

These heart-warming, soul-stirring dog tales will bring you laughter and tears. You'll be uplifted by these captivating canines with their antics, comedy, and love for humans. In this dark world, dogs light up the darkness with their love and courage.

Dogs: Heart-Warming, Soul-Stirring Stories of our Canine Companions

**Buy The Complete Version of This Book at
Booklocker.com:**

<http://www.booklocker.com/p/books/3316.html?s=pdf>

DOGS

**Heart-Warming, Soul-Stirring
Stories of
Our Canine Companions**

John Cali

**BookLocker.com, Inc.
Bangor, Maine
<http://www.BookLocker.com>**

DOGS

Heart-Warming, Soul-Stirring Stories of Our Canine Companions

John Cali

Library of Congress Control Number: 2007906733

© 2008 John Cali

ISBN-13 978-0-924033-44-5

ISBN-10 0-92403-44-4

All rights reserved. Printed in the United States of America. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise without the permission of the publisher.

Printed in the United States of America

Published by: BookLocker.com, Inc.
Bangor, Maine

Cover design by Todd Engel

Table of Contents

Acknowledgments.....	vii
Introduction.....	1
Dog Tales.....	3
More Than “Just A Dog”.....	6
Remembering Alice.....	9
My Search for Beau.....	12
Always Look on the Bright Side.....	18
Monty.....	21
Help Wanted: Canine Caretaker.....	24
Dog is My Co-Pilot.....	26
Doggone It, I’m in Love Again.....	28
My Little Diplomat.....	31
A Good Deed Dog.....	33
Hans Was Here.....	36
Shared Angst.....	40
A Painted Pony for Fitzgerald.....	43
My Dog Thinks I’m a Sheep (Is That Baaad?).....	46
Rocky on Guard.....	48
Nest Empty Except for Superdog.....	51
Little Shepherd, Guardian of Her Flock.....	53

DOGS

Shanna: A Story of Love, Devotion, and Courage	56
What's That Noise?.....	64
Forever Faithful: Shep's Story	66
Princess: The Mutt with Moxie.....	70
Max, My Beloved Schnauzer.....	74
The Happiest Dog at Christmas	77
The Compassion of a Dog.....	80
Our Guardian	82
An Angel Named Taffy	85
My Amazing Dog Thunder Bear	88
A Sight to Behold.....	90
Wily.....	92
In Loving Memory of Tote	102
Through the Eyes of Love.....	104
Who Is John Cali?.....	106
Contributors	107
Copyright Permissions	112
Resources	115
A Final Story.....	118

Dog Tales

Happiness is a warm puppy.

Charles M. Schulz

A few days ago, my ten-month-old puppy, Zelda (who, yes, like F. Scott Fitzgerald's wife, must, on a regular basis, be locked up) decided to take an unauthorized tour of the neighborhood. She escaped from me as I was attempting to put her outside on her chain. I had just gotten home from work and was still dressed in my work clothes, complete with pantyhose and red high heels. As she dashed down the driveway and across the street, I followed her as quickly as possible, a demented Dorothy in ruby slippers trying to retrieve a very poorly behaved Toto.

Zelda was not trying to run over the rainbow, but rather indulge in a neighborhood-wide game of "Chase." Looking over her shoulder she would let me get almost close enough to touch her, and then she would bound out of reach. It was a great entertainment for my neighbors, who, for some reason or another, were reluctant to join in the game. Well, it could be the fact Zelda often appears with a muzzle on (a vain attempt to discourage constant barking and grass-eating) or perhaps the huge "Beware of Dog" sign on my house, meant to discourage unwanted visitors when I am not home.

My neighbors stood behind their fences, laughing and pointing as Zelda, a golden retriever mix with a huge tail held up like a flag, raced back and forth, with me hobbling after her in my workday finery and red shoes. Finally, I was able to corner her against a fence and drag her disobedient furry butt home. She immediately drank an entire bowl of water, and collapsed on the floor, with an expression on her face that clearly said, "Now that was fun."

