

The Beautiful Dog

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DISTANT WINDS SWEEP in from the north. It was a fierce blizzard. A thin veneer of ice masked the lake; naturally, not a soul was out boating.

The pet was down by the shore of the lake where he had been barking for some time. The pet was a stray. Mr. Morris was his owner, but now he lived alone on the porch of Mr. Morris' cottage. When the pet first arrived at the cottage on the banks of Lake Nojiri, his coat was lustrous and his build, sturdy.

Unfortunately, Mr. Morris returned with his family to America during the war. The pet was sold to the owner of a hardware shop in Kashihara. But in about a week, the chain holding him snapped, and the pet escaped and returned to Nojiri. There he became the pet of Mr. Gavrysh, a white Russian and a neighbor of Mr. Morris. But at the end of the war, Mr. Gavrysh moved to Yokohama with his family.

The pet parted from Mr. Gavrysh and no longer had food. He lost his once beautiful fur and sunk into life as a stray dog on the banks of Lake Nojiri.

The pet was a Pointer, a big, brown dog. His beloved owner was gone, as was Mr. Gavrysh. His previous life with rules and fun had vanished. Each passing day sapped his body of strength.

Winter came. In their old home in Azabu, Tokyo, Mr. Morris kept the pet near the stove. Later, even at Nojiri, Mr. Gavrysh always let the pet sleep near the stove during the winter. But the war ended. All the people loved by the pet were gone. This was the first winter the pet had to live a truly miserable life.

Some evacuees remained in a few of the cottages, but not one kindhearted person took care of the pet. Once in a while, the pet walked around the town of Nojiri to peek through the kitchen doors of the houses and beg for food. He looked at them with eyes filled with compassion, but they shooed the pet away without a morsel to eat.

The pet spent each day foraging for food.

Around the end of autumn, an unfamiliar Jeep drove into the neighborhood of cottages at Nojiri. The visitor was an American soldier who came to Lake Nojiri to go boating. The pet ran toward the Jeep as he mused over meeting this person who resembled Mr.

Morris after such a long time. Still in the Jeep, the soldier whistled when he saw the pet and tossed him a biscuit.