



## Hazel's Story

*As told by her mom, Judy Hayes-Casey*

I first met Hazel on a cold January day a little over a year ago. I had received a call to pick her up at the Twin Maples Veterinary Hospital in West Carrollton, Ohio at 3:00. My goal was to meet Sharon (a fellow rescuer) at the vet's office to conference with her and Dr. Wells, Hazel's attending vet, and get back home before the snow made the roads impassable. The week before, Sharon had pulled Hazel from the Clark County animal shelter in Springfield, Ohio. She had been diagnosed with advanced demodex mange which left her with huge bleeding sores and secondary infections.

After meeting Sharon for the first time, she began to paint a picture for me of how horrific Hazel looked when she pulled her from the shelter. She said her skin was so infected that she was dripping large amounts of pus and blood. Every time Hazel shook she filled the car's interior with fresh blood. By this time in the conversation I was a bit shell shocked and not sure what I had gotten myself into. Sharon politely told me this is the side of rescue that most people don't see.

A few minutes later Dr. Wells came in and we met and talked about Hazel's medical care. She had written all Hazel's meds and dosages on computer paper for me. Dr. Wells wanted to talk to Sharon and me before bringing Hazel into the room. I think she knew there would be a lot for me to digest. Well, there was. Hazel's meds included a list that took up two complete pieces of paper plus a shopping bag full of medications from antibiotics, to skin cream, to shampoo. Dr. Wells explained the entire medication regime to me and made sure I understood what to do and how to do it. After seeing the list I knew when I got home I would be making a medication chart to keep me organized throughout the day. After we finished discussing Hazel and her medications one of the vet techs brought her in. I was in shock. She was nothing like what I expected. She made my English Bulldog Olive look like a peanut. This girl was huge. She had a very long body, long legs, a big head, and huge feet. She reminded me of a gentle giant. The first thing she did was rub her head on my legs. She was adorable and I was in love. I could not imagine what horror she had lived through and yet she walked through that door like she owned the place and was demanding the respect and love she deserved.

After a few more hints and tips on how to best take care of Hazel, Dr. Wells gave me the following list of medications Hazel was taking and would need to keep taking until she was well.: Cephalexin twice daily for infection, Rimadyl twice a day for inflammation, Chlorpheniramine 3-4 times a day for itching, Pyoben shampoo 2-3 times weekly for baths, Revolutin applied topically every two weeks for 3 total treatments for heartworm, fleas, ticks, and parasites, and Ivermectin administered with a syringe daily until 2 skin scrapes come back negative. After the skin infections healed Hazel still needed to be spayed, work done on her tail, and possible eye surgery.

As the three of us gently lifted Hazel into the back of my hatchback, Dr. Wells told me she was available for any questions and I could always use her voicemail if needed. It was all we could do to get this huge dog lifted up into the car using nothing more than a t-shirt for a sling. Hazel's neck was so raw using a collar and leash were out of the question. I thanked the ladies for all their help with Hazel and for the first time I was alone with her and trying to digest all that lay ahead for us.

Then the most amazing thing happened. As Hazel was waiting for me to lower the tailgate she stopped and looked at me, eye to eye, with a look so deep and real I almost can't begin to describe it. I felt like she had pierced through my eyes deep into my soul. It was a look that said no matter what I look like now I am proud and strong and I will survive.

Within a few seconds, Hazel and I set out for home with snow coming down from all directions. The roads were snow covered and icy. On the way home Hazel sat in the back of the car wearing her huge blue padded e-collar. Even with the collar on she tried to lick the back of my head while I was driving. When we got home I immediately began the medications. This proved to be a little difficult. I had to put her meds in tiny bites of turkey franks. Due to the skin infection underneath her chin her mouth did not open very wide, so bites had to be small. She had a hard time standing up because she was so drowsy from the meds. Just getting her ready for bed that first night was a monumental task. Once she took all her meds it was time to go outside. The snow had continued to fall all afternoon and evening and had accumulated to about 6 inches. When Hazel's feet hit the snow she was immediately in heaven. She ran through the snow and played in the drifts. The snow must have felt so good to her. At one point I looked over and she was eating the snow like a child would. She looked like she was having the time of her life. At that moment, in the middle of the night, standing in the snow I felt an overwhelming sense of hope for Hazel and her new life.

During the next several months I continued to foster Hazel and take care of her. She had to be spayed and had to have her tail removed. The removal of her tail left her with a huge incision and once again in pain and on more medications. Throughout all Hazel's trials and tribulations she always wore a happy "bullie" smile on her face and made everyone around her laugh.

As time went on, I could not see Hazel living with anyone but me. We had been through so much together that by this time I felt like she was one of my children. She had wormed her way into my home and my heart. I had already been a foster failure once so was not embarrassed to wear that title twice. I eventually went on to adopt Hazel and the rest is history. She is a happy, healthy bulldog living life to the fullest and making me smile. Hazel just recently finished her first obedience class and is on her way to becoming a therapy dog. I am so grateful that she found her way to me and is a part of my life. Hazel is a living, breathing testament of how far a rescued dog can come with a little love, compassion, and great rescue organizations like Indiana Bulldog Rescue and Sharon coming to her rescue.



