
Lost Souls: FOUND!™

Inspiring Stories About Great Danes



Kyla Duffy and Lowrey Mumford

Published by Happy Tails Books™, LLC

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Joy Personified



One day our foster coordinator forwarded the photos and story of an eight-week-old Great Dane puppy whose left, hind leg was severely broken to a select few of us. She said that another rescue had the puppy but could not take on the financial responsibility of repairing her leg. It was, of course, a unanimous decision to take the puppy in and pay for the surgery.

This precious puppy had been brutally kicked and/or beaten at the age of six weeks, and her leg had been broken in three places. There was also nerve damage in the other hind leg due to swelling along her spine, so there was no way to know if that leg would be functional. The person who did this to her did not take her for any medical care, and she suffered with this broken leg for almost two weeks before she was removed from the situation and wound up with the previous rescue group.

The pictures the rescue had sent to our group were sad, to say the least. There sat this little, emaciated creature with a drooping head and a bruised and swollen hind leg. I could just feel her sadness.

As soon as those pictures popped up on my computer screen, it was love at first sight, and I forwarded them to my husband, Brad. She was a beautiful, white dog with blue eyes. Yes, she was deaf, but my husband and I did not care at all, especially since we already had another deaf Great Dane at home. We discussed her with our vet and told our adoption coordinator that we wanted to put our name in to adopt this special girl.

Her leg ended up needing amputation, and she went to a foster home to recover. They named her Katie, and she thrived

and gained strength under her foster parent's supervision. Brad and I enjoyed receiving her "pupdates" each week. We tossed names around and decided we were going to call her Cassidy (as in Hop-Along Cassidy).

Each week Cassidy grew stronger and inspired us with her determination. The pictures of her trying to do things that ordinary dogs do without a thought of her disability were enough to make us cry. One, where she is trying to make it up the steps into the house, stands out in my mind. I could just see how determined she was to be just like the other dogs.

Fast forward to Labor Day weekend, a month after Cassidy's surgery. We arranged to meet Cassidy and her foster mom just inside Indiana from the Michigan border to transfer her into our care. We were equally excited and nervous, and when we got to the meeting place, we were surprised at how small our three-or-four-month-old dog was. We sat for a bit and let Cassidy's foster mom, who was heartbroken but resolved to let her go, have more time with her and then we put her in our van and headed home. Cassidy traveled well, sleeping most of the way, and when we brought her into the house, she immediately fit right in with our other three Danes.

On top of Cassidy losing her leg, we also discovered she had been shot with BB's or buckshots. Oh, and she is also pretty much blind in one of her eyes. Nevertheless, that didn't stop Cassidy from becoming quite the little tomboy. When her big brother knocks her down, she gets right up and immediately jumps back into the mix of things. Watching her do zoomies around the kitchen table and into the living room and back again is hilarious—she tends to slide when rounding a curve so that her butt scrapes the ground, but she sure can move. And when she is in the back yard, look out!

In our eyes you can't get more perfect than our little Cassidy. She is truly joy personified, and our goal is to keep her healthy and happy and to spoil her rotten for as long as we are privileged to have her in our lives.

Jeanette & Brad Coval

Dogdini



“Hey, Marley, you’ve got nothing on me! Bentley’s my name, and rascal’s my game.”

There have been many times in the past few years when we wished we had been given that warning when one adorable Mastiff puppy first adopted us. It was my monthly volunteer day at the rescue. On my knees, scrubbing the wall, I felt someone staring at me. Turning my head, I came eye to eye with the biggest brown eyes I had ever seen peering out of an

oversized, tan head. At five-months-old, he showed the promise of growing into quite the dog.

"What are you doing here?" I asked him, knowing he was supposed to be in a crate. I should have taken a clue then. But he was so gosh-darned cute, and my son, Craig, who was also at the rescue that day, decided this goofy pup with feet like Paul Bunyan would make a great brother for his other Great Dane, Greda. Two days later, after trying out several names, "Bentley" seemed to suit him best, so Bentley it was.

