

# Sookie

By Debbie Nicholson

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Published by keDEB publishers

Picton, Marlborough, New Zealand

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## **Preface and Disclaimer**

After Sookie passed away, one of my reviewers of *Mal Takes A Walk With Sookie* remarked that he would have liked to have known more about Sookie and his actual life experiences.

I thought about that and thought – “Why not?” Sookie had a lot to offer and if I could give our family more memories of him, why not?

Dogs are creatures all of their own and I thought it might be a good way to show readers a sample of just how many different types of

dogs that do exist.

Our camp is one of a very few on the Tourist map of New Zealand who will accept pets into the camp grounds. Consequently, all year round, there are numerous dogs and cats that come here to camp sometimes overnight, sometimes for a few weeks at a time. If there are dog or cat shows happening in the South Island, it is more often than not that their owners will choose our camp grounds to stay either after they disembark or before they board the inter-island

ferries that connect the North and the South Islands of New Zealand.

I have had many a conversation with pet owners as they have parked next to us to enjoy the facilities with their beloved animals.

Many owners have relished the idea that their dog might be a chapter in one of my books, therefore the idea my reviewer threw my way one day has come to fruition with Book One in a series of two books that I have written for the Sookie series.

During my extensive research I have come across some very



interesting human interest stories to accompany the dog's stories just to make things more interesting. All of them have featured as various friends of Sookie that live inside the neighbour houses in his street and in the block around which he walks every day with various members of his family.

While many of the pictures are my own and all content is my own, please contact me should there be a discretion that you would like me to fix and we can fix it quickly.

[Any quotes from actual text on pages I wanted to include in my](#)

references are in the colour blue so that you can distinguish between my thoughts and the thoughts of others who actually provided me with the insight as to what I wanted to include in my own book.

Watch out for more from me in other areas.

As usual, my email address for correspondence, criticisms or just some love from you is

[stories4debbie@gmail.com](mailto:stories4debbie@gmail.com).

Kind regards

Debbie Nicholson

22nd January 2018



Debbie Nicholson



Sookie



Sookie  
on the deck

## Reviews

That was an awesome read some very sad and touching moments but, in the end, it's always happy moments. Thanks for letting me read your lovely books 😁

Courtney Hill  
Picton, New Zealand  
26 Feb 2018.

\* \* \* \* \*

Hi Debbie,

I have read the chapters provided for reviewing!


A chord struck within me as all of the chapters shared one prominent word...Love!

The compassion and empathy between humans and animals clearly illustrated!!!

The stories surfaced my own wonderful experiences with my own animals, cats and dogs, who have now passed. Glistening memories for all my family members, in which we absolutely adore.

Debbie, you managed to remind me of the compassion between humans and animals, not to be underestimated, nor forgotten.

Absolutely heart-warming, and

a  gem! Well done:)

Manu Aupaau  
Picton, New Zealand  
28 Feb 2018.

\* \* \* \* \*

# Chapter One : Bringing Sookie Home



Our Mam had often thought about owning a puppy, but the idea just used to go in and out of her head at whim. They already owned a cat named Mottel, so another pet would be just another unnecessary burden on the already tightly stretched budget.

However, after a family tussle she decided that perhaps owning a puppy might be good for healing, so all of the family trotted down to the Animal Rescue Centre to see what kind of puppies were waiting to be saved.

Each of them looked up and down the cages surveying this one and



that and of course they wanted them all as they were all so adorable.

Our Mam in her wisdom had beforehand decided that there had to be some rules put into place before decisions were made and of course once that decision had been made – the puppy could be brought home to live with them.

The need had been investigated and met – the children were in need of healing from a traumatic situation – it was the lifestyle that was next on the list to be considered.

What kind of puppy did they want?

Did they want a puppy that would

grow into a little dog or did they want a puppy that would eventually grow into a BIG dog?

What colour puppy should they get?

What kind of personality should they look for?

Would it be an outside dog or an inside dog?

Did they want a mixed breed, or did they want something nearer to pure?

What a lot of questions had to be answered so they all went home again to think about what to do with a new puppy and to answer

the questions Our Mam had put to the family to be considered.

They all knew that bringing home a puppy would certainly change their lives forever!

Our family live in the suburbs of South Auckland and once they all were actively thinking about a puppy, they noticed that all around them in the neighbourhood there were all sorts of dogs of one kind or another – which - they had not really noticed before.

Having Mottel had made them aware of other cats in the houses next door and up and down the

street, however, the dog perspective had not really been on the horizon up until then.

They all sat in the sitting room and each told their story of a puppy that they had seen and what they had liked about it. Being a fairly big sized family, there were several stories and of course Our Mam knew that only one puppy would be chosen.

Each of the children thought theirs should be the one as they were cute, and adorable and looking lonely and they reached out to them as they stood in front of their cages – it

was quite sad to know of some of the stories of why some of the puppies were now in those cages at the rescue shelter. They all needed love and who better to give it to a special puppy but many children who needed extra comfort right then.

Our Mam had seen a special puppy herself, so she decided in her heart that her own story had to be the convincing one. Although once everyone had had their say, her mind was in a topsy-turvy thinking about their ultimate choice.

Okay. They had to pick a name for their special animal – which of course meant that they had to decide which one was best, go back and visit him or her and then decide on an appropriate name. Names usually go on appearances anyway.

