

Freedom And Jeff

I received another touching email forward, and I have to admit that I [snopes-ed](#) it because it sounded so fake. It's the story of Freedom the eagle and her friend Jeff – here is their story:

Freedom and I have been together 10 years this summer. She came in as a baby in 1998 with two broken wings. Her left wing doesn't open all the way even after surgery, it was broken in 4 places. She's my baby.

When Freedom came in she could not stand and both wings were broken. She was emaciated and covered in lice. We made the decision to give her a chance at life, so I took her to the vets office. From then on, I was always around her. We had her in a huge dog carrier with the top off, and it was loaded up with shredded newspaper for her to lay in. I used to sit and talk to her, urging her to live, to fight; and she would lay there looking at me with those big brown eyes. We also had to tube feed her for weeks.

This went on for 4-6 weeks, and by then she still couldn't stand. It got to the point where the decision was made to euthanize her if she couldn't stand in a week. You know you don't want to cross that line between torture and rehab, and it looked like death was winning. She was going to be put down that Friday, and I was supposed to come in on that Thursday afternoon. I didn't want to go to the center that Thursday, because I couldn't

bear the thought of her being euthanized; but I went anyway, and when I walked in everyone was grinning from ear to ear. I went immediately back to her cage; and there she was, standing on her own, a big beautiful eagle. She was ready to live. I was just about in tears by then. That was a very good day.

We knew she could never fly, so the director asked me to glove train her. I got her used to the glove, and then to jesses, and we started doing education programs for schools in western Washington. We wound up in the newspapers, radio (believe it or not) and some TV. Miracle Pets even did a show about us.



In the spring of 2000, I was diagnosed with non-Hodgkin's lymphoma. I had stage 3, which is not good (one major organ plus everywhere), so I wound up doing 8 months of chemo. Lost the hair – the whole bit. I missed a lot of work. When I felt good enough, I would go to Sarvey and take Freedom out for walks. Freedom would also come to me in my dreams and help me fight the cancer. This happened time and time again.

Fast forward to November 2000, the day after Thanksgiving. I went in for my last checkup. I was told that if the cancer was not all gone after 8 rounds of chemo, then my last option was a stem cell transplant. Anyway, they did the tests; and I had to come back Monday for the results. I went in Monday, and I was told that all the cancer was gone.

So the first thing I did was get up to Sarvey and take the big girl out for a walk. It was misty and cold. I went to her flight and jessed her up, and we went out front to the top of the hill. I hadn't said a word to Freedom, but somehow she knew. She looked at me and wrapped both her wings around me to where I could feel them pressing in on my back (I was engulfed in eagle wings), and she touched my nose with her beak and stared into my eyes, and we just stood there like that for I don't know how long. That was a magic moment. We have been soul mates ever since she came in. This is a very special bird.

On a side note: I have had people who were sick come up to us when we are out, and Freedom has some kind of hold on them. I once had a guy who was terminal come up to us and I let him hold her. His knees just about buckled and he swore he could feel her power coarse through his body. I have so many stories like that.

I never forget the honor I have of being so close to such a magnificent spirit as Freedom.

Hope

you enjoy this.

Jeff

Awww, that eagle sounds so sweet! So how did we get stuck with this big red jerk?



Help Me Find...

A while ago, I came across an extremely cool website – it was an alphabetical list of animals and which zoos in the world had the species on display. My computer since crashed, launching my previous list of bookmarked sites into a cyberspace void. I've been trying to find this site again lately, but to no avail. I know some fellow tangenteers are good at doing research and also like a good challenging hunt. The prize? Getting to use the list to locate the zoo of any animal species you wish ☐

Oh yeah – and you win my thank you.

That's A WHAT?

We visited our local zoo this weekend (to feed my zoo addiction, it had been awhile), and when I got home, as usual, I decided to research some of the animals we observed. As I was researching these animals on the internet, I came across some ultra-cute baby animal pics, and I thought I might make a fun game on my blog of having people guess which animal is what type of baby – HAVE FUN! Don't worry about posting your guesses – other people can just ignore them or use them as hints if they get stuck.





Here is an added picture of the same type of animal, a little older – per a request in the comments



for a better picture:



Bee Vs. Me

Yesterday I became unwittingly involved in a duel, but at least I was the winner!

