

Maggie's' Rabbits

By

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To God who gave me a talent, the talent to write...

To my family and friends who always said I could it.

To Tess, my motivator, the one who got me to write.

And of course to Maggie, who's playfulness, lead to this story.

Introduction

When people look and talk, about the animal kingdom, in the wild or even in their own backyards, they are amazed how animals act towards each other. In the wild there are predators and prey, even in their backyards, or in the house, it's the same, predators and prey. But once in awhile, a kind of friendship develops between them. Sometimes you'll see dogs and squirrels tease each other, cats and birds will do the same on occasions. Oh sure, there's the chance that they will become predator and prey, but sometimes they just like to have one or the other chase them for the fun of it. Squirrels will try to get dogs to chase them around the yard and up the tree, and sometimes dogs will lie in wait, looking like their resting, waiting for the squirrels to think that it's safe, and then boom, the dog will get up and at a full run and chase those squirrels up the tree. A bird in the home will sometimes wait until the cat is asleep and then start to make some noise and wake the cat up, and then the cat will wait for the bird to be asleep and then go and hit the birdcage just to repay the bird for waking the cat up. It's comical sometimes and sometimes serious, but it looks like they have a friendship like little kids have. Like kids just having fun, playing tag.

The story you are about to read is true. It's about a dog and a group of rabbits who have developed a friendship of sorts. It didn't start out at that first, friends, but after a couple of days, the friendship between these animals took place. The dog looks for the rabbits and the rabbits look for the dog. And when they see each other, let the fun begin.

I'm telling this story as I have seen it, but I'll let you the reader, decide. Is there friendship or what?

Maggie

'What am I doing?' I say to myself as I pull out of the driveway at 11 o'clock at night, 'Practically everybody in town is in bed, watching television or something and here I am taking my dog, Maggie, to look for rabbits! Crazy, that's what it is crazy.' But when I look in the rear view mirror and see Maggie with her ears up, and alert, I say to myself it's worth it considering what she has been through in her life. Let me tell you about her and her rabbits.

I adopted Maggie several years ago from a humane society in a nearby town after Shamrock my little beagle died. It was a few months later when I decided to think about getting another dog. I decided to go to a humane society to see what was there. I went to the society here in town but there wasn't any one dog that caught my interest, so I went to another town the next day with the same results. Finally, I went to the society in another town and got there too late, it was closed. So, the next day I went in the morning and guess what? The place didn't open until noon. Since I didn't feel like driving back and forth, I decided to do some shopping in this town until the society was opened. It was after twelve when I got back to the humane society and there were quite a few people there already. They, the humane society, let people who were interested in adopting a pet to go back into the kennel area and look at the animals that were up for adoption. As I entered the kennel area, there was an empty kennel with a card above the gate and the card read, 'Maggie, German Sheppard, Age 2 years old.' For some unexplained reason I stood there for at least ten minutes just reading the card. I finally got my eyes off of the card and walked around the other kennels looking at the dogs up for adoption. But I was drawn back to that kennel with Maggie's card, staring at it. I went back to the front desk and started talking to humane officer there, just talking about dogs in general, never asking about Maggie. As we were talking I seen a dog that was silver and white and thought that dog looked cute. I didn't say anything. After a while that one dog I saw was taken back into the kennels. After some more small talk the humane officer said, "What about Maggie? Would you like to see her?" I said sure I would since I read her card so much. So he went back and got her and much to my surprise Maggie was that silver and white dog I seen earlier!

