

Nancy M. Peers

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THE
DOG

The Adventures
of Major Alexander

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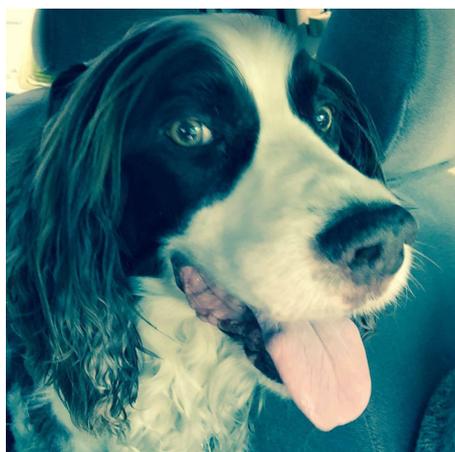
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CTRL-click the musical notes to open the soundtrack, courtesy of Youtube.



Chapter 1: The First Yearling



I was born in a puppy mill in Windsor, Ontario, Canada in September, 2004. I was a purebred, classic English Springer Spaniel. Not a field or American spaniel. I was squat and broad, with a stubbier nose. We are of the same breed as American spaniels, but I always considered myself less hyper, calmer, and more evolved. My breed has been the choice of presidents and monarchs. My self-esteem proved me well.

It was dark when I was placed in a cardboard box lined with newspaper. It was a long drive, and I went deep into puppy sleep. When I awoke, I was on a bed of straw with a bowl of water in the corner. I craved my mom's teat and warm milk. I was so thirsty that I struggled on the uneven straw bed and swaggered to the water bowl. As I lapped the cool water, my long ears soaked it in.

A deep snort froze me in place!

I could feel the monster's warm breath and sense its enormous size in the darkness. Then its huge, rough, snake-like tongue almost knocked me over! The second lick drenched me to my thick bones. I didn't know what to do! I had to move, but then the tongue flipped me completely over! The monster licked my belly and found my tickle spot! My legs could barely roll me over and puppy-stagger me out of the monster's reach. I cried, whined, and whimpered. I peed myself. Then the monster's snorts and subtle moos started to soothe me. That's when I learned my first words in Bovine.

Altogether, I know Canine, Bovine, Feline, English, and a little French. Of course, I know English. I am an English Springer Spaniel!

I must have fallen asleep again after my near-drowning. The morning light drifted in through the cloudy barn windows, lifting particles of dust that seemed suspended in the air and glinting as they caught the sunrise peeking through the windows.

The thick, heavy air was sweet with barn smells and all the new sounds. It awoke me from my puppy slumber. Around me were huge, brown, French-Canadian cows. I later learned they were a rare breed, almost extinct, but for the efforts of the farmer. They were a noble breed, much like myself.

The farmer came early after the sun rose. I





tried to rise up, but my little legs were wobbly. I made it to the edge of the pen where the farmer sat on a stool, almost under the horned monster who had molested me during the night! I put my nose through the pen holes to get a better sniff. Suddenly, I was struck by a stream of warm liquid. Mmm m m m mmm – warm milk! I let my mouth hang open and tried to catch the milk as it came in squirts from the next pen. Drenched and sticky with milk, my pen's straw hanging from my fur and entangling itself in my floppy ears, I was sufficiently suffonsified.

The cobwebs were thick and amazingly strong fibers that tickled my whiskers. They were everywhere in the barn. Even if you drove your way through them, they were back, rebuilt, rewoven within minutes. Every corner had them, but not only in the corners, some in the middle of nowhere, suspended and invisible, without any scent either. The walls were flaking, white-washed, and the small windows

flecked by the old lye spray and thickly webbed by the invisible strings.

In the winter, the cows joined me inside the barn and added a sweet-smelling warmth. Along with the twice-daily visits by my farmer to freshen their bedding with new straw and





the breaking of bales of hay for their feed, a new energy arrived when the lights came on each morning and night.

I had free run inside the barn, and it was usually only at night that I was kept there. Mornings when the sun strove to get through the small panes, my farmer would arrive. I would run excitedly around his feet, wagging my tail uncontrollably. I couldn't control my frenzy.

When he brought out the big green machine, I would lead the way! My energy was endless. I would clear the field and flush out other animals and let the farmer know if there were kill-deer nests to avoid.

I return to those days when I am dreaming, running through the fields, my nose to the ground, my nostrils flared, my ears flopping, hunting for I know not what...



Chapter 2:

Love To Chew

I don't remember my parents, not even my mom. I barely remember my siblings and wouldn't recognize any of them, even if they sat on my face. I was adopted once I was weanable and taken for my very first car ride. My life became meaningful! I loved that car. I loved all my cars!

My first car was a Jeep, and it smelled like shit. My man was a farmer. He adopted me and took me home to his farm. It was a classic red barn with stalls in the basement and hay and grain in the loft. The house was a three-brick-thick Victorian with a lovely porch that the farmer and I relaxed on in the evenings. The house and barn both sat in the middle of the farm fields close to the old stage road.

The pond behind the house was where the clay for the bricks had been dug to build the house, sun-dried centuries before. The roadside fields were flat and weather breaks of trees edged them, while the fields south of the house sloped down to the pond and a creek beyond. The creek flooded in the spring and covered the flats around it.