I was standing outside throwing out our old bread for the birds with my 3-year-old when I bent over to pick up some doggy-doo. I noticed a few bees hovering about, but there have been a lot of them lately, and I'm never too worried about bees since they don't usually sting away from their hive unless provoked... unless you happen across a bee who is a little off his rocker or something. So anyway, I went inside to wash my hands, and that's when I got stung on the back of my neck. Out of instinct, I slapped the little pest, and then I ran outside to get my daughter to safety away from the other bees. When we got inside, the bee was on the floor and still alive, so I triumphantly took it hostage. I looked up how to treat a bee sting (it **hurt!!!**), as well as what they eat – I had not captured the thing to torture it, but I certainly didn't want to let it go... I wasn't sure what I was going to do with it, but I didn't want it starving in the meantime. After finding out that it was indeed a honeybee, and that he would probably like some nectar before he passed away as a result of his stinger being torn from his behind (and implanted into my neck). I guess I just kind of wanted to see if what I thought was an old myth was true – do honeybees die after stinging? From everything I read as well as my real-life example (he passed away last night), it seems to be truth rather than fiction. So goodbye to the bee that stung me yesterday, and farewell – I'm sorry it had to end this way. The good news is, other than a marble-sized lump on the back of my neck, I don't have many ill effects from the sting; the pain is gone and the itching is tolerable. I traded my

story with everyone I ran into yesterday because who over the age of 30 still gets stung by bees? Surprisingly, it's more common than I thought, and not just something that happens to reckless kids whose curiosity and carelessness often pave the way to childhood wounds and ailments. After trading bee stories yesterday, I learned that a friend and her husband were stung by what they said were sweat bees while riding their motorcycle, but after further research and thanks to the Schmidt Sting Pain Index I found on Wikipedia, I've concluded that neither their nor my bee stings could be the work of sweat bees. Honey bees are more likely the culprit, as the pain from their sting ranks much higher on the scale. Since my husband found the pain index so interesting (and began looking up bullet ant stings on youtube, yeow!), I've posted it for your reference as well. Yet another thing I love about living where I live – we don't have all the varieties of nasty stinging insects as are found in tropical climates, and the ones we do have at least give us a break over the winters. I'm glad for that because after the pain I went through yesterday, it's going to be difficult to let my little ones play outside until the bees are gone – thank goodness this happened to me and not them! Oh, and if you don't cringe or at least wriggle your toes when reading the following descriptions of types of pain, there is something wrong with you!

RIP, Bee!

Schmidt Sting Pain Index

- * 1.0 Sweat bee: Light, ephemeral, almost fruity. A tiny spark has singed a single hair on your arm.
- * 1.2 Fire ant: Sharp, sudden, mildly alarming. Like walking across a shag carpet & reaching for the light switch.
- * 1.8 Bullhorn acacia ant: A rare, piercing, elevated sort of pain. Someone has fired a staple into your cheek.
- * 2.0 Bald-faced hornet: Rich, hearty, slightly crunchy. Similar to getting your hand mashed in a revolving door.

- * 2.0 Yellowjacket: Hot and smoky, almost irreverent. Imagine W. C. Fields extinguishing a cigar on your tongue.
 - * 2.x Honey bee and European hornet: Like a matchhead that flips off and burns on your skin.
 - * 3.0 Red harvester ant: Bold and unrelenting. Somebody is using a drill to etaylhisvate your ingrown toenail.
 - * 3.0 Paper wasp: Caustic & burning. Distinctly bitter aftertaste. Like spilling a beaker of hydrochloric acid on a paper cut.
 - * 4.0 Pepsis wasp: Blinding, fierce, shockingly electric. A running hair drier has been dropped into your bubble bath.
 - * 4.0+ Bullet ant: Pure, intense, brilliant pain. Like fire-walking over flaming charcoal with a 3-inch rusty nail in your heel.
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Supressing My Whim For Another Parrot...