Typically we don't crate new adoptees at our house, but since Bentley was still an untrained puppy, we decided that prevention was probably the wisest idea. We purchased a colossal crate, a cushy bed, and plenty of toys to keep him busy when we were out. I'm not sure how long he lasted the first time we placed him in the crate and left the house because upon our return, we were greeted at the door by one excited puppy and the remains of two throw pillows. What was he doing out?

"Craig, didn't you latch the crate?" After repeated affirmatives we added a carabineer hook to the front latch. The next time we came in, we were again greeted an excited puppy, but this time we were also met with a dog food bag strewn

across the floor and an overturned plant. We linked another colossal crate to the first one to create a doggie condo. We added more toys and a big quilt. Surely, this would be divine?

Another absence and return with the same puppy greeting. Our questions about his escape were answered when we noticed the top of the crate peeled back like an open tin can. From that day forward, Bentley acquired the nickname Dogdini. We kept Bentley in the crate for only a short time thereafter, quickly weaning him to the bedroom with the rest of our fur babies, behind a gate that needed to be lifted up to release the latch. Well, it didn't take Dogdini long to figure out a new escape trick, and once again we returned home to an excited, slightly older Bentley and three more furry faces behind him.

But this was not the end of the escapades. There was the day we anxiously called and called him to come in from the fenced yard. No Bentley. We went out searching, only to find him huddled in the corner under the deck "protecting" a nest of baby bunnies (no bunnies were hurt during this episode). And the time our call to come in was answered by a howl—Bentley had climbed a hillside, walked across a waterfall leading to a pond, and cornered himself on the top of a retaining wall, afraid

to turn around. There was also an antique table that Bentley decided to taste, leading to a frantic repair job before the "big dog" of the house returned from a business trip. Additionally, the leather ottoman is now topped by a throw, and my favorite couch was relegated to the dumpster after Bentley decided to eat it while weathering a storm in the downstairs playroom.

I was informed of the funniest episode of all by a call from home while I was visiting New Jersey. It went like this:

Tom: "How do you remove White Out?"

Judy: "Why?" (You can hear the trepidation in my voice.)

Tom: "Bentley got hold of the bottle. It's on the rug, and he has a mustache like Hitler! Got Milk?"

Craig finally moved to his own home and took Bentley and Greda with him, and believe it or not, we actually miss him (Bentley, that is). In his new house, Craig first confined Bentley and Greda to a huge bedroom loft upstairs. After chewing the windowsills (which have been replaced with marble), the handrail, the door, and the arms of his futon, Bentley is now free to roam the house. Blinds are raised, so he does not destroy them while looking out the window, and screws are attached to the window frames, so Bentley can only open the

window six inches. Although I hate to jinx myself, the house has remained fairly damage-free.

But Bentley also has an angel on his shoulder whispering to him to be the sweetest, most loving dog anyone could ask for. He was the giant at obedience training, lying on the floor patiently while the mini-dogs barked at him to play. He’s a sloth, stretched across the bed or couch, using his innocent look to defy anyone to kick him off. And he’s the big mush who allows anyone—kids and family alike—to bury their faces in his fur or use his body for a pillow. His undying devotion and clown antics lift everyone’s spirits on a bad day.

Once upon a time, several years ago, Dogdini escaped from his home and ended up at the Franklin County Animal Shelter before making his way to the rescue. We are glad his journey continued until he found his way to us.

Judy Yacks

Planning for Disaster



After finally finishing school and moving into a house, my roommate and I decided to get a dog. I had always wanted a Golden Retriever, but he was set on adopting a Great Dane. We did some research and came across Rocky Mountain Great Dane Rescue (RMGDRI) in Denver, CO. Every day I would look at all the pictures they had posted online and read the stories about the gentle giants who needed good homes.

We attended an open house hosted by RMGDRI at the local PETCO to meet some of the available Danes. I had seen Sam, a blue merle, on the website a few times and could not get over his sweet face and beautiful markings. They didn't know much about his history, but when he was turned in to the rescue, he weighed a mere 80 pounds and was all skin and bones. He was very timid around men and had a blue blanket that he could not be without.

When we arrived at PETCO, I saw Sam right away and went over to meet him. He was very shy but sweet and immediately took a liking to my roommate. We spent some time with him and decided to begin the adoption process by filling out some paperwork. While we waited to be approved, which took a few weeks, I read everything I could on Great Danes to prepare for his arrival.

