

## The Last Day Of Poobah

The hardest part for a pet owner is having to say goodbye to our loved ones. Yesterday, I said goodbye to Poobah - my baby, my best friend, my companion, my therapist. Poobah meant the world to me, and I loved her so much - I cannot begin to describe. She was 13 years and 2 months old. She joined our household when she was a tiny little puppy that could fit into the palm of my hand.

Poobah had kidney disease (which the vet said would be the cause of her death - he was correct), arthritis in her legs, her kneecap had been displaced for a couple of years, eyesight and hearing going...old age problems. We (her Mom, my ex Tammy) knew that Poobah was sick and would not be with us for long, and we wanted to ensure her remaining time was as comfortable and enjoyable as possible.

I saw Poobah last weekend. I'm in London, Tammy and Poobah are in Hamilton, but I come back as often as I can. Poobah had energy and pep. I was pleasantly surprised. We got back to my parents place and she rushed around checking the place out, making sure everything was in order - which is what she loved to do. She hustled downstairs to check out our bedroom. The past couple of months she would either go up and down the stairs tentatively, or most likely, I would carry her. She hustled back up the stairs...it was fantastic seeing her with this much energy. Over the course of the visit, she did throw up once, still slept a LOT, still had arthritis in her back legs; but...better.

When I dropped Poobah off at Tammy's, I began optimistically thinking that Poobah could possibly make it to spring or early summer, and with better weather and my shingles finally clearing up, I would be able to come back and see her more often. I'm realistic. I knew she wouldn't be around by next fall, but a couple more months...please...

*...Friday*

I received an email from Tammy. "Harv she is not well again. this time she is pooing dried black stuff and eating nothing..... " ...we talked...we discussed...we formulated a plan where I would come back next weekend and we would take her to the vets on Saturday. Find out the state of her health, and decide the best course of action. Tammy realized she could take Poobah to the vet if she got worse...Poobah had become a veteran in visiting the vets the past few months, and she always bounced back.

*...Saturday*

Tammy calls at 6:55pm saying I better come back and see my baby tomorrow. We can't wait another week. She was worse...very sick...*not* bouncing back. Tammy wanted me to spend time with Poobah and see what I thought. We figured we would take her to the vets on Monday and get a health update. I said of course, and called my parents to inform them they would have guests on Sunday night.

*...Sunday January 28th, 2018 (The Last Day Of Poobah).*

I slept fitfully. I couldn't get my mind off of Poobah. I was worried about my baby! I was up well before 8, showered, packed and ready to go. The plan was for me to be there around 10:30 and since it takes an hour thirty to get there, I planned on drinking coffee until my departure at 9.

The phone rings at 8:39. It's Tammy making sure I was up and ready to go. Poobah was much worse. I poured my coffee into a travel mug and headed out. The highways were quiet and the weather was good. I arrived at Tammy's and when I walked in and saw Poobah I was shocked, saddened and heartbroken. She was laying on the couch half-covered in a blanket. Her tail wagged in greeting, but she was unable to get up. I went over to see my baby, and my heart broke. My Bah was very sick. I could tell she knew I was there and happy to see me. I was so happy I could be there for her! Tammy got a syringe with water and gave some to Bah. She wasn't eating or drinking from her bowl (I found out it was because she couldn't stand). Tammy picked her up and moved her to the couch between the two of us with Bah looking at me (which I appreciated), while we discussed...things. We would go to the vets on Monday, and she would stay overnight with me at my parents place. Most likely...a final night.

I picked Poobah up (still wrapped in her blanket), and I was unpleasantly surprised at how much weight she had lost since the previous weekend. She was bony and her body just...hung there. She *felt* sick. I put her in the front seat of the car on her blanket, wrapped around her little body. We drove to my parents, and Poobah didn't move at all, except for lifting her head a little as we neared my parents place. It quickly went back down. It was her routine to always stand up and look out the window as we neared my parents place. She would get excited, wag her tail and smile. Not today.

I carried her inside the house, gently laid her down on the carpet in her favourite spot, and told my Mom that we had a very sick guest today. My Mom looked at her and told me Poobah had lost weight. She could tell immediately how sick she was, and then started tearing up. Poobah didn't move at all for the next 2 hours. I gave her some water from a syringe - she took some. I offered her some food - she turned her head away. We were all so sad. We knew her body was shutting down.