The officer said I could take Maggie outside for a walk in the area just alongside the parking area for awhile, about fifteen minutes. So Maggie and I went for walk, and she was very nice, but with a peculiar habit, she walked sideways. After we got back in the office, I sat down w and Maggie sat next to me and wanted me to pet her. So I did. After some time it was time for Maggie to go to her kennel to eat and rest. It was close to closing time and I asked about her walk. The officer told me she walked like that because the people who had her since a pup tied her up outside with a heavy chain so her movements were limited. They also mistreated her. They would beat her with a fishing rod when she did something wrong or thrown down into the basement for punishment. She was shot, had Lyme disease, beaten, undernourished, amongst other things. Well, I decided right there and then, that I wanted to adopt her. I filled out the paperwork and was told that I had to wait for Monday to come before they decided on my adopting her. This was a Saturday afternoon when I seen her. All day Sunday I waited, anticipating. Monday morning rolled around, no phone call. Afternoon came, still no call. So I called them and they said they were making up their mind on who should adopt Maggie, this one family or me. They said they'll call back in an hour. Boy, was that a long hour. Then the phone rang, I picked it up, and on the other end the person said, 'Congratulations, Maggie adoption has been approved. When do want to pick her up?' I said, 'I'm on my way.' And was out the door before they could say goodbye, well, to make a long story short, I got her home, got in touch with her old vet, and found out she was five not two years old, no difference, she was my dog. She got out of the habit of walking sideways after a couple of weeks. And her silver and white color finally got back to its original color of black and tan after two years with proper nourishment and tender loving care. She still has some mental scars, like fishing rods and the basement. I gave up fishing because of her fear of rods and I never had tried to get her to come down into the basement. But she's happy and content with her home now and so am I happy and content not just as having her as a pet, but as a companion as well.

Shall we get back to the rabbits now? Let's see, there are Hop-Scotch, Grandpa, Bright Eyes, Signs, The Twins, and Little Pete amongst others. How did they get their names? Let's find out.

Hopscotch

How did we start looking for rabbits at this time of night? Easy, the park that we usually go to closes at eleven every night. So one day we were running extremely late and since the park was closed already, I decided to take her someplace else. The place I decided on was a quiet side street; it's about three blocks long, and off a street that's somewhat busy but not too busy. On one side of the street is the back of a grocery store and on the other side, the side and back of a hotel. Nice and quiet. No cars, no people, no rabbits, nothing, just peace and quiet.

Well, the first couple of times we went there all was quiet. Then one night when we arrived at this place, Maggie was just sitting in the car looking around, like she was saying, "I wish there was something to do here besides walk." After I got out of the car and was about to open the back door to let her out, she saw something that grabbed her attention and she wanted to get out of the car so fast, I thought she was going to go through the window. I just had enough time to grab her leash and close the car door before she scampered to the front of the car. There she froze, standing perfectly still. I couldn't see what she was looking at, but I knew it had to be something. I followed her gaze and lo and behold, behind this small bush was a rabbit. Just an ordinary run of the mill rabbit, little did I know that this rabbit was about to change the way we did things from now on. Maggie started to move forward ever so slightly, getting lower to the ground as she moved. Now this rabbit was either asleep or oblivious to Maggie creeping up on it, for it didn't even bat an eyelash, if rabbits have eyelashes. Maggie's belly was about four inches off and about two feet from this rabbit, when all of a sudden this rabbit jumped and took off hopping down the sidewalk. Maggie got up out of her crouch and watched that rabbit hop away. I thought, and as Maggie did also, that the rabbit was going to keep on hopping till it got out of sight or found its hole. But no, it stopped about twenty yards from us and sat there with its back to us. Just sitting there, like it had no cares in the world. So Maggie and I started walking towards it. As we drew nearer to the rabbit, Maggie once again began to get lower to the ground. This time the rabbit turned around, looking straight at Maggie as if saying, "You're never going to catch me you dog." Maggie continued to get closer, this time within a foot and stopped. Guess what? You guessed it, it took off again. This time, hopping from one side of the sidewalk to the other side until it ran around the corner. Maggie gave chase but when she got to the corner, the rabbit was out of sight. Nowhere to be seen. This was our first but not last encounter.