She had the same look on her face when it was discovered she had chewed my daughter's entire wardrobe of underwear, an act that clearly warned the dangers of leaving unattended laundry baskets on the floor. It's an expression Zelda sports anytime one discovers her chewing on things she shouldn't, such as vacuum cleaner cords and watchbands. To add to the aggravation, she usually has her own dog

DOGS

toy right next to the illegal object, as if to say, “Oops, I chewed the wrong thing.”

Having this puppy in the house brings back memories of all the dog mischief I have been subjected to my entire life. Now some families are not dog families and cannot comprehend why we are willing to subject ourselves to this. To those families all I can say is you haven’t lived until you come home to find your house has been gleefully redecorated with the fragrant contents of your kitchen garbage can. Or the family is reduced to sitting on folding chairs to watch television because the couch belongs to the dog.

However, if you are a dog family, you understand the joy and companionship far outweigh the chewed-up camera straps and stained carpeting. And the stories of the dogs that spend their lives with you become the stuff of family legend.

The dog I grew up with was a good-natured basset hound named The Red Baron. A show dog with a championship bloodline, I occasionally would show him in the Junior Showmanship section of American Kennel Club dog shows. Unlike the professional dogs who arrived in crates with fancy grooming tables, Red would ride in the car like one of the kids, his paws resting on the back of the front seat and his nose constantly knocking off my father’s hat. This was also the lazy, slow-moving dog who, at the mere mention of bedtime, would be off like a shot, flying up the stairs as fast as his short little legs would carry him. If you weren’t able to catch up with him, he would jump in your bed first, settle in the exact middle with his head on the pillow, forcing you to sleep, blanketless, on the edge.

Later, as a single young woman living alone, I felt the need for a dog not only for companionship but protection. This was naturally what I was looking for when I fell for a miniature dachshund in a pet store. I named him Max, after the song “Maxwell’s Silver Hammer.” I can’t explain why I felt the need to name my dog after a musical serial killer; however, I think he took it very seriously. Max was the only schizophrenic dog I have ever had, and all I can say is, thank goodness he only weighed five pounds.

At certain times, Max would station himself under a chair and attack anything that passed by, including my feet. Attempts to clip his

Heart-Warming, Soul-Stirring Stories of Our Canine Companions

nails induced a mania that required three people to control. And once, while romping in the yard at my parent's house, he bit down on a stick so hard, the ends snapped off, leaving the middle of the stick firmly lodged against the roof of his mouth. It took the entire family to hold him down, open his mouth, and yank out the stick. He promptly rewarded my father by sinking his teeth into his hand. Biting the hand that fed him was Max's hobby.

Gypsy was the dog who served as the "first child" when I was married. A devoted and well-trained German shepherd, she was popular in our circle of friends. But friends are in short supply when your dog goes out in the yard and meets a skunk. No one wants to come over and help you douse her with tomato juice, orange juice, baby powder, and vinegar. Kids run away screaming, slamming their bedroom doors and yelling "She's not sleeping in here tonight!" So much for all her years of loyalty.

Now we have Zelda. Born in a junkyard and bottle-fed by a kindly family who rescued her from a malnourished mother, Zelda still feels the need to be cuddled and held. The problem is, she is almost fifty pounds, with a tail that would be more appropriate for a horse. Days and nights are spent keeping her body off the furniture, her paws off guests, her head out of the fish bowl, and her tail away from anything not nailed down. Her extreme distractibility means she often takes a drink of water, forgets to swallow it, and proceeds to dribble it all over the first person she encounters.

I've been trying hard to come up with a solution that keeps Zelda occupied and doesn't involve house demolition. Finally, yesterday, I turned down a road I don't usually take, and passed a huge facility called Canine Academy. There, behind sturdy, tall fencing was an elaborate dog obstacle course, complete with things to jump over, squeeze under, crawl through, and run around. The perfect place for Zelda and her Olympic-style dog tricks. I made a mental note to call the school right away and get information on how she can join in.

