

Lacey

**By
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Prince Kristopher's kingdom was a beautiful place; with rolling hills, green grass, blue skies, and Queen Karyn's magical garden. One particular yorkie who had been saved from the evil Ludwig, loved to go to the Queen's garden and walk the paths in solitude. This little yorkie did not like being around people or other yorkies because she thought that everyone laughed and pointed at her. When she had lived at evil Ludwig's puppy mill, Ludwig had hung a sign over her back that had said "Bargain Price" on one side and "Fixer-upper" on the other side, while he had laughed and called her "baldy". Some of the other puppy mill yorkies had laughed at her when the evil Ludwig had taunted her. That memory was so humiliating to her, and the name that the evil Ludwig had pinned on her reminded her daily of how ugly she was. Since she had never been given a name at her birth, the name "Baldy" had stuck. Now, Baldy preferred to sit by herself for hours and enjoy the birds chirping, the squirrels chasing each other around the trees, and watching the butterflies as they flitted from one flower to the next.

Baldy was not a pretty sight. Her head, paws, and back had bare patches. Her head hung dejectedly as she sat and watched a single pigeon walk back and forth in front of her. She watched the pigeon with her sad brown eyes and thought "I'd chase you, but I don't have the energy." The pigeon turned around and walked back, closer this time, tempting her. Baldy stood up slowly and walked away from the pigeon. She looked for a new place to snooze, someplace warm yet out of the sun's hot rays. The bare spots on her body made her get cold easily and shiver, yet the hot sun blistered her skin.

All the other puppy mill yorkies had made friends, but not Baldy. She did not know how to make friends nor did she know how to play. These were things she'd never been taught since she had been born in a puppy mill. Baldy tried to make friends...but she could not forget that these yorkies were the ones who had laughed at her when the evil Ludwig had called her "Baldy". Baldy vaguely recalled having no bald spots when she was a young puppy with her Mom. Was that only less than a year ago? So Baldy lived in a lonely world walking with her head and tail down so no one would speak with her. She looked so sad. Baldy deliberately kept her head down so that no one would notice her or the occasional tear that fell from her liquid brown eyes between the sparse golden hairs on her face. She daydreamed about having a friend to play with, talk to and to laugh with, as friends do

Inside, deep inside, she knew she was as good and as nice as the other yorkies, but as time went by, that feeling of being “almost” or “just as good” got buried deeper in her memories.

The afternoon sun began to fade, and Baldy got up from her spot in Queen Karyn’s garden, and walked slowly back toward the castle. She would eat her supper, and then curl on a warm blanket for the night all by herself, no friend to keep her company. The thought of being alone made Baldy sad, and her head hung more dejectedly than normal as she walked inside the castle. Several other yorkies were also returning to the castle, playing with each other as they ran past the guards and gave them a friendly “Yap” as they passed. No one noticed Baldy or the tear that slid down her golden cheek.

Queen Karyn stood just inside the entrance of the castle and saw Baldy as she approached the castle door. She beckoned Baldy to come to her, and took the sad little yorkie in her arms. Queen Karyn gently stroked Baldy’s back and talked to her in a soothing voice, “It will be okay.” Baldy never felt anything so nice and her heart melted when she looked into Queen Karyn’s eyes. The Queen smiled at Baldy, “I want you to come to me for every meal in the morning and night. I will have special meals prepared for you to help you get better, because you are a sweet and gentle little lady.”

“Me? Special? Baldy looked around to be sure that Queen Karyn was talking to her. There was no one else around!! Baldy could not believe that someone had noticed her, and that someone was the beautiful Queen Karyn!! Baldy bowed to the Queen shyly. Several days of special meals had passed, and Queen Karyn looked at Baldy again, just as gently as before, “Well, little one, it’s working. Your special meals are doing their job. You now have very tiny hairs just beginning to show on your back and on your head, too.” said the Queen. “Now, I want you to practice holding your head and tail up when you walk, so you will walk proudly. Try it here, before you go out. The little yorkie looked up at the Queen – “Yes”, said Queen Karyn, “That looks much better.” Then, she winked at her patient. “Go and practice. I’ll see you at dinner tonight.” Queen Karyn smiled as she watched the sad little yorkie leave the large healing area. Baldy would lift her head and tail, and then as she walked a few steps, she automatically lowered her head a little bit with each step her face was looking at the floor. Then she would stop, and lift her head and even adjust her tiny shoulders to hold her head up. Then a few more steps, each time a few steps longer before she stopped and raised her tiny head and re-adjusted her shoulders to help her keep her head up in a proud position and the tail upright. “Alright,” muttered Baldy, “I’ll do this for Queen Kayla,” as she lifted her head again. She is the only one who seems to care about

me. “Drat”, she muttered as she realized her head was down again and lifted it, flexing her shoulder muscles that had not been used in some time. Baldy struggled to keep her head and tail up, and after going up the length of the healing room area a second time, she managed to succeed in keeping her head from dropping towards the floor!! Baldy did not notice the other yorkies watching her and smiling their encouragement with a tail wag. Baldy had lived in her world of loneliness for too long to see that others were finally noticing her!!

