

H O M E
{ S W E E T }
H O M E

—

ARKANSAS *rescue* DOGS & THEIR *stories*

written by /
GRACE VEST



Little Rock, Arkansas 2017

Copyright © 2017 Grace Vest

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced without express permission of the publisher, except in the case of reviews. Contact publisher for permission under any circumstances aside from book reviews.

Published in the United States of America by:

Et Alia Press

1819 Shadow Lane

Little Rock, AR 72207

etaliapress.com

ISBN: 978-1-944528-02-7

Library of Congress Control Number: 2017954259

Edited by Erin Wood

Cover & Layout Design by June Upton

Photography by Whitney Bower

TABLE

OF

CONTENTS

/

25 dogs

/

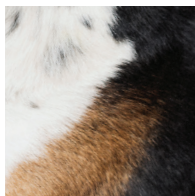
25 rescues

+
06

{ intro }

by grace vest

+
08



{ part I }

*champ, rascal,
hattie, kali,
walter, & margie*

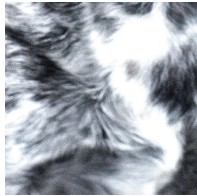
+
22



{ part II }

*rocky, tripp,
lucie, django,
piper, & faye*

+
36



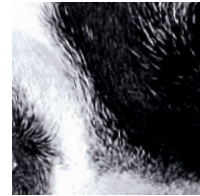
{ part III }
*cash, nala,
roxy, riley,
& frankie*

+
46



{ part IV }
*maxwell,
marshmallow,
lyla, & cedar*

+
56



{ part V }
*priscilla,
sheva, grux,
teddy, & georgia*

+
68

{ resources }
*arkansas
animal rescue
organizations*



+ stephanie parsley photography

{ INTRODUCTION }



Dogs are simple souls. They don't care what you look like, what you do for a living, or how old you are. They're most interested in what's in your heart. Many would agree that if humans acted more like dogs, the world would be a better place. With all that dogs give us, humans should in return give dogs a

proper and loving home. Sadly, all dogs aren't treated the way they deserve to be.

Throughout my life, my family has rescued pets. I remember many occasions when my dad would take my sister, my brother, and me to the local Humane Society to pick out our new furry family member. As

many who have rescued dogs can attest, canine rescues human as much as human rescues canine. I can say this with authority, because I owe life as I know it to a couple of rescue pups. Rescue dogs led me to my husband, Patrick. If I had never rescued Rascal, I wouldn't have met Patrick and his rescue lab, Jake, at the dog park.

Jake was a protagonist in our fairytale story. He was Patrick's baby; wherever Patrick went, Jake was alongside him. Later, when Patrick and I were dating, Jake became my sidekick. He was my passenger for errands, my beach buddy when Patrick couldn't go to Florida. He loved being outside, but didn't enjoy exercise like I did, so he would stay behind while I ran. Jake was even a best man in our wedding. If it weren't for Jake, I wouldn't have my little family as I know it today. Sadly, he left us in November of 2015.

It's important to me to carry on Jake's memory. I want our son, Townsend, to know how much Jake was loved, and to understand how the simplest things in life—like tail wags, excited sniffs, and head scratches by the front door—can be the best, the things that turn a house into a “home sweet home” for rescued canines and rescued humans.

Jake inspired me to write this book and tell other Arkansas rescue dogs' stories. For the rescue dogs that have become members of my own family, I wanted to write this book. Because of all those I cannot rescue, but that I know are out there grieving for loving homes, I couldn't not write this book. When I started

this project, I couldn't have imagined that nearly 300 rescued humans would write in with the stories of Arkansas dogs.

One of those who shared her dog's story was Whitney Bower. A photographer talented in capturing the hearts of her subjects, Whitney's love for dogs and passion for finding homes for rescues made her the ideal choice to be this book's photographer.

It was a challenge to narrow so many powerful stories down to a fraction of those submitted. In spirit, I am including each and every one. I hope that as you read through those I ultimately selected to print, and see their personalities reflected in Whitney's images, you'll think also of the many wagging tails across the state and beyond awaiting loving homes. If someone reads this book and decides to adopt or foster, volunteer at or donate to a local shelter or organization, then I have done my job in sharing Jake's legacy.

