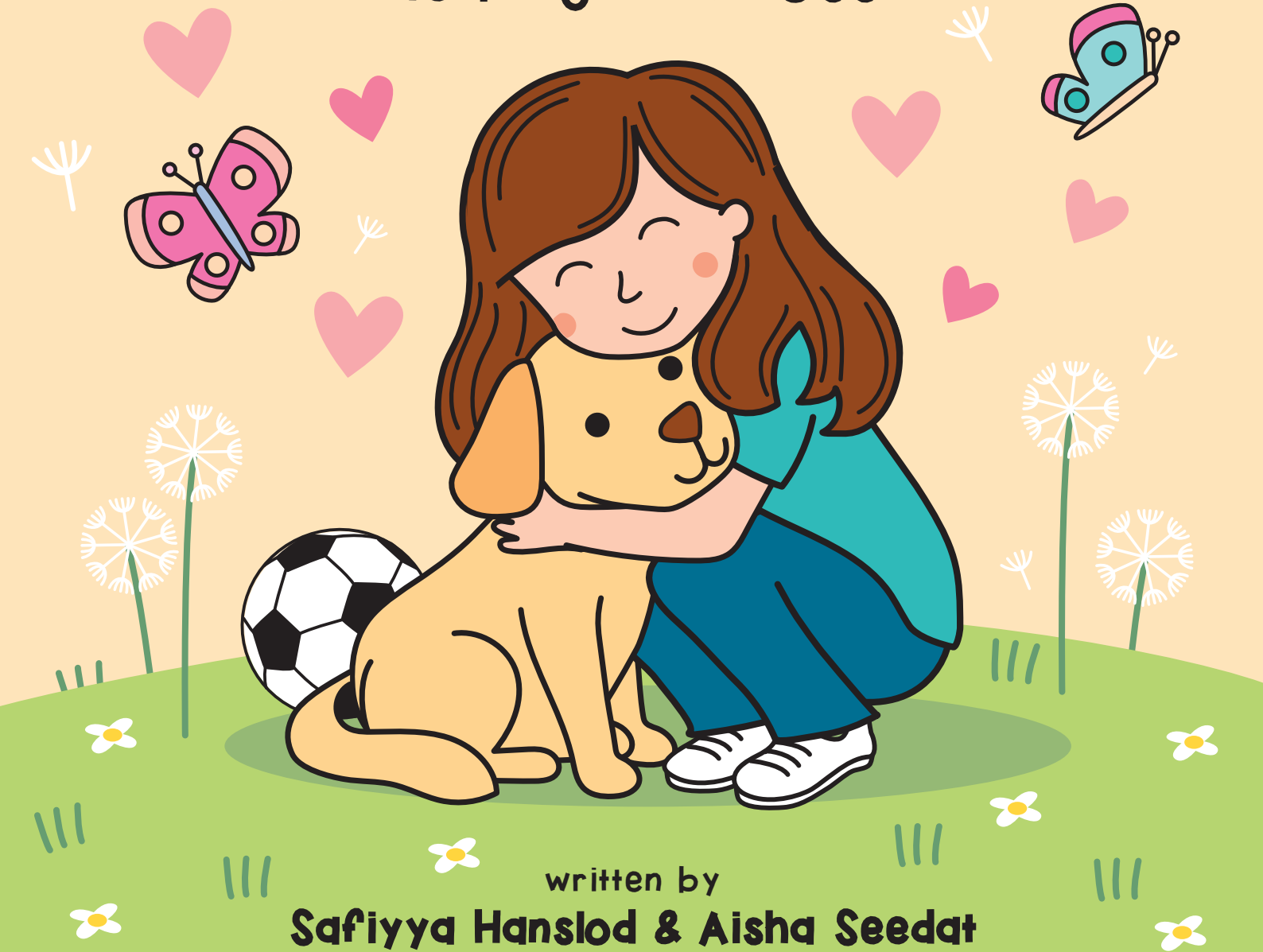


Sam's Diary

dealing with loss



written by

Safiyya Hanslod & Aisha Seedat

About the author

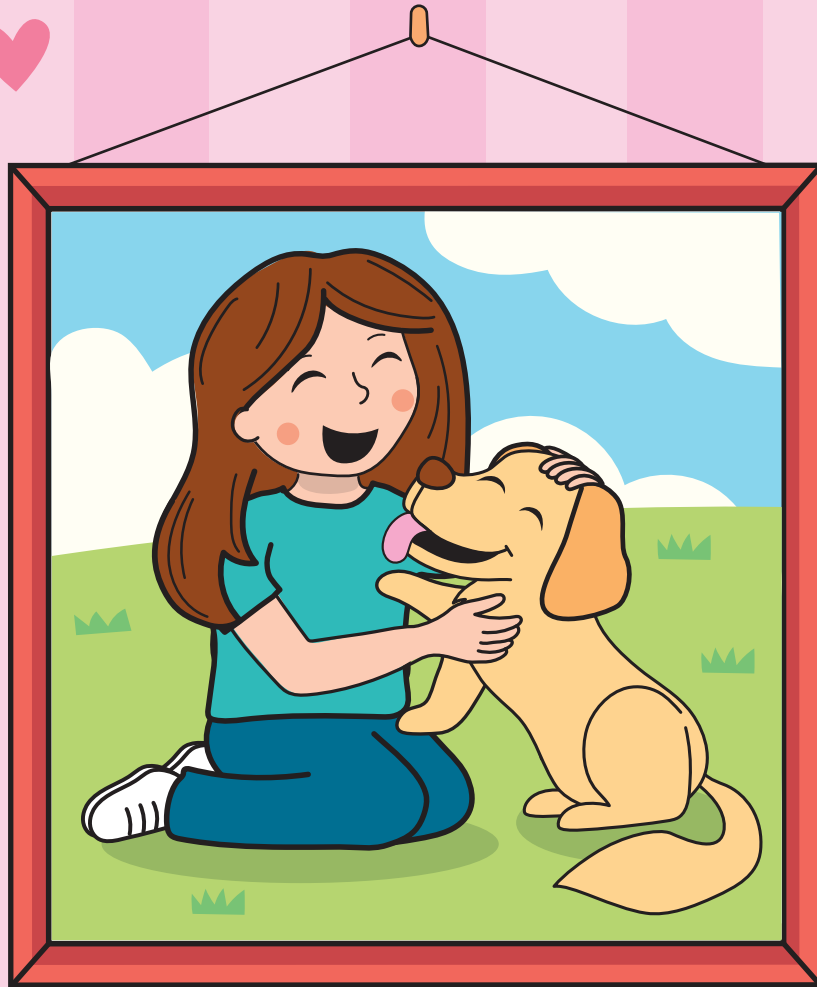
Saffiya Hanslod is 17 years old and attends St. Wilfrid's Sixth Form, in Blackburn. She was born in Blackburn and has been a member of One Voice Blackburn since the age of 11. She is passionate about emotional health and wellbeing. This is her second book, aimed at primary school children.

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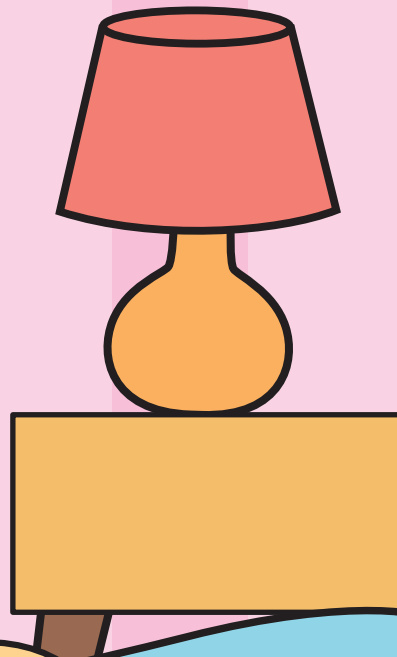
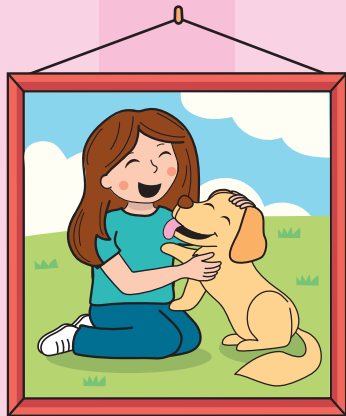


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Dear diary

It's been a while since my last life update. So much has changed but so little at the same time. I am happy to say that I am enjoying life here in my new town. I have come to appreciate the change of scenery and all the exciting new opportunities at my new school and I've made loads of new friends through my passion of football.

Although things are going great, the last few days I've been feeling worried for my best friend Jess (besides Asia of course)! She's getting old now and is not as active. Most of the time she's sleeping, and it makes me worried because I can't help but feel a sinking in my belly when I think of a life without her.



Dear diary

It was my first day back at school after half term holidays, I reflected on how school no longer seemed like a scary fortress full of new and unfamiliar faces but a place where I can have fun with all the friends I have made.

I entered my class confidently finding a sense of comfort as I sat next to Joey in my familiar seat at the back of the class.

Whilst we waited for class to start Joey and I chatted away.