Believe me, I am definitely not expressing that parrots are pets to get on a whim, not that any pets should be obtained on a whim. But I wouldn't really even recommend parrots, the loud and moody (however beautiful and insanely smart) creatures as pets, except to the perfect parrot owner – which might just be as rare as the gorgeous birds themselves. Due to a set of circumstances that transcribed long ago, we've found ourselves adapting to a be a parrot family. Years ago we adopted Squawky, as a needy unwanted baby, a Scarlet Macaw, who is now somewhere just older than 8 years old. He is finally starting to calm down just a tad, but he still makes me think of putting him in a more unused room of the house on an almost daily basis. That being said, it's time to share with you the video of a bird who re-kindled my childhood

desire (not that I ever really lost it, but 4 kids and little sleep will certainly give one pause about adding any new pet to the family) to raise an African Grey Parrot – the type of parrot known more for their uncanny impressions and ability to reason than for their beautiful feathers. As a kid, I read a book that made me want the parrot in the first place. It is called *Harry's Mad* by Dick King-Smith (this author also wrote the story that the movie [The Water Horse](#)'s screenplay (good movie!!) is based upon), and it's a great read for young adults (and maybe regular adults too? Might be basic, but fun – haven't tried it as an adult). And as for the video that made me again want an African Grey, despite the daily blows to my eardrums from the Scarlet Macaw? See for yourself; her name is Sylvia, and I especially love her Rhett Butler and Desi Arnaz impressions!

Match.com – For Gorillas

See if you enjoy this as much as I did – a group of female gorillas is given posters of their prospective mate. How did they react to it? Read:

From cnn.com:

by Nick Hunt

So when three female gorillas at London Zoo heard that they would soon be visited by a brooding French hunk – well, they went a bit bananas.

The latest development in Anglo-French relations sees Yeboah, a 20-stone 12-year-old, leave his current home at La Boissiere Du Dore Zoo, Pays de la Loire, northwest France and head for the British capital by the end of the year.

There he will be greeted by gorilla trio Zaire, Effie and Mjukuu, who were given posters of their prospective boyfriend for the first time Thursday.

One female gorilla shrieked in delight, while another wedged the poster in a tree to stare at it.

A third, clearly overcome by emotion, held the photo close to her chest – then ate it.

Their reception was somewhat unsurprising. The zoo has been without a male gorilla since the demise of Bobby, a silverback, in December.

Tracey Lee, team leader at London Zoo, put in a good word for the hirsute lothario on the London Zoo Web site, saying Yeboah is “a very charming, fun loving and intelligent gorilla.”

But whom will Yeboah choose to charm first?

Zaire, at 34, is the oldest female gorilla and has been at London Zoo since 1984. The zoo says she's "happiest when she's taking down and rebuilding her nest in various spots around the island. She loves to play with fabric and often drags it around with her all day. "

Then there's Effie, 16, who "enjoys seeing toddlers and often makes her way over to the glass when they come to see her," according to the zoo Web site.

Finally there's 10-year-old Mjukuu, or "Jookie." Dan Simmonds, a keeper at the zoo's Gorilla Kingdom, says she "has this 'butter wouldn't melt look' to her, and she gets away with murder."

"The other two females get along with her very well; she seems to have them all wrapped around her little finger."



Above is a picture of the gorilla who hung up the picture of her new beau.

Faith

Well, we found a church home in March, and it's been going very well; we love it there. The month of August is filled with church opportunities for us – a few classes we're taking, a carnival for the kids, I'm volunteering in the Welcome Center, and we just went to a retreat at a beautiful Christian campground in Michigan yesterday. But this post is not about THAT type of faith – it's about a dog named Faith who was born with only a stub instead of front legs. They had to remove his stub, and his mommy and first owner rejected him. His new owner named him Faith and taught him to walk and get along without his front legs just fine. How cute is this?



Thanks to Elizabeth for sending this to me!

Christian The Lion

My previous post became too lengthy, but I wanted to share the following video they had on the hotel tv. Whether it was my relief that the baby had finally fallen asleep, or my being so tired after a huge busy day, the video made me emotional – I think it's just a feel-good video. I meant to show it to the fellow animal lovers in my family, but it skipped my mind that morning, so now they can see it here; it's awesome!

Christian The Lion:

Furry Babies Sucks!!!

