



Pet Tips 'n' Tales

by Mary Ellen "Angel Scribe"

Dearest Readers,

I do not just write about pets and miracles, I live a life "filled with miracles" and am the author of "Expect Miracles" and "A Christmas Filled With Miracles".

Here is my favorite miracle wrapped beautifully in Holiday Spirit. Christmas eve forty years ago my husband, Howard, and I prepared for an unusual, possibly depressing, Christmas holiday because my stepfather, Jim, had terminal cancer. But, never in a million Christmases did we expect to end up immersed in a miracle!

At the time, as newly weds living of Vancouver Island in Canada, we had to take the ferry from Nanaimo to reach mainland Vancouver, and my parents' home. Along with the usual assortment of

luggage and Christmas gifts, we also packed our "traveling trouble-adors" Channel and Camelot, Shaded Silver Persian cats whose fluffy, white winter coats resembled the cuffs on Santa's red jacket. For our "listening pleasure" they meowed their way to our holiday destination.

A torrential downpour greeted us in Vancouver, the weather thus matching our moods. As we pulled up to my childhood home, it's Christmas lights sparkliness transfixed me, transporting me back in time to when my sister was still alive and my brother home, versus half a world away in Australia. My how things have changed over the years! We opened the car doors and out leapt the cats, eager to re-explore the familiar territory.

I entered the house through the back door into the kitchen where Jim's well-stocked "pharmacy" stood as the ammunition in his war against pain and illness. A heaviness hung in the air as if the Spirit of Christmas had yet to make an appearance, or had refused to board the ferry with us, purr-furring instead to remain behind on the Island with all of our friends and neighbors. So, we decided to make an early night of it and all went to bed.

I was the first to awaken on Christmas morning, the most magical day for children everywhere. Everyone else in the household was still peacefully asleep so even though it was only 7:00 a.m., I decided to call my best friend, Rita, back on Vancouver Island; after all, her giggling children would have awakened her hours ago. "Hello", she answered in a weak, "crackly" voice. "Rita, are you all right?!", I asked. "Who is this?!", a total stranger replied.

Oh! Oh! Apparently, the busy holiday phone lines had crossed resulting in awakening an elderly woman. I apologized for waking her, but she said, "Not to worry. It is nice to have someone to talk to, as I don't have anything to do today, nor anyone to talk to."

No one is a stranger to me, so we began chatting.

I had phoned Rita on the Island, which is a long distance number, so I was curious as to where this woman lived. "Burnaby," she said. About ten miles away!

I used to be a PBX switchboard operator and know that when many phones are in use "wires" get crossed. But, how could this be? She only lived a few miles away when their phone numbers and area codes weren't even close!

Introducing herself, she said that her name was Faith and that she was an 80 year old widow. Her deceased husband, Dick, and she did not have any children. She continued that she had no reason to get up, as she had no one to share Christmas with. She was "glad" I phoned, "A bit of a Christmas gift." She was all alone, while we at least had each other. Yet, she considered this "wake up" call to be a gift!

Faith and I talked for an hour. My mother awakened in the meantime so I asked her if Faith could share Christmas dinner with us and she said, "Yes." Faith hung up the phone and hurriedly dressed to catch a bus for her visit. Little did the bus driver or us know that he would really be delivering a Christmas miracle.

Excitedly anticipating the arrival of our "mystery" guest, our home's atmosphere was transformed from "doom and gloom" into JOY, the delicious aroma of the holiday turkey wafting from the oven, all through the house.



I met the "gift" of Faith at the bus stop; we smiled at each other. As a child, I frequently "rescued" stray animals, but this new rescue was much more fulfilling, resulting in a wonderful visit, sharing a delicious meal and lots of laughter!

After dinner, Faith and I donned our coats in preparation to drive her home but we were sidetracked by a miracle so extraordinary that we are still in awe of it after all of these years!

Faith and my mother were saying their last "Good-byes!" when my mother realized that we had not shared last names. "What is your last name?", my mother asked her, to which Faith replied, "Holden."

"No!" my mother said not understanding, "That's OUR last name. What is YOUR last name?"

We all experienced the shock of our lives when Faith, looking confused and repeated, "That is MY last name. Holden. H-o-l-d-e-n."

I had never told Faith our last name, this was years before the internet, so she could not have looked us up. What are the odds? The same last name, Holden, spelled the exact same way!

How had we been divinely put together with someone with the same family name?

What a miraculous, Divine, coincidence! Obviously, the universe was saying, "Family is not by birth alone, but also by Divine appointment. We are all one!"

Still in shock, (and our coats), we sat down on the living room couch beside the ticking grandfather clock, unprepared for even more as-yet-to-be-revealed surprises as Faith shared the story of her life. Her husband was from England, as was my stepfather, Jim, with both families migrating to Winnipeg, Canada. Both Dick and Jim were the second of four children, with the same combination of brothers and sisters in the same birth order, and all of the siblings remaining childless after marriage. Faith and my mother had attended the same high school. An amazing list of coincidences, as if the two women were reading from identical books of life, reiterating one similar experience after another.

How was it possible to dial a long distance number on Christmas morning, but end up connecting with a "local" person who needed us as much as we needed her?! Unbelievably mysterious--God obviously works overtime on Christmas; how else could I have possibly connected to a "stranger" who is actually "family" with a last name of Holden?! It is a Christmas and a miracle we will never forget! And the clincher: Faith revealed that her phone number is UNLISTED! So, even if we had wanted to locate her, we could not have, adding evening more mystery to this Christmas Morning Miracle!

May your holidays be magical, filled with miracles, family and friends. And if the holidays look dull create some magic and memories for others.

WHERE WILL YOU BE RINGING IN THE NEW YEAR?

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and
HAPPY NEW YEAR

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Christmas through the eyes of a child...