Beyond the flats on the next concession over was the closest farm. The farmer's sons from that farm came to my farmer's every day to borrow something or to chat. As my farmer's knees and hips gave out, they worked, planted, and harvested my farmer's fields for him, as well as their own. After my farmer could no longer get up on his tractors or throw bales of hay, they worked together using his machinery. They came every day to the barn, sometimes before my farmer got there. I liked the smell of them, but I never got to ride in their trucks or chase the tractors with them.

My farmer had an aluminum webbed garden chair, like Red Green's, that he put up against



"When the farmer is gone and I am all alone
And feeling sad, I simply remember a few of my
Favourite things and then I don't feel so bad.

The Fridge door opening, or two day old bacon fat,
Crumbs on the floor, cookies, and ice-cream,
These are a few of my favourite things

Big bones, pig's ears and homemade treats,
The sound of the car keys
the patter of the kids feet,
rides in the car, walks on the beach
These are just a few of my favorite things"





the garage doors, halfway between the house and barn. He could sit there, shaded by the garage eave, to rest in between and keep watch over his farm and the goings-on. He still drove the John Deere lawn mower. He could get seated on it and a leg over, and he used it as an all-purpose scooter. Some days he rode it from the house to the barn, or to his webbed chair, or just from the house to the car. He wasn't at all lazy. It was just that he didn't trust his legs to carry him that far.

I lived in the barn at first and killed rats, but the barn was almost empty, and the farmer was old. He only had a few cows and some chickens, but strong smells and historic shit told me a story of many animals and many dogs, like myself of noble descent, that my farmer had loved before and were buried there.

I was just a pup. I didn't know better. The farmer allowed me to stay in the sun porch of the old house, closer to him, my only person - but my water bowl often froze. Hardly a sunroom! I was bored and teething, so I soothed my orphaned soul on the rubber boots and shoes there. Yes! - I ate the broom handle, the bookcase, and started in on the old Chesterfield. Man, I could still be chewing on that davenport!

Once I moved from the barn to the sunroom, I missed the deep, rich scents of the barn and sinking into my bed of straw. I still did a run through the barn daily, but at night, in the sunroom, I had only my farmer's rubber boots to sniff, to bring those memories and dreams to my sleep.

Spring came, and my farmer tried to teach me stuff. I tried my best, but the sound of a shotgun still scares me. Fireworks I hate! Any loud noises, and I start to shake.

I loved to chase the tractor. I absolutely loved running in the perfect furrows, up and down, back and forth. I loved riding in my Jeep, but



then my Jeep quit moving. It was still in the yard, but filled with bees!

The Farmer bought a Buick, Oldsmobile! It was comfy and it matched my fur! Some would say I am an auburn or burgundy color, but I prefer liver.

I was singing in my mind, “Can’t you smell that smell, the smell that surrounds you,” changing the words to “Don’t you hate that new car smell...”, laughing to myself.

We went far in that car. We made it our own. It smelled like home. That didn’t take me long! He should have kept it but, I don’t know why, but the Farmer traded it for a Honda, with that awful new car smell again! I don’t know what came over me but I started with the seat belts and then the console. I was still teething I guess. It didn’t take long to make the Honda smell

better, more like home, but the seats weren’t as roomy as the Buick had been. It was also blue which doesn’t highlight my natural liver color as much either.

The Farmer and I went for drives every day, just us, my tongue hanging freely, my liver-spotted fur and floppy ears blowing in the breeze of the



open window. One day we went for a long drive not around the farm, but somewhere new. The Farmer rolled the Honda down into a ditch and he couldn’t get out of the car. Well, I didn’t want to leave the car or the Farmer, but I crawled out of the window, up the ditch to the road and found a couple of person animals who came and saved my Farmer. Everyone made a big deal like I had found Timmy in a well, or something. After that, I got to sleep inside the house instead of the sun porch - at the end of the Farmer’s bed!

We animals may be stupid as men say God gave men reason by which they can find out things by themselves, but animal knowledge, which isn’t dependent on reason, is faster, and more perfect in its way, and often has saved the lives of men. Black Beauty.

I was easily led, not on a leash, mind you! The Farmer tried to keep me on a short leash, I guess

that is a saying too, but I was excitable. I loved my Farmer and I know he loved me, despite my short leash discipline and even after I came into the house once with a burning stick from the fire, the Farmer was my best friend.

The Daughter's cars were all Fords with a place for me behind the kid's seats. The Daughter didn't care so much about its interior and called it her purse on wheels. After the kids were older and I could still climb over, I would get to sit in the front seat. I liked my butt up on the console so I could brace my feet on the seat. I did many a face plant when they weren't secure. Another time, when I'd

gotten quite plump, I landed on my belly on the console, all four of my legs suspended there, where I flailed like a fish out of water! Big joke. Not funny!

The Daughter got the Farmer's special car he kept in the garage behind his webbed chair. I got to ride in the back seat of it, with the Daughter, and we made several trips. Then she restored it and it too had that awful new car smell, but it was still special that I had my own Silver Cloud.



Chapter 3:

FREE

So many changes since I had come to the farm. I wasn't a puppy anymore. I was a full grown dog now!

