

# How much is that doggy in the window?



Our 8-year-old wants a dog. He'd probably settle for a cat, but he really wants a dog.

This weekend when we visited his aunt and uncle, he and their cat, "Little Little," hung out together. By the end of the day, he was remembering again how much he wants to be a pet owner. So we've been hearing how much he'd love a dog.

My husband and I are both allergic to dogs and cats, though, and no one in this household is getting a dog.

When the topic kept coming up, I decided to share with him the story of my own journey to dog ownership.

Maybe showing some empathy would make it easier for him.

So I took him back to the days of little Rita, way back a thousand years ago when I was younger than he is now. Oh, how I wanted a dog—more than I wanted anything in the world. I read about dogs, memorized dog breeds, played with every dog I could find, accepted any and every dog sitting job in the neighborhood, and visited pet stores just so I could see dogs up close.

For years, I told him, I didn't have a dog—or any hope of having one. Then one day I was talking to my mother about how much I wanted a dog, and she said, "The only way you could ever have a dog is if I never had to deal with it."

That sounded like a yes to me! And my mother, who has only misspoken that one

time in her life, never goes back on her word.

So my brothers and I emptied the garage onto our back yard, and my father had to hire someone to carry all the junk away. Then we had room for everything our dog would need. I found an ad in the newspaper for husky-shepherd puppies and persuaded my father to drive me to a farm and bring a puppy home.

“That puppy was Flurry, and she was the best dog ever,” I told our younger son. “One day when you’re grown up, you’ll have a dog, too. And it will be so wonderful. You just can’t have one now.”

He was silent for a minute. I was mentally patting myself on the back for sharing my story of victory after years of waiting. Maybe, just maybe, he was seeing the virtue of waiting for what you really want.



Or...not. Because the next second he started in on it again—with more gusto, and greater hope now that he had heard that his Grandma had once relented.

“PLEASE can I have a dog? Please get me a dog? Please, please, please, please can I have a dog? Or at least rent one?”

Oh dear. I’m afraid this dog lover is in for a long wait. But it will be worth it in the end.

*The drawing at the top of this post is by my sister Treasa, who made it for me for a birthday card more than a few years ago...back before we had a dog ourselves.*