The next night, we returned to same spot, parked in the same place, and lo and behold, there was the rabbit, behind the same bush. Maggie saw it before I even had the car in park. She just stared at that rabbit. This time when I opened the door, Maggie didn't rush to get out. Instead she just walked out very softly. She waited until I closed the door and then proceeded to walk towards the front of the car slowly, and low to the ground. When she got to the front of the car, the rabbit was already out from behind the bush and sitting on the sidewalk. Maggie just stared at that rabbit. Then she started to walk really slowly, one paw at a time. She would stop every couple of inches with one paw in the air, staring at her rabbit. In the meantime, that rabbit laid down like nothing was happening or going to happen. Maggie stepped up on the curb ever so closer to that rabbit. This time she got within a foot of it and just what? You guessed it. Off goes the rabbit down the sidewalk. But this time the rabbit did something different. It hopped about three feet then jumped from one side of the sidewalk to the other then straight for another three feet then side to side again before continuing straight for about another two feet. By this time Maggie was on the sidewalk and still low to the ground, but she started to walk a little faster, trying to gain on that small bundle of fur. She got within a foot again and off goes the rabbit, doing the same hopping motion. Straight, then side to side, then straight again, like it was playing a game. By this time, Maggie was getting a little frustrated with its antics. So she decided to charge. It doesn't take Maggie long to get up to speed, maybe a second or two. Off she went, straight for that rabbit. But the rabbit was a second quicker. This time it went straight as fast as it could with Maggie right on its tail, about a foot from it, dragging me along with her. Once again that rabbit turned the corner and was gone. Right down the sidewalk as fast as it could go. Maggie turned the corner and all she saw was this rabbit racing down the sidewalk like it was shot of a cannon. No chance to catch up with that speedster, so she turned around, looked at me, and like she was saying to me, "Next time I'm getting that fur ball, and wear your running shoes will you!"

Over the next few days, we repeated the same thing. Down the sidewalk, side to side, give chase, turn the corner, and wave bye-bye as the rabbit scurried down the sidewalk. I said to Maggie, "We should give that rabbit a name." I was thinking of some names, but none of them fit. What could I name it? Since the rabbit ran straight, then side to side, straight, side to side and straight again like it was playing the child's game hopscotch. That's it! That's its name!

Hopscotch!

Night after night, it was the same thing. Maggie and Hopscotch, down the street, around the corner, and wave bye-bye. Then one night, Hopscotch was sitting sideways on the sidewalk, just a couple of feet from where we parked, Maggie got out of the car and did something different. Instead of going to the front of the car, she went to the back of it. She peeked around the backend of the car and seen Hopscotch just sitting there, perfectly still. So Maggie turned and walked in the opposite direction for a few yards, made a wide turn, got on the sidewalk, and crept up on Hopscotch from the back slowly and quietly as she could be. Now Hopscotch was waiting for Maggie to come from in front of the car, not thinking that Maggie was sneaking up from the rear. Maggie got within inches of Hopscotch and laid down right behind Hopscotch. Hopscotch was probably thinking where was Maggie? She wasn't coming in front of the car to play. So Hopscotch lay there, very still, not knowing that Maggie was right behind her. Finally, Hopscotch got up and turned towards the car and boom! There's Maggie! Maggie stood up so fast; I think Hopscotch thought that this was it, the end of its life .But no. Hopscotch jumped about four feet in the air, and I would say, turned in mid-air, and hit the sidewalk running as fast as its little paws could move, no side to side but straight to the corner and straight down the sidewalk. Maggie just stood there, looking as if she was laughing and saying, "Gotcha!" For the rest of her walk, Maggie appeared to be so pleased with herself that she got the better of Hopscotch.

Every night, Maggie and Hopscotch would play with each other; one chasing the other .Hopscotch would change things once in awhile, by running in its usual fashion, but from one side of the street to the other side and back again. Hopscotch even got so brave that when I stopped the car and put in park, got out and let Maggie out, Hopscotch would come from behind the bush and would be sitting there right by driver's side door, waiting for Maggie to play, as if it was saying, "Catch me if you can." There were some other rabbits around watching Maggie and Hopscotch running around, but Maggie didn't want any part of them. She was having too much fun with Hopscotch.

Maggie and Hopscotch still have fun together, but sometimes Hopscotch isn't there and sometimes is. Funny thing, sometimes when Maggie is walking down the street, Hopscotch follows right alongside, a few feet between them of course. Hopscotch will follow Maggie for her entire walk and even back to the car. Before Maggie gets into the car, she'll glance over to Hopscotch, and Hopscotch will stand up on its hind feet and look at Maggie. Strange, it was like their saying to each other, "Bye. See you tomorrow." And you know what; I really think they are saying that. Hopscotch: Maggie's first friend.

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