

The Trap of Torture

It was a Friday afternoon when the phone call came through to ARK. A dog had been discovered caught in a trap. Few details were given so I found myself travelling towards Nishi Nose with Elizabeth Oliver not really knowing what to expect. We met up with the woman who had phoned and were shown to a steep grassy bank behind her house. There completely obscured from view lay a small brown dog. Her pointed face and slender frame reminded me of a fox. My gaze however was soon averted to her hideously swollen front foot, totally clamped in a rusted metal trap. Her eyes were clouded with pain and she lay motionless in the undergrowth. Even people fussing around did nothing to rouse her attention. Despite being little more than a puppy herself she was already a mother. All the pups except one had been picked up by the Hokensho. My initial meeting with Genevieve made me feel that luck really wasn't on her side.

Our first problem was how to free her foot. It was a leg hold trap, old fashioned and brutal. Two curved bands of metal had enclosed and partially severed the foot from either side. I slipped two leads around Genevieve's neck for security. Then Elizabeth attempted to part the two metal clamps which were sunk deep into the flesh. I tried desperately to hold onto the leads as Genevieve writhed around in what must have been unimaginable pain. Mercifully her foot was released and she hurled herself around madly. I was terrified she would struggle free but she didn't. Soon she was in a cage in the back of the jeep looking frightened and bewildered. An elderly woman who had been looking on, disappeared off into the bushes and returned with a small brown puppy no more than three weeks old. He was immediately reunited with his mother. For a moment her eyes showed recognition, before confusion and fear set in once more.

When we arrived back at ARK the extent of Genevieve's injury became apparent. Her left front foot was grotesquely swollen with a deep open gash across the front and back. She was immediately taken to the vet's, another traumatic but unavoidable ordeal for poor Genevieve. Her foot was treated and the staff gathered round in horror to view the barbaric trap. Her harrowing day finally came to an end when she returned to ARK with her puppy.

Over the next few days Genevieve's foot continued to worsen. What had started as a deep gash became a gaping hole, exposing bone and tendons. She also seemed to have lost sensation in the foot. Her puppy, now named Bart, could roll over onto it without causing any obvious discomfort to his mother. Nobody wanted to think of the worst but the awful question was looming, would Genevieve have to lose her foot?

It soon became apparent Genevieve would have to stay at the vet's for constant treatment. Everyone at ARK awaited eagerly for news. To start with there seemed to be no real improvement but finally the foot began to heal. Around this time Bart returned to ARK. He was a lively character, affectionate and charming.

Finally almost a month after my first meeting with Genevieve, she returned to ARK. It was really heartening to see her again. Her foot was nearly back to its normal size and the gaping hole was reduced to a line of scar tissue. She could walk with only a slight limp and although still timid, would greet people with bright eyes and a wagging tail.

Given time a faint scar across Genevieve's foot will probably be the only trace of all the distress and suffering that this young dog has had to endure.

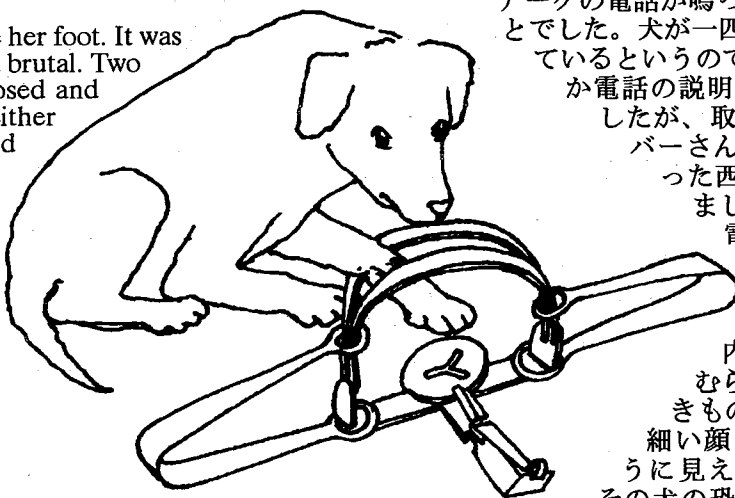
Genevieve however, will never forget and neither should we. Leg hold traps are barbaric and potentially lethal. They should have no place in any society. The use of inhumane traps should be stopped to try and prevent other animals or small children suffering as Genevieve has done.

Claire Jacob

Post script:

Genevieve has now found a wonderful home with the Hamaokas who are regular volunteers at ARK. They always bring her and Tetsu, another stray they adopted, when they come. Her foot has healed perfectly and only because we know her story can we detect a slight scar on her foot.

ジェネビーブ物語



アークの電話が鳴ったのは、金曜日の午後ことでした。犬が一匹わなにかかかって放置されているというのです。どのような状況なのか電話の説明では良くわかりませんが、取るものもとりにあえずオリバーさんと一緒に、その通報にあった西能勢の現場に向かっています。駆けつけた現場には電話の主の女性が一人立っていて、私たちを家の裏側にある草の生い茂った急勾配の土手へと案内してくれました。その草むらには小さな茶色の犬らしきものが見えました。その犬は、細い顔と痩せた体から、狐のように見えました。しかしすぐに、その犬の恐ろしく腫れ上がった前足を見て思わず目を反らしてしまいました。その足に錆びた鉄の罠が喰い込んでいます。犬の目は苦痛に曇り身じろぎせずじっと草むらに倒れています。その周りで私たちが騒いでいても一向に動こうとしません。その犬は小犬よりわずかに大きい程でしたがすでに母親だったのです。彼女の子供たちのうち一匹を除いてすべて保健所によって捕獲されてしまっていたのです。その母犬はのちにジェネビーブと呼ばれるのですが、私は彼女が神様から見放されたのだと思いました。

まず問題になったのは、どのようにして彼女の前足を罠から外すかということでした。その罠は足全体に噛みつく形のもので旧式ではあるが残忍なものなのです。さらにそれは二つの丸い帯金が両側から足をさみ込みその帯金の片方で、足を激しく傷つけるようになっているのです。わたしは、ジェネビーブが逃走しないように首に2本のリードを掛けました。オリバーさんは彼女の前足の肉に深く喰い込んだ帯金を外そうと試みるのですが、わたしは彼女の想像を絶する痛みにもだえのたうちまわるのを抑えるのに必死でした。しかし神様は彼女を見放さなかったのです。ようやく彼女の前足から罠は外れました。が、彼女は狂ったように、あたり構わず飛びかかってきました。彼女が自由になろうと必死にもがく様を見て恐ろしくさへありました。すぐに車の後ろのケージに入れられましたが、ひどく怯え興奮していました。電話を掛けてきたその女性は、近くの茂みの中に姿を消したかと思ったら生後三週間足らずの茶色の小犬を一匹抱いて出てきました。小犬はそこで再び母親に寄り添うことができたのです。一瞬ジェネビーブは自分の子供を認めましたが再び混乱し怯えだしました。

アークに戻るとジェネビーブの負傷がどれほどのものかが分かりました。彼女の左前足はグロテスクに腫れ上がり深い大きな傷口があいていました。私たちはすぐに獣医師のもとへ連れて行きましたが、そこでの治療はま