



THE KODIAK TAILS

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SAVING LIVES, ONE DOG AT A TIME

AUGUST 2022



Stay Out of the Bathroom, Roc! Pit Bull Survives Close Call

All dog owners know the guilty look when family pets have done something wrong. Jacqueline Smith recognized that look right away, after guests visiting her Tampa, Fla., home left the bathroom door open, and Roc, her beloved pit bull, came out with an object in his mouth.

As Smith approached her 90-pound “baby,” ordering him to drop the object, Roc swallowed it, beginning a difficult odyssey that left him nearly dead and his owner juggling her everyday bills.

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Just one day after the incident, Roc was not himself. Weak and quiet, he refused food and vomited. Smith works 10-hour days, and her only after-work option was an expensive, 24-hour emergency animal hospital, so she hesitated.

On day three, with Roc still ailing, she made it to several veterinary clinics that diagnosed the problem – an intestinal blockage -- but required payment in advance for the needed surgery. The cost was completely out of reach for Smith and she had to return home facing a tragic decision.

The next day, Harmony Vet Care called back with good news: If Smith pitched in whatever funds she could, the clinic and KodiakCare would cover the rest. The surgery was scheduled for the next morning, but Smith worried Roc might not make it to the appointment: “He laid across my legs and I could feel his heart was weak,” she recalled. “All I could do was pray.”

Fortunately, Roc’s surgery came just in time. Dr. Alexander Cole removed a sanitary pad that had made it to Roc’s small intestine. Roc’s surgery was as straightforward as the diagnosis: “He’s a big, sweet doofus who happened to eat the wrong thing,” Cole explained. “It went in one end and didn’t come out the other.”

The surgery saved Roc’s life, Cole said. And after just two days, he was “back to normal,” according to Smith. “I was so happy to see him being himself. He’s like my kid. You hate to see your baby sick.”

Contributing even part of the cost was a hardship for Smith. She had to juggle bills, offering good faith down payments, and promising to follow up when her paychecks arrived. Weeks later, she still was not “out of the woods” financially, she said.

Her commitment to the one-and-a-half-year-old Roc grew even stronger. She fed him salmon and eggs to build back his strength and trained him to leave socks and other tempting objects untouched. “If he goes into the bathroom, I say, ‘No!’ and he turns around and comes out,” she noted.

Cole said KodiakCare is a “lifeline,” for more than the dogs. “The fact we have access to this fund is incredible and we’re thrilled to have it,” he said. “This is truly the highlight of my career, getting to do these kinds of things. It’s the best feeling.”

And Smith is grateful as well: “I appreciate y’all so much,” she said. “If it hadn’t been for you, I wouldn’t have my baby.”



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