

Going Home

By: Leah C.

Hi, my name is Jace. I had a tragic childhood. When I was asked to talk on the CNN news about my childhood, I decided to give it a try. It all started at a door step. My parents wanted a girl, so when they got a boy they took one look and dropped me off at an orphanage. Twelve years passed, but no one wanted me, the kid hiding in the corner.

Today is the first day of summer. It is also the day that my best friend Jerry got adopted. We were a lot alike. He was at the orphanage for 5 years and I was there for 12. I am 12 now and Jerry is 10. The feeling that went through my body when he walked out of the orphanage made me run up the stairs and cry. I could tell that Vivian, who is the owner of the orphanage and who has been there since I arrived, knew how sad I was. When I went to bed that night, I thought about what I wanted.

Suddenly, I shouted, "Yes, I know what I want! I want someone who can relate to me."

"What is wrong?" Vivian asked. Alarmed by my screaming, she looked like she had just witnessed a shooting.

Once the other kids saw Vivian's face they pointed at me. "Sorry, I just got excited" I said, quite embarrassed.

"It's okay," Vivian said.

The last week of summer I went to the library. I decided to check out the book titled "How Lamar's Bad Prank Won a BUBBA-SIZED trophy." On the way home from the library, I spotted a black and white dog that had scratches all over his body, and was the thinnest dog I had ever seen. Once the school year started, the bus just happened to drop me off at the library, so every day I saw that black and white dog. Before I knew it, I was walking home with that dog. I decided to give the dog a name. "Marley" is what I named him. Every time I walked home I noticed a girl with her dog walking home on the other side of the street. I soon found out that Bethany was the girl's name.

As I walked home every day, I was thinking about my approaching birthday. I was going to ask if I could keep Marley! On my birthday, I brought Marley to the orphanage and asked if I could keep him. Vivian was hesitant, but she knew I had lost my best friend so she said, "Yes!" I was so happy, I got Marley a tag.

Then I planned how to ask Bethany if she wanted to walk home with me after school. The following week I finally got up enough courage to ask her. On the bus ride home, I said to her, "I was wondering if you wanted to walk home with me today?" Looking up from her phone, she smiled and said, "I would love that." I really enjoyed the walk. First, I asked her what her dog's name was. She replied, "Her name is Skye because of her sky blue eyes." Then she said, "Do you want to walk home tomorrow?" "Yes!" I said,

thinking I blurted that out a little too quickly. Bethany and I walked home every day together. We were becoming very good friends.

On the bus one day I was feeling great, until I asked Bethany if we could walk home together. She lowered her head and told me her dad did not approve of a boy from the orphanage who was not adopted! My heart dropped! I thought everything was going very well. Even Marley felt sad when we walked home alone without Bethany and Skye.

Things changed in a way none of us could ever imagine! That night I could not sleep and stayed awake for a long time. Suddenly Marley jumped on me as I laid in bed. I pushed him off, but he did it again, more forcefully. Finally, I got up and Marley took me by the sleeve, pulling me to the window. I saw smoke rising from the direction of Bethany's house. I immediately put on my shoes, ran downstairs, and told Vivian what was happening as Marley and I ran out the door. Marley was way ahead of me, and rushed as fast as he could in the direction of the burning house. By the time I got there, Bethany's parents were standing in front of the house. They were crying and calling for help. Her dad looked at me and said, "Bethany and Skye are trapped in her room." Immediately, Marley ran into the house with me standing at the doorstep. I knew it was dangerous, and I was very scared to know that I could lose my best friend Marley.

I could see through the burning door, Marley raced up the stairs. I called to Marley, "Come!" However, he found the room where Bethany and Skye were trapped. Then, through the smoke, I saw Marley pulling Bethany by the sleeve. She had Skye in her arms. When her dad saw Bethany and Skye appear in the doorway, he gave Bethany and Skye big hugs. He looked at me with tears in his eyes and said, "How is it that a boy and his dog with such big hearts have not been adopted?"

A few days later, the Pearsons showed up at the orphanage. They were friends of Bethany's family and had heard about the rescue. As soon as our eyes met, I knew that I had a family. That day marked a new beginning for me! I am going home!