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*It was a warm late spring day in 2011 when Tara first noticed a swelling on Lily's neck.*

Lily didn't eat that night, and she began to pace. Tara Prosser knew something was wrong. A discoloration grew in Lily's eye, and she began bumping into walls.

Monday morning, Tara awoke to find that Lily's condition was worse. She rushed her beloved friend to the local veterinarians, who were completely stumped by Lily's problem. They advised Tara to take Lily to the Oklahoma State University Veterinary Clinic in Stillwater, 180 miles away, as soon as possible.

Without her purse, extra clothes or money, a friend whisked Tara and Lily to OSU immediately. Lily was checked into the veterinary Intensive Care Unit (ICU). Tara camped out at a local hotel. As Lily's condition deteriorated, the doctors asked Tara not to visit, so as not to excite the dog.

Days crawled by. Tara lay awake at night waiting for the phone to ring with what she expected to be the inevitable bad news. She was losing her baby. Tara felt entirely helpless. Unable to visit and comfort Lily, unable to diagnose Lily's mystery illness, it was all she could do to bide her time and wait, as the veterinarians worked on her girl.

Lily was not just a dog to Tara. She was a member of the Prosser family. She was an extension of Tara herself, her trusted partner in rescues, her faithful companion at home. Tara couldn't fathom life without her Lily.

#### CHAPTER 4: Lily's Illness

Four days later, the vets were still unable to diagnose Lily's illness, and she showed no signs of improvement. The doctors suggested an experimental treatment as a last-ditch effort. Tara agreed to the treatment, hoping it would save Lily's life.

Miraculously, it worked!

After five days in the ICU, Tara took Lily home! She watched Lily regain her health. Every lick, every bounding step, every morning waking to Lily's blue eyes



became that much more precious. Tara had been so close to losing her dog, her partner, her champ.

Lily had led Tara down the road of this search and rescue (SAR) adventure, and she could never be replaced.

Lily eventually was diagnosed with Addison's Disease. Her adrenal gland did not produce the right amount of certain hormones for her body to function properly. The treatment for Addison's, as Tara and the veterinarians learned, involves monthly steroid injections.

One month after Lily's illness, Tara made plans to take her younger dog, Daisy, a green but enthusiastic pup, to a training weekend in Arkansas. As the day arrived, Tara couldn't bring herself to leave Lily at home. Lily had regained her old energy, yet Tara was cautious and

wanted to keep an eye on her. She took Lily along, thinking the dog would be happiest with her family.

Though Lily loved road trips with Tara and the Prosser clan, once they arrived in Arkansas, Lily wanted to participate in the training exercises rather than watch as Daisy and the other dogs performed.

Lily was born to be a SAR dog. She couldn't stand her newly acquired red shirt status. Watching Daisy train with Tara made Lily nuts. Everyone could see it. Jeff and friends encouraged Tara to let Lily try to work, to let the dog tell her if she was feeling well enough to train, if she was really ready. Tara finally conceded. She would let Lily give it a try.

That afternoon, during a training session, Lily found a single baby tooth in the middle of a wide, open field.

She was back in the game.

### Dig A Little Deeper!



Lily was diagnosed with Addison's Disease. Visit the following site to learn more about the disease: [addisondogs.com/addisons](http://addisondogs.com/addisons). Imagine you are Lily's vet and have a classmate pretend to be Tara. Explain Addison's Disease to Tara, answer her questions, and offer suggestions for Lily's care.

**In the News:** In this chapter, Lily overcame her illness. Find a news story with a person who had to overcome something. What obstacle did he have to overcome? How did he achieve it? Compare and contrast the news article to Lily's experience.

CCSS: R.CCR.1, R.CCR.2, R.CCR.3, R.CCR.4, R.CCR.5, R.CCR.7, W.CCR.4, SL.CCR.3, L.CCR.4