

# HOBBITON'S JAZZ, CGC, M.D.

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By Marilène P. Henry, PhD

**ON** May 6, 2011, I fell completely and irrevocably in love with a small, squirming, and very vocal bundle of black Schipperke fur. Said bundle, having been born on February 9 of the same year, was now ready to be removed from his siblings, none of which I could tell apart from the others. With her innate sense of match-making, the puppies' breeder, Mrs. Laura Gilbert, reached into the wriggling canine mass, scooped up one of the brood and deposited it in my lap. And, as I dug my face into his sweet-smelling, newly-washed puppy fur, I realized immediately that love at first sight was something much more than just an old, trite, and worn-out expression.

Admittedly, Mrs. Gilbert was taking a chance on me. I am a senior citizen who has been fortunate enough to be accepted by dogs all my life, yet who has never had a puppy. To prove to Laura that her faith in me was not unfounded, I swore then and there to myself that, as long as I was still alive, this puppy would enjoy all the happiness and love I could give him. As things turned out, these feelings were soon reciprocated.

Jazz the Sweet and Fearless Wonder Dog (sired by Ch Hobbiton's Chatelet Elijah and whelped by Hobbiton's Song of Sissel) passed Obedience 1 when he was six months old, earned his CGC on November 5, 2011, and finished Obedience 2 on May 4, 2013. In between, he took to Agility like a fish takes to water. Moreover, he became a Therapy Dog. And, after having introduced Jazz, this is where the story begins.

Jazz resides in Warrenton, VA, in the company of my husband, two mixed-breed SPCA rescues, a cockatiel, two former steeplechase horses, a donkey, two hens, a rooster, and myself. Warrenton is also home to a hospital and several nursing homes as well as to an assisted living community. For the last eleven years, I have taken one or both of my other dogs each week to the nursing facilities in the company of a dear friend, Ellen Hahn, and her Great Dane. When Jazz was a year old, I felt he had the maturity, sweetness of disposition, and inordinate patience needed to accompany me on these visits. I

also thought that the sight of a Schip accompanied by a Great Dane would make most anybody at least crack a smile.

Jazz has shown himself to be the star I know he is. Although he loves to be rolled in a wheelchair, from where he has direct access to a resident's bed, he is equally happy to be carried or to use his own four-legged means of transportation. He seems to know instinctively who is in dire need of his furry comfort and is accustomed to being cooed over, hugged, kissed, and having sweet nothings whispered in his pointed ears. After one hour of the many mutual tokens of affection, Jazz is exhausted and ready to hit the road and, shortly thereafter, the sack.

Two weeks ago, as Jazz and I were strolling down the corridors of one of the homes, we encountered a lovely, wheelchair-bound, lady whose left hand was paralyzed. She was returning from physical therapy where the hand had been massaged but, unfortunately, without much change in the paralysis. Having been told that this resident loves dogs passionately, I deposited Jazz in her lap, where he snuggled up against her chest. To the amazement of therapists and nurses alike, the lady slowly began stroking Jazz with her bad hand and continued to do so for a short while. I could hear the sound of jaws dropping all around us as well as expressions of amazement, disbelief, and pure joy at the unexpected improvement. From that moment on, my little friend has been known as Dr. Jazz.

There are some people who still believe that canines have no place among the ill, the depressed, the lonely, the lost, the forgetful, and the forgotten; I beg to differ. The case above is but one of the many examples of numerous confirmed healings that have occurred as a result of the ancient bond between man and his best friend. After all these years, I have become fully convinced that many people in need can be comforted by the warmth and unconditional love of exceptional dogs, and nothing will make me change my mind.

Thank you, dear Laura, for entrusting the little tyke to me. ✨