

Lost Souls: FOUND!™

Inspiring Stories About Golden Retrievers

Kyla Duffy and Lowrey Mumford



Published by Happy Tails Books™, LLC

Happy Tails Books™ publishes breed-specific and region-specific compilations of stories about rescued dogs. These thought-provoking books are meant to entertain pet lovers, and raise awareness about pet adoption and typical breed characteristics. They provide a venue for proud owners to showcase their adopted pets and generate funding for rescue groups through the donation of a portion of each sale.

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More Interesting than Shoes



“The key,” she said softly, “is to be more interesting than whatever he’s looking at.”

It was 9:00 a.m., and I was crouched on the floor of my local PETCO® with the trainer, and a statue that had moments earlier been a four-year-old Golden Retriever named Eli. We were at an obedience class where we had been working on “loose leash walking,” and he’d been doing quite well, actually.

At least he had been until he saw the ferrets. Despite my best efforts, for ten minutes after Eli first laid eyes on them, he stood completely still, not blinking, totally impervious to my gentle nudges, my excited calls, my offers of a treat. Nothing would break his gaze. The trainer remarked that in all her years she'd never seen a dog quite like Eli.

Nor, for that matter, had I. My family and I were lucky enough to have three Goldens, even before I got Eli during my first year of law school. While all of them had displayed a "love" of nature, if you will, none came close to Eli.

Instead of playing ball or swimming, Eli prefers sitting at the window of my apartment for hours on end, watching the birds and the squirrels. Rather than playing with the dogs at my girlfriend's house, he chooses to sit at the porch door and scan her backyard. At my parents' house he spends half of his time outside, lying and watching the animals. Long periods of calm are punctuated by sudden bursts of energy, where he runs across the yard at full speed, trying to catch one that strayed too far afield. The other half of his time is spent sitting in front of my parents' birdcage, drooling all over himself and occasionally looking up at me, wondering when I will open the cage and let him do his job.

Looking back, Toby (Eli's name, at the time) was more than hesitant the first time I met him, and I don't think I could have imagined then that he would grow into the dog I today know and love as Eli. As much as Eli's not a "normal" Golden Retriever, having him has brought order to my mildly chaotic life. Gone are the days of sleeping until two in the afternoon and staying at the library to study for 14 hours straight. Gone is the freedom to leave food lying around at dog-on-his-hind-legs-height or to just stay inside all day when it is cold or snowy.

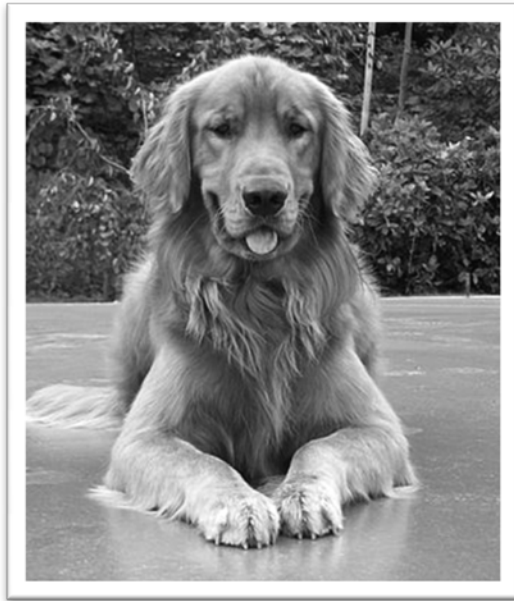
But also gone is the feeling of coming home to an empty apartment. Gone is waking up and having no one to greet me. I suddenly have my very own, foolproof, smile machine, which can cheer me up no matter how down I may feel. There's nothing like laughing at him rolling around on the floor while attacking a stuffed goose or taking him on a good, long walk. There are few things in this world which can brighten your world like a happy dog, and Eli's endless energy and constant enthusiasm lighten whatever load the day may have built up on my shoulders.

No matter Eli's current distraction, he never lets me forget he is around. He slides around on the hardwood floor and pounces on toys when I throw them in the air. Whenever I

try to put on my shoes, he always sits on my feet, making sure, it seems, I don't forget he wants to join me wherever I'm going. While he may have appeared to be stuck on the ferrets, he must have actually been listening when the trainer said, "The key is to be more interesting than whatever he's looking at."

Jon Markman

“Lola, Who?”



One gray and drizzly Sunday afternoon in January, John and Judy stopped at the local pet shop. They had an excellent idea!

They thought, “It’s been so long since we’ve “borrowed” Lola from (son) Niklas, let’s get Lola’s favorite dog food, so that next time they stop by we can ask if Lola would like to spend the night.”

They would already have her favorite food on hand, so it would be an easy sell...

Judy paid the bill, and met John at the door. He said, "Oh, you must come see this puppy that just came in."

At the back of the shop was a lanky, clumsy, big-eyed, copper-colored puppy.

"Oh what a beautiful dog," said John, who immediately knelt to play with him.

The young couple at the other end of the leash, said, "Yes, he is quite adorable. He's just 11-months-old and his name is Micah."

After further conversation, they added that they were the foster parents, and he was a Golden Retriever rescue dog that had been surrendered by an elderly woman who was unable to care for him or exercise him properly. Here's the doozy – they also said that there was a young family and others who had already applied to adopt him. (Put sad face on John at this point.)

