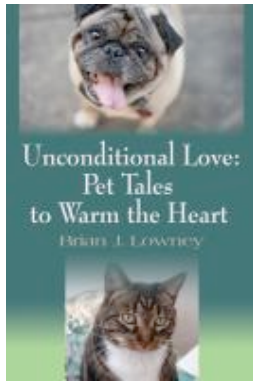




Unconditional Love: Pet Tales to Warm the Heart

Brian J. Lowney





UNCONDITIONAL LOVE: *Pet Tales to Warm the Heart* was written for anyone who loves animals, especially those furry, finned, and feathered creatures that bring pure joy to their owners' lives. Whether you share your heart and hearth with a friendly feline, a comical canine, a colorful tank of fish, or other creatures, this book will entertain, educate, and inspire you with stories that illustrate how animals transform lives, and make the world a better place.

UNCONDITIONAL LOVE

Pet Tales to Warm the Heart

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First Edition

DISABLED DUCK TEACHES VALUABLE LESSONS

Lemon is certainly one lucky duck!

When the tiny creature was hatched five years ago, everyone doubted that the little duckling would live more than a few days, but Lemon has beaten all the odds and matured to become a big happy duck who inspires and brings joy to everyone she greets.

“She was a beautiful shade of lemon when she was born,” says the bird’s owner Laura Backman, a reading specialist in the Portsmouth, Rhode Island public schools.

The Crested Pekin duck suffers from neurological issues that prevent the animal from balancing, standing or walking normally. Most veterinarians who have examined Lemon attribute the duck’s condition to brain damage caused by the large crest.

Lemon was one of four ducklings hatched during a classroom science project. Backman and her students realized within a few days that although Lemon looked and quacked like a duck, the tiny bird couldn’t move around like her siblings.

“She kept falling over,” Backman remembers, adding that the students took turns watching Lemon at recess time while the little duck played in the grass. The teacher says that the children worked together to make the duck thrive.

By caring for Lemon, the students shared in her triumphs and defeats and learned about love and acceptance. Most important, the children discovered that disabilities and differences don’t make a person or animal less special or valued.

The enchanting duck continues to visit classes and teaches students that although some people face significant challenges, they still can enjoy a happy life if they are loved and respected.

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Last year, one of Backman's students, Joanna Lewis, who is hearing impaired, developed a special bond with the loveable bird.

"She could relate to the duck," reveals Susan Lewis, the young girl's mother. "It was good to see that there was an animal with a disability."

Lewis recalls that although her daughter was once ostracized and mocked, when the students began to care for Lemon after entering Backman's classroom, they became more compassionate and accepting, and began to reach out to Joanna.

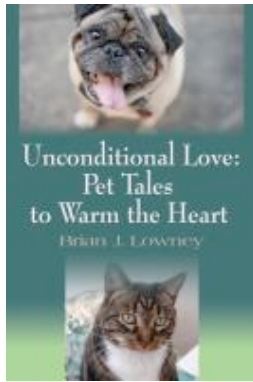
"They all bonded and they didn't see the differences in their classmates," Lewis notes.

Backman and her feathered friend routinely visit schools, summer camps and programs for children and adults with special needs, and they also volunteer in the Pets & Vets program that teaches compassionate animal care and promotes the human-animal bond in inner-city schools.

"While some may consider Lemon a classroom friend or mascot, she is as much a teacher as is Laura," wrote Dr. Ted White, past president of the Rhode Island Veterinary Association in a letter praising the popular duck. "As a teacher, Lemon has inspired students and symbolized equality among able-bodied students and students with disabilities. ... In this age of classroom, playground and cyber bullying, Lemon represents the goodness of the human spirit and the warm and nurturing environment we, as parents, want classrooms to embody."

In honor of her amazing companion, Backman has written a charming children's book, *Lemon the Duck*, beautifully illustrated by Laurence Clemet-Merle of France. The book is available at www.amazon.com/.

To learn more about Lemon, visit www.lemontheduck.com.



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