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## **Lost Souls: FOUND!™**

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*Inspiring Stories About German Shepherd Dogs*

**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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**Hot Water Rescue**

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

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## Inspiring Stories About German Shepherd Dogs



“He is your friend, your partner, your defender, your dog. You are his life, his love, his leader.

He will be yours, faithful and true, to the last beat of his heart. You owe it to him to be worthy of such devotion.”

*Anonymous*

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## Giving It All to Chance

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When we lost our beloved Brandy we desperately needed to hear the sound of four paws in our house once again, so we adopted Chance, and from the start our baby was off and running. After all, he was only seven weeks old! We attempted to confine him to the kitchen with a kiddie gate, but that didn't work. He climbed the gate and landed on the other side with a

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loud "kerplunk." (I swear he was giggling!) Another gate placed on top of the first one finally solved the problem.

To potty train Chance we put newspapers in front of the kitchen French doors, and he caught on right away. However, once the papers were soiled from end to end he would bark to let us know he needed clean papers. This usually occurred around 3am. Having Chance was like having a baby, and we each took turns getting up during the "wee" hours of the morning. Oh my, the red and swollen eyes!

We planned on remodeling the kitchen later in the year, but when Chance got wind of the idea, he thought he would try to save us some money. He ripped up sections of the linoleum floor, bit off big chunks of the windowsill, and ate the cabinet corners. I told him the remodeling plan was down the road, but he continued trying to help—like the one Saturday he chewed a big chunk of the sheetrock out of the kitchen wall while we were still sleeping. Our clue to his early morning antics was the white chalk all over his face and mouth, making him look like a mad dog. The stern talking to we gave him didn't do much good; shortly thereafter he went right back to his remodeling. A

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TV tray in front of the hole finally ended Chance's mad dog exploits.

To say Chance was spoiled is an understatement. He was the only doggie in the neighborhood with his own kiddie pool, which he wouldn't get in! In fact, he would have preferred we return the thing to Wal-Mart, until one day his buddy, Jake, came over and hopped right in. Suddenly Chance wanted in, too, but it wasn't big enough for both of them! Jake told Chance, "I'm not moving kid. You've got to wait your turn." But from that day forward, Chance thought that pool was the best thing ever.

Chance wasn't interested in lying on the floor. Any time we would tell Chance to have a seat, he would find a chair, sofa, or recliner, and that's where he would sit. Instead of moving him off the furniture we got him his own La-Z-Boy. Actually he took my husband, Drew's, so we bought Drew a new one. I had my sofa, Chance had his recliner next to me, and Daddy Drew had his recliner on the other side of Chance's.

There was just one problem with the new seating arrangement: Now Drew didn't have a lamp. Since Chance had

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never requested a newspaper or other reading material, he didn't need a light, so it only made sense to rearrange the recliners. Well, when Chance came in and observed the new recliner placement, he didn't think much of it. He tried getting into Drew's recliner and was shooed away, so he went back to the bedroom to pout. Can you believe he would not return to the den until we had moved the recliners back?

After dinner Chance's favorite treat was "Frosty Paws" doggie ice cream cups, especially in the summer. He would sit in his bed, hold the cup between his front paws, close his eyes, and lick himself into oblivion. If a burglar had broken into the house during "Frosty Paws" time, Chance would have just told him to take what he wanted; life was too heavenly to care!

The amount we spoiled Chance was only matched by the amount of love he had to give. When Chance's grandmother (my mother) suffered a stroke, she came to live with us for the last nine months of her life. Her semi-catatonic condition was precarious, and Chance, her favorite, wanted her to come back so badly each time she was taken to the ER. The last time the ambulance returned her to our home, I let Chance see her after

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I got her settled in. I put down one bedrail, and he put both paws up on the side of the bed, stretched his neck, kissed her on each cheek, and then planted a big, sloppy kiss directly on her lips! He just wanted to let her know he was there and that he was going to make sure I took good care of her.

