



The Odyssey of Homer

By
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Chapter One

With his blonde mane blowing in the breeze of a Denver October, Homer strolled around the wood fence, inspecting all the perimeter. He had been here for over nine months and had walked this fence many times.

Finally he found it. There was one small hole in the fence. He had first discovered it two weeks before. Then it had been much smaller, but he had worked it with his teeth almost every day since then. He lowered his head and began to chew.

“What are you doing there, kid?”

Homer jumped, startled by the voice. He turned to face Hector. Hector was a large boxer with drooping, always salivating jaws.

“Just playing.” was Homer’s non-committal answer.

“Well, just play somewhere else. I don’t like you around my fence.”

Hector was the oldest dog of the family and somewhat of a bully.

“You heard him, kid. Move on.” This from Helen.

Homer had been so distracted by Hector that he did not see Helen approach. She was a beautiful collie. She was large also, but not as large as Hector.

Homer moved slowly along the fence. But his progress was too slow. A brusque growl from Hector made him hurry faster, through the doggie door and into the

carpeted living room.

Homer was a mutt. He had come to his new home as a puppy, barely with eyes open. Immediately, Hector had asserted his authority. He put Homer in his place, then went to curl up on his soft dog bed.

Helen was excited at first. She played with Homer as if he were her own pup. Then, she realized he did not fit in, he did not belong here. He was rough and thought he was much tougher than he truly was. He did not bow to Hector's authority as he should. And, what was worse, he did not mind Helen. Soon, she was done with him. He was not smart enough to follow instructions did not fit into the flow of things.

Homer could not understand anything the humans said, but he soon learned to differentiate the names of the dogs. And, he realized that the first sound of every dog's name was the same. Helen told him the humans had done this on purpose. Homer shook his head, swirling his golden mane. He did not really understand and, what is more, he did not care.

Hector was a registered boxer and the favorite of the family. He had tenure. He was getting older, but, because of his size, he was still the canine commander.

Helen was a registered collie. She had always been beautiful. She was the favorite of the female human child and the female human grown-up. She was a queen.

Homer was a mutt. Not registered as anything. He had been the favorite of the female human child, until the newness wore off. Within three days of his arrival, Homer was on his own. At first, Hector would growl at him if he got too close to the food dish. The third time Homer approached the bowl before Hector was through, Hector attacked him. He knocked Homer onto his back and grabbed the furry throat. He did not bite hard, not hard enough to draw blood, but hard enough to let Homer know he meant business. The humans heard the row and rushed to see what the problem was. By the time they got there, Hector had made his point and backed off Homer. Of course, being the new one, Homer got blamed.

So, now, Homer planned his escape through the wooden fence.

He waited until Hector and Helen had curled up and started their nap. So, Homer quickly found the doggie door and went slowly through it so that it would make little noise.

He found the hole and began chewing on it.

After only a few minutes of chewing on it, he smelled a new smell. He put his nose down close to the hole.

"Who's there?" He waited a few seconds, then repeated the question.

"I'm called Pat. Who's that?"

"I'm Homer. What are you doing?"

"I'm on the search for food."

"Doesn't your human feed you?"

“What human?” Answered Pat. “All the humans of the world are my human. Sometimes they feed me some, sometimes they do not.”

“Where do you live?” Homer was intrigued.

“Anywhere and everywhere. I am a dog of the world.”

“Sounds great!” Homer thought a minute. “Wanna be friends?”

“What for?”

“Cause I am going to get out of here and I could use a friend like you.”

“Sure. Why not.” A pause. “Listen, I will come by again tomorrow with my friend, Achilles. Maybe he can help you break out.”

“Great. See you tomorrow.”

Homer went back to chewing and continued until his gums hurt. Then he wandered back into the house. Fortunately, both Hector and Helen were still asleep. He curled up on the towel laid down for him and went to sleep.

He felt like he had only slept for ten minutes when Hector grabbed him by the scruff of the neck and shook him off his bed.

