



Karl's Diary

It's a Dog's Life

SHARON WINTERS

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Dedicated to all of the people who are committed to rescuing animals and finding them forever loving homes. In particular:

*The Humane Society of Yuma
in Yuma, Arizona*

*Friends for Life Animal Rescue
in Gilbert, Arizona*

*Maricopa County Animal Care and Control
in Mesa and Phoenix, Arizona*

OTHER BOOKS WRITTEN BY SHARON WINTERS:

Cutted Chicken in Shanghai

Runtie the Desert Rat

Until one has loved an animal,
a part of one's soul remains unawakened.

—ANATOLE FRANCE





Foreword

Serendipity is often described as a “happy accident.” But its full definition is “the phenomenon of finding valuable or agreeable things not sought for.” I make this distinction because both this foreword, and the rest of the book you’re about to read, began as serendipitous events.

I met Sharon Winters by way of an email response to an article I wrote for the *Mensa Bulletin* back in 2008. Titled “A Tail of Discovery,” it recounted the rescue of a pet rat named Molly, who my husband and I had spotted under a drive-up mailbox in the course of running errands on a snowy first day of spring. How long had she been there? Had others noticed her before us and merely driven past? I don’t know. Nor do I know what “accident” had landed her there. I only know that at the moment we arrived, this tiny brown and white creature sat before us, in need of a little help. And when my husband held out a hand, and the grateful gal immediately hopped aboard, I could tell it was the start of a most wondrous “happy” event.

The same might be said of receiving Sharon’s email. In it she explained that she, too, was a great lover of animals, and she shared a couple of short tales she had written from the perspective

of pet guinea pigs. We bonded instantly. And so began a friendship that has been growing ever since.

Given our commonalities, it came as no surprise when, in early 2015, I received a message from Sharon's email account, written by a new resident of her household—a chocolate-colored dog with golden eyes, who had come to her through his own series of serendipitous events. In the message, he introduced himself as Come Ear Karl. As you will learn on the pages that follow, things were a bit confusing in those first days after his arrival—including his new name. Well, some things were confusing. Others were crystal clear. He now had a family. The food was great. He was dearly loved—and he was home.

I started this foreword by talking about serendipity because the circumstances that brought Molly to me, those that brought Karl to Sharon, those that brought about my friendship with Sharon, and the myriad of others relating to these happy occurrences that space prevents recounting here, were by no means planned—at least—not by me or Sharon. And while all have ultimately proved valuable beyond any description that can be put into words, I don't believe for a minute that any of them were accidents.

Neither do I believe was your picking up this book. I hope you enjoy meeting Karl through this book as much as I enjoyed knowing him as his "auntie." And I hope your own serendipitous journeys lead to all things being as right with your own world as you will see how Karl meeting Sharon made everything right with his world.

—Mil Scott, editor and publisher of: *The Rodent Reader Quarterly*



In December of 2014 I was wandering in the Yuma Desert in Arizona. I was lost, thirsty, and hungry. A kind man saw me and scooped me up into his arms. He took me to The Humane Society of Yuma where I was put up for adoption. People would look at me, but they didn't want me.



After a few weeks I was put into a car and transported to Friends for Life Animal Rescue in Gilbert, Arizona, where I was put into a large kennel with grass and a dog house. People would look at me, but again, no one wanted me. I was feeling unloved and unwanted.

It was New Year's Day, and I still didn't have a family to love me forever; a family I could love forever. I was sitting all alone in my kennel and thinking about what I wished for in the New Year. Should I lose weight? Nah. Read more? Maybe. Work more—NO! Play more? Sure.



Wouldn't it be wonderful if everyone knew they were loved and precious; that the peace that passes all understanding is in the hearts and minds of everyone. With so much love there would be no fear. With so much peace there would be no war. As I was thinking about all of this, a doggy angel appeared before me and asked me if I had a wish. I sat up and gave her my biggest smile. "Yes! I want to go to a home filled with love and peace."



As she fluttered her wings she said, "Make your wish and click your paws three times as you say, 'I want to go home. I want to go home. I want to go home.'" "

FEBRUARY 20, 2015



Things soon began to happen. First, a photographer took a beautiful picture of me. Then on February 20, 2015, my picture was published in *The Arizona Republic* with the hope that someone would want me. And that's when it happened! A man and a woman showed up at Friends for Life. I was taken out of my kennel and walked over to a bench. There was a woman sitting on the bench and a man was standing beside her. The man petted me with a loving gentleness. The woman extended her hand to me, and I moved over to her and looked into her eyes. She said, "Do you want to come home with us?" All was right with the world.

MAY 20, 2015



At Friends for Life, someone had named me Porter, but when Mommy and Daddy brought me home, they gave me a new name; a name that would fit a Boykin Spaniel. But what was it? They kept saying, "Wanna Go Potty?" and "Come Ear Karl." Finally, I recognized my new name. It was just Karl. I liked it.

I liked riding in the car, too, and on one of my first long car rides, Daddy drove us to Flagstaff, Arizona. It took three hours and by the time we arrived, I really had to take a walk!

On my first walk in Flagstaff, I found myself in a large forest with a lot of sweet-smelling pine trees and other interesting smells as well as squirrels and singing birds. There was a lot to investigate.

SEPTEMBER 20, 2015



I learned how to get whatever I wanted from my new family. I just give them a certain look. You can see the look I'm talking about in the picture. I would think about what I wanted and POW! I would give them the LOOK. Works for me every time.



The LOOK.

