

# Ebby's Tale



FROM SHELTER TO STAGE

Bob Madgic



# *Ebby's Tale*

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TO STAGE



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Cover photo of Ebby: Jon Catton  
Cover photo of Cascade Theatre: Garry Bagula

*This book is dedicated to Susan Marshall, who rescued and nurtured Ebby as she transitioned from a stray confined in an animal shelter to the precious pet she has become, and to all of Ebby's friends, including the cast members of The Wizard of Oz and Mary Poppins, who made her experiences at the Cascade Theatre so memorable.*



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## *Preface*

THIS TALE BEGINS by tracing the long history of our family pets, including Meko—a beloved canine companion to my wife and me for over 18 years.

After being pet-free for four years, we came to adopt a rescue dog that we named Ebbetts Pass, or Ebby for short.

This book relates her story.

It details how she was rescued from an animal shelter, fostered, and finally adopted by us after she experienced many failed trials, including two with us.

It reviews what went into training Ebby to be a Canine Good Citizen, a Therapy Dog, and finally a Service Dog.

And it delves into the many parts of her temperament and intelligence.

Also recounted are Ebby's roles in two major stage productions. Although these performances were just icing on the cake in her overall development, a dog engaging in live theater is by itself a revealing experience, as we discovered with Ebby.

Ebby's journey has not always been smooth, with still more required for her to be a consistently friendly and reliable dog. You'll discover what this involves in the following pages.



## *1. Pets over the Years*

IN OUR decades-long marriage, Diane and I have had many pets before Ebby, six dogs and six cats to be exact. (I'm leaving out the hamsters, parakeets, rabbits, fish, etc.) We enjoyed good success with the canines, less so with the felines.

A rundown of our cats first.

Our very first pet was Sabrina, a mischievous, entertaining white cat. She was with us when we left Massachusetts for California in the early 1960s. As we camped in varied parks across the country, Sabrina, who was deaf, kept disappearing. Once, after driving away thinking we lost her, I found her miles later under the canvas tarp on the roof. Another time it was under the car hood. And then she climbed 100 feet up a pine tree in Custer State Park, South Dakota, and wouldn't come down. She eventually did. She disappeared for good in Grand Teton National Park, causing Diane to cry all across Idaho. In hindsight, we should have had her on a harness.

The second cat was a handsome calico named Luke that enjoyed many years with us. But a neighbor started feeding her more tasty food, and when we acquired a second dog, it proved to be the last straw. Luke became the neighbor's pet, with only an occasional visit back to us.

Our third was Alpine, a lovable white Siamese mix. She was a fierce killer of rats that visited our garage, seizing one in mid-air and in the dark when it frantically jumped from a shelf. She didn't return one night at our mountain house, probably killed by a coyote.

Grizzly came next. For some odd reason I thought an orange cat would be best at killing gophers. So we specifically acquired an orange-colored kitten and named it Grizzly. Instead of hunting prey, however, he looked to our kitchen counter for food, jumping up on it so frequently we could not keep him in the house. He became an outdoors cat.

Casper was our best cat. Multi-colored with a stump tail, he was so well behaved that he sat politely in a chair at the dinner table with us. Sadly, Casper got hit by a car and had to be put down.

Our last cat was Murphys, a well-behaved Siamese mix. When we moved to a new house, it had a cat door that he used so much going in and out, he became uncontrollable, so we shut it down. Plus raccoons started using it. When we went on vacation one time, we couldn't find him in the house, so we left assuming he was outside. No, he was in the house, asleep someplace, and had to survive for 10 days on his own. Yes, big mess. From then on, he was very vigilant when in the house, as were we when leaving to go on a trip. He liked to spring out from behind a bush and make a faux attack on the haunches of our dog Meko, who absolutely hated his doing this. Murphys also killed birds, a feline trait that finally soured me on all cats, period.

We had better success with dogs.

Our first was a rash acquisition of Noodles, a highly

spirited, mid-sized terrier mix. One fond memory was his chasing a bear away from our tent in Yosemite's Tuolumne Meadows. I could never stop him from digging up our newly planted flowers, shrubs, bulbs, you name it. When we were about to fly back east, we thankfully found a family that took him in.

Years later, I came home one day to find Foxy, a small black dog left in a parking lot and picked up by Diane. A gimpy back leg caused her to lope along on three legs. I loved how this small Pappillon-Chihuahua mix signaled to any dog "don't mess with me." They never did. Due to lack of money at the time, we did not have Foxy spayed and she had two litters of pups while with us. We placed all of them, except for one we kept, Pongo.

Lovable Pongo was a light tan, indescribable mixed breed. Her back legs were longer than her front ones, the result of a much larger dog (poodle?) mating with Foxy. This gave her great jumping ability, which she used to leap up onto the kitchen counter or dining table when we were out of the house. The last time she did this, she consumed an entire pork and sauerkraut casserole. The tremendous build-up of gas literally caused her stomach to burst and she died.

Next was Reba, a rescue, blond female cocker mix. I remember thinking there could not be any nicer dog than she. This gentle, amicable dog never had the slightest quarrel with any other dog. But she bagged many ground squirrels in her lifetime. She also took solitary walks, to the house of a neighbor who gave her treats for example, and to locate family members, including to our children's school, one mile away. She was with us for about 13 years.

After Reba, we acquired Meko. This prince of a dog merits a fuller report.

Author's note: Some of the above details suggest a few of our pets might have been better supervised. I agree.





KARA STEWART

*Dorothy and Toto*



*Toto greets the audience*



TERRY CRAIG

*Mary Poppins cast members join  
Bob and Ebby at dress rehearsal night.*



*Willoughby with Mary Poppins, Bert, and chimney sweeps*



*Ready*



*Ebby and Susan Marshall have a reunion six years later.*