Then...

Poobah tried to stand. She couldn't. She fell over. I rushed over to pick her up and comfort her. We hustled outside. I assumed she needed to do busies (she hadn't done any since I had been with her). I was correct...but, it was a terrible experience for poor Poobah. I tried to gently put her down, but her legs were not functioning - at all. I held her up and I realized she had started peeing, at the same time as she started crying terribly...and the pee kept coming...and the crying kept coming. My Mom panicked and called for my Dad; but, I told her: "It's ok, it's ok". The peeing and crying both stopped. I cleaned up Poobah and she just...hung there, looking so...tired.

I gently put her back in her favorite spot. Her legs were not responding at all. Her little body was shutting down. We all found it heartbreaking to watch. I realized there was no return. She was not going to bounce back this time.

I went online to see if any vets were open on Sunday. I found one in a location between Tammy and my parents on Upper James. It was open until 10:00pm. I called Tammy, but her phone went immediately to the answering machine without ringing - it was a work phone & the answering machine's message was not made by Tammy, so I didn't want to leave a message. The phone rang and worked fine that morning when I called her. Who knows? These things happen all the time. I emailed and messaged her, and then waited until she read her email...then I waited...I tried her phone a few times. Then I tried her phone and this time it worked! She had just read the emails and was going to call. We started talking then I heard my parents:

"John, John! It's Poobah!"

I told Tammy I had to go - something wrong with Poobah - I'd call her back. I rushed into the other room and saw my baby having a seizure. Her whole body was spasming. It was terrifying! I got down on the floor and the seizure finally stopped. Her legs were bent at a strange angle. No movement at all...her face still. I think I heard one of my parents mutter "oh my god" ...We all thought the same thing. It turned out Poobah wasn't done yet. It would not surprise me if she hung in there, so she could see her Mom before she went to the other side.

I called Tammy back, said I would call the vet and get us in as soon as possible. I called the vet and Samantha answered the phone. She was pleasant. I explained the situation and she said we could get an appointment for 6:30 (it was 5:00). She asked a couple of questions...yes, I choked up a bit. I called Tammy back and told her the time of the appointment. I waited with Poobah and she wouldn't move at all. I was watching her life ebb away. I tried to give her some water, but I don't think she got much. At 5:50, I thought to myself: "screw this, it's time to go". I gave Tammy a call to tell her we were leaving...she was ready to go as well. Hopefully, the vets weren't busy.

I was in a state of shock. Last weekend, Poobah had energy, some life in her - the best she's been in 2 months! Then less than a week later, the finale had arrived. Last weekend, must have been a "last gasp", a last burst of energy...then, that's it. There was no more life left. I have heard about this happening with humans as well. That last burst of energy right before the end.

Poobah and I got to the vet's first (we were about 5 minutes closer), and Samantha put us in a room immediately and asked a couple of questions, and then Tammy showed up right on cue. Samantha finished up her questions and explained some things to us. It will be fast, she said. I paid attention the best I could - but, it was difficult. I kept looking at my baby. Then we were given privacy. Tammy held Poobah while I stroked and petted her - I made sure she could keep an eye on me. When we were ready, I went to get Samantha. She took Poobah for some needle thing - I wasn't completely focused on the technical stuff...my heart was breaking! They brought Poobah back and we spent a few final minutes with her, before the vet came in to end Poobah's pain. Poobah passed away in her mother's arms, while I stroked and petted her. Then Tammy put Bah down on her blanket, and the vet confirmed that Poobah's last day was complete.

We both left the vets, had a hug - our baby was gone. She drove back home, I drove back to London.

What exactly happened today?

I said goodbye to my baby, my best friend, my companion, my therapist. When I got home, I did what people in this time period of civilization do. I went on Facebook, replied to a few comments - but, didn't stay on long. I didn't post anything about Poobah. Not yet. Immediate family do not need to hear the news unexpectedly on Facebook!

I did mindless things and my mind kept drifting back to Poobah and all the great memories we had. The day she started barking and getting so angry when she first saw her reflection in the mirror...the story of Tammy Harv Poobah and the Bear...the way she would find the deepest dirtiest puddles to lay in...how she interacted with Trouble our cat (he was 16-20 while living with his sister)...how at xmas time she would have to sniff every box before you opened it...and a lot lot more...our babies live on within our hearts and memories forever.