I discovered that I had neighbors. I ran free roaming with my hood. Peaches was a large golden lab with long blond fur, and the leader of our pack. Cream - another smaller lab mix, Red - a mixed mixed breed, and Ruby - a total mutt. Further up the road was Zeus - a huge black Newfoundland.

Her dark speckled fur, like a hyena's, her yellow and her blue eye, her square head and cropped ears - no one could hang a name on her. One of a kind, maybe half blind. She was my first and only, a fatal exotic attraction. I was a noble breed. She was a mongrel. I was a champion. I was a male Gigolo, put out to stud. People paid for my seed for their bitches, but Ruby got my love for free. My Ruby never took her love off the farm. She never went to town either. She'd been dropped off and abandoned on our road and the neighbors' kids brought her home, same with Red, I think. Peaches and Cream were pure breeds like me.

The Farmer never called me by my full name, unless I was in trouble. He just called me by Dawg, or dog, or here boy. I once heard him mutter that my name was Major, short for major pain in the ass, but I know he was joking. I've seen the official papers with my very own unique nose print and I can prove my pedigree! I heard that there is going to be a Major Dog in the White House in the United States. I have my birth certificate if it was ever relevant.

My self-esteem made me impervious to the alphas around me, and no dog was too big for

me to assert my dominance over. All Ruby's fault. She stole my innocence with ten ugly puppies that only a mother could love. She cost me my balls! My testicles! I was neutered - more of a eunuch now than a gigolo. It didn't slow me down or keep me home, just ended any more of my prodigy.

Under the table is the best place to be! Shhhh don't whine, hold your pee. Avoid all eye contact. Begging will get you put out. Wait for it, wait for it... someone will drop something for me - a crumb, a bone, I'll eat anything!

The Farmer had let me into the house and at the end of his bed. The house was old and drafty, and eventually he let me up on the bed at his toes, and then I would snuggle up and feel his heart beat with mine. The winters were long and lonely. People came and went. We were one - until my Farmer never came back.





That last winter, the Farmer had housekeepers and nurses come to the house. There were numerous new faces for a while, some of them actually scared of me! I had to go to the barn when they came. Finally, there was just one and he wasn't scared of me, and the Farmer became comfortable again. He didn't like strangers in his house, or having to repeat his whole life story to everyone new. He had the same housekeeper who would come once a month to move around the dust, but he wouldn't let her move anything or clean the whole house. Another kind lady, a Caper, came during the week to cook and keep him company, and the crazy lady-friend of the

Daughter came to stay full-time. The Son came a lot more often too, but he wasn't any fun.

The Farmer and I had set off to the coffee shop as was our routine. It was winter. The cornfields lay barren, furrowed, cob-stubbed, snow-crested and empty. I was supposed to

wait in the car until the Farmer returned. But, in getting his cane out, the seat belt hung into the car door and blocked its complete closure. I regret the impatience of my youth, as I took the opportunity to leave the car, only meaning to piss on the surrounding shrubbery. However, the endless scents to cover, I found myself lost in what was becoming a blinding blizzard. Winds whipping up whirlwind funnels of snow, drifting, filling the streets, driveway cavities and sidewalks. My Farmer had left, and the scent of him and my Honda had gone with the wind.

I wandered in the blinding snow until I found a concentration of consecrated ground that, even in the whipping wind and under a deep, frozen layer of snow, I could sense with my deepest sense, that of smell. As I neared the dwelling—Dettol and antiseptic! Smells I remembered with a deep twinge in my groin. I was at the Vet's, where my lost balls or testicles lay.

The new Lady came with my car. The Vet recognized me and had called the Farmer. We drove home in awkward silence despite the radio and her music screaming around me. I knew I should have been in trouble and perhaps punished, but as I ran into the old farm house, and the old Farmer saw me - I saw the same tears of joy for our reunion as those in my own eyes. Short-lived and a premonition of our future - that winter was our last together on the farm.

The Farmer left in a square car with flashing lights. The Daughter arrived the next day. The Farmer's last words to the new Lady were directions to the airport to pick the Daughter up. I had done it before and knew the way. I went with the new Lady in the Farmer's car. She drove fast, music pumping, cigarette smoke drowning out my Farmer's comforting smell.

After that Lady left too, the Farmer's Son moved into the old house and kept me tied up in the cold, empty barn. He sold my cows for slaughter!

Dark, cold and lonely, hours tied up, not even free to run inside the barn, my fur became dirty and matted. I missed my people, my Farmer, his eyes, voice and I cried that I hadn't got to say goodbye. The Son had no smell of pets or children. He didn't like me to jump up or my fur getting on his clothes. He never came into the barn or wore boots. He never took me for drives or even let me in his car.

It seemed an eternity.



