

Name:

The Most Beautiful Dog

THERE ONCE WAS A GIRL who had the world's most beautiful dog. Such beauty deserved a special name, so she called him Clarence, which means "shining, gentle, and bright." Every day she proudly walked Clarence to his favorite park, down his favorite streets.

Then one day, Clarence vanished. A door at home blew open, and being nosy, he crept outside. Frantic, the girl combed the streets. She searched every inch of the park. She almost gave up hope before she remembered the animal shelter. That's where people care for lost critters.

"Have you seen my Clarence?" she asked. "He is the most beautiful dog in the world."

The officer nodded. "I know just the one," he said, marching over to a Great Dane. The dog was squarely built, with powerful shoulders and a glossy coat. Very handsome, indeed. But the girl shook her head.

Next he showed her an important-looking poodle with woolly bracelets on his ankles and a pompom tail. Then came all sorts of other grand, lovely dogs. But none, it turns out, was as beautiful as Clarence. The girl grew very worried; her eyes filled with tears.

The only dog left was a sad creature with dull fur. He had old, crooked shoulders and clumsy feet. His head hung low, and his cheeks drooped pitifully, like violets in the rain.

Anyone could see he was not beautiful at all. When the girl laid eyes on this dreadful dog, she gasped.

The officer turned to comfort the girl. But when he looked down, she was gone.

She had not gone far. There she stood, next to the pitiful old dog. She took his gray, crooked shoulders and wrapped her arms around them.

"Thank you," she said to the officer. "Thank you for finding my dog." And she proudly walked Clarence home.

How did you imagine Clarence? Draw him here!