

# **A Dog's Purpose Study Guide**

**A Dog's Purpose by W. Bruce Cameron**

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# Plot Summary

The main plot of the book, "A Dog's Purpose" is the story of a dog who goes through four reincarnations as different dogs. He is seeking "a dog's purpose in life" in his different reincarnations. In his first incarnation, he is a mutt named Toby; in his second reincarnation, he is a Golden Retriever named Bailey; in his third reincarnation, he is a female dog with the name of Ellie; and in the last reincarnation, he is a Black Lab and his name is Buddy. In this last reincarnation, he meets up with his beloved owner Ethan whom he had known when Ethan was a boy and young man. In this incarnation, Ethan has become an old man. Ethan used to have a sweetheart and Buddy as Bailey brings the two of them together by smell. In each of his incarnations, the dog learns something more about what a dog's purpose is and by the end of the book, he feels he has fulfilled his purpose.

Four puppies are born to a feral dog who keeps them hidden in a den scooped out underneath the black roots of a tree . The mother dog trains them to fear humans but they are all caught and put in a large fenced-in yard with many other dogs. A kind woman with long, white hair names the hero, Toby. He finally has to be put down because he is wounded in a fight.

In the second reincarnation, the hero is a Golden Retriever named Bailey. He loves Ethan, the boy he lives with, deeply. In the summer Ethan visits his grandparents in the country. There is a girl named Hannah who lives down the road and Ethan falls in love with her .

There is a bad boy in the neighborhood named Todd whom Bailey discovers setting fire to Ethan's house. When Ethan goes away to college, Hannah promises to write every day but Ethan discovers she has a new boyfriend when he returns on a visit. Bailey gets sick and has to be put down.

In the third reincarnation, the puppy is a female German Shepherd named Ellie who becomes a search and rescue dog. When she knows she's near death, she doesn't believe that she'll come back again because she's done everything a dog can do.

In the last reincarnation, the puppy is a Black Lab and he meets his beloved Ethan again as an old man. He reunites Ethan and Hannah who hadn't married one another. He realizes that he has fulfilled his purpose.

The main character remembers people and events from lifetime to lifetime.



# Chapters 1 - 4

## Chapters 1 - 4 Summary

This is the beginning of a book about a dog who goes through four reincarnations. These four chapters deal with the first lifetime of the main character, Toby. He is a mutt with three siblings and a feral mother.

The first impression Toby has is of the fuzzy bodies of his three siblings and the wonderful, long tongue of his mother. His siblings' names are Fast, Sister, and Hungry. They live in a den under a large tree growing on a creek bank. Mother tries to teach them to fear humans. There is a culvert under the road near the den and they find dead birds there. Mother evades cars and trucks.

One day a truck drives slowly up and down the road as if searching for them. Mother and puppies run into the culvert. Men appear at both ends of the culvert. All are caught, except Sister. A woman with long, white hair, Senora, picks up Toby. She exudes love and friendliness and he wags his tail. Hungry dies. They are put in a large fenced-in yard with many other dogs of all sizes and ages. Senora gives Toby his name. She is warned by her helpers that she has too many dogs.

Once in the yard, Toby gets to know the hierarchy. He makes friends with a little female, named Coco. His mother escapes one night and he follows her but is soon found in the front yard by Senora whose face he licks.

One day Sister appears in the yard. Coco starts getting attention from the male dogs and Toby is jealous. Both Coco and Toby are taken to a cool room with a metal table. They have to wear collars over their heads afterwards. A new dog appears in the Yard, one who had been bred to fight. His name is Spike and he quickly establishes himself as the new leader after fighting with Top Dog and wounding him.

Fast and Toby lash out at Spike when he threatens Sister and Toby's foreleg is badly wounded by Spike. Finally a lot of men come and cage all the dogs and take them away. A man looks at Toby's leg and says, "Unadoptable". Toby feels himself sinking into a dark sleep and he feels sadness from Senora washing over him. He wants to lick her palms and make her happy again. He reflects that the only thing that gives his life purpose is making Senora laugh.

## Chapters 1 - 4 Analysis

In Chapters one through four Toby, the main character is a mutt, one of four puppies born to a feral mother. In these chapters, the joys of being a dog, sensing things that humans can't sense, is revealed. Toby has an affinity for humans even as a puppy. His mother, however, distrusts humans and tries to protect her puppies from them. This theme of a mother's love is a universal theme even among humans. The book is written



from Toby's standpoint but interaction with other dogs and with humans, like Senora, add to the plot.

The whole book, although narrated by the main character, a dog going through different lifetimes, human dialogue is also used to further the plot and describe the characters.

Another theme is the relationship of Toby's siblings with one another. Fast, his brother, is particularly fond of Toby's one sister, Sister, and they play together a lot. Hungry is a sickly puppy who never seems to get enough food and has found that if he licks his mother's mouth, she will bring up food for him. He sleeps all the time. Once more, Mother's concern for her sickly puppy can be compared to a human mother's concern over one of her children who isn't as healthy as the rest of her children.

The mother dog's fear of humans and her efforts to teach her puppies to also fear and avoid them is an example of what humans call "street smarts". She is feral and had to learn how to keep herself and her puppies safe.

When the puppies and Mother are caught by Senora and put in the Yard, a large enclosed area surrounded by a tall fence, the puppies encounter other dogs of all sizes and ages. Toby finds a new friend in a little female named Coco. He is attracted to her smell at first and wants to jump on her back, but after they are taken to a cool building with a metal table and come back with collars on, Toby no longer thinks of Coco in the same way. This is foreshadowing of what happens again and again during his different reincarnations, always the same cool, metal table and the cone-shaped plastic collar.

At the end of the chapter when Toby is sinking into a deep sleep from an injection and is dying, his only wish is to lick Senora's face and make her happy again. He reflects that this is his purpose. Though he is dying, he wants only to comfort Senora. Toby also felt love for the man at the shelter as evidenced in these two quotes from Chapter 4, pg 53: "From the first man I sensed a caring tinged with sadness" and "The first man reached inside the cone and smoothed my ears back. Though I felt disloyal to Senora I licked his hand." These quotes foreshadow how the dog in his many lifetimes is able to sense the love of people and how he immediately responds to this love. It also shows the dog's sense of loyalty. He feels strong loyalty to any human who has been kind and loving to him, culminating in his undying love and loyalty to the boy in his second lifetime as a Golden Retriever and every lifetime thereafter.

Humans also find that making their loved ones happy becomes their main goal in life. Dogs and humans have many traits in common.



# Chapters 5 - 9

## Chapters 5 - 9 Summary

In chapter 5, Toby wakes up still remembering Spike's fury but then he realizes that he is a puppy again in a new place. He now has light-colored fur, long legs and has seven brothers and sisters. He is reincarnated as a Golden Retriever and begins his adventures in this reincarnation.

Toby is now a Golden Retriever with seven brothers and sisters. He lives in a cage with a cement floor. He is now experiencing a new life and the question of his purpose enters his mind again. What is he supposed to do? He discovers that there are other puppies in the kennel in cages, and wonders about them too. He compares the man who feeds him to Carlos and Bobby in his last lifetime. The man isn't friendly or interested in any of the dogs like they were.

Toby is able to escape from this kennel like his feral mother had. He finally gets to a road. A truck stops and an old man gets out, picks him up and puts him in the front seat of the truck. The truck stops at a building smelling of chemicals like the man does. He rolls the windows up. It gets unbearably hot. A woman looks in the window and throws a rock through the window and whispers, "You poor puppy" and pours cool water over him. The puppy feels adoration coming from her like he had from Senora. He rides in the front seat with her and when the car stops the woman calls, "Ethan, Come here I want you to meet someone." The puppy and Ethan run to one another. It's love at first sight. After a day, the puppy knows Ethan by "smell, sight, sound and gesture." Ethan is allowed to keep the puppy and promises to take care of him. The puppy is named Bailey.

Bailey's foremost job is to play with the boy. Ethan introduces Bailey to the neighborhood, the other children, especially Chelsea who tells him she loves him. Chelsea has a long-haired brown and white dog named Marshmallow who wrestles happily with Bailey.

One of Bailey's favorite things is to learn new tricks like "Sit" or "Dog door". He observes that Smokey, the cat, always has a snide expression on his face. Three children move into the neighborhood, Todd, Drake and Linda.

Todd is Ethan's age. They become friends but are not alike. Todd likes to burn things but Ethan doesn't like it when Todd starts setting off firecrackers. Bailey is allowed to roam the neighborhood. One day Bailey goes near Todd's house and Todd calls him to come in. Bailey doesn't trust Todd. Todd takes him to his room, locks the door and tries to get him to smell toy airplane glue. Bailey hears Ethan calling him and finally Linda, Todd's sister, opens the door and Bailey escapes. It's not long after this that Bailey is taken to a clean, cool room which brings back memories. Once more he has to wear a plastic collar and has an ache in his tummy.



Not long after that the family goes to the country to visit Ethan's grandparents on a farm. Bailey gets to know Flare, the horse, the ducks down at the pond, a black cat in the barn and his first skunk! Toward the end of the summer Ethan catches a large fish when they're in the boat. He falls overboard and Bailey jumps in after him to rescue him. Ethan is so proud of him he has Bailey do it again for grandpa. He calls Bailey his Doodle Dog.

## Chapters 5 - 9 Analysis

The puppy is Bailey, a Golden Retriever, in this lifetime and he meets the boy, Ethan. They fall in love instantly and become best friends. Bailey finds out more things he can do as a dog which help define his purpose in life.

One of the themes in this section is the pure and total love a boy and his dog have for one another. This love foreshadows a later meeting in the book The description of their relationship epitomizes the old saying "A Dog is Man's Best Friend". He and Ethan experience "love at first sight." Bailey's love for the boy, Ethan, continues through the rest of the book through his future lifetimes.

