

Puppy Love

December 2022

Newsletter of *Belle Amore Dachshunds*

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70th ANNIVERSARY Miracle on 34th Street

Two big eyes peered out from a little face framed by floppy, brown-and-white speckled ears. The little Cocker Spaniel rested in the grass beneath the bench on which his master, an old man with a cane, was sitting.

"Miss," the man said, "would you do me a favor and walk my dog around the lake? I have to rest my old bones today." The woman wanted to say "No, my 40-year-old bones are pretty weary too." They had been weary every day for the past year, since last September when her husband had been killed in a terrorist bombing. But then there were those two deep, doggy eyes watchfully waiting. Grudgingly, she accepted the leash that was extended to her. The dog leaped up in eager anticipation, as if he'd just been released from prison.

He charged ahead with gusto. Soon the DOG was taking the woman for a walk, rather than vice versa. The woman was puffing by the time they had circled the Bronxville Lake and returned to the "starting" bench. There was only one problem; no sign of the dog's owner. She searched and searched to no avail. No one in the park remembered the man.

She went to the police station and reported the incident. There was no report of a man of his description missing. The police checked hospitals and even the morgue. Still no sign of the old man.

"What am I supposed to do with HIM?" she asked, pointing an accusing finger at the little dog parked at her feet. "Well, you could bring him to the pound," the policeman said. "Good idea," she answered. The officer continued: "These days the pound is pretty crowded, though." She shrugged. But when she looked down, there were those two soulful eyes



Santa has been way too busy stocking up his toy bag for these good boys and girls, it's about to burst!

and so she said, "I could bring him home for a day or two." A day or two stretched into a week, which soon stretched into a month, then two, then three. The woman and dog often went for brisk walks around the lake, but there was no sign of the old man.

The woman's life changed considerably. Having to get up early to walk the dog, she could no longer sleep late. Since she had to feed the dog several times a day, she got back into the habit of eating three meals a day, a habit broken since her husband died. The dog ripped up some of her old clothes and she had to shop for new ones, the first new clothes she had bought in over a year. She needed them because she had met some new friends (fellow dog walkers) and had begun to socialize again.

On Christmas Eve, the dog seemed restless as he and the woman circled the Bronxville Lake. He stopped and stared at each person they passed. Several times he scampered into the woods surrounding the lake, sniffing and darting his eyes around at anything and everything. He appeared to be on a search mission.

The woman thought it was strange because the dog's mood seemed to be in sharp contrast with her own. She was feeling so much more peaceful these days. She bent down and patted the little dog, trying

to calm him down and she mumbled, "He never even told me your name."

They stopped for a rest at the bench where it had all begun three months ago. The dog began barking and sniffing at a small scrape of paper stuck to the bench. The woman picked it up and was startled to read, "His name is Angel." She looked down at the dog, now resting at her feet; he, too, had found peace.

She thought about the little old man with the cane who had given her the dog. He was chubby, with red cheeks, and a long white beard. He said he was tired, but he didn't look it. In fact, he looked quite hale and hearty. She thought of the movie "**Miracle on 34th Street**." Hmm. She questioned herself: Am I losing it?"

She tugged at the dog's leash and said, "Come on Angel, we're going home." Angel jumped to attention. She was startled to see that his eyes were gazing upward ~ not at her, but at something way, way above her. She followed his gaze but saw nothing.

As they headed home, she couldn't help but think that maybe, just maybe, **34th Street** didn't have the monopoly on Christmas miracles. There had been at least one in Bronxville. She quickened her pace. Were there more to come?

by Gail Farrelly, published as an original short story, *It's a Dog's Life: A Christmas Tale* in December 2011

Merry Christmas!



A Very Special School Christmas Concert



There's nothing cuter than little kids belting their lungs out during a holiday concert, unless, of course, they are accompanied by an absolutely precious deaf therapy dog wearing his best holiday costumes! Cole is a deaf Pit Bull puppy who works as a therapy dog at the Dr. Mennies School in South Jersey alongside his music teacher dad. Cole's profound and wonderful message is "A Disability is not an inability, it's a superpower!" Cole is *making a difference by being different!*



Cole was awarded the
2022 Therapy Hero Dog of the Year
by the American Humane Hero Dog