

THE WIZARD OF DOGS

BRYAN DAVIS

NOT SO FAMOUS DOG TALES - BOOK #5

Books by Bryan Davis

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CHAPTER I

An Emergency Call

Steve counted the dogs in the garage, whispering, “Nova, Luna, her two puppies, Chance, Goliath, and Indiana. That makes seven.” Earlier in the day, Chance had brought a parade of ten dogs seeking help. Now, since Dr. Wilson had taken several dogs to her veterinary clinic for checkups, the number remaining seemed more manageable.

As rain poured outside on this cool spring day, Steve, Emily, Nim, and Bastian huddled in the garage, a space that used to be filled with homeschool projects and supplies. They sat on the cool concrete floor, dry because the main garage door was closed, though a side door remained open a crack to let dogs in and out. Now that they had cleared half of the garage, they had room for the dogs to stay for a while. “Okay,” Steve said, “which dog is next?”

Nim, dressed in light gray sweat pants with her shoulder-length brown hair loose and flowing, looked at the family's phone with Indiana sitting at her side. "Goliath is next. I've been searching through posts from people who are looking to adopt a dog, but they all want a big watchdog, not a Pekinese. I posted a *Free Dog* listing on several sites and added Goliath's photo, but no one's answered yet. It's been only a couple of hours, though."

"We'll give it more time." Steve scooted closer to Emily. "While we're waiting, would you and the kids please interview Indiana to see what we can do for him? I'll try to learn more about Goliath's story."

Emily, wearing blue jeans, tipped her fedora, revealing more of her wig. A few weeks earlier, she shaved her hair off to stand in solidarity with a cancer patient. "Will do, O Wizard of Dogs."

"Thank you, O Heart of our Home." Steve focused on Goliath. "Okay, tell me about your time with humans before you discovered that you had been left alone."

Goliath wrinkled his little nose and spoke with high-pitched barks in a cadence that seemed polished and refined. "Well, my oldest



memory is being in a cage with my mother and three siblings. No one ever told me why we were there, but I know they called the place a shelter. Anyway, a family with a mother, father, and two little girls came to the cage. The girls squealed about how cute we were and begged their parents to take me home. They also gave me my name and laughed about it. I never learned why they thought it was funny.”

“Because,” Steve said softly, “among humans, Goliath is a well-known name for a giant, and you’re smaller than most dogs. They think an opposite meaning is funny.”

Goliath’s features sagged. “Oh ... I see. It was a joke.” He sighed. “Back to my story. Although I missed my dog family, my humans and I had a lot of fun together for a few years. One day the older sister came to me sobbing. She never told me why she was so upset, but she hugged and kissed me, and I never saw her again, or her sister or mother, only her father. When I saw him, he was also crying, but he never spoke to me.”

“I suppose,” Steve said, “that no one in the family understood *dog*. So they couldn’t understand your questions.”

“Right. They didn’t. Then, one day, the father left and never came back. I was alone in the house. He left plenty of food and water behind as well as a litter box that I knew how to use. After three days, a kind woman came. She said she was going to sell the house, but first she had to take me to a shelter. I didn’t want to go, so I ran out of the house and looked for my humans. But I got lost.

“When I finally went back, everyone was gone. After searching for days, I gave up and started looking for a way to survive. I found a bed in a landfill, so I dragged it to a cabinet at the back of an abandoned building. I also found food in the landfill. It tasted awful, but it kept me alive.” Goliath let out a heavy sigh. “And that’s my story.”

Steve patted his head. “Thank you. You’ve certainly been through some difficult struggles. If only some people in your life understood *dog*, you could have learned what was going on.”

“And,” Emily said as she sat next to Steve, “they would have learned what an intelligent, articulate, and passionate dog you are. You told your story with such emotion, I nearly cried.

Who could possibly leave a wonderful dog like you behind?"

Steve looked at her. "I'm guessing there was a terrible tragedy in the family."

She nodded sadly. "Most likely. And that last woman he mentioned might have been a real estate agent who was assigned to sell the house."

"So we need to find the address and look up that agent."

Chance barked, "I know where the house is, but I can't read the address. Since the rain has eased quite a bit, I'll get Sherlock to go there with me. He and his human are home from the nursing facility, and he can read anything. Then I'll come back with a report. Give me one hour."

"Great," Steve said. "Thank you, Chance."

"You're quite welcome." Chance trotted out through the gap in the side door.

Steve looked at Emily. "What did you learn from Indiana?"

"As you heard before, he doesn't get enough to eat. He tries to tell his human that he needs more, but she doesn't understand. That's why he has to go out and scrounge for food."

Steve glanced at Indiana, a mix of yellow Labrador and other breeds, as he stood nearby listening to them. Steve whispered to Emily, “His ribs aren’t showing, but he looks pretty thin.”

She whispered in return, “True. We have enough food for today, but we’ll need more. Good thing Max from church is coming later to donate food. He’s also going to install a doggy door in the garage door. And that reminds me. We need to come up with ways to fund our new organization. We’re not always going to get everything for free.”

Steve stroked his chin. “Well, it’s obvious that one huge need is for humans to learn *dog*. Both Goliath and Indiana might not be suffering if their humans could understand them. I think people would pay for that education.”

“Cool.” Bastian spoke in an announcer’s tone. “Come to Professor Wizard’s class about the dog language. You’ll also get pup-corn in a dog dish.”

Nim laughed. “And also pup-tato salad.”

Bastian rubbed his stomach. “Or pup-eroni pizza. Yum!”

“Well,” Steve said, grinning, “with you two telling such good jokes, I guess I don’t have to add mine.”

Emily pushed his shoulder. “You don’t fool me, my witty wizard. You’re aching to tell us your joke.”

He shrugged. “Just that when we serve all of those yummy treats, we should say, ‘*Bone appétit!*’”

Bastian winced. “Not your best. I’ll give it a five.”

“Yep,” Nim said. “Five’s a good rating. I would’ve given you a six if you had said it with a French accent.”

Steve’s phone rang. He climbed to his feet, pulled the phone from his pocket, and looked at the screen. “It’s Chloe MacDonald.” He pressed the speaker option. “Hello, this is Steve Barkley. You’re on speaker, Dr. MacDonald.”

“Steve,” Chloe said, her voice shaking. “I’m so worried. Sherlock is missing.”