Another foreshadowing is the time Bailey jumps into the water after Ethan when Ethan falls overboard. This foreshadows that Bailey becomes a search and rescue dog in a future reincarnation.

The character, Todd, is an example of a boy who does evil things because he begrudges other children their joys. He lures Bailey into his room and tries to have him smell airplane glue. He also uses firecrackers to burn up toys and likes to burn things which is a foreshadowing of when he burns Ethan's house down and Ethan is severely burned in the fire. Todd's dislike of Bailey and his attempt to get him to sniff airplane glue is a foreshadowing of Marshmallow, Chelsea's dog's disappearance . Bailey smells Marshmallow on Todd's pants. Marshmallow never returns!

Todd really seems to be totally evil and no explanation is given for this. However, this kind of character appears in many classic books. Just because he's an eight-year-old boy doesn't mean he's an innocent child.

Bailey experiences once more being taken to a cool room with a metal table and having a needle put in his neck. He once more has to wear a plastic collar and his stomach hurts. He remembers experiencing this in his last lifetime, showing the continuity of his memory. This is a foreshadowing of numerous times in future lifetimes when he and other dogs have to wear the cone-shaped plastic collar.

Smokey, the cat, is typical of cats appearing in literature or Disney movies. He teases Bailey and is haughty and gets away with things that Bailey is blamed for. Bailey's relationship with Smokey is a foreshadowing of his relationships with other cats in his later lifetimes. The reader can see through cats through the eyes of a dog. These encounters are often quite humorous.

Bailey experiences the love of humans , first from Ethan's mother and then immediate love from Ethan, then love from Chelsea and finally from Ethan's grandparents and Hannah. He experiences this wonderful sensation of being loved throughout this lifetime.





# Chapters 10 - 12

## Chapters 10 - 12 Summary

Bailey notices in Chapter 10 that the children of the neighborhood don't play with Todd now. Ethan doesn't go to his house. When he comes around Bailey and Marshmallow feel his presence with fear. One night Bailey smells Todd on the other side of the fence. He barks and Todd goes away.

Bailey likes summer when they go to the Farm. He learns all the smells and sounds on the way to the town. One day when they are in the town, Bailey sees a dog catching a plastic disk. When they get home Ethan goes to his room to start making "the flip," a cross between a frisbee, a boomerang and a baseball. When Ethan throws it Bailey can't catch it and Ethan becomes discouraged. A girl appears during these attempts bearing a basket of good-smelling brownies. Ethan and the girl are shy with one another. Her name is Hannah and she lives down the road. Ethan asks her if she wants to play with the flip again to Bailey's horror. She later gets on her bicycle and goes home.

Ethan's mother and grandparents take a trip in the car. One night a noise frightens him and he gets a gun out of the gun cabinet and checks all the rooms. The next morning he saddles Flare and calls Bailey to go with him. Soon they're off the road and on a trail and Flare sees a snake. He throws Ethan and gallops off. Ethan starts crying. and tells Bailey that they're lost. They keep each other warm at night and keep trying to find their way home. Finally they come to a swamp. There's a stream running into a river on the other side of the swamp. They find a path there that smells like humans. They see a bridge and hear a man calling for Ethan. The man takes them to building where Ethan is reunited with his family.

Ethan's mom takes Bailey home when school starts and he gets reacquainted with Marshmallow, his favorite dog friend. One day he hears Chelsea frantically calling Marshmallow's name to no avail. Bailey smells Marshmallow on Todd's pants. She never comes home. At Christmas Chelsea gets a new puppy named Duchess. Ethan beats Todd in a go-kart race. That night someone throws a rock through the window of Ethan's house. Bailey smells Todd on the broken glass.

## Chapters 10 - 12 Analysis

Ethan takes Flare, the horse on a ride. Bailey trots along. After a while, Flare sees a snake and gallops away. The theme of "fear" and how Ethan and Bailey handle fear is revealed.

In these chapters Bailey exhibits his ability to recognize sounds, smells, gestures and feelings . These heightened senses determine how he sees the world, humans and other animals. The ability of a dog to sense the intents of humans is also revealed. The



dog can smell emotions not just odors. Humans lack this ability and the only thing that comes close to it is intuition.

Another theme is the resourcefulness of Ethan and Bailey when they are lost. Bailey knows to try to keep his beloved boy warm and night and how to attempt not to give up.

There is more foreshadowing in Bailey's ability to smell Marshmallow on Todd's clothing and to smell Todd's scent on the shards of glass from the rock thrown through Ethan's family's house. This foreshadows what Todd's evil intentions are.

The theme of competitiveness is described when Ethan and Todd enter the go-kart race and Ethan wins. This makes Todd hate Ethan even more. Todd can't stand to have anyone experience joy or success.

The theme of the importance of a dog's ability to smell things and people very accurately is dealt with in these chapters. Bailey exhibits these abilities and because of these dog abilities the unconditional love of Bailey for Ethan is demonstrated. The whole book, narrated by a dog, is seen, felt, sensed, and smelled by the dog. The difference between dog senses and human senses is described. Dogs can smell and sense things humans can't. Also the difference between Bailey, the dog, and the other animals of the farm is dealt with.

Bailey viewpoint concerning other animals like Flare, the horse, and the ducks is handled in these chapters. It is evident Bailey feels that dogs are superior to other animals. He views the horse and ducks as stupid and the cats as contemptible and haughty. As the narrator, he relates his opinions of the other animals in an insightful and humorous way.

The theme of love between a boy and girl is shown in the relationship of Ethan and Hannah. It is once again seen and felt through the senses of a Bailey, the dog. He sees them as wrestling but they're really hugging and kissing. His innocent view of them is refreshing.



# Chapters 13 - 17

## Chapters 13 - 17 Summary

In Chapter 13, Ethan mows yards instead of going to the Farm. Another summer passes without a visit to the farm. It grows cold and football games resume. Ethan can now drive and takes Bailey with him. When school ends, Mom and Ethan take Bailey to the farm. Grandpa and Ethan build a new barn. Hannah comes over often and sits on the porch with Ethan. Bailey tries to sit between them and they laugh.

When Ethan returns from the farm, he talks with Hannah on the phone a lot. One day a silver bus comes and brings Hannah. Ethan tells her that scouts from the University of Michigan are coming that night to see him play football. Bailey sits with Hannah while Ethan plays. Todd comes over and asks Hannah if she wants to party. Bailey growls. Todd tells Hannah that she should ask Ethan about Michele which upsets her. Ethan is happy because the scout wants him to attend Michigan University. Ethan and Hannah walk around and finally they hug. Ethan drives them home and the boy and girl wrestle on the couch. Bailey goes out the new dog door to the back yard and finds a piece of meat that smells strange and has Todd's scent all over it. The next day Ethan's mother throws the meat into the garbage.

One afternoon Ethan and Hannah go sledding and really enjoy being together. Todd is there and Bailey senses something worse than anger coming from Todd as he watches Ethan and Hannah. Ethan and Hannah are radiating so much happiness they don't notice Ethan's hate. Hannah tells Ethan that it was Todd who told her about Michele. Ethan asks Todd why he lied.

Hannah leaves a few days later and the snow drifts. Bailey goes exploring one night and when he returns to the house he smells chemical liquid and sees Todd setting fire to some papers and throwing them into the bushes. Todd is too busy watching the fire to see Bailey. Bailey doesn't bark or growl he just leaps on Todd. Bailey bites into Todd's foot in a fury. Todd's shoe comes off. Mom and dad stumble outside coughing and mom screams for Ethan, looking up at his window. Suddenly something bursts through Ethan's window. It's the flip. Ethan's parents tell him to jump and he throws his desk chair through the window since he can't open it but when he jumps he gets hung up and drops right into the burning bushes. One of his legs is badly burned and Bailey can smell burning flesh. Ethan is put on a bed in the back of a truck and Mom goes with him. One man says that it is arson. A man shows the lieutenant Todd's shoe. Someone notices that there is blood on Bailey but they soon determine that it's not his blood but the blood of the arsonist and they clip some of it as evidence.

A week later Ethan's mom takes Bailey to their new home, an apartment. None of them like the apartment and Bailey misses his boy terribly. They are all still living in the apartment when the boy comes home. Bailey has learned to identify cars by their engines so when he hears the mother's car he cannot contain his excitement. Ethan's



mother tells him not to jump and tries to hold him back but Bailey and Ethan are reunited and Ethan calls Bailey his doodle dog. Bailey sees that the boy is different, has a hard time walking, and is in pain.

One day Ethan's mom tells him it's time to go to school. Bailey feels the sad anger inside Ethan. A few days later Ethan's mom invites his school friends over and Ethan's spirits lift. He decides to return to school but he now has to use a cane. A few days later they return to the house which smells of smoke and new carpet. Shortly after settling in they go to the Farm. They visit Hannah first and she asks Ethan if he's going to kiss her. Ethan begins delivering papers early each morning and he and Hannah sit on the porch wrestling as Bailey sees it. Ethan is sad because he no longer has a football scholarship because of Todd.

Grandma tells Ethan's mother it would be better if Ethan stayed at the Farm. He seems happier and has a girlfriend but when fall comes Ethan has to go away to college. Bailey doesn't understand. Hannah tells Ethan to write her every day and he promises. She holds on to Bailey as the car drives away but he breaks free and chases it but it's too fast. Finally Bailey catches up with the car when it stops for a train to go by.. Grandpa's truck shows up and Bailey jumps in but it turns around and goes back to the farm. Bailey sulks when they return to the farm and he digs up the flip from Ethan's closet. Bailey dreams of Ethan often.