My baby, Chance, crossed over the Rainbow Bridge at the exact age of 13, but as you can tell, Chance was and is a very special part of my life. Singer Shania Twain said, "It's important to give it all you have while you have the *chance*." She may not have meant our Chance, but she nailed it—we gave him our all, and he gave it right back. He filled the void left by the death of my heart dog, Brandy, and always kept us on our toes. -*Diane Ferguson*

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## Hurricane Heartbreak

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Hurricane Katrina: Those two words still evoke sadness and disbelief in the American people. Animal lovers were further depressed at the overwhelming suffering endured by untold numbers of animals along the Gulf Coast. Even though I made two trips south to volunteer in the temporary shelters, my husband and I felt the need to do more; donations of money and time simply did not seem to be enough. Additionally, we

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were still suffering from the loss of one of our adopted German Shepherd Dogs who had recently died at the advanced age of fifteen. So I started looking on Petfinder.com to see if there was a German Shepherd Dog who needed a post-Katrina home. Because our two surviving dogs were both old males, we were looking for a senior female.

I kept coming back to the North Louisiana German Shepherd Rescue website which had an eight-year-old, female, Katrina rescue named Prissy. However, she needed to be placed with her older male companion, Foto, and we did not feel another male would be a good addition to our family. Then one day I saw a notice that the old male had succumbed to the physical damage he had suffered in the long aftermath of the hurricane. Sad as it is, Foto's passing opened up the possibility for us to give Prissy a happy home.

Prissy had lived with three other German Shepherd Dog companions in New Orleans. When the levees broke, two of the dogs drowned, but Prissy and Foto were able to swim to a balcony. Nevertheless, this safety was an illusion. When the waters receded, the dogs became trapped on the balcony for

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almost three weeks before being rescued and reunited with their guardian. But their guardian no longer had a home and had no choice but to surrender the dogs to a rescue organization. I can only imagine how difficult that decision must have been as she had already lost everything, but I am grateful she loved her dogs enough to put their needs first.

When I met Prissy I was impressed by her soft, almost ashy coloring and her prominent Roman nose, which was so similar to our dog who had recently died. Her ears were a surprise as the tips had been eaten away by flies, but this only added to her character. Prissy apparently liked what she saw also, as she came directly to me and lay down for tummy rubs. She was obviously confused about loading into an unfamiliar car with a stranger and driving for several hours, but she took it all in stride—it was just one more upheaval in her life.

And so, Prissy joined our pack in Tennessee. The boys accepted her immediately, and she easily took to the slow pastoral life, navigating the dog door and exploring the woods. She protected her stuffed toys by burying them deep under bushes, with just the tip of an ear or a nose exposed so that she

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could pull them out when she wanted them. She snuggled with her new brothers and politely offered humans a paw in exchange for a pat. She had her issues, of course; she was afraid to go outside in the dark and barked frantically at storms with high winds. The thunder which had worried almost every other German Shepherd Dog with whom we have ever lived was not an issue for Prissy, but blowing rain and wind—that was another story. She even reacted adversely to a TV documentary about Hurricane Katrina so that I had to mute the sound when the hurricane winds were blowing. But these fears gradually abated, and Prissy began to look to her new brothers to determine what was really dangerous in her strange new world, such as dinner being late or a toy being lost.

Prissy also came to us with very weak hips and muscle deterioration in her rear legs. She tottered along with the other old dogs and loved lying in the grass in the warm sun, occasionally giving the squirrels a warning bark about the danger awaiting them if they dared descend from the trees. She was a vibrant presence in our lives for just over a year, and then the spark began fading from all the old dogs. One by one, with very little time between their going, they passed on, finally

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leaving Prissy on her own. Just two weeks after the second dog's death, we awoke to find Prissy trying to crawl to the dog door and, even when we lifted her, she could not stand. It was time to say goodbye.