One of the things I recall reading about was *bloat and torsion*, a horrible stomach condition that kills many Danes. The articles implied that it was not a matter of "if" a Dane would get it but rather a matter of "when" your Dane would be affected. We followed all the recommendations about leaving time between feedings and water, giving Sam food on an elevated surface, and not letting him run around after eating,

but I was always on edge and watching for signs, which might include restlessness, excessive drooling, abdominal pain, retching, and non-productive attempts to vomit.

About a year and half after adopting Sam, I was living on my own and had taken Sam with me, so he was going to doggy daycare a few days a week. One night when I picked him up, I noticed he was acting funny. He kept following me around, and his breathing was heavy and labored. I also saw that his belly was puffy and hard like a drum. He started retching but was unable to vomit. When he refused to drink any water, I knew something was terribly wrong.

I immediately put him in the car and drove him to the 24-hour pet clinic. I told them that I thought he might be bloated. They took him in for an X-ray and confirmed that my nightmare was a reality. Not only was he bloated, but his stomach had rotated, and the vet said that if they didn't operate on him right away, he would die. I told them to do whatever it took to save him. I'm not sure how long I paced back and forth in the waiting room, but the vet finally came out and told me that the surgery was a success. Sam was going to be fine. She said I must have caught it right away because he had no

damage to his organs, which happens rather quickly once the stomach twists.

Sam spent the night at the vet to be monitored, and I was able to bring him home two days later. During the surgery, the vet was able to "tack" his stomach in an effort to prevent future twisting or torsion. It took a few weeks for him to be back to normal, but thankfully he healed, and we have not had any problems since.

I'm so glad I carefully researched the breed before bringing Sam home. RMGDRI also did an excellent job of providing information about Great Danes to us so we knew what to look for in order to keep our gentle giants safe.

Today Sam is a happy, healthy, playful nine-year-old. He still has his blue blanket, although he prefers to sleep on the furniture. I finally got a Golden Retriever, too, and he is Sam's best friend in the world. Having a Great Dane gives me something to smile about every day, which makes me so glad that Sam is a part of my life.

Amanda Adams

Black Dog Conspiracy



A year ago I was content with my two teenage boys and two cats. I live in a tiny house, and we are always on the go; I couldn't possibly handle a dog. I knew I would have another Great Dane someday like I had 10 years earlier but not for at least a few years. But then one of my well-meaning friends sent me a link to a Great Dane breeder, and I thought, "Well, *maybe* I could have a dog now—just not a puppy." A very quick internet search introduced me to Upper Midwest Great Dane Rescue (UMGDR), and life immediately took an unexpected turn.

The UMGDR website is like internet dog dating, and I fell in love with a classic fawn Dane named Maverick. I filled out an application for him, sent in my fee, and scheduled the required home inspection. A volunteer brought her four-year-old foster dog, Harley, with her when she came for the visit. This dog made me smile as I watched him lumber out of her car and up my steps, and I quickly forgot about Maverick.

Harley walked into my home, gave me a Great Dane lean, and then climbed onto the couch where my 15-year-old son was lying. In my heart he became part of our family at that moment, and before the meeting was over, he had "hugged" all of us. The only problem was that I was already "dating" Maverick, and Harley had his own date scheduled with someone else for later that same day. Dating can be tricky, but as they say, it's a timing thing. Before I met Maverick in person, I found out there was no chemistry between Harley and the family he met later that day, so he was fair game, and I, too, was technically available.

A few days later I got the email stating I had been approved to adopt, and I immediately contacted Harley's foster mom. I was ready to take the plunge, so we made arrangements to pick him up the week before Christmas.

One of the first things we did was change Harley's name. We had to because his human baby sister's name is Hailey, and after we brought Harley home, we kept calling her Harley, too. The poor girl was going to need therapy before she even learned to walk, which is why Harley became Burly.