Bailey isn't surprised when Ethan goes away again. He realizes his life is with Grandpa and Grandma now. On one of Ethan's visits he and Bailey go to visit Hannah where they see boys and girls. Bailey observes Hannah hugging one of the boys, Brett. Ethan remarks on how fast Brett is on his feet. Hannah says that he is only a friend but when Ethan tells her she should go back to her track coach, she does. Ethan limps away giving off feelings of sadness and anger. That summer brings changes with it. Ethan works and Hannah no longer comes to the farm. Ethan's father no longer comes either. One day down at the pond, Bailey sees Ethan's mother take a little round ring from her finger and throw it in the pond.

One day a man named Rick comes to dinner. He and Ethan's mother sit on the porch like Ethan and Hannah used to do. He throws the ball for Bailey, so Bailey likes him. Bailey starts taking naps frequently. One evening Grandpa puts a plate of food down for Bailey, but he doesn't eat it and feels a sharp pain going through his body, leaving him panting for breath. Bailey lies all night by his food bowl. Grandma sees him in the morning and calls for Grandpa saying there is something wrong with Bailey, Ethan's mom and grandpa carry Bailey to the truck to the clean, cool room where he'd been taken often recently. The nice man feels Bailey all over but Bailey doesn't have the energy to sit up. Ethan's mom comes in crying and Grandpa, Grandma and Rick come too. The nice man brings the needle and Bailey smells the familiar smell and feels the tiny jab. After a few minutes the pain gets better but Bailey feels sleepy. When he wakes up he knows he is dying. He remembers how it was in his last lifetime when he was Toby in a small, hot room with Spike The nice man talks with Bailey and tells him he can let go that he has done a good job. Bailey senses he is talking about death. Mother, Grandpa, Grandma, and Rick come and hug Bailey who feels Mother needs him. Then



all of a sudden Bailey hears his name being called. It's Ethan. Bailey feels another jab and he doesn't have the strength to wag his tail. Ethan whispers that he is going to miss his doodle dog. Bailey closes his eyes from the sheer pleasure of feeling Ethan's love for him. Then the pain is gone and Bailey feels like a puppy again.

## Chapters 13 - 17 Analysis

In chapters 13 - 17, the book continues to be written from the dog's point of view and his observations. The book is seen through the dog's eyes, smelled through his nose, felt through his heart and sensed as humans cannot sense things. The whole book is written as if it is written by the dog going through different lifetimes and experiencing different adventures.

There is a lot of foreshadowing in these chapters. Since the dog remembers the past and things like experiencing the vet's metal table and the plastic collar and the sore tummy are remembrances of the past and foreshadowing of future lifetimes.

The themes of lost dreams and shattered hopes are handled in these chapters. Ethan no longer has his football scholarship because of his severely burned leg caused by Todd's setting fire to the house. Ethan also sees that Hannah is slipping away from him too and is sad and angry but accepting of the situation. Ethan's mother and father also separate. There is much sadness in these chapters.

Bailey grows old and sick and no longer can eat and is in pain. Once more he experiences the metal table of the vet, and the needle. The reader can feel his pain and the pain of his beloved boy saying good-bye to his "doodle dog." This is a universal theme which many people (and dogs) can relate to parting from one's loved one, either animal or human. The emotion is very powerful. It has been experienced by millions of humans and animals down through the years.

The dog is able to smell Todd on people and dogs and objects and this enables foreshadowing of Todd's evil doings. Bailey knows what has happened and what is going to happen because of his ability to smell Todd and Todd's dark anger. This is a foreshadowing of his ability to smell the evil intent of a murderer during his reincarnation as Ellie, the search and rescue dog.

Bailey senses the love between Hannah and Ethan. He wants to get right between them when they're hugging and feel the warmth and love.



# Chapters 18 - 20

## Chapters 18 - 20 Summary

In chapter 18, Bailey wakes and realizes he's a puppy again. He remembers everything. How could he have a more important mission than loving the boy? Bailey squats and realizes all at once he is now a female! A man comes and claps and the puppies who don't cower he puts in a box. The dog who was formerly Bailey is among these puppies. The man puts her in his T-shirt and asks her if she can find her way out. When she jumps out, the man tells the woman she is very bright. His name is Jakob. She retrieves a paper ball for him, remembering how Ethan wanted her to return "the flip" Jakob takes the puppy.

The puppy's new home reminds her of Ethan's apartment. The puppy knows it's far away from Ethan and from the farm by the smells. The man, Jakob, names the puppy Ellie.. He wears dark clothes with a gun in his belt like a policeman. When he is gone during the day, a nice woman named Georgia, comes to play with Ellie. She calls her silly names like Ellie-wellie Cuddle-Coo. It reminds Ellie of being called doodle dog by Ethan.

Ellie is expected to sleep in her dog bed and do what Jakob tells her She feels her purpose was to be with Ethan and she had fulfilled it. as Bailey. Why is she now Ellie? "Could a dog have more than one purpose?"

Ellie starts to feel there is something sad inside Jakob that keeps him from showing affection. Jakob takes her to the park to what he tells her is 'work'. He teaches her to "Drop, which means to lie down." She learns how to stay until she is told to come.

One day Jakob takes Ellie to the woods where they meet a man named Wally who pets her and then runs away. Jakob teaches Ellie to find Wally.

Ellie is embarrassed when she notices that she gives off odors and male dogs mill round the apartment. Jakob takes her to the familiar cool room with the metal table and she wakes up with the same cone-shaped collar. Soon they are back in the park and Jakob is teaching Ellie a new command, "Show". She also learns how to climb a slide and ease herself down a ladder on the other side. He also teaches her how to crawl into tight tubes and leap on a stack of logs. He teaches her not to be afraid of the sound of a gun going off. Jakob teaches her to find a person by sniffing an item of clothing.

Ellie starts going to work with Jakob every day. He takes her to a kennel at work where there are two dogs, Gypsy and Cammie. Gypsy works with Paul and Cammie, an older dog, works with Amy. There's an emergency and Jakob drives Amy and Ellie to a large, flat building. He lets her out and leads her away from the people and holds two shirts for her to smell. Jakob tells Ellie to "Find". Ellie finally finds the scent by some bushes. Jacob says, "Find" again. Ellie traces the scent to an open gate. An old woman



is sitting on a swing and Ellie takes Jakob to her. Marilyn is an Alzheimer's patient who had disappeared. Jakob is happy with Ellie and plays with her. She can feel the pride he has in her. She realizes she has discovered her purpose as Ellie is not just to find people but to save them. It reminds her of playing "rescue" with Ethan.

The next day Jakob buys some fragrant flowers and takes Ellie to a yard filled with stones. Jakob puts the flowers next to one of the stones. Ellie feels his pain and sees his tears. From that day forward they spend a lot more time away from the kennel and ride on airplanes and helicopters. Jakob shows her a huge pond where she tracks a little girl and finds her.

One day Ellie hears Jakob calling her urgently. Jakob drives very fast to the place of work. Ellie senses Jakob's extreme anxiety and there's a woman so afraid she can't stand up. The woman holds out a toy. Jakob hands Ellie the toy to sniff and tells her to "Find". Ellie leaps from the truck and tries to find the smell that matches the toy. She finds it but it is mixed with a strong male scent. The smell vanishes next to a car, telling Ellie that the scent she was following was in a vehicle that had driven away and another one is in its place. Ellie hears a man say the last two bodies were found up in Topanga Canyon.

Jakob tells Ellie to sit in the front seat and holds the toy to her nose again, saying "Find". She sticks her nose out the window and sniffs the air. Normally Ellie doesn't bark when she catches a scent but it is strong and steady. The truck slows down and comes to a stop. Jakob asks Ellie which way to go. She shoves her face out Jakob's window

A few minutes later they're on a fire road. They arrive at a gate and see the stolen empty red Toyota Camry. Ellie can smell the man carrying the girl. Jakob puts his gun back on his belt. Ellie sees the little girl sitting on some steps while the man pulls at a door with some sort of tool. The man whirls around and Ellie's hackles rise. She senses the same dark sickness she had felt from Todd but stronger and more vicious.

Ellie runs back to Jakob . He tells Ellie she's a good girl and tells her to Show" Ellie hears a helicopter and three policemen come running. They continue to follow the man down the canyon. They find a crowbar the man had dropped. Jakob and Ellie enter a woods. Ellie smells the man there. Jakob shouts , "Police! Freeze.!" A shot rings out and Jakob falls to the ground. Ellie senses a flash of pain and smells the blood. Ellie realizes that the man used his gun to hurt Jakob. Ellie once again feels the primal rage she felt when she attacked Todd when she was Bailey. She lowers her head and charges. Ellie has the man's wrist in her mouth and his gun falls to the ground. He screams as he feels her teeth tear into his arm.

Policemen come and the man yells for them to get the dog off him. The man lunges forward , picks up the gun and he shoots .The police shoot and kill him. Jakob is only concerned with Emily, the little girl. Jakob is carried away and put on a helicopter and Ellie wants desperately to be with him.





Amy puts Ellie in a cage on a different truck. Ellie has fulfilled her purpose by finding the girl but now she is sleeping in the kennel and feels somehow she is being punished. She stays there a couple days until Amy is joined by a woman named Maya. Maya's pants smell of cats.

Maya tells Amy that everybody in the K-9 is in such good shape. She tells Amy that losing weight is hard for her and tells Amy that she doesn't want to let Ellie down. Ellie just keeps wondering when Jakob is coming back.

## Chapters 18 - 20 Analysis

In Chapter 18 the puppy who had been Bailey is now a girl puppy. She is a German Shepherd and no longer a Golden Retriever. However, she remembers her life as Bailey and the experiences of all her former lifetimes.

Just as she had been eager to please Ethan and Senora , she now wants to please Jakob. She remembers how much she had loved learning tricks from Ethan and how happy he had been when she tried to retrieve "the flip". She uses this knowledge in this lifetime to please Jakob. He immediately realizes she is a smart puppy able to learn quickly and that he why he chooses her and not her litter mates.

