
Lost Souls: FOUND!™

Inspiring Stories About Pugs

Kyla Duffy and Lowrey Mumford



Published by Happy Tails Books™, LLC

Happy Tails Books™ 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 Happy Tails Books 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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mumford.

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Inspiring Stories About Pugs



Old Man Crazy Legs



Cooter "Krazy Legs" journey into my life started when he was tossed out of a moving car. Though they were unable to care for him, the kind couple in the car behind the one in question picked him up and took him to a shelter, hoping for the best. But Cooter's future looked bleak. Even though the shelter staff loved him, he was an older guy with one other major "flaw" that made him unattractive to most potential

adopters: his back was crooked so he couldn't curl his tail, and though he could stand on his back legs, when he walked he bounced like he just run a marathon. He could move his back legs independently but he fell down—a lot. Nobody knew whether this problem was a congenital birth defect or a previous injury that hadn't been attended to before causing permanent damage.

I had started volunteering at the shelter a few months prior to Cooter's arrival and had already overcome the typical "I wish I could take them all home" syndrome that plagues most volunteers. Nevertheless, by chance I was asked to go looking for somebody in a kennel I had not been in all day, and when I rounded the corner, there was Cooter, bouncing up and down on his front legs since he had such trouble with the back ones. At that moment I knew I had to give him a forever home. After some surgery and the removal of most of his lower teeth, he was able to come home to a big backyard and a doggie door.

Cooter is indeed an old man and he still has trouble with his legs. I don't know how long I'll have him in my life, but his hilarious antics give me something to look forward to each day, and I'll miss him when he's gone. Despite his "handicap," Cooter

is a real go-getter. He has figured out how to dig under my fence and has gone on several adventures, which have luckily ended with a knock on my door by a neighbor who has rounded him up. He has settled into his new home with comfy beds to lie in, friendly laps to snuggle on, and healthy meals to eat.

Cooter has taught me that despite a dog's age and physical (in)ability, adopted dogs are loving, full of life, and always grateful because deep down they know when they've been saved.

G. Edward Imes

Little Alien



After tragically losing our two dogs to cancer within four months of each other, our house seemed strangely empty. Though our Aussie, Darin, had been elderly, Lilly, our English setter-mix, had been much too young to die. Through our sadness we told ourselves to enjoy the freedom of being dog-free for a while, but that didn't work. If a bit of food fell to the floor, it just sat there; there was no one to gobble it up, no one

asking to go in and out the door, no one to sing silly nonsense songs to.

My partner, Dee, had wanted a lap dog for years. We’d never had a small dog of any sort, but after discussing a few breeds, we agreed on a pug. Michigan Pug Rescue’s application was exhaustive, but we understood their cautious scrutiny of prospective adopters. While our application was being processed, we dropped by a “meet the pugs” event. Henry was two, and hadn’t yet been posted online, but there he was, laying upside-down and relaxed in the arms of the rescue coordinator, and they’d only known each other for a couple of days! Perfect, we thought, Dee’s lap dog. I wanted him for Dee, and Dee wanted him because she thought I was smitten. We mentioned our interest to the rescue, not yet too attached, but soon thereafter we learned that Henry would be ours.

And so this bug-eyed, curly-tailed, little gentleman came home with us. For many weeks, I had to remind myself: This is a *dog*—I can treat it like a dog and train it like a dog—it is not a weird little alien. Henry’s cuddliness and charm, his puggy seriousness, and his delight in our company worked his way into our hearts and onto our pillows. I had formerly been a

"no dogs on the furniture" person, but first, I gave in on the couch. It was obvious Henry was used to being on furniture, and I got tired of arguing with him. Eventually the bed was not off limits either. When allowed, Henry likes to snuggle under the covers with his head on my hip. He was supposed to be Dee's dog, but he turned out to be mine.

It's some consolation to my partner that after we'd had Henry for a year or so, we adopted "my" dog. I'd wanted a collie for years, but Mary Abigail is now Dee's dog and as collies go, I will admit she's not exactly purebred. My "young collie" is more of a 10-year-old Boston terrier/pug mix. The only vaguely collie thing about her, and I'm really reaching here, is the way one ear bends over at the tip. Mary Abigail is funny, feisty, homely-cute, stubborn, bossy, and smelly—and we love her. Having lost our Setter-mix too early, it feels like a sort of balance to take Mary in and give her the old age that Lilly didn't have. Mary and Henry are great companions, whether they're wrestling, chasing, snoring, or waiting for each other to give up the best chew (one is always better than the other).

