

Throughout that long bitter cold day Red Dog and her companions again meandered the streets there in that little Oklahoma town. In spite of the bright daytime sunshine the air was frosty. The groups of dogs enjoyed a small meal from a good sized armadillo and 2 squirrels they had buried a long time back and rediscovered out in the park. Red Dog was a sociable critter. She liked the companionship of the dogs who lived in houses near to her own.

Once more at dusk Red Dog was left alone, sadness filled her as she watched each animal awake, shake himself and climb down from the moldy hay filling the dilapidated barn where the pack spent their days. As happened each twilight, just as the evening sky began to darken, the other dogs began drifting away from the barn and back to their own homes, and back to their filled supper dishes.

Red Dog was so confused. She did not understand what had happened to her world. Her People were gone, These New People were there in the Yellow Rock House. She did not know what to do. It was much colder this night. Weak from hunger, gaunt, Red Dog shuddered even more. There was a lot of

deep, slick snow on the ground. Red Dog walked across the glabrous surface. Her sore foot pads were pierced and bleeding. Each step was tormenting. The frosty mass now had sharp little pieces of ice that cut into her feet as she made her way to the gate in the pasture field.

Red Dog hoped she would be able to sleep in her little house tonight. Too little food for so long had left her coat dull; her hair was stiff, dry and lusterless. Her skin hung in loose, too large folds upon her thin, bony frame. Hunger gnawed at her with a fierce painful feeling. The emaciated hound hoped she might find more food in her supper dish. For a long time she lay shivering, crouched in the icy snowy pasture. She quaked as the penetrating wind began blowing even harder. After the night sky was filled with darkness Red Dog made her hesitant way through the big pasture gate and finally up to the cement pad behind the Yellow Rock People House.

This night the wary dog was gladdened to find there were two pans set out by the steps near the glass kitchen door. One pan held food. The other was filled with fresh, clean water. Burying her nose Red Dog drank with greedy

gulps. During the day she had not found much water. There was only a little muddy water under the ice in the creek. She was very thirsty. How good the fresh water tasted. Red Dog sniffed the dishes carefully. She was chary. They smelled like the Lady. Gazing at the door the vigilant dog sat beside the food dish. How hungry she was. Before eating the skinny dog made her way across the prickly snow between the house and the small yard. Sad eyes contemplated her little house. She pushed the gate with her nose. It did not open. She made her way back to the food dish.

The Lady was standing there behind the storm door. Red Dog watched The Lady. She was ready to run. Red Dog shook with big, violent shivers. The Lady went away. Red Dog's eyes never left the door as the ravenous, uneasy hound hurried to gulp the food from the dish before she lay down on the cold, rough cement.

She heard the patio door open out behind the house. Clunk, the gate to the small yard opened. Red Dog leaped to her feet. She felt the sting of the ice, slipping and sliding Red Dog Dash across the brittle snow toward the

safety of the pasture. Through the big pasture gate she bolted. She did not stop running until she had reached the safety of a big clump of snow covered prairie grass.

From that vantage point Red Dog saw The Lady come back to the porch. She saw The Lady near the food dish. The Lady went back into The Yellow Rock House. Red Dog continued to lay in the pasture. Keen shooting particles of ice stung her eyes and her skin.

At last Red Dog crept back to the kitchen door. She nosed the piece of old carpet on the porch. The scent of The Lady was on the carpet. Red Dog peered at the door. No one was there. A tantalizing scent drew her back to the food dish set on the carpet; she buried her nose in the warm left over stew. Within moments she had gulped the pan of warmed meat and vegetables. She licked every drop of the broth. Red Dog saw the gate leading into the small yard was standing open. She hurried through the gate and into her own little house.

Tonight her emaciated stomach did not ache from hunger. Her milk was almost gone. Red Dog lay in her little house away from the sleet

and the ice. She did not shiver quite so hard as she went to sleep.

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