



'Friendly' family dog attacks girl in house

By Sharika Regchang

A 4-year-old girl was mauled by a German Shepherd in the Athlone home of her grandmother's employers on Tuesday.

The dog then attacked her grandmother when she went to the girl's rescue.

The girl, Amahle Duma, was bitten on her thighs, buttocks and back. Her grandmother, Irene Duma, sustained injuries to her thighs and buttocks when she tried to pull Amahle from the dog's grip.

Speaking from Northdale Hospital, where the child and grandmother were taken for medical attention, the shaken Duma said she had taken her grandchild with her to work on Tuesday.

When she took the washing outside to hang it on the line, she left the house door open.

She said that the dog went into the house and grabbed her granddaughter, dragging her out of the house.

"The dog would not let go and was tearing her clothes," said the shaken Duma, adding that the dog had attacked her.

Duma said she could not understand the dog's actions.

"Maybe the dog was jealous," she said.

Duma, who lives in Sweetwaters, said she had been working for her employer for 17 years. She had known the dog for two years and the dog had never attacked her.

Duma said that she had previously taken Amahle to work and the dog knew the child as well.

The child's mother, Thembelihle Duma, said her daughter loved animals and that they had several dogs at their home. She said that her child had never before been attacked by an animal.

The grandmother and child received medical attention and were discharged on Tuesday afternoon.

The SPCA's Senior Inspector, Daniel Stewart, who attended the scene, said the German Shepherd had been running around when he got to the scene.

"The paramedics had arrived and were with the grandmother and child," he said. Stewart said he had approached the dog.

"The dog was scared and licked my hand," he said, adding that it was not aggressive towards him.

Steward said that he believed it was the child's first visit to the house and she had screamed when she saw the dog, prompting the animal to attack.

"The incident was very sad. However, I don't believe the dog should be euthanased, as it is not aggressive," said Stewart.

The Mercury could not reach the owner of the dog for comment.

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