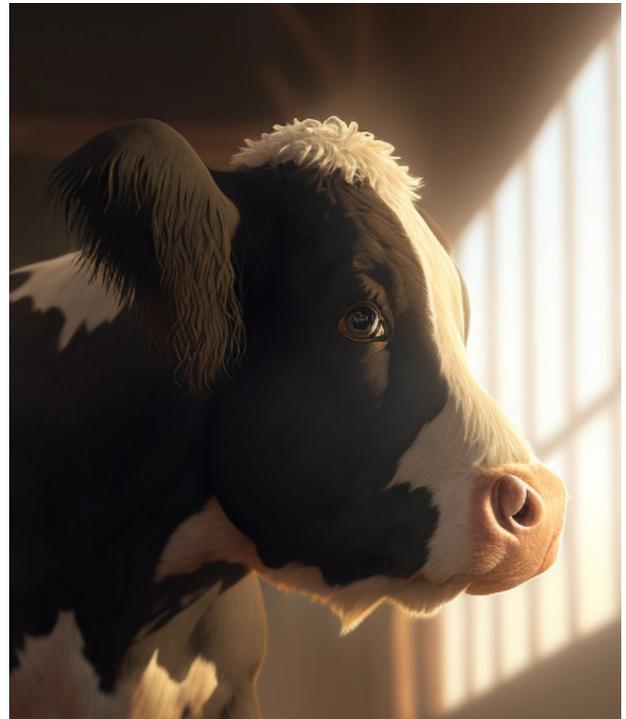
Chapter 4: Bovine Bliss

All the cows had fancy names. The oldest was Frances, almost 30, but she never went far from the barn. The head cow was Bossy, and she was ingenious. She could get out of the barn and find any hole in the fence, even the electric ones, she didn't seem to sense. One day she escaped and was in the middle of the road, two OPP cruisers surrounded her for hours. The cops stayed in their cruisers waiting for backup, in their bullproof jackets. The Farmer came home and saw what was happening and got some corn in the metal bucket. As soon as the Farmer shook the bucket, Bossy's ears perked up, and she came home in a cow trot. The Farmer could call them by name or whistle, and all the cows came. He'd yell, "Here Bossy, Bossy!" and meet them at the gate.

All the cattle had names, most after the Farmer's wife's family, as well as pierced ears with yellow tags numbered. There was Vina, the Farmer's late wife, her sisters Cora, Margaret, Audrey, Mary, and Irene, as well as their daughters. Heather was number 13. She was a heifer. The Farmer had left her horns, so she was also known as Horny Cow and was the Farmer's favorite. There was a Nancy and Susan, a Marion and Marie, and the last little calf he got was named Marieawanna, with a twin named Montreal Girl, that never made sense to me.

Shortly after I was born, they had cut off my tail and tattooed my ear. Unfortunately, they didn't remove my dew claws. The Son tried to cut them, and they bled and bled and got infected. It was horrid. I was so matted and dirty when they came for me.

I was used to sleeping with the Farmer, watching TV, our drives. Now I was chained





and neglected, alone in the empty barn. Even when we did go back to the farm and the Son was there, I kept my distance. Instinct. He was a man and might have had hair on his chest, but so did Lassie!

The Daughter and the kids came back—finally. They took me in their car to the hospital to visit the Farmer, and I saw him there. That was my last summer on the farm. I remembered their scents and flavors from visits before, but they always left again. No one tasted as good as those kids.

My Farmer had been gone for what seemed like a lifetime when the Daughter and her kids came. They came with face licks and kisses, and I was overwhelmed with love. I don't remember much over the incredible noise of the jet engines and the whines and screams of the others in cargo, but my kids were there when we landed in Moncton. The Daughter and the Lady were there too.

I love cows as much as my Farmer loved cows. My besties were cows, but I had never seen a cow like the one I saw that day. They picked me up from the Moncton airport, and as we were driving to Miramichi, there was one of the biggest cows I had ever seen! It was huge, with enormous horns that horny cow would have envied. Later I learned it was a moose. Shit, I thought our rats were big!

Life was wonderful. I swam in salt water, rolled in dead fish, found new territories and dog buddies. I met cousins, and the neighbor had horses. Quite frankly, horses freak me out!

So my life was living in my cars. So many miles, I knew the way. The Daughter always stopped at the same spots so I could mark my provincial territories. I know the way in my reams and more.

Chapter 5: So Alive

We live on a lake with muskrats and beavers. I love to mucky muck along the edge of it. Sometimes those beavers come check me out! Like I'm the odd one out! My lake has a voice. It talks back to me, annoyingly repeating everything I bark. WTF. I gave up trying to talk back, and now she's still and quiet as can be, except in the winter when my lake moans and sometimes thunders below the ice.



Her dark brown eyes filled with tears, and I felt impelled to return her sorrowful stare. Can another part of a soul carry on in another animal? We spend a lot of time together, just the two of us, and she lets me share her bed. I have spa days now when I get my baths, haircuts, and my nails properly trimmed.

