

A Greyhound Mother

In 2003, police in Warwickshire, England, opened a garden shed and found a whimpering, cowering dog. It had been locked in the shed and abandoned. It was dirty and malnourished, and had clearly been abused.

In an act of kindness, the police took the dog, which was a greyhound female, to the nearby Nuneaton and Warwickshire Wildlife Sanctuary known as a willing haven for animals abandoned, orphaned or otherwise in need.

Geoff and the other sanctuary staff went to work with two aims: to restore the dog to full health, and to win her trust. It took several weeks, but eventually both goals were achieved.

They named her Jasmine, and they started to think about finding her an adoptive home.

The dog had other ideas. No-one remembers now how it began, but Jasmine started welcoming all animal arrivals at the sanctuary. It wouldn't matter if it was a puppy, a fox cub, a rabbit or, probably, a rhinoceros, Jasmine would peer into the box or cage and, where possible, deliver a welcoming lick.

Geoff relates one of the early incidents. "We had two puppies that had been abandoned by a nearby railway line. One was a Lakeland Terrier cross and another was a Jack Russell Doberman cross. They were tiny when they arrived at the centre and Jasmine approached them and grabbed one by the scruff of the neck in her mouth and put him on the settee. Then she fetched the other one and sat down with them, cuddling them."

"But she is like that with all of our animals, even the rabbits. She takes all the stress out of them and it helps them to not only feel close to her but to settle into their new surroundings.

"She has done the same with the fox and badger cubs, she licks the rabbits and guinea pigs and even lets the birds perch on the bridge of her nose."

Jasmine, the timid, abused, deserted waif, became the animal sanctuary's resident surrogate mother, a role for which she might have been born. The list of orphaned and abandoned youngsters she has cared for comprises five fox cubs, four badger cubs, 15 chicks, eight guinea pigs, two stray puppies and 15 rabbits.

And one roe deer fawn. Tiny Bramble, 11 weeks old, was found semi-conscious in a field. Upon arrival at the sanctuary, Jasmine cuddled up to her to keep her warm, and then went into the full foster mum role. Jasmine the greyhound showers Bramble the roe deer with affection and makes sure nothing is matted in her fur.



Jasmine will continue to care for Bramble until she is old enough to be returned to woodland life. When that happens, Jasmine will not be lonely. She will be too busy showering love and affection on the next orphan or victim of abuse.

"They are inseparable," says Geoff. "Bramble walks between her legs and they keep kissing each other. They walk together round the sanctuary. It's a real treat to see them."



From left, Toby, a stray Lakeland dog; Bramble, an orphaned roe deer; Buster, a stray Jack, Russell; a dumped rabbit; Sky, an injured barn owl; and Jasmine



Lanky look-alikes

Bramble, a 5-week-old roe deer, cuddles with foster mom Jasmine, a 7-year-old greyhound, at the Warwickshire Wildlife Sanctuary in Nuneaton, U.K.

Peter Corns / Zuma Press

Doing what she does best, being a mother.

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