

My angel boy, Peewee, was in my arms for a brief moment in time, but it was the happiest 17-months of my life.



May, 2021

Dear Partner,

This has been the hardest year, and the most devastating last two months, of my life. It started February 12 and kept up til April 12. The losses will continue, but nothing can top those two months.

All these years I figured I was cursed. That of all people, like some kind of karmic retribution, I would never be allowed to have a personal animal.

Back when I rescued my first dog who was abandoned in the forest, my beloved Delta, I had him for only three years. We went everywhere together . . . ice cream at Marina Del Rey, swimming at the ocean, and hiking in the forest . . . where we found 35 other abandoned dogs.

I had my best friend and I was happy. But then he developed cancer which, in a few months, took him from me. I remember writing a letter to our supporters on the kitchen table and hearing a whimper from my bedroom. I ran in and Delta was gone.

Then I rescued a little white kitten, who slept on my chest every night. Scamp was a loving little boy, and after only three months I noticed something about his belly . . . so I took him to a vet. He had wet FIP. **This haunts me to this day . . . that in my youth and inexperience I listened to the "vet" and put him to sleep.**

I remember Scamp looking up at me when the needle was going in his little arm and asking me what I was doing. Today I would keep him going for weeks or months, a time we would both cherish.

Then one day I found Duchess. She was an abandoned year-old harlequin great dane. Duchess and I went everywhere as if she were Delta reincarnated. I loved that girl and I was crushed when after only one year

she died of a congenital condition, kidney failure. Again, I felt I was cursed. Ironically, Duchess was the beginning of my immersion into kidney disease which led to our co-founding the kidney dialysis center with UC Davis. That program was the first one in the world and it has saved countless animals, advanced kidney care, and even changed human medicine.

And anyone who knows me remembers my Fred. He was a black terri-poo of whom somebody said, "you should just tape him to your leg!" He was my son. I took him everywhere and he was always on my arm or in my lap.

Fred developed an enlarged heart, as many of mine do, and I lost him at a young age. Other people have their animals for a long and happy life, but I was cursed. I could not. My personal angels left early.

What was I doing wrong? Why am I being punished?

I had founded this wilderness rescue, I had been in the woods or desert for decades, I never went to parties or even ball games . . . my life was dedicated to the animals . . . so what was it? Why was I singled out to suffer so much loss?

So I made a change

I knew that if I had any special, personal little one, he would die early. So I went on without any single special one, loving many instead of pouring my soul into one. But that didn't work out too well either. In the past year I've lost seven personal dogs and cats . . .

. . . four in the past two months.

I started with Miley, my "cat wife." She would yell at me, grab my pants cuffs, and yank on them whenever she saw me packing my bag to leave for a few days.

Miley had IBS but it was under control. What I did not count on was her kidneys failing. After a few days in our hospital last year, with my visiting her and telling her she was coming home soon, I did take her home . . . for her last night on Earth.

In the morning, Miley was failing, so I put her on my bed in her favorite spot, and I injected her so she fell asleep in my arms. It was a very beautiful passing.



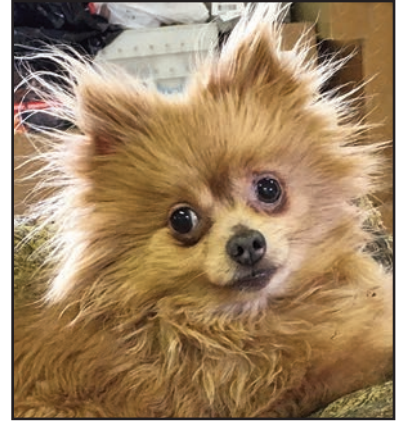
When I was a kid in nuns' school, they used to talk about a "beautiful death," saying it was the goal of each of the sisters. I never understood that until I helped so many of my animals to cross over, surrounded by love. It is excruciating for me, but I never let them feel my pain.



Fawn was an old lady when I rescued her in the dark one night. She was an escapee or a throw away from a chihuahua puppy mill. Her teeth were black from non-care and we fixed her up at our hospital. Since she was so small, I took her home to live with my other little ones.

Fawn also had a heart condition, her eyesight wasn't the best, but she was fiercely independent! I loved that old lady. I had her for only four-years, and I know it was her best . . . full of love . . . but I wish it could have been more.

Bayla, my rescued pomeranian, had a new heart condition, and we had just started treating it. His prognosis was good, and we expected him to live another two or three years. But one morning after he ate breakfast I found him lying on the floor. I rushed him to our hospital but he died on the way.



Then the last two months.

My precious Little Red used to sit in my lap and kiss my cheek while I hugged him.



Red had a nasal infection which we were treating. We sent in a swab for testing, but the lab took two weeks to get back with the results. One night Little Red was breathing heavily so I took him to our hospital. He died in my arms two-hours later. He had pneumonia from the nasal infection.

Lola had a heart condition, and one day she was weak. I took her to a well known, expensive hospital franchise for a cardiologist to examine. **He said she was fine.** Two days later she died of a heart attack. And worse, I wasn't with her. I'm sorry Lola.



Coco, Miley's brother, had kidney failure which worsened, but he hung on for months. Then one night he crashed and I held him as I helped him cross over on the same bed as his sister.



This has been a devastating year, and an even worse two months. I had no idea that LAST YEAR was the best year of my life. I had them all with me.

But the worst, most painful loss ever was my Peewee, pictured on the envelope and at the top of this letter. He had crossed all four lanes and the median of a desert super highway. There's no room here to tell you how I rescued him, except that we were both sent on a mission to find each other . . . at that precise moment.

Peewee was older, and alone in his deafness. I can still see him walking in my room, his hind end wobbling with two hernias, his tongue torn in his toothless mouth from car wheels. He was my angel.

Every day I wished that Peewee could have been with me from the beginning, as a puppy. I kept imagining what he must have looked like and how close we would have been for all those years. He had the most beautiful eyes and I tried to memorize them because I knew I would try to recall them someday . . . just not so soon.

For 17-months I'd wake up at night and look for him, and when I saw him lying there, sleeping secure in my love, I felt blessed.

One morning he didn't feel well and I wanted to check it out. I held him in my arms for a moment before we went to the hospital. He settled in and we melted into each other as one.

At the hospital I lifted him up into the anesthesia chamber. I didn't think it would be the last time I saw him alive. He was relaxed and he looked up at me petting the chamber lid. He must have known I was helping him . . . he yawned, trusting me, comfortable. He fell asleep knowing I was there, but I never got to kiss him goodbye.

X-rays showed his heart was ready to burst. We didn't wake him up. My happiness ended that day.

For all the animals, here and there,



Leo Grillo, founder

PS:

The next morning I had a brief moment of joy . . . I felt that Peewee was with me! Then I got it, after all these decades. **I am not cursed.** I am here to help all these angels, who are in trouble here on Earth, to have a beautiful passing. And my reward is that they are all there . . . waiting for me.

Dedication & Everlasting Love To Animals

P.O. Box 9, Glendale, CA 91209 ~ tel. 661-269-4010 ~ www.deltarescue.org

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to love and care for them daily at our “no-kill” sanctuary.

to provide full time medical care at our modern on-site hospital.

And here's \$ _____ to _____!

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To save the hassle of writing a check every month, I hereby authorize D.E.L.T.A. Rescue and my financial institution to **automatically deduct** my monthly donation of \$ _____ from the checking account as shown on my enclosed check, **on the tenth (10th) of every month.**

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Please send me information on the inclusion of D.E.L.T.A. Rescue's animals in my estate plans.

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