Ellie misses Ethan so terribly she whimpers at first. and her litter mates think this is sign of weakness and pounce on her. All through this lifetime she thinks back to her life with Ethan and compares things that happen to her now to what happened to her when she was with Ethan. Her keen nose tells her she no longer lives near Ethan because the trees and bushes smell different. She can also smell that it is from from the Farm where Ethan's grandparents lived.

The theme of a dog's empathy and ability to sense the emotions of humans appears in these chapters once again. Ellie can feel Jakob's sorrow and the fact that something broken inside him prevents him from feeling joy. She nuzzles his hand when he visits his wife's gravestone to put flowers there. She feels his sorrow and wants to leave the sad place.

The theme of finding one's purpose in life is continued in these chapters. Ellie discovers her purpose is not only to "Find" people but also to "Save" them.

Ellie uses her ability to sense the character and thoughts of humans to uncover the murderer's intentions, as she had sensed Todd's evil intentions when she was Bailey. She once more realizes that her purpose is not just to "find" but to "save" when she finds the little girl who had been taken from the mall by a known murderer. She feels the same primal fury and rage toward the murderer when he shoots Jakob that she had felt as Bailey when Todd had set fire to Ethan's house. This primal rage is perhaps felt more strongly by an animal than a human but a human can relate to it.

When Ellie first comes to live with Jakob, a woman named Georgia comes over every day to take her on walks and play with her. Georgia calls her "Ellie-wellie Cuddle Coo".





Ellie remembers Ethan calling her his "doodle dog" and though the names are silly she feels the love of the humans who call her these names. This is a theme of human affection for their pets as exhibited by the affectionate names they call them. They could rarely call a human loved one such a silly affectionate name, even a sweetheart. This shows how close humans feel to their pets. It is a very special relationship.



# Chapters 21 - 25

## Chapters 21 - 25 Summary

In Chapter 21, Maya tells Ellie that they are going to work together and Ellie can sleep in her room. . Maya parks outside her small house. . Her smell is everywhere but there is also the disappointing smell of cats. Ellie meets Maya's three cats. Stella, Tinkerbelle and Emmet.

After dinner Maya takes Ellie for a walk on a leash. Maya trots with Ellie at her side until Maya starts huffing and Ellie can smell the sweat on her. Later Ellie realizes she is going to live with Maya when she is shown her dog bed.

The next morning Maya and Ellie go to work and Wally is there with a woman named Belinda. Wally stays with Maya while Belinda goes off into the woods. Wally teaches Maya the hand signals and commands used during work. Maya tells Ellie to "Find" and Ellie easily finds Belinda sitting in a car. Wally tells Maya how Ellie looks when she finds a person or thing. Finally Maya tells Ellie to "Show" and Belinda comes out of the car laughing. Wally tells Maya to reward Ellie by playing with her.

Maya has a neighbor, Al, . who is always asking her if he can help her. She tells him no but she is anxious and sweaty and sad when he walks away . Al scratches Ellie behind her ears which makes her instantly love him.

Maya and Ellie work almost every day. . Maya is much slower than Jakob was and Ellie can feel real pain coming from her and is patient. Maya asks Wally if they are good enough to get certified. Wally says that Ellie is the best dog he's ever seen. Then Maya says that she's too heavy. The next day they don't go to work but Maya is determined and they run longer than they ever ran before. By the time they get to the truck Maya is limping and then she vomits. The next day they "Find" Belinda but Maya's gait is so stiff and painful Ellie does "Find" at half speed. When they find Belinda she's asleep under a tree.

That night Maya takes a bubble bath. She reaches out a wet hand to stroke Ellie and tells her she doesn't feel good enough. Ellie climbs into the tub with Maya trying to cheer her up and Maya laughs. She tells Ellie that she has a surprise for her tomorrow.

The next day Maya takes Ellie to Jakob's apartment. Ellie leaps with joy She feels torn. Jakob is better at work but carries sadness within. Neither of them could love Ellie as Ethan had. They are totally focused on work. Jakob tells Maya he is taking disability and getting his law degree at UCLA.. Jakob asks Maya when she is getting certified. Maya tells him two weeks and then she tells him she's thinking of resigning. Jakob tells her she can't do that because it's unfair to Ellie to make her switch handlers again. Maya first feels anger then shame. Jakob tells her of his wife who had cancer and never gave up. He tells her she should try harder. Ellie feels resolve coming from Maya when they



leave.. They take a long run which delights Ellie but Maya feels pain and sorrow. A few evenings later, Maya pulls up to her house and is too exhausted to get out of the car. She tells Ellie that she is going to fail. Al comes up to the car and tells Maya she's lost weight. Then he feels bad and says that she wasn't fat he just noticed how thin her legs were. Maya tells him he's sweet and he tells her she doesn't need exercise she's perfect right now.

The next time Maya and Ellie go to work, Ellie finds a man up a tree. They get certified and Mama throws a big party. Al comes over and gives Mama some flower and is introduced to everyone. During the next days, Ellie and Maya found two children who had wandered away and a dead man. Maya is more upset about the dead man that Jakob had been about such things.

One day Maya and Ellie take a plane ride than a chopper. The government of El Salvador is overwhelmed with more than 4,000 injured, hundreds dead and there are still trapped people. Both Maya and Ellie become very depressed with finding dead people. Maya asks Vernon to hide so that Ellie can find a live person. Ellie finds Vernon and shows him and they are all happy. Ellie licks his face and then they play ball. Vernon starts running up the street and he and Maya expect Ellie to follow. However, Ellie smells a live person trapped in the rubble. Maya tells her NO but she starts digging into the rubble past a dead person following the scent of the trapped person. Ellie's feet start to sting and she smells strong chemicals. Choking, Ellie tunnels ahead , squirms through a hole and drops into a narrow shaft. She barks , the woman starts screaming . Men dig a hole and the woman and Ellie are hoisted out. Ellie is taken to a vet who treats her acid wounds.

When Maya and Ellie returned to work and started finding Wally. Ellie discovered the acid had taken away her ability to smell Wally until he was right in front of her. Ellie's sense of smell wad damaged by the acid and she can no longer work. Maya tells Ellie she'll live with her. They take a drive to the ocean and Al and Maya tell one another that they love each other and Al asks Maya to marry him.

Ellie is taken to a big building where Maya, Al, Mama and all Maya's family are gathered. Ellie has to do a new trick which is to walk slowly down a narrow path between benches and stand patiently while Al removes something from a pack on her back. Ellie lives with Al and Maya now and Ellie realizes she won't be working anymore. Maya takes Ellie to schools and tells the children about Ellie's work as a search and rescue dog.

Several years pass and Maya takes Ellie to a place called a class. Maya calls one of the children to come forward. Her name is Alyssa. The teacher tells the children that Alyssa wouldn't be there except for Ellie. At the end of school, Alyssa runs to a man. It is Jakob. He no longer gives off feelings of sadness. He is married and Alyssa is his little girl. Ellie, however, loves Maya now and is satisfied to go home with her.

Ellie finds herself thinking more and more of Ethan but not so much of her first lifetime with Fast , Sister, the Yard and Coco. They are a distant memory.



One day rains is threatening Maya and Ellie are doing school. A huge storm makes the sky black and rain pounds the building. Suddenly the door to the classroom opens and a man and woman come in . They are wet.

"We've lost Geoffrey Hickman" the man says. "He's a first grader. The man asks if Ellie can help find the boy. Maya tells him she hasn't worked as a rescue dog for years and tells him to call the police. The man says the the rain will wash away the scent by the time the police arrive.. He mentions a woods behind the playground with a fence the children can lift.

The woman holds out the boy's backpack. Maya lowers her face to Ellie and asks her if she is ready. She gives her the backpack to sniff and opens the door. She tells Ellie to "Find". The police arrive while Ellie is hugging the fence. Ellie finds a small gap in the fence where no adult can climb through. She smells Geoffrey and runs back to alert Maya. Maya tells Ellie to "Show". She yells to the policeman that the boy is on the other side of the fence and has left the playground. Ellie loses his scent. Then she picks it up again where water runs down a storm drain. Ellie can smell Geoffrey now. He is here! Maya shouts that Geoffrey in in the sewer

She can't reach him but yells that they're going to get him out. Geoffrey loses his grip and is swept away. Ellie plunges in after him , wanting to rescue him as she used to rescue Ethan. Finally she gets Geoffrey's hood in her mouth. Finally after being swept through a tunnel and down a shoot they emerge into the sunlight into a swift-flowing river. Two men downstream are able to catch them. They wrap Geoffrey in blankets after he vomits

brown water. Ellie is shaking and she too vomits. Maya screams Ellie's name. Maya is soaking wet but Ellie feels her warmth and love.

Maya and Al soon have a little baby to distract them named Gabriella. Ellie starts having trouble containing her bowel movements as does Gabriella. One day Al carries Ellie to the yard to do her business. Afterwards he puts her head in his lap and begins to cry. Maya tells Ellie over and over what a good dog she is , a hero dog. She tells Gabriella to say "bye bye". Al tells Maya he will do it but Maya tells him she wants to be there for Ellie.

Ellie knows where they're going. She feels she has done everything and that was enough. She wags her tail when they put her on the familiar metal table. She hears Maya calling her a good dog and feels her love and that's what she takes with her when a tiny prick in her neck washes her away into warm ocean waters.

## Chapters 21 - 25 Analysis

In Chapter 21 Ellie becomes Maya's search and rescue dog and goes to live with her. She can no longer be with Jakob because his gunshot wound has made him leave the K9 unit.



