

MENTOR TEXT – BOOKLET 19

My tenth birthday was the supposed to be the best birthday ever! My parents gave me the biggest surprise. They said I was finally old enough to get a pet. I had been asking for a pet forever, mostly a fluffy bunny or a playful puppy. They said we could go to the animal shelter and pick out any mammal I wanted! I was so excited, I practically bounced all the way to the car.

When we got to the shelter, it was a little noisy with all the barks and meows, but it was also full of cute animals. There were tiny kittens, sleepy guinea pigs, and lots of different dogs. I walked past cages, trying to decide. Then, I saw him. In a quiet corner, there was a little brown dog with big, sad eyes and floppy ears. He wasn't barking or jumping like the others. He just sat there, looking a little lonely. "That's the one!" I told my parents. They helped me fill out some papers, and pretty soon, the little dog was mine! I decided to name him Rusty because his fur was the colour of rusty metal. I held him in my lap all the way home, talking to him softly and telling him about his new toys and bed.

When we got home, I was super excited to show Rusty his new home. I had a super soft bed ready for him in my room and a brand new red bowl filled with yummy dog food. I even bought him a squeaky ball. "Come on, Rusty!" I said, putting his food bowl down. "Time to eat!" Rusty just sniffed the food once and then looked away. He wouldn't even take a tiny bite. I then tried to play with him. I threw the squeaky ball, but he just watched it roll by. He didn't wag his tail or bark or anything. He just curled up in his new bed and looked sad. He didn't want to play or eat.

I felt a little worried. Was he sick? Did he not like me? I tried to give him a gentle pat, but he just sighed. My mom said, "He's probably just a little scared, honey. Everything is new to him. Just give him some time." I sat on the floor next to his bed for a long time, just watching him. It was a bit disappointing that he wasn't jumping and playing like I thought he would. Then I remembered the shelter. He had been quiet there too. Maybe he just needed to feel safe and loved. I decided I would just sit with him quietly and wait. I hoped the next day would be better.

That day, I learnt that things don't always work out the way you planned in it your head!