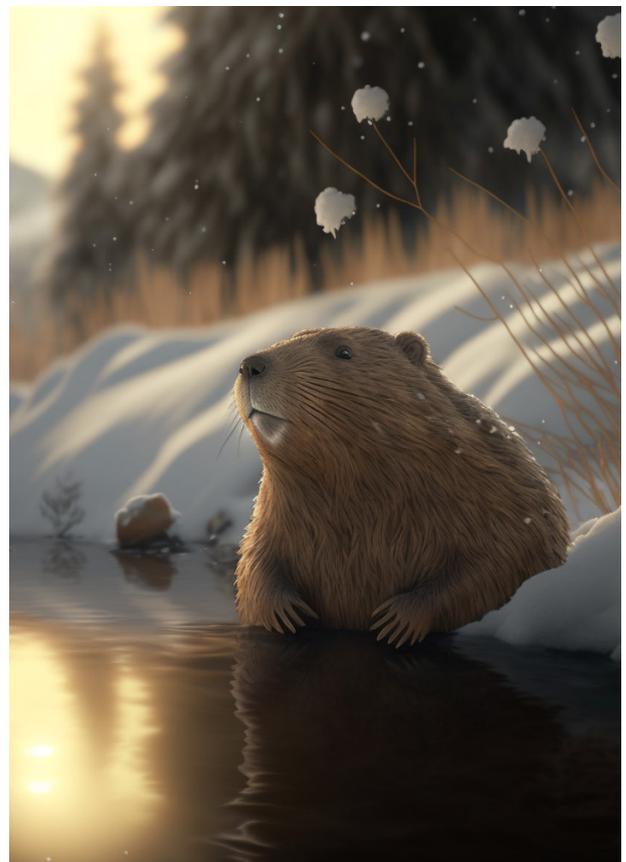
My people take me on road trips and back to the farm every summer, to my bones. I loved those long drives. I loved my people, and I love my life.

My new life was with two cats and a rabbit. Dwat dat wabbit! Mein oh Mein, I wanted to git them at first, but I'm not allowed. I can ignore them, though, because I can go where they cannot. I have a new car!

I freely visit all my neighbors, but I don't have a pack of doggie buddies anymore like on the farm to hang with.

I have a new routine, awakening to a house alive with children. My job is to jump on their beds and lick them until they awaken. Let me outside. I would do my morning circle on the hill, where I had an established shit circle, go to the neighbors, each one, with my morning greetings, and often got treats. Especially on garbage days.

The yellow bus would come. I loved the bus.



I would run for it, holding it there for my sleepy-eyed kids, sometimes getting on with them with screaming children and lunches and so much fun.

After the children left for school, sometimes before, they'd let me sit in the car until it was beach time. Weather permitting, we went to the beach for a walk each day. Sometimes early morning, sometimes the Daughter came home at noon, sometimes in the evening, when the tide was low. Sometimes I had the entire beach to myself. We walked to the crib work and back. I led the way. Once there was a baby seal twice my size! It barked like a dog and charged me. The Daughter was cautious and put me on a leash so I couldn't get close enough to get a really good sniff.

Another time a sea otter ran out of the ocean and hid under my car. Another time I saw people on boards riding the waves and flying in the sky! Sometimes there were horses too cantering on the water's edge with riders on their backs.

I love the beach. When summer comes, there are kids, picnics, and sticky tasty faces and fingers. I became quite skilled at stealing their picnics and ice-cream cones! Once at the lake, however, my thievery failed, and the Daughter's Man had to go to town to buy a pizza for the people whose food I'd stole. I had no conscience when it came to food; I couldn't resist eating whatever smelled good.

The Lady lives with us on and off. She takes me to the beach and to Mechanic's. The Daughter leaves after the kids to go to work. Sometimes I go with her to my office in town. I hang out there or in my car and wait for my kids to come. The Girl comes after school and we go for pizza and to the library next door where I can get in the back door. They have an after-school thing with popcorn, and I help clean up!

I like going to school and to church. I love running in and all around the children who laugh to see a dog at school. Not so much at church.





I like going to Gow's Hardware where they all know my name, and the people in red shirts have milk bones in their pockets in every department. The guy at the Shell station used to give me treats too, and at the Dairy Queen drive-through, I could get a little doggy dish of ice cream, and at Timmy's, a timbit or two.

Sometimes they'll leave their fast food wrappers around, and I sucked whatever was left on them, sometimes the wrappers too, and I can suck up through a straw too when I have to.

When I look back at the pictures, I think wow, I was a good-looking dog! My ears a deep rich liver color, my ringlets white, my tail all liver except for the very tip, which was white.

My first spring on the farm, the Farmer gave me my first clipping with the same clippers he'd used on the cows minutes before. He held me by the collar and gave me a reverse Mohawk down my back. When he was done, I had spots I never knew I had! I was embarrassed at how skinny and knobby my legs were and hid for a week or two. It all grew back, and it was a relief when the days grew hot and longer over the summer.

The Farmer never really bathed me except with the garden hose. The first real "do" was a summer after the Daughter arrived; we went to a cousin's on her mother's side. She was a professional groomer and did a really good job. I wasn't embarrassed anymore, but proud. She did me a couple of times before I left for the Maritimes.

Down there, in Nova Scotia, out of the blue, in the parking lot of Bucks Hardware, a Scottish lass approached my car. She asked the daughter if I would be her model. I might be a star. She was doing her Masters in dog grooming and needed a spaniel for her portfolio. Well, I liked going there, way way in the woods, up the river somewhere. I was





treated well. I thought I would be her model, but in the end, a younger spaniel took my place on the catwalk, and my modeling career was over.

After that, the daughter, the girl, and many others tried their own hand at my grooming. Others more professional would later fix it up. As I grew older, my fur has become thicker, like wool. I love going to the doggy spa now.

It feels so good to be rid of the weight of it all. They clean my ears and clip my nails too. Always treats after, and a big fuss. I like going there where the girl's friend works.

