

Just So.

Earth Boy Meets Galactic Girl

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My William is a down-to-earth kind of guy.

So sweet, gentle, and kind. He always behaves beautifully, always did even as a young puppy. Everyone adores him. I named my new puppy girl “Maisie” because I thought it was such a sweet and gentle name, hoping to impart those characteristics onto her. At now seven months, she is sweet and gentle. She is also a tornado. And it is all because of her name, since dogs live up to their names.

Turns out, about four months after I named her, the James Webb Space Telescope made a tremendous discovery of a galaxy created shortly after the Big Bang. The astrophysicist who discovered this amazing galaxy named it after his daughter, Maisie. No wonder my Maisie is a galactic girl!

Maisie is now Maisie May, to further distance her from galactic creations of universal proportions.

Let me begin by saying that my two dogs adore each other, often sleeping spooned together. They chew bones side by side, legs intertwined. They play tug together. They just enjoy breathing next to each other.

So what happens when an Earth Boy meets a Galactic Girl?

Typically, a puppy emulates the older dog in the household. I was so hoping Maisie May would follow William’s wise guidance especially in the area of his impeccable house manners. I have had older dogs kindly discipline puppies for breaking house rules, or at least come tattling to me. Instead, quite the opposite occurred. William has, in a word, gone mad.

Maisie May tends to get the zoomies on a regular basis, not just in the evening as my past puppies did. William just grins and follows her lead, happily zooming after her throughout the house. A coffee table has been overturned once or twice. It is bedlam.

All of my puppies were house trained inside of a few days. Every single one of them went to the back door to be let out. Not Maisie May. For the first two months, we went outside every 20 to 30 minutes – just in case. Now she gets double zoomies, which is the only way I know she has to go outside. Sometimes William stands by the door for her to let me know she has to go out. It is unbelievable.

Maisie May is a voracious reader, especially of magazines. Some people read in the bathroom. Maisie May reads while I am in the bathroom. She delights in pulling magazines out of the trash. She reads for a split second followed by consuming them in a nontraditional way. She eats them. Although he does not join in, William looks on with grave approval as if expecting to discuss current events with her.

We won't even discuss Maisie May's proclivity to steal socks and run off hiding in her toy box, which apparently is her safe space. Even William does not understand that unusual activity.

William is a quiet dog. He never barks at people approaching the house. He reserves his barking for trespassing bunnies and squirrels. Maisie May, on the other hand, has decided to become protector of the house. Not only does she look out the front windows, she looks out the side window and even races to the nearby room's windows to address her targets. William tacitly nods in silent approval.

When they play together in the yard, William generally stands in the center of the yard and Maisie May runs figure eights around him. Every time she meets him in the middle, she body slams him or leaps over him. He seems overjoyed to have her attention. When she wants him to run with her, she pulls out his hair. Once he begins to run, she chases him, not the reverse.

I often give them identical bones to chew. Of course Maisie May always wants William's bone. The house rule is that once a dog has walked away from his or her bone, the other dog may take it. Maisie May's rule is that she just snuggles next to William and squeaks at him until he moves away in resignation.

Of course I protect William against Maisie May's antics. I do not permit her to continue to act inappropriately, nor do I want William to have to defend himself. William is delighted at whatever

Maisie does or does not do. He's just thrilled to be within her orbit.

I'm just explaining what happens when an Earth Boy meets a Galactic Girl, a heavenly body who is out of this world – a Big Bang!

~ Just so.

Elizabeth M. Jarrell of Bon Ami Australian Shepherds has won six Maxwells from the Dog Writers Association of America (DWAA), including two for her "Just So" column, one for books, one for editorial, and one for online feature, plus Certificate of Excellence from the Cat Writers Association. Liz won the AKC Family Dog Award, from the DWAA 2018 Annual Writing Competition. This award is for the best writing (including books, articles and blog posts) about any or all of the good manners programs under the AKC Family Dog umbrella, including AKC Therapy Dog, AKC Trick Dog, AKC Canine Good Citizen, AKC Community Canine, Urban CGC and AKC S.T.A.R. Puppy. Previously, she had also won DWAA's 2016 AKC S.T.A.R. Puppy and Canine Good Citizen Special Award.



Remembering Sandy Cornwell

The Australian Shepherd has lost a very special piece of the present and of history with the passing of Sandy Cornwell. She was one of the first names I learned when I joined ASCA in 1972. Sandy supported the founding club, ASCA, from the beginning, serving on the board of directors and in other volunteer positions as it evolved from a tiny group who loved a breed of dogs without even a registry – a breed that few people out there even knew existed. Not many people dedicate themselves to creating a bloodline that will have an effect on that breed forever. Sandy did that and, along the way, helped so many people while playing a huge part in the big picture as a judge, breeder, mentor. No breed survives without people like Sandy and her beloved Fair Oaks dogs. We will all be forgotten some day, but there will be those who look at those dogs falling off the page of the pedigree and hopefully will think kindly of those who laid the foundation for their own living dog.

~ Terry Martin