

A BLACK WOLF'S PASSING—IN LOVING MEMORY OF ARABY

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Wolf Haven mourns the passing of Araby, a beautiful black and silver wolf, in April 1997. She was a few weeks shy of her 13th birthday, a full and happy life which she spent entirely at Wolf Haven.

Araby was one of seven pups born to Princess Lilypad in the spring of 1984. She was a wonderful ambassador for her species, but being the omega pup of her litter was hard at times. Fortunately she found a wonderful companion in Onyx, another black wolf who came to us from Wolf Park, Indiana, and perfectly complemented her own ebony beauty. They made a very handsome couple, growing more and more silver with age and both sporting striking golden eyes that seemed to mirror each other's joy in life.

Though wolf pairs usually have a more dominant, or alpha, member, this function was shared between the couple, depending on the situation. Both Araby and Onyx were avid eaters, but Onyx always deferred to her when it came to food, be it their main meals of beef or morning treats of dog biscuits. Araby always got the first bite and—if Onyx wasn't fast or bold enough—the second, third, and fourth one too! But when it came to attention, it was Onyx, front and center. Unless there was more than one person at the enclosure, Araby had to wait her turn, a mandate that he enforced with growls and snaps if she came too close.

Overall, however, they were a very happy couple. Though Onyx was three years her junior, Araby played vigorously with him until very near the end. The pair's enclosure was located off the Wolf Haven tour; visitors to our weekend Howl-Ins got a chance to see them through the gates by the amphitheater, where they often led the howls during the evening.

In December 1996, Araby developed a swelling on her cheek, which later was diagnosed as a very aggressive form of cancer and inoperable because of its position on and around too many vital nerves and muscles. Many canids have been known to die within 48 hours of such a diagnosis, but Araby was made of sterner stuff. She continued to scamper, play, and display her usual voracious appetite for several more months. The cancer appeared to have gone into remission, with the tumor showing no further growth.

Although she did not indicate to us in any way that she was in pain or in the least inconvenienced by this tumor, it began to grow again at the end of February, partially obscuring her right eye. Despite some itching discomfort and the growing inability to chew hard food items, such as her beloved biscuits, Araby's spirits remained high. She gladly took her twice-daily medication (they were placed inside hot dogs, which she was happy to substitute for biscuits), and continued to beat Onyx to hunks of beef. If she was a little slower in her romps, she remained affectionate to her companion, though she did not go into season this winter.

Finally, at the beginning of April, she let us know that she had reached the end of her road and that it was time for us to let her go. She began to refuse food and spent most of her time sleeping. On April 5, she seemed a little better in the morning, enough to get some sweet goodbyes from Animal Care staff, but failed rapidly during the afternoon. Our vet determined there was nothing more to be done. She was orally sedated and then euthanized. She went very easily and gently, shedding the cloak of the body as though with relief to be free of its weight.

Onyx has mourned her but seems to be doing well otherwise. Animal Care staff is making sure to spend extra time with him during this transition. During the first weekend's Howl-In of the season, an eagle flew over the sanctuary, returned and circled Onyx's enclosure three times. Perhaps this was Araby's final message to her longtime companion and friend, and to all of her two-legged friends as well.

