

Chapter 9: Zenith Shill.

Of

all the calves that Shilling had only some were very quiet like her, but they got a home for life. Snevel, Rastus, Sweet Pea and Sirris the 2nd all lived out their mostly long lives on the little farm. But Shilling saved the best for last. On the 12/11/1998 she gave birth to a brindle heifer calf whose sire was a Wagyu bull named Itomichi. Joanne was thrilled as her favourite colour for a cow was brindle, a red and black stripe coat that is very pretty. She was named Zenith Shill and registered in the appendix of the Wagyu registry. A couple of weeks after Zenith Shill was born Shilling was not herself. She was having trouble getting up and down in the paddock, and the vet said she had a type of arthritis. This got worse in spite of treatment until Shilling couldn't get up at all one day and the vet said nothing else could be done. Joanne buried her in the paddock with her mum Seven Hills, and planted a peppercorn tree on her grave. Zenith Shill was only six weeks old when she lost her mum, so Joanne had to feed her on a bottle. The first afternoon that Shill was without her mum Joanne sat with her in the shed so that she wouldn't be lonely or afraid, the little calf was calling for her mum but there was no answer. Then little Shill did something that Joanne will never forget. She came over to Joanne who was sitting cross legged on the floor and lay down in her lap and went to sleep.

Luckily she was a light calf because after only a few minutes Joannes' legs were going to sleep and were full of pins and needles but she wasn't going to move as she didn't want to disturb the sleeping calf. This was the beginning of a lifelong friendship. Joanne stayed like that for as long as she could and could barely move at all by the time Shill woke up. Joanne knew that little Shill would need a friend for company, and so she moved Sirris who was Shillings sister and little Shills



aunty into the paddock and Sirris and Shill took to each other like ducks to water. In spite of never having had a calf of her own, Sirris mothered the little brindle calf as if she was hers. It was Sirris' finest moment, as if she had lived her whole life to take care of her sisters baby. When it rained she licked her dry, when she was hungry she let her suck her teats [even though she had no milk and Joanne gave Shill a big bottle of milk twice per day] and when the calf ran around the paddock playing old

Sirris did her best to keep up. Between aunty Sirris and Joanne little Shill had all the love and care that a calf could want, even though she had lost her mum at 6 weeks old.