



Barks N Bits

with our favorite
Jack Russel Terrier...

Bella
Loyal Ole' Duke

We've had an exciting month here at the Ranch with several babies already born and still more on the way. I'm learning which mammas will tolerate a dog nearby and which ones will try to squish me like a bug if I get close. I don't care much for the latter mares.

There has been one revelation made by your truly this month. I hate to admit it, but Duke - the neighbor dog that never went home - is really not such a bad guy. (Even though he slobbers and drools when he begs and he leaves ginormous "dukey piles" all over the yard....) I have witnessed a softer side of Ole' Duke that has left a lasting impression.

Let me share. The first baby that was born was witnessed by most of the people that live here. I was out in the barn looking for mice during the excitement, but Duke, he was engrossed in the miracle happening on the other side of the stall door. He was on the floor, as flat as he could make himself with his head as close to the door as he could get it....all to get a glimpse. He was hooked...in love....mesmerized....whatever you want to call it, but I think that he thought he had found his calling. He was now "Duke - Protector of the Baby Horses."

I would get a kick out of him trying to visit with them all. He learned real quick about the mares I mentioned before. He's a much bigger target

than me and almost got squished himself a few times. He witnessed a few more miracles and just like the first time, he would get as close as the people allow to get a peek.

One of the foals born was very weak and the people were spending a lot of time in the stall with him, several times a day and all night they were feeding the baby, trying to get the little guy up to walk and working with the vet to get him well. Each time they would enter the stall, Duke would follow and stay as close as he could. Sometimes the people would make him leave the stall and then he would just stand in the doorway, watching and whimpering. That would kind of get to me.

Unfortunately, the little foal just wasn't strong enough to stand and nurse and after about three days he gave up the fight and went on to horse heaven. (And yes, I believe there are horses - and dogs - in heaven.)

Duke took it very hard. The people had to leave the foal in the stall next to his mamma until they could make arrangements for his little body. Duke would not leave the foal's side. He stayed right there in the straw with his head sometimes resting on the foal's hind leg. He had us all tore up.....it was bad enough losing that foal, but then watching Duke's loyalty gave us all a peek at unconditional love and loyalty.

The only time Duke left the stall was when the people called for all of us dog's or someone pulled in he driveway....then right back to his post.

It was sad to watch them take the little fella away, but we all knew he was better off and Duke was satisfied that he had done his job well. And I have to say that I agree.

Until next month....
Stay loyal....

Bella 