“Get up, kid, and get out to do your business.”

“What? What are you doing?”

“I am keeping you in shape. We defecate outside so the humans don’t punish us. I will not pay for your stupid mistakes. I don’t care if you are a puppy.”

By this time, Homer was fully awake. He turned on Hector and bared his

teeth. "You are not the boss of me. I can sleep a while longer if I want."

"NO YOU CAN NOT!!!" Hector barked at him. "I am the one who says what and when and you Will obey!"

With that, Hector turned, and, kicking out his back legs, kicked Homer in the side, sending the young mutt sliding on the carpet. His ribs hurt, but he would not let Hector have the pleasure of seeing that he was hurt.

Homer wandered the fence, peeing twice and pooping once. He found the hole and chewed a little, being sure to stay quiet so that Hector would not hear him.

"Pat?" He whimpered quietly. But, there was no answer.

He felt Hector coming up behind him. He turned to face the snarling.

"Move along, kid."

Five more days passed. The cold October of Denver turned into a blustery, cold November.

Homer met with Pat twice more. On the fifth day, he found Pat at the hole.

"This is my friend, Achilles."

"Good to meet you." Said Homer.

"And you." Answered Achilles. "Would be better if I could see you."

Achilles had a deep, booming voice. He was a little too loud and it attracted Hector.

"Get away from there, kid." Growled Hector. "Who's out there? Get away from here. You are not wanted here." He barked.

“Be careful. I am Achilles. You do not want to cross me.”

“And I am Hector. You can assault these walls all you want. They have held out much better than you.”

“You are not wise to treat me thus. I am the warrior of your sofa cushioned nightmares!”

“Get!” Roared Hector.

“Let us leave now, Pat. Hector there wants us gone. But, we will be back. I will make him eat his words and wish he were back in his mother’s arms.”

Hector turned on Homer. “I said, get back in the house.”

Slowly Homer went into the house.

That night the family sat around the supper table as Hector stood guard, not far from the table, watching for any food that might fall. Helen stood quietly beside and barely behind him. Homer was relegated to a position much further back.

A small piece of meat ‘accidentally’ fell from the young girl human’s fork. Homer was still hungry and it smelled so good. He went for it at the same time as Hector. There ensued a horrible fight as the two growled, bit, and yelped at each other. Helen took the meat quietly and swallowed it with a single chew.

The older male human got up from the table in such a hurry and with such anger that the chair in which he had been sitting, fell over backward.

He came onto the pair quickly, lashing out with his feet. Homer did not understand any of the sounds he made, except that they were very loud, and

heard his name several times. But the intent was clear. With flailing hands and feet, he herded Homer out the back door. Homer heard the man talk firmly, yet with a kind undertone, to Hector.

Homer went to his hole and chewed twice, then lost interest. He wandered around the fence and pouted.

After what seemed a long time to Homer, he was let back in the house. He went to his towel and curled up. He slept until the early morning hours.

When he awoke, he silently padded to where Hector slept. Then he went back to bed.

The morning sun was shining through the window when he awoke again.

Hector woke and yawned. Then he sniffed and saw the pile of puppy feces beside his bed.

“You little punk! Your guts and throat are mine. I will dine on puppy blood this day!”

He stood, lowered his head, blood in his eyes. He charged Homer and the puppy stood on his hind legs, hoping to make himself at least look bigger. Hector lunged and knocked Homer backward. Homer could not help a yelp. Hector was on him in a minute. His blood-lust was up.

The male human came stomping in, wiping sleep from his eyes. He said something very loudly, still angry. He shoved Hector aside and grabbed Homer. He went to the doggie door and unceremoniously dumped him outside.

Homer had had enough. He sniffed his way to the hole.

"Pat?" He whispered. He waited several minutes, then repeated the call, slightly louder.

"Yeah. I'm here. Who's that?"

"It's me, Homer."

"Oh, yeah. What's happenin'?"