Ellie is not too happy that Ellie has three cats. She remembers her feelings about the cats in her last lifetime, how they got away with things and she was blamed. She hadn't cared that much for cats during her lifetime as Bailey even when a kitten snuggled up to her as if she was the mommy and that was when she was a boy dog! She continues to look down on cats and is puzzled by humans' love for them. She asks herself why in the world a woman would want three cats?! Cats symbolize trouble to her and symbolize humans' occasional stupidity when it comes to animals besides dogs. This is a very funny passage where the dog's hilarious attitudes about cats are revealed. The cats are always watching her as they did when she was Bailey. Any human reading this book can relate to this experience of being "watched" by cats especially when they are in the company of a dog or dogs.

Ellie goes to "mama's for dinner most nights. Mama reminds Ellie of Ethan's Grandma in her last lifetime.

Ellie once again exhibits empathy when it comes to Maya. She can feel Maya's struggle with trying to run and go through the K9 training with Wally at the right speed. She feels the pain Maya feels after over-working her body and tries to compensate by slowing down her part of search and find. She feels Maya's lack of feeling self-worth and her fear of being overweight. Al, Maya's neighbor, is in love with her and also exhibits empathy with her and wants to encourage her and build up her confidence. Ellie shows a touching show of empathy and affection one night when Ellie takes a bubble bath after a particularly stressful day. Maya sticks her hand out of the tub to pet Ellie. Ellie feels her sadness and decides to cheer her up she will jump into the tub with her. She does jump in the tub and this does help to cheer Maya up. Maya tells Ellie she has a surprise for her the next day.

Maya takes Ellie to Jakob's apartment. Ellie senses Maya's happy expectation and feels happy too but when she smells Jakob outside his apartment door she leaps and twists with joy and bounds up to the door barking loudly. She would never have done that when she lived with Jakob. He is such a strict disciplinarian. Jakob asks Ellie how she is but commands her to "Sit!" Ellie finds it hard not to jump into Jakob's lap she is so happy to see him. This is once more an example of the love and loyalty a dog feels for his/her master.

Ellie looks around Jakob's apartment and starts wondering where she would sleep. Then all of a sudden she realizes if she moves in with Jakob she will have to leave Maya. She feels torn between her love and loyalty to Jakob and her loyalty to Maya. She weighs everything. Jakob has a sadness inside that makes Ellie sad. Maya has three cats who annoy Ellie. Jakob is better at work and Ellie's purpose is to "Find, Show and Save" people in this lifetime. Maya embraced Ellie with more affection than Jakob but both Jakob and Maya are focused on work above all else. Neither of them can love her the way Ethan had.



## Chapters 26 - 29

### Chapters 26 - 29 Summary

In chapter 26, Ellie is now a boy again and has a mother with a black face. He has eight brothers and sisters. The puppy ponders all the things he has learned in his different lifetimes. What is the reason for this rebirth? Someone congratulates the owner, called Colonel, on having a litter that will bring top dollar. However there is some concern about the puppy who was Ellie. He doesn't have energy and sleeps all the time. The puppy is the last one to be adopted by a man named Derek who offers two fifty, a low price for a pedigree Black Lab. Derek says it's for his girlfriend. He takes the puppy to Wendi, who calls him Bear. Wendi doesn't take good care of Bear and finally tries to give him to her mother, Lisa. She doesn't want Bear but takes Wendi and Bear in when Wendi is evicted. Victor, Lisa's boyfriend, is angry about the dog but Bear stays there. The puppy stays away from Victor. Victor is notified he will be fined \$50. because of the conditions he keeps the puppy in. Victor is determined not to pay the fine and asks Bear if he wants a car ride. He puts him in the trunk, drives him away, takes his collar off and lets him loose. Bear feels guilty and sad, not free. He feels he has no direction, no purpose. Bear is thirsty and suddenly senses water and is drawn to a river. He lifts up his head with a jolt of surprise. He knows where he is!

This is where he and Ethan had been after being lost. The dog is hungry. He comes to the very bridge where he and Ethan had been found. The dog hopes to find a town where there would be food. Finally he comes to a house and eats the food of an old dog, Leo, who doesn't want it. The next day Bear gets to the town and is hungry again. He still feels like a bad dog. He comes to a dog park and watches with envy how the people play with their dogs. Toward the end of the day a woman comes with a big, yellow dog. Bear smells Hannah on her fur! If Hannah is here, maybe Ethan is too! Bear lives in the dog park for a week but the people become suspicious and soon the police are after him and he hides. He gets his meals from garbage cans. The woman with the yellow dog who smells of Hannah calls out to him with concern because he's so skinny

The next day Bear suddenly smells Jasper, the donkey that Grandpa got. He follows Jasper's scent until he smells Ethan! He must still live on the Farm! The dog is dizzy with joy. He looks through the living room window and sees an old man sitting in a chair. He starts scratching the door and finally gets into the house through the dog door. Both the man and the dog are surprised. It's Ethan!

### Chapters 26 - 29 Analysis

In chapter 26, the female German Shepherd is now a Black Labrador puppy with eight brothers and sisters. He ponders once more the reason for his rebirth and his purpose in life. The puppy is a disappointment to his owner, the Colonel, because he sleeps all



the time and seems to have no energy. Since the Colonel sells the puppies and takes pride in their pedigree and lineage for monetary reasons, he is upset when he gives in and sells the puppy for much less than a purebred lab should bring. The man who buys the puppy buys him for his girlfriend as a pet. It turns out thought that, Wendi, his girlfriend doesn't take good care of the puppy she names Bear. The puppy senses that Wendi and her boyfriend don't really love one another either.

When Wendi is evicted she asks her mother, Lisa, to take her and the puppy in. Lisa has a lousy boyfriend, Victor, who ties Bear up in the back yard, doesn't clean his business up or feed him properly. It seems poor Bear isn't having a very good lifetime this time. There is a old woman who lives next door who hands Bear tidbits through the fence and is concerned about him. She pours clean water into his bowl for him. It seems to Bear that perhaps his only purpose in this lifetime is to bring a little joy to the little old lady next door. One day a policeman pulls in the driveway and hands Lisa a paper. It states that Victor must pay a \$50. fine for not keeping the puppy's yard clean and taking proper care of him. Bear feels a malevolence and hatred coming from Victor that reminds him of Todd and the murderer who shot Jakob. In order not to pay the fine, Victor puts Bear in the trunk of his car , drives him away, takes off his collar and lets him go. Still not happy, Bear feels purposeless without direction. He loses Victor's scent quickly and ends up leaving the road when he senses water . He's thirsty He takes in all the smells and suddenly he realizes where he is! It is where he and his beloved Ethan had walked after Flare, the horse , threw Ethan.

Victor's treatment of the puppy and the Colonel's disdain for him had badly damaged his feeling of self-worth. He muses that anyone observing him would see a dog similar to his first feral mother, a log shy of humans. He is not used to being on his own. He is used to relating to humans. When hunger takes over he is able to eat an old dog, Leo's food because Leo doesn't want it. Bear is searching for the town he knows so well from his lifetime as Bailey. He knows there will be food there. When he reaches the town he finds a dog park where he sees a woman with a yellow dog who smells like Hannah!

When darkness falls, Bear, slinks into the shadows remembering the lessons he learned from his mother when he was a feral puppy. He raids trash cans as his first mother had taught him. The people in the park begin to be suspicious of him because he is alone and doesn't have a collar. Bear begins to understand his first mother's wariness of people. Bear thinks the squirrels he observes are stupid.. They are oblivious to the dogs so near who could catch them. This is a recurring theme of the dog's feeling that other animals aren't as smart as dogs are.

One day a policeman appears with a long pole with a loop at the end. Bear knows all too well what this is for. He remembers the poles the loops from his first lifetime when the dogs were caught with them Remembering what he learned from his first feral mother, he is able to stay away from the policeman. He runs away from the park and finally ends up near a building he recognizes as the last place he and Ethan were, the place where the nice man took care of him. He goes around this building where he can hear dogs barking and then in the front of the building he smells a familiar scent. It smells like Jasper, the donkey Grandpa bought.





# Chapters 30 - 32

## Chapters 30 - 32 Summary

In Chapter 31, The dog, reverting to his identity as Bailey tries to jump into Ethan's lap. He loves the feel of the old man's hand on his face. The old man peers at him and asks him who he is and why he's so skinny. He puts the dog outside and tells him to go home but the dog barks so much he brings a pan of succulent food. When Ethan comes out the next day he's surprised that the dog is still there. A truck drives into the driveway. It's the policeman who searched for the dog at the dog park. Ethan asks the dog to jump into the truck and because it's his beloved boy he does what he is told. Ethan asks the man what will happen and the man tells him a black Lab will be adopted easily. Ethan asks to be notified. The dog is taken to a building full of barking dogs. Three children want to adopt him and call him Coalie. A woman calls Ethan and tells him the good news. Soon the dog hears Ethan's angry voice. He tells the woman he's changed his mind. He wants the dog. When the cage is opened the dog rushes out wagging and licking with joy. When they get home Ethan tries different names on the dog and the dog finally responds to "Buddy". He sleeps on Ethan's bed and follows him everywhere even to the bathroom at night. He smells "the Flip" in the downstairs closet.

Buddy feels a deep sadness in Ethan. Ethan buys him a collar with a name tag "My name is Buddy. I belong to Ethan Montgomery." Ethan and Buddy start taking walks together. One evening they pass Hannah's house and Buddy feels the same sadness he felt in Jakob. Ethan tells Buddy he never thought he would end up all alone. It occurs to Buddy that it isn't enough to have "Found" Ethan. He must "Save" him. The next day Buddy/Bailey finds his way to town by smell and finds the dog park. Late that afternoon Carly comes to the park, smelling of Hannah. A woman on the bench remarks how good Buddy looks now. He follows them home until a car pulls up and a white-haired woman steps out. It's Hannah! Hannah looks at his name tag. "I belong to Ethan Montgomery" Buddy feels he doing some kind of Find and Show. Hannah calls Ethan. When he comes they laugh and awkwardly hug. Hannah tells Ethan her daughter Rachel, Carly's owner, is having a baby . Hannah's husband died 15 years ago and now she's been back two years. Ethan starts to go and then suddenly asks Hannah to come for dinner. They joke about Ethan's cooking. The sadness has lifted.