My looks have changed over the years, but I still have a puppy's sparkle in my eyes. Fashions come and go, seasons change, and so do I. And, despite being English, I have good teeth and a great doggy smile!



Chapter 6:

I Love Sticks

"Good grief, good gravy,
Good grief, great Scott,
Charlie Brown!
Always end your day with a positive thought
And a grateful heart.

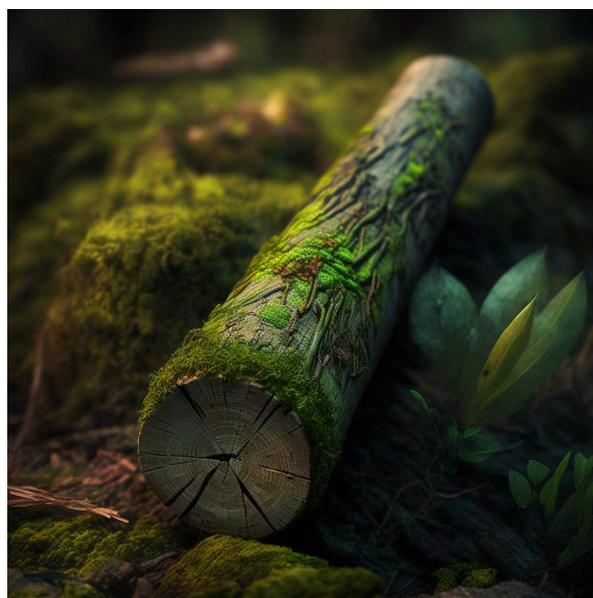
Arf arf !!!"

I found a stick today. It was totally awesome. The perfect size, lichens, and moss covered its knurly, knotted sides. Still green in its core, it was light enough to toss high and strong enough for me to tackle it in its fall and shake it and shake it. It was pliable enough to bend and not break, soft enough for my soft bite. It was perfect, the most perfect stick.

I had it, I played with it all day. I had it yesterday. Did I bury it and forget again? Oh, where oh where did my special stick go, where or where could it be?

Our summer trips continued to the farm, but the farmer was no longer there. Memories of how happy he was when the daughter and kids came and the old house got cleaned up. They had meals together, and that taught me about under the table being the best place to be. How wonderfully tasty children are. One summer, the girl had a doggy party for me, with my whole pack, and we all got treats and medals around our necks.

They took me in their car to other friends of the daughter's who came to the farm with their dogs, Belle, and Keta. They were city dogs that didn't know a thing about electric fences or even cows! We stayed at Keta's place too. She also had a rabbit...what's with the pet rabbits? Squirrels, porcupines, and rabbits are meant to be chased, not have their own Christmas trees!



A third cat joined our menagerie called Little Kitty that fall, and unlike the others, she wouldn't leave me alone. One night she knitted with her nails on my back so much I was stabbed by her claws, but she didn't mean it.

My mind is racing, my legs as well. I wake myself with my own yelp! What a dream. It seemed so real. There was a Deere, a John Deere. I was enveloped by the shadow of the harvester. Then I was humping Ruby. I was communicating with my unconscious spirit world. I enjoyed my dreams, my sleeps, where all my spaniel anxieties worked their way away.

Chapter 7:

Living In Heaven

They both had blue eyes, like my farmer had, and comfy, messy rooms with beds low to the floor that I could easily clamber onto in the mornings to wake them, and during the rest of my day for rotating naps by myself. The two cats graciously ignored me, and I returned the favor.

The boy was a teenager when I moved there, and he had the stinkiest sneakers and socks that were the best I'd ever smelled. The girl, younger, was the sweetest little thing. I followed her to school and church. I knew all their friends and their friends' dogs, and I especially liked Molly Porter. She passed a few years back, but we got along well. There weren't a lot of other dogs to hang with, not like my old hood back at the farm. There were the beach dogs. I knew a couple of them quite well, but we never packed together. Jade lived up the road; I played with her when she was a puppy, but she got too big for me to play with. She's a Rottie.

The carpenter had a familiar smell, and I recognized him from my youth and the farm. I liked visits to his farm up the road.

The mechanic had the best woods, and I enjoyed staying with him when my people were away. His old dog, Ropper, died, but I could still smell his scent inside.

I have always had a good sense of direction, and I knew my way around the neighborhood well. I always made my visits whenever I could.

Everyone spoiled me, and I was allowed to sleep on the beds, the couch, treats, and I pretty much had my way.





When the daughter's man came, I gave up my bed with her, and at first, I was a bit jealous, but the daughter loved him, and so I did too. He took me on many walks on the beach and at his cottage in Miramichi, where I played with Jake and my spaniel cousin, Jessie. He never walked by me without a scratch or a pet. He is a good man, I think. When the man

is here, we spend good quality time together, and after a few years, he's a member of my family, like the others.

This was my family. My home. The end of the road. I was a hobo no more.

Chapter 8:

All the Things I Shouldn't Have Ate

I was never a picky eater and I have always maintained a good appetite. I guess it started on the farm where I mostly ate what the farmer ate.

I told you about eating the boots, shoes, bookcase, broom, and couch, seat belts, consoles, and such. That was just the beginning of eating all the wrong stuff!