Size, cuteness, what it would be like around the children and in or out of the house – all these things had to be discussed as well.

Who would be in charge of feeding it and how often and of course what?

What about the costs involved every year – don't puppies have to

be treated with shots and licences etc? That part would have to be left up to Our Mam as she was the expert on these matters.

They all trooped back to the Animal Rescue Centre to take another look at all the puppies. This time they all stood in front of each cage talking about the puppy inside. The choice was VERY hard to make.

Eventually though, everyone was brave and a special puppy that looked so forlorn and like a baby weighing just under two pounds, was picked.

It was a he and immediately his name was Sookie because he seemed to be that type of personality – always hanging his head in sadness, a soft type of feeling about him, a shy wee baby who needed a lot of affection.

The puppy didn't cost too much – everyone has to pay an adoption fee and of course this money is used to help rescue another animal in need, so Our Mam didn't mind too much, and the cost did come into her own personal reckoning.

- He'd been taken to the VET and had had all sorts of check-



ups.

He'd had his temperament checked so we knew he wasn't a crazy animal that would rip up the furniture or the children once grown.

He had been de-sexed and therefore would not want to wander to become a parent with some other dog down the road.

He had been vaccinated and de-wormed.

He had been treated for fleas, therefore we knew that once we had him home that we wouldn't be subjected to flea bites ourselves and he wouldn't be constantly scratching.

He had been micro-chipped in case we lost him for some reason.

And the biggie – he had been registered with our local council office.

We had been assured that he wouldn't grow into too big a dog –

although no one was very sure what type of dog he was – maybe a Labrador but not a pure one.

“Hmmm”, thought Our Mam as she put him carefully into the car – “wonder what the mix is?” and made a mental note to look on the internet about Labradors. “We have a big house and a big yard,” therefore she couldn’t see a problem in keeping him under control in their future.

It wasn’t long before Sookie was a bit bigger than we had originally intended though. And being a puppy, he was always filled with energy and jumping up on

furniture and all over us when we came home from school and work.

Anyway, that is how Sookie came to be part of our family.

## Chapter Two : Sookie



He had a lot of character and was very good-natured, so it was not hard to love him and certainly very difficult to be angry with him for long. Once scolded and sent outside into the weather, he had this way of leaning on the glass door and looking so sad and lonely out there – how could you leave such a wee baby out for very long?

Naturally all of us had to make sure he had enough exercise. And when it came to taking him for a wee walk up and down our street, at the beginning everyone argued as to whose turn it was. He loved the

attention – he certainly enjoyed being the topic of conversation and he seemed to know he was being talked about. Anyway, once that lead got rattled then he knew that he would be going walkies any moment and he would have to be good if he wanted to go again tomorrow.

In the beginning his little legs were far too short to go any sort of distance – therefore up and down the incline of our street was really enough. As he grew then we took him around more than once depending on him.

Each year passed and of course his size altered considerably, therefore it was not long before we were taking him around the actual bigger block that our street was part of.

That was fun for all of us. In fact, that is how he got attached to the Mal series as the Grandparents used to take over the walking duties on their visits. And of course, you all know by now that our Grandmother is the author of many books of which Sookie is now the star of two of them.

Food wise wasn't too bad. He loved his dog sausage every day



and when Granddad visited, he always got a warm real human sausage as a snack a couple of times a day as well. He wasn't that wonderfully keen on his biscuits, however, sometimes that was all that was available, so they had to do. His water intake was gigantic – always drinking and of course always having to let it out the other end as well. But then that is what a big yard is for and it was our Ezra's job to pick up all of his droppings especially before the lawn mower man came around.

Sookie had a good life all in all. He was happy. The family was happy.

Yes, we all enjoyed his presence in our family.

When Grandmother was visiting she used to think that he got a lot of special treatment – he liked to lie at the foot of the bed of the Grandchildren – never mind which one it was – whoever had the mind to leave their door open at night would be the first choice and then sometimes through the night he would swap bedrooms so as not to spoil one particular child.

The sofa was not safe – he liked to watch TV with the family, therefore, the sofa was definitely not safe,

even though he was constantly growled about getting on the furniture – what does a dog know anyway? A growling in a certain way could also be an affectionate conversation as far as he was concerned – so maybe the humans got it wrong much of the time.

Persistence always gets you what you want – Sookie had learned that early in his life – just like a child wanting an ice cream and being constantly told no, and eventually being given it to just shut him up.

Yes, that was our Sookie. Just the same!

We even got him a raincoat for when it was wet outside and it was time for a walk. Our Natalie and Our Meison got matching raincoats at one stage – therefore everyone was dressed the same and Grandmother brought them all stickers to go on their backs so that the passing motorists would see them – a warning that:

“This is a Doggie walk with Family so please keep your car speed and distance under control!”

So, to suggest that Sookie thought like a human would be an understatement!

Besides the sofa, he had his own special bed. He even had a kennel outside which was rather large – but he didn't like that much. He would much rather be inside with the humans than outside in the weather and all of those scary sounds that go on throughout the night.

One time in a hurricane which our country has been subjected to lately, the kennel lost its lid – the roaring wind just lifted it off its nailing - yes, that's right – just tore the nails off with its viciousness and threw the roof over the hedge and into the neighbour's wall. Thank goodness

it missed their window. Needless to say, that retrieval of the roof once the weather had righted itself was a simple matter of picking it up and quickly taking it back to our place without anyone knowing that it had happened.