"Just got kicked out of the house. For the last time. I swear." Said Homer quietly through gritted teeth.

"Who are you talking to?" Came the gruff voice of Hector from somewhere behind Homer.

Homer turned to face Hector. "I have had it with you! Get out of here." Growled Homer with tears of anger streaming down his face.

"Who else is in there?" Queried Pat.

"Hector, the bully." Responded Homer.

"Send him out here." Threatened Pat.

"He is much too big to fit through the hole."

"But, it is big enough for you."

Homer tensed, his face still toward Hector, his back to the fence.

"Come on, you bully." Gritted Homer.

Hector stared at him and a cruel grin spread on his boxer face. "Now is your time to really suffer. The humans have left and you are mine to do with as I please."

He charged Homer. Homer rocked back on his haunches, prepared for the attack. Hector bowled him over, then turned for a second attack. He shifted his weight back onto his haunches to assault again. But, before he could move, a set of teeth sunk into the back of his neck.

Pat, a long hair dachshund had lunged over him, gripping the scruff of his neck as he passed over. He held on for dear life.

“Get through the hole.” Said Pat through clenched teeth.

Homer did not need a second invitation. He slid through the hole with no problem. He took a quick step, prepared to turn back to the fence when his progress was stopped by a pair of steady legs.

“Hold on, there. Who are you?”

“I am Homer, and my friend is in trouble in there.”

The big dog looked at him and listened to the growling, howling and scuffle inside the fence.

“I am Achilles. Who is in there?”

“Pat. He came in and is fighting Hector.”

“Who is Hector.” Achilles barely paused. “Answer me.”

“A large, mean boxer.”

Before Achilles could reply or move, the noise of the fight turned into a piercing scream.

Pat came flying out of the hole, screaming. His left ear was torn and blood glistened on his left flank. Blood streamed from his nose.

“Wait!” Yelled Achilles as Pat streaked past the two.

Pat stumbled over the curb and went into the street, trying to regain his balance. He lay on the pavement for a brief moment catching his breath. His eyes were partially glazed over. The first few cars swerved around him as he rose and tried to return to the fight, though off balance and not fully aware.

He had streaked between Homer and Achilles as he had gone across the sidewalk. Homer and Achilles turned their heads to follow his crash into the street. Homer hesitated but a brief second, then turned to go to Pat’s aid. But, before he could take a step, Achilles grabbed the scruff of his neck in his mouth.

Homer heard a high pitched screech of tires, then a squeal. Then the scream of Pat turned into a frightening yelp, then it went quiet. Even Hector made no noise.

Achilles lowered his head and opened his mouth, dropping Homer. He looked at Homer. “Come on, Homer, let’s get out of here.”

Homer felt the solemnity of the moment. He turned toward where he had heard the yelp, but before he could move, he heard Achilles pad to the fence.

Achilles lowered his head even further, until his large nose was at the hole.

“Hector, I will find you and I will kill you.”

Achilles turned and began to trot down the sidewalk. Homer followed, tears still stinging his eyes in the cold wind.

Chapter Two

Tell me, muse, of that man, so ready at need, who wandered far and wide, after he had sacked the sacred citadel of Troy, and many were the men whose towns he saw and whose mind he learnt, yea, and many woes he suffered in his heart on the deep, striving to win his own life and the return of his company. Nay, but, even so he saved not his company, though he desired it sore.

Homer,

The Odyssey

Achilles and Homer soon slept that night in an ally behind a grocery store. Achilles taught him how to wait until some of the trash from the dumpster fell on the ground, then pounce on it before it could be blown away by the wind, or stolen by squirrels.

Full and somewhat out of the wind, Homer slept the dreamless sleep of exhaustion.

The next morning, he went to the edge of the building and relieved himself. Achilles came over and added his own waste. Then, the pair moved on down the street. Homer noticed Achilles was limping some.

“What’s wrong?” Inquired Homer.