*EVERY RESCUE DOG HAS
A STORY. I'M HUMBLED TO
SHARE A FEW WITH YOU.*

/ grace vest

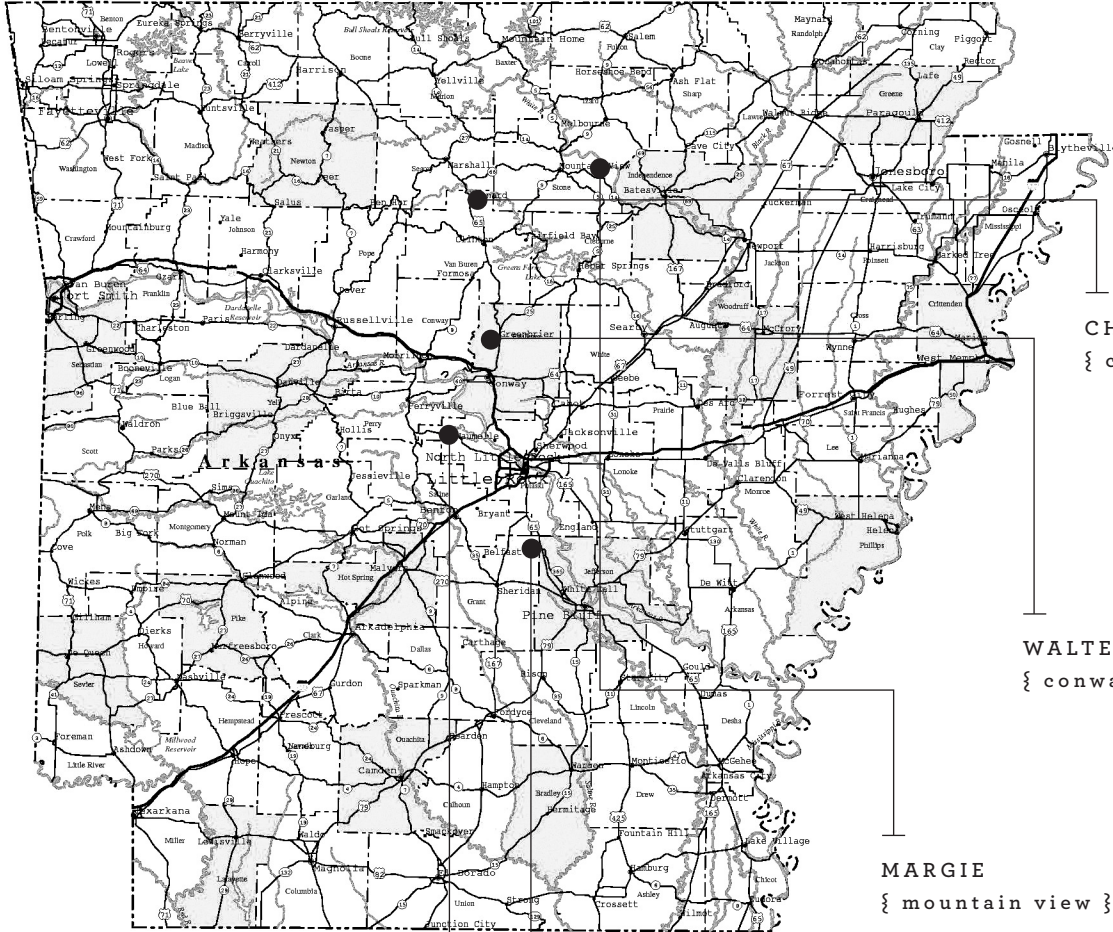
{ PART I }



“I can’t imagine how Kali ended up on the path she did, but we are the lucky ones! She exemplifies dignity, and the fact that anyone can overcome hardships!”

