



My Angel, My Sweet Tulip

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By Tyler Nasise

It was October 2011 when I was browsing through Craigslist. I thought my little guy 3 month old Toby needed a friend to keep him company when I came across a beautiful black & white 8 month old female piglet. Immediately I emailed them to find out if she was still available. The owners had moved into an apartment and could no longer keep her. I was told she was & met her that evening—it was love at first oink & nibble of my shoe & even more so when I saw her beautiful green eyes and the way she looked at me through her long eye lashes. She was adorably cute & off we went to her new home. I decided to name her Tulip which is fitting for such a beautiful girl. Tulip was very skinny and it was apparent to me that she was not being fed properly because her ribs, spine and hip bones were showing. At 8 months old she weighed a mere 15 lbs. Starvation is a tactic used way too often to stunt the growth of these beautiful beings. Two months after I brought Tulip home I noticed a change in her gait and the way she walked, so I took her to the vet, the first of many vet visits to follow. She was diagnosed with a blood infection and was quite sick but she also had arthritis in her joints. The arthritis was caused from lack of proper nutrition due to improper feeding & deformities in her front legs & hooves. Many breeders of *mini*, tea cup pigs tell owners to feed a very small portion & the pig will remain small, basically starving them & condoning abuse & neglect because of monetary greed.

At a year old Tulip went lame & wouldn't get up, it was the first of many episodes. I took her to the vet & pain management was started & also multiple supplements in the hopes that it would help her. For 3 days I hand fed her food, gave her pedialyte through a syringe to make sure she wouldn't become dehydrated. After a few days she was finally able to stand again but had difficulty walking. She was putting on weight as she should have been & her bones and joints were weakened & the arthritis made it difficult for her to walk. We went to the vet again & started new medications which consisted of an equine anti inflammatory and pain medication. A few days later she was up and walking again. At the time my house had stairs in the front so a ramp was put in place to make it easier. Tulip did not have the strength to go down or up the ramp by herself. This was the beginning of walking her using a harness and leash to help her outside and down the ramp & every evening would help her up the ramp & into her room where she slept. I used this method & we had a routine daily.

Several times throughout the year Tulip became lame & we would go through the same cycles. It was then that I realized maybe she would be better off in a home with no stairs, no ramps flat ground and she could get around better by herself.

I made the difficult decision to try to place Tulip into a home that would love & care for her as much as I did. I was not giving up on her but I felt that it would be in her best interest & make life a little easier for her. I found a wonderful family to adopt her & they graciously took her into their home where she would be loved and spoiled. Tulip had other plans. She became depressed and extremely aggressive and started charging the adopters and bit them. It was a week later and she was returned. I was happy she was coming back yet I knew it would still be difficult for her. When they pulled up to the house with Tulip I could hear her grunting and when I said her name her grunts became happy & deep grunts as she has always done. When we got her unloaded & I was talking to the adopters she slowly made her way to the fence, pushed the gate open with her snout and proceeded to go into the yard and then go lay in her mud puddle. The woman that had adopted her said, "This is Tulips home, she is obviously happy here despite her disabilities and limitations, you are her parent & she loves you." At that moment I knew I had to do whatever I could to make Tulip happy. She knew I loved her and I knew without a doubt she loved me too. Back to our daily routine we went & Tulip was once again her happy, loving & vocal self. Over the course of the year there were once again multiple times Tulip had a hard time walking & several times I thought it was time to let her go. Each time I made the appointment to humanely put her to rest she would perk up & be her feisty self. She wasn't ready to say good bye & neither was I.

Fast forward to June 7th 2014—We moved into our new home March 2014 & Tulip finally had a space all her own, unfortunately she was not able to enjoy it. She was limited on how far she could walk, she could barely walk a few feet and most days spent all of her time in her house. It broke my heart to not see her come out of her house for sometimes up to 24 hrs and that was only go to the restroom. Tulip no longer had any fight left in her and on June 7th I knew it was time and she was telling me it was time. I had to make the dreaded call to the vet & schedule her appointment to put her to rest peacefully. On June 14th 2014 at 10:33am Tulip passed away peacefully as I held her and whispered in her ear how much I love her. She will forever have a part of my heart. As I sit here in tell some of her story I still get tears in my eyes. She was a huge part of my life and not a day goes by when I don't miss her or think about her. She was the sweetest and most affectionate pig. I know she is no longer struggling, suffering or in pain. I also know that I did all I possibly could to give her the best life possible for as long as we had together.

Please do research before you purchase a pig from a breeder. They are not meant to stay small & starvation is cruel, neglect & can cause a lot of heartache down the road, as I have gone through in losing my sweet girl because of the previous owners starving her to keep her small.

All The Best,
Tyler Nasise & My Piggy Angel *Tulip*

