

Lucy Belle Arrives at the Rainbow Bridge

By Hallie Lee

I reluctantly padded into the valley, feeling alone, even as I marveled at the vivid green grass and the endless blooming flowers. Without thinking, I dashed after a golden butterfly, surprised by the way my legs galloped beneath me, with nary a stumble.

After inspecting the cheeky butterfly, I offered up a jubilant cry, amused by the silly yodel that tumbled out of my mouth. I wagged my little Papillion body excitedly, thrilled as my echo trumpeted throughout the magical valley. Emboldened, I darted up and down vast, boundless hills, fueled by an exhilarating, newfound energy.

I ambled over to a massive pond to explore further, finding the water overflowing with sparkling blue water. As I lapped up the refreshing, cool liquid, I saw my own reflection, framed by vibrant greens, yellows, oranges, and purples! I couldn't decide which was more stunning! Me? Or the exquisite kaleidoscope of color?

Drawn to the glow of the mesmerizing rainbow, I tipped my nose back, awed by the astounding bridge towering high above me. The bridge overflowed with dogs! And cats! For just a moment, I experienced panic. Large dogs scared me. But these big beasts seemed to beckon me with kind, black-button eyes. When I slowly approached, they parted, forming a clear path down the middle.

Feeling very special, I trotted forward, shocked when all the dogs and meandering cats fell into step behind me. When I reached the end, my eyes landed on a distinguished black and white cocker spaniel. Her stubby tail wiggled with barely contained joy, and she kindly beckoned me over.

"Hello," she said. "I'm Daisy." *Daisy? Why did that name sound so familiar to me? Of course! They talked about her.*

I greeted Daisy with a typical sniff. My heart raced. "You smell just like *them*."

"So do you," she replied with a knowing smile. *My spirit soared. This was the best place ever!!*

"Come on," Daisy said, leading the way. "There are others." Her ear flopped as she eyed me over her shoulder. "A couple of cats in particular can't wait to meet you."

I followed Daisy, this regal dog that smelled like me. Like them. And I didn't feel alone anymore.