

ANIMAL FRIENDS.....

I think the true picture of Jimba's growing up cannot be properly portrayed without describing the character and cunning antics of the animal fold who shared his home and his bed and his environment.

Jim and I have never been able to regard animals as "lower" forms of life... (and being less than ourselves) but rather as equals with all of our virtues and a few of the vices and many other beautiful attributes, and much more which nature gave them in attempt to equalize their lot since they can hardly make out in the present world evolution of things, depletion of their natural habitats, etc., in spite of the love and help and tender care of human kind.

However, my husband, Jim's father, and his family did not share these tender sentiments of ours and little else that had to do with us, except in ~~times~~ times their reasons of trouble and adversity, when they were quick to seek my aid, and were not rebuffed though I had little in common with them or they with me, in fact. Some of them harbored a poorly concealed notion that being as fit and able as I was in the skills of survival was unbecoming a female of my size and stature and somehow detracted from the thing they called respectability.

And so it was concluded by the house of Jones that pigeons were messy things, none of which was good, and it was scarcely decent of me to have rigged a nursery for ~~the~~ "Pidge Widge" beside my back door. Time her droppings had to be cleaned frequently, but I had strung a bushel farm basket upon nails by the wire hand holds close under the roof of the back porch. Kitchen and bedrooms were within sound of her voice as she crooned her babes to sleep while gentle winds in summer rocked their cradle. We adored going to sleep to the sound of her ~~own~~ crooning, little Jim and I...

It is unfortunate that one must fight to have and hold a paradise permanency and to make wee creatures happy, but so it was with me in the course of marriage.

I had infrequently required the spouse and his younger brother to buff the back porch on a few occasions to remove ~~the~~ Pidge's droppings because I was so often working away from home and this was none to their liking since it required effort, and they began to plot to remove Pidge-Widge. Took me a while to catch on... Fact is, Bill, the brother-in-law had made two 200 mile runs before I learned of this. Pidge had beaten him home on both occasions. There was homing instinct in her genes for which I was very thankful and to reinforce this, I held long conversation with her like, "Don't let em put you in a car, girl, but if they do, be sure and watch direction carefully, sweetheart, because I have no way of tracing you... yet. But don't you worry, sweet girl... I shall inform them that if once more they try it, they are in deep, dark trouble. I will band you, now, and put this little tinkle bell on. They can remove these, of course, so you must watch out carefully both for yourself, your mate and the babies... etc."

I passed these plotters taking the morning sun on the long front porch, as I lit out to work that A. M.

"Watch yourselves, me fine Buckaroos," challenged I. "Lay hands on Pidge and her family once more ~~xxx~~ or any of the others, and you no longer sleep under this roof or dine at yonder talbe. . Geronimo had spoken! Whereupon I mounted the car which was incorporated in a workers car pool, and like Sir Gallahad, mounted his ~~stock~~ white, gayly comparisioned charger -- and was off to my habitual daily slavery. The nation was at way, and I worked in a defense plant. . 17 miles away from our quiet town.

Two weeks ~~later~~, these cohorts having repented their aggressions against Pidge ~~xxx~~ and her family, took off on a fishing trip, forgetfully of having Lady Bug our toy eskimo spitz along, they returned without her. It took me all night to locate the river and recover Lady Bug who was helpless, being of advanced years now would I hear their impassioned plea that this had been an accident. . .

I replied: "that's what I'm gonna tell God about what happens to you, too, if the likes of THIS ever happens again." It didn't happen again, but young William, (stolen car) the brother-in-~~law~~ law up and stole my car and headed for the asphalt jungle of an adjacent town where he'd had a long standing hubub of disappearing and being "ripped off" if he happened to have been working or recently had received a pay check. He was later murdered there, and it was a sorrowful things on the heels of what I called the wasted years of his life.

Loss of the car was too much! I headed for that town, stopped at the police department and they said: "ye can't go there! 'Tis as much as your life is worth. . it could easily cost your life."

Replied I, "That car IS my livelihood. . so what? said I, "I came to suggest that you have a look if I do not return inside of 12 hours, and bring an ambulance along, if 'taint too much trouble."

I sniffed and departed as they yelled inunison: "You can't!" So I sought the bell- weathers of this flock both male and female and in the more dangerous and most likely byways. Really, wherever I spotted cars that appeared slated for stripping down for the parts for which there was a lively market at this point in time. I didn't get abusive or speak with less than firm convictions either.

I did not appear greatly upset, but merely said in all the right (or wrong) places: "I shall expect my car to be parked with all parts intact out on the main highway! before 8 am tomorrow where I shall stop and pick it up."

"Nay:" they all contended, "they had no knowledge of anything having to do with my car. Then quiz your grapevine, said I, "but get it done like I have said," said as if I was tougher than all skid row toughs put together, and I was a very good and convincing actress.

~~XXXX~~ "I hold no soul in these parts innocent of this," said I, calmly, "and I have contracted to do another census for the Federals and do it I will, even if I have to "rip up these parts brick by brick, ~~h~~first."

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O Possum .

The car was at the designated place at 8:00 AM and no part missing. I insisted the police start it, though, for I had no intent to be taken in by a booby trap and leave Jimba at the mercy of a cruel world. Jimba and all of the others we had befriended, especially our darling and so dependant animals. There was Madam O'Possum and her uncouth children who rode her back when we went for walks in the evening time. There was Miss Skunk who threatened me every time I fed her by ~~squix~~ squaring off and sighting over her shoulder, but restrained herself seeming to realize that I could not afford to take weeks off the job in effort to rid myself of such havoc as she was fully capable of delivering in less than ~~xxx~~ a wink of an eye. She was a beautiful thing with her white stripe against the sable blackness of her, and that mischievous twinkle in her eyes. There was Bobby, the raccoon...