/ tracy abston, KALI

WHERE OUR DOGS



CHAMP
{ clinton }

WALTER
{ conway }

MARGIE
{ mountain view }

RASCAL & HATTIE
{ little rock }

KALI
{ sheridan }

WERE FOUND

{ CHAMP } | owners / patrick & grace vest

If it weren't for this book, I wouldn't have Champ. My bowlegged little man had a rough start at life. He had a home, but not a good one. Whitney Bower, this book's photographer, called with bad news: a friend of hers had seen a beagle chained to a fence in Clinton, and he'd been there for at least five days. To make matters worse, it looked like the people who lived there had abandoned him after a recent house fire.

After learning about Champ, Whitney stopped what she was doing, drove to Clinton, and rescued him. When she got to the burned-down house, she saw Champ lying down by a joke of a dog house, pieces missing from the roof and nails sticking out from the top and sides. He was so still she thought he was dead. Thankfully, when she approached him he got up. He looked at her as if saying, "Please, take me."

His collar and chain had become embedded in his skin, and he smelled like he had never been bathed. Whitney knocked on the neighbor's door and asked if anyone owned the dog. The neighbors said Champ had belonged to the people that once lived in the burned-down house, and they believed he had been outside on the chain for at least four years. They would give him water and throw him scraps, but said they didn't want to take him for fear of the cops coming to their house.

Whitney loaded Champ in her car, bathed him, took him to the vet, and called me. I took Champ in as a foster dog until we could find him a proper home. As many do, I became a foster failure. Champ loved our rescue lab, Norma, and got along perfectly with our son, Townsend, who was eight months old at the time. It took Champ about three weeks to figure out what love was, because it was clear he had never been loved properly before. We had him fixed and made sure the cut where his collar had once been was healed. He was scared of the couch at first, but now it is one of his favorite spots. Through fostering, we formed a bond that we decided we couldn't break.

Champ is the perfect addition to our family. Whitney remains his forever fairy godmother.



My dad would always say, “The best dog is an adopted dog.” I was at a point in my life where I was living on my own, and felt prepared to take on the responsibility of having my own dog. I went to the Little Rock Animal Village, adopted a 10-week-old Border Collie mix, and named him Cooper.

Cooper was found in a shed in southwest Little Rock where his brother and sisters had passed away. The pups’ mother was nowhere to be found. Cooper was sweet, and we instantly bonded. One night after about a week together, and seemingly out of nowhere, Copper started foaming at the mouth. He was having trouble breathing. I rushed him to the vet. While we were still in the waiting room, little Copper passed away in my arms.

Following Cooper’s death, it was confirmed that he had suffered from parvo. In puppies, parvo is caused by the canine parvovirus. This virus is highly contagious and spreads through direct contact with an infected dog or by indirect contact with a contaminated object. A puppy is exposed to the parvovirus every time he sniffs, licks, or consumes infected feces. In most cases, young puppies die from this awful virus.

After about a month, I went back to the Little Rock Animal Village, and shared the story about Cooper and his siblings in the shed. They took me to a room and showed me a litter of puppies that were recently born. My sister helped me pick the runt of the group, based on his playful and joyful demeanor. I named him Rascal.

Often from bad comes good, and that was the case with Rascal. He accompanies me everywhere, including to Arkansas Razorback football games. Rascal has been with me through every stage of learning how to “adult.” Mentioned in the introduction of the book, Rascal is the reason I met my husband, Patrick, and his rescue dog, Jake, who would become our dog Jake. I took Rascal to the dog park every day, and Patrick brought Jake. We all instantly connected but it wasn’t until six years later that Patrick and I finally started dating. During the years between meeting and dating, I called Patrick my “dog park boyfriend” because I could never remember his real name. Our wedding and our son later, we fully appreciate that if it weren’t for rescuing Rascal, we may never have met.

These days, Rascal lives with my dad, Corley Townsend. He went to live with my parents when my apartment management decided dogs were no longer allowed. It was intended to be temporary, but Rascal and my dad formed a quick bond. Dad had recently had lost his rescue, Eli, and Rascal was there for him when my dad needed him most. Rascal and I still see each other weekly and Rascal has formed a bond with our son, Townsend. Rascal plays golf at the First Tee of Arkansas, enjoys long weekends at the lake, and loves giving hugs to everyone who’ll let him.