Our "1.5 pugs" fill our hearts and our home. We are thankful to their rescues for taking them in, for screening

applicants, and for letting them come live with us. We're also grateful to our dogs' original families, who cared for them and then recognized that they couldn't anymore, making the difficult decision to let them go. Henry and Mary Abigail aren't perfect, and neither are we. We celebrate them for that! We missed the joy and the work of their puppy days, but we hope to have many happy years together. Whatever fate brings, we're lucky to have them in our lives.

Julie Larson

Better With Baggage



My family always had dogs, so when I finally bought a condo, I was excited to get one of my own. As a conscientious dog-seeker, I researched many breeds before deciding a pug would be the perfect pup for me. Understanding that pugs are prone to numerous health problems, I wanted as much information about my new family member's genetic make-up and predisposition to common pug ailments as possible, which led me to purchase my puppy from a reputable breeder.

Unfortunately, even breeders can't guarantee the health of puppies, and the one for whom I'd waited so long had a terrible reaction to anesthesia and did not make it through his neuter surgery. Needless to say, I was devastated. I vowed I'd never own another pug, possibly not even another dog. I didn't think I could ever bear the pain of losing another animal again.

As time passed, I found myself yearning for the companionship of a furry body. I missed the feel of a wet tongue on my face and the sound of four little paws scampering across the room to greet me each time I walked through the door. I missed hearing the "ferocious" pug warning bark when someone knocked on the front door and the squeak, squeak, squeak of toys. I was finally ready for a new dog, and it absolutely had to be a pug.

This time, though, I had a new perspective on dog ownership. I realized that just as with people, there are no guarantees with pug health or lifespan, and for all the heartbreak I'd felt losing my puppy, somewhere out there was an equally heartbroken pug who had lost the comfort of his original home. I began exploring the Colorado Pug Rescue website, and some of the dog's overwhelming stories caused

me to question whether I was truly ready to adopt. Could I handle a pug with medical or behavioral problems? Did I want a playful young dog or a lovable senior? Was I really prepared to help a displaced dog re-adjust to a new home? I had some doubts, but I filled out the application anyway.

I was soon contacted about Kobe, a 10-month-old, black Pug who had already been in two homes before landing in rescue. I met Kobe the next day. He was in a foster home with three other Pugs, and he was by far the quietest, looking like he'd rather hide than play. His foster mom told me not to be offended if he ran from me. After all, he'd already experienced abuse and neglect in his short life. Though he was a very sweet little dog, he had a hard time trusting strangers, especially men.

As I looked down into Kobe's sad little eyes and contemplated his tragic history, I wondered if I could possibly provide enough love to make up for what he'd missed out on during his first year of life. Laying my fears to rest, Kobe answered my question for me by unexpectedly jumping right into my lap. While I sat with him in the living room of his foster home, I knew he would soon be sitting with me in my own living room.

I spent that night preparing my home to once again have a dog by purchasing new toys and lining a crate with blankets. The next day I adopted Kobe. I knew I had a long road ahead because Kobe was frightened and needed to build self-confidence, so I spent as much time with him as possible. Within a few weeks, Kobe was visibly more comfortable. He and I were already bonding, and though he was still hesitant with strangers, he began approaching other dogs on our daily walks. I decided to enroll him in a training class with the hopes of socializing him a little more.

Kobe loved his class and with each week became more outgoing. He grew into a well-mannered, lovable, goofy guy—everything I had hoped for. Yet I couldn't help but feel like something was missing. When Kobe began nipping at me and trying to play as though I were another pug, I realized he needed a buddy.

I went back to Colorado Pug Rescue and recently adopted Hercules. Not only does the pair endlessly entertain each other, but Hercules' presence has given Kobe the last bit of confidence he lacked. As I look at the two of them curled up next to me on the couch, our family feels complete, and I know

that any future pet in my life will be from a rescue. For every home out there needing a furry critter, there is a furry critter needing a home just as much!

Sarah Keckler

Fear No Moe



In October of 2004, I lost both of my parents in a fire. Being the Indian rebel child that I was, I chose to cope with alcohol and essentially had a nervous breakdown. Luckily, by the grace of God, I became sober about a year and a half after they passed away, and a year later I met my fiancé, Jason, who was accepting of the many things that I had on my plate. Because of my nutty family situation, Jason and I moved in

together only a few months after we began dating, but we promised to support each other no matter what.

Jason helped me face my irrational fears, which were significantly hindering my life. For example, I was terrified of flying, so Jason took me on many flights. His "therapy" worked, and eventually I got over my fear of flying. The next thing we had to conquer was my fear of animals—particularly dogs.