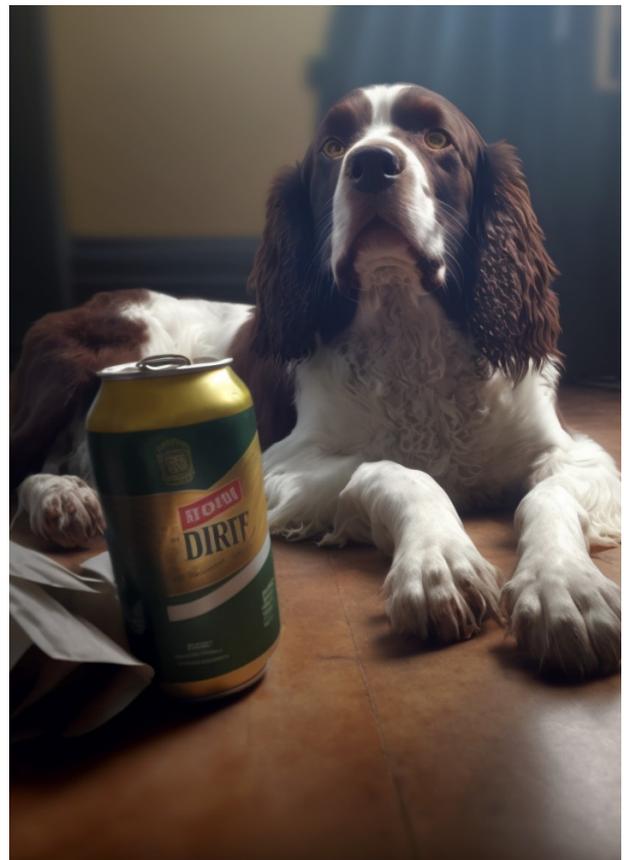
On the farm, I had a sweet selection of excrements to savor. I like any kind of shit, really, even my own! I had a habit of eating the cat shit from the litter, and that was all well and fine until they changed the brand to this clumping stuff. It plugged my nose and plugged my throat. I couldn't breathe and thought I would choke. I did that by mistake two more times. I guess it's true that I never learned. It's hard to teach an old dog new tricks.

Little Kitty would bring me mice she caught, and she'd always leave me the best part.

Dogs aren't supposed to eat chocolate, but I guess I had built up my tolerance living with the farmer. At Christmas, there were Quality Street chocolates, all individually wrapped, that I got off the table and meticulously unwrapped. I enjoyed every one of them, and no harm done. Same at Halloween. And Easter too, they had to hide the candy high and out of view.

There were also chocolate brownies that made me feel kind of funny, but even those didn't send me to the clinic.

Porcupines took me to the vet for my annual shots and nail clippings, and I developed an allergy to bees! Another thing I should never have eaten was wasps or hornets either.



However, not until I drank the anti-freeze were any of the things I ate serious.

We were at the carpenter's when I got out of the car. I found a bowl of sweet blue stuff. I drank it right down, and then there was a big fuss. They threw me in the car and drove like maniacs to the vet, where he pumped my stomach. Earlier in the day, I'd snuck in the neighbor's back porch and ate half a bag of their Alpo, which likely saved my life. I was placed in a kennel with a goat on one side, and a 40 proof alcohol drip put in my vein. I was higher than high for the next three days. It was a trip those few days in and out of reality. When I sobered up, I had such a headache. After that I stuck with beer and never hard liquor.

I don't remember much, but they said after I had more lives than a cat. That vet was so kind and he was my hero. He saved my life when the odds were a million to zero. I think he prized me too, in a way, as the dog he saved despite all odds.

I never minded visiting the vets. It wasn't always painful, usually treats instead. I knew the routine to sit on the scale first, and once in the room, I could go from the bench seat to the table for his easier view.

He never scolded me, but he scolded the daughter for what I ate and after that my diet became quite bland. I was restricted to only special dog food and allowed no human food or treats, although I still scooped my fair share by licking their plates left unattended or the garbage lid open. The compost was my favorite despite the nasty coffee grains and odd onion. I would get into it every chance I got.

The two older cats, Boots first died, then Sparky ran away. I heard it whispered that he was most likely coyote prey. After that, Little Kitty became my only companion. I let her sleep next to me if she wanted, or I'd lay down beside her and put my leg around her. It did not seem that I could ever be lonely again, although all of us are somehow lonely.



Chapter 9:

The Lady, The Vet, Then Chester Time

The daughter and kids are away for long periods of time now, and I am left with the lady and little Kitty. She's alright sometimes and takes me in her car to the beach or visiting the mechanic and others. Other times she completely forgets about me and leaves me for days. The other day, she left me stuck in a snow bank on the hill behind the house. My paws had broken through the snow and my legs were stuck in the deep snow. I couldn't move and she left.



My vet miraculously came, from his office to my house, and saved me again. He broke through the snow too and was waist deep, but never gave up digging me out of the bank and carrying me home. The girl came for me and got me and took me home.

Another time, I was left with the lady in town. I got around and met the neighbors there, and I guess she thought someone would let me in. Again, she never came back and I didn't know how I could get to my home, as it was too far to run. By another miracle, I wandered upon and recognized the scents of the vets and I was safe for a long weekend.