## Chapter Three : Sookie And Mottel



Sookie and Mottel got on like a house on fire from the day he arrived into Our Family. We were wondering how Mottel would take it, however, unbeknown to us, our Mottel was already not well inside herself, therefore it wasn't too long after Sookie came to us, that Mottel was no longer a part of our family. Sookie seemed to know this instinctively and nurtured Mottel through her illness right up to the moment she left for Cat Heaven.

Our Family will never know what was wrong with Mottel – she was so beside herself at times – she



would go outside supposedly to do her elimination business, only to come inside to actually carry the deed out – of course, that had Our Mam up in arms much of the time as it is not a pleasant task to be constantly cleaning up after a cat.

No one knows why Mottel started doing things the wrong way around, but near the end this is what her behaviour had come to, therefore once she was gone, it was a huge sigh of relief from Our Mam to know that all of the extra work Mottel had suddenly become was no longer, sad though her passing was to all of Our Family.

They were very good friends, with Mottel constantly following Sookie around in his escapades throughout all of the rooms he had the run of especially if Our Family were out for a few hours. I can just imagine the pranks they both got up to with no “sheriffs” around can’t you?

Sookie would carefully lick Mottel on her head very gently like an ice-cream that needed to be tasted carefully before it melted.

Sookie had her own baby to look after – and that was a very sick Mottel which Our Family soon found out about after her passing.

All the neighbours liked our Sookie. They watched as he grew, and everyone knew him by name. He seemed to know where each child lived and when Our Ezra or Our Natalie was outside playing in the street, the children were always happy to include Sookie in their play as he leaped and bounded among them all and got into games as much as he could.

Lucky for us, he knew everyone, therefore, when he barked, we knew instantly that the person or thing that had disturbed his peace did not belong in our street.

One time Our Family got home from an emergency visit to the hospital only to find that all of the business gym gear, TVs, computer equipment and sound equipment throughout the entire house had been stolen. We could only guess at the fight that Sookie might have put up, but the intruders had been very careful to bring along food offerings, therefore they had known from the start that there was a dog on the premises.

Obviously, the house had been cased.

None of the neighbours had noticed anything untoward as Sookie had been put outside in the back yard by the burglars therefore his barking had not really attracted any attention because by then he was busy eating the peace offering and no doubt enjoying it.

Fortunately for Our Family, they had not ill-treated him thank goodness.

Furniture can be replaced and is insured, but your precious pet is not usually so. Our Family is pleased they were humane, even

though we were all quite infuriated at the imposition the loss of precious work and technical equipment presented to us at the time.

As to Sookie, he passed away before our eyes when Our Family knew he was sick but at the same time, didn't realise how sick he was. The week before the Grandparents had been visiting and Grandmother noticed through his sluggishness that something was wrong with him. He didn't seem keen to join in anything preferring just to lie down and watch from under the chair.

Granddad offered that he thought Sookie had eaten something the day before when he was walking him around the block, but he was too quick, and he hadn't seen what it was that he had eaten.

With that information under her belt, Grandmother with her vast knowledge of herbs produced an envelope of Koromiko which is a herb we Maori people use for stomach ailments. She quickly chopped one up into his real human sausage that Granddad was about to feed him and made sure that he ate the entire sausage with the medicine tucked safely away

inside it. (Just like she used to watch the children eat what she gave them to make them better as well!)

After a few minutes, Sookie was up and running around, twisting on his tail and nudging us all in the legs as if to say,

“I’m feeling miles better, let’s all do something!”

Grandmother was delighted as she always is when the patient responds in a positive way. So a couple of days came and went



without any further problems regarding Sookie's health.

After the Grandparents left the next day, we all got back to normal and everyone was happy.

The day after that though, Sookie resumed his lying down position under the long Family stool and just watched the goings on with Our Family. School and work were the priorities of the day and so Sookie was left pretty much to himself for most of the day. Our Dad was home with his Gym clients so there was always

someone at home until work and school had finished.

Sookie seemed to steadily get more inactive as the week passed. Then one night he came up to each of us - nuzzled our legs, went over to his blanket, lay down on it and went to Dog Heaven – just like that. Our Natalie tried her best to get him to get up, carefully placing a blanket over him thinking he might be cold.

However, he had gone.

How do you explain to a Special Needs young person that their

favourite person in all the world would no longer be there to play with? And then of course we had to let the Grandparents know too because Granddad had a special place in his heart for Our Sookie.

He was very heavy, and we had to ring Our Dad to come home and lift him to a more comfortable place for us all so that we could spend the night lying beside our favourite Dog Person just like in our Marae setting.

And the next day, members of Our Dad's Gym who had faithfully

taken Sookie for walks around the block as part of their gym routine came and helped Our Dad dig the grave under one of our trees in the garden. Unbeknown to us, the ground was rock hard as our house is built on a clay foundation.

What should have taken maybe a couple of hours took them all nine hours to complete their task. And then, as a Family we held a special service and laid beautiful things over the grave once he had been carefully placed on his blanket, limed and then covered over with the soil.

Our Natalie has been filled with grief ever since. I think we all have felt in our hearts the special place that Sookie had with each of us.