“Just an old ankle injury acting up.” Answered Achilles, non-committaly.

They moved on down the street, until they found several humans, huddled together in another alley. Most of the humans seemed almost asleep. One spoke to Homer, but, of course, he did not understand the words. This time, he could not even figure out the meaning. He sat and listened for a long time.

“Come on, leave these people alone.” Said Achilles, nudging Homer lightly in the flank.

“Just a minute.”

“No. This is not good.”

“Wait!” Shouted Homer.

Another dog, a medium sized mutt, came up and laid down beside one of the humans who was laying on the ground. The human’s hand slowly raised, and he lethargically stroked the new dog’s head. Soon the hand fell, the human’s head rolled back and his eyes glassed over.

Homer tried to talk to the new dog, but, this dog seemed more interested in licking something up that the human had spilled than answering him. Homer could tell that it was a female dog, and she exuded a funny body smell that Homer did not recognize.

Homer barked at her, but she kept ignoring him. Soon she laid down and went to sleep. Homer gave up and left the group.

He felt the air getting dark and cold. The wind began to pick up. He began to shiver uncontrollably.

A young boy passed him and said something in Spanish, though Homer could not understand Spanish, English or any other human language. The boy's mother pulled him away from the little dog, but the lilting voice of the child gave Homer some temporary comfort.

He wandered down the sidewalk, hoping to find Achilles. Perhaps Achilles could help him find some food and some shelter from the wind which was picking up and was very cold.

Homer missed the warm house, and even missed Hector a little. Better the devil you know....

Finally he found an alley which gave him some shelter from the cold. He laid down and curled up into a ball. His fur fluffed with a slight breeze. He shivered himself to sleep.

He awoke the next morning, stiff and hungry. He stood and stretched. He wandered down the sidewalk, forlorn and self-pitying.

A strong smell of warm food wafted to his nostrils. He lifted his snout and sniffed. It smelled like a type of bread with some fruit mixed in with it. He followed the smell. Soon he found some of it laying on the concrete. He gobbled the first bite, unable to control himself. The second bite he relished a little.

He heard a low bark. He raised his head and gave a low growl. The growl would be hard for a human to hear, but he knew any other dog could hear and recognize that this was *his* food.

"What do you have there?" Came the gruff voice of Achilles.

Homer quickly swallowed the bite of the food he had found.

"Achilles! I thought I had lost you."

"Glad to see you got away from those bums, kid."

"They were very boring." grinned Homer. "And a little scary."

"They are very scary."

"I found some food. There is a little left. Have a bite."

Achilles padded over. He gulped down the last bite. "Bagel." He said.

"Bagel?"

"Sort of like bread."

"Let's find some more food."

Homer started to step off the sidewalk. Achilles caught him up in his mouth.

"Wait a minute, kid."

Homer heard and felt a whoosh as a car whizzed past.

"Watch your step around here. The cars around here don't look very well. They kill you without breaking stride." Achilles began down the sidewalk.

"Come on. This way."

Homer began to follow Achilles, trotting to match the larger dog's stride. The sun began shining through the street, lighting up Homer's golden fur and warming him.

Soon, he smelled a smell that was wondrous. He thought that he had never

smelled such a heavenly thing before.

“Wait.” Said Achilles simply.

Homer bumped into Achilles, backed up a step, then sat down.

Soon, the smell became stronger.

Homer heard a human voice. The tone was not very pleasant.

“Look the other way.” Said Achilles. After a short pause, he added. “This way.”

Homer turned to look in a different direction. He had to muster all his courage and patience to sit there while that superb smell wafted past him. He heard the human’s steps increase, stop, then die away. He heard a door open, then shut.

“Now.” Said Achilles.

Homer followed his voice. They went to a dumpster.

“Wait here.” Achilles pushed the dumpster open with his nose. Soon, he had two steak bones on the sidewalk.

“Take one.” Said Achilles.

Homer nosed the bone, but, before his jaws could close on it, Achilles’ voice stopped him.

