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**Subject:** merlin - a journey  
**Date:** Wednesday, July 29, 2009 9:20:57 PM

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## Merlin – a journey

I dislike winter for any number of reasons; the cold for one, the bitter frosts that seize my toes and fingers like the whack of a well worn sledge hammer, the short gloomy days, the mud (although these days the fact that mud means we have had rain one cannot complain) but most of all winter means lambs. While for many the sight of a pristine little white bundle of lambiness means “goo’s” and “gahs”, for me it means orphans.

Every year I know it’s really winter by the arrival of orphan lambs here at Edgar’s Mission- and to date we have had several. Don’t get me wrong I would never ever begrudge helping one of these innocents. In fact some of my most magical moments have been spent in the wee hours of the morning cuddled up with one of my lambies. Phil Wollen once said the “powerless are precious” and precious indeed they are. What I find hard to bear is the fact that the ones that serendipitously find their way here are but a tiny weenie tip of a ginormous iceberg. So much so that I doubt any figures realistically account for the number of young lambs that die each year and no one ever even knows about them.

Merlin would have been one of them, but at least for now someone knows and cares about him. I named him Merlin not so much because he looked like a little wizard but because it is going to take a miracle for him to survive. Merlin arrived on Sunday afternoon in the arms of a teary farmer’s wife who felt “the little one just deserved a chance”. He had been found earlier that day when the sheep had been rounded up for drenching. The little chap limped slowly along behind the rest of the flock, a bloodied wound on his hind leg



told of a recent dog attack.

Merlin's leg was not only bloodied and bleeding it was broken, no make that shattered. To make matters worse it had been done sometime before and it had become infected. Already suffering from, and struggling to cope with, life without a mum the little chap's immune system had already become depressed. The situation was not good and x-rays soon confirmed even worse. It would have taken a large jawed animal to crush the two bones in his leg, splintering them in



several places. The vet confessed that while not lacking compassion he did not have the expertise to fix the leg even if it was possible. It was going to take a miracle.



My options were few, euthanasia or wait until tomorrow for one of the senior vets to have a look. With the passage of years I have come to realise that death is not always the worst option, suffering is. My answer was simple,

"could we provide Merlin with sufficient pain relief that could get him through till the morning so he would not be suffering". With the price of lamb sitting on around \$10.00 a kilo the vet nodded "we could, but it was not going to be cheap". I guess it would be a journey for us all.

I had taken Merlin to the best place possible, equipped with extremely knowledgeable and compassionate vets, ultra modern equipment and a desire to help animals regardless of their species. For now I could do no more. Merlin was given enough pain relief to get him comfortably through the night, a kiss on his head and

tomorrow would be another day...

*“All things are possible until they are proved impossible -  
and even the impossible may only be so, as of now.” Pearl S  
Buck*