Raccoon

Missey
Mouse

and Missey Mouse who when she saw me putting a colorful border around my kitchen wall which I had painted light green fixed one for her cleverly designed house from bits of cotton.

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That was a night ~~no~~ no sleep was had. Missey's house had a hand hold for carrying her wherever I went -- to make up to her for my long absenses which must have been very lonely for her. I was unable to catch her message for sometime, but when I finally did, I was too excited to continue border-building and for her sake, discontinued it until later. She discontinued only when I did. Then we got serious about the message she was attempting to convey.

"Missey," said I, "If you can forgive my weariness and fatigue, and give me your message... again, I think I can read you, now."

Missey made it so plain that only a fool could have erred therein. She dove into her snow white cotton tee pee and came out bearing a fatted, hairless object, but little larger than a healthy grub work and when this light of comprehension dawned upon me, belatedly, she was placing the 4th object for my inspection.

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"Missey," breathed I, always more than somewhat overawed at the ~~marvelous~~ miracle of birth. These are without doubt the most beautiful babes on the face of this earth -- but HOW? Oh, yes! Now all is clear. 'Twas the day I took you and Horatio down by the creek for a dip and an afternoon of freedom. There was soft winds, the odor of many flowers and the music of clear running water, and the birds sang -- and spring hung heavy with promise upon the air. Ah, I should have known. Horatio never does anything by halves, neither do you, my darling. I opened the door of her house and cradled her as usual, but her excitement was so great that I KNEW this was NOT the usual. I scooped up the hairless objects and Missey suckled them right there in the palm of my hand while I crooned and swayed them, gently, as the cradle rocks. Missey dozed. The babies unapologetically slept. All activity was suspended while nature had her way with them.

BOBBY RACCOON

And Bobby, the raccoon, had been run over ~~x~~ in the highway in front of the house. When a neighbor, Mrx Kennedy, who together with his wonderful wife Myrtle, were the kind of neighbors every female breadwinner should have to keep their moral courage up, reported this to me. My grief knew no bounds -- Mr. K had asked if I could come and pull Bobby out of the street before he was "struck again" since he seemed to be dead or unconscious.

Said he would do it except he figured Bobby would bite him if he was ~~able~~ dead. I was able to control my grief enough, and finally asked him to put on his winter coat and heavy work gloves to do it which he did, even though I was sobbing and saying "it is no use, he will not be ~~at~~ alive, and I love him so much I think I cannot live without him. ~~Mrx~~ Mr. K. came in with the little unconscious form in arms and I thought I heard a soft mewling ~~wax~~ such as Bobby always gave when he wanted me to pull down the covers of my bed and lay his head on my pillow. This I did, and he pulled my face down to his and kissed me, salt tears and all. I put cold cloths on his head and massaged his body gently, and my household inclusive of the Kennedys was soon in excellent spirits, because no harm had come to Bobby, the raccoon.

That was the beautiful part of the Kennedies. They rejoiced with me in times of you, and cried with me when sorrows came. ~~Mrx~~ They were the salt of the earth. Mrs. K. is still living, in Lynn, Indiana, my son visited her with his 13 church buses and numerous members of his congregation. The re-union was a great joy to all.

A very religious person, Mrs. K had always hoped my only son would be a minister, and her work at that time was tremendous and very side spread. Up and down the west ~~coast~~ coast of California with missions in the southern hemisphere and in the Islands of the South Pacific, Mrs. K's only child had been a daughter. A very able and likeable girl with no yen for the ministry. I think, though, in after years, a very devout church member which gave her mother much happiness in the later years, following the death of Mr. K. Sr.s husband, her father.

THE PUPPY WHO CRIED....

Jim's going out on the highways at all hours (at age four) to save baby animals flung out on the roadside, often still tied in sacks, caused me great anxiety for his safety. He would go at most any hour of night or day, or any distance -- riding his little tricycle or on foot, prowling in the side ditches.

Once I had gone to pick him up and found him trying to push his tricycle through mud, water, briars and brambles, with his sack of animals across the handle bars. I loaded them all in my car and took them home...

Another time, the young doctor in town drove up in front of my house and unloaded Jim, his tricycle and the animals he had salvaged that night.. As the young doctor unloaded them... panicked, I half whispered..."I cannot take any more! Oh -- I swear, I can not."

I take it that I was hysterical or half conscious to say that, but say it I did.

Little Jim snatched the puppy into his arms and promptly parked it in my arms. "Look for yourself," said he, scathingly, "you have grieved him. He needs someone so very much and he heard you say you do not want him."

This sent spears and daggers of remorse racing through me and bathed my eyes in silent tears.

"See, he is crying, Mom. He has little tears in his eyes. He feels so unwanted. Tell him you love him and will care for him always. Hold him close, Mom, and tell him he is your baby. Hurry...!"

The young doctor reached over and hoisted the brim of the old straw hat I had pulled low over my brow, regarded my tears awhile and announced to Jim: "It's just fine Jim, you have convinced her already. So I will get in my car and go home. I've been at the hospital all night."

The sack holding the kittens had been opened by then to give them more air and they were walking uncertainly about, being toddlers, still, with eyes barely open but not yet focussed. I rushed to warm some milk for them, with the puppy still in arms. Having told him he was loved and wanted and my very own for keeps, I gave him a bowl of warm milk for himself and scratched my head wondering where the next bottle of milk was coming from. But come it did.. when my brother-in-law who worked for the gas and electric company came by to inform my husband that there was a three dollar deposit

Puppy who cried...

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at that office, due us from a post transaction, and he'd taken the liberty of bringing it to us.

I was more pleased with my brother-in-law than I'd ever been before or ever had reason to be thereafter, as I remember. He was about my age and that was the only thing we had in common.

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