He blinked his eyes open, slowly lifting his head. He had no idea where he was, and next to no memory of how he got there. All that he remembered was a struggle, people yelling, and a loud bang. Everything after that was just a blur of light and noise. He struggled to get up, but his legs gave out from underneath him. Flopping back down onto the ground, he closed his eyes again and floated into a dreamless sleep.

*Bang!*
He was awoken by a loud noise, like a door slamming open. This turned out to be exactly what it was. In front of him stood a woman. She was tall and slender, with long black hair and green eyes. Behind her was a little girl. The woman took a step closer, and he cowered. After all, he didn't know if she was friend or foe.

*Clink.*

The little girl stepped out from behind the woman and placed a bowl of food in front of him, making a sort of sweeping gesture with her hands. Assuming this meant it was for him, he took a tentative step forward and began to eat. They both gave satisfied nods and left the room.

=======================================================================

Over time, the woman and her little girl, Cara, had become his family. There was also a man, 'Dad', who was built like a rugby player. Dad didn't seem to be all too fond of him. Every day in the mornings, his family would all get up and rush around the house, getting ready for something. Then Cara would give him breakfast, which he greatly appreciated.

But then they would leave, and he would be alone again. The first few times this happened, he had tried pushing the doorknob, hoping it would swing open and he would be free to go and look for them. Alas, it never did, so eventually he gave up trying. They always came back, so what did it matter if they were gone for a few hours everyday? He did wonder where they went.

He sat on the floor, examining some unidentified item he found lying around.
"Tom!"

A high - pitched shout came from the front door, and it was flung open to reveal Cara standing there. He had come to learn that Tom was his name, and ran over to her. She squealed in delight. The woman, whom Cara always called 'Mom', also stepped into the house. Cara abandoned the bag she wore on her back and went to her room. Tom wanted to follow, but he knew he wasn't allowed in there after the incident last time

Mom took off her jacket and ruffled Tom's hair.
"Hey, buddy."
She sighed, sitting down on the floor next to him.
"Had a long day at work today. My boss chewed me out. But at least you're still here."
He leaned into her side, offering silent comfort. She hugged him, standing up suddenly.
"You know what? How about we go on a walk? I think that'd be good for everyone."
Tom perked up. He enjoyed going on walks, as they were one of the only times he actually flexed his muscles and got out of the house. Mom smiled.
"Cara! We're going on a walk now!"
"Coming, Mom!"
She soon reappeared, and they all walked out the door together.

By the time they got home, Dad was back. He was standing in the living room, and opened his arms when he saw them
"Dad!"
Cara yelled, going to hug him. Tom sniffed, his nose picking up the scent of something tasty. Dad had obviously been cooking. He jumped up in excitement as Cara set the table, getting out a bowl for him and placing it next to her chair. Dad didn't like it when Tom lounged at the table. That was fine. He liked sitting on the floor, anyway. His legs were more comfortable.

========================================================================

Because of the accident, Tom's bones weren't what they used to be. He could no longer walk ahead when they went on family walks, or jump up to meet Mom and Cara when they came home each day. Sometimes the pain in his legs was so bad he lay down all day, feeling like fire was shooting up his veins. One night he woke up to Mom and Dad having a hushed conversation.
"It will be best for him, Lindsay. He's in pain. You and I can both see that."
"He's fine! Plus, it would crush Cara. You know how much she loves him. He's her brother."

"But he's not."
"Mom? Dad?"
They both stopped their conversation, and Mom turned her head to where Cara was standing.
"What are you talking about? Is it Tom? Is he sick?"
She said in a small voice. Mom and Dad exchanged a look.
"No, darling. Tom is fine. And you're supposed to be asleep!"
Dad led her back to her bedroom to put her to sleep, and Tom closed his eyes as well, but sleep didn't come easily.

========================================================================

Cara was older now, but she still clung onto Tom as she rode in the backseat of the car, sobbing. They never rode in the car unless it was something important, so Tom was worried.
"Why does he have to go? He's fine!"
She cried. Mom gave her a sad look from the front seat.
"Tom's not fine, honey. He'll be happier this way. It's been going on too long"
"But I love him!"
"I do too. But it has to be this way."
The car came to a stop, and they all exited and walked into a small white building with glaring lights.

Mom gently picked Tom up, placing him onto a cold surface and giving him a fierce hug. When she let go, there were tears in her eyes.
"I'm gonna miss you, buddy. It'll all be ok, alright?"
Dad hugged him as well, which was a surprise. Dad never showed any affection towards him. Cara was the last one to hug him. She was still holding on, her body shaking with sobs, when a woman with a long needle in her hand walked into the room.
"Said your goodbyes?"
She asked. Everyone nodded. Tom was still confused, and then there was a sharp pain in his left leg, his eyes closed, and everything became very calm. No pain. Peace.

========================================================================

Dad stepped back from the grave they had dug. Cara came up with a big rock, and placed it on top of the dirt. The words scribbled onto its surface read: 'In memory of Tom, a loyal dog and bestest boy in the world. My brother.'