

**Woman's Best Friend**  
**by Krista Fink**

When I first met Jazzy, I just wasn't a dog person. I liked my pets to be calm, dainty, clean, soothing. I had nowhere to keep a dog, as I had lived in a small apartment; and as a college student living away from home at the time, it just wasn't practical. I did not want a dog. But apparently, that was not my decision to make. I did not pick Jazmyn. She picked me.

When we went to "just look" at the Dalmations advertised in the paper, the owner was releasing the pups from the barn for feeding time, and all the other puppies rushed past me on their way to the food bowl. All but one. That one small spotted pup ran straight to me and began licking the toes sticking out of my brown leather sandals. She was the most adorable puppy I'd ever seen. I knew in an instant I was hers and she was mine.

Jazzy and I took potty walks every two hours around the clock and bonded closely in that tiny apartment, but I had no way of knowing just how important she would become in my life.

When I needed to, Jazzy would let me cry into her soft, comforting fur. She would lay in bed or on the couch with me when I was sick. She stayed up late into the night, keeping me company while I finished homework, and later, after I became a teacher, lesson plans.

When Jazzy was huge with pups, she and I cuddled in the recliner. She lay stretched out on her back, spanning the length of my body, her head resting on my cheek and her feet hanging over the edge of the chair. Breathing laboriously, she grunted and groaned

with the little comfort she received as I rubbed her swollen, jerking belly. I tried to soothe her, as she had so often done for me.

How was I to know, even then, that Jazzy would not once, not twice, but countless times save me from the man who claimed to love us both?

I never would have dreamed that she could comfort me with her terror, but she did. That terror is what saved me. The sound of our loving, sweet dog's tail as it beat nervously against the bathtub while she hid there in terror was the only thing that would stop his fits of rage.

His love for her could stop him. His love for me could not.

Thank you, Jazzy. I'm sorry you had to see all that you did. I'm sorry I couldn't take you with me, but he needs your comfort now even more than I. I hope you understand. Don't worry about me. I am safe now. Take care of yourself, girl.