

Moses' Story

The Miraculous Story of Moses Titan, The Christmas Pup



It was a cold Christmas Eve afternoon and I was heading north on Santa Fe way out of Douglas County, heading into the city to meet a friend, and something happened that changed my life. I was running late, as usual, speeding along at about 55 miles an hour. Somehow, out of the corner of my eye, I noticed a familiar shape on the side of the road. It appeared to be the outline of the top of a dog's head! The image was barely visible down the slight embankment by the side of road and in the tall grass. I went by so quickly that I thought surely I couldn't have seen what I thought I saw. I reflected on needing to hurry on in order to not be late for my

appointment, but something told me I just had to turn back to see if I really saw something. I pulled over onto the dirt and backed up about 50 feet. With cars speeding by me, I walked back to where I thought "it" had been. To my amazement, I was looking down into the most pitiful face I had ever seen. This was no dog -- this

was a puppy! He was very tiny, less than ten pounds, and was completely emaciated. He was literally just skin and bones with patches of black hair missing from all over his body. His nose was crusty and green slime oozed out of each nostril. He had a horrendous, hacking cough and scabs all over his body. It was chilling to see such a sight and yet my heart immediately went out to this poor, pathetic pup. As I reached down to pick him up, he was motionless - sitting facing the traffic speeding by a few yards away - without expression on his face. As I reached under his arms and lifted him into the air, I saw his leg beaming with red blood and two deep gashes that went down to the bone. I was sickened by this sight, and



knew from that point that I had to help him. I cradled him by my side and walked back to my Jeep. As I placed him on the passenger seat, he looked up at me with a look of gratitude, his tail wagged once, and then he crawled onto the floor and did not move a muscle for the next several hours while I drove where I needed to go and back home again. I figured the thing he needed most at this point was rest and

protection from the cold. As I stared down at him and the extent of his injuries, I was absolutely amazed. It felt surreal and felt like fate. It was one of those feelings of being in the exact right place at the exact right time, as if by divine intervention.

He was at first unable to drink water - did not seem to understand the concept. He was so weak he could barely move and seemed so dazed and disconnected from the world around him. I finally cajoled him into drinking a little water and he then immediately fell back into motionlessness. When I got him home, the first thing I had to do was give him a bath. He was absolutely disgusting. As I gently washed him with soap and warm water in my utility sink, his hair fell out in clumps. He clung to me like an infant and was docile in my arms. I wrapped him in a soft towel and cradled him in my arms. I cleaned and bandaged his leg wound. I took him to the living room and sat on the floor in front of my gas fireplace, letting him feel the warmth of the fire and safety of our home.



Soon, I decided to offer him a bowl of milk. He gobbled it up like he had not eaten in a month as he did the second bowl of milk I put down. After he kept that down a while, I got him a bowl of kibble, which he noisily devoured and begged for another bowl, which was quickly produced. Our mysterious puppy fell asleep with a full belly, warm, and dry for the first time in who knows how long.

We sat together as a family that Christmas eve, nestled around the fireplace and pouring our love out to this puppy as we debated what to call the little guy. We finally decided on the biblical name "Moses" because he too had been found as a baby in the tall grass. There was also a strong vote for the name "Titan", which was added as his middle name, to reflect that he was found close by Titan Road. So, little Moses Titan became our Christmas miracle, bringing our family close and making us reflect on the true meaning of Christmas.

The day after Christmas, we took him to see our vet, a wonderful woman by the name of Paula Bumpers at Canyon View Animal Hospital. In the spirit of the holidays, someone in the family had tied a bright red ribbon around the puppy's neck. The vet later told me that she was going to just tell me to put him down, his injuries were so severe. But when she saw the ribbon and our love for him, she couldn't bring herself to say the words. Paula was horrified by his condition and very eager to help, but wondered where to start! One of his canine teeth had been knocked upside down and was sticking into his gum. With the extent of his injuries and infection, it was clear that he couldn't be put under anesthesia. Would you believe that that puppy sat there motionless while she pulled that tooth out of its socket?!? It was truly pitiful. The vet said it plainly: "All this little guy knows is pain."