Baldy walked down the long castle hall, continuing to practice holding her head and tail high. Occasionally, anyone passing would hear a muttered “Drat, not again!” as Baldy kept practicing holding her head up, as she walked as close to the wall as possible, as she usually did. She did not realize that as she practiced walking with her head held high, she began to move away from the shadows, and away from the false security of the wall. Even though it took most of Baldy’s concentration to keep her head and tail up, she was surprised by a breeze from a doorway, and heard the sound of silk rustling. “Queen Karyn?” No, it could not be Queen Karyn because the queen was wearing a “quiet” dress of cotton and it did not rustle. “Who could it be then?” Baldy wondered as she walked into the breezy doorway with her head held up.

Baldy saw a long billowing white thing. It had lots of pretty little holes in it, and hung from a window. A breeze made it fluff out again, one corner flapping a beckoning wave to the little yorkie. She moved closer, as the curtain waved again, just beyond her reach. She felt her tail go up and begin to wag, and as she walked even closer to the curtain she went up on her hind paws. A new breeze made the curtain almost touch her nose.

Baldy heard a voice behind her. “Hello little one, do you like the lace curtain?” said the castle seamstress, Teresa. “Yes, you can bark at it”, Teresa smiled at Baldy. Baldy responded to Teresa with a “Yap!” as the curtain moved again. The excitement inside Baldy made her tail move ever so fast, faster than the lace curtain moved, as her tail wiggled and stayed up!!! Baldy ran back and forth with the curtain, keeping her head up to chase it, and forgetting to hide along the wall. “Yap! This is fun!” Baldy chased the elusive curtain. “Yap. Is this play? I love it. Yap! Yap!” Teresa the seamstress smiled as she watched Baldy play with the curtain. The playing yorkie was so cute, that Teresa laughed out loud. The sound of Teresa’s laughter made Baldy freeze on the spot. “Oh, please, don’t stop” said Teresa. “You look like you were having so much fun, that I want to play with you. Go ahead.....the nicest thing to see is someone having fun.” “You’re not laughing at me?” asked Baldy.

Teresa responded “Heavens, no! Watching you play “chase the curtain” was almost as much fun as I were doing it myself. Why would you think someone would laugh at you?....Um, wait.....did one of our castle folk laugh at you?” asked Teresa. Baldy hung her head as she answered Teresa, “The evil Ludwig laughed at me all the time.” “Ludwig?” exclaimed Teresa. “That evil low life of a man is too dumb and mean to know what being nice is.” Baldy’s eyes got sad as she looked at Teresa, “But look at me!! I have patches of hair missing on my back,” and Baldy turned her back so Teresa could see. “I’m almost bald. Queen Karyn said there are tiny hairs growing in, but I still can’t see them.” Baldy hiccupped to keep from crying, as she waited for Teresa to look at her with distaste. Teresa smiled gently at Baldy, “No sweetie, I was just thinking we have to protect those bare spots so those new baby hairs can grow in. Please stay and chat with me. Sometimes I look so busy that people don’t visit, and I get lonely. Baldy looked at Teresa and asked, “You want to be my friend?” Teresa nodded at Baldy, and said “Wait, I have an idea.” Teresa picked up small pieces of fabrics. “What color do you like? Green, blue, yellow, pink or red?” she asked the yorkie. Baldy asked Teresa, “Why do you want to know what color I like?” Teresa chuckled as she looked at the puzzled yorkie, “Because I am going to make you a coat!! We can make it in a thin soft fabric or we can use fancy stuff if you wish. It will protect your hair until it grows in. Then later you can wear it when you wish to,” replied Teresa. “We are going to make a coat just for you!!!”

Baldy could not believe her ears.....Teresa was going to make her a coat. A special coat just for her!!! Baldy looked longingly at the pretty curtain she had been playing with earlier, and spotted a piece of pink ribbon on the floor. She ran to get the ribbon and brought it to Teresa. The Baldy looked at the curtain again, afraid to ask Teresa to make her a coat out of the same lacy material.

