

God's Most Unselfish and Loving Creation



My Ruby is a wonderful hunting companion and pet. She is quite a vision in the field at twenty five pounds and full of dynamite. Always up to a challenge and ever protective and loving. In late May, Ruby sustained an injury while in the care of a good friend who was sharing Ruby and her love with many hospital patients via pet therapy. My friend has a very high bed at home and she felt that Ruby had injured herself jumping from it. She felt it had not happened at the hospital as Ruby was not allowed to jump from those beds. Another concern was that Ruby had been bred weeks earlier and was due in June and perhaps she was having "pregnancy problems". I traveled to pick her up, and upon seeing her, I knew something serious was wrong with her. This was no simple injury or pregnancy issues as my friend had thought.

Sadly, the injury was a badly fractured vertebra in her neck and my vet referred me to Dr. Jonathan Suber for emergency surgery. Poor Ruby! The expected cost was insane, but that was not an issue as all of my dogs are family and are provided whatever they need. Putting her down was simply not an option.

Ruby survived the risky procedure. I brought her home to recuperate. Six weeks of crate confinement was required. Medication around the clock and completely restricted movement, allowed a potty break only every few hours and no excitement at all!!! Apparently Ruby had been pregnant, but Mother Nature deals with these things and her pups must have absorbed. I had noticed caked milk on all her teats when she returned home af-

ter several days in the hospital. She returned home just a couple of days before Belle was due to whelp.

We all settled in for the blessed event and for Ruby's confinement. My cottage at the lake is small and I have begun to whelp pups in my loving room rather than my bedroom as it allows more room to move about. After whelping, everyone goes to the bedroom for the next two weeks, and then to the kitchen as they are beginning to require more room to play. Ruby's crate was also in the living room due to its size.



Fast forward... Belle begins labor and Ruby watches, five are born, and then two come stillborn with abrupto placenta. Ruby becomes very restless. I hurriedly carry Belle to the vet for a c-section because chances were good that the remaining pups would have the same fate as the stillborns. Belle had 11 pups in all, with no runts. Nine survived of the 11. Belle had too many pups and too few teats with a shortage of milk. Shortly after returning home with Belle, Ruby began to make a terrible racket. I was concerned that she would injure herself and become paralyzed! What to do? Her attention was focused entirely on the basket full of babies. She wanted them! Finally, in trying to determine what she wanted and to calm her, I took the largest little guy from the basket and gently introduced him to her in her crate. I was half in and half out of the crate myself to assure the safety of the pup. My fear was unnecessary as she cuddled the baby and began to lick him, and he nursed with great vigor! I cried. My heart was so full and touched by this amazing sight.

Ruby became Belle's willing wet-nurse and very best friend. A very grateful Belle shared her family with the sad and injured Ruby who had absorbed her pups because of the injury. Ruby was producing milk like a factory! Much more than Belle! Her surgeon was amazed. Because Ruby had to be so still with the tiny pups, they helped her to heal physically and emotionally. When Ruby had more ability to move around, she and Belle would just switch boxes and thus take a turn at nursing both sets of pups; five pups in one box and four in another. It was a remarkable thing to witness. All the pups have gone to their new homes, but the girls remain very close and even clean each others faces after swimming every day.

Mother Nature is just as amazing as our Boykin Spaniels!

- Patricia Watts, Editor



COVER PHOTO: HOLLOW
CREEK'S "ROSEY"
OWNER: PAT WATTS OF
LEESVILLE, SC

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