Paula said that from the extent of his bowed legs (a growth deformities from malnutrition), she estimated that Moses had been out on his own for at least a

month. It is a miracle that he survived - the area is full of foxes and coyotes, not to mention cars. And with the freezing temperatures and snow, it is simply amazing. Paula thought the leg gashes were from being hit by a car. Luckily, he had no broken bones. She doctored up his wounds professionally and also showed me how to do bandage changes. In addition to the myriad of tests for parasites, mange, and the like, she added an antibiotic and some other medicines. She also noticed an odd thing - this puppy had had his dewclaws removed! This puppy was a purebred black lab! So, how in the world did he end up in such a state? Did he wander away? Did he get dumped? It remains a mystery to this day.

Over the next days and weeks, Moses slowly began to re-cooperate. His cough was so bad and his poor body so worn out. When I cuddled with him, he was so beautiful to me - but when I'd turn away and do something else and then return, my stomach would lurch at the sight of him. I knew he needed love and warmth and that he wasn't going to survive without it.



I slept on my sofa those first nights, with him lying on my chest. I was up all night tending to him, patting his back at his hacking coughs and taking him outside frequently to go to the bathroom. The poor dog was terrified of the cold outside - he would start to whimper and whine as soon as I took him outside. What a struggle to housebreak a puppy terrified of being left outside in the cold! I finally borrowed a cute little sweater from a teddy bear and dressed him in it. It fit perfectly and added some protection and warmth for his ravaged body.

We went through countless bandage changes both at home and at the Vet for her to check up on his healing. His antibiotic did not immediately clear up his horrific pneumonia and so we had to start him on a second course of an even stronger antibiotic. With each vet visit, this little guy grew more and more strong and more and more revived. By three months, he had grown back all his hair and looked like any other cuddly puppy. He was full of pep, curiosity, and excitement. Our vet could hardly believe her eyes!



One may wonder what effect this traumatic beginning had on little Moses Titan. He definitely was delayed in many ways. He could not even make eye contact the first few weeks and he was unable to bond. He was very slow moving and slept an incredible amount of time. He loved to stare into our gas fireplace, motionless and mesmerized. Today, a large scar on his back left leg is the only evidence that this is even the same dog who survived such a traumatic beginning. He is very calm for a one year old lab and still loves to sleep. From the beginning, I knew that Moses was special and that he had a special gift for the world. I knew he had a calling in life and that I had to help him fulfill it. It was then that I decided that

Moses should become a therapy dog! I took great pride in teaching this little guy and he has proven to be a great student. He is my pride and joy and I love to take him with me everywhere I go. I work as a Hospice Social Worker, doing home visits and so Moses became my little copilot -- and a source of great joy to the patients I visit! In August 2004, Moses and I completed and passed the Denver Pet Partners examination. He was approximately one year old at that time and even passed as able to visit "complex" environments. I believe that his temperament is so good because of his tragic beginning. He is so happy to be warm and safe that nothing fazes him. Not loud noises, not vacuums, nothing! We are still waiting for his formal registration materials to come in the mail and look forward to getting assigned to a site. Moses has a great affinity for children and I am hoping that he can do visits to Denver Children's Home or other similar facility for abused or neglected kids. Moses would certainly be a dog they could relate to - he has also suffered a traumatic beginning. I love to share Moses' story because I believe he is an inspiration to all who struggle through adversity. He is my true Christmas miracle!



Editor's Note:

Elena, your act of compassion toward this little black lab puppy exemplifies such a wonderful emotional and spiritual connection with animals. The way in which you have promoted the human-animal bond and displayed such a deep respect for animals through this act embodies everything that Denver Pet Partners stands for. We are honored to have you and Moses as part of our team and as our Pet Partner Team of the Month for December 2004. We have yet to realize the full gifts and powers that Moses possesses. However, I am confident that he will transform many lives within the coming years as a therapy dog. Your story is inspiring and hopefully all who read it will be empowered to look beyond themselves and be inspired to strive for a stronger communion with all creatures.

Diana McQuarrie

*"How are we to build a new humanity? Reverence for life.
Existence depends more on reverence for life than the law and the prophets.
Reverence for life comprises the whole ethic of love in its deepest and highest sense.
It is the source of constant renewal for the individual and for mankind."*

- Albert Schweitzer