{ K A L I } | owner / tracy abston

Kali, a Catahoula Mix, was adopted from the Arkansas Paws in Prison Program (PIP) at Tucker Maximum Security Prison in April 2015. Kali was two years old when Tracy Abston met her and immediately fell in love. Kali was rescued by Last Chance Arkansas from a high kill animal shelter in Sheridan.

Kali is large, black, and was very pregnant at the time—all factors making her adoption less likely. Within four hours of her rescue from the shelter, Kali gave birth to three glass-eyed puppies. She was a fantastic mother. All of her puppies have very calm temperaments and are being trained as service or therapy dogs.

After the puppies were weaned, Kali entered the Arkansas Paws in Prison Program. In the middle of the program, one of her teeth had to be pulled by the vet. That's where Tracy met her and immediately fell in love. Tracy always adopted black dogs and she had recently lost her former rescue, Beaux. Tracy knew Kali had been waiting for her family and Kali's new brother Maxwell, who had been found on the side of the road in Arkadelphia with two broken legs. Kali was a blessing for Maxwell because he needed another "dog friend." He became very solitary after Beaux passed and Kali gave him a new lease on life.

Unfortunately, Kali never got to experience an official graduation from Paws in Prison since she was adopted in the middle of it. Her trainer wrote Tracy a wonderful three-page letter all about Kali: what Kali had learned during the program, a list of all her tricks, what she loves, and her story. Her trainer at Tucker Max said, "I never got to say good-bye, but heard Kali went to a great home." He just wished he could have hugged her goodbye. Tracy has written him back with pictures of Kali and Max. She has offered for Last Chance Rescue to take Kali back to Tucker Max to say goodbye if they ever want to.

Kali is absolutely beautiful inside and out, loves everyone, and is sharp and eager to learn.



{ WALTER }

owner / amy turpen

Walter is made of love . . . and a lot of hair. He is a beautiful four-year-old great Pyrenees / Labrador retriever mix, adopted by his family through Central Arkansas Rescue for Animals (CARE) in October 2013. He weighs around 90 pounds, but thinks he is tiny. He must be among the sweetest dogs in the world, and is highly intelligent. Very verbal, he talks all the time; sometimes his family even knows what he is telling them. They are sure he always understands what people say to him.

Walter loves to play in the back yard with his sister, Gemma—also a rescue. Great Pyrenees are considered guardian dogs and are bred to watch over sheep. The guardian traits are apparent in him

every day. He loves kids and watches over them very closely. The younger they are, the closer he sticks to them. His favorite spot to lie is under the dining room table at home where he can see all three doors, a good vantage point to watch over the house and his people.

Walter was picked up roaming the Conway city streets at about 9 months old, and was a tall and skinny 70 pounds. CARE rescued him from Conway Animal Control and he was accepted into the Arkansas Paws in Prison Program (PIP). Shortly after entering PIP, he was moved to the service dog training program because he was so smart and trainable, and had the perfect temperament. Entering the program meant



he was no longer available for general adoption. But after a few weeks, his trainers noticed he was having some muscle tremors and leg weakness. So, he was pulled from the service dog program and once more made available for general adoption. The trainers continued to teach him as many tricks as they could, and by graduation, Walter knew a long list of tricks.

After vets inspected the tremors and weakness, Walter was diagnosed with an autoimmune disease. It looked like he would be on medication for the rest of his life to keep the symptoms under control. Miraculously, a few months after placement in his forever home, Walter was pronounced 100% healthy.

His short-lived illness remains a mystery, but the consensus is that he had growing pains because he is such a large breed, exacerbated by being so malnourished as a puppy. What we do know without any doubt is that he was meant to be part of Amy Turpen's family. One of the many things they love about him is that he still knows a handful of unusual tricks, ones he learned in service dog training. His favorite is "Dry"; when he's soaking wet, he'll shake dry on command.