“Did you do anything fun in the holidays?” I asked Joey.

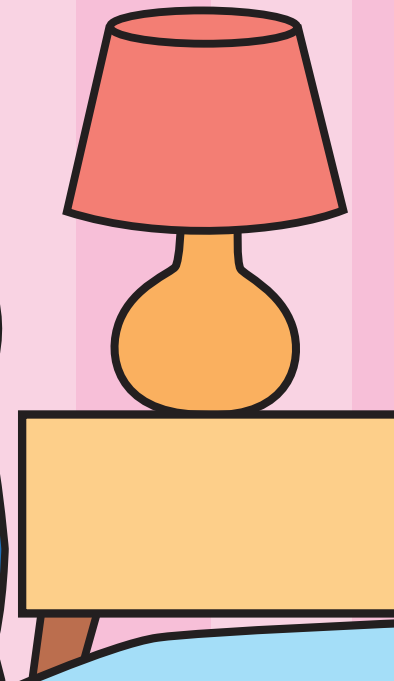
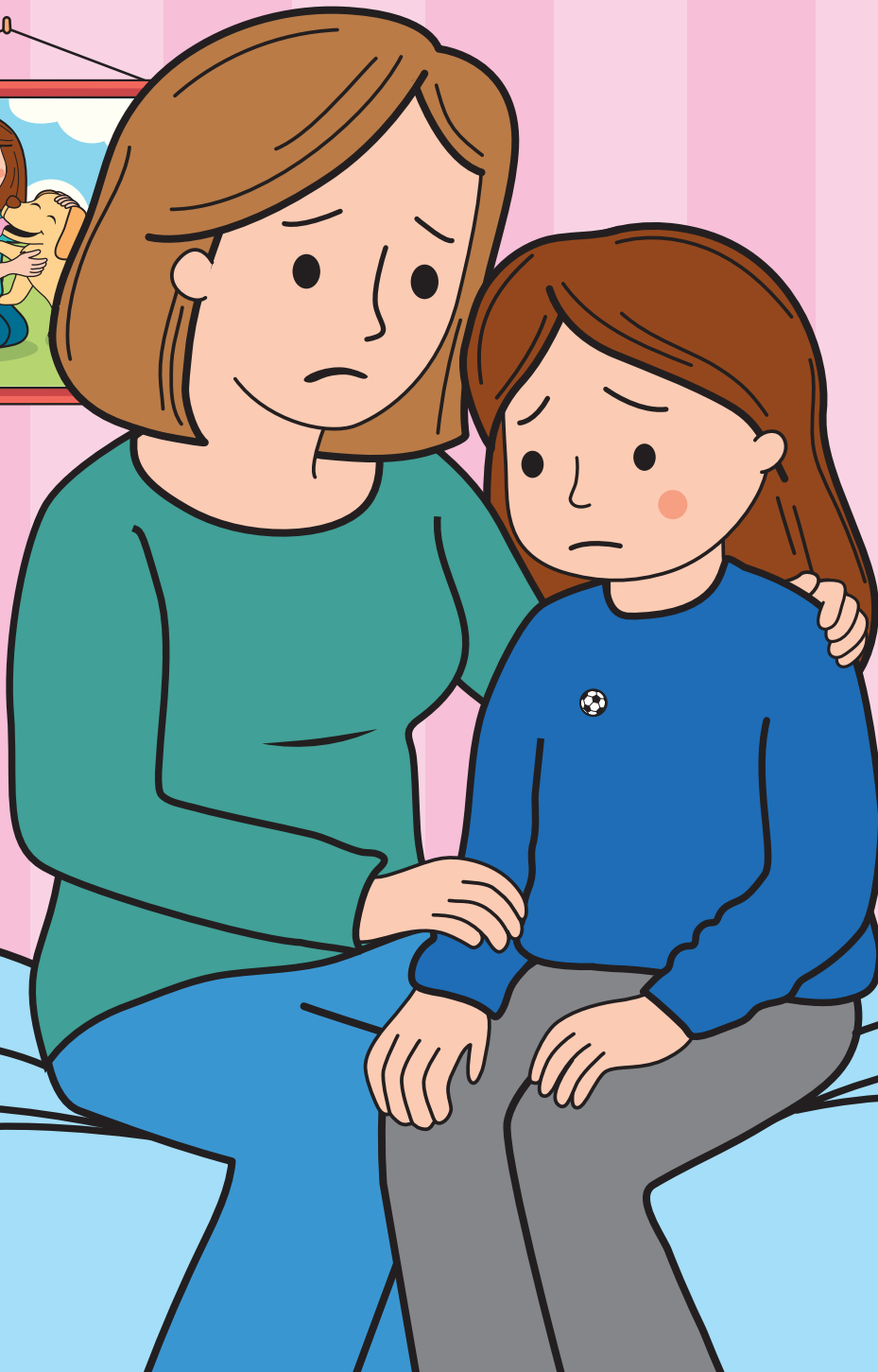
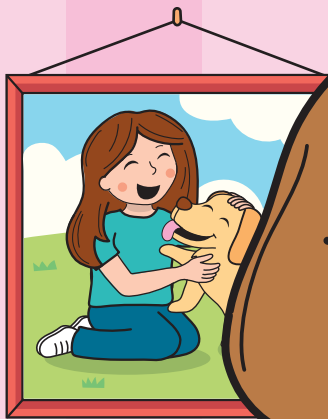
She talked about all the wonderful things she got up to in the holidays, one of them being adopting a new pup from the shelter which she described as a beautiful gold labrador.

