really. Lady Lee put her***

*hand on the tiny babe and she could feel the yorkie tremble underneath her fingers. The yorkie began to whimper, “Shhhhh,” said Lady Lee in her soft quiet voice, “You are safe here with us.” “My name is Tara” trembled the young yorkie, looking up at Lady Lee with her sad brown eyes, “and I am only 5 months old. I have lived outside in a cage all of my life with only a small candle for heat. It has been very cold and lonely”. Tara began to cough, and Lady Lee picked the yorkie up and gently rubbed Tara’s throat to help soothe her. “Never you mind Tara” those days are over and you will have a good life now, with me and Lord Ern.”*

*Lord Ern found his hands full as one of the King’s men put a yorkie in his arms. He saw Lady Donamerry beckoning to him to bring the yorkie to her. He moved swiftly across the ballroom to Lady Donamerry and handed the yorkie to her “Have you seen my wife?” asked Lord Ern. Lady Donamerry pointed to a corner in the ballroom, “Over there my lord”. Lord Ern looked in the direction that Lady Donamerry had pointed, and saw his wife tending to a young yorkie. Lord Ern began to walk toward his wife, moving slowly and taking in the scene in front of him. Each servant was ministering to a yorkie’s needs and the room was almost full. Lord Ern finally made it to his wife’s side, just as she stood up and turned to face him. “What is that” asked Lord Ern and Lady Lee gently put Tara in his arms, “My dear husband, meet your new daughter!!!” Lord Ern looked down into his arms and saw the small furry face looking up at him. Lord Ern fell instantly in love.*

*Four years passed, and Lady Lee, Lord Ern, and Tara became a family. They traveled together on their trips to visit friends. Tara worshipped the ground her masters walked on and she appreciated the new life Lady Lee and Lord Ern gave her. Tara continued to cough.*

*Lady Lee began to worry as Tara’s cough worsened over time. Each coughing episode appeared to be worse then the last, and at times Tara had difficulty breathing. Tara could no longer run and play like the other yorkies as she tired so easily. Lady Lee decided that Tara needed to see the Queen for help.*

*Lady Lee entered into the Queen’s healing room and curtsied, “Good morning, your majesty”. Queen Karyn smiled at Lady Lee, “It is wonderful to see you Lady Lee, what ails your Tara?” Lady Lee held Tara close to her as she said, “Tara is coughing and she has difficulty breathing. Her coughing continues to get worse and I am worried. She is only five years old”*

***Queen Karyn motioned for Lady Lee to bring Tara to her examining table. Lady Lee set Tara down just as one of the coughing episodes began. “Quaaaack, quack, quaaaack” coughed Tara, “Quaaaaaack, quaaaaaack, quaaaaaack, quaaaaaack. The Queen frowned, as she looked Tara over, “Lady Lee, run and ask my personal maid Leah to bring the King to me.” Queen Karyn continued to examine Tara as Lady Lee went to do as she was bid.***

***The King entered the healing room, followed by Leah and Lady Lee, “My Queen, you need me?” The Queen’s face lit up when she saw her husband, “Yes, my dear, Tara needs your help. She is coughing terribly and has difficulty breathing. I have checked her throat, and her trachea is collapsing. We will need your expertise to help her. The King began to examine Tara, running his fingers gently along her throat, “We will need to do x-rays, and see how badly her trachea is damaged. Bring her to my healing room. The wizard and I will see what we can do for this babe.” The King turned to Lady Lee and saw the fright in her eyes, “Tara will most likely need surgery. If we do not do this, she will eventually die from not being able to breathe. You must come with me to my healing room. We will give Tara the pure magic air she needs to help her breath and we will discuss her surgery. The King turned to his wife and gave her a gentle kiss before he picked up Tara and beckoned Lady Lee to follow him to his healing room.***

***Lady Lee and Lord Ern sat on the bench outside the King’s healing room waiting. The King and the wizard were inside the healing room along with Tara. Lady Lee knew that Tara was in the best of hands, but yet she still worried. The Queen’s personal maid Leah came down the hall and took a seat beside Lady Lee, “Lady Lee, the King and the wizard have the magic to make Tara well again. They can fix her collapsing trachea. You must trust them to help her and do what is best. Leah put her hand on top of Lady Lee’s hand in a gesture of comfort. Lady Lee turned to Leah “You always know the right words to bring us comfort” as Lady Lee held on to Leah’s hand.***

***The door to the King’s healing room opened and the wizard came out with Tara in his arms. The wizard was a young handsome man full of energy and life, and his flowing blue gown swirled like magic dust around his feet. He passed Tara from his arms to Lady Lee’s arms, “The pure magic air has made Tara feel better, but we will need to do surgery soon or she will die. You must bring Tara back to us in two days time.***

***The word spread quickly throughout the castle that Tara would need surgery to correct her collapsing trachea. All of the servants as well as the lady’s and lord’s could talk of nothing else. The day of Tara’s***

***surgery loomed closer, and everyone became hushed and gathered around Lady Lee and Lord Ern in support.***

***The morning of the third day, Lady Lee, Lord Ern, and Tara walked slowly to the King's healing room. When they went across the courtyard to get to the healing room, everyone in the castle gathered with them. Leah came forward and spoke to Lady Lee and Lord Ern, "All of us will be saying prayers for Tara, and we are here for you. Leah gave Lady Lee a hug, then gave Lord Ern a hug. Leah moved away, and each person in the courtyard hugged both Lady Lee and Lord Ern. Lady Lee's eyes welled up with tears and she looked around her and saw the love and concern in everyone's eyes. "Thank You", Lady Lee whispered. Lord Ern nodded his head in agreement, as a lone tear slid down his cheek.***

***Several hours passed. Lady Lee and Lord Ern held hands as they waited anxiously for word on Tara's surgery. Lady Lee looked at Lord Ern, "Tara has to be okay, please tell me it is so." Lord Ern embraced his wife and gave her a gentle hug.***

***The hall was quiet, and occasionally Lady Lee and Lord Ern could hear the King and the wizard talking. Finally, the hours staring at the door, waiting for it to open were rewarded. The King opened the door, and he had a big smile on his face. Lady Lee and Lord Ern stood up and walked toward the King. The King nodded and said "The surgery was a success. We had to put rings in Tara's trachea to help keep her airway open, but the surgery went well. Now, we will have to wait and see how Tara does. Tara is still sleeping, but you can see her for a few minutes, then you must go home and get some rest!!"***

***Several months have passed, and Tara is now completely healed. She runs and plays like the young yorkie she is, and she no longer coughs. The King and the wizard have given Tara a new life.***

***Tara now has two yorkie siblings named Baby Girl and Tia. Lord Ern and Lady Lee have bought a new larger carriage to fit all three yorkies, and the five now travel together and enjoy visiting friends.***