When Grandmother visits, she always looks after dark and before sunrise to see the twinkling solar lights that hang from the tree over his grave. They are so beautiful: constantly flashing and looking like they are dancing with the alternate currents running through each of the strands. It's a very pretty site to help Our Family remember their beautiful pet Sookie.



**Sookie's final resting place.**

## Chapter Four : Protection At It's Best



One time Sookie got out and had a grand old time with his friends in the street. They had all gotten out together and with their humans away at work or school all day nobody seemed to mind what they were up to.

They all had their collars on and they were very careful to mind their Ps and Qs when crossing the roads and walking in convoy down the street foot paths chit chatting to each other when they managed to pair up during their walk.

I told you the dogs all think they are humans!



Anyway, they went a bit further than they normally did when they were excited about getting out for a few hours.

And it so happened that after a long while all six dogs realised that they had come to a very busy intersection. They had previously seen their humans pushing buttons and seemed to watch a green sign in front of them.

Sookie knew what to do – he had done this heaps of times before, however, his friends were a little confused and just started to follow one of their friends out onto the busy street sending caution to the wind.

Naturally such reckless behaviour usually ends up in a catastrophe and sure enough the lead dog from Number 26 was knocked down by a passing vehicle travelling well beyond the speed limit that Sookie knew was posted on a sign he'd seen as they passed a few seconds ago. The others responded in panic of course and quickly ran across to the other side, however, Sookie was still at the lights waiting patiently for the vehicles to stop.

He didn't know what to do, therefore, he went inside himself to ask what should he do? And a small voice from Dog Heaven told him to go quietly and sit beside his

friend and they would manoeuvre the traffic to go around him until help from the humans came.

Once his friends on the other side saw their friend Sookie sitting by Number 26, they bravely crossed back and sat in a circle around their friend who was not moving at all.

They tried to nuzzle their friend into action, but unbeknown to them, he had already died.

Witnesses said the five dogs didn't seem to understand that their friend had been killed and were standing around its body for protection against the cars coming dangerously close.

Within a few seconds of them forming a protective circle around their friend, two cars stopped one on either side of the marked lanes. This action caused other cars to halt in their positions as well. Just at the same time, the green light had turned red and so approaching traffic were on the ready for the slowdown in one of the lanes while the other car that had stopped on the other side had a passenger who quietly stepped out behind their car and signalled the traffic to stop.

While they were doing this, the two drivers quietly got out of their cars, gently picked the injured dog up in their arms and moved it to the grassy verge on the side of the

footpath. One then got out his cell phone, and after examining the collar of their Number 26 friend, rang someone. He then moved his car into a carpark that was nearby and waited for help to arrive from the police and the local animal rescue team. The other driver and his passenger had a few quiet words with the driver who had volunteered to stay. They all shook hands, and with the handshake was a transfer of cash. Then the pair of them quickly got into their car and sped away.

Once the Animal Rescue Team arrived and explanations given, all the dogs were rounded up. They all had their identification collars,

so each of their owners were duly notified and each dog was returned to their homes.

The Animal Rescue Team were astounded at the loyalty shown to their friend and the story was handed around about what they had done to make sure their friend was no longer in a position of danger, and yet faced that very same danger themselves.

I believe in someone that looks after each of us while we walk the pathways of the Earth. And I believe that the same person knows and looks after our pets as well.

# Chapter Five : Sookie & The Cat

## Next Door



Sookie started acting really strangely one day. We had a new neighbour move in across the street and as we excitedly watched the movers taking things in and bringing empty boxes back out, we noticed a cat cage among the deliveries.

“Another cat,” Our Mam mused, “another one to get into my garden and upset all the new seedlings with their little paws – it’s bad enough I have a problem with the ones we already have here in our street. Never to mind – a pet means that the owners will be caring and loving so they probably won’t be loud or a nuisance. We will have to



go over and make ourselves known as soon as they are settled in.”

Our Mam was good like that. She always had a great armful of stuff to welcome new neighbours into the neighbourhood – it had been a long time since anyone had left us, and that house was sure starting to look lonely after being shut up all that time. Houses are built to be lived in and loved by someone – so with those thoughts in her mind, she hummed her way around the kitchen preparing some scones and some little cup cakes with the help of Our Natalie who just loves cooking.

After a few days she noticed Sookie sitting at the front window staring out very intently. Our Mam looked out to see what he was looking at and couldn't see anything or anybody out on the street worthy of such attention – he wasn't barking or moving around madly therefore she just dismissed it and left him to it.

The next day he did the same and soon it wasn't too long before he was in that same position nearly all day when he wasn't required by Our Family to be joining in our activities.

And the next day.

And the next.

Anyway, after this had been going on for a few weeks, Our Mam decided to get to the bottom of all this attention that window was getting where Sookie was concerned.

One day when he was looking longingly into the distance, she quietly crept around to the back of Sookie and looked directly out the window in his line of vision.

And what did she see?

She saw a very majestic cat looking back at them both from the window opposite theirs.

So that is what is wrong with our Sookie. He is in love with the new neighbour's cat!

I told you Sookie thinks he's a human!

And he was reacting to a life situation just as one of her daughters would probably behave if in the same situation.

He was in love.

Sookie being the super sensitive dog that he has always been around us all had developed feelings for the new cat in the neighbourhood.

