



Between the bars

-by Marjorie Davis

A constant stressful cry gradually penetrated into Rod's deep sleep. He raised his head, listening as the cries continued. "What is that? An animal? Never heard one like that before. Better check it out," he mumbled to himself. Grabbing his flashlight, never thinking of slippers or robe, Rod staggered out into the night.



Following the sound he soon located the source. A tiny fawn had become wedged tightly between the bars of a wrought-iron gate that protected nothing and went nowhere. This was a junkyard. The gate was attached to a small portion of fence that served no purpose. On display, waiting to be sold.

Apple trees on his property attracted the resident deer who were welcome on the land and traveled through daily to help themselves to the succulent fruit.

The doe stood watching helplessly nearby. Caught between the abdomen and ribs, the fawn struggled in vain and cried out in pain and terror. She could move neither back, nor forward. The man, too, was helpless. He didn't know how to release the writhing fawn from between the bars.

Early morning found Rod, and his partner, Tom, wondering if they should attempt to saw the bars loose with a power saw. They hesitated, afraid to hurt her even more, or that the shock might kill her. Tom made several calls around town "only to find out that no one would mess with deer." He finally located Fawn Rescue. The situation was serious and called for immediate action.





Each year we receive many such calls and have rescued a number of adult deer from these treacherous wrought-iron fences and gates. This need not happen. Place the vertical bars closer together. Insert horizontal bars into the design, low enough to prevent hungry wildlife from attempting to push through to tempting grape vines, flower beds, gardens, fruit trees and water, saving both your landscape and their lives.

This was the first call we had ever received for a fawn caught in this situation. About three months old, she had grown just large enough to be unable to slip completely through the bars. Perhaps at an earlier age she had gone through these very bars without trouble?

When I reached the fawn, she hung limp. She had given up after a night of calling out in terror and scraping her sides raw in her struggle to pull free. She screamed as she heard me coming near. She used her last bit of strength to try to save herself from further danger. I quickly placed my hand on the back of her neck and pushed downward.

She stopped moving at once, quieted, which is what a wild animal will do when caught by a predator. She instinctively understood this skill of survival. A wild predator will kill to eat, but a dog will lose interest and move on when the animal no longer struggles. I injected the little doe with a very small amount of tranquilizer. She relaxed within seconds.

Rod held her small, limp body upright which made it simple for me to squeeze her ribs and slip her body through the bars. A topical antibiotic was all that was needed to cover the abrasions.

Rob carried the fawn to a spot under a grove of oaks, near where her mother watched anxiously. "Don't go near," I cautioned both men. "There is no need to check. She will sleep for several hours. If you keep disturbing her, the doe can't get back to be with her baby when she awakes. Leave them alone to work it out. Check tonight and she will be gone." She was.