

# Daddy, Can I Have A Puppy?

*by* JM Prescott

I don't really like dogs, but every kid wants a puppy. When I was too small to remember, my Dad won me a stuff dog as big as me in one of those ball throwing games at Wonderland. That giant dog sat in my room until I was a teenager.

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When I was old enough to remember; my parents took me to see 101 Dalmatians. On the way out we walked by a toy store that had 101 dalmatian stuffed dogs in the store. I had to look at each and every one. Dad must have walked around with me 20 times, the store closed around us and finally he said I could have one. They were all in different poses and sizes, with black spots. Except one. One had silver spots. Dad said that was the one I couldn't have. "Any of the others, Joanne, but not that one in the window." And I went home crying without a puppy. Two weeks later, under the Christmas tree was my perfect dalmatian with silver spots. His spots still sparkle in the nightlight.

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The whole summer I was 12 I asked for a dog. I begged and promised I'd take care of him. "Please Daddy, Please. I promise I'll walk him every day."

One day the following autumn I came home from school and Dad had this mischievous smile he gets when he's up to something - which is most of the time. I was annoyed for a moment; figuring he'd found one of my dolls lying around and set her up in a silly pose. Then I heard it. My little brother and I searched the house, but I

found him first. I knew how Dad thinks; my brother was too young to have figured it out yet. And there he was, the perfect little marmalade kitten. He stopped meowing as soon as I picked him up and didn't stop purring for three months. Dad called him Reilly and insisted he thought he was a dog. I had to agree.

Dad and I are cat people I guess. Reilly died a couple years ago and I've moved out on my own. I have a new cat and she doesn't think she's a dog, but she chases them. She loves it when Dad comes over and plays with her. His grand-kitten. I mentioned I might get a puppy the other day. "No, Joanne," Dad said, rolling his eyes, "you don't want to get a dog." I guess I don't. I'm not sure I ever needed one.

