

## *My Name Is Dreamer*



Dreamer at 3 months

My name is Dreamer and I am a Papillon dog who helps write a local newspaper column titled *The Path To Healing* from time to time. They won't give me a by-line of course, but my readers know my voice. And I do have something to say.

"Fran named me "Dreamer," but they both call me "good boy." I wonder which one of us is the dreamer? She loves me, and I am cute, smart, alert, active. Dreamers aren't like that, are they? If I represent what she has dreamed, I would be called the dream, not the dreamer.



Will someone play catch with me?

I am registered with the American Kennel Club as Welcome Dream Come True. Welcome is the kennel name they had when he and she raised Saint Bernards, separately, his house and hers.

Updike's Patient Welcome and Updike's Prudent Welcome brought them together, with his dog, Prudence, becoming an AKC Champion, and her dog, Patience, would have been one, maybe even better. The highlight of their show dog careers came several times, when Patience and Prudence both won over all the rest of the competition.

Then a terrible thing intervened. Marlys Ann Wohlenhaus was struck down by a serial killer, and I ask, "How did life go on?" It did, of course, or I would be in someone else's kitchen, chewing rawhide bones and playing with my toys or untying one of their shoes. Two Saint Bernards brought them together, let them dream of what might have been, what still could be. They're still together, working so hard to make the dream come true. My name is Dreamer. I'll help them."



Now this is the life!

Fran and Jack think they invented the theology of accompaniment, talking all the time about “being there” with someone who is on the path to healing. Where do they think they got it? Both Fran and Jack had dogs before they found each other, and they did meet because of dogs. Those big Saint Bernards may try to take credit for bringing them together, but any dog could see they were meant for each other. So when Marlys was attacked, the dogs were there to accompany them in their mourning. The Saints, if you could call those oversized beasts that, could, like any dog, tell that Fran and Jack were hurting. They could see that the two of them were trying to sort out their feelings but didn’t know how. We dogs stayed by them, tended to them, gave them comfort.



I want to write like Fran & Jack

Sometimes we watch TV, though I usually prefer my rawhide bone. The other day, I saw something to bark about. There on the screen were real dogs being led around by soldiers. They weren't doing the usual things one thinks dogs do for soldiers. These dogs were companions to soldiers who had been wounded in combat, and the dogs were there to be with them and help when needed.

So they yelled and pointed to the television when the announcer went on about a program for using dogs to help soldiers recover from the physical and emotional wounds of being in combat. The show was from a VA hospital, and one of the soldiers talked about post traumatic stress syndrome, and how his dog gave him a sense of peace. I believe the soldier said that the dog had unconditional love for him, and didn't care that he couldn't walk or do other things that the uninjured can do. Of course we dogs always give unconditional love.



So much wisdom at 14 months of age

We Papillons are the lap dog of royalty, but since democracy did away with our primary occupation, we have sought out families where we are treated like royalty, and where we can bestow our favor on the members of that family. They think they chose me, but I picked them out the first moment I saw them.

When someone enters the path to healing after a sadness in their life, it is so much easier to walk the path if there is someone to scamper and prance along the path, bringing just a bit of joy to an otherwise difficult time in life. I am not suggesting that every mourner rush out and get a pet. I am suggesting that there are dogs, and some people, who will walk with you so that you are not alone.