

Myta Sr. – the lion and the lamb

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MYTA WAS AN AMAZING WOLF. Visitors to our sanctuary often comment with surprise about how full of personality a wolf can be. Myta was not only full of personality, but possessed the full spectrum of character traits. To me, Myta was the most intense and powerful wolf of the sanctuary; however when he opened up to someone, his gentleness and tenderness was second to none. This is how I will always remember Myta, as the lion and the lamb of the sanctuary.

Myta was the father of what we affectionately called the “San Bernardino pack”, which included his mate Kuani and their pups Bart, Chai, Cricket, Jinkies, Myta Jr. and Spruce. As the name indicates, this privately owned pack was rescued by Wolf Haven Intl. from San Bernardino, California.

I first knew Myta as the “lion” a tall, powerful wolf who wasn’t afraid to let you know how he felt about you. I remember going out of my way to give Myta extra treats – I desperately wanted to be on Myta’s good side. My overtures thankfully weren’t in vain... well, at least he never told me to leave when I was around.

Sadly, at a relatively young age, Myta was diagnosed with *Spondylosis*, (a condition where vertebrae start to fuse together), which can result in movement difficulties and weakness. I remember being very nervous about this. “What if Myta needs help moving? What if he gets stuck somewhere? Will he let us help him?” At that point, I still only knew Myta as the lion. But as I found out, Myta had a side to him that I would have never guessed.

Eventually, Myta’s mobility declined and he began needing

assistance. It started with him getting stuck in a den, but progressed to the point that he even got stuck on inclines if he wasn’t positioned just right. Each time this occurred, we had to muzzle Myta to safely move him. At first, muzzling was difficult, but he seemed to quickly understand that we only wanted to help him. It wasn’t long before Myta willingly put his nose in the muzzle to allow us to work with him.

Then an interesting thing happened between Myta and me. One day, Myta’s rump was up against the shelter and he couldn’t get his back legs under him to get up. Like always, I grabbed the muzzle to put it on him. This day however, Myta resisted and wouldn’t let me put it on. He didn’t growl, just turned his head away. I remember asking him why he was suddenly being fussy with the muzzle. While he never directly responded to my question, looking back now, his message was clear. This was his way of telling me it was no longer needed. Myta trusted that we were only there to help him. Now he wanted us to trust him. That day, the muzzle was hung up in the office and Myta never needed to put it on again.

Myta’s kindness was shown not only to me, but to everyone. Toward the end of his life, Myta was the “lamb” of the sanctuary. Three years ago, if you were to tell me that I would be sitting next to Myta simply hanging out with him, I would have told you that you were crazy. I would have given anything to cure Myta of his spondylosis. But in a way, those health issues allowed me to get to know Myta closer and better than anyone else during my six years here.

You will be terribly missed, Myta. The sanctuary is already much different without you.