We went to a dog adoption event shortly after I returned back to college, and a pug named Moe stole my heart away. Of course, I was nervous about owning a dog, but as soon as Moe came home with us, he put my fears at ease. Our little pug inspires both Jason and I, teaching us lessons of life, love, and how special it is to be a pug parent. Jason is a surgical resident, and I am very busy with full-time school and a part-time job. Moe is always excited to see us when we come home from a long day, and he's always ready to take a family nap.

Moe was given up at eight months of age by his original owner because she did not want to walk him anymore, giving us a common bond of being displaced from our homes and families that makes us inseparable. While Jason works long

hours, Moe and I are a like a team, conquering dinner and potty time together.

Moe has amazingly transformed my life and helped me conquer my fears. He drives me to do so many things that I've never done before, like attending puppy classes, going to the dog park, and helping out at pug adoption days. I'll be graduating this year with a degree in psychology, and I hope to work at a rehab facility, encouraging others into recovery. With how fearful I used to be, I never thought I'd be encouraging anyone to do anything, but now I know that anything is possible—especially when you have great companions to help see you through!

Aman D. Singh

A "Snort" Break

Puggie Pantry: One afternoon our blind foster pug, Buddy, was nowhere to be found. I frantically searched everywhere—beds, closets, hampers, toy bins—to no avail and could not believe I would have to call the director of our pug rescue to tell her I had lost the pug who had really touched my heart. After a moment crying on the couch, I walked into the kitchen to make my dreaded phone call. As I passed the pantry, I saw Buddy sitting on the first shelf among the paper towels and tissues. He was simply waiting for someone to help him down! I had never been so happy to see anyone before, and four years later I still keep in touch with Buddy's forever home just to make sure I know where that puggie is! -*Lindsay Campbell*

A Bumper, Not a Chewer: The dog we adopted had been surrendered in a crate that he'd chewed through after interminable hours of solitary confinement and boredom. In our home he didn't chew and treated his toys very gently, grabbing one and bumping it into the legs of whoever entered the room to get the attention he so desperately craved. Earning the name "Bumper," our wonderful dog turned out to be a lover, not a chewer, and everyone loved him right back. -*Vonnie May*

Her Name Was Lola



"Courtney, we have a dog for you to foster," said the voice on the other end of my phone as I drove home one early spring afternoon. My heart skipped a beat. I half listened to her as I pulled over to write down the information: five-year-old female, doesn't get along with small children, dog aggression but sweet personality, call the family. I called immediately and set up a meeting for me to pick her up the next day.

The following morning I couldn't talk about anything but my new foster—my first foster pug. I hardly worked and mainly watched the clock, which was moving unusually slow. I looked up directions to the house where I was to get her and checked the local news reports to make sure I wouldn't hit any traffic. Just in case my paperwork blew out the window or was the victim of a flash flood, I made extra copies and stored them in various places. I drove quickly and carefully as I made the 20 minute trip. When I saw the house and started to approach the door I suddenly became fearful. What if they didn't like me? What if their pug was awful?

The door opened, and I heard the familiar sounds of a pug guarding the house. There beyond the woman who had answered the door was a small fawn angel. Her name was Lola.

The rest of the meeting went quickly. I cried as the family told me about her. I could feel their loss, their hurt, and their grief letting go. I could tell they loved her so much that they wanted her to have an opportunity for a better life.

Lola and I drove to my house. She sat quietly in the passenger seat, and occasionally we would steal glances at each

other. As I pulled in the driveway, Lola became excited. My pug, Molly, and Lola introduced themselves and quickly began a friendship. They ran throughout the house chasing each other; the "Pugtona" races I would experience every evening from then on had begun.

Lola was beautiful, and she knew it. If there was ever a diva pug, Lola was it. She walked around the house like it was her kingdom. My cats were her loyal subjects, and Molly was the little peasant girl who envied the princess.

Five months in, Lola was still aggressive with other dogs except mine. Additionally, she didn't like children except my nephew. We were resolved to adopt her as our own, and then the phone rang.

"I have a home for Lola," the rescue volunteer said. My heart stopped. I managed to say a few pleasantries as I wrote down the information, and I quickly called the family before I lost my nerve. We planned to meet the next day. As we drove to their house, I said they had to be perfect, or they can't have her. If Lola's not comfortable, we'll just leave.

We approached the house, and Lola seemed to know where we were going. She quickly ran to the couple sitting on the porch, and they cried because she reminded them of the first pug they had over 30 years ago. At that point I knew that Lola had found her home.