Now Buddy/Bailey sees Hannah and Carly a lot. The next summer there's a big party and after that Hannah comes to live at the Farm..Hannah and Ethan sit on the porch with Buddy at their feet feeling utter contentment. The only thing he doesn't like is that he isn't allowed to sleep in bed with them. There are now little children who call Ethan Granddaddy which gives him great joy.

One spring day when Hannah is gone Buddy senses something terribly wrong with Ethan. He's glassy-eyed and dizzy and calls for Hannah. Then all of a sudden Ethan calls him Bailey and the dog realizes Ethan is now seeing his true identity as Bailey. He wants to prove it so he goes to the closet and get "the flip". Bailey licks his face and is





distressed when Ethan throws it out the window with great effort. Bailey feels he has to retrieve it for Ethan but doesn't want to leave his side. When he returns Ethan is worse. Bailey puts his head in his lap. Ethan tells him he'll miss his doodle dog and Bailey tenderly licks his face offering him the assurance that as he leaves this life, he is not alone but tended by a dog who loves him more than anything in the world. Bailey has fulfilled his purpose.

## Chapters 30 - 32 Analysis

In Chapters 30 - 32, the dog realizes, though he is in the body of a black Labrador, he is really Bailey, his beloved Ethan's dog. He recognizes Ethan immediately although he is now an old man and is overjoyed, to put it mildly, to be with his beloved Ethan once more.. Bailey's purpose in life was to protect Ethan and give him joy. This purpose is no different in this lifetime.

Bailey has the opportunity to heal Ethan's broken heart the way he saw Jakob's heart healed in his lifetime as Ellie. At first Ethan lets the dog pound policeman take the dog away but he wakes up to the fact that he wants the dog for his own. He has named him "buddy" and buys him a collar with that name on stating he is owned by Ethan Montgomery. Now Bailey can return to the dog park without fear. He returns with the purpose of somehow reuniting Ethan with his first love, Hannah and he is successful. Hannah reads the tag on his collar, calls Ethan and they

rekindle their love and ultimately Hannah moves into the Farm with Ethan and shares her grandchildren with him. This causes him great joy. Just as Jakob had been healed of his sorrow about his first wife's death, Ethan is healed of the sorrow he has felt at being alone for so many years without a wife or family.

At the end of the book, Ethan becomes forgetful and calls Buddy, Bailey. Bailey tries to prove that he is Bailey by fetching "the flip" for Ethan. Finally Ethan does know that it is Bailey and calls him his doodle dog. Bailey is right there by Ethan's side as he dies, comforting him and showing him that his biggest purpose in life is to love Ethan more than anything else in the world and to be by his side to the end. This is the main character's ultimate purpose in life, loving the boy with all his heart.



# Characters

## Toby

This is the main character, a puppy born to a feral mother who lives with her puppies in a den among the roots of a large tree by a creek. Toby has three siblings named Fast, Sister, and Hungry. Fast and Sister play together a lot. Hungry is always hungry and sleepy. Toby tries to catch a frog and that is one of his first adventures. Toby's mother tries to teach her puppies to fear humans and evade cars and trucks, but one day a truck comes and men capture all the dogs except Sister and take them to a white-haired woman, Senora, who loves the puppies. Toby likes Senora. The dogs are put in a large fenced-in yard where there are many dogs. Toby makes friends with a little female puppy named Coco. Both Toby and Coco are taken to an animal hospital and come back with large collars around their necks. They have been neutered. Mother escapes from the yard and Toby follows but he lingers in the front yard and Senora finds him. When he returns a new dog, Spike, is put in the yard. He has been bred to fight and fights with the other dogs in the Yard. Fast and Toby fight him when he attacks Sister and Spike bites Toby's foreleg, injuring it seriously. The authorities discover that Senora has been keeping too many dogs and they come to take them away in cages. They put Spike and an old female dog to sleep and have to put Toby to sleep because he is not adoptable because of his serious injury. As Toby falls asleep from his injection, he realizes how sad Senora is and realizes his purpose in life is to make Senora happy. In his first lifetime as the mutt, Toby, he finds feeling loved by humans and loving them back is the most important thing in his life.

## Senora

She is a white-haired woman who keeps too many dogs in a yard surrounded by a tall wooden fence. She loves dogs but it's illegal to keep as many as she does. Toby loves her immediately and she loves him. Senora has two workmen, Carlos and Bobbie, who also like dogs but warn her she has too many and it's illegal.

## Mother

Toby's mother, a feral dog with four puppies who tries to teach them to fear humans, to forage for food from garbage bags behind houses and to evade cars and trucks. She exhibits intuitive intelligence and is able to escape from the Yard by twisting the metal knob on the gate to the Yard and escaping. Toby learns this from his mother and uses it in a future lifetime. Mother exhibits an intense love and protectiveness toward her puppies, which humans can relate to. She exhibits a tremendous instinct for survival.



## Fast

Fast is Toby's brother who plays with his favorite sibling, Sister, most of the time. He is caught along with Toby and put in the Yard. Later when the vicious dog, Spike, attacks Sister, his sister, he and Toby fight Spike and Toby's foreleg is severely wounded.

## Hungry

Hungry is Toby's sickly brother who never seems to get enough food, sleeps most of the time, and dies young. Mother was protective of him and he licked her mouth to get her to throw up food for him.

## Sister

Sister is Toby's only female sibling who avoids capture by the truck at first but is captured later and put in the Yard. She is Fast's favorite sibling.

## Carlos and Bobby

These people are men who work for Senora and help feed and take care of the dogs.

## Spike

This is a large dog who was bred to fight and picks fights with all the dogs in the Yard. He eventually bites Toby's foreleg so severely Toby has to be put to sleep. Before Spike came, Top Dog was the king of the Yard but Spike was bred to fight and is very vicious.

## Bailey

The main character's second reincarnation is in the form of a Golden Retriever. Bailey comes to live with a family where there is an eight-year-old boy named Ethan. Bailey and Ethan fall in love at first sight and develop an intense, loyal, and eternal love which spans the future lifetimes Bailey experiences as other breeds. He is always remembering his experiences with Ethan and comparing them to the particular lifetime he is experiencing at the time. Bailey learns to "rescue" Ethan when he falls overboard into the pond. This is a foreshadowing of his lifetime as Ellie the "search and rescue" dog. Bailey senses the characters of people and other animals. He senses Todd's evil character and intentions. He uses his powerful sense of smell to uncover what has happened to Marshmallow, what Todd has done. Bailey views Ethan's and Hannah's romance from a dog's perspective. Ethan and Hannah wrestle as he and Marshmallow wrestle and that is a humorous perspective for a reader to observe.



## Ethan

Ethan is an eight-year-old boy when he first appears in the book. The main character, a dog experiencing many lifetimes, who is the narrator of the book, falls in love with Ethan immediately and Ethan loves him too.

Ethan is a typical American boy who is very wholesome. He goes with his family to the "Farm" in the summer and meets Hannah, a girl down the road. They fall in love. Ethan and Bailey are inseparable. They play together and Bailey loves doing tricks for Ethan. He dives in after Ethan when he falls overboard into the pond at the farm. Ethan plays football very well and scouts from Michigan University come to see him. He has an excellent opportunity to get a football scholarship but Todd destroys his chances by setting fire to Ethan's house causing Ethan's leg to be badly burned. Ethan becomes a partial cripple due to Todd's malevolence.

Ethan loses his sweetheart, Hannah, too. He never does marry. Bailey brings Ethan and Hannah together at the end of the during his reincarnation as Buddy , the black Labrador. Right before he dies, Ethan recognizes that Buddy is actually Bailey, his beloved doodle dog.

## Hannah

Hannah is a girl who lives down the road from Ethan's grandparents who live in the country on the Farm. She brings brownies one day and she and Ethan fall in love. Bailey observes that they wrestle together. Hannah appears again in the dog's last reincarnation. She is now an old woman and Bailey, now a black labrador, named Buddy reunites her with Ethan.

## Chelsea

Chelsea is a little girl and a neighbor of Ethan's in town. She loves Bailey and owns a dog, Marshmallow who plays with Bailey.

## Todd

Todd is a boy the same age as Ethan. He moves into the neighborhood with his older brother, Drake, and is younger sister, Linda. At first Ethan played with Todd but he soon realizes that they were very different. Todd likes to set off firecrackers and has a mean streak. This mean streak has a dark side. Todd doesn't want anyone else to be happy or have anything. He also doesn't like animals. He lures Bailey into his room and tries to get him to sniff airplane glue, but Bailey escapes with Linda opens the door. Todd particularly dislikes Ethan. He is extremely envious and Bailey can smell the hatred he feels for Ethan. Todd tries to kill Bailey with poisoned meat and Bailey smells Marshmallow on his pants when Marshmallow is missing. She never does return. The



worst thing he does, though, is setting fire to Ethan's house and causing Ethan to be so badly burned that he loses his football scholarship and becomes a cripple. He also loses Hannah because of this.

## **Ethan's family**

Ethan's family is made up of his mother and father and his grandparents who live on a farm in the country. His parents end up separating.

## **Ellie**

Ellie is a German Shepherd and is the main character in the third reincarnation. Ellie works as a search and rescue dog with Jakob and then with Maya. She exhibits empathy and affection for her trainers but never forgets her deep love for Ethan. She discovers in this lifetime that her purpose is not just to find people but to save them. Ellie finds and rescues a number of different people during this lifetime.