I still think about Prissy and the year we had together. Her presence was a gift for my husband, for our other dogs, and for me as she filled the space left vacant by our previous aristocratic female. I sometimes wonder if the loss of her two adopted brothers was more than she could bear after losing her initial family, her canine siblings, and her home. But, even if that is true, I know she was happy to be with us in her last year of life. She was safe and loved, and I am glad that she had a year of peace and sunshine. I believe that, even though our time together was short, every minute was precious.

While most Americans initially were deeply touched and troubled by the events of Hurricane Katrina and many reached out to give homes to displaced animals, difficult conditions remain along the Gulf and all across the country. Everywhere there are dogs like Prissy who continue to wait for loving homes. -*Kay Norman*

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## Beating the Odds

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Several months ago a dirty guy who reeked of alcohol dropped off his German Shepherd mix, Max, at the pound where I work as an animal control officer. Admitting he made Max live outside, he said he no longer wanted Max because he kept getting hit by cars.

As soon as I laid eyes on Max, I was in love, and the more I found out about his situation, the angrier I became. There was obviously something wrong with Max's back end, as his nails and the tips of his toes were worn off and gushing blood from being dragged during his 1 ½ mile walk to our facility. As the guy went on and on about how his neighbors had to feed Max because he couldn't afford dog food, I tended to Max's wounds, exhaustion, and thirst. I was shocked and saddened to find that Max had suffered for four years in the hands of this guy. I tolerated the guy's babbling for a few minutes until he raised his hand to Max, and Max cringed right to the floor. I was done, so I asked the guy for the \$50.00 surrender fee to get him out of my office. He told me he would have to walk to the bank to get it and complained about the heat. Could he come back another day? *No!* I took his dog *and* his wallet and told him to take a hike. I wanted him to suffer, just as he had made Max suffer.

The guy did come back, paid the 50 bucks, and Max was officially free of him. Over the next several weeks, Max made himself at home in my air-conditioned office on a nice, soft, clean blanket atop his Kuranda bed. We gave him as much food

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and water as he wanted. Whenever I got up from my desk, poor Max got up to follow. It pained me to watch him walk.

I tried to get a rescue to take in Max, but everyone was either full or they wanted to know what was wrong with him. Finally, after almost losing hope, Barbara from Hot Water Rescue agreed to spring him and help me pay for his vet care while I fostered him. After almost a month at the pound, Max was finally going to live in a home. Our apartment is on my boyfriends' parent's 30-acre farm, and they are kind enough to let me bring home animals from time to time. It's a nice environment for Max, with other dogs, cats, ponies, donkeys, horses, chickens, pigs, etc. to keep him entertained.

It was also time to begin getting Max the vet care he desperately needed. Tests and x-rays confirmed that Max had perfect hips, which was the only good news. He also had heartworm and *Chronic Degenerative Radiculomyelopathy* (CDRM—a progressive spinal cord disease). There is no cure for CDRM and no treatment. It just gets worse over time, eventually affecting Max's ability to walk. In a month or months (the vet couldn't tell), I would have to put Max down.

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Or maybe I wouldn't...

Extensive online research revealed that many dogs with CDRM remain mobile by using a wheeled cart to support their back end. So after collecting donations to help with Max's vetting, I still had enough money left over to buy his dog cart. Poor Max was such a trooper while my boyfriend, Tim, and I sized it to fit and then strapped him in. At first Max didn't know what to do, but within minutes he had the hang of it and was off down the driveway. His first stop was to greet Tim's dad, and then he was off to say hello to our pony and donkey. Again on the move, he made another stop at the wood-splitting area to hang out with all the guys. Everyone was so happy to see him out exploring without dragging himself from spot to spot. Max was finally able to just be a dog.

I can now take Max out for long walks, and he no longer has any pain. He simply rolls along in his cart with booties to protect his feet from sores. I actually have to put him on a leash because otherwise he'll take off down the ¼ mile dirt driveway to see whom he can greet first; he just loves everyone.

