

Wisconsin Right to Life Teen Impact Writing Contest

The Power of Silence
A Fictional Story



Photo Credit: Hannah Davis

Desiree – 11th Grade

Life was good. I had everything I had hoped for--a warm bed to sleep in, long walks in the park, and most importantly, my loving human. Eliana was always cheerful and happy. I mean every human has their bad days, but she bounced back pretty quickly with a few licks from me and a bar of chocolate. My favorite thing about Eliana was her attentiveness to me, a brush and a hug before work, and snuggles on the couch after. So, my life as a dog wasn't bad.

Then it changed. It started with Eliana's new friend. His name was Toby. She apparently met him at a work event. Toby seemed nice. Eliana and Toby got along really well. He offered me a few scratches once in a while and they seemed happy, so what can I say. Soon they grew closer and closer, spending more time with each other. I didn't mind until Eliana seemed too busy to take me to the park, and she preferred sitting on the couch with Toby, while I slept on my bed. Sometimes she'd go to his house and stay out late at night. I was worried about her, but she still seemed happy so I tried to be content.

Early one morning, I found Eliana curled in the bathroom, tears streaming down her face. A white stick-looking thing lay at her feet. I stuck my nose into her face, licking the salty tears that slipped down her cheeks. I could tell that she was upset, but I didn't know why! Eliana pushed herself up, her back leaning against the cabinet, legs outstretched. Trying to cheer her up I flopped down on her legs, leaning my head to rest on her lap. She leaned over me, and I could feel her heart beating steadily. But there was something else too, a fainter beating emanating from lower in her abdomen. I couldn't understand. Then I remembered when her sister had come over a few months ago. I could sense that her sister was pregnant and they talked excitedly the whole evening. Immediately I understood- Eliana was with child! I didn't understand how she could be upset but in that moment I could do my best to comfort her. That's just what I did.

After she got home from work, Toby came over. Eliana presented him with a small bag stuffed with that crinkly paper. I could feel the tension she possessed as she waited anxiously for Toby's reaction. Toby seemed slightly confused, his tone light but concerned. He removed the crinkly paper, pulling out that white stick that had been laying on the floor earlier. Shock moved in waves from the small apartment kitchen to my spot next to the couch. Eliana's voice was shaky as she spoke a few words to Toby, trying to sound optimistic. He tossed the package on the counter, throwing up his hands and raising his voice. Eliana shrank back, her next words catching in her throat. Sensing how upset and disappointed Eliana was, I slowly moved into the kitchen sitting at her feet, hoping to offer some sort of comfort. They started arguing, raising their voices with each passing sentence. I growled low, concerned with Toby's threatening manner toward my Eliana. Then Toby turned, stalking to the apartment door, seeing himself out. Slipping to the floor, Eliana collapsed in tears. I tried to push my head into her lap, but she pushed me away angrily. Slinking away, I laid down in my bed, not knowing how to help.

That evening progressed slowly. Eliana forced herself to keep it together so she could have supper with a good friend. She guarded her sorrow with feeling unwell and carried the conversation lightly. After her friend left she cleaned up the kitchen and went to bed. I usually lay at the foot of her bed at night, but she was restless, tossing and turning all night. In the morning, she fed me, and left early for work, though without her usual bags. I lay in my bed worried for Eliana. When she returned home, she looked unwell. She was very tense and seemed to be in pain. She curled up on the couch and slept. Emotions surged through her body as I lay near her, trying to cheer her up. I rested my head on her stomach, feeling her heartbeat. Then it hit me! The small heartbeat of the child she bore was no longer there, and a strange emptiness replaced it. Somehow, she had gotten rid of her child, but why? How?

Sadness now fills the apartment where before joy resonated. Where a baby could learn to walk, run, and smile, now I lay alone. The days since the loss of this life have been empty and dark. Eliana has fallen into depression, struggling through each day. Toby has disappeared. At least, I haven't seen him since. Life goes on, but it goes on with one less life. How can people rid themselves of their children like they are shedding hair? It clearly is not that simple. Where once there once was light and happiness, now there is darkness.

Author's note: You may be wondering how I got the idea for this story. I heard a story (of course this was not scientifically proven) about a woman whose service dog seemed to be alerting her to her baby just before she found out she was pregnant. Since one of her service dogs' tasks is to detect her high heart rate, she assumed that her dog was alerting to her baby's heartbeat. If our 4-legged friends can recognize life inside the womb, how can we turn away from it? The subject of abortion is a hard one to approach. When writing a short story about the impacts of abortion, you may be able to approach through the eyes of a pet, but it will never get easier. The loss of a child, whether chosen or unpredicted, is tragic each time it happens. Every day thousands of children are murdered in abortion. Each of these children never get to even see the world, get to pet a dog, or play at the park. We need to keep fighting, to fight for the chance for life for each child...