

A Barnyard Dog Named Moose

By Cindy K. Roberts©



Years ago, I lived in an urban town with a barnyard dog, named Moose. Moose was a large scroungy looking “Heinz 57” dog with no future. His paws were big and everything else about him was big too, even his appetite. Since that first day he showed up on my doorstep batting those big brown eyes, I calculated his food bill to be at \$1,848.00 not including the tickets and attorney fees that ensued. From the beginning, it became very clear to me that Moose decided this is where he was going to live, right here on my doorstep, like it or not. Fine, I went to Branneky Hardware store, bought some cheap lumber and went home to build this mangy overgrown mutt a roomy doghouse. I didn't bother painting or sealing it, because I wasn't sure how long this flea bag mongrel would hang around. After all, I've seen his type before, they are all users and abusers. Becoming your pal, eating the left overs from the table, stealing your heart and then to take off without saying goodbye. It took some coaxing to convince Moose that he needed to spend time in his doghouse instead of chasing the UPS delivery guy or the joggers that picked up speed as they ran past our house. Because Moose was a drifter, he preferred the open skies and the nightlife of just sniffing around.

For the most part, Moose hung out at the barn and chased the horses for his daily cardiovascular workout. After twenty minutes of this nonsense, the horses would turn around and chase after Moose. Afterward, he would nap quietly on the front porch. It wasn't long after Moose took up residence on my front porch that I started receiving canine complaints. Next door, at the golf driving range, the manager called to complain



that Moose was stealing golf balls from the field before the customers could retrieve them. It was also reported that he was taking off with the patrons suntan lotion and their beer too. I was stunned to say the least. I explained to the manager that I understood how it would be tempting for Moose to retrieve the golf balls, being how he is so playful and all, but the suntan lotion



I didn't quite get, after all, Moose wasn't a sun dog, he preferred the shade. The beer thing, well, he never drank that I knew of. I then very firmly stated, “And I better not catch anyone serving beer to my dog, he is a minor, you know.” After that conversation, I didn't hear anymore from the manager; instead Officer Don that came to my door that afternoon.



Officer Don had a warrant for Moose's arrest. It seems that Moose had been wandering through the back roads to show up at Branneky Hardware in town and terrorizing the caged chicks and rabbits that were on sale in front of the store. To make matters worse, there were witnesses. The female

patrons thought Moose was a coyote and had the manager call the police on him. I never thought that dog looked anything like a coyote but I was impressed that Moose could navigate himself all the way to the hardware store, negotiating street lights and traffic to boot. Officer Don showed me a search warrant to search Moose's dog house. I pointed to the rickety mutt-shack out back and before I knew it, Officer Don was on his knees gathering golf balls, suntan lotion, one beach towel, a Cabbage Patch doll, a dated newspaper and a case of beer cans with holes punched in them. "That's a new one," I said, "when did that dog learn how to read?" Officer Don was not amused, instead he put a leash on Moose and directed him to the back seat of the police car. Moose wagged his tail and jumped around with excitement, because he knew he was going to get to ride in the police car for a change instead of chasing after one.

That evening I drove to the police station, paid the fine, brought him home and much to his dissatisfaction, confined him to his dog house. I promised the Judge that Moose will no longer be a neighborhood nuisance and would never steal another Cabbage Patch doll again.



The following week, I took the dog to the neighborhood humane society to get him neutered, thinking this would cure him from running around shamelessly. It didn't do any good because Moose already was running with the wrong crowd and by now he developed a strong desire for dumping trash cans. That dog came home with a swollen belly and the most God-awful breath, so I grounded him... forever. And since that dog wasn't very picky about what went into his mouth, I never kissed him on the lips again.

Moose became a house dog, hung out on the sofa and started getting real lazy. I don't even think he got up to bark when someone was at the front door. That urban mutt was delighted that he had access to AC, a color TV set and cool water from the toilet bowl. It wasn't too long before boredom set in and that prompted Moose to discover a new and flavorful past time of helping himself to the cat box. What did you expect from a trashy dog anyhow? There he was, laying on the rug holding a brown, crusty "kitty chew" to munch on. I was so disgusted, I turned into a hygiene fanatic and began cleaning the cat box twice daily. Needless to say, I firmly booted the dog out during parties. Sadly, Moose would lay outside on the back porch and howl at the moon in distress during our private parties.



One evening, a water purifier salesman came by the house. The TV claimed that after listening to his sales presentation, you would receive a steak knife gift set and you were under no obligation to buy. I was low on cash as I had just bought a horse trailer, and yes, I needed a steak knife set. I let the young salesman in, he sat on the sofa while placing his presentation book on top of the glass coffee table. I could tell that Moose didn't care much

for this guy, after all, he wore a tie. Moose stretched out to his liking and promptly laid down on the shag carpet underneath the table and commenced to break wind. My husband swore that mangy hound had talent because he could toot the Star Spangled Banner without missing a note! Ten minutes of methane explosions coming from Moose prompted the young gentleman to leave a set of steak knives and claim that he had to leave early.



The next day, I gave Moose time off for good behavior and let him play in the barnyard. He was anxious and excited at the same time, chasing after the horses, running after a couple of rabbits and a barn cat or two. Moose was so happy, he ran in circles, gaining speed after each lap. With his tongue out to one side of his mouth and his tail bouncing up and down in the wind, that dog kept sprinting laps around the barn. At the same time, the UPS delivery guy dropped off a package, got into his truck and drove off...with Moose trailing behind him. A neighbor witnessed the incident and didn't think anything about it. After all, Moose was just being Moose.

I placed a "lost dog" ad in the paper and to my surprise no one called. I thought, that dog is ugly and a complete mess, who would want him? Two weeks I was driving down the boulevard when I experienced a "Moose sighting." The Heinz 57 dog was riding in a 1974 Eldorado Cadillac with his head sticking straight up through the sun roof, just as proud as he could be. Moose had hit the big time now and he was not about to give it up. Wearing a pair of sunglasses with his ears flapping in the wind, while inhaling all the fast food smells he could take in. The driver was a pretty brunette sporting her designer sunglasses along with a baby girl in a car seat holding onto a Cabbage Patch doll. The car stopped at a traffic light; with one hand on the wheel and the other around her new canine friend. The pretty lady planted a big kiss right onto that ugly dog's lips. "Wow," I thought. I felt betrayed and used. So, that explains the suntan lotion and Cabbage Patch doll that was stockpiled in that ugly mutt's shack. He doesn't call or write...that was eighteen hundred and forty eight dollars of dog food and four tickets ago...when I knew a barnyard dog named Moose.



Author Cindy K. Roberts is a contributing feature and column writer that has a lifetime experience with horses and mules. Cindy's equine heart, and passion for the wilderness rich in wild west history keeps her on the road with her paint horse, "Cowboy" and palomino mule - in search of the cowgirl spirit. Cindy can be reached through her web site WWW.EVERYCOWGIRLSDREAM.COM or write cindy@everycowgirlsdream.com.