“Oh, he’s so cute and small Sam!” she gushed. I thought of Jess and how old and slow she’s gotten. A flash of dread and worry crossed my mind as I remember she didn’t eat her dinner last night or get up to say goodbye to me earlier in the morning.



Joey asked what I got up to in the holidays. I decided not to mention my worry for Jess since I didn't want to dampen the mood and instead spoke about my catch up with Asia and about the latest football match.

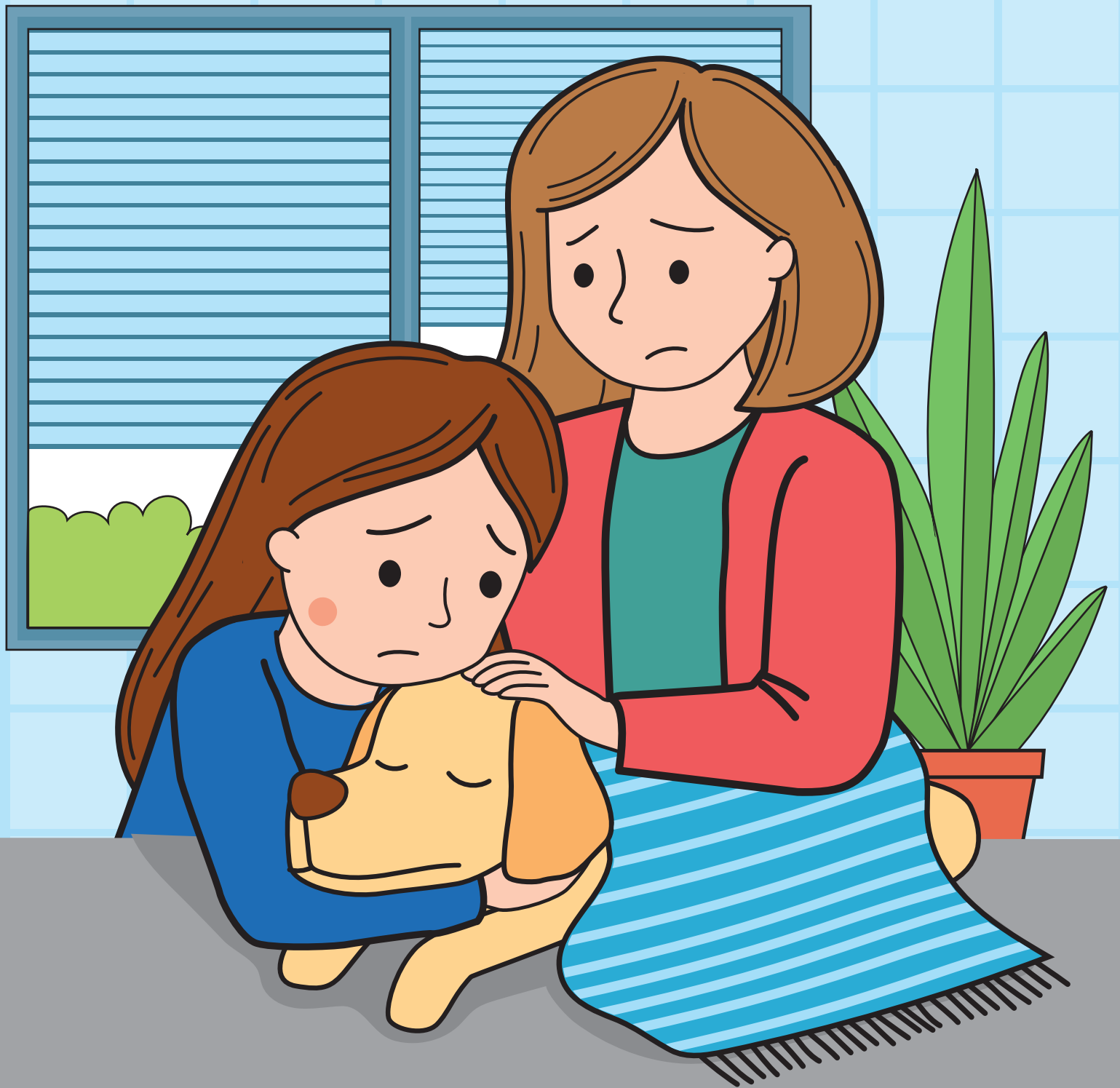
Finally, school ended. I felt exhausted and anxious to get home and check on Jess. Mum picked me up in the car, and I saw her sad face before she had a chance to change it. I sensed something was wrong and I asked her what's the matter. She replied 'lets wait until we get home'. I knew what she was going to say, I knew the moment I had seen her face. We arrived home and mum sat me down on my bed and told me the news that I didn't want to hear.