After that, I lived with the lady's sister in Chester and that was good and a relief. The daughter and kids came and took me back to my lake. That was the last time I was moved around. From there on, after I stayed home, except for a month or so one winter when I got to stay at the mechanic's and that was wonderful.

My vet tried to help me stay a young ten and removed cysts now and again. He always was gentle and spoke kind. It was like Cheers at the vets where everyone knew my name and was a friend.



Chapter 10: Almost Died Again

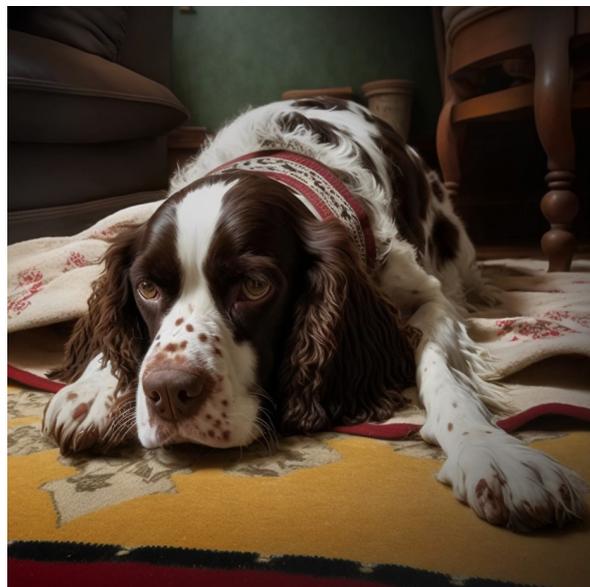
I was in good shape for an old dog and for my breed. Apparently, 10 is the average lifespan, but not for me! I guess it was my liver that was giving me pain, but again the vet prescribed me some good drugs and I regained my health again.

For the first few years, every summer we returned to the farm in my car. The daughter preferred Fords, and sometimes the lady came too. The daughter, lady, the kids, and me; other times the daughter and her man, the kids, and their friend. I know the way well. I know my stops - tourist welcome centers and random cornfields along the way. I know when we're near my farm - Tower-Line Road, Old Stage Road... I know when I'm almost there.

Once we all stopped in Quebec where I tried to remember my French. I couldn't help myself when I saw the horses and dragged the lady off the picnic table. Another time, that crazy lady got lost in a cornfield looking for me while I was in the car waiting for her! Despite her long nails, loud music, and all around neglect of me while in her care, she goes way back in my memories as part of my family. And the lady liked long drives, like me.

The farm wasn't the same. The farmer was gone. The son had cleaned the barn and cut down all my trees. The old gang was gone too - Peaches and Cream, Reed, and my Ruby, even Belle and Keta passed on. They were my Ontario family.

My seaside family, I'm not forgetting. I'm just reminiscing about the old days, like old dogs do. I go there in my dreams sometimes because that farm in southern Ontario was where all my changes had been.



I guess the farmer has passed too, long ago now. I understood death now. Death was silence that gave no answer back, except in your dreams where you could reunite with all those in your heart's past. Someone said that if there were no dogs in heaven, they'd rather go where the dogs went when they died. If my farmer isn't in my heaven, I want to go where my farmer went.

I guess I don't like horses because, unlike my cows, they can kick and bite. I never noticed them when I was with the farmer when they were pulling the black buggies. There have been a few I came too close to, like the Newfoundland pony named Annie who came after me! However, to the credit of horses, they do produce really tasty shit! I have to add that to my favorites list!



Chapter 11:

All Good Dogs Go To Heaven

The next 5 years went by half asleep. I can't believe I've reached 15! I am a medical miracle and a wonder!

The girl stays home with me now, her and her beau. The lady sometimes is here. The girl's beau again evoked feelings of jealousy in me. I'd had the girl to myself and I didn't want to share. With the girl's beau came two new cats too. Good grief... and I knew he preferred the cats to me. He played with me, but too rough, and I am afraid I bit his hand. Oops. It was the girl who stuck with me through and through.

My family and life have been full. My children have all grown and the boy moved away. The girl loves me truly and takes care of me each day. I can't stand on my own and I lay in my poo. I can't help it and she knows. She nurses, feeds me, bathes me, and saves me to live another day, but I am old and tired and it's not much of a life. I am ready to meet my maker. I have had a good life.

I have to admit it seemed to happen overnight. I could not jump up on the bed or couch anymore. I needed help to get in and out of my car. My eyesight became clouded and my hearing dulled. I spent more time sleeping. No treats in my diet, only made for senior dog food, without flavor or surprise. I had my own doggy bed on the floor and considering my age and hard living, I was doing quite well. I sensed though and knew that my time would soon be up and I would join my farmer, Molly, and the ones who had gone above.

The tears in the girl's eyes, I wished I could dry and let her know that everyone must die.

I am still there, looking down from above, as I explore heaven's grounds, chasing clouds, waiting to reincarnate; to bring another family a dog's love.

Love you forever and always.

REST IN PEACE
MAJOR DOG



Story by

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Edited by
Samuel Hammond

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Dedicated to
Major Alexander
aka
The Dog



2004 - 2020