As the meeting progressed, I became absolutely sure that this couple was perfect for Lola, a realization that left my heart heavy. We planned the adoption for the next day, and as we drove off, I cried. I'd like to say they were tears of joy that Lola had found her forever home. I'd like to say they were tears of happiness that this family had finally found their new pug child. But I cried selfish tears of sadness and loss. My little princess would be leaving.

That night I watched her sleep, and I realized that I loved Lola, and Molly loved Lola, but there were other pugs for us to love, too. Somewhere on that cool fall night was an abandoned, cold, lonely, little pug who needed a home. She needed a sister pug who was kind and a human who was patient—she needed us. At that point I let Lola go.

Since then I have had many foster dogs. I still cry when they go, but it's never as hard as it was for my first foster, my first little girl who stole our hearts. Her name was Lola.

Courtney Thornton

Remove *What?*



My name is Norma, and I am a *Chug*: mostly pug and part Chihuahua. That’s the new “designer” name for my breed, which really just means I’m a fabulous mutt.

As a particularly attractive Chug, my greedy humans decided I should have babies—lots and lots of babies. I lived in a little wire cage until it was time for the babies to be born, and then they put me into a warm place for a few weeks. That part

was nice because we snuggled in a blanket, and I was given extra food to help me feed my family. But when I was just getting to know my little ones, those humans took them away and put me back into my cold little cage, thus beginning the whole process anew. This went on for about five years until those crummy people finally decided I was not producing enough lucrative babies. They kicked me out since I was no longer of use to them, which turned out to be the best thing that ever happened to me. By then I wasn't so pretty: my teeth were rotting, and I had a dozen little black nipples hanging down like dried up teardrops, but even so, a rescue took me in and placed me in a home with nice people and some great dogs while I waited for a permanent home.

The new place was great! After receiving some medical care, I slept inside on a bed and ran in a big yard. It took me a while to learn to play with the three other pugs at that home because I had never had a real friend before, but I eventually caught on. Shar, my foster mom, would cuddle me and tell me that she was trying to find the right family for me. I heard her tell people that I might be hard to place because I wasn't looking so good, but she knew I had a sweet soul behind my big

brown eyes. After what I had been through, Shar wanted someone special who could love me and treat me right.

A family finally came to look at me, but they said they were horrified by my stomach and wondered if they could have my nipples *removed*. Seriously? When they called back to adopt me, Shar lied and told them that another family had taken me. She told me that they were not special enough for "Miss Norma," so I stayed with Shar for a while longer. Christmas came, and I was very excited to see a tree in the house—how convenient! I was later informed it was not meant for me, but why not?

About that time, a young woman named Rachel stopped by to see Shar's daughter, Jessi. They are best friends, and Rachel's mom, Beth, is Shar's best friend. Rachel and I just *fell in love!* I could not leave her side, and she could not stop holding me. Rachel had just bought a condo by the ocean, and she wanted me to hang out with her there. Imagine, someone *needed* me just to love them and be loved by them, without wanting to remove any of my anatomy! As a delivery nurse and lactation specialist, Rachel saw my nipples as beautiful badges of honor.

Rachel wanted to start the adoption process right away and bring me to my new home. But her mom told Shar that Rachel didn't need a dog in her life because she was getting settled in her job and new home. Shar felt Rachel's was the perfect new home for me, so she insisted that Beth meet me on Christmas Eve at the annual Open House where Rachel would also be. I was ready to destroy all resistance with an amazing display of cuteness!

That night when Rachel arrived, I flew into her arms, and she would not let me go. I wore a jingling Christmas collar, which rang as I licked her face. Then Beth and her husband, Mark, came in, fully prepared to stand firm, that is, until Rachel introduced us. I've never seen a human melt as fast as Beth did when we met. She gathered me up while Rachel told her my life story. As other people met me that night, most made jokes about my peculiar underside, and Beth rose to my defense like a woman possessed. She said that if Rachel did not adopt me, she would! What were once sad reminders of my old life were now symbols of dignity and courage.

A few days later, Rachel officially adopted me and brought to my new home a short distance away. Beth, now

known as Nonni to me, was there to welcome me. I had a new bed just for me, pretty coats and collars, toys, and my own *Rachel*. I can sit in her lap and look into her eyes, and she knows that I love her as much as she loves me. When she has to work a long shift at the hospital, Nonni takes me to her house, so I am not alone. If I accidentally gain a little weight, Nonni's Boot Camp marches it right off of me! When Rachel took an assignment across the country, she planned a route through pet-friendly hotels, and off we went on an adventure! My new life was nothing short of amazing.