SEPTEMBER 22, 2015



All Mommy is saying today is, "Who did this?" I turn my back for one minute and the trash can with yummy smells MYSTERIOUSLY turns over. Now I'm in trouble until someone confesses to this deed. Mommy and Daddy know how well I have been trained. Why are they suspicious of me? If someone confesses to this deed, I can have fresh carrot juice with my supper. Thank you in advance.



Who Did This?

SEPTEMBER 23, 2015

Someone asked me for advice on how to have a happy life. Here it is: Eat a bug every morning and nothing worse will happen for the rest of the day.

SEPTEMBER 24, 2015

I'm living in the Coconino Forest in Flagstaff, and Daddy takes me for a walk four times a day. I usually see nice people and their dogs on my walks; however, yesterday I met a snotty poodle. I'll call him Mark. As I approached Mark in a friendly manner, Mark gave me a slobbery growl and barked at me. I didn't growl or bark back. I stared at him with my golden eyes and formulated a plan to put him in his place. He continued to snarl at me as his mother pulled him away.

In order to get to the forested area, Daddy and I have to walk down a sidewalk that goes right by Mark's front window where Mark has sentry duty. When I walked up to Mark's window, there he was. He was looking out his window and growling and barking. As I stopped in front of his window, I stared at him with my golden eyes. There was doggy spit flying all over the window as Mark bounced up and down and pawed the glass. I laughed silently as I gave him a steady stare and lifted my leg. I'd taken a big drink of water before we left; so I had plenty to gift to him. Just as I had nothing left to give, his mother came to the window and scolded him for slobbering all over the glass. As hard as his mom tried, she couldn't drag him away from the window; so I knew he was still watching me as I sashayed down the sidewalk and wagged my tail and hips to the rhythm of NAH nah, nah . . . nah NAH . . . nah . . . I get to go to the forest . . . NAH nah, nah . . . nah NAH . . . nah . . .



Walking in the Coconino Forest.

OCTOBER 22, 2015



I think I know what life is about now. It's about being snuggled in Daddy's arms and being loved and cared for. And it's about living in a peaceful home—until that cat comes into the backyard and I have to chase her away.

OCTOBER 23, 2015

I want to tell you a little secret. When you find someone who loves you unconditionally, make sure they know you love them with all your heart. Here's how you do that: First, look into their eyes and make sure you have their attention. Then move in real close . . . and lick their face.

OCTOBER 27, 2015

Oh my! Mommy discovered I like my ears rubbed while she rocks me in her chair. I'm in a state of rhapsody.



Am I levitating?

DECEMBER 13, 2015



This morning Mommy held me in her arms and rocked me. There is only one purpose in life—to love.



In my special place of feeling loved.

DECEMBER 14, 2015



Daddy was walking me on the sidewalk by a café in downtown Flagstaff, and a school bus pulled up across the street. About six

or seven teenage girls stepped out of the bus wearing plaid skirts and white blouses. When the bus pulled away, they all came screaming across the street. Daddy thought they were coming over to see him. NOT! They were looking at me and yelling, “Can we pet him? Can we pet him? He’s so cute!” I enjoyed all of the petting and attention.

A teenage boy was watching all of this and came over to my daddy and said, “Sir, what kind of dog is that? He’s a babe magnet, and I want one just like him.”

DECEMBER 26, 2015



Whew! I got doggy toys for Christmas, and now I’m exhausted from playing with my new toys. I can hardly prop my head up with my paw. I feel like a limp rag.



I'm a spoiled doggy.

DECEMBER 31, 2015

I have a little problem. I used to weigh twenty-five pounds and now my Daddy says I weigh twenty-seven pounds. First of all, if this is true, it's not my fault. You see, Mommy and Daddy went out of town for a few days and Uncle Marty took me to his house. I LOVE being at Uncle Marty's house. For one thing, he lets me sleep in his bed, and all night long I snuggle so close to him that I can hear his heart beating. I love that sound and then . . . breakfast!

The first time Uncle Marty put my breakfast kibble in front of me, I gave him a pitiful look, and he said, "What's the matter, Karl? Don't you want to eat your breakfast?" I let my head go limp over my breakfast and then I gave Uncle Marty "The LOOK" with my piercing golden eyes. (I should go into acting.) Uncle Marty scrambled an egg for me and put that over my kibble. Wowzah! That scrambled egg was delicious. I'm drooling just thinking about it. And for dinner we had brisket.

The other thing I like about staying with Uncle Marty is that he works from home, and he has a La-Z-Boy chair for me in his office. I curl up in that chair while he works. In between his phone calls he talks to me about guy stuff, like our walking schedule and what we're having for dinner. Then Uncle Marty takes a break and plays with me. I have a big box of toys at Uncle Marty's house.

So, back to my problem. I heard Mommy telling Daddy that she had a come-to-Jesus talk with Uncle Marty and told him that I'm getting fat. *Excuse me!* Here's the thing. It's winter now and my hair is two inches long in some places, and I know this has added some serious weight. So, in my defense, I'm just saying: I'm NOT fat. I'm fluffy.

In December 2014, a chocolate-colored dog with golden eyes is found wandering in Arizona's Yuma Desert. A kind-hearted man brings the lost dog to a rescue facility. Sadly, no one chooses to adopt the stray, whose desperate wish is for a family to love and cherish him. Soon, however, while he's at a second animal rescue, his picture is published in a local paper and—voilà! A compassionate couple fall for him, name him Karl, and bring him to his forever home, one filled with unconditional love. Parents and children alike will be captivated by this tender, humorous look at Karl's now happy life—told from his point of view and with pictures of the real Karl, a handsome Boykin Spaniel.