

Prologue

When a dog enters your life they enter your heart, and a bond of love is signed and sealed. Spanning the boundaries of time and physical existence, this love has no end. It is eternal.

As humans we may think we fully know the nature of love when we have caring parents and siblings, when we fall in love with our beloved, or when we look into the eyes of our children. But that magical mystery of the heart extends far beyond romance and family ties. It exists, not only for the human race, but in all of creation; it is omniscient, omnipotent, and I now know what all that means. Love is everywhere, in all living things, and in the beautiful synchronicities that show up in our lives to guide us.

When you have been blessed with the love of an animal a new window opens up on love's richness, depth, and mystery. Animals love you unconditionally, and dogs are especially demonstrative of this. It isn't any wonder they have been dubbed *man's best friend*.

these small hours – *For the Love of Bailey* is a love story about a blind dog who saw into our hearts from the moment she came into our lives by way of a dream, until she left us ... with a song. Bailey intuitively felt our joys, our pain, our love, and finally our confusion, frailty, and anger ... and knew just how to heal it all.

I hope you will find inspiration in Bailey's story as you tread in her footsteps and ours through the pages of her miraculous little life. If she lets you know when it is time to have a box of Kleenex nearby, don't worry; she will also give you a belly laugh or two and will most certainly leave you richer for having known her.

This book is also about the value of giving homeless animals a chance at a new life. While it does not impose upon your personal choices for pet ownership, it will shed light on, and hopefully dissipate the fears and reservations you might feel about accepting a homeless animal into your life. Before adopting Bailey, Buddy, and Dexter, my idea of having a pet was to get a brand new puppy or kitten. I wanted to ensure they didn't come with "baggage" ... someone else's imposed *behaviours*.

But I was to learn a beautiful lesson about how life and happiness really work. By heeding a dog's plea, I embarked on a beautiful journey that would inspire me to share my findings with the world.

Our personal experience with adopting *shelter* animals has been an incredibly rewarding one. Pet ownership has its challenges but not unlike any other life experience that brings with it enough good to outweigh the negatives. I believe there is a spiritual blessing in opening up your home and your heart to those animals who perhaps once knew love but lost their good home through unfortunate circumstances; or those who never knew love and are starving for it, who would do anything they can for you, just to know and feel what every living thing was born to feel before they die: Love.

I have learned that the *issues* we find with animals ... and even with parenting our children ... are mostly a reflection of our own misunderstanding of how we feel our lives *should* be. Those issues represent the truth that we are not always *in control*, and they bring with them an opportunity to draw upon a greater power beyond the limits of our own vision and cognitive reasoning. Then real love and power are released ... to us and through us

... leaving us stronger and more wholesome human beings. How? By illustrating that the *problems* are really just keys to finding our greatest potential and capacity for love. Then we understand that no matter how our journey unfolds, we will be OK.

At the back of the book is an insert about the work of the Calgary Humane Society, along with a list of other wonderful animal organizations. In that section you will find out how to adopt, how to find a best fit for you and your family, and how to support the work of those who care for the animals while they wait for a *forever home*. If you purchased this book you have already made a start in supporting their cause. Forty percent of all profits from this book will be donated to the Calgary Humane Society.

A big thank you from my partner, Doug, and me ... and from homeless animals everywhere.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Verna". The script is cursive and elegant.

Verna Lee Bowen
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