

## Hop-a-long Cassidy

I received a call to say that baby ringtail was on his way to live at my house – lovely – but I now I needed a friend or two for him. Cassidy duly arrived, and was so named because his back leg was bit gammy. The crows had gotten his tail, which was wonky, and his face had lots of scratch marks from their beaks. Lots of therapy later, and the leg was working as well as it ever would, and more than acceptable for release. By this time Cassidy was nearly 300 grams and still no partner in sight.

Then came the call. A little female ringtail had been located, but was not in a good way, and not expected to live. A member of the public had kept her (upon vet's advice) in a box, not toileted or fed; just offered cow's milk in a bowl. She was only 70 grams and had been kept like this for 4 days, so I was more than a little dubious as to whether she would make it.

During the first day, things didn't look good, and seemed to go from bad to worse. I was under no illusions that I had a 'goner' on my hands, and made the decision to introduce her to Cassidy anyway, even though I knew he was way too big for her.

You should have seen it! Her little eyes lit up and she reached out both front paws to grab his nose and nuzzle it. She then nuzzled his ear, and promptly went to sleep. Cassidy sat there on my lap while she slept, with a much put upon look upon his face as if to say – what's this? – but he did not move his head away from her nuzzling nose in his ear. Upon waking, she fed and toileted – no problems at all. Taking a chance, I bundled her into a pouch, which I pegged shut, and placed in the drey with Cass for warmth. Coming back after an hour to check them I found the pouch empty and no sign of the little girl. Panic stations! I searched the cage, the surrounding area and still no sign. Cassidy sat through all of this upheaval, still tucked up in the drey, legs curled underneath. Where had she gone? Just then Cassidy raised his head to look at me, and there, tucked against his tummy between his paws was the little girl. After that, she stuck to him like glue, so we named her Bindi. He absolutely adored her and she him. Cassidy later took on a second little girl (Mittens – as she used to punch everyone) whom he also adored, and then a pair of ringtail girls, Chrissy and Indianna (both explorers). He was eventually released with his harem of four girls.

*Photo – Cassidy, nobby tail and scarred face second from the right. Bindi is sitting next to him on the left. Then Chrissy. Indianna is hanging down the door and Mittens is looking behind herself on the far right.*

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