Teresa had watched the yorkie glance at the curtains and she knew in her heart what kind of material Baldy wanted her new coat. Teresa walked over to the curtains, and touched them. “How about this? she asked the little yorkie, “I’d say you would look lovely in lace. By the way, my name is Teresa, what is your name? Baldy hung her head, “I was born without a name. The evil Ludwig hung a sign on me and he called me Baldy...but I don’t like that name.” Teresa frowned as she thought of the evil Ludwig, and she shook her head and said, “Baldy is a horrible name and you are too pretty to have a name like that. I think we should call you Lacey, since you like lace so much. I think that name will suit you much better, because your face is so pretty and delicate.” said Teresa. “Besides, you seem to love to play with lace.” Baldy’s eyes sparkled as she thought about the new name Teresa had picked for her. She looked

up at Teresa with gratitude, and said “Lacey..... I like that name!!!” Teresa mused, “Yes, you have pretty eyes too. You are delicate only because you are small. Now let me measure you for a new lace coat, to go with your new name Lacey. You won’t need a heavy coat until winter and that is only when you go outdoors, but I can use that pattern for a light lace coat to protect you from the sun for summer. I can make your new coat right now!!” Lacey jumped for joy and let out an excited “Yap” as she ran to the curtain to chase the dancing billows of the lace.

Teresa and Lacy kept each other company and passed the hours as Teresa set about cutting out and sewing Lacey’s new coat. The time passed quickly and soon the dinner bell began to sound. Teresa and Lacey put aside the sewing, and got up to go to dinner. They walked down the corridor hall towards the aroma of roasting chicken, potatoes, and fresh homemade bread. They entered the dining hall and Lacey ran upon Queen Karyn. Queen Karyn had been wondering about the shy yorkie all day and had started to get concerned over her whereabouts, until she saw Teresa enter the dining hall with the shy Yorkie, looking at each other. Queen Karyn immediately noticed the once shy yorkie now held her head high and that a sparkle shined in the deep brown eyes!! Teresa walked up to Queen Karyn and greeted her with a curtsy, “Queen Karyn, I would like you to meet my new friend Lacey. I believe Lacey has been in your care with a special diet.”

The Queen smiled at Teresa, “Yes, Lacey has been flourishing under her special diet, by I see that you have given her the missing ingredients – love, friendship, and play!!”

Lacey came forward and bowed to Queen Karyn, “Teresa is my new friend, and she has given me a new name to go with my new coat and hat.” Lacey then ran in a tight yorkie circle of play to show Queen Karyn her beautiful new white lace coat and matching hat edged in pink ribbon!! Queen Karyn beamed at Lacey, “I am so glad to see the joyful side of you. Tonight we will have our dinner in honor of you and Teresa, and to your wonderful new friendship. We had all been so worried about you.” Lacey tilted her head at Queen Karyn and asked, “You were worried about me?”

Queen Karyn nodded, “We were all concerned about you. Most of the other yorkies were afraid to talk to you because you looked so sad. The other yorkies were afraid they’d make you cry. They do like you and hated the way Ludwig treated you.” “Lacey’s eyes got big and welled with tears of happiness as she looked from Teresa to Queen Karyn and asked, “They liked me and they were worried about me?” Queen Karyn chuckled, “You know Lacey, I think you will get many yorkie hugs tonight at your party, and you will have a

fun filled well-dressed life with Teresa. All you needed was to feel loved and cared for by someone. That is the best medicine you can have. Now, let us go and celebrate!!

Queen Karyn, Teresa, and Lacey stood at the door to the dining hall. All eyes in the room turned to the Queen. Queen Karyn guided Teresa and Lacey forward as she addressed the entire room, "Tonight we have cause for celebration. Teresa has found a new friend, and her name is Lacey. We will honor them tonight with our feast." All the people in the dining hall began to call out their well wishes to Teresa and Lacey, and all the yorkies came running to give Lacey a lick and a hug. They clamored around the prettily clad yorkie and exclaimed, "Lacey we love you too and we are so happy that you have found a new friend!! Lacey looked at all the yorkies around her and exclaimed "I have found many new friends tonight, thanks to my very special friend Teresa. Lacey jumped on Teresa and begged Teresa to pick her up. Lacey showered Teresa's face with kisses, and exclaimed to everyone in the room, "I love Teresa and we will take care of each other forever!!!!