
Lost Souls: FOUND!™

Inspiring Stories About Chihuahuas

Kyla Duffy and Lowrey Mumford



Published by Happy Tails Books™, LLC

Happy Tails Books™ (HTB) uses the power of storytelling to effect positive changes in the lives of animals in need. The joy, hope, and (occasional) chaos these stories describe will make you laugh and cry, as you *embark* on a journey with these authors who are guardians and/or fosters of adopted dogs. “Reading for Rescue” with HTB not only brings further awareness to rescue efforts and breed characteristics, but each sale also results in a financial contribution to dog rescue groups.

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Publishers Cataloging In Publication

Lost Souls: Found!™ Inspiring Stories About Chihuahuas/ [Compiled and edited by] Kyla Duffy and Lowrey Mumford.

p. ; cm.

ISBN: 978-0-9824895-8-1

1. Chihuahuas. 2. Dog rescue. 3. Dogs – Anecdotes. 4. Animal welfare – United States. 5. Human-animal relationships – Anecdotes. I. Duffy, Kyla. II. Mumford, Lowrey. III. Title.

SF426.5 2010

636.76 2010902771

Happy Tails Books appreciates all of the contributors and rescue groups whose thought-provoking stories make this book come to life. We’d like to send a special thanks to:

Arizona Chihuahua Rescue

<http://www.azchihuahuarescue.org/>



Chihuahua Rescue and Referral

<http://www.chihuahuarescueandreferral.com/>



Chihuahua Rescue of Georgia

<http://www.chihuahuarescuega.com/>

Upstate Chihuahua Rescue

<http://www.petfinder.com/shelters/SC142.html>



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Not Your Average Old Man



I'd been affiliated with the SPCA as their Chihuahua rescue contact for 14 years, and they usually called me regarding their most serious cases. One day, when my husband and I were hard at work in our home office, a call came in: “We’ve just seized a 19-year-old, severely abused Chihuahua-mix. He’ll need specialized care that we can’t provide. Can you help?”

Of course, I dropped everything, grabbed one of the many dog crates adorning every corner of our house, and flew

out the door with the usual parting words to my husband: “Don’t worry, we won’t adopt him!”

I didn’t even make it to my truck before I paused and thought, “Who am I kidding? *Of course*, we’ll adopt him! Who’s going to take on a 19-year-old dog?” I later found out that my husband was laughing as I left—he’s been my partner in rescue for too long not to know exactly what was about to happen.

I arrived at the shelter to find that “severely abused” was an enormous understatement. One of the workers hurried me into a back room where I was handed a limp, soggy skeleton covered with gray fur and wrapped in a towel. “His name is Ringo, and we had to bathe him. He was filthy and crawling with fleas,” the employee whispered. At the sound of her voice, he weakly raised his head, and I felt the feeble wagging of his tail through the towel.

Ringo ended up at the shelter after a neighbor of his abusive family had called the SPCA about ongoing neglect. The investigator pulled up just in time to see the apparent “man of the house” boot Ringo out the front door and down the stairs, where an elderly woman sitting in the front yard then began punching him in the head. They agreed to surrender Ringo in return for no charges being filed (yes, you read that right).

Ringo was too weak to walk more than three or four steps without falling over, so my husband and I lined the entire floor of our office with fabric pee-pads. We set up a crate with clean, soft bedding and provided fresh water and warm, mushy food, which had to be given by oral syringe. We spent most of our days in the office, and I stayed with Ringo at night, camped out on the floor.

By the third morning, he showed no improvement, and in fact, I believed he was dying. I took the first vet appointment I could get after the weekend, which happened to be at a small satellite clinic owned by our major veterinary hospital. Dr. Marnie took one look at Ringo, told the receptionist to cancel or postpone appointments for the rest of the day, and we raced him to the main hospital where he was placed on subcutaneous fluids.

He was diagnosed with mid-stage renal (kidney) failure and some cardiac issues, but to our amazement, Ringo rallied! Dr. Marnie did some on-the-spot research and devised a homemade recipe for renal failure (much more effective and quick-acting than commercial diets) and loaded me up with vitamins and supplements, free of charge.