We began our trip to Chicago last Saturday, and the 3-state, 4-kid, mini-van trip went pretty smoothly. At some point, we achieved the quadruple-kid-pass-out which is never anything short of a great thing!

We arrived at our hotel in Naperville, Illinois on Saturday afternoon, and we decided to take the girls swimming in the outdoor pool which was really refreshing on an 80°+ day. It's been a long time since I've been swimming outdoors, and it was nice of my mom to meet us there for a swim instead of us driving the girls to her house for their week of fun with Grandma. After the girls left with her, we wanted to meet with a friend, but we were staying in the west 'burbs rather than the north 'burbs this time. Both parties had just endured long car rides, so we settled on a halfway point – a mall in the west 'burbs. Not really knowing what to plan on doing, we ended up finding such a great parking space at the mall that we just ended up going in to bumble. And it was fun! Partly because I haven't been in a real mall for years, so it was really interesting to see the different techniques that have evolved to try and entice shoppers to buy and visit... But I also enjoyed my mall visit because of the company we were keeping; it was nice to chat and catch up. And as you might have read in [derek's blog](#), we happened upon a glow-in-the-dark indoor mini-golf course that was less than a week old! It had 56 holes, but I don't think I could ever play that much mini-golf at once, so we stuck with the traditional 18 holes. I guess I should add in that I won the round and also had a lucky day with two holes-in-1 ☐ And I must comment on how good the baby was – he just sat in the shopping cart and watched the glow-in-the-dark golf balls

throughout ALL 18 holes! There were these small contraptions sprinkled throughout the golfing space – you put your ball in, and it rolls around and comes out glowing brighter – those were fun! And it was fun to see the mall again. It wasn't the same mall I hung out in all the time as a teenager, but I had still been to this one a lot growing up, and it was neat to see how much (or how little, compared to most things in the area) it had changed over the past decade and a half. That reminds me, speaking of change... when we arrived in Chicago, err Naperville on Saturday, we took the Naperville Road exit off of I-88 which is an area with which I am used to be very familiar. Back in the day (did I really just say that?), I would commute through that same intersection to work and back every single day, yuck... but apparently they've completely re-done the entire area in the past few years because the intersection was unrecognizable. I mean, they added new roads and everything – it was the most bizarre feeling, it felt like I had gotten dropped into the middle of the twilight zone. We exited I-88, and all of a sudden, we were on Freedom Drive. Where now? Freedom Drive? I had literally never heard of Freedom Drive, they created the street from scratch and plopped it down into this area where I worked and played so many years ago. As much as I thought I knew where we were going, Jill the GPS was actually quite helpful during this twilight zone adventure, and she got us to our hotel, even though I knew where it was – WAS being the key word here. But back to the mall... we bumbled around some more after getting some pretzel dogs (yummier in Chicagoland, of course, what isn't?) at the food court. I heard some lady talking on a cell phone about the "puppy store", and sure enough, we happened across it. I'm an animal lover, so I love to see and visit with animals, but I think a side effect of my tenderness toward animals is my loathing of pet stores. And the pet store in the Stratford Mall in Bloomingdale Illinois is just about the worst I've ever seen. It's no secret that many of the major chains of pet stores get their "wares" from puppy mills; ie dog breeding facilities with cramped quarters,

little food, and animal abuse. The huge chain famous for bad press, Petland, just closed a bunch of stores, which I believe is a good thing for dogs and dog lovers everywhere. I strongly believe that people should adopt animals, namely dogs and cats, from humane societies and other animal shelters. There are so many homeless pets, so how can it be justified to buy a puppy who is bred for selling when there are so many others bred accidentally who are also looking for love? I strongly support spay/neuter programs as well, fyi...