## **Jakob**

Jakob is the first handler that Ellie has as a K9 dog. His wife has died and he carries this deep sorrow in his heart which makes it difficult for him to exhibit affection. Ellie feels empathy for Jakob but doesn't like to be around such sorrow. Jakob is badly wounded during a search and rescue mission and has to retire. He goes back to school to get his law degree, meets a woman, marries her, and they have a little daughter.

## **Maya**

Maya is the second K9 handler that Ellie has. Maya is always worried about her weight and isn't able to run and work as hard as Jakob did. Ellie feels compassion for her.

## **Al**

Al is Maya's neighbor who is in love with her. They finally get married.

## **Bear/Buddy/Bailey**

In his last lifetime, the dog has the names Bear and Buddy and finally is reunited with his beloved Ethan who is now an old man. Ethan recognizes Buddy who is no longer a Golden Retriever but a black labrador as his beloved Bailey right before he dies.



## Objects/Places

### The den

This is a cool, dark place scooped out from under the roots of a large tree by a creek. This is where Mother, a feral dog, and her four puppies live.

### The culvert

This is a a metal pipe under the road near the den where the puppies and their mother hide when humans come in a truck to catch them.

### The Yard

This is a large fenced-in area where Senora keeps many dogs of different sizes and ages. A tall wooden fences surrounds it. Toby, the main character who is a feral puppy is caught and put into the yard along with his brother, Fast , his mother and eventually his sister, Sister. Finally men come and take the dogs away because Senora has too many and it is not legal. There is a strict hierarchy within the Yard. First Top Dog and Rottie are at the top of the hierarchy but then a large, vicious dog named Spike who was bred to fight causes all the other dogs to fear him.

### Ethan's house

This is the house where Ethan and his family live and where Bailey comes to live. Todd burns it down by setting fire to it.

### The Farm

This is the place where Ethan's grandparents live in the country. There is a barn and animals and a pond nearby with ducks. Hannah, a girl whom Ethan falls in love with lives down the road. Ethan goes to the Farm in the summer when school's out. In his last reincarnation, the main character the dog, Bailey, now a black lab named Buddy finds the farm again by following the scent of Jasper, the donkey that Ethan's grandpa owned.

### The Flip

This is an object that Ethan makes which is like a combination of a frisbee, a boomerang, and a baseball. Bailey doesn't ;ole it because when Ethan throws it, he



can't catch it. In Bailey's last reincarnation as Buddy, a Black labrador, he digs the flip out of Ethan's closet to prove to him that he is really Bailey, Ethan's doodle dog.

## **El Salvador**

The country where Maya and Ellie are sent as part of a K9 patrol to search and rescue people both dead and alive. Ellie doesn't like finding dead bodies and rescues a woman who is buried deep under the rubble.



# Themes

## Unconditional Love.

Unconditional love is the main theme of the book. The main character who is first Toby, and then becomes Bailey, Ellie and lastly Buddy during his reincarnations, exhibits unconditional love, especially for the boy, Ethan, whom he meets in his second lifetime as a Golden Retriever. Bailey loves Ethan at first sight and Ethan loves Bailey. They show their love for one another over and over. The love remains throughout the rest of the book during his remaining reincarnations as other breeds. He always yearns for Ethan and misses him. In Bailey's final reincarnation as a black labrador, the two are reunited and recognize one another. Ethan is now an old man and Bailey reunites him with his first love, Hannah. At the end of the book, Bailey is at Ethan's side as he dies, comforting and tending to him and showing him how much he is loved. Ethan tells Bailey how much he will miss his doodle dog but Bailey senses he is at peace, knowing that his beloved dog who loves him more than anything in the world is by his side. Bailey now realizes that he is going to have to comfort Hannah. He realizes he will soon feel an aching grief, but he is at peace knowing he has fulfilled his purpose in life to remain true to his love for the boy to the end.

## A Purpose in Life.

The Title of the book is "A Dog's Purpose" and this theme runs throughout the book. The main character, a dog going through 4 reincarnations, is continually seeking his purpose in life. He questions his purpose continually and everything that happens to this main character is focused on this search for a purpose for being alive. In his first lifetime as Toby, a mutt, he is taught by his mother his purpose is to avoid humans. However, he finds he is drawn to humans and learns to love Senora, Carlos, and Bobby. He reflects the love they have for him. In his second lifetime, he discovers that his purpose is to love Ethan and make him happy. In his third lifetime, the dog is a female who discovers her purpose is to find, rescue and save people. She also feels her purpose is to support and comfort her two handlers, Jakob and Maya. In the fourth reincarnation of the main character as a black labrador, he seems at first not to have a purpose. However, he finds his joy and purpose once more when he reunites Hannah and Ethan and is reunited with his beloved Ethan, now an old man. Ethan recognizes his beloved Bailey right before he dies.

## Loyalty

The theme of loyalty runs throughout the book. The dog feels loyalty to any person who is kind to it. In his first lifetime, he feels loyalty to Senora. In his second lifetime, he feels tremendous loyalty to Ethan. He tries to please him every way he can and attack Todd with a primal rage when Todd endangers Ethan by setting fire to Ethan's house. In his





third lifetime as a female German Shepherd, she feels loyalty to her two handlers and obeys them unquestioningly.

## **Overcoming Fear As The Enemy.**

The theme of overcoming fear and realizing it is the enemy is a recurring theme throughout the book. The main character, the dog going through four reincarnations, is constantly confronted by fearful situations which he must face and overcome. The dog goes through many veterinarian surgeries to neuter him and is brave through all of them. As Bailey in his second lifetime, he is fearless when his boy is threatened and leaps on Todd with primal rage. Ellie is fearless when she jumps on the murderer after he shoots Jakob. Ellie displays incredible fearlessness when she digs through the rubble dripping with acid to find the woman buried alive in El Salvador. She also dives into a sewer drain after a little boy named Geoffrey and is propelled by the current through dark underground watery tunnels. She does not let any fear deter her from finally getting hold of the boy's hood and then holding her head above water till they are both rescued by men when they are washed out into a raging river.

# Style

## Point of View

The main point of view of the book is the first person. The book is narrated by a dog who goes through 4 different lifetimes and the reader sees everything from the dog's point of view. Even the feelings and emotions of the humans in the book are seen and felt from the dog's point of view. However, some of the dialogue between the human characters brings out more of how they feel and think as humans and develops the plot in more detail.

The dog in all of his incarnations has a point of view determined by what he sees, smells, senses, hears, and feels. His point of view is shaped by the loyalty and love he feels for the humans he comes in contact with. The dog can sense the feelings of humans and that determines to a great extent what his point of view is.

The point of view that the humans have in the book are determined by how they interact with the dog in his various lifetimes.

The reader's point of view is molded by the points of view of the dog and the humans that he encounters. The reader can almost experience what it is like to be a dog since the narration of the dog is so vivid portrayed through the senses and feelings of a dog.

## Setting

The novel takes place in different places during the different lifetimes of the dog. The setting for the first lifetime of the dog is at first the den under a large tree on a river bank where the feral mother hides her pups. Then when they are caught by Senora's workmen, they are put in the Yard, an area enclosed by a tall wooden fence, where many dogs of different sizes, breeds, and temperaments live. The only other place the dog experiences in this lifetime is the animal hospital where in a cool room he is neutered and then put to sleep when his foreleg is so badly injured and he is not able to be adopted.

The setting in the second reincarnation of the dog as Ellie, the K9 rescue dog, is on the West Coast near the ocean. Jakob's home reminds Ellie of Ethan's apartment but is far away from the smell of the trees and bushes and doesn't smell wet like Grandpa's Farm. The air is filled with the fragrance of lush flowers and shrubbery but there is the smell of cars in the air too. She later is taken to what she sees as a big pond but which turns out to be the ocean and she tracks a little girl on the beach. In this lifetime, Ellie and Maya also travel down to El Salvador on a search and rescue mission. As Ellie, she also lives with Maya her second handler in a house with three cats where there is a neighbor, Al, who is in love with Maya.



In the third reincarnation, the dog is born as a purebred black Labrador in the kennel of a Colonel who wants top dollar for his puppies. He is sold to a low life man, named Derek who give the puppy to his girlfriend, Wendi. Wendi lives where dogs are not allowed and she doesn't take good care of the puppy, whom she names Bear. When Wendi is evicted, she and Bear go to live with Liss, Wendi's mother, who lives with a mean boyfriend, Victor, who doesn't like Bear and ties him in the yard, doesn't clean up the excrement of the dog. A policeman comes and leaves a notice for Victor. Victor puts Bear in the trunk of his car, drives him away, and releases him without a collar along the road.

Bear is thirsty and smells water. He follow the scent of water down to a river and then sudden realizes he has been there before. It is where he and Ethan were when they were lost. He had been Bailey in that lifetime. After finding the town and a dog with Hannah's scent in her fur, Bear finally tracks his beloved boy, Ethan, back to the Farm by following the scent of Jasper, Grandpa's donkey. So finally Bear, who was Bailey, Ethan's Golden Retriever in a former lifetime, ends up at the Farm.

## Language and Meaning

The language of the novel is simple and easy to understand since the novel is narrated by a dog, who describes things that he views from a very elemental standpoint using his senses like smell, sight, hearing, and the feelings he can sense about the humans in the book. The vocabulary is not very challenging but it fits the book. The sentences tend to be the right length for easy understanding and the book moves along at a good pace because it hold the reader's interest. A number of flashbacks appear throughout the book. They link the different lifetimes to one another. There is a lot of foreshadowing in the book. The main character experiences the same things multiple times throughout the book. A good example of this is when he is put on a metal table in a cool room and wakes up with a plastic cone-shaped collar.

