

A DOG TALE ...

When you share your heart and home with six rescued canines, each day is filled with interesting moments. Since you cannot reasonably walk six dogs and remain upright, the fenced-in backyard serves as their place for adventure.

Nonetheless, the entire pack doesn't always venture outdoors in unison. It is an in-and-out process of a few at a time starting from the moment we awake until the time we go to bed. I am constantly doing a tail count to make sure everyone is accounted for. However, the other night I made a very unusual error.

Several hours had passed since the last group excursion. At around 7:00 p.m. three of the dogs wanted outside again. When I opened the backdoor I was stunned! Standing there waiting to greet me from the other side was none other than "Stevie the Wonder Dog."

I mean you have to understand. This dog fully embraces the concept of creature comforts based on indoor living. Four out of five times when the rest go outside, he stays behind lounging around in the doggie bed. Even when the adventurous spirit hits, Stevie is still the first one standing at the door wanting back in.

During the time outside alone never once was there a bark to get my attention. Nor did he come to the side window and jump up on the ledge, which is the standard *modus operandi* to announce "Hey mom, it's time to come in!" Therefore, you can imagine my surprise to open the door and find he was still out there.

After the shock of finding him outside subsided, I noticed an odd looking whitish clump on the ground. While holding the others back, I motioned Stevie to come in. I continued to stare out into the darkness of the night trying to identify the strange object. As I turned on the porch light the mystery was unveiled. Lo and behold, there it was! A huge ole possum balled up on the grass and not even one of the tiniest of hairs was twitching.

Well now, that certainly explained a great deal. Apparently Stevie had found something quite fascinating to play with for the last several hours. Much to the possum's dismay I am sure! Since these creatures are known for none other than playing possum, I did not attempt any poking maneuvers to determine whether the balled up tuft was still alive.

Ever had a possum come at you hissing in the dark with those laser beam red eyes staring you down? I am here to tell you, it induces a strong desire to immediately back-up and run for your life while screaming like a little girl! Seriously, I'm surprised Stephen King hasn't produced a film depicting giant beady-eyed possums terrorizing suburban neighborhoods.

Several times over the next hour I continued to look outside, but ole possum had not budged an inch. I sighed and decided I would deal with the burial arrangements in the morning. Of course, first thing the next day I peeked the window and was expecting the worse. Instead, my heart began to pound with excitement! I am very pleased to announce the possum did in fact make the great escape.

LIFE LESSON LEARNED & WISDOM GAINED

In the eleven years we have been together, the tailwaggers have shared with me the gift of many interesting lessons about life. In this instance, I learned never underestimate the ability to overcome adversity. It is not the strongest that survive. It is those with the greatest adaptability to adversity that rise up triumphantly.

So, no matter how difficult the struggle or how bleak things may appear, never give up! Just ask the ole possum in the backyard. Despite the dire circumstances, with steadfast resolve, it survived and lived on to enjoy another glorious day.



Photo: Stevie the Wonder Dog by Kathy Ioannou