Within a few days, Ringo was tottering around on shaky legs, and we soon re-named him Tim, in honor of the great comedian, Tim Conway, and his old man impression from the *Carol Burnett Show*. Not only was Tim starved nearly to death, his hips and back were misaligned from repeated kicks. It’s a miracle he survived the beatings, though we later found out that Ringo’s main abuser was his owner’s boyfriend. We can only hope he didn’t suffer for his entire 19 years.

We were blessed with Tim for 6½ months, during which time his eyes went from dull and expressionless to lighting up the room when he saw us. He spent hours ambling around the house, and every time he’d pass a full-length mirror he would stop, stare at himself, and preen, as if to say, “What a *fine*-looking boy I am!” His thin, dry coat was replaced by a soft, thick, luxurious one, and his ribs disappeared under a healthy layer of muscle, tissue, and fat. When his eyes finally did become too sensitive to the bright sun, we simply bought him a pair of Doggles (doggie sunglasses), which he sported as though he were Joe Cool.

Tim’s veterinary issues eventually caught up with him, and he began having seizures. We were faced with the agonizing choice of letting him go while he still had some

quality of life or prolonging the inevitable and putting him through more seizures, injections, etc. Reluctantly we said good-bye to our beloved Tim. He was heavily sedated and peacefully breathed his last breath, while the vet, receptionist, my husband, and I quietly sobbed, hugged each other, and wrapped him in his favorite blanky, in which he would be cremated before being returned to us.

Tim Conway's character had a comic inability to get jobs done, which wasn't the case with our Tim. He successfully completed the task of showing us how to rise above abuse and neglect to go on loving those who love us back, and for that he deserves a standing ovation. What we learned from our short time together will remain in our hearts for our lifetimes.

Pat Weir

Priceless



I was living in Concordia, Kansas, still involved in rescue work, when I viewed an email about a Chihuahua born from a breeder, who had been surrendered to an animal shelter. The breeder didn't want this baby *because she was born with only three legs*, which seemed so cold and heartless and really bothered me.

The puppy, Foxy, was being held in Biloxi, Mississippi—over a 1000 miles from me. For three days I kept up on news about her to see if anyone would adopt her. No one did, and so

she was looking death in the face (via euthanization). With time running out, I called the shelter and asked them to put a hold on her for me, telling them I would be there within 24 hours.

I left Kansas, heading for Mississippi in a 37-foot motor home, burned lots of gas, and arrived at the shelter the next day. I scooped Foxy up, and within 20 minutes we were on our way back to Kansas.

Foxy weighs about four pounds and can run and jump just as well as (if not better than) all of my four-leggers. Seeing her happy was completely worth the drive.

-Total distance: **2183 miles.**

-Gas: **\$650.00.**

-Going to bed each night with Foxy rubbing her face across mine: **Priceless.**

Chester Burns

A Little Love

Size Is Only Skin Deep: As a volunteer with Yankee Chihuahua Rescue and Adoption, I was called to evaluate and foster a Chihuahua named Weetzie. She was very large, not housebroken, and feared people, so I never thought I would find her a suitable home. I managed to housebreak her and finally did receive an application from a potentially appropriate family, but I still thought they wouldn't want her after meeting this giant dog in person. My fears were laid to rest when they became immediately enamored with her, and Weetzie loved them right back. The family was able to look beyond her size and see the beautiful, giant heart that resided within. *-Janie O'Halloran*

Cat's Best Friend: We thought Bella, our anti-social cat, needed a doggie friend to help her come out of her shell, so we invited 4-year-old foster dog, Max, over one night. It was an experiment to say the least, but Max immediately captivated Bella with his aloofness. His sweet, innocent, affection then won us all over, so Max never left. Our dog and cat are now best friends, always chasing each other around the house. Sometimes Bella stalks Max, suddenly pouncing on him when he's least expecting it, which incites another wonderful round of play. Max's presence in Bella's life has made her much happier and friendlier to people and animals alike—a magical transformation. *-Sabrina Wilkerson & Jonathan Edmett*

Spoiled and Sweet



At six months of age, Candy became homeless when her family had to move in with relatives to afford care for their ill child. My sister-in-law, a cat rescuer, heard of the situation and agreed to find Candy a home. She circulated Candy’s information, and after taking one look at Candy, my sister-in-law’s mother was in love.