“That one is mine. You take the other.”

Homer nosed around ‘til he found the other bone. He growled for good measure, then took it and went to the side of the building. He laid down by the building and began to chew on it.

“No. Not here.” Said Achilles. “Too close to the source, and the smell will attract others.”

“I don’t care. I can guard my own bone.”

“No, Little One, you can not. You do not know the evil that walks these streets. There are dogs here bigger than I and some that are smaller, but much meaner and sneakier. Get your bone and follow me.”

The two jogged down the sidewalk a ways, then went into another alley. There they curled up and chewed on the bones.

By noon, Homer was warmer and his belly felt full. He found it impossible to keep his eyes open. He curled up around the chewed bone and fell asleep.

He awoke and found Achilles gone. In his place was a scarred and foul-smelling dog, smaller than Achilles, but not by much.

“What have you there?” Asked a gruff voice.

“Nothing.” Whimpered Homer, trying to hide what was left of the bone under his paw.

“Yes you do. I may have only one eye left, but that is all I need to see that luscious bone.”

“It is mine!” Growled Homer.

“Give it to me if you want to live.”

“No.”

The one-eyed dog’s growl turned into a vicious snarl. He lunged at Homer. Homer ducked, grabbing the bone in his jaws in one fluid movement. He

continued moving as the larger dog flew over the top of him. He received a small scratch from the seeking jaws of the hound as he went under it.

Homer broke into a run and did not slow down to look back. He ran until he came to a cross street. Not expecting the dip of the curb, he did a flip off the curb and went sprawling onto the street. He rolled quickly from his back to his tucked legs and jumped up. He ran back onto the sidewalk, now aware that it was there. He no longer smelled the other dog anywhere near.

Hanging his head, he began to walk the sidewalk with a slow, despondent pace. He walked for about five minutes, though to him, it seemed five hours.

He felt cold, tired and alone. Soon, he came to an obstruction and was pulled up short. Looking up he saw Achilles.

"Hi, Achilles! Where you been?"

Achilles gave a slight snort. "Around."

"I'm glad to see you." Homer shook his head slightly. "I'm cold."

Homer related to Achilles the events in the alley where he evaded the other dog.

"Come on, kid."

Achilles led him along the sidewalk. He slowed down and turned his head toward Homer.

"Come on up here. Walk beside me, kid."

Homer trotted up until he was beside Achilles. They walked on side by side.

“See, kid, always walk with your nose to the wind. You can smell food, humans, or an enemy long before you can see them if you walk into the wind.”

Homer nodded his head. “That makes sense.”

Achilles stopped and turned and faced Homer.

“Now, kid, show me how fierce you can look.” He sat back on his haunches and stared at Homer.

Homer licked his lips, then let out a low growl, which fairly quickly turned into a rough bark.

“That’s pretty good for a start. But, you need to look more vicious. See, if you get into a fight, the most important thing is to look rough and mean. Make the enemy think you are a lot bigger than you are.” He gazed over Homer from front to back. “Now, raise the hair on your back.”

Homer’s lips came back and he really concentrated. Soon, the ridge of hair along his spine raised straight up. “How’s this?”

“That’s pretty good, kid.”

“My name’s Homer, sir.”

“OK, Homer. Don’t call me sir.”

“Now what, Achilles?”

“We wander. Just remember what I taught you. You might need it some day.”

“I’m cold.” Repeated Homer.

“All right.” Achilles looked up at the sky. “It is getting darker and the

wind is picking up.”

They walked slowly down the sidewalk until they reached a narrow alley. Achilles led into the alley. Achilles stretched, then and laid down. Homer turned to Achilles and began chewing on his ear.

“Stop that, Homer. It is time to sleep.” Grumbled Achilles.

“I just wanted to play.”

“The only ‘play’ we do on the streets is to learn to fight and survive. We will have another lesson tomorrow. Sleep now.”