And here Our Mam had put it down to anything that was passing their front door – even if it was just leaves scurrying in the wind!

“How silly of me,” she thought.

So she left him to it – to dream and to long for as much as he liked.

But then a funny thing happened.

After several weeks of this going on, he suddenly started to act strange in another way. He got very depressed and lost interest in anything that we all used to find quite fun together. He wasn't interested in going for a walk

preferring to just lie around and mope. He had gone off his food in a big way. He started to lose weight in a very obvious way.

We all got quite worried. What had gotten into him? Our Mam was so worried she took him down to the Vets to see if they could shed any light on things - maybe his health was threatened?

Naturally the Vet asked a lot of questions to which Our Mam could only guess at the answers. It seemed that nothing she could come up with could point to an obvious solution as to what was wrong with our normally healthy and fun-loving Sookie.

One day Our Mam passed the window that Sookie had previously spent so much time looking out at the cat that had captured his heart, when to her amazement along the window sill inside the house opposite was a very attractive row of pot plants all in bloom and looking very magnificent.

She looked everywhere for the cat that used to sit there and then realised that there was probably no longer any room for the cat to sit and look out any more..

“Could this be the problem?” Our Mam thought to herself, “have they pushed the cat off the window sill with all of those beautiful plants?”

She mulled over these thoughts for several days and every now and again Sookie would saunter up to the window, look out, put his head down and then go back to lie in his favourite place on the sofa quietly wasting away in body and soul.

“Yes, I think it is the problem!” Our Mam thought. “Well I have to fix this if I can.”



So over she went to the writing desk and sat down to write a wee note to the neighbours.

“They will probably think I’m a crank, however, I have to try if only for the health of our Sookie because without food or even water, he is not going to be with us for much longer.”

In her note she explained what she had observed over the past several months and appealed to them to know if their cat had changed in any way over the past few weeks since they had put up those pot plants.

The neighbours weren't home when she got to their door, so she carefully slipped the pink envelope under the door and returned home to see what would happen next.

After the owners returned from work that night – she waited anxiously by the window in the dark to see what their reaction would be.

Nothing.

Then the next day - the same – it appeared - nothing. But, on this second day something greeted her with great amusement at some point in the morning – under her

own door came an envelope, this time a bright yellow one. The owners explained in their note that their cat was on the brink of death – it had not eaten or drunk for many, many days and they were about to have it put down. Upon getting Our Mam's note, they had started to think about what had gone on since they had moved into the street.

They had taken their cat to the Vet and he could not see anything wrong with their cat, however, it had become so very thin and sick-looking after once having been so full of health and vitality.

They had read her note again and looked at the pot plants and started to wonder if perhaps they had inadvertently been the cause of her ill-health.

“Look out the window today and keep an eye on the two animals to see what comes to pass please. And we will come over when we come home from work to see what we can do to rectify this situation if nothing has changed.”

Well, Our Mam was beside herself. She quickly went to the window and the pot plants were nowhere to be seen. She could see a nice blue

cushion instead and, on that cushion, lay the cat.

She ran to get Sookie and guided him over to the window. He managed to lift his head to look over the window sill and without any word of a lie, his ears went up and his tongue flashed around his gums and he gave a little bound on his feet.

And then he settled on his hind paws to just watch for a while.

He left for a few minutes and went to his food bowl and Our Mam was so relieved to see him eat something on his own and to drink

something after each member of the Family had had to force feed him for so long.

Then he returned to the window and watched some more.

It took several days for the cat to regain enough strength that she could sit up again and watch back.

However, it did happen.

And that is how Our Mam got to really get to know the neighbours next door!

## Chapter Six: Camille



One day Number 48 brought home a special white dog called Camille. Of course, Sookie always welcomed the new animals into the street and when he saw Camille, he knew that he would have a special friend for life where she was concerned.

She was cute – perhaps just over 2 feet tall and a good healthy weight. Her breed as he came to find out a bit later on when Our Mam was sharing another batch of her favourite scones and home-made jam with the new neighbours was that of the Great Pyrenees. Talk about bossy though – Camille was very bossy. She just knew what she



wanted and when. So, our Sookie found himself giving in to her for much of their friendship.

She wasn't scared of anything and yet was so loving and kind – all of the other dogs in the street soon palled up to her because Sookie had led the way.

Camille knew everything about everybody. She hadn't been in the neighbourhood too long before she knew exactly everything about each animal who lived up each side of the footpath on both sides of the road.

Sookie questioned Our Mam one day – “Why is Camille so bossy?”

So, Our Mam looked her breed up on the internet and there it all was – she was designed that way.

Our Mam did her best to explain to Sookie in Sookie/Our Mam language that her main goal in life was to protect anything and everything over which she had charge – e.g. her ancestors protected sheep and goats in a big way. She originally came from France and so once she landed in New Zealand, she lived up to her upbringing which was that she had

been brought into the country by a very special Family who had trained her to be a great Family Dog. Anything or anybody that came into her personal space was a good reason that she would take upon her the responsibility of guardian to that particular thing or person. Therefore, it was to her benefit to quickly come to know those with whom she became associated. She was a very well-educated dog and had an immeasurable memory – I would think she could be compared to Our Skye who has a photographic memory. She would always

remember things that we would probably forget very quickly.