Candy and Mom got along great, and Mom never demanded anything at all of Candy, whom Mom said was impossible not to love. Candy could have whatever she wanted,

including coffee in the morning and chocolate (eek!), too. She ate spaghetti and any people food she fancied, rarely even acknowledging her dog food.

Once Candy came on the scene, she was the focal point of attention whenever we visited Mom. She danced around, playing with us and with her toys and bones. If Candy wanted something, she would whine until Mom figured out what it was and gave it to her.

When Mom died five years later, Candy became our dog. At the time I had only had cats in my adult life and didn't share Mom's view about Candy's being impossible not to love. Nevertheless, I sat down on the floor with Candy and asked her if, even though we weren't crazy about each other, we could make the best of our situation. I got the impression that Candy agreed to meet me halfway.

Candy had never before worn a collar or harness nor had she walked on a leash. We had to slowly get her used to all of these things. She learned a few commands but was unreliable at best, and although she liked bacon-flavored dog treats, she wasn't particularly food motivated.

Candy expected me to protect her from any threat. I didn't understand how truly threatened she was until the day a

Rottweiler came into the yard, and despite my effort to mace him, he chased poor Candy in a circle around me. The man accompanying the Rottweiler finally called the dog off, but the incident opened my eyes to how easily Candy could be killed. Eventually we moved to a house with a larger, fenced-in yard, but we never left Candy outside alone for more than a couple of minutes for fear that a hawk might attack her. Plus, she sometimes chased squirrels, which only half-heartedly ran up a tree to accommodate her.

We tried visiting people in a convalescent home but had to stop because Candy was too delicate for some people's inadvertently heavy touch. At five pounds, ordinary things were often threats to Candy, so I hand-sewed a cotton cloth pouch and put egg-crate foam and cardboard wrapped in a towel at the bottom. After introducing it to her with her favorite treats, Candy seemed to like it because she was up where she could see what was going on. I carried her around in it for years, of course, walking her and giving her water often. It was sweet to see her sometimes doze-off in her pouch.

Candy had a twinkle in her eye and a spring in her step. She delighted in stealing any tools my husband might put on the floor temporarily while making a repair or working on a

project. When he would protest, she would return the screwdriver or whatever she had stolen and hidden under the bed.

She was truly a dog with a mind of her own. For example, when the vet wanted her to take some type of pill for a couple of weeks, Candy disagreed. Neither I nor the vet's assistants could make her take it, so I ended up bringing her in for an injection every day for the duration.

Although Candy was spoiled and pampered, she had a nice disposition. She didn't ever bite, but she would whine until she got what she wanted. Only one time, when a stranger approached our car, did Candy ever snap at anyone. She didn't know he had no hostile intent. He jumped back, but that didn't keep me from laughing. For all the protecting I did for her, I was glad to see she had a protective instinct for me, too.

At the age of 15, when Candy had had enough of various heart medications, she stopped eating and drinking. She had always done as she pleased, and I wasn't going to change that now. She didn't appear to be in any pain and seemed content, and a few days later she died while sleeping on my chest, after first sniffing to make sure I was there.

It’s now years later, and I still miss her. It turned out that Candy, our perfect, little princess Chihuahua, *was* impossible not to love.

Sarah Qualman

She Was My Bug From the Start



It was a cool, wet day when I was called out on another run to pick up a dog. I was working for Greenfield/Hancock Animal Control as a control officer, and as usual, I hadn't been told anything about this dog. I assumed it would be large, as most strays are, but when I arrived at the address I was given and looked around, I didn't see any dogs. It wasn't until I got out of my truck and heard a little, angry bark, that I was convinced a dog was even nearby. I followed the noise and

came upon a small, muddy, sopping wet dog, tied to the door handle of a car with a large, heavy rope.