On the way home, John said, "Oh, what a wonderful dog. I think he would have been the perfect pet for us!"

Three days later Judy came home from work and found a voice message on the phone.

"Hello, John, this is Angie, Micah's foster mom. I'd like to tell you that the young family who planned to adopt Micah has decided to wait for another year or so until their small children are older. If you are still interested, I can put your name on the list for him and do a home visit."

Judy put the phone down and wondered, "HOW did Angie get our phone number?!"

Lengthy discussion ensued, encompassing topics such as: 1) Owning a dog is a 15-year commitment; 2) John is leaving in May for six weeks in Australia; 3) Lengthy international trips in the next eight months are planned; 4) The delight of having new leather furniture, expensive carpets, and a relatively clean, non-dog smelling house; 5) The master plan is to acquire a dog early NEXT Year! And so on...

Well, Micah came for a "home visit." John and Judy deemed it a success, and Micah gave them the lick of approval. So it was decided – Micah became John and Judy's unexpected dog.

"Lola, who?" Just kidding – John and Judy still love her visits, too. But now she has a playmate, and there's no need to stay over. Plus, Micah ate all her food...

Judy Christensen

Because Giving Them Up Is a Gift



Bob and I are retired schoolteachers and are currently on foster dogs number 78 and 79. Each and every one has touched our hearts.

The most common question we get asked is, "Isn't it hard to give them up?" Of course we fall in love with each and every dog. We miss them, and worry about them when they go out the door, but then we get our phone call with the first

report. As soon as I hear the magic words, "We love our new dog," a smile comes into my heart, and I quit worrying. If only we could bottle that feeling... it's like a gift.

The following two journal entries highlight the reasons why we love to take dogs in and why we feel we must let them go.

Diane and Bob Missler

(Jeff adopted Luci from a family that had a child who abused her. When Jeff had a child of his own, he had to re-home Luci because she couldn't get over her fear of children. He writes...)

I make this entry with a heavy heart. It's been four-and-a-half years since she became part of our family, and tonight is the last night that Luci will to be with us. Tomorrow we journey to Michigan to surrender her to the Great Lakes Golden Retriever Rescue.

Diane and Bob will foster her until they can find her a suitable home. I hope it doesn't take too long, because Luci deserves to be somewhere where she can lead a relaxing life.

That place used to be here, but since the birth of my daughter, Luci has lived in her own little hell. It is clear that she

is fearful of Hallie. I don't know what happened to her when she was at her first home, but it was not good.

When she is not fearful, she is the best dog. She listens, she's smart, she's sweet, and she loves affection. Outside of my wife and daughter, she and her "sister" Sadie are my best friends. I love having them with me when I run. I especially enjoy watching them run off leash. It is magical for me.

I feel as if I am taking a family member and giving her away tomorrow, and I'm going to miss many things about her. I'll miss the feel of her fur - she has the softest coat. I'll miss her unique sweet dog smell. I'll miss her coming to me in the middle of the night to have her head rubbed, and then going back to sleep under the bed. I'll miss having her lie on the floor in the basement as I do laundry. I'll miss her stealing clothes or shoes and carrying them all over the house - they usually end up under the bed. I'll miss her playfulness - she loves to run and play in the backyard, and especially likes to catch the Frisbee.

All that being said, she needs to go someplace where there are no children; a place where she can run, play, and not be fearful of her surroundings. She needs to remain active. I believe Diane is going to do everything in her power to put her

in a Forever Home. Luci has led a challenging life, and I want her to go somewhere and live out her life in peace.

"LUCI, I WILL MISS YOU DEARLY!" Deep down, I know you will be better off away from here. Life here is just too stressful for you. I hope you end up in a place that makes you happier than you were here these last few years.

As I end this entry, she is walking around the house with a pair of my socks in her mouth. So typical.

(From Luci's new forever family.)

Dear Luci,

It's hard to imagine, but only a month-and-a-half ago, we were complete strangers. You were the smiling, furry face plastered on the pet finding website. You were a couple ominous paragraphs that spoke to Mom and made her announce, "I think this is the right dog. I think she needs us just like we need her."

We were the mismatched, nervous group that came to see you at Diane's house. We were the ones who fed you carrots and silently prayed that you would like us.

And then something magical happened – you became the newest member of our family.

Seemingly overnight, you've filled our lives with energy and love... and walks, lots of walks. Whether it's a romp in the backyard with your partially deflated pink ball, or cuddling on the couch, you attack each moment with a passion for life that is entirely infectious. You manage to remind us of the importance of finding joy in the little things like chewing on a well-loved Frisbee or touching noses with the neighbor's cat, and you do it all with that wide grin on your face.

Luci, we know it hasn't been an easy adaptation for you. Four homes in five years is something that no dog should go through. Your sad eyes and little quirks are evidence of just what kind of things you've been through. We might not always understand your oddities, but we understand your needs, and we are all committed to giving you the home that you deserve.

There isn't much left to say, Luci, except, "Thank you." Thank you for choosing us as your family. Thank you for loving us with your big, furry heart. Thank you for all the wet slobbery kisses and spontaneous high fives that make us smile. Thank you for this incredible adventure that we're all in together.

Love, Your new family

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 and region-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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