“So you see, Sookie,” Our Mam said, “she was designed that way, just as you are who you are.”

Explaining all of that to Sookie helped him love her even more.

After a few years, the neighbours at Number 48 where Camille lived had a visit from a red sports car. Sookie had noticed the car because of its colour – all of the Family he lived with had red cars but not quite as flash as this one.

Soon afterwards a For Sale sign went up on the lawn.

Sookie once again questioned Our Mam about this unusual event.

Our Mam took it upon herself to keep up with the neighbours herself especially if they seemed vulnerable and the people at Number 48 were of a great age and one of them had had a serious fall a while before and was having a hard time recovering, therefore it had been arranged for her to be in a special place for the elderly. The one left at home had heartbreakingly told Our Mam all

about it one afternoon when she had popped in for a visit to see how he was getting along without his wife.

“It’s very sad my dear,” he said.

“Poor Agatha is having such a problem learning to walk again and I am afraid we have been advised by our family that we both need to go into special care so that we can be in a safer environment. After all, we are both very nearly 80 now. We have managed on our own up until now, but we have to realise that we have to face the truth for ourselves.”

Our Mam was very sympathetic as she herself has parents who are fast approaching that same age bracket.

And so it was that Camille was given to a new home far away from our street and Sookie was very sad to lose his friend as were his other animal friends. She had been such a great buddy – always looking out for their needs. Always making sure they were up with the play about stuff that was happening in our neighbourhood.

I don't think she knew she was moving because she never let on to Sookie about it – she was there one

day and gone the next. Our Mam found out that she had been taken further down the country to a lovely home with children who would be very kind to her. The people at Number 48 were very sad themselves to give up their pet, but where they were going had rules about not accepting any animals at all, therefore it was for the best that she was given to someone else to be taken care of.

And so Sookie and the others accepted her fate and got on with their lives. It wasn't very long before there were new neighbours



at Number 48, only this time they didn't arrive with any pets in tow.

A long time after the new people at Number 48 had moved in, Sookie happened to be going for walk with Our Natalie and her Granddad when he saw Camille limping up to the front door of her old house.

“Camille, what are you doing here?” Sookie asked.

“I didn't like it where I was Sookie. I had to come home. Where are my humans?”

“Your humans moved away a long time ago. They couldn't look after

themselves anymore and so they had to go live somewhere else.”

“Oh no, I would have looked after them Sookie, you know I would have,” Camille burst into tears and lay herself down on the front door mat.

Our Natalie seemed to understand what was being said – she is so intelligent you know, she might not be able to tell us or make us understand sometimes, but I know in her head she knows way more things than the other humans give her credit for.

She quickly turned to Granddad and said, “I must go get Our Mam, can you wait for me here Granddad?”

“Of course, my angel, away you go. Sookie and I will wait here – he seems to be talking to that dog over there anyway so maybe it is time for a break.”

Our Natalie quickly left and soon returned with Our Mam. Our Mam took one look at Camille and instantly knew what might have happened. These dogs have such great memories and their loyalty is second to none – “I bet she watched

out the window the day she was taken away and committed to memory every mile!”

Our Mam carefully picked up Camille. “The new people at Number 48 are away at work anyway so they needn’t know what’s happening,” she thought to herself in her wise kind of way. Our Natalie decided to go home with Our Mam so Sookie continued his walk with Granddad.

Once they were home again, the discovered that Our Mam, Our Natalie and the car were missing.

Sookie had his snack and lay down on his own bed on the floor to wait to see what would happen next. Granddad was happy to have him at his feet stroking him every now and again until he nodded off for a nap himself.

After what seemed like a long while, Our Mam and Our Natalie arrived back home without Camille. Our Mam explained in her Sookie/Our Mam language that she had taken Camille down to the Animal Rescue Shelter and left her in the hands of the kind people there.

Sookie was relieved. There was no one to look after Camille in our street anymore. So he knew that she would need special care, especially because she was limping so badly. Our Mam said that she must have walked back home from that very long distance away because her new home was way down country. Sookie was very proud of his friend – fancy that – that she would come home after all this time and even remember how to get back here. But how sad to come home to no one who knew her except us of course.

Our Mam kept in touch with the Animal Rescue Centre for a long while after that. They had found her a new home where she would only live inside and there was a big high fence around the property so that it would be very difficult to get out. Our Mam had felt that with Sookie explaining to her about her humans, that Camille was probably savvy enough to understand that trying to come home would not be in her best interests anymore, therefore her new home would have to be where she would have to stay. Her new humans were a very loving couple and one of them

worked at home as an Author,  
therefore she would have no  
shortage of attention.

Sookie was content to know the end  
of this story for his friend Camille  
and soon sent the notice out to all of  
their friends in the street.



## Chapter Seven : Geoff and Sammy



Our Natalie has a friend just like her who lives at Number 15. I say her friend is just like her, but he has problems with his physical body which is different to what Our Natalie has plus this friend is much older than her.

How did they get to meet?

Our Natalie goes to a special school designed for people who are a little bit different than the norm. To Sookie, everyone is normal – he doesn't ever worry about what they look like or act like. He just looks into their hearts with his X-ray vision to check if this person is a loving and caring, fun person. And

if they are, then they immediately become Sookie's friend. I guess Our Natalie is a bit like that too as she has superhuman powers that go beyond what we who are described as "normal" people possess.