When I brought Max home, I wanted to show him what being loved and cared for was all about, even if our time together would be limited. Little did I know that Max would show me that even in the face of adversity, a little ingenuity can help one to beat the odds, at least for a time. -*Cari DeLorenzo*

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## Shepherd Shorts

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**Applause!** Loud noises and unsettling events would set off Annie's sensitive colon like a latte machine. I usually managed to patch her up with doggie Kaopectate and loperamide, but, when I occasionally couldn't get to her in time, she fragrantly let her concerns be known on our white carpet. So we usually left Annie in the yard when unsupervised, but one day I got wrapped up in holiday preparations and jumped into the shower without thinking. The fact that Annie was still inside hit me with such horror that I ran out of the shower and through the house, putting her in the yard without even grabbing a towel. The dogs were fine. The house was fine. And so were my in-laws, who applauded (good thing Annie was out of earshot). They had apparently already arrived. *-Anonymous*

**The Perfect Prewitt:** When we first met Sweetie she was timid, but as soon as the kids jumped onto their battery-powered vehicles in the backyard, she went into herding mode! That day she did a great job of "keeping the kids out of harm's way," and ever since we adopted her she has been Lily's pillow, Mitch's soccer goalie, Mom's everyday companion while the kids are at school, and Dad's shadow. Sweetie is much more than a family pet...she is a family member. *-The Prewitt Family*

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## No Padlock Needed

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Boy, my days were numbered! My former owners had turned me over to animal control because....well, because. I had only ever lived outside and didn't meet many people, so I didn't know what to do when I found myself inside a small cage with all these people looking in at me. I decided it would be best to show them my tough side, so I growled and snarled a lot. The tough guy act worked, maybe a little too well, because before I

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knew it, there was a big padlock and a sign I couldn't read on my cage, and *nobody* was going near me.

That is, nobody except this one man who came and sat outside my cage and talked to me. I put on my best "back off!" display, but he didn't go away. Then one of the officer-ladies (who obviously believed me about how tough I am) hesitantly came and unlocked my cage. She told the man he was wasting his time; I was going to be put down that same day. He didn't seem to care, and I wondered, "Down where?"

The man came in and tried to put a rope around my neck. It seemed he wanted to take me out of the cage, so I figured I'd let him. Anything that wasn't the cage was fine with me! The two of us, along with another lady, went over to a small pen, where they let me sniff around and handed me treats. I didn't know what they were trying to pull, so I still acted all tough. Then I heard the man say, "We're taking him home," and I got really hopeful for the first time in days.

WOW! What a difference a day makes. Now I am the happiest dog on the block. I have this really super girl-dog to play with all day, I get to go in or out of the house whenever I

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want (I'm really interested in the "in" part), and I get to snuggle with my people on the couch. Plus, I get lots of treats, especially when I do something easy like sit or lie down (which I do anyway, silly people!).

My people keep bringing other dogs home and telling me to be sweet to them because they are "fosters." From what I've seen, "foster" means the other dogs go and I stay (woo-hoo!). I've gotta feel a little bad for the buggers though; my people say they all go to good homes, but in my experience the best home is here! Could there really be someplace better? No matter. I've got my people, my buddies, and a home with no padlock required. If there's a heaven on earth, this is it! -*Teddie*, translated by Gale Hull

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## Walks on Water

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We were taking advantage of a warm Colorado January day, getting some fresh air and strolling at an outside mall, when there it was...a Lurcher. I grew up in England where Lurchers are common, but this was only the second Lurcher I'd seen here in 30 years of living in America.

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I had always wanted a Lurcher, which is typically a sight hound crossed with some type of herding dog. Often considered the gypsies' dog, "Lurcher" is derived from the Romany (gypsy) word *lur*, meaning *thief*, and *cur*, the English word for *bastard* or *mongrel*. "Lur cur" or Lurcher thus means a stealing bastard, which is arguably appropriate as they were developed for poaching. They hunted deer, hare, and rabbit, and their blood lines can go back many decades. Lurchers have great speed and endurance—think Road Runner meets Energizer Bunny—and are now used mainly for lure coursing, which is an event testing a dog's speed, endurance, agility, and hunting by sight ability.

