

Paul's Canine Friend

Walking past the pet store, Paul couldn't resist; he had to go in. Across the room, there stared a sweet Lab puppy, its big brown eyes like chocolate. Paul ran up to the window of the pen to see it. The puppy came to greet him, wagging his tail with glee. Excited, it even let out a friendly bark and jumped around happily.

Paul asked the store owner, "Is this puppy for sale?"

"Sure is," the store owner said, although when he saw how young Paul was, he did not seem to pay him much attention.

"How much is he?" asked Paul, fingering the money in his pocket hopefully.

"Three fifty," the man replied a bit gruffly and then looked away. Paul walked up to the counter. He reached into his pocket, pulled out three dollars and fifty cents, and put the money on the counter. The young boy smiled with excitement, confident that he would soon have a puppy of his own.

The store owner quickly realized he had not been clear. "I meant three hundred and fifty dollars. Sorry son," said the store owner.

Even though he could not buy the puppy, Paul did not forget his furry friend. He made a point of walking past the pet store every day on his way home from school. During the day, he often thought about the puppy. He had always wanted his own dog, and this particular puppy had won his heart. Paul was still happy though because he could visit the sweet puppy at the store every day.

After school that Friday, Paul stopped by the pet store. On this visit, the owner of the store even let the puppy out to play with him. Paul was thrilled! As he pet and played with the puppy, he thought about ways to earn money. Maybe he could wash cars or take care of pets when their owners were out of town. Maybe he could do yard work to earn additional money. Oh, what he would give to have this puppy as his own!

Paul knew that he had one hundred and fifty dollars in his savings account in the bank. He could also combine Christmas, birthday, and work money to put towards the dog. However, even if he combined all his money and worked extra jobs, he realized it would take some time to earn enough money to purchase the puppy.

At dinner, Paul was quiet because he was busy thinking about the dog. Paul's mom could tell he was deep in thought. "A penny for your thoughts," she said.

"Yeah, Paul, what are you thinking about?" asked his dad.

Before he could answer, his sister Elise piped up. "I'll bet it's the puppy he stops by the pet store to see after school almost every day."

"Well, you know," said Paul, "I've always wanted a dog, and this one is a really sweet Lab."

His dad asked, "How much does it cost?"

"Three-hundred and fifty dollars," replied Paul.

"Quite pricey I'd say. Purebreds usually are though," said Paul's dad.

"What's a purebred?" asked Elise, confused because she had never before heard of the term.

Paul's mom replied, "It means that the animal is made up of only one breed. With a Lab, for example, two dogs which are both fully Labs will have puppies that are purebred Labs. They will be purebreds because there are no other types of dog breeds mixed in."

"Well, even if I can't afford to buy him, I can still see him frequently," said Paul. "We can have that connection anyway."

"I sure wish we could help out, but we don't have that kind of money right now," replied his dad.

"I know, Pops, don't worry. At least I get to visit him," said Paul, trying to look on the bright side of things. Paul's parents were impressed by their son's positive attitude.

That Monday at school, Paul was eating his lunch in the cafeteria with some friends. When he finished eating, he went to the bathroom to wash his hands. In the hall, Paul noticed some bullies picking on a guy named Norman. Paul went into the boy's bathroom and came out to find Norman crying. "What's wrong, Norman?" asked Paul.

"Steve and Billy took my lunch again. I'm hungry and don't have anything to eat," said Norman.

"Here you go," said Paul as he gave Norman five bucks.

"Thanks so much!" shouted Norman.

"No problem. Come sit with me after you pick up your hot lunch," said Paul. Norman nodded as he jumped into the lunch line.

Paul was always looking to help others. When the tropical storm Katrina hit the Gulf Coast, Paul's school collected school supplies to send out. The children who lived there lost everything. It's hard to imagine losing everything. Paul and his family put together a backpack. Paul happily brought it to school. It had crayons, pencils, pens, notebooks, and paper in it. But Paul still wanted to do more. He decided to buy another backpack himself. He bought the same items his family had. To pay for it, he took money from his savings. He may want a puppy, but these kids needed school supplies.

Paul couldn't wait to stop by the pet store. He hadn't visited in two days. As the door banged shut, the puppy jumped up and onto the glass. He kept barking until Paul came over. "Can I let him out to play?" asked Paul.

The owner replied, "Sure, since no one else is in here."

"It looks like he missed me," said Paul with a tremendous smile lighting his face.

"He does." The store owner paused and then started speaking again. "I hate to tell you this, but there was a couple looking at him recently. I'm afraid they might buy the pup," said the owner. Paul's heart was sad, as he realized he might never see his furry friend again.

The next week Elise got so sick it hurt her to swallow. She could only eat soft blended foods, and cold liquids felt the best flowing down her throat. Elise had to stay home from school. Paul thought about how miserable Elise was; he tried to come up with ways to cheer his sister up. He decided to ride his bike to the local store where he got a rainbow-colored popsicle and fudge bar.

When he arrived home, he ran into Elise's room with a smile on his face. "Which hand?" he asked.

She looked at him with a curious grin. "That one," she replied. She picked the fudge bar.

Paul said, "I thought it would feel good on your throat, and it will taste great too!" The fudge bar was delightful. With each lick, Elise's smile grew.

Paul was a thoughtful boy. As fast as he earned money, he saw a need to spend it. They weren't his needs either. He heard that the elderly neighbor lady broke her hip. She didn't have family close by and couldn't easily get around. In addition, she had very little money to live on. Paul volunteered to bring in her mail and help around her house. He bought light bulbs and other small items so she wouldn't have to go without. It was his little secret, or so he thought.