Homer dropped his head and wandered to Achilles side. He circled, then curled up against Achilles’ flank.

After a few minutes, Homer said, “I miss Pat.”

Achilles opened his eyes. “I miss him too.”

“I like Pat.” Murmured Homer.

“I liked him too.”

“I miss Pat.” With that, Homer was asleep. Achilles sighed, stretched his neck, laid his head on his paws and went to sleep.

The next morning, Homer woke and yawned, then stretched. Achilles was gone. Homer looked around, then went to the wall of the building and urinated. He walked out onto the sidewalk which was flooded in bright sunshine.

He stood in one place, trying to decide which way to go. He was confused.

At that moment he heard a familiar voice.

“Morning, Homer.”

"Morning, Achilles." Homer tried to keep the relief out of his voice. He tried to sound nonchalant.

"Come on. Let's find some breakfast."

They wandered down the sidewalk looking for food. The search was rewarded with a left over McDonald's breakfast and some doughnut pieces.

"What do we do now?" Asked Homer.

"Just cruise."

The morning was spent 'cruising'. Homer's legs were getting tired. His foot pads were almost raw.

"Let's cross the street now. Just be careful. Watch for cars."

Homer wasn't sure exactly what he meant, but he tried not to show it.

Achilles ran across, then looked back. "Come on, Homer."

Homer started across, then heard a loud, harsh noise. He was startled and turned back.

"Watch it, kid." Achilles paused. "Now, kid, run."

Homer ran toward Achilles voice and soon made it to the other sidewalk.

As they walked along, Homer realized the tempo of Achilles' footfalls was not its usual.

"What's wrong, Achilles?"

"Bad ankle. It's all right." Achilles looked around. "You wait here. I will be back real soon."

Homer sat down and listened to the noises of the street. The cars, some sounding nice, some neurotic, some taking it slow, some in a hurry. He heard the footsteps of people walking down the sidewalk. He heard some of them make comments. Some of the comments sounded kind, some quiet but with a harsh undertone, some outwardly hateful.

Homer waited for hours. The sun passed over him with golden warmth. Achilles did not come back.

Homer was not at all familiar with this part of the street. He decided he needed to cross back to the other side where he was more familiar. But, every time he started across, the loud car noises got louder and horns blared. Finally, he gave up. He was lost.

Then he heard soft footsteps again. This time the steps stopped next to him. He turned to the human. The human's voice was soft and soothing. He felt himself being lifted and he panicked. His feet were no longer in contact with the ground and it was very disconcerting. He reached his arms around the wrist of the person holding him. The panic subsided some, but did not completely leave. What if he was dropped? How would he land? Would he be hurt bad?

He felt the motion as he was carried a short distance. Then he was set down on the ground again. But this ground felt much different. It was soft, not hard; it was warm, not cold. Then he felt the motion without wind, without him moving.

Chapter Three

*"Descended from the gods! Ulysses, cease;
Offend not Jove: obey, and give the peace."*

Homer,

The Odyssey

Linda heard the cell phone ring and reached in her purse for it. She fumbled with the phone while trying to keep her eyes on the road and dropped it on the seat. Her son, Danny retrieved the phone and handed it to her.

"Hello." She paused. "Yes, this is Linda."

Danny looked at her then shrugged.

"Where did you say you are?" She looked at Danny and nodded toward the glove compartment. He opened the compartment and pulled out a small notepad. He clicked open the pen. "Two one five Speer Boulevard?" She nodded again at Danny. He quickly scribbled down the address. "We are close. We should be there in less than ten minutes."

Linda clicked closed the phone and sat it down on the car seat.

"We have to go to that address. There is the cutest dog there. The woman said there is something wrong with it, but it was found wandering around Sheridan boulevard. How the dear thing survived is a miracle."

"OK, Mom, but what is wrong with the dog?"

"What do you mean, dear?"

"You said there is something wrong with the dog. What is wrong with it?"

