



“Tails” From Real Life Heroes

by Sharon Fedor

They don't wear the Medal of Honor, the Purple Heart, or the Medal of Valor on their uniforms. They don't even wear a uniform, but they are heroes nevertheless. They wear a long, or short, or shaggy fur coat.

Their stories astound us, their videos go viral, their actions have saved lives, and all they want is a bowl of chow, water, a little TLC, and a place to call home. They are Heroes of the four-legged kind.

When we think of hero animals we tend to think of Man's Best Friend, and certainly when we look at photos of the dogs who served at 9-11, one can see in their eyes they deeply understood the tragedy it was. Some of them searched through the rubble for 11 days, meeting death hourly. Without a doubt, they and their owners are unsung heroes. But the story of animal heroes is a much broader, and wider picture than just our canine friends.

Take for instance the ordinary tabby cat from California, ... an unlikely hero you might surmise, not so! Tara the tabby, is owned by a family whose four year old little boy likes to ride his bike. Riding along one sunny California day, out runs an unleashed, viscous dog, who for some reason didn't like this little boy on his bike. The dog proceeded to attack the child's leg so viciously, that it knocked the bike over, dragging and shaking the child to the ground, making the little boy vulnerable to even more hurt. The tabby, not wasting a second, sprang into action, and lunged at the dog, connected, and chased the dog - gone. The child suffered two bite marks, and needed ten stitches. Jeremy, the four year old boy, states Tara is his hero.

A little dog who someone in Pennsylvania threw in a trash dumpster, and closed the lid, became the guardian angel of a little girl named Maya, who has a rare neurological disorder. A Speech Therapist, recommended the little girl's family adopt a dog to help Maya with her socialization skills. This little girl who rarely spoke, developed seizures, up to as many as six a day. It was Jack, the little, white dog, who someone threw away, that sensed the first seizure, alerted the family, and protects, and breaks Maya's falls during seizure episodes. Maya's mom states her daughter is often shunned by other children, but Jack, filled the void of friendship, and Maya can now tell it best when she says of Jack, "He loves me."

A 3 year old boy wandered away from his mom, and fell almost 20 feet down into, Binti Jua, a Western Lowland Gorilla's, enclosure. Instead of showing any aggressive behavior towards the child, she cradled the child with human-like maternal instincts, and carried the child to safety. All the while, she was carrying her own 17 month old baby on her back. Zoo workers said it was an image they will never forget.

Oddly enough, an Australian farmer was butted by a cow, fell into a pile of manure and lay helpless with a shattered hip. It was late Spring, and for five days the farmer endured rain storms, hot days, and cold nights. His dog brought him bones, but it was the goat who kept him alive. The goat discovered him the first evening, the farmer discovered a bottle, and was able to milk her to keep him from starving. The goat returned to the farmer each night to keep him warm. Friends stopped by this remote farm to pick out a new kid, found the farmer, and called an ambulance. Well done faithful goat!

Animals protect us, befriend us, keep us warm, love us, tune into our needs, entertain us, but do we do enough for them?