Many of you have read of our sweet Sadie Eleanor Louise in my columns in the past. On Sunday, we had to send our girl to the great beyond to wait for us.

She hadn't really been sick, she just had a nagging snotty nose that antibiotics couldn't take care of. On Saturday, blood started coming out of her nose and it wouldn't stop. After a frantic call to the vet, I calmed down a little. Her BFF Rudy and Jace, Amanda and Max were visiting and she seemed to be enjoying herself so I thought, hey, I'm more upset than she is so, I cooled it.

We had been warned of this troubling symptom and what it meant. So after our company left, I called her Auntie Anne and told her the too sad news. She came right over and sat with Sadie for a couple of hours. We petted her and talked to her and told her how beautiful she was and how much we loved her. After Anne left, I kept vigil the rest of the night.

When Sunday morning came, I knew it was time.

Sadie had been such a good and faithful companion. She was loving and gentle and just an all-around good dog. So, I stayed with her as she drifted off to sleep at the vet's office. I held her in my arms until her heart stopped beating. She deserved no less. She had never left me alone and I was not going to leave her.

I know not everyone looks at their pets the same way. A lot of rural residents are very matter-of-fact about their farm dogs and cats. We were big mushy marshmallows when it came to Sadie Lou. She was our girl. My husband and I were crushed. We had put our hearts and souls into Sadie. She was our "child." She went where we went, making many trips to visit friends and relatives in Michigan.

When we first got her, it didn't take her long to train us. She soon had us wrapped around her furry little paw and she ruled the Spencer household. And we were just fine with it. She had picked us, after all. She latched on to Jay's shoelace at the fuzzy puppy farm where we got her.

Sunday was a bad day. The house seemed so empty and reminders of our sweet girl were everywhere. Monday was no better. My heart was broken and I felt like it would never be the same. I wanted my girl back.

At that point, I think my husband would have given me just about anything I asked for. We could have had an alpaca in our backyard, that's how bad it was.

When he asked if I wanted to go look for another dog, my heart jumped and I said yes.

We decided we were looking for another refined, well-behaved girl. (Everyone knows girls rule and boys drool.)

We started at the dog warden's office in Lima and moved to the Allen County Humane Society. Both places had some nice-looking dogs but they were so much older, some half-way through their life span. That would have been too tough too soon.

As we ate lunch, we called the number for American Eskimo puppies we found in the newspaper. All they had left were males and we were set on another girl.

We drove over to the pet store by I-75 and there were oodles of puppies. Some were purebred and others mixed and not an ugly one in the bunch. We asked to see a Boxer girl and just to mix it up, a Boxer mix boy. The girl dog was very put out by the eager attention of the little guy. She would have climbed out of the box if she could have. Then the little male scrapper grabbed

at our shoelaces.
It was a sign for us and all it took. Sadie must have sent him to us, letting him in on the shoelace secret.
We had set out to find a nice, quiet female puppy and we came home with a rowdy, ornery boy.
We miss our girl terribly but there is no longer a 60-pound weight on my chest and a huge whole in my heart.
Puppy breath heals all.