

## Always an Adventure

My sister Linda is an adventure. One recent weekend, we gardened, watched old Disney movies *That Darn Cat* and *The Ugly Dachshund*, cleaned the source of pantry moths, watched episodes of *The Lone Ranger* and *Little House on the Prairie*, and encountered a skunk.

Yes, a skunk!

At 10:00 p.m. Sunday, Linda let out her dogs before bedtime. Then, she let them in—along with an unmistakable odor. Which dog had found a skunk? Prissy, a five-year-old, 40-pound, golden brown, golden-eyed, short-haired, affectionate rescue, seemed the culprit. Linda escorted her outdoors for the night.

“Should we call Houston and tell him what’s happened?” Linda asked.

“No, let’s let your son sleep, okay? I’ll check my phone for ways to clear the air.”

Google advised: simmer apple cider vinegar for two hours. My shortcut? Microwaving vinegar in a coffee mug, and setting the cup on the kitchen table.

Result? I smelled vinegar—and skunk.

What about Linda’s three miniature Doberman Pinschers—sisters Tiny, Misty, and Rainbow? Rainbow? We weren’t sure. All we smelled was skunk—everywhere!

“You’d better close your bedroom door tonight, Linda.”

“Yes, I’ve already been thinking about that!”

Our ordinary day had segued into a smelly night.

And a noisy one!

Behind our bedroom doors, which only partially blocked the odor, we were kept awake an hour by the mini-pins’ forlorn barking to be admitted to Linda’s room. Finally, they stopped and we slept. The yelping began again. They gave up, and we slept. A third round of yipping started. The din subsided, and all five of us slept.

Morning came at 9:00 a.m., well past my usual 7:00. Linda was up and had called Houston.

I told Linda I’d patrol the alley fence. Yesterday, we’d found a hole, and I’d replaced the soil and topped it with three stones. The skunk’s entry/exit? No way to know.

Yesterday’s spot was undisturbed. Looking farther, I spied another hole. Was it new? Had I missed it yesterday? No way to know. I refilled it and added a stone.

Reporting to Linda, I also told her I’d carefully petted Prissy and smelled my hand. I asked her to sniff my palm. We agreed the odor seemed gone. The skunk hadn’t made a direct hit!

I updated my nephew and ended with, “You don’t need to come. The situation’s under control.” He sighed, relieved and grateful.

After breakfast, we fed the dogs and prepared to bathe them outdoors. Each leashed dog mostly cooperated, except Rainbow, who, seeing the bath, slipped her collar and escaped. As I roamed Linda’s gardens calling Rainbow’s name, I came to the carport, which reeked. Holding my breath, I crept by, hoping the skunk, if still around, was sleeping. I found Rainbow, and Linda and I completed the last bath. Finished with our “could’ve been worse” skunk adventure, we cheered, “Hallelujah!”

Our hope? The skunk has found a new home far, far away. Linda’s vow? “I’m never, ever letting those dogs out after dark again!”