At parent teacher conferences, Paul's teacher thanked his parents for the two backpacks. They looked at each other in confusion. "I guess we don't understand. We provided only one backpack for the disaster relief," said Paul's mom.

"Well, Paul brought in two backpacks, I'm quite sure of it," she replied. She went on to say, "He is always looking out for kids who get picked on. He also works hard in my class. You must be proud of him."

"We are," said Paul's dad.

On his way home from school the next day, Paul stopped by the pet store eager to see his friend. He rushed in to find the puppy's cage empty! Sadness quickly replaced his joy. "Did someone buy him?" asked Paul.

"I tried to discourage them. I told them there is a boy who really wants this puppy, but it was no good; they bought him anyway," said the owner. He continued, "I really am sorry, Paul. I was hoping you would find a way to buy him."

Paul replied, "I'll be fine. It's just a dog anyway." He pushed open the store door and walked through as a tear silently fell to the ground.

Paul came home to find his mom cooking dinner. "What's wrong?" she asked.

"My...I mean the puppy's gone," replied Paul, trying hard not to start crying again.

"That's too bad. Come give me a hug," said his mom, kneeling down. She squeezed him tight and then asked, "Will you do me a favor?"

"Sure," said Paul. He was anxious for something to take his mind off of his sorrow. She asked Paul to bring the clean clothes out of the laundry room. As he opened the door, out jumped Elise and his father.

"Surprise!" they yelled together. Paul looked down, and there was his puppy.

"Is he really ours?" yelped Paul.

"Yes," said his dad. Paul held his dog tight. No more trips to the pet store for him!

1. What did Paul do because he couldn't take the dog home?

- A. He stopped by after school every day to look at it.
- B. He looked for a dog that did not cost so much.
- C. He never stopped thinking about the dog.

2. How did Paul's parents find out about the dog?

- A. Paul told them.
- B. They guessed.
- C. His sister told them.

3. What was a problem for Paul?

- A. Paul couldn't think of any ways to make more money.
- B. He didn't have enough money to buy the dog.
- C. The store owner didn't want to sell the dog to a child.

4. What did Paul do that showed what he was like?

- A. He went to see the puppy every day after school.
- B. He waited for his parents to buy the dog.
- C. He helped others who were in need.

5. What did Paul say to the store owner right after he found out the dog was sold?
- A. That he was fine because it was just a dog anyway.
 - B. That he didn't care about the dog anymore.
 - C. That he would get a dog some other day.
6. What did Paul do first when he found Norman crying in the bathroom?
- A. He asked Norman to sit with him.
 - B. He gave Norman some money.
 - C. He asked Norman a question.
7. What did Paul like to do with his money?
- A. Spend it all on himself.
 - B. Spend it on others in need.
 - C. Save it to buy something special.
8. Why did the dog cost so much?
- A. The dog was one of a kind.
 - B. The dog was very smart.
 - C. The dog was a purebred.
9. How did Paul's mom keep the dog a surprise?
- A. She asked him to bring clothes from the laundry room.
 - B. She acted like she was sad that Paul didn't get the dog.
 - C. She told Paul to cheer up and forget about the dog.
10. What happened right after Paul left the store the last time?
- A. He cried outside the store.
 - B. He went home to tell his mom.
 - C. He got angry at the store owner.

- 11. How did Paul's father show how he felt about Paul getting a dog?**
- A. He said he wanted to help buy the dog but didn't have money for such an expensive dog.
 - B. He said he would help Paul to buy the dog but not until he got some more money.
 - C. He said he wanted Paul to have the dog, and he would find a way to get it for him.
- 12. What was Paul like when he found out his parents couldn't help him buy the dog?**
- A. He was sad and happy at the same time but didn't show it.
 - B. He was happy that he could at least visit the dog at the store.
 - C. He was sad and felt that his dad should try to get more money.
- 13. How did the store owner feel about Paul?**
- A. He felt badly for Paul when he told him that someone wanted to buy the dog.
 - B. He trusted Paul to play gently with the dog but didn't care if he bought it.
 - C. He thought Paul was a nice boy but didn't care who bought the dog.
- 14. Why didn't the store owner pay much attention to Paul at first?**
- A. He thought Paul was too young to buy a dog.
 - B. He was taking care of other pets in the store.
 - C. He didn't think Paul had enough money.
- 15. What did Paul's dad think about the price of the dog?**
- A. He thought it was too expensive for the family to buy.
 - B. He thought it was a lot, but not too much for a purebred.
 - C. He thought it was okay as long as Paul was going to pay for it.
- 16. What best explains why Paul's parents bought the dog for him?**
- A. Paul worked hard to save money, and they wanted to help him out.
 - B. Paul loved the dog so much they felt they had to buy it for him.
 - C. Paul was always helping others, so they wanted to help Paul.

17. What was this story mostly about?

- A. A boy who wanted a puppy but didn't have enough money.
- B. A boy who cared about others and really wanted a puppy.
- C. A boy who only cared about getting money to buy a puppy.

18. What was probably the reason the store owner told Paul that he tried to keep the people from buying the dog?

- A. So Paul wouldn't think that it was his parents who bought the dog.
- B. So Paul wouldn't feel so bad about not being able to buy the dog.
- C. So Paul wouldn't get really upset and start to cry in the store.

19. How did Paul know the dog liked him?

- A. The dog played with Paul when Paul came to see him.
- B. The dog looked at Paul with his big brown eyes.
- C. The dog barked until Paul came over to him.

20. What showed that Paul cared more about others than he cared about getting a dog?

- A. He bought some ice cream for his sister Elsie when she had a bad sore throat.
- B. He brought in the mail and cleaned for an older woman who didn't have any money.
- C. He took money from his savings to buy things for kids who were caught in a storm.