
Faithfully Yours

In my Astrological chart, I have Sun, Jupiter and Mercury reigning in my 5th House. Such a combination entails the prediction that a dearly loved one will hugely impact on my life and thoughts. When I pondered over this combination, my mind recalled a particularly special “one”...



She was 10 years old when I was eight. We were the best of friends, always playing our little games of fetch and hide-and-go-seek. Blackie was more than a family pet; she was practically family. She would protect me as we went roaming around the tough home area. During my time, I lived in a dangerous neighbourhood where one needed to have their guard up. Say the wrong things and you would get a fist in your face. Do the wrong moves and you will pretty much encounter the whole lot of bashing. With Blackie around me, I somewhat managed to avoid the threats of others.

Like many tough neighbourhoods, most of us lingering on this part of the world endured much sufferings and poverty. My family met with the same circumstances of meager income and starvation. Most of the monies earned were given for living expenses for the home, leaving close to nothing for food. I recall all the times I could hear the rumblings of my family stomachs, including my own. We tested many techniques to overcome the hunger. Drinking water, scrounging for food, visiting our better off neighbours in the hopes that they could spare us some leftovers. The generosity of our neighbours during those times were relatively well given, for they would give whatever they could afford to others like us. Perhaps it was because they understood based on their own intermittent problems and could relate to the feeling of human hunger, which drove them to be altruistic and donate some plain rice or even cans of food (on good days). They realistically did not have much, but they did give whatever they could.

During one of the darkest periods of life for us, we had nothing for purchasing food. Even Blackie had trouble finding her meals through our usual scrounging and visits. However, Blackie was an astute and kind soul in that dog body. Denying her own suffering, she had her own way of helping the family out. Our time now would label her actions “stealing”, but during those days, we did not burden ourselves with the heaviness of such morals. Blackie was a dog, anyhow. She only knew that we were starving, and she only wanted to help us curb our hunger. It was not wickedness that drove her, it was her kind intentions. She somehow managed to gather some little bits of food for us during this time. It could be a loaf of bread, a bunch of bananas or even biscuits. Initially, we feared that she might have gotten these from an altar where they put offerings for the Gods. However, our growling stomachs impaired our logic, and we gave our gratitude as we humbly ate what we got.

There was a day when Blackie got us ten huge dried and pressed cuttlefish. Dropping this onto our floor, she ran and hid in a dark corner of the house. I was concerned for her, but she refused to come out. We suspected that she might have been followed and cautiously checked outside to see if there was anyone. After waiting for very long, no one came and so,

on the very next day, we shredded these cuttlefish and mixed it into our huge vat of porridge. It was

one of the best savoury meals we got! I remember thanking the heavens for the cuttlefish, and for helping Blackie come home to me safely.

It was the next day when Blackie came home from her usual rounds when I noticed something protruding from her body.



The sharp metal spear had torn right through her and caused profuse bleeding which dripped constantly on our floor. I knew then that Blackie had incurred the wrath of someone she was stealing from, and had suffered the consequences of that person's aggression. There was no blaming anyone for these circumstances, and I knew better than to pull the spear and create more pain for Blackie. It was obvious that because of the lack of finance to help Blackie, we could only do one other thing.

Blackie was carried gently into a smaller room and wrapped around her increasingly cold body. I refused to move that day. My thoughts were only of my best friend, my true companion. I watched her whimper, I watched her bleed, and I watched her watch me lovingly for those few hours. We did not need words between us, because we were friends who could feel each other's thoughts. Our friendship transcended the boundaries of words and we were grateful for the time

we had.

I knew her time was up when she placed her paw on my shaking hand, and sighed meekly at the stroke of 11 at night. The tears crowded heavily and rolled past my cheeks in pain, until I realized that something white was passing me by. This strange, white smoke was coming out of Blackie, as if someone was smoking a huge pipe in her being and blowing the smoke upwards. I didn't really understand what the smoke was at the time, and could only watch as it spiraled the room three times before ascending up and away into the stairwell. After consulting with my father and many other elders, I came to the conclusion that Blackie's spirit was going to heaven and taking leave of her body. It was this notion that renewed my tears.

It hurt so badly to lose someone as dear as Blackie, for she was a beautiful dog with a matching soul. She knew better than any human I knew then to sacrifice herself for the ones she loved, and encompassed so much kind love and human understanding. Blackie will always be that great spirit in my life, watching over me as I walk through the hurdles of existence and fall during the lows of times.

As I referred to my chart once more, I knew who that great someone, or dog rather, was. And I smiled.