

## **Two Dogs, Two Grievs by Debra J. Bilton**

### **Excerpt from Chapter: A Natural Death**

#### **Give Him the Best**

The veterinarian called me on Saturday to ask how Toby was doing. I told him that Toby had not moved at all. He had no energy and ate very little. The veterinarian said, "We're going to change the treatment plan." He told me to give Toby whatever he wanted. I asked what he meant by this. He said to give him whatever he wants to eat, chicken, cheese. I said it might bring his energy level up. The veterinarian said, "If these are his last days..." I finished his sentence with, "...give him the best." He agreed.

I went to the grocery store and bought chicken and expensive cheese for Toby. I cut both up into bite-sized pieces and offered them to Toby. He ate some and really liked it. He didn't eat a lot, but at least he ate something. I tried to feed him after that, but he wouldn't eat.

As the night progressed, he got weaker and weaker. I started giving him water out of his bowl. As time went by, he couldn't lift his head to drink. He would try to use his tongue out of the side of his mouth but this didn't work well. I had to improvise.

I used a tightly folded blanket to prop his head so that his mouth was pointed downward. I placed pee pads under his head and around the area of his head. I poured the water into a tall, conical glass and held it at an angle so that Toby's tongue could easily lap the water. I kept pouring water into the glass until Toby finished drinking as much as he wanted to.

Toby and the pee pads were soaked. I removed the wet pads and replaced them with dry ones. Then I used a towel to dry Toby's face and head. This became our routine. He slept more and more, and for longer periods of time. Whenever he woke up, I gave him a drink.

#### **Go Pee**

On Sunday morning, Toby was so tired and lethargic. I was concerned that he had not had a pee since Friday afternoon. I searched online for how to express a dog's bladder. I found a video where a veterinarian demonstrated how to do this. I watched it over and over until I thought I could do it. I tried it several times on Toby but he wouldn't pee. He looked so uncomfortable and I felt bad for making him feel that way. He was so well trained that he wouldn't pee while inside the house.

I got down on the floor beside him, looked him in the eyes and said, "Toby, it's okay to go pee. You go pee." I repeated this several times. At first, he looked away from me. Then he looked me in the eyes and I knew he understood what I said. He closed his eyes. I saw his body relax and then he started peeing. I couldn't believe how much urine came out of him.

I kept putting more pee pads down. When he was done, I removed the wet pads and put clean ones under him. I had bought some non-allergic wipes for him. I used them to clean all of the urine off of his fur. I had read that urine can cause skin burns if a dog is left to lay in it. I wanted him to be comfortable.