

Hanna Parisio
Anna Thompson
Bio 101
19 April 2021

Sebastian and Bailey

The morning dawned bright, crisp, and clear. The birds sang their angelic song as the sun finally peaked through the window. Sebastian had already been up for hours filled with excitement. Christmas is his favorite holiday because of all the joy that comes along with it. He had to force himself to stay in bed and wait for the sun to rise so he could wake up his parents and finally open his presents. As soon as the sun rose just above the horizon, Sebastian sprinted down the stairs to his parents room to wake them up. Once he woke them up, he rushed them into the living room to start opening their presents. His eyes lit up as he saw all the beautiful presents under their dazzling tree. He saw that the biggest present he had was from Santa, but his parents had this rule that Santa's present had to be opened last. However, Sebastian did get to open his presents first. He was overjoyed as he ripped the ribbon and the sparkly wrapping paper off his presents. The first present he opened was a box of dog supplies including food, bowls, treats and toys. He was very confused by this because he doesn't have a dog. But that got him thinking that maybe his present from Santa would be a dog. He got super excited about the thought of having a dog. He always wanted one but his parents thought he needed to be older in order to take care of a dog. Sebastian could no longer contain his excitement and needed to know if he had gotten a dog and sure enough his big present was a dog. It was his first dog and he was overjoyed. She was a beagle that was only a few months old. She had long floppy ears and beautiful black and brown fur. Sebastian decided to name her Bailey.

Sebastian and Bailey shortly became best friends and Sebastian took her everywhere. She would go on car rides with him, family trips, but very rarely would go on walks with him. Bailey's favorite trip to go on is to the sand dunes. Even though it is usually a long car ride to get there, Bailey does really good when it comes to roadtrips.

But she usually sleeps the whole way and only causes a little trouble while they drive. This is her favorite trip because she gets to run around in the sand, everyone likes to feed her their leftover food, and even gets to go on a ride with Sebastian on his four-wheeler. They would always have so much fun together and usually would end up cuddling whenever they slept together. And yes Bailey definitely got to sleep on Sebastian's bed. They were the best of friends, but he wanted more.

Sebastian loves Bailey so much that he begged his parents for another dog. He thought it would be fun to have another dog so Bailey could have another dog friend to play with. His parents just kept saying no over and over again, but this didn't stop him from asking. He was so persistent that he annoyed his parents on a daily basis about getting a second dog. It took a few years but eventually his parents finally caved and said he could get another dog. He was so excited and decided to go with a little bit of a bigger dog this time. He chose to get a chocolate lab and named her Daffiney. When they brought Daffiney home, Bailey was super excited to meet her and have a new friend. They would always play together and have a lot of fun. Sebastian started to spend way more time with Daffiney and kind of forgot about Bailey. He still loved them both, but gave Daffiney way more attention because she was a younger puppy and required more attention.

Sebastian started taking Daffiney on walks or runs and left Bailey behind. He just couldn't handle walking both dogs at the same time. Bailey would get very sad and stopped wanting to play and run around as much throughout the day. It took awhile but eventually Sebastian started to notice that Bailey was gaining a lot of weight. He began to pay more attention to her and noticed that she was always tired, excessively panting and never really wanted to play anymore (3). Sebastian thought that this was very strange since Bailey was still pretty young and had several more years where she should be playful and energetic. So, he decided to do some research. After researching the symptoms that Bailey was having, he realized that she was starting to become obese. He became very worried and wanted to get Bailey healthy again because he found out that when animals become obese their life expectancy goes down (4). He

really didn't want that to happen because Bailey was his first best friend and he loved her more than anything.

Sebastian began to do a lot more research on obesity in house pets. He was very surprised with the results he found. Obesity in pets occurs when excessive adipose tissue accumulates in the body, and is generally defined when the animal's body weight is at least 20% greater than its optimal weight (5). About 60% of cats and 56% of dogs in the US are overweight or obese according to the Association for Pet Obesity Prevention (5). This information made him feel a little bit better since there is such a high percentage of dogs that are obese in the United States. He was still very upset that his lack of attention that he gave to Bailey led to a lack of exercise and poor diet and that is ultimately what caused him to become obese (5).

Sebastian's goal was to change Bailey's diet so she was eating healthier and going on more walks with her to increase her daily exercise (3). Even though he tried to change her life and fix the mistakes he made when it came to taking care of her, Bailey developed many different health problems including osteoarthritis, diabetes, high blood pressure, and cancer (4). As she became older it became very hard for Bailey to walk and she just wasn't her happy self anymore. She had less energy and just never wanted to play with him too long. Sebastian was only a teenager when he had to make a very hard decision. He had to decide to put down Bailey because she was living a terrible life. Even though this was the hardest decision he has ever had to make it taught him a very valuable lesson. He told himself that he would never allow another one of his pets to become obese again. After this experience Sebastian decided to be the best pet owner he could be to Daffiney. He never wanted to make such a terrible mistake again. He started to constantly take her on walks and train her. He continued to be the best pet owner even after Daffiney. He only fed his dogs with nutritious dog food and fed them the right proportions instead of over feeding them. Every dog he had after Bailey lived over their expected life span. They all had amazing lives and not one of them ever became obese!

Work Cited

1. "2018." *Association for Pet Obesity Prevention*, petobesityprevention.org/2018.
2. "The Basic Necessities of Proper Pet Care / The Animal Foundation." *The Animal Foundation*, 2018, animalfoundation.com/whats-going-on/blog/basic-necessities-proper-pet-care.
3. "Obesity." *The Kennel Club*, www.thekennelclub.org.uk/health-and-dog-care/health/health-and-care/a-z-of-health-and-care-issues/obesity/.
4. Ward, Erine. "5 Reasons Why Pet Obesity Is a Serious Problem." *Pet Health Network*, 2010, www.pethealthnetwork.com/dog-health/dog-diseases-conditions-a-z/5-reasons-why-pet-obesity-a-serious-problem.
5. Withy, Carey. "Obesity in House Pets." *Lazy Paw Vet Library*, 2 Aug. 2019, lazypawvet.com/library/articles/obesity-in-house-pets/#:~:text=Overweight%20and%20obese%20pets%20are,their%20overall%20health%20and%20wellbeing.
6. Wsvma. "Blog." *WSVMA*, 14 Feb. 2020, wsvma.org/2020/02/14/pet-obesity-at-epidemic-proportions/#:~:text=The%20prevalence%20of%20overweight%20and,nationwide%20in%202018%20were%20overweight.