

## The Soul of a Dog

The routine around here goes something like this: whoever goes to bed last lets our 2 German Shepherds outside for a final romp before going to sleep for the night. Cochise, our 2-year-old altered male will walk his yard's fenced perimeter making sure all is well. Cheyenne, our 10-month-old spayed girl, will spend a few minutes locating "the" spot before doing her business and coming back to the door where she will "rooo rooo!" to be let back in. Cochise makes no sound when he's ready to come inside. If he makes any noise at all it's that (in)famous GSD sigh/groan. So if I get busy and don't hear Miss Cheyenne's "lemme in, please", Cochise will stretch out on the patio and be perfectly content.

Tuesday, Oct. 5, 2010 - 1:24 in the morning. I let the dogs out and just as I closed the door, an invisible crosstie slammed into the center of my chest; knocking me backwards with the force of the pain. Heart attack. I'd never been diagnosed with heart problems; never gave the condition much thought really, but from what little I'd read/heard, I knew I was in big trouble. My husband, Scottie, was asleep in another part of the house. I made it to a kitchen chair and realized that's as far as I could go. I could have yelled for Scottie but I couldn't get enough air to even whisper his name. He would find me dead, right there, in the morning. Behind the crushing pain of my wounded heart awoke the darker agony of what my Scottie would do when he saw me on the floor, hours from now, cold, unresponsive - gone.

Just then, I heard - something; the sharp staccato bark of a dog. Cochise was making noise - a LOT of noise - just outside the back door. The bark was unusual; almost "yappy" in texture and unrelenting in volume. Before I could think what this might mean, Scottie came rushing from the hallway and opened the back door. "What's the matter with you, "chise!?? Be QUIET!" And then he saw me there...called 911. I was rushed to our local hospital, air-lifted to Huntsville where I received a cardiac catheter. I spent 4 days recovering and learning about what life was going to be like with a damaged heart. I came home yesterday, feeling pretty good and very, VERY grateful to our Schwarzer Hund dog. I always thought true heroes looked like Superman or one of the Fantastic Four. Not true. For Scottie and me, a true hero looks just like this.

Oh yeah, a real hero is never very far from his lady. That's Cheyenne on the left.

Thank you, Robert. Thank you.

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