Burly is an amazing, wonderful, caring, and smart dog. We love him to death, and he loves us right back. He wants nothing more than to be with us, whatever we are doing, wherever we are going. Burly obviously came from a loving home and was already well-trained. My understanding is that he was teased by neighborhood kids and bit one of them, and the family was forced to give him up. We haven't had any issues with him at all. Okay, maybe one: He was obviously a country dog and is struggling to become a city dog. Traffic noises make him want to bolt, but he trusts me to keep him safe a little more each day. He got away from me when we first adopted him, and a fellow Great Dane owner followed him for more than a mile before getting him into his car. He called me and delivered Burly back to me within the hour. God Bless him!

In the months since adopting Burly, life has changed in too many fabulous ways to list. He was meant to be mine. I have discovered though, that maybe he *was* a special needs dog, just

not to me. Before Burly, I never knew about the big black dog conspiracy, also known as "black dog syndrome," that black dogs get adopted less frequently than other dogs, and *big*, black dogs are even less fortunate. According to the UMGDR website, the first dogs to get euthanized at shelters and pounds are the big, black ones because they take up so much room and are overlooked by potential adopters due to the usual dim shelter lighting. If Burly had landed at a shelter instead of at UMGDR, that might have been his fate, but luckily he just ended up in foster care for several months.

It's true that many people we meet on our walks are terrified that I won't be able to control my gentle giant, and many have to muster all their courage to reach out and pet this beautiful dog. But anyone who stops and takes a moment to get to know Burly walks away convinced that he is one sweet dog. And any difficulties I associate with owning a giant dog melt away when my 130-pound lap dog cuddles up with me on the couch.

I will be a Great Dane owner for life, and after learning about the big, black dog conspiracy, I will always adopt black ones. A volunteer at UMGDR came up with these top five reasons to adopt a big, black dog, and I completely agree:

5. Owning a big, black dog makes you look thinner.
4. Big, black dogs are easy to find in the snow.
3. They turn into ninjas when intruders enter your home at night.
2. They’re the perfect accessory—black goes with everything, so your dog will never clash with your outfit.
1. Black dogs will always be the “hide and seek” champion.

Cheryl Aarsvold

Leanin' Legends

Bitten and Smitten: Spencer, our second foster dog, was very nervous and didn't know how to ascend the stairs that led into our house. Transport volunteers unloading a large crate from their car behind him escalated his fears, and he frantically slipped out of his collar and took himself for a walk. After a while, we managed to bribe him back into our driveway, but when I grabbed him by his scruff, he bit me! From then on we had to tell interested adopters about his bite history, which made most shy away. But no matter, by that time my husband had fallen for him, and we adopted him ourselves. All our friends asked, "You mean the one who bit Julie?" Yep, that's the one; I was bitten and smitten ever since. -*Julie Meehan*

Mr. Scents-ability: Aside from doing some requisite marking, counter-surfing, and slobbering, starving, smelly Hunter was also very mouthy at first, and he barked aggressively at my husband. But after dog training classes, dog daycare, and lots of work, we made improvements. We discovered much about each other, and one of my favorite Hunterisms is that he loves fragrant things. It is hard to explain to guests that smelling like he walked out of the perfume section of a department store really makes Hunter proud, as he rubs against them to pick up the scent of their perfume or cologne. Nowadays, those "in the know" even put on cologne just for Hunter to enjoy, and he behaves just as nicely as he smells. -*Julie Corbin*

Massage Therapy



Dad's sweet black Lab managed to jump the fence and mate with a neighboring black Great Dane. My father was mortified, and while the neighbor was kind and understanding about the incident, Dad promised to find each puppy a good home. That's how my husband, Steve, and I were lucky enough to get stuck with Magic, one of the wonderful, though unplanned puppies.

Magic was a delight, a clown who made us laugh daily. He complimented the Doxies we already had, and when they passed in their teens and Magic was still less than four, the three of us regularly went to the park for walks and picnics. When he was eight, we were devastated to learn that the cough he had developed was bilateral lung cancer, and we would only have seven more months with him.

We tried to prepare for the inevitable loss, but it was very hard. About two months before we lost Magic, Steve insisted on taking me back to Petsmart right after he and Magic had just shopped there. While Magic rested at home, Steve led me to the back of the store where a Great Dane rescue was showing off their adoptable dogs. I was drawn to them like a bee to a flower. I met the rescue president, known as "Grandma," who could see a potential home in our eyes and immediately began to interview us. When I told her about Magic and how we knew the end was nearing, we both welled up with tears. She gave us some literature and hugged me, saying, "You call me when you are ready, and I hope it's longer than you are expecting it to be." Unfortunately, we were ready to contact her a very short seven weeks later.