This particular Lurcher was obviously a Greyhound/German Shepherd mix, given his color (brindle: black on tan) and build. At the mobile pet adoption trailer, he was introduced to us as "Tipsy." The name suited him well since he had lost the top half of his left ear and walked with the quasi-swagger of a barroom brawler (or a young dog who hasn't yet grown into his long legs).

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I knew I had to have him, but at the time we were definitely NOT in the market for a third dog. We already had two rescue dogs—a magnificent, old, big, brindle (tan on black) mongrel called Rufus McGee, who was almost 14 ½, and a nine-year-old Border Collie/English Setter princess called Miss Chutney. A third, large dog, young and full of energy, was more than we could handle. And even though a young playmate would have been good for Chutney, we worried about Rufus. While his spirit was still young, his body was slowing down, and one alpha dog was quite enough.

Rufus was also my husband and my first joint dog, so he held a special place in our hearts, and we were very respectful of his dignity. The bottom line is that even though I fell in love with Topsy, we walked away....well, sort of. We actually went back to the mobile pet adoption unit to see about filling out paperwork, but the truck had packed up and gone back to the shelter.

Over a month passed, and as I talked to my stepmother in England about the rare Lurcher I couldn't quite forget, my eavesdropping husband checked the website and found "Tippy"

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was still up for adoption! (Apparently his name was actually "Tippy" due to the white tip on his tail. The name wasn't nearly as original as Topsy, but I guess it was still fitting.)

We were horrified; we'd left Tippy to languish in the kennel for too long, so throwing all practicality to the wind, we pledged to go get him the next weekend. I vacillated between joy for Chutney and terror for Rufus and me. How was I going to manage the disparities between them all on walks, hikes, and with giving affection?

I checked the website many times each day to ensure Tippy was still posted, and then the day finally came. It was like Christmas; I woke before dawn and wanted to be at the shelter right then. As I lay there, his new name came to me in a flash—TWIGLET! "Twiglets" are my favorite English savory snack, and his brindle marking matched the snack exactly. Plus he was a Lurcher, an English dog.

When we arrived, Twiglet was nowhere to be found. As my heart sank, we were informed that he was quarantined with kennel cough. Lovely. We were also surprised to find that he hadn't been at the kennel for six weeks; he'd been adopted

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out...and returned! Gracious, what could he have done? Well, we later heard that he was not housetrained, sat on the furniture, and was destructive. I think he barked, too. Twiglet's saving grace was that he did not jump fences (a Lurcher skill).

Awful though he sounded, I knew it was not him. The people who'd adopted him had left him alone for 8-10 hours a day and not spent time on training him. His behavior was on them. So I went on hoping we would sail through the interview, which we did. It seemed a bit strange that everyone was so enthusiastic and slightly surprised Twiglet was going to a home, and it wasn't until after we adopted him that I found out why.

During Twiglet's first trip to our vet, we found he has a liver condition. So I checked back in with the shelter and finally got the full story about Twiglet's life, which was not good. He was transferred in from another state and had been in and out of the shelter for most of his life, suffering from illness much of the time. We worked to get him healthy, and, while he seemed in good health, it was months before we got good liver tests back from the vet.

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As predicted, Twiglet's bad behaviors were because of his previous owners, not because of the dog. We housetrained him in a weekend, and he learned everything as fast as we could teach him. While the first few weeks were not without drama (it was immediately apparent he had no boundaries, discipline, or manners), all Twiglet needed was consistency and kindness. If anyone had tried to train him in the past, it would have shown, but at least he was a quick learner.

Twiglet had obviously been punished when told to "come," as that was the hardest thing for him to learn. But it was all a matter of trust, which he'd learn from Chutney's leading by example. Twiglet would come on his own accord, but not when asked. It took weeks before he really knew we would not harm him, and that time is now a distant memory. His heart is as big as a house, and he follows us everywhere all the time, seeking attention, sharing humorous antics, and fetching toys on command.

