

## RUTHIE

It's been a long hard winter for most of us. At Southwest Ohio Doberman Rescue it's been snowing dobies for months without letting up. We have taken in so many dogs, and we've been feeling pretty overwhelmed. But a request came recently from a rural Ohio shelter that rarely asks us for help, and when we heard their story we couldn't refuse them.

Some heartless person dumped a senior dobergirl off at the intersection of two lonely country roads on a cold day in February. A kind soul found her and took her to the shelter, with the hope that an owner would show up looking for her. When the shelter workers saw this dog, they knew no one was ever coming. She was somewhere between 8 and 10 years old, and whoever was charged with caring for her had bred her so many times she had huge mammary cysts, one of which had ripped open from the pressure of its size and it was draining. This underfunded shelter sent the girl off to the vet, but their limited resources could provide only a cursory examination and some pain medication. When her three days' hold was up, they knew they would be adding her to their euthanasia for that week. Despite her sweetness, and her gentle demeanor, this county shelter could not justify keeping an obviously sick dog alive while other younger, healthier dogs would die waiting for her kennel space.

We were full at SWODR, but we took her in. Several of our own shelter volunteers have come up against breast cancer in our personal lives and in our foster dogs. Sometimes we've beaten it, and sometimes not, but we weren't going to let this girl go without a fight. There is every chance that she does not, in fact, suffer from cancer and the cysts are benign. This is our hope. But our vet has also discovered that she also has some suspicious swellings in her gums, which may be an abscessed tooth, or something more sinister. When the vet tried to look at Ruthie's front teeth she discovered she doesn't have any. Years of trying to chew her way out of a crate destroyed them, along with her hope, no doubt, for any kind of freedom or dignity.

We have named this lovely dog, who for some reason seems ready to forgive human beings for their many transgressions, Ruth, for one of the strongest women in the Bible. Her first night in her foster home was a revelation. She could not get comfortable; the cyst is so big that she has to have a way to prop herself up to make space for it below her. She was clearly thrilled to be inside; in fact, it was hard to get her to go out. She seemed to think she was going to be left out there....again. She discovered the treat jar. The next day she went to the vet and managed to turn everyone there into a fan with her sweet courage. And now, in just a short time we have all learned that Ruthie is a delight. She may be an old broad, but she loves life and everyone in it. She plays hard with her dobie siblings every day. She has the funniest habit of sneezing from excitement the whole time she's playing. We've never seen anything like it. Perhaps her cutest habit is holding her natural ears up very high, and when we first saw her we wondered how some genetics lab had managed to cross a dog with a bat.

But Ruthie is all Doberman. She's sweet, loyal, fearless, and loving. She likes everyone: dogs, cats, and people big and small. She has a big heart, and she deserves a chance at life in a home where she is valued for herself and not the profit her puppies will bring. Ruthie is in a comfortable foster home where she is adored. Once having undergone surgery she will be perfectly adoptable.

The cost of Ruthie's surgery would be daunting to any rescue, but everyone who meets her understands immediately why we want to help her. Please help us to help her. Thank you.