



## Pet Tips 'n' Tales

by Mary Ellen "Angel Scribe"

### Raining Meatballs?

December is miracle month for Pet Tips 'n' Tales! Here is your first story to enjoy!

"Meatball is a mystery," said Debra. "He arrived with a valuable lesson, 'Be careful what you wish for, you may get it, right away, and it may come with some challenges!' A year ago, on a Friday night, my husband, Adam, and I decided it was time for our Pit Bull, Elsa Mae, to have a little brother. Adam had always wanted an English bulldog. There are many good and loving animals in shelters that need homes. So we spent the weekend online, unsuccessfully looking to rescue one.

Monday morning, I arrived at work (out in the middle of the woods) and sitting on the porch was a filthy, tan and white, about three-year-old English bulldog! I bent down to pet him and the male dog rolled over on his back for me to rub his tummy. I told him he was a 'little meatball'.

My boss said the collarless dog had appeared that morning and none of his staff or his neighbors recognized it.

I said, 'If he is here at the end of the day, I will take him to a vet and see if he has a micro chip.' The whole day was surreal because at the end of it the 'surprise' dog was still waiting on the porch, as if he knew he was mine and I just needed time to figure it out. After all, I had prayed him into my existence!

We pulled into our driveway and I called to my husband, 'Come and meet someone!' I was anticipating seeing his face! What are the chances of a stray rare breed dog showing up after we had spent the weekend searching for — one in a million! That is what Meatball is — one in a million.

Our veterinarian confirmed that Meatball was chipped but NEVER registered. What good is a chip without ID to confirm its origin?

The vet sent a "found" bulletin to other veterinarians. We posted the dog on Craigslist, shelters and a bulldog rescue. If someone was looking for him, we made it easy to find him.

After a few months, a friend saw a sign at a grocery store matching our little guy's description. Adam bravely phoned the number, left a message telling them we had their dog and that he was loved. They never called. It was a great relief. We love Meatball. The thought of losing him was devastating. We had his microchip registered to us because we did not want to take a chance that he would disappear from our lives.

Meatball had a nasty eye infection. Could the threat of his impending vet bills led to his abandonment? Or was he severely neglected? His past remains a mystery.

In the meantime, Elsa and Meatball became inseparable, snuggling with each other. He loves his big sister and does



Courtesy Photo

**Adam cuddles Elsa Mae, and Debra shows off Meatball as they explain their one-in-a-million chance of finding Meatball! It was as magical as if he'd been dropped out of the sky!**

whatever she does, just like any little brother. On walks, he speeds up to catch up with her and she slows down so he can.

His big face wrinkles give him such a darn cute look, but they also caused him discomfort. His eyelashes rolled inward and scratched his eyeballs making them cloudy and infected. We also discovered the painful fact that his eyes don't produce tears. We drop artificial tears into his eyes three times a day for his relief and comfort. I can't believe that breeders continue breeding dogs that create this pain for puppies and a financial struggle for their adopters.

Three vets suggested that Meatball receive entropion surgery, a facelift where excess skin is removed from around his eyes so he can keep them open and his eye lashes turned out. Also suggested was having his nostrils enlarged in hopes that he could breathe better. Meatball had surgery and the top nose wrinkle was removed because it was pushing up on his eyes and down on his nose, closing off his nostrils so he couldn't breathe and smell.

The first night after surgery I was concerned. It sounded like he wasn't breathing right. We couldn't hear his proverbial snoring. The surgery was such a success that he was breathing better than ever and his eyes now make tears!

Meatball is a mama's boy. No other creature has ever made me feel so appreciated. He loves

his Poppa and sleeps on the bed between our heads. One of his most endearing qualities is that he appreciates everything - even the things he doesn't like, such as baths and medicated eye drops. Yes, he squirms, huffs and puffs while he is experiencing them, but as soon as it's done he snuggles and loves.

He fits perfectly into our family and we couldn't imagine life without our little Meatball. His arrival was reminiscent of watching a miracle manifest.

### TIPS

"More and more people are using natural and homeopathic vet care," said Debra. "Meatball and his sister are on an all raw food diet that we learned about on Healing Paws Wellness Center's website. [www.healingpawscenter.com](http://www.healingpawscenter.com)

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## SURVEY

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"Clearly Cottage Grove residents are interested in having a healthier community," said Tom Wheeler, executive director of South Lane Mental Health, a Be Your Best partner. "The survey is validation of what many of us in the social services and health sectors already know — that we have some critical issues that need to be addressed, including reducing drug and alcohol abuse and increasing opportunities for better-paying and more meaningful jobs here in Cottage Grove."

The younger sample was less optimistic about Cottage Grove's state of wellbeing compared to the older individuals polled. In the phone survey, 64 percent of respondents agreed with the statement "I think Cottage Grove is a healthy vibrant community" while less than half, 48 percent, of on-line/in-person survey respondents agreed with the statement.

The majorities of both groups

felt Cottage Grove should become a more healthy and vibrant community, but the younger people agreed more strongly with this sentiment.

According to the survey report, Be Your Best aims to identify how Cottage Grove describes a healthy, vibrant community, then determine what steps locals are taking (or could take) to foster their own well-being. The survey represents a partnership between United Way of Lane County and a group composed of local stakeholders and agencies dedicated to local health.

"Although the challenges that the sample identified, like unemployment and lack of family-wage jobs, cannot be solved by Be Your Best Cottage Grove, there are many opportunities where Be Your Best Cottage Grove can help the community maintain their strong sense of civic pride and help the community work together toward a common goal," the report stated.

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