Back home a young man recently came into Rachel's life. He had to get my approval first. While I don't necessarily want to share Rachel, more people loving me can't possibly be bad! Plus, he made clear that he fully understands my station in life when he bought me a life vest so I could accompany him and Rachel for rides in his boat. I still see Shar, and she likes to tell me how Nonni didn't want me but now loves me most!

I know that the people who adopt dogs like me say how much we have enriched their lives, and they could not imagine life without us. Rachel would say that too. But I need to tell her how much she changed mine. It wasn't so long ago that I was

locked alone in an ice-cold cage. Clean water and enough food were luxuries I didn't often experience. My instincts and breeding tell me that I am a companion dog, someone who would love my human above all others by always providing her with friendship and comfort. I truly don't need designer coats, boundless food, toys, and an HDTV tuned to Animal Planet to answer this calling (but I'll take it!). I am happiest and most complete when I am sleeping beside Rachel on the couch, with both of us heaving a deep sigh of satisfaction and peace.

My teardrops, those badges of honor, are fortunately still with me, but thanks to Rachel, any tears I may have cried in the past have long since been wiped away.

Norma, translated by beloved foster mom, Sharon Clarke

Pugmobile



Jump in the car with my three “used” pugs and me, and you’ll see they’re as different as different can be. We’re on our way to the groomer.

In the backseat you’ll find Miss Maribel, a petrified retired puppy mill breeder. She sits as still as a statue with no movement whatsoever. Wait, yes, she is breathing. Good!

Next is Boomie, an owner surrender and couch potato who becomes a canine ping pong ball in the car. He *hates* car rides and is currently bouncing to and fro while emitting a soft, pathetic whine. He loves to bark, but Mommy does not allow that! In his bouncing frenzy he has a total disregard for the comfort of his fellow pug passengers.

Finally take a good look at Beau, who was surrendered by his owners at 13 years young. He's now almost 15, and the resident deputy dog. He's sitting by the window as happy as can be, and despite being deaf and blind, he's "watching" the world go by and wagging his big, floppy tail. One can almost hear him singing our car ride song: "Going for a ride. Going for a ride. Me and the posse are going for a ride!"

We make it to the groomer, but do you dare join us for the return trip home? Come on, chicken!

Beth Herrick

Doggie Soul Mate



At five years old Blaze was surrendered to the pound by his owners, and I still can't figure out why. The shelter workers said they had never seen such a terrified dog when he came in, so they called Compassionate Pug Rescue, and we sprung him *immediately*. My husband and I were to foster him, so a local volunteer pulled him from the shelter while we made the 90-minute drive to go get him.

Blaze turned out to be a joy. Granted, he had unsightly black skin and crusty lumps on his body, which we feared were tumors but turned out to just be the result of a bad yeast infection. Could this have been why he was surrendered? For the next few weeks we gave him medicated baths and medicine, and he assimilated into our lives as though he had always belonged.

Once he regained his health, we began taking him on home visits to potential adopters, but he constantly hid and cowered—especially from men. Because of this, his chances of finding a new family seemed slim. We already had four pugs, a black lab, three cats, a bird, and a turtle, so although he got along great with us, adopting him as a permanent family member didn't really seem like an option. Regardless, when I came home from work, Blaze ran to greet me as if I had just returned from a long trip. And when I called him, he stopped whatever he was doing to come and sit with me.

The volunteer who picked him up from the shelter had given him a grape box and a blanket as a bed. He slept in the box next to my bed at night until one day we decided to upgrade him. We bought him a real bed, but he wanted nothing

to do with it—Blaze just wanted his box. He cried if he couldn't find it and jumped in it if I tried to pick it up. No matter what kind of bed we bought him, Blaze whined for his box. Finally, my husband made a wood frame for the grape box, and we added a pillow with a nice cover in addition to his blanket. Problem solved.

With the box issues out of the way, we still found ourselves at a loss to solve the real problem of finding Blaze a home. It was the holiday season, and the applications for Blaze had stopped coming in. Christmas morning we opened our gifts—the critters, my husband, our son, and me. My last gift was a shirt box, and as I opened it, I saw a homemade story inside. My husband had taken pictures of Blaze doing all the things I love to do, and each picture said how Blaze could help me do them. The last picture was Blaze sitting under our Christmas tree saying that we were each other's gift. My husband had adopted Blaze. He said it was obvious that Blaze was my doggie soul mate.

That was three years ago, and I still cannot think of one reason why someone would surrender him. I am so glad the

shelter called Compassionate Pug Rescue to get Blaze because I believe we were meant to be Blaze's forever family.

I am truly thankful and blessed to have such a wonderful family—flesh and furry!

Tracey Carr

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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