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THE DAY THE PUPPY GREW UP

It was a crisp, cool, January day, when a somewhat large German Shepard puppy came bursting out of a back porch door belonging to a friendly looking brick house. As soon as the puppy realized he was no longer safe and warm, he began to slow his pace down. He just sat huddled at the same back door he was so eager to run out just a few moments before, and whimpered and cried like a little baby. His mostly black body shivered recklessly, and his long, thin tail was wrapped around his body, as if to keep out the cold breeze.

Minutes later, he seemed to forget that he was cold and scared, and remembered what he had come outside to do. As he walked slowly to the back yard, he had to leap occasionally over mounds of drifted snow. He cautiously moved close to the house. It was as if the friendly house would protect him from this cold, scary place. He hadn't noticed the silence until now. Now that he was in the middle of the yard, he stopped to listen. The faint sounds of strange noises lingered around the yard. It was as if he had first discovered there was more beyond this yard. A small breeze began to blow, and his ears perked up to hear the low howling around the fence. It was a familiar sound, but it was louder than usual to him as he shivered, feeling the temperature dropping as he stood there. The air felt clean and easy to breath, as he stuck his nose up in the air and breathed deeply. It smelled of burning wood and pine needles from the neighbor's house. He looked around to see where these odors were coming from, but all he could see was lots of white, cold, wet stuff all over the yard. He put his head down close to this powder-like substance and sniffed it. Only, he took too large of a sniff, because he sneezed soon after from the wet sensation in his nose. He leaned way down again, but this time he didn't sniff it, he licked it. He backed away as he tried to chew it, only it was gone. How could this be? He looked back at it with a puzzled face. He tilted his head from side to side as if shaking the answer out of his head. He repeated his actions once more, only receiving a larger piece of snow. This piece had started to turn to ice. He crunched noisily as he turned his head as if to be rolling it

around in his mouth. It tasted like water when it melted on his hot tongue. Although, it wasn't good enough to go back for more just yet.

Just then, a fast flying object went over his head in a blue flash. He ducked and ran towards the back door, hoping someone from inside that warm, dry place would open it just in time to save him from this screeching creature. He listened carefully as he leaned his head toward the direction the bird had gone. He even turned his head so that his ear would be facing that same direction and he heard nothing. Maybe, it was coming after him. Or, maybe, it was just flying overhead. Feeling a little bit safer, but still very cautious, he walked back to the center of the yard. He began to look up, since that was where the danger seemed to be. After all, to him the fence was almost as tall as the sky, and the tree seemed to reach the clouds. Just then, a quick-snap and some crackling and rustling of tree branches, and then something fell to the ground in front of him. It was a piece of this huge rough black thing in front of him. The noise startled him. When the branch fell, he barked at it, inching closer and closer. It did not move or even bark back, so he leaned to sniff it. It smelled a little like the dirt he remembered was under this new white stuff. Although, it smelled kind of stale, he put it in his mouth anyway. It felt rough and tasted bitter, but it wasn't very heavy. It seemed as if he had overcome his fear of it, once he realized he could control it. It was like a new found friend. He carried it all over the yard, as if showing it around the place, almost losing it a couple of times when he hit snow deeper than he had expected. He had to keep his head stretched up as far as it would go.

He was acting very proud now, as he pranced around the yard. He went to the highest snow mound, and sat very still, as he scanned his property looking for unfamiliar objects. He just studied for minutes, as if seeing for the first time with both eyes open. He was perched up there like he was "king of the mountain".

The same back door that he practically fell out of before, now opened again and a high, soft voice called, "Shadow, are you done yet?" He seemed disappointed to be interrupted during such a triumphant time...