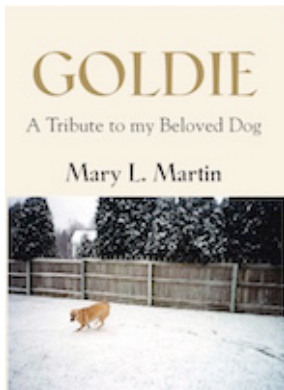


GOLDIE

A Tribute to my Beloved Dog

Mary L. Martin





It was a very rocky childhood and young adulthood. Growing up with an alcoholic parent made Mary Martin's life miserable. It was a very unhappy and lonely time in her life. She tried desperately to experience the love and attention that is normally present in most children's lives but her life was anything but normal. She was never taught how to truly love someone or how to receive love from someone else. She struggled through her childhood days only to encounter an equally rocky marriage. The unhappiness and loneliness she experienced during her marriage was, at times, unbearable. Mary longed for the love and attention in her marriage that she never experienced as a child.

She searched for someone or something to help her through her difficult marriage. It was a very special dog who entered her life and who saved her time and time again during that difficult time. It was that very special dog who taught her about love, forgiveness and friendship when no one else in her life ever could...

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First Edition

CHAPTER 3

I received a small divorce settlement that allowed me the opportunity to move into a townhouse. I bought a small townhouse in New Jersey. I decided to live in New Jersey because it was so much closer to my job at the hospital. I was so happy about this because I could now have Goldie come back to live with me. I knew we were going to be very happy together once again. This was going to be our home. Goldie would come back to me and feel loved and wanted again as would I. I would tell my friends at the hospital how happy I was that I was finally going to have Goldie back with me where I knew she would receive the love and attention she deserved. The day came when I finally moved into the townhouse. It was a cold January day. I picked Goldie up the next day after I moved into the townhouse at the doggie day care where she had been staying. We said our good-byes to Kate and Tim and to everyone there who took very good care of Goldie and we were on our way to our new home. The townhouse I moved into was much smaller than the big house I lived in with Daniel. Daniel's house had a big backyard

where Goldie would love to run around and play. The yard to the townhouse I had bought was very small but Goldie didn't seem to mind. We were both so happy to be reunited.

When I got Goldie home to our new house I noticed she had a reddened area to her right hind leg. I called Kate at the doggie camp where Goldie had been staying and mentioned it to her and asked if she had noticed this as well. Kate told me that she did and she thinks it was from the puppies nipping at Goldie's leg while they were playing. I accepted this but decided to keep an eye on it. I would examine Goldie's leg every day. The reddened area was not getting any worse and eventually disappeared. I became so busy with work and keeping house that I wasn't able to spend as much time with Goldie as I thought I was going to do. I was trying to get my life back on track. I was making new friends and even began dating again. I also became very good friends with my next door neighbors. They were a young married couple who loved dogs as much as I did. They adored Goldie and Goldie adored them. They had a beautiful dog of their own that Goldie would play with and become friends with. Even though

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I was starting to get my life back on track, I always made sure that I would free up some of my time so Goldie and I could continue with our walks every day. This was something Goldie really enjoyed doing with me and I enjoyed it as well. The months passed and it was already spring time. It was around June when I noticed Goldie began to lick the area on her right hind leg where she had had that reddened area months before. She was also starting to not want to walk on that leg. She would lift her right hind leg whenever she walked and began to walk on three legs only. I knew she was in pain but didn't know why so I decided to take her to the vet to have her leg examined. The vet told me that Goldie was biting at her leg due to separation anxiety. The vet felt that whenever I wasn't around, Goldie would experience anxiety and bite at her leg. I was given a cream to rub on Goldie's leg but still was not totally accepting of this diagnosis.

Despite the diagnosis I got from the vet, I felt there was something else going on so I decided Goldie should have an x-ray done of her leg. The vet told me the x-ray results show that it was an old injury Goldie had suffered. An old injury Goldie had suffered? I

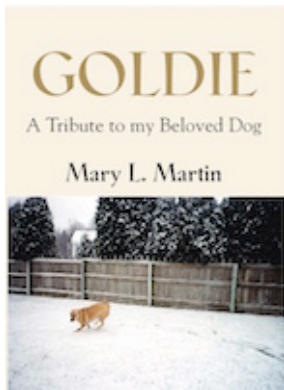
thought when was Goldie's leg injured? My thoughts immediately turned to my ex-husband. Had he injured Goldie when I wasn't around? I didn't want to talk to Daniel so I asked my sister to call and ask him about it. Daniel denied ever having hurt Goldie in any way. I accepted this because my sister said Daniel sounded truthful and I knew Daniel would not physically harm Goldie but I needed to be sure. Daniel never paid much attention to Goldie and never really cared much about her but I had never seen Daniel be physically abusive towards Goldie in any way. After Goldie's x-ray the vet decided to place Goldie on a pain medicine for the time being. A few days after Goldie's vet visit and after her x-ray was done I received a phone call from another vet at the facility I had taken Goldie to. This vet asked if I could come to his office because he wanted to discuss something about Goldie with me.

When I arrived at the vet's office he took me into an out of the way back room and told me that his colleague had asked him to take a look at the x-ray of Goldie's leg. He told me that Goldie actually has cancer to that leg. The vet said that Goldie has osteosarcoma. The vet told me we could keep Goldie comfortable

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with pain medications for awhile but the best thing to do would be to put Goldie down. I knew, being a nurse, this was the worse type of bone cancer anyone can have. I could not believe what I was hearing. This could not be true I thought – not my Goldie Girl. I had to sit down in a chair because I felt as though I was going to fall onto the floor. I felt numb. I could not hear anything coming out of the vet's mouth after that. I began to cry and told the vet I could not lose my Goldie. I told the vet we had to do everything possible to save Goldie's life but the vet recommended that I have Goldie put to rest. The vet sent me home with a prescription for a pain medicine for Goldie. The vet also gave me a prescription for a medication given to dogs with arthritis. The vet told me that it sometimes helps with the pain a dog experiences who have bone cancer. I took both prescriptions with me and left the vet's office. When I returned home from the vet's office I sat on my couch and couldn't move for a while. I just sat there stunned. Goldie and I had only just been reunited a few short months now. Goldie was only five years old (in dog years she was thirty five years old). Goldie was so young. I could not believe this was happening. Finally, I went over to where Goldie was

laying and I lay beside her and just held her in my arms. I knew I did not want Goldie to suffer but how was I ever going to let her go. I knew I was not going to be able to do it. The next day after work I called the vet's office to find out if there were any other options available besides putting Goldie down. The vet told me that some people opt for amputation of the limb. The vet said that will prolong Goldie's life but it would also involve a quite long recovery period. Being a nurse, I thought to myself, I could do that. I could have Goldie's leg amputated and then rehab her back to health. The only thing is that Goldie would now only have three legs instead of four. The vet told me that dogs adjust very well to only having three legs. I, at first, felt optimistic about this idea. Later, I would look at Goldie and think I could not do that to her, and besides, I didn't know if the cancer had already spread to other parts of Goldie's body. I knew amputation was not going to be the cure and I also knew I was faced with quite a decision to make but how in the world would I ever be able to make the decision to let my Goldie go.



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