I untied her and looped a small slip lead around the fawn-colored dog's neck. She looked at me sadly with big, buggy eyes and licked my face as I dried her with a towel. Like I had so many times before, I lost my heart to this dog, and of course, she rode on the front seat with me instead of in one of the kennel compartments in the back. Upon returning to the department, she hung out in my office as she was booked into the kennel.

This little girl looked so much like my first dog, which I had bought years ago on my 8th birthday from a small kennel in my town in Florida. When we moved back to Indiana, we brought her with us, but she was stolen out of my Aunt's backyard. We looked high and low and advertised her everywhere, but we were never able to get her back. So needless to say, it did not take long for this new dog to wiggle her way into my heart.

The weekend came and no one had claimed her, so I took her home with me. In addition to my animal control job, I have my own boarding kennel and rescue, so finding space for her was no problem. She was so small and cute compared to

my other dogs, and her eyes were kind of buggy, so she became Skeeter Bug. I quickly found her to be my essential companion for a good night’s rest, so I decided to adopt her.

I walked into work on Monday with a smile on my face, but after hearing my announcement, my supervisor (at the time) did not support my decision, stating that I already had too many big dogs. Even though my dogs got along with Skeeter Bug just fine, I let her talk me into interviewing other interested adopters. With her pushing, we found a lady and her daughter we thought would be a good fit, and my little girl was suddenly taken away.

Before the day was over, I found myself sick with grief because I missed Skeeter Bug so much. The next day, when I called to check on her, the people said they thought she was sick or maybe grieving because she would not eat. They asked if they could bring her back, but I said no—I’d be right over to pick her up!

My dog was as happy to see me as I was to see her, and she has been my best friend for five years and counting. This Chihuahua/Pug mix is as cute as a button, and of course, she rules the roost.

Stella Koch

Some Good Years



A four-pound Chihuahua-mix is picked up by the dog catcher at the ripe age of 15 or 16. She's suffering from demodectic mange, a hernia, and has so few teeth that her tongue lolls out the side of her tiny mouth. Our wonderful San Diego Humane Society routinely visits the pound when they have extra kennel space, and today is this old lady's lucky day.

One of the shelter employees names her Esmerelda, and it sticks. Being too tiny and fragile for a kennel, she spends her days in a cat cage and her nights in the home of a big-hearted

employee. Two months of trips to the doggie dermatologist and hernia surgeon fly by, and Esmerelda is finally ready for adoption.

Being in the animal rescue field has its privileges, and one is that I can meet Ezzie before she’s officially advertised for adoption. Many (make that *most*) people call me crazy, and even my vet gives me his “What are you thinking?” look, but it’s love at first sight, and Ezzie is coming home with me. My reasoning is that if the San Diego Humane Society can be crazy enough to save her, the least I can do is make what is left of her golden years as happy as possible.

She has knee problems, which are typical for Chihuahuas, but is too old for corrective surgery. So when Ezzie is motivated to go faster than a trot, she holds up one back leg and her rear end bounces up and down like a pogo stick. Her “happy shake” sends her back feet right out from under her if she is standing on the tile floor.

Murphy’s Law sets in: I get her to reliably respond to verbal commands and then realize she is going deaf. No problem—she learns hand signals easily. We enjoy many long walks, trips to the beach, and meals at her favorite restaurants, where she always attracts attention.

We have five amazing years together, and I never regret my decision to adopt an ancient, geriatric mutt. I sometimes find myself wondering what her life was like before we met, and though I don't like to think about her pain and suffering, I'm happy I could give her some good years.

I hope Esmerelda's story inspires those looking for a pet to consider adopting an elderly or special needs dog. Nobody with such enormous amounts of love to give deserves to spend her last years in a shelter.

Geri Allison

About Happy Tails Books™

Happy Tails Books™ was created to help support animal rescue efforts by showcasing the love, happiness, and joy adopted dogs have to offer. With the help of animal rescue groups, stories are submitted by people who have adopted dogs, and then Happy Tails Books™ compiles them into breed-specific books. These books serve not only to entertain, but also to educate readers about dog adoption and the characteristics of each specific type of dog. Happy Tails Books™ donates a significant portion of proceeds back to the rescue groups who help gather stories for the books.



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