## Structure

The book has 319 pages and thirty-two chapters, all of which are about the same length. Each chapter leads to the next, building upon what happened in the previous one.

The plot is fairly simple but is broken into four parts representing the four reincarnations of a dog, the humans who interact with him and the adventures that he has. In each part, the dog searches for his purpose in life and comes up with different conclusions in each reincarnation, but all the purposes the main character in each reincarnation discovers are based on love and serving humans, either as a loving companion, a search and rescue dog, or a loyal friend who wants only the safety and joy of his master.



## Quotes

"When we were running with Mother, I learned to fear humans. I learned to scavenge for food, I learned how to placate Fast so he would be in what for him, was a good mood." (Chapter 4, p. 43).

"In the Yard I adjusted quickly to life in the pack, I learned to love Senora and Carlos and Bobby, and just when my play with Coco was starting to assume a different, more complex character we were taken to visit the nice lady in a cool room and the urgency I'd been feeling went completely away." (Chapter 4, p. 43).

"Once outside the fence, I was upset to see Senora crying, struggling against Carlos and Bobby. Her sadness came off her and washed into me, and I pulled against the noose, wanting to comfort her." (Chapter 4, p. 51).

"I was seized with an inexplicable question, a question of purpose. This didn't seem like the sort of thing a dog should think about, but I found myself returning to the issue often, usually as I was just dozing off for an irresistible nap. Why was I a puppy again? Why did I harbor a nagging feeling that as a dog there was something I was supposed to do?" (Chapter 5, p. 56-57).

"One of my favorite things to do was to learn new tricks, as the boy called them, which consisted of him speaking to me in encouraging tones and then feeding me treats." (Chapter 7, p. 75).

"We burst up into the air. 'Bailey!' the boy shouted, laughing, 'Are you trying to save me, boy'" (Chapter 9, p. 95).

"Over the course of the next year or two, I noticed that when the children all played together Todd was often excluded. When he came around, an uneasiness went through the children, a mood change that Marshmallow and I could sense as easily as if one of them had screamed." (Chapter 10, p. 103).

"Ethan and Hannah came to a halt at the bottom of the hill, tumbling out of their sled. They lay on top of each other, giggling. Todd stood and watched them. Something in Todd came to the surface, then. Not anger, exactly, but something worse, something dark, an emotion I'd never felt from anyone before. I felt it in the way he stared at Ethan and Hannah, his face very still." (Chapter 14, p. 143).

"Todd didn't see me; he was watching the fire. And I never barked, I never growled, I just ran up that sidewalk in silent fury. I leaped for him as if I had been taking down men my whole life, and surging through me was a sense of power, as if I were leading a pack." (Chapter 14, p. 149).

"I'd learned to identify our cars by the sound of their engines as they pulled into the parking lot, so when Mom's car arrived I jumped to my feet." (Chapter 16, p.159).



"Everyone was infuriatingly calm, seemingly oblivious to the catastrophic change that had struck the household. I became so frantic I even dug into the boy's closet and brought out the flip, running down and tossing it into Grandma's lap." (Chapter 17, p. 171).

"The boy buried his face in my neck and sobbed. It took everything I had to lift my head up and lick him, to let him know it was all right. I wasn't afraid." (Chapter 17, p. 178).

"My eyes were open and my vision was starting to sharpen well enough for me to see my mother's dark brown face the day I understood, with a jolt, that I was a puppy again." (Chapter 18, p. 180).

"Now that I remembered everything that had come before, I was truly puzzled. I'd felt so complete, there just didn't seem to be any reason for me to go on — how could I possibly have a more important mission than loving the boy?" (Chapter 18, p. 182).

"A few weeks later I was in the yard, showing one of my brothers who was boss, when I stopped and squatted and all at once I realized I was a female!" (Chapter 18, p. 182).

"Then I remembered Ethan and the stupid flip, how happy it made him when I brought the thing back to him. I turned around and trotted back to the man, dropping the ball at his feet and sitting for him to throw it again." (Chapter 18, p. 184).

"There was, though, a difference between obeying commands and having a purpose, a reason for being. I thought my purpose was to be with Ethan and that I'd fulfilled that purpose being by his side as he grew up. If that was the case, why was I now Ellie? Could a dog have more than one purpose?" (Chapter 18, p. 185).

"The training helped me keep my mind off Ethan. At night, though, I often fell asleep thinking of the boy. I thought of his hands in my fur, the smell of him as he slept, his laugh and his voice. Wherever he was, whatever he was doing, I hoped he was happy. I knew I would never see him again." (Chapter 18, p. 186).

"Jakob said, 'Time to see the vet,' and took me for a car ride to a place that was very familiar, a cool room with bright lights and a metal table. I fell asleep and predictably, was wearing a stupid cone-shaped collar when I awoke back home." (Chapter 18, p. 188).

"It was I reflected, as close as Jakob could come to the unrestrained adoration I once felt from Ethan, and from it I realized that today I truly understood my purpose as Ellie: not just to Find people but to save them." (Chapter 19, p. 195).

"I felt strong fear from Jakob as we descended down into the canyon, so strong I kept returning to him for reassurance. Then the girl's scent pulled me forward and I galloped ahead, racing toward a collection of small buildings." (Chapter 20, p. 203).

"What came over me then was exactly the same primal impulse that had seized me when I attacked Todd on the night of the fire." (Chapter 20, p. 206).



"And where was Jakob? I remembered the scent of his blood, and it made me whine in anguish." (Chapter 20, p. 208).

"Stella, Tinkerbelle, and Emmet. Why on earth would a woman want three cats? Tinkerbelle was hiding under the bed, thinking I couldn't smell her there. Emmet followed me into the kitchen and looked curiously into the bowl Maya filled with food, then lifted his head and walked away as if he didn't care that I was eating and he was not. Stella watched me unwinkingly from her perch on the chair." (Chapter 21, p. 212).

"I had a clear purpose — to Find, Show, and save people. I was a good dog. Both Maya and Jakob were focused on work, and that meant neither one of them could ever love me with the utter abandon of Ethan." (Chapter 22, p. 220).

"I alerted again, agitated. We couldn't leave! This one was alive." (Chapter 22, p. 229).

"What I had learned from my first mother had led me to Ethan, and what I had learned from Ethan had enabled me to dive into those black waters and find Geoffrey. Along the way, Jakob had taught me to Find and Show and I had helped save many people." (Chapter 25, p. 255).

"If, despite all the time and changes, the girl Hannah was here, then maybe the boy was here, too. And if Ethan was still here, I would track him. I would Find Ethan." (Chapter 28, p. 283).

"The children who came to visit called him Granddaddy, and each one made his heart soar when they did so. Hannah called him "my love" and darling as well as just plain Ethan." (Chapter 32, p. 313).

"All I could do now was offer him the comfort, the assurance that as he left this life he was not alone but rather tended by the dog who loved him more than anything in the world." (Chapter 32, p. 318).



## Topics for Discussion

Discuss the love that dogs have for their owners and the love humans have for their pets. How does it differ from the love humans have for one another? How does the main character, a dog, exhibit his/her love? Do you believe that a dog is a man's best friend? Discuss this. Have you ever felt this overpowering love for an animal and felt it reciprocated?

Discuss reincarnation. Do you believe reincarnation is possible. Did the book change your opinion about reincarnation? Which far-eastern religion believes in reincarnation? Discuss this.

Discuss the evil that the characters, Todd and the kidnapper, exhibited. They both appeared to be totally evil. Do you think anyone is totally evil? Todd was only eight years old but he did so many evil and cruel things. Do you think he was born evil? His brother and sister didn't seem to be that way. Can you come up with any explanation of Todd's behavior except that he was inherently bad and wished ill to everyone? Do you think the the author of the book included these characters to help develop the plot of the book and the other characters? Have you ever met a person you felt was totally evil? Is there any merit in evil at all , perhaps as opposite of good as dark is the opposite of light? Is evil necessary in order to prove that good is the right way to be?

Discuss fear. Why is overcoming fear so important? What were some of the instances where the main character overcame fear in order to save and help humans. Do you think animals can overcome fear more easily than humans because of their strong primal feelings? Is it true that fear is the main enemy of all progress and happiness? Do you agree with the famous quote: "There is nothing to fear but fear itself?"

Discuss how dogs are different from humans. The book is narrated by a dog. How is the book different from a book narrated by a human? What advantages do dogs have over humans when it comes to judging situations, the character of humans, the places where they live, the smells, the feelings and the senses? Are humans greatly handicapped when it comes to the basic ability to sense things and experience life fully? What advantages do humans have? Is it education or being able to speak? Discuss this.

Discuss how dogs are different from cats. There are often "dog people" and "cat people." The main character, a dog, sees cats as snide, haughty, sneaky and a bit stupid. He comments on the fact that the cats are always watching him/her silently. Have you experience this behavior in the cats you have known? Have you ever walked our dog around your neighborhood and observed cats lurking in the shadows, under bushes and on top of garbage cans watching you and especially your dog in silence? Do you think dogs are more loving than cats? Or do you feel that a purring cat on your lap is the most comforting and lovely experience? Have you read the book by T.S. Eliot , "Old Possums' Book of Practical Cats."? Do you think cats are more mysterious and more independent than dogs? Do you prefer dogs or cats or do you love them equally?



What do you think is the best way to treat an animal? Should one be a strict disciplinarian? Should one shower love on animals and spoil them? What should be done to people who abuse and mistreat animals? Do you believe in "no kill" shelters? Would you rather adopt a dog from a pound or buy one from a breeder or a pet shop? Do you think dogs should be taught tricks or have jobs like K9 or seeing-eye dogs? Do you think that dogs appreciate learning these jobs and does it make them happier?