



WORLD'S
UGLIEST
DOG



Jeff Gottesfeld

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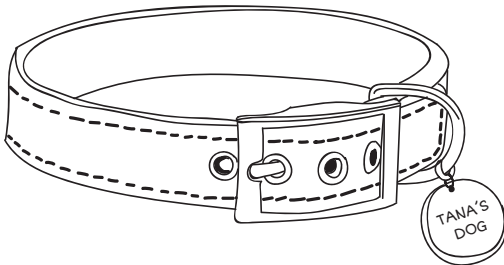
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1 WOOF!

Tana Glass wanted a dog. She had been asking her parents since she was four. But they always said no. Their house was too small. Dogs shed too much. They had many excuses.

Several years went by. Tana never gave up hope. Someday she would get a dog. She knew it.



When her older sister left for college, Tana tried again.

“Please?” she begged. “We have more room now. Plus, I miss Stacy. A dog would keep me company.”

Her parents sighed. They knew it was hard for Tana to make friends. She was very shy.

“Dogs are a lot of work,” her dad said. “Are you ready for that?”

“What about another pet?” her mom asked. “Something smaller. Quieter. If you can handle that, then *maybe* we can consider a dog. Maybe.”

Tana jumped up. This was the closest thing to a “yes” so far.

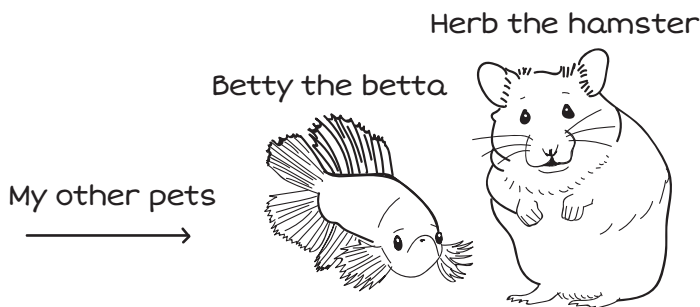
“Okay! Thank you!” She hugged her parents. “I can do it. You’ll see!”

The next day, the Glass family went to



the pet store. Tana picked out a blue fish. She named it Betty.

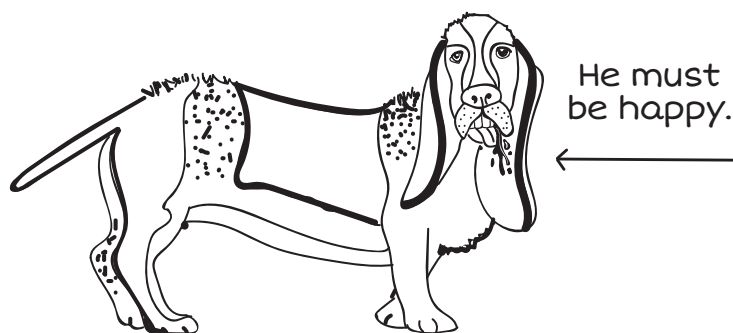
A few months later, Tana got a hamster. His name was Herb. Both Herb and Betty seemed very happy. Tana took great care of them. She knew it was good practice.



When Tana started sixth grade, she felt ready. Her parents agreed. Tana could finally get a dog. That afternoon they went to the animal shelter.

The first dog Tana saw was named Funky. It was easy to see why. He was pretty funny-looking. In fact, he was super ugly.

Funky had a big body and little legs. His tail was like a stick. He had big floppy ears. Buck teeth stuck out of his mouth. Worst of all, the dog drooled a lot. It got really bad when he was happy. That is what the people at the shelter said.



Tana loved him right away. She could tell he was a special dog.

The Glass family took Funky out for a walk. Rain had started to fall. Funky was so excited to be outside. He rolled around in the wet grass.

"Sit," Tana told him. He sat. "Stay."



Tana walked a few feet away. The dog waited. Rain whipped around them. It was really coming down now.

“Come!” she called. Funky barked and ran over. Tana knew this was the dog for her.

Inside, her family filled out the adoption papers. The lady helping them smiled.

“You can change his name,” she said. “If you want.”

Tana looked out the window at the rain. “I think I’ll call him Storm.”

It was the perfect name. The dog learned it fast too.

“Here, Storm!” Tana called. He ran right over. Tana beamed. Her new dog was ugly. But he was also very smart.

Storm and Tana became best buds. She walked him every day. Sometimes Storm



barked at odd noises. But he was always nice to people. The dog especially liked kids.

Soon, everyone in the neighborhood knew the ugly dog. Many people stopped to say hi. A few were not very kind.



“Wow! That’s an ugly dog!”

“Oh, my. Get that dog a mask!”

On one walk, something bad happened. They were near the park. Storm saw kids playing and pulled. Tana lost her grip and

dropped his leash. The dog ran free. He headed right for the kids.

“Stop!” Tana shouted. “Come back!”

But Storm kept going. He was too excited.

The kids looked up. Their eyes grew wide.

“It’s fine. Don’t worry!” Tana called out.

“He’s nice!”

“Look at that ugly dog,” one kid yelled.

“He has cooties. Run!”

The kids took off. Storm chased them. He was so happy.

Tana followed. “He does not have cooties! It’s just how he looks.”



Storm looks even
UGLIER when he runs.

“Cooties!” The kids kept shouting.

Their parents came running. One mother yelled at Tana. “Keep that scary dog tied up!”

Tana grabbed Storm. She held him for a few minutes. Then they walked home.

Storm was a good dog. Tana wished other people knew that. But some only saw how he looked.



2

THE LETTER

“Hi, honey. How was your walk? Isn’t this fall weather the best?” Tana’s mom sat at the table. She was reading the newspaper.



The best thing
about fall?

Pumpkin Spice
Lattes (decaf)

My favorite!



“Um. It was okay.” Tana didn’t want to talk about what happened. It was hard to admit that Storm scared some people.

Storm ran over to her mother. He flopped onto his back. Tana's mom reached down. She rubbed the dog's belly.

"That's good. Do you have homework?"

"Reading. Math. And I have to draw a map of the moon."

"Sounds fun." Her mom smiled. "Pizza for dinner tonight. Oh!" She snapped her fingers. "I almost forgot. You got mail today."

"Snail mail?"

I only get mail
on my birthday.



“Yep.” She stood up. “I’ll go get it.”

While her mom went to the front hall, Tana petted Storm. “You’re a great dog. Don’t let those kids get you down.”

Storm licked her hand and drooled. Tana grinned. Her dog wasn’t thinking about the park at all. That was the great thing about dogs. They just focused on love.



Storm only thinks
about love . . . and food.

“Here you go.” Her mom held out a big envelope. “It looks important.”

Tana wiped her hands.



The mail was from a vet. Stuff like this came all the time. But this was different. An ad was tucked inside. There was also a letter.

Dear Tana,

I am a vet who fixes how pets look. Even an ugly pet can look great with my help. What I do is simple. It is like a nose job for a person. Plus, it costs very little. In fact, it would cost you nothing. Your dog needs so much help, I'd do it for free. Before and after pictures would be taken. These might be used later in an ad. Then your dog could be famous. Talk to your parents. Call me to learn more. Thanks!

—Dr. John

Tana put the letter aside. She picked up the ad. It had a note on it.

Storm might be a good fit for this. He is a loser when it comes to looks. Maybe he could win.

The ad was for a contest called World's Ugliest Dog. Tana scanned the sheet. It was in two weeks at a hotel downtown.

Judges would pick the ugliest dog. The winner got a lifetime supply of dog food.



Tana gave Storm a hug. She was tired of people picking on him. “You’re not a loser,” she said. “Let’s win this thing!”