

Small World

Well, we missed our yearly trip to Disney World this year, so it feels like ages since I've been on the Small World ride. That isn't what this post is about anyway.

13 years ago when we started dating, I met my future husband's mother, father, and grandmother for the first time at his grandmother's house. She lived beside a lake, and I have fond memories of walking their new 8-week-old adorable Cocker Spaniel puppy Murphy around the lake with my new boyfriend, with whom I had already fallen in love. A few years later, we were married, and my father-in-law was tragically diagnosed with ALS (Lou Gehrig's Disease). The disease is awful; one's mind remains intact while muscles in their body begin to fail. My father-in-law was soon confined to a wheelchair, and one day while his caretaker was taking him for a walk, his beloved Murphy ran into the street and was hit by a car while my father-in-law was forced to watch, completely helpless. Murphy was taken to the vet, and miraculously, she had no major injuries.

After my father-in-law passed away, one of the tough decisions we had to make was what to do with Murphy. My mother-in-law worked all the time and didn't feel it was fair for Murphy to be alone much of the time; she thought my husband and I should take her. I would normally do my best to take in an animal in need, especially a dog as sweet as Murphy and especially back then when I had only one child. But at the time, there was so much going on that it was impossible. I will spare many details, but among other things, we had a new baby, there was a crisis with our business, and we knew we would have to be moving in the near future – it's difficult to find an apartment (especially in the Chicago area where we lived at the time) with the pets we had – one dog and one cat – let alone with adding another dog to the mix. So it broke my heart because I knew my father-in-law would have wanted Murphy

to stay with us, but I said no.

We did our best to find her a good home; we spread the word, and my mom put up fliers at the school where she worked – someone heard about the story of Murphy’s “dad” and was interested. So she took her home, and months later, we heard that she had been made a part of their family; even getting her own professional Christmas pictures taken.

All was well, 10 years passed, and from time to time, my husband and I would think about Murphy. The woman at my mom’s work moved on to another job just a year or so after taking Murphy, and they fell out of touch, so we often wondered what became of them. It had seemed like we had made the right choice and that Murphy had found her family, but you just never know...

And then today I got this email from my mom:

Hi Lisa,

Thought you would want to know....Murphy (Vince’s dog) passed away last week. She was with the same family all this time. They are very broken up as she became part of their family. The way I found out....their son came in to school for a conference on his 6th grade daughter. Small world.

Love, Mom

Of course I am sad to hear that Murphy passed away, but I am also relieved to know that she was part of someone’s family all this time. It’s a relief to know that her getting hit by that car didn’t have an impact on her long-term health. I have closure knowing that she lived a long and happy life, and I can finally say that I know we made the right decision all those years ago. I think Vince would have understood and been happy about Murphy’s new family.