

Almost-Perfect Meg

Perfectly shiny hair!

Perfectly clean hands!

Perfectly neat clothes!



By Kathleen Mulroy
(Based on a true story)

Meg wanted to be perfect. She brushed her hair until it was perfectly shiny. She kept her hands perfectly clean. She kept her clothes perfectly neat.

Meg didn't like messy sandboxes. She hated it when one shoelace was longer than the other. And she really didn't like dirt. Playing tag looked like fun . . . but she might mess up

her hair or get her shirt dirty!

On Meg's birthday, her mommy and daddy gave her a special gift. It was a puppy! He was tan with white paws and soft brown eyes.

"Oh, I love him!" Meg said. "I'm going to call him Mittens."

The next day, Meg played with Mittens in the yard. She threw the ball over and over again. They had



so much fun. Then Mittens jumped into Meg's lap. With dirty paws!

"Eww!" Meg yelled. "Mommy! Mittens got me dirty!"

Mommy came outside. She gave Meg a hug. "Puppies are messy," she told Meg. "I know it's hard for you. But I hope you can have fun with Mittens, even if it means getting a little dirty."

Meg looked down at Mittens. She wanted her clothes perfectly clean. But she also wanted to keep playing with her puppy. She loved him!

"I guess it's OK to get a little messy sometimes," Meg said.

Days went by. Meg kept playing with Mittens. Sometimes

he drooled a little on her clothes. Sometimes he drooled *a lot* on her clothes! After a while, Meg worried less about the mess. Mittens was fun to play with! He was always happy to see her.

Soon Meg started trying other new things. She waded in the lake with her family. She played in the sandbox. She played tag at recess.

One day, Mommy even had to remind Meg to change her dirty clothes! But Meg didn't mind. Things didn't need to be perfect for her to feel happy. ●

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