Steve and I were sick with grief. After a few days of collapsing into tears each morning and coming home from work with no wagging tail to greet us, we knew we could not wait. I called Grandma, and again she shed tears with me as I choked out the words, "We need to get this application in. There is a hole the size of the Grand Canyon in our home." She explained that conducting a home inspection, checking references, and investigating our vet records normally takes two weeks, but as I swallowed a sob, she said, "In your case I will try to get these things accomplished within a week." While we waited, I looked at the photos on the website of available Danes and picked out three dogs to meet that Sunday.

Steve had to work but told me to go and pick out our next dog. We agreed it would be a black, male Dane between one and three years old. Harley was the second Dane on our list, and he communicated his feelings to me loudly and clearly. As an 11-month-old puppy, he had been dumped at the rescue by his owner, who said her husband insisted she get rid of him. Though the woman had cried when she left him, she never called to inquire about him or make any donation toward his food and vet care. Grandma said his situation was like a broken

record—a big dog is a big responsibility, and too many people get one without really understanding that.

Harley was now a week from turning two and had been at the rescue for a little over a year. Grandma said he had been “looked at” countless times but was never chosen by anyone as she slipped a thin lead over his head and handed me the other end. Now, I’m 4’ 11” tall, and here I am, walking a 140-pound giant on what felt like a string around the property. I was surprised at how much of a difference the 25 pounds Harley had on Magic actually made.

Unlike the first Great Dane I walked, Harley went slowly and easily like he knew to be gentle with this little woman. I talked to him and stroked his head, and he looked at me longingly with huge, brown eyes. He then nudged into me, nearly knocking me over, to get as close as he could to my affection. I was hooked! I went in and told Grandma, “Harley is the one. I do not need to see the third.” Harley looked like he was crying as I started to leave, so I stared into his eyes and said, “It’s okay, boy. I’m coming back for you, I promise.” He didn’t seem to believe me as he hung his head and returned to the common area with the others.

Grandma made good on her intentions to complete our application approval process quickly, and that Thursday she called to say our references were excellent, our home and yard was more than they could hope for (half-acre back yard with a 6' privacy fence and woods behind it), and we could pick up Harley that Saturday.

My husband had not yet seen our new dog, but as Grandma approached us with Harley, Steve's eyes lit up like a Christmas tree, and Harley went straight into his embrace. Grandma packed up some things and handed us the lead looped around Harley's neck. Suddenly it clicked, and Harley got it: "I've been chosen!" His mouth dropped open, and his tongue hung out as he smiled from one big ear to the other. He turned to Grandma and jumped up on her, slamming her against the fridge and giving her a huge lick all the way up her face. He then dropped back down to leave with us. We opened the car door and he jumped right in, wagging his tail at warp speed.

At home he settled in like he had been there since he was a pup. Harley was different from Magic, and we quickly found him to be a deep thinker, very serious, and fiercely

devoted to us. He responded quickly to all basic commands, and within a week I could say, “Excuse me,” when he was blocking my way, and he would move aside—a perfect gentlemen.

We love plants and always have large, tropical types on our patio. Two weeks after adopting Harley we were sitting outside, enjoying them while reading the paper and having a morning coffee, when Steve suddenly bumped my knee with his and said in a low tone, “What the heck is he *doing*?” I turned to see Harley walking around a large plant with long, finger-type leaves. He had his eyes closed and was moving ever so slowly as the leaves caressed him. We watched, giggling quietly, while he performed this ritual for over 20 minutes.

We named the plant Sally, and when Harley would continue to nudge at us after we had stroked him until our arms ached, we would tell him to “go see Sally.” And he would. Our big Harley introduced us to “the plant massage,” a gift we will always remember and hold close to our hearts.

Betty Lane

Ode to Great Danes



Wiggles and wags,
Drool, saggy eye-bags.

Large and lean,
Not maliciously mean.

Tired and downward dog-stretched,
Unconditional love in my heart etched.

Jennifer Cordosi

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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 group that help gather stories for the books.



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