Geoff from Number 15 moved into our neighbourhood a while ago and he catches the same morning and afternoon taxi that Our Natalie takes to school. We are very lucky at our school, because we have the privilege of having transport requirements met by our local taxi company that I mentioned in our other book *Mal Takes A Walk With Sookie*.

One day the school principal approached Geoff's Mum who is very much like Our Mam and asked her if she would be willing to look after a small Jack Daniels dog that she had found always hanging around the playground. Try as she might over the past few days, her inquiries as to who might own this little dog had not been very helpful, therefore she was at a loss as to what to do with it. Every morning she would come to work early and there was this little Jack Daniels waiting to be let in when the gates were opened.

No one she knew seemed to recognise him. He just appeared out of nowhere and when the school

closed at night, he went off on his own merry way only to return in the morning.

Geoff's Mum felt a little put out as she already felt overburdened with her own charges, time and budget so she reluctantly agreed telling the Principal – "I can only keep him overnight." "Fine," came the reply. "I will enquire at the Animal Rescue Centre in the morning to see if they will come and get him."

Geoff's Mum who always did the right thing just like Our Mam does, stopped at the \$2 shop on the way home and got him a few toys to play with, a couple of bowls for some food and water and some

food at the grocery shop next door. She had three children at home. The eldest (20 years old) was Geoff, Jamie (10 years old) and Buck (8 years old). Geoff had been born with Down syndrome plus a terribly weak heart and problem kidneys. As if that wasn't enough, during his short lifetime he had developed other unforeseeable problems with his mental and physical health – all of which sometimes took their toll on her own health. Her husband had passed away a couple of years ago and life wasn't really that easy for our Geoff's Mum.

She was struggling to become a recognised writer and income from

her published books, though spasmodic, helped her financially. Thankfully, that income through royalty payments was starting to come in quite steadily in more recent times to help their family survive. Geoff's medical bills were rather large – she needed all the help she could get when it came to anything involving Geoff.

Geoff was a likeable fellow. Sookie liked him. He especially liked him because he was a good friend to Our Natalie. They were always helping each other with their homework and liked to sit and talk about world things during their times in the sun and at the park. Sometimes Geoff was able to come

outside and walk a little way up the street with us when Our Natalie and I were returning from our jaunt around the block. Geoff's Mum would watch for us coming and get him ready by the door so that he could be pushed by Our Natalie up to our door and back to his door at the end of our walk.

The next day came and the Principal said that she hadn't been able to get through to the Animal Rescue Centre, did she mind if Geoff's Mum would keep him a little while longer. Well, what could Geoff's Mum say? She had taken Sammy home which they had started to call him on that very first day, telling the boys very firmly



that they were not to fall in love with the newcomer as he was only there overnight while the Principal arranged for the Animal Rescue Centre to come take him. She had only agreed to have him overnight so that he could be taken care of until the Rescue people came to the school the next day.

She emphasised this story many times during the afternoon.

And evening.

And again the next morning.

And then again that night when she came home with him again.

As she did for the next couple of days.

On the fifth day she was told by the Principal that the Animal Rescue Centre would be over the next day as they had already located another home to take him in who could foster him for a longer period of time.

Then a strange thing happened.

She had popped down to the grocery store – “Boys seem to constantly be eating,” she mused to herself as she walked up and down the grocery aisles – and into her basket she also added bits and pieces for their little friend Sammy.

Upon arriving home, Sammy was all in a frenzy – barking non-stop at the door, jumping up and seeming to be very urgent about something. As soon as she had managed to push the door open, Sammy turned on his heels and ran quickly into Geoff's room.

Worriedly, Geoff's Mum dropped her packages on the floor and quickly followed Sammy only to find Geoff collapsed on the floor in a fit of seizure. How long he had been there, it was difficult to tell but she knew that she must immediately press Geoff's emergency button that he always wore around his neck.

As soon as she reached Geoff,  
Sammy stopped his craziness and  
just lay down quietly watching.  
The ambulance came tearing up our  
street and we all watched with  
interest from our own yards and  
gates to know what was happening  
at Number 15. Our Natalie and  
Our Mam rushed over to see what  
they could do to help.

As it happened Geoff's specialist  
doctor was on board the ambulance.  
It was a coincidence that when the  
call came in, he was at the station  
lecturing the attendants about how  
important their quick responses  
were to patients when called out to  
attend them. He had recognised  
the address the phone operator had

relayed to the ambulance staff and quickly jumped into the response vehicle as Geoff had been on his mind all of that day.

Afterwards Our Mam came home with the full story to relate to us all. Had the Neurologist not been in the ambulance Geoff would have been lost to us all as he was on the point of choking in his own blood.

Sammy had truly saved the day.

Geoff's Mum didn't want to ever be without him ever again. Geoff had formed a friendship with Sammy that she had not noticed. However, she put two and two together pretty fast on that ambulance ride to the

hospital and came to the realisation that perhaps they were made for each other. That perhaps Sammy had been sent to them for a reason.

Once home from the hospital, Geoff's Mum decided they would tell the Principal that they would keep him after all. He had become such a famous and necessary part of their family in just that incident earlier in the afternoon.