{ MARGIE }

owners / lisa & troy schulte

“Everyone should have the good fortune of having one really good dog as a part of their life.” Lisa Schulte’s father-in-law texted this message to Lisa the day she and her husband, Troy, had to put their first rescue dog to sleep.

Kona was Lisa’s first dog to have on her own after college. Lisa’s friend Barry had raised Kona from a puppy after she was abandoned in a box at an apartment complex. She was smart, beautiful, and one of the best friends Lisa could ask for. After Kona’s cancer diagnosis and seizures at just four years old, Lisa and her husband had to make the difficult decision to put her down. Following her death, Lisa had never been so

devastated and her heart remained heavy. Although Kona was irreplaceable, she knew she and Troy needed another dog in their lives.

The couple had heard about Arkansas Paws in Prison, which pairs shelter dogs with inmates in the Arkansas prison system. For 8 weeks, inmates train the dogs on basic obedience commands. The dogs “graduate” at the end of the program, and become available for adoption. Lisa had always admired the program, and loved looking at the pictures of the adorable dogs on the Paws in Prison Facebook page.

A few days after Kona’s death, Lisa came across a photo of Margie online. The second Lisa saw the



picture, she knew Margie was going to be their next dog. Lisa commented on the picture, asking if Margie was adoptable, and discovered she was. Lisa promptly arranged a meet-and-greet. Lisa and Troy not only met Margie, they met her inmate trainer. They felt completely at ease during their meeting and were excited to get to know everyone who had worked with their soon-to-be family member.

With some research of the Stone County Humane Society Facebook page, Lisa found that Margie and a dog suspected to be her mother were thrown from a moving car on Christmas Eve in 2015. Margie lived at the Stone County Humane Society from the time she

was dumped until she made her way into the Paws in Prison Program in July 2016.

Adopting Margie has been one of the best decisions Lisa and Troy have made. Though she does have a penchant for destroying books and shoes, Margie loves to cuddle and keep them company. She is most likely part pit bull, part Labrador retriever. Don't let the pit bull part scare you, because she is the sweetest dog you will ever meet. Lisa is so glad Margie is a part of their little family.

{ HATTIE } | owners / corley & jennifer townsend

This girl has such a fun and loving soul. You would never guess she was once a stray on the streets. This sweet gal got a second chance at life after my dad decided he needed to have his car washed one Saturday afternoon.

After a Saturday round of golf, my father, Corley Townsend, decided his car was long overdue for a proper wash. When he arrived at the carwash off of Colonel Glenn Road in Little Rock, he noticed a tiny dog hanging out in the back of the building. He asked a few employees if they knew the dog and they said she had been there for about two weeks. They would throw her leftover food and give her water from time to time. They would watch her look both ways, cross the street, and hang out at a local tire place. The employees there would give her more scraps of food, and then she'd return to the carwash.

The carwash was no five-star hotel. The back was nasty, coated in colored soap and dirt, and not suitable living quarters for a tiny dog. Dad could tell she was malnourished, and she was covered in fleas and ticks. He suspected she was pregnant. Deciding that enough was enough, he took her home.

That Monday, he took her to the vet to get shots and a cleaning, discovering she was under a year old and very pregnant. She was only about 13 pounds so it was hard to believe that puppies were living inside of her.

My step-mom, Jennifer, posted the pregnant pup on the Arkansas Lost and Found facebook page, and was contacted by the owners. They couldn't verify any information about the dog and couldn't explain why they couldn't properly take care of her. Dad and Jennifer decided she was not going back to that home, and the previous owners agreed to let them keep her. They named her Hattie, inspired by their recent meal at Hattie B's Hot Chicken in Nashville, Tennessee.

About three weeks later, Hattie had the five beautiful babies pictured. She delivered three at home, but was rushed to the emergency vet in the middle of the night because she was having a hard time birthing the others. Sadly, she lost one puppy, but the others were safely delivered.

All five puppies are larger than Hattie, and have been adopted by loving families. Three of the puppies live in the neighborhood, so mamma and pups occasionally have play dates. Dad and Jennifer cannot imagine life without Hattie, and she is great addition to their now three-dog family!