Just as soon as I catch her.

Noreen Braman

Monty

Dogs are our link to paradise. They don't know evil or jealousy or discontent. To sit with a dog on a hillside on a glorious afternoon is to be back in Eden, where doing nothing was not boring—it was peace.

Milan Kundera

We are a “cat” family, Monty. I think you always knew that, and dedicated your life to proving to us there was the possibility of canine superiority.

Do you remember when we met? You were the self-assured pup sitting patiently in the corner of the cage as your brothers and sisters yipped their misery. You were the terrier-mix fluff ball in the group with intelligent eyes. Something in them met mine—I think it was kindness I saw—and when I left the store, I had you in my arms.

We had two little girls at home, and two grown cats. I thought it important the girls grow up with a dog. You see, my personal commitment to you was altruistic—for them—and rather superficial. You would fit in, but you would be the girls’ pet.

Well. The tears that ran freely when it occurred to me you might not survive your recent paralysis came from a deep well of affection our years together have honed. My blatant sobs and aching heart as we buried you beneath the juniper were testament to the attachment we shared for each other over twelve years. There is an empty place in my day for you, Monty. The lump in my throat when I think of our times together has not gone away. I know time will change that. It always does. Today, though, I want to tell you what you came to mean to me—what you taught me.

You were a terrier mix—black fluff with golden markings and penetrating black eyes. We did not consider docking your tail or clipping your ears. You were a warm and cuddly shaggy dog in the winter, and a smartly clipped schnauzer-looking piece of elegance in the summer and fall. Yes, we had you clipped. We, who cut our own

DOGS

daughters' hair to save at the beauty shop, paid tightly budgeted dollars to have your easily matted shag cut. Though you stepped out smartly with each new clip, secretly, you and I both preferred the comfort of your familiar and friendly shaggy-dog hair. That is how you were laid to rest. Familiar and friendly, I am happy that is our last memory together.

Do you remember how little you were? You could walk underneath the cats and nip at their bellies. Their nose-in-the-air attempt to ignore you was wasted. Your enthusiasm to be the friendly newcomer vaulted you to eminence with your persistent determination to be part of the family.

You were a quick study. You were trained within days, eager to please at every turn. Your feelings could be bruised with a look. I feel guilty, Monty, that we used that sensitive nature of yours to fit you into our lifestyle. And, fit in, you did. You were not built like a runner, but you were an apt and capable one. Do you remember the girls racing ahead on a country road while we held you? You loved the game, and caught them and passed them—barking your victory—each and every time. And, as I think of you now, I envision a little black ball, ears flying, chasing her girls in a high mountain meadow.

Wherever you are now, I hope you are running out your joy in an amiable meadow, chasing along with the wind lifting your ears.

Your girls learned so much from you. You were always an eager and affable companion to them. You taught them responsibility for another creature, rewarding their efforts with face-licking enthusiasm. When they were older, they would take you on your favorite “bye-bye” trips. Sometimes it was just a trip to the store; other times, they included you in their personal camping and hiking trips. Thank you for enriching the souls of our daughters, Monty.

I think of the countless times you would sit outside with me, on the ground, and lean into me for support. Physical closeness was bliss to you. You would sit for hours while I read or gardened or did what I do. You would follow so closely that I was constantly stumbling over you. I wonder what you thought about those countless, sweet times. Surely you had more interesting things to do than to stand guard,

Heart-Warming, Soul-Stirring Stories of Our Canine Companions

leaning into me for hours on end. And, your quiet loyalty touched me in a special way.

Do you remember? Of course you do. Your memories etched the responses for the rhythm of your days. Your life was not over-burdened by the human dilemma. It was simple and focused. And we were the beneficiaries of your perspective.

Your blind eyes. We speculate you must have bumped into something or stumbled the night your legs quit working. A disk high in your spine was completely displaced.

