

FINN-FINN

(a short story about bumping into a lady walking a dog)

By

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Sometimes events seem to happen almost magically. What else explains when thousands of atoms bump into one another, seemingly at random, and create wonderful stories. Are they synchronistic? Coincidental? A result of timing, luck, or all of it rolled into one big strange and wonderful gift from a higher power? This was the case of Finn-Finn, aka, Finney.

My neighbor Cheryl's dog, Jack, was half Border Collie and half Australian Shepherd. He was one of twelve pups and they all had Australian names; his was Jackaroo. All of the other pups found homes but Jacaroo and 3 others were sent to a dog rescue in Yosemite. Cheryl found him online and ordered him sight-unseen like a mail order bride, only a dog. Dave, Cheryl's husband, and Jeremy, her oldest son, drove to Yosemite and picked him up and shortened his name to Jack.

Ten years later Jack collapsed in our nearby park where Cheryl often took him for walks. She phoned her son, Jeremy, who raced to meet her with the red wagon from his childhood. He gently placed Jack down and covered him with a warm blanket and they both rushed him towards the house. Jack never recovered and died just before Cheryl's birthday. It wasn't unexpected as he had been sick for a time, yet the sadness and loss struck hard in their hearts, not yet healed from the loss of Cheryl's husband and father of her two boys, who died recently when his transplanted heart stopped.

After living just a few doors down from Cheryl for almost eighteen years I had only socialized with her and her husband, Dave, a few times at a neighbor's annual Halloween party. It wasn't until I became ill (with a rare heart disease (Cardiac Amyloidosis) that I truly became friends with Cheryl. I found out through another neighbor, Joy, (and she truly is a joy) that Dave had the same rare heart disease as I had. Cheryl and I started visiting each other at her home or mine. She was an encyclopedia of information and advice as she had handled almost all of Dave's medical journey and knew almost as much about this disease as my nurses and doctors. Our friendship became a blessing in my life.

Two months prior to Jack's death, another neighbor, Debbie, whom I also did not know or socialize with, was on her way to meet a friend at a Watsonville nursery when she received a panicked call from that friend who had just picked up a stray dog. He was running in traffic and she almost hit him twice. Her girlfriend stopped and the frightened dog jumped right into her truck. She called Debbie to tell her she might be late and how she almost hit a sweet dog. He had a bunch of cuts on his face, neck, and legs. The two friends met up at the nursery and they put the dog in Debbie's van so he had more room. The nursery owner said they would take the dog but they would have to keep him tied up to keep him away from a busy nearby street. Debbie, said, "That's no life for a dog," ... so at the end of the day nobody could take him. Debbie's friend's husband did not want a male dog. They had females and Finney was not neutered. Another woman, her friend's assistant, could not take him because she lived in an apartment and already had a dog. So, Debbie ended up taking him home risking a divorce. She told her husband she would take him back to the nursery in two days but when time was up, she couldn't bear taking him to a yard and have him tied up. Instead, she bathed him, astonished as the layers of dirt melted away from what initially she thought was a brown dog, gave way to one with a shiny

black coat that glistened in the sun. Debbie could tell he was very smart. She ended up keeping him, got him neutered, chipped, and vaccinated. She put him in obedience class only to find out he already knew a lot of the commands. She originally named him Lucky Finney, but took the “lucky” out so he didn’t seem handicapped. She had him for two and a half months but time was running out to either find him a home or send him to a shelter even though by now he felt like a member of her family. After all, they already had a dog and he was small enough to take on their many trips; Finney, a Labrador/bull Terrier mix, was not. However, she continued to care for and walk Finny daily. On one of her walks my husband and I passed her on the street. We did not know her but we stopped to pet Finney and she told us she was searching for a forever home for him as she could no longer keep him. At that very moment Joy, (yes, that same Joy that introduced me to Cheryl) walked by with her new puppy and my husband, Clive, was in dog heaven petting them both. Joy and Debbie seemingly knew each other as they chatted about the dogs and other neighborly news while we continued to enjoy the doggies. Then we all went on our separate ways.

The next day, Cheryl and I had a visit planned at my house. I gave her a drawing I had done of Jack and she cried.

“You know, I feel like I need to get another dog right away,” Cheryl said.

“Really”, I replied. “You don’t think it is too soon?”

“No,” she said. “I think it would be good for me and my boys.”

Then like a lightening bolt to my brain, I remembered the woman just down the street and around the corner with Finny, only I did not know her name or where she lived. I texted Joy immediately and all the atoms started bumping into one another. Joy texted the lady fostering Finney, and told me her name was Debbie McCreary. We connected via messenger on Facebook

and I told her my name. She texted me and we discovered that Debbie actually knew Cheryl. I told her that Cheryl wanted to adopt a dog. She reached out to Cheryl. Before you know it, Finny was scheduled for a meet and greet with Cheryl and her sons, Jeremy and Jay. The meeting went well but then how else can it go when you meet a love bug? Cheryl officially adopted Finney two days later and affectionately changed his name to Finn-Finn. Happy ending, yes?

But those atoms were still bumping around. A few days after the doggie adoption my husband and I were taking our walk on the same street where we originally met Finn-Finn and there was a darling van on the side of the road where a neighbor was chatting with the woman inside. As we passed by, I interrupted them and asked what her business was about and she told me she designed gardens. I asked if she could design our raised garden as my husband and I just did not have the energy to do it this year.

She said, “I live in the neighborhood. Will you be around this afternoon?” I replied, “We certainly can be, what time?”

Later that afternoon she arrived to measure the space and asked what we wanted to plant. One thing led to another and we ended up having a conversation about how much we loved living in this friendly neighborhood. I asked, “Do you by any chance know Debbie McCreary?” “I certainly do know her, very well,” she replied. “I am Debbie McCreary!” Then she blurted out, “Oh my god, Are you Carol Pollard?” “Yes, I am,” I said laughing.” I did not recognize her as the woman we met walking the dog and she of course had not heard my name connected with my face.

There were many other strange discoveries. Her husband, Mark, works in England a lot and was returning home that night. My husband, Clive is from England. Debbie and her husband were engaged in Italy as were Clive and I. It felt like we met an old soul mate from

another time. Maybe we did or maybe all those atoms bumping around in the universe are more connected than we all can imagine. The garden is growing like a weed but only with wonderful vegetables and I have already made a couple of salads from the fruit of Debbie's labor. So many gifts to so many people all because we bumped into a remarkable lady walking a dog.

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