Linda cocked her head to the side and pursed her lips. She thought a minute, then answered. "I don't know, but he sounds really cute."

"What does it look like?"

"I don't know, but the lady says he looks like he is part Corgi."

"So, how do you know what he looks like. I mean, how do you know he is cute?"

"I just know, dear." She glanced over at her thirty year old son. "Just help me find the address."

Soon they arrived at the specified house. After parking the car, Linda led the way up the sidewalk to the door. Danny pulled down his dachshund sweatshirt, and shuffled behind her.

A pleasant woman in her late sixty's let them in. Her hair, which was dark with wisps of gray, answered the doorbell.

"Hello. I am Martha. Won't you come." The lady had a soothing, melodious voice. She stood straight and tall, but with an air of quiet confidence.

Linda and Danny followed her into the house. The house had a seventies décor, with brown-orange shag carpet and a bar/island with tall bar stools. It smelled of fresh carpet cleaner, a sure sign of a dog person.

"Hello, Martha, I am Linda, and this is my son, Danny."

"Welcome." She led them to a couch. "Please sit while I get the little fellow."

Linda sat and looked around as Martha left the room. Danny sat beside his mother, looking straight ahead.

“This is nice, isn’t it?” Said Linda looking toward Danny.

Danny realized this was a rhetorical question and merely nodded his head, even though he knew Linda was not looking at him.

Soon Martha entered with a small dog crate. Inside was a small, young dog with long, golden hair. Martha set the crate down and took the dog out. He glowed in the sunshine streaming from the open window. The puppy turned his head from side to side, sniffing the air. He glowed with a youthful dignity.

“Oh, he’s beautiful!” Exclaimed Linda.

“Yes.” Martha stared at Homer and smiled. “I don’t know how he survived on that busy street, I’ll never know.”

Danny looked at Martha. “Do you know how long he was there?”

“Several day, at least.” Martha considered. “Perhaps longer.”

“Well, we will take him and find him a wonderful home.” Said Linda. She looked at Danny. “You, know, I think I know just where to place him.”

Danny looked at Martha. “You said something was wrong with him. Do you know what?”

“No. We found the people who owned him. They said he had a ‘problem’ and did not get along with their other two dogs. So, they did not want him back.”

Linda looked at the shining puppy. “Oh, I can’t imagine anyone not wanting this dog.” She turned to Danny. “Don’t you think he is the prettiest thing

you have ever seen?"

Danny nodded.

"I think he has some Corgi in him. Maybe some dachshund also."

"Well, if you think you can find him a good home, take him." Said Martha.

"I will need to keep the carrier."

"Oh, that's all right." Said Linda. "We have one in the Honda."

Danny gently picked up the puppy. He placed both paws around Danny's wrist, holding on for dear life.

In the car, Danny continued holding the puppy.

"We can take him to your sister's while we are here in Denver. He can play with her puppy in the back yard."

"Debbie will love that." Commented Danny.

"Oh, she won't mind."

Soon they were at Linda's daughter's house. They put the puppy in the back yard. He played happily with the corgi puppy of Debbie's. He slowly sniffed around the fence and then went back to tussling with Berwyn, the corgi.

That afternoon, Linda took him to be checked out by the vet. The vet looked him over, announced him in good health. Then turned to Linda. "I have some concerns with his eyes. I will have my partner, who specializes in pet ophthalmology look him over in a minute."

The vet left. Linda and Danny looked at each other silently.

Soon the ophthalmology vet came in. He shined lights in the dog's eyes, he

blew lightly into Homer's eyes. Then handed the puppy to Danny. He sat on a chair across from Linda and Danny.

The vet looked down, sucked his teeth, then looked at Linda and Danny.

"This dog is completely blind."

Linda and Danny looked at each other.

"Wait. We put him in the back yard with another dog and they played. He walked around the fence. I didn't see him walk into anything."

"He walked slowly, didn't he?" Said the specialist.

"Well, yeah, but he seemed to know where he was going." Commented Danny, amazed.

