

## Tristan

### ***The Tiny Mighty Dog***



Tristan was an addict. He didn't know he was an addict – he just was. Addicted to love, that is.

Now, Tristan did not lack for having the ladies – he was after all, kept in a puppy mill for 12 years, working as a stud dog. But, these little trysts were equivalent to one-night stands; they meant nothing – and it was exhausting work to boot. Tristan was looking for true love. No matter, he was used until the mill was done with him and then tossed him out. So where is a used-up three pound stud to go? In April 2009, he was dumped at the Missouri Humane Society and that's where he met Mary. And, there was something about Mary... For 30 years, Mary R. (nurse now retired), has fostered many dogs and tends to favor the elderly ones.

“They are the greatest”, says Mary. She went on to share that the youngsters tend to chew on everything and pee every where and the seniors always seem grateful to have a warm and loving home. Mary agreed to foster Tristan for a short time. Their personalities “did not suit” each other – she thought he was way too cocky and full of himself. But Mary didn't think it

would be a problem for just a few weeks. What could happen?

It was not love at first sight for Mary, but something must have clicked because within a short time Mary adopted Tristan. Perhaps, she thought she could change him (certainly, Tristan thought he could change her!) So Tristan settled in with Mary and two adopted Boxers. Things were pretty good except for, as Mary puts it, “the daily warring”. Tristan continued to “boss” Mary around – he had his own sense of priorities. Tristan would stare at Mary, desperate to communicate, and if she didn't hop to it, he would bark until she acquiesced. When Mary determined these demands were unacceptable, the battle of wills began. Many “this is for your own good” conversations were had. Sometimes, when Mary might have put his tiny self in the backyard to gain a little space between them – she had to factor in the neighborhood hawk possibly swooping in for a dinner date – so, Mary ended up standing in the back yard as guard for Tristan during his time outs.

So much for a little separation!



Mostly, though,

Tristan was a happy boy. Not big for words or rules – Tristan was very happy cuddling on Mary's lap; he was quite responsive to affection of any kind. The love grew – and it was mutual – Tristan finally earned cuddle rights and slept blissfully in Mary's bed (the only dog to ever do this) tucked safely under her chin

Mary shared that Tristan didn't have a clue about doggie toys or games but he did enjoy interaction with his Boxer house mates and sharing a good chew on the end of a femur bone. Tristan loved going to the dog park. Tristan, true to his Terrier roots, was fearless;



Mary said he was “his own little man”. Mary tried to protect Tristan at the dog park, even resorting to putting a tiny inner tube around his neck, so he would stay in Alternate and not slip under the gate. But Tristan insisted on joining the fun, sometimes to his own dismay, when giant paws came crashing down on him. Even a broken leg didn't slow him down, he just hobbled around on his itsy bitsy cast. Tristan was a quirky eater; refused to eat out of a bowl - this boy wanted his kibble straight up – on the floor or paper towel. Not one for a lot of fanfare he did love boiled chicken, but Mary said, “well, you can't live on chicken alone”. So she cajoled him with a variety of food and over time Tristan blossomed to 4.3 pounds. Impressive!

Mary believes Tristan was a “good dog who just wanted to be understood”. A spunky dog until the end. At 16+ years old, sadly Tristan passed away from mouth cancer. The truth is – Mary loved Tristan and Tristan loved Mary – and none of the rest matters very much. Mary thinks of Tristan often and smiles when she remembers how they ended each day – together.