

## Paw-Print Notes

1<sup>st</sup> Place

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Grade 5 & 6

“Sit!” Molly yelled at her border collie, Sky. But she just stared up at her with big, brown, clueless eyes and wagged her tail. “Dumb dog,” Molly mumbled. It was useless. She had done everything she could all week to teach this dog one simple command, but the dog didn’t give her the time of day.

It was now 10:00 pm. Molly yawned and crept into bed. She was so frustrated with Sky that she couldn’t fall asleep. She had never liked Sky, from the moment her dad had brought the puppy home. Molly wanted a cat, not a dog.

What had her father told her to do when she was angry? Write it down on paper. Yes, that was it. Molly crawled out of bed and sat down at her desk. She scribbled down on a piece of paper these words:

*Why is Sky not listening? Why doesn’t she understand?*

Then Molly went back into her bed, put the note on the nightstand, and fell asleep. But a cool wind blew through the crack in the window, and the note floated down next to Sky’s bed.

The next day, Molly climbed out of bed and stepped on something that crackled. She bent down and picked it up. It was a note – to her. It said:

*Dear Molly,*

*I’m sorry that I made you mad, but I didn’t understand the command.*

*You see, my previous owner used hand signals. If you lift your right hand, I’ll sit.*

*Your dog,*

*Sky*

Molly stared at it in disbelief. Sky had written her back? It wasn’t possible. But there was the evidence, right in her hand.

Molly thought about it all day, and she got in trouble at school because she wasn't listening. When she got home, she went straight to Sky. She raised her shaky right hand. Sky sat.

That night Molly wrote a note that said this:

*Dear Sky,*

*What do you do during the day while I'm gone?*

*Your owner,*

*Molly*

She laid it down right next to Sky's bed and fell asleep. When she woke up, there was a new piece of paper. . . . Her eyes scanned the words:

*Dear Molly,*

*I usually roam the town, have a daily chat with the lab across the street, and stop by the butcher's shop to have some leftovers. Then I go back home. Every week the town dogs have a meeting to discuss certain things. Sometimes I'll chase a car, but that's only when I feel energetic.*

*Your dog,*

*Sky*

*P.S. Could you walk me soon? Then I wouldn't feel so energetic.*

Molly grabbed the leash and hooked it onto Sky's collar. She always knew Sky wanted to walk, but for some reason seeing it make her do it. She walked Sky and had a lot of fun.

Slowly Molly and Sky became closer. Molly wrote notes to Sky every night, and Sky always wrote back. They took daily walks and spent more than half the day together on weekends. Soon Molly loved dogs, but most of all, she loved Sky.

One cold, winter night, Molly had just written a note and gotten into her bed. In about fifteen minutes she was asleep. Five minutes later, the door creaked open and her dad stepped in. He tip-toed toward the sleeping dog and read the note. Then he stuck it in his pocket, wrote a response, and tip-toed out, closing the door behind him.

Molly never knew.