

# *Abby, Jack the Zipper*-----

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By Larry Coglan

We first met our new family member in a typical pet store, with rows of overpriced puppies on display behind glass doors. Usually there is someone nearby asking if you would like to hold one. Many of these stores have small rooms set up, with chairs to sit on, and toys for you and the puppy to play with, to insure a quick sale.

We had been Christmas shopping in late November, when we happened upon one of these establishments, quite by accident. My wife insisted we go in.

“I just like to look,” she said, with pleading eyes, “they’re so cute.” As we strolled down the row of puppies, we came to a pen full of miniature Dachshunds, a half dozen tiny puppies all squirming around and play fighting with one another. My wife, Carol, put her finger up to the glass and one little black and tan puppy came over and put her foot up to the glass next to Carol’s finger.

“Ooohhh,” said Carol, tears welling up in her eyes, “did you see that?”

“Uh oh,” I think to myself, “this isn’t good.”

“Ya, curious little bugger all right,” I said, “look at this one over here.”

Carol now had her face up to the glass, talking to the little black and tan puppy, and had lost interest in the rest.

“Ya know,” I said, “there’s a pizza joint next door, and I haven’t had lunch yet. How about we go get a bite to eat.” Carol’s half of the pizza went untouched, while she explained all the benefits such a puppy would bring to our home.

“\$600 for a two pound puppy,” I said, “figures out at \$300 a pound, what about that?” I could see the futility of arguing however and after boxing up Carol’s half of the pizza, we went back to the pet shop and made our investment.

“What should we name her?” asked Carol. “How about Abby, or maybe Abigail.”

“How about Shitfer?” I said. “You know, shit fer brains.”

And so it was decided, Carol would call her Abby, and I would call her Shitfer. Abby/Shitfer settled into her new home right off and seemed to get along with our old dog, Peewee, very well. Peewee was quite old, totally blind, overweight, and slept a lot, but they seemed to enjoy the company of one another.

Shortly before Christmas, we decided to leave the house and do some shopping. We left the two dogs in the kitchen, with their food and water. A baby gate blocked the way to the rest of the house. They were curled up together on a doggy bed, asleep, as we left home.

Upon our return, several hours later, we were greeted to a quiet house, but when I flipped the light switch, I discovered we had no electricity. The flashlight by the door revealed some of the horror. It appeared as though our home had been vandalized in our absence. The baby gate lay on its side in the living room. We went to the kitchen to check on the dogs, and found them both on their doggy bed, looking at us. Peewee had her head down, with a guilty look. Finding lights in the kitchen, and a tripped breaker to be the cause of the dark living room, we started to put two and two together. The Christmas tree was on its side, with chewed branches. The Christmas presents were still there; they were just unwrapped and shredded. The cord on the back of the TV was chewed in half, explaining the tripped breaker. A vase that had held some decorative Peacock feathers, was now broken, and the Peacock feathers chewed to shreds. I was becoming less and less happy.

“I need to go to work now, I’ll see you when I get home.” I said in a stern voice.

An hour after I was on the job, I received a telephone call from Carol, crying hysterically. I was able to piece together that Abby’s mouth was full of broken glass from the shattered Christmas tree decorations, as well as bits of copper wiring from the TV cord and that she needed to go to the Veterinary immediately.

Several days later, when we picked up our little dog from the Vet’s clinic, along with a bill for \$400, he showed us a jar full of material taken from inside this little two and half pound puppy. He had performed surgery to remove the copper wiring, Christmas tree tinsel, and broken glass. He commented that he had never seen anything like it in his entire career. Abby had stitches running from between her back legs, almost to her front legs, all the way up her belly. It looked a bit like a zipper. When her registration papers came in the mail a few days later, we decided that her registered name would be “Abby Jack the Zipper”.

Eventually, Abby Jack became a well-loved member of the family and lived to the ripe old age of 17.

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