



FOSTER  
SHUVA  
ALLEN

FOSTER WAS BORN ON JULY 21ST, 1996 ON THE  
SAME DAY AS DEBBIE'S BRIDAL SHOWER

When you miss your family pet so much it hurts...

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## Bagel

Our Foster was born on July 21<sup>st</sup>, 1996 on the same day as my wife, Debbie's bridal shower. She was born to a private breeder in Madison, Connecticut. Bonnie, Foster's Mom (AKC Godiva Isahoney) gave birth to eight chocolates (Labrador Retrievers). We were fortunate to have made plans with the breeder well in advance of the birth so we had the pick of the litter. Debbie and I drove to Madison to see the new-born puppies. After only two weeks, they all looked like little Beanie Babies to us. They were cute, little furry things, but they weren't distinctive enough for us to choose, so we chose not to choose at that time.

Debbie started law school a week before our wedding and between all the plans and preparations for our marriage and her schooling, we were unable to get back to Madison to make our selection. Since we had "first choice" and needed to make the decision, our friend, Stacey, who connected us with the breeder, drove out to Madison to bring back our dog. Stacey picked the dog that the breeder named "Bagel". Stacey said Bagel was the only pup trying to climb out of the whelping box as she was making her selection. She was feisty.

Stacey brought the dog back to her house in Spotswood, NJ. I remember the first meeting like it was yesterday. I pulled into her long driveway and parked close to the street. As I was walking toward her back yard, Stacey came around from the back of the house cradling Foster her in her arms with her head looking forward. I stopped in my tracks and looked at her. It was instant love. Only once before did I connect so deeply so quickly with another living thing. And I married her. It was exhilarating to watch Foster playing with her older friend, Cooper, Stacey's dog. Debbie and I were now dog owners!



I brought Foster home to meet Debbie. Neither of us had ever owned a pet. I once had a goldfish and fed it matzo instead of fish food. I thought everyone loved matzo. The fish, as it turned out, didn't live very long. Foster was going to be our test case. If we didn't kill the dog, then we were confident enough to have kids, we joked. We took our new responsibility very seriously being newly married, relatively young, and filled with energy and determination. Foster was just

starting life and Debbie and I were just starting our lives together.



*Foster with her mother, Bonnie*