Tears filled my eyes when Mum told me we had to say goodbye to Jess. I couldn't believe it. I didn't want to live without her. It felt like the worst thing that could ever happen. My heart was beating so fast, and I started to cry. Mum hugged me tight.

Jess was at the vet, and I couldn't wait to see her. The car ride felt like it took forever. When we finally got there, my tummy felt fluttery, and like everything around me was moving in slow motion.

We walked down a quiet hallway and into the room where Jess was lying peacefully. I gently stroked her soft golden fur and gave her a big hug. I whispered goodbye to her, even though I didn't want to say it. Mum gave me a warm hug and held me close.



We arrived home to an eery silence. Jess wasn't there to greet me. No wagging tail, no excited paws tapping against the floor. Just quiet. I didn't want to go school the next day so I was allowed to have a day off.

The next few days, I moved through the house like a shadow. Seeing her leash by the door, and her bowl of half eaten food made me feel sad. On the weekend, mum took me to get ice cream to make me feel better. We walked home through the park, and I felt strange being here without her. We sat on a bench and watched other dogs play. One dog came over and tried to lick my ice cream. Mum and I laughed as I remembered when Jess used to do that. I felt like that was the first time I had smiled in a while.





Dear diary,

I was feeling a little better and decided to go back to school.

A group of girls had gathered around Joey as she excitedly shared stories and photos of her new puppy. She explained how soft his fur was and how clever he was for learning to chase a ball. When she saw me, she called me over to join the group.

I forced a smile and headed over, but something inside me ached. “He’s so cute, he fits in the palm of my dad’s hand!”

Joey beamed with excitement! “I want to teach him how to kick the ball so we can play football together.” She laughed cheekily and everyone laughed with her.

I felt my eyes filling with tears and my face getting red. I couldn’t contain my emotions.... the sickness in my stomach was rising and I ran off, feeling embarrassed.

Tears rolled down my cheeks like a waterfall. I couldn't stop crying. Joey quietly came over, sat beside me, and gently put her arm around my shoulder.

“What’s wrong?” she asked softly.

Through my sobs, I told her about Jess.

“I’m so sorry, Sam,” Joey said kindly. “I didn’t know... I feel bad for talking about my new puppy.”

“It’s not your fault,” I sniffled. “You didn’t know. I’m really happy for you and your puppy. I just miss Jess so much. And I feel embarrassed for running off in front of everyone.”

Joey gave my shoulder a little squeeze.

“Hey, it’s okay to feel sad and to cry,” she said. “I cried a lot when my old dog, Max, passed away. One time, he tried to chase a butterfly and ran straight into the garden sprinkler. He was soaking wet and looked so confused!”

I couldn’t help but giggle through my tears. “Jess did something like that once,” I said, smiling a little. “She tried to chase a bee and ended up falling into her water bowl!”

We both laughed quietly.

“We’re lucky to have those memories,” Joey said, her voice warm. I nodded. And just like that, the heaviness in my chest didn’t feel quite so heavy. I knew I’d still miss Jess, but I also knew I wasn’t alone—and that made all the difference.



Dear diary,

By the end of the day, I felt a little better. I realised that letting the tears out and sharing happy memories with Joey helped more than I expected. Now, as I sit writing this, I have Jess's old blanket . It still smells a little like her. I close my eyes for a moment and remember how she used to rest her head on my lap, so calm and warm.

I feel a wave of thankfulness come over me as I think about all the special moments we had together. Even though she's gone, Jess will always be a part of my heart. And when I miss her, I can hold her blanket, think of her silly tail wags, and smile—because love like that never really goes away.

Until next time x

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