So anyway, the new pet store at the mall is called "Furry Babies". Their website calls it an "upscale puppy boutique, not just a pet store", but I call it disgusting. The puppies were in cribs, for goodness sakes, and along the walls they had a large variety of dog clothes for sale, no doubt at prices that I wouldn't pay to clothe my human kids. We inquired about one particular puppy, who was cute but looked to be slightly cross-eyed. We found out that she was a "designer dog" – they pretend like they meant to mix two breeds together (in this case a golden retriever and a poodle, thus giving us a "Goldendoodle"), but where I come from (the reality land of logic), we would call it a "mutt". And mutts tend to be better with kids, live longer, and are cheaper than purebreds – at least they were until a few years ago. Now mutts are these "designer dogs" and they cost **a lot** of money – in the case of the furry baby Goldendoodle – a cool \$1600. I cannot denounce this place loud enough! I also don't want to spend a ton of time going off about animal welfare nor lose readers by getting political. This just happens to be an issue I feel strongly about, and I plead that if you are in the market for a family pet, you consider adopting your animal companion from a shelter and also realize that you are entering into a life-long commitment! That being said, Furry Babies sucks, but the good news is that I can't see them lasting that long. Oh yeah, I forgot to mention that the employees wear mock scrubs, in order to imitate delivery room nurses, I guess, which to me is even more sickening. But there I go again... get me going and I will never stop... so if

you want to read more, [here is a link](#) to the forums about Furry Babies on the bestfriends.org website, which is an awesome organization – the country’s largest animal sanctuary for homeless pets of all kinds! I hope to visit them someday in Utah, but until I get over my fear of flying I will just persue their website and I suggest you do the same...

Now that I’m actually leaving the homeless pet tangent behind... we left the mall at a decent hour since we wanted a good night’s sleep to rest up for the Cubs / Sox game the following day – the entire reason we were in town to begin with. Poor us – that did not happen! We got back to the hotel (which was pretty crappy for a Naperville Hampton Inn – see my [Small Separate Side Post](#)), and the baby decided he was going to go nuts and stay up until midnight. Then the little booger awoke at 6 the next morning, and he crawled around and caused mischief like dipping my drying bathing suit into the toilet, thanks for THAT. My husband was nice enough to take him in the bath for awhile and do other various quiet activities with him in the small room so that I could get a little more sleep, and then we all went down to breakfast – my poor husband was a zombie. I decided for us (he could not make decisions at that point) that he would go back up to the room while I drove our son over to my mom’s for the day while we went to the Cubs game. We did that, and it took me about an hour to get all the way out to Aurora (not much traffic on a Sunday morning, but S000 many stoplights!) and back. I thought we had plenty of time, but if you read my “A Patch of Blue In A Sea Of Black And White” post, you’ll see why I should have stepped on the gas a little...

AWWW!!!

We were playing in the back yard yesterday when we saw something furry laying on the ground. Thinking the dog had gotten an animal, I put the dog inside and made myself scarce while my husband investigated – I'm sensitive about animals, and if the dog had killed a furry little creature in the back yard, I wanted to pretend like it didn't happen. So I come back outside a few minutes later, and my husband is still kneeling over the fur, saying he hasn't figured out what it is yet. What? Clearly the fur was not moving; why couldn't he figure out what it was? I fetched him a stick, and when he poked it, he found that it was just fur. And underneath the fur was a hole containing teeny tiny baby bunnies – live ones! They are incredibly cute, and they even hop! After some investigation on the internet, we found that the best thing to do is to leave them alone and that their mother didn't abandon them. Baby bunnies only get nursed for 5 minutes per day, and if the mother were to stay near the nest, she would alert predators to the babies. I couldn't resist pushing aside the fur to take a picture. It's very inconspicuous yet also in the middle of the open yard. I sure hope nothing happens to those babies. The first one is of the nest, then you move the fur, and the second picture is of a little head, note the white blaze on the top of the head. The third picture is a baby bunny face with eyes closed, see if you can find it in the middle of the fur:



I'm too afraid of hurting them to examine them closely enough to count them or take better pictures, but aren't they cute! From what I read, they will venture out of the nest at around 3 weeks old, and they will leave it altogether at 6-8 weeks. Judging by the size of our babies and the fact that we didn't see the nest before yesterday, I'd say ours are probably only days old; perhaps they were even only hours old when we found them yesterday! I am so glad we have a fenced yard now to

keep the neighborhood cats out – we have a few, and I've been feeding one of them. I feed her at the front of the house though, so I wonder if continuing to feed the cat will encourage her to come over here or if it will distract her and keep her in the front of the house, away from the baby bunnies?

I'm excited to watch them grow – they already look bigger than they did yesterday! Maybe I'll post their progress on my blog – stay tuned!