"I said he was blind, not stupid." The vet looked down at Homer. "He walks slowly around a place once and has it memorized. He is a special case." He took a deep breath. "He was probably born blind. So, he probably doesn't know anything different."

"Wow!" exclaimed Danny. "I mean; WOW." Danny shook his head.

The vet looked at the two. "Watch this." He called to the puppy. Homer turned his head with bright eyes to the vet. The vet threw a cotton ball at Homer. It flew just over Homer's head. The dog did not blink or flinch. "There. The cotton ball displaces very little air, so no air pressure cues. It makes no sound, so no auditory cues. The dog has no vision, so no visual cues. He did not recognize that something was thrown at him." The vet shook his head. "Where did you say he was found?"

“On Sheridan boulevard.” Said Linda quietly.

“Wow. How did he survive the traffic?” Asked Danny.

“Vibrations through his foot pads. Sounds from the cars, etcetera.”

“Wow.” Was all Danny could say.

Linda was speechless. She shook her head and closed her eyes tight to hold back the tears. “He is a special puppy.”

“He certainly is.” Clucked the vet, rising from his chair. “You take good care of that special dog.” He rubbed the underside of Homer’s chin then left the room.

Back in Wyoming, Linda introduced Homer to her other dogs slowly. She had nine other rescue dogs, some waiting for a home, some at home with her.

She looked at her husband, Dan. “Don’t you think he is just the cutest?”

Dan was a very kind man. He was white haired with wisdom and well muscled. He lifted the golden puppy. The dog grabbed his wrist and held on tight.

“I don’t think he likes to be held.”

“It scares him not to have to have his feet on the ground. He is scared.”

Explained Linda.

“He’s a really smart, cool dog.” Commented Danny.

“He’s just here for a while. We already have too many dogs.” Stated Dan.

Just then a row broke out. Danny’s dachshund and Homer got into a

terrible fight.

“Here, stop that you two.” Shouted Danny as he separated the two with his feet. “He is a great puppy, but he has to go to a forever home.”

Linda frowned at the golden puppy. “Hmmm, yes. I know just the place for him.” She stared at Homer. Jim hasn’t seen him yet.”

The next day, Jim met Homer. He was captured at once. He had heard that the dog was very smart, and totally blind. His awed comment was: “He’s as blind as a bat and as beautiful as a mountain stream.”

So, Homer found his home. But the adventure was not at a full end. Jim had several dogs at home. He brought Homer to his home.

He found many suitors for Jim’s affection. Koni, Jim’s wife, was very kind and patient with the dogs, and especially taken with Homer. But, her favorite was H.G. Wells.

Homer did think HG smelled somewhat like Hector. He did not know where HG stood in the hierarchy, but, he did feel threatened. The hair along his spine stood up and he attacked. The fight lasted only seconds, but it set the tone for the first day. Homer was going to make his own way. He would attack first, then would have a place of honor.

Samuel Clemmons, a large, red dachshund, rolled him without problems. Sammy was older and had been with Jim and Koni for several years. He stood over Homer, letting him know that he had a position in the household, but not the top position.

Poppa Ernest Hemmingway sauntered over to Homer. He was a roly-poly dachshund. He sniffed Homer, and let Homer know that he would not be disturbed with any puppy nonsense. Poppa liked his naps and let Homer know that these would not be disturbed and there was no room for discussion.

Homer soon made friends with Jules Verne, a long haired reddish-brown dachshund. They played most of the day long.

Within half a day Homer had learned the layout of the house. Usually he had no problem navigating, unless he got excited. Then, sometimes he would forget where the step up into the kitchen was, or where Jim's recliner was exactly located. But, missteps were very rare.

Homer's odyssey was over.

*So, Pallas spoke: the mandate from above
The King obey'd. The virgin-seed of Jove,
In Mentor's form, confirm'd the full accord,
And willing nations knew their lawful lord.*

Homer,

The Odyssey