You could not stand, and were too weary to do more than lay your head on my hand as we took you to the vet. When I called the next morning and was told there was no hope, I said we would be in to see you. I called your girls, away at college now, to tell them the sad news. I am glad they were spared this painful goodbye. For you, though, I would have wished you could have been wrapped in their love one last time.

We raced over to see you, unable to present the cheery front we wanted. It was cruel to have to make such a decision for you. Pumped full of medicines, and unable to stand, you talked your joy at seeing us. You told us how bad it had been, how happy you were we were taking you out of that place. We had a wonderful conversation. You knew we loved you, you knew we were there, you knew we thought you were a “good girl”—your most prized words. Your cry when we left ripped through us both.

So, Monty, we laid you under the junipers, your collar high in the trees. You looked so much like our sleeping little dog it was hard to believe you were past sleeping. You earned a place in our hearts with your persistence, enthusiasm, and love. You will always be a member of our family—part and parcel of our precious memories. You were our friend.

We are a “cat” family. Now, we are also a “dog” family.

There will not be another dog for awhile. We could never have another terrier-mix. That is our weakness, Monty, and our understanding there could never be another like you. But, our tribute to you is we want another dog in our lives—someday.

Rest well, Monty.

Betti Bernardi

Through the Eyes of Love

An animal's eyes have the power to speak a great language.

Martin Buber

Last Saturday, after a meeting with two of my friends, we had an experience that transcends words. It still lingers in my heart, with great gratitude for having had it at all. To tell the story does not seem out of the ordinary, except it was extraordinary—as love always is.

After our meeting, we went to a restaurant, and as we got out of the car, a woman on a bike rode by. She asked if we had any change. I only had a \$20 bill, which was for dinner, so I said “No.”

She rode off, and one of my friends commented on her cute dog, in her bike carrier. I called out to the bicyclist, she stopped, and we went to see the dog. We noticed immediately there was a depth of quality in the woman's presence. She was like a friend, someone we had known for a long time.

She shared that her dog was fifteen years old, and had cancer. She told us the dog had been stolen twice, and she prayed so hard for its return. God answered her prayers.

She talked about being homeless, but did not seem unhappy about it. I think she said she lived in her car. I looked into the dog's eyes and, truly, they became the eyes of Christ.

Really they did. They were large and full of light. I stared into them and said, in my heart, “Oh my God—you are so beautiful!”

Before the thought was finished, the dog leaped from the basket, right into my arms, and licked my face.

After a few minutes, the dog began to shake a little. So the woman got off her bike, opened up a bag, and pulled out pajamas for the dog. She took him, sat on the ground, and lovingly put on his pajamas.

The love between her and the dog was heart-warming. She gently put him back into the basket, and we continued to talk.

Heart-Warming, Soul-Stirring Stories of Our Canine Companions

We could have stayed forever in that moment, as time stopped, and we were just in the deliciousness of it all. It felt like a holy encounter for all of us.

I searched my purse again, found \$5, and handed it to our mystery lady. My friend also found \$5 she did not realize she had.

As the woman rode away, she turned to me and said “Happy Birthday. You will live to be very old.” None of us had told her it was any of our birthdays. We stood there stunned!

My friends and I all felt this woman was very special, and we were blessed by her presence. I have never before in my life felt face-to-face with God, in the eyes of a dog. I truly was overwhelmed by the beauty in this dog’s eyes.

And it was my 70th birthday!

The encounter was a special gift, as I love animals!

Marie Rhodes

These heart-warming, soul-stirring dog tales will bring you laughter and tears. You'll be uplifted by these captivating canines with their antics, comedy, and love for humans. In this dark world, dogs light up the darkness with their love and courage.

Dogs: Heart-Warming, Soul-Stirring Stories of our Canine Companions

**Buy The Complete Version of This Book at
Booklocker.com:**

<http://www.booklocker.com/p/books/3316.html?s=pdf>