To our relief, Twiglet was great with Rufus. He was gentle, respectful, and playful, while letting Rufus be the dominant dog. They had six weeks together before Rufus was

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put down at home with us and the dogs by his side. Twiglet is devoted to Chutney, who taught him how to swim. It took four days as neither Greyhounds nor German Shepherds are known as water dogs, but Twiglet is now a fish, and they will swim together for hours.

As predicted, Twiglet is a high-energy dog who needs a job, so we hike with him off leash 3-5 times a week. He has passed the AKC Canine Good Citizen test and is training to become a therapy dog through the Delta Society's registered Pet Partners program. As with most Lurchers, Twiglet is incredibly devoted and affectionate and has a love of soft furniture—the last is particularly a Greyhound trait. The German Shepherd part is the endurance and his smart mind. It is a most wonderful combination.

My husband and I are constantly amazed how this beautiful, loving creature was so maligned and endured such an awful life before he came to us. As his photo shows, he can walk on water and do no wrong. *-Lowrey Mumford*

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## Happy Jack

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Talk about being left alone. Both of Jack's parents had passed away, his boy had gone to live with relatives, and his companion dog had been adopted out. Coastal White German Shepherd Rescue was having trouble finding a home for Jack since he was 11, mostly blind, and had hip dysplasia. Nevertheless, his ad caught my eye because it spoke of his undying spirit in the face of such adversity. I had recently lost

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my own 11-year-old White German Shepherd Dog to cancer and thought Jack would be the perfect fit in my home.

Right away Jack proved me right. Although blind and disabled, nothing seemed too daunting. Whether it be negotiating a strange house, walking through unfamiliar woods, putting up with an overly-enthusiastic 1½ year old German Shepherd constantly in his face, or serving as a pillow for my four-year-old daughter, Jack accepted everything with a big grin. He quickly assimilated into our household over the next few weeks, and my love and respect for him grew. Here was a dog who had been through so much (both physically and mentally), yet he was loving and affectionate, always laying his head against my chest for a hug. Jack was independent, too. When we got a big snowstorm he would routinely fall down in snow banks, but he didn't need help. He would just pick himself up and walk on, and through it all he had a smile on his face—my Happy Jack.

Jack's positive attitude was sorely tested when he bloated after just four months with us. Even as an old dog, Jack had such a love of life that when offered the choice of risky

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surgery or euthanasia by the emergency vet, I chose surgery. After three touch-and-go days, I brought him home. My husband felt I had gone too far in treating Jack since he was totally incapacitated, but within 48 hours he was eating his words! Jack was following me around the house, refusing help when he had to go out, and shortly thereafter, trotting around the yard, playing with my other dog, and even tolerating our new, four-month-old, White German Shepherd Dog puppy, who considered Jack his hero. Most importantly he had on his grin—my Happy Jack was back!

We had Jack for 15 months when his hip dysplasia got the best of him. His hind legs gave out, but he was still so happy and wanting so badly to be independent that I brought him to be fitted for a custom cart. He took to the demo right away, cruising around the parking lot with that old grin plastered on his face. It would take two weeks to have his cart built, and I couldn't wait to see him tooling around the yard in it, chasing the other dogs.

Sadly, Jack never got to use his cart. A week later I noticed his breathing becoming labored one night. I made him

comfortable and lay down next to him, patting and reassuring him when he got scared. I must have dozed off for a few minutes, when I felt a cold nose and gentle lick on my cheek. I thought it was my other dog, but when I rolled over, she wasn't there. I listened and all was quiet. I turned to look at Jack, and he was still. Jack had passed away.

I like to think it was his angel telling me goodbye with a gentle kiss. I know my Happy Jack is now running and playing and looking down on me from the Bridge with, of course, a big grin on his face. *-Laurie Tylaska*

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## 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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