And so started a long relationship for Geoff and Sammy who had become great friends from the moment he had stepped into the house a few days before. Well, Sookie and Our Natalie say it was a long relationship because in their

world, everything seems such a long time. However, a few days later, there came a knock on the door and it was one of the Carers from the Animal Rescue Centre.

“We have found the owner of the Jack Daniels that you are looking after, and he wants to come and pick him up in the weekend – would that be alright?”

All three boys as well as Geoff’s Mum burst into tears. He had saved Geoff’s life and out tumbled the story to the Carer who was also overcome with emotion by their story.

She said that she would check with the owner as to what would be the best thing to do from that point.

The owner of course was very fond of his little Jack Daniels and had missed him terribly since he had disappeared the week before. It had been an out-of-character event in their lives for their little Tommy to up and go like that a fortnight earlier. Previous to that, Tommy had been such a loyal wee fellow and seemed always happy around them. Until suddenly one day he had jumped the fence and ran for his life. Such odd behaviour for the wee dog that they had known for a few years.



The Carer rang Geoff's Mum and relayed the message, that they still wanted their little dog back and he would come up to the house with their permission on Saturday morning at 10am so long as that was convenient.

Geoff's Mum and all three boys wept after she got off the phone and she had shared the latest news with them.

It was Friday night and they only had a few hours left with Sammy before he would have to leave them.

"I know," Geoff's Mum said. "Let's have a party."

So they had a party. Our Natalie, Our Mam and I were invited, and we had a grand old time at Number 15 that evening. We were all sad when it was time to come home after dark.

The next morning promptly at 10am there was a knock at the door.

Geoff was waiting on his special bike with Sammy propped up in his special basket in the front. Geoff's Mum was beside him with Jamie and Buck following up the rear. All had tears in their eyes as they bent to give Sammy their final hugs at which point the owner asked Geoff's Mum to come outside to talk for a little while on her own. So

Geoff's Mum summoned up her courage and closed the door behind her.

The owner had heard the full story from the Neurologist who just happened to be his good friend. It also turned out that he was a film producer and at that time was looking for a human-interest story and would the family be prepared to be part of his vision for his film? He would also like some input from her as the Neurologist friend had told him he had read some of her work and that she was GOOD!

He had already decided on his way to the house that he would let the family keep his little Tommy as

their need was far more than he could ever offer. And with that he pushed an envelope into her hand as a deposit for work to be done on the script he had in mind. Geoff's Mum was overwhelmed with excitement. She couldn't believe her ears. Here was her break in life.

Geoff's need had become the priority – all the spin offs came through that need.

And so that was how Sammy became a very important part of our street.

## Chapter Eight : Barking



I had to laugh when I heard someone ask Our Mam one day,

“How is it that you can talk to Sookie? How do you make him understand you? He obviously does – what is your secret?”

“Well,” Our Mam thought about it a bit and replied, “I don’t know – we have always been able to understand each other. Ever since he was a puppy – he talked to me from his cage when I first saw him, and I knew that he would be the one the children would choose to be our puppy in our home.”

They shrugged their shoulders –  
“Makes sense!”

I, however, do not have the same relationship with Sookie as she does, as Our Natalie does, or even as Granddad does. I know they talk to each other because I have watched their interactions a lot. And that is why I wrote the book *Mal Takes A Walk With Sookie* – because I could feel the relationship between Mal and Sookie – perhaps it is the same way that I can understand Mal when he talks to me.

For instance, the other day – Mal started to whine. He never complains, however, this particular day he started to whine and every day he just got louder and louder. In fact, there was even a rattle in there sometimes. Now, cars do make noises – I know that. However, at 4 o’clock in the morning when you are trying to sneak away to the gym before everyone in the camp wakes up – the whining and the rattling were just downright embarrassing. I asked Granddad about it. He didn’t know but he would “look into it!”



“Typical male response!” is all I could think at the time.

In the meantime – every day poor Mal whined more and more.

After a lot of my own whining to Granddad, we were given permission to take ourselves off to the mechanic – and sure enough he had something wrong with his muffler!

Later that day he came home from there very happy and pleased with himself – and from that point on, we no longer had a whine or a moan or a rattle!

We just resumed our carefree life of sailing along the road in peace again thinking our thoughts out loud to each other as to what the next adventure was going to be all about.

So, with that in mind - why do you think dogs bark?

We as their humans talk to each other. Mal talks to me and no doubt talks to other cars as well. So it makes sense that dogs talk to each other just as we do. We are all given a voice when we get to pack our bags from the Talent Shelves before we leave where we came

from to be here on the Earth in the first place. Therefore, some way of being heard and understood needs to be one of the first Talents we should choose to pack into our bags. And the rest is all up to you depending as to what your aspirations in life might be.

Do we as humans talk to just be a nuisance or to pester someone? Sometimes, you might say – but then that depends on the situation we are in at the time.

- we talk to say nice things
- we talk to growl
- we talk to offend

- we talk to defend
- we talk to debate
- we talk to ... and I am sure you can come up with plenty of reasons why we talk

Well animals are the same.

They communicate in just the same way we do.

- Dogs bark to say nice things
- Dogs bark to growl
- Dogs bark to offend
- Dogs bark to defend
- Dogs bark to debate
- Dogs bark to etc etc etc.

The sooner you get to understand this then the more you will accept it. Despite what you think, dogs are not there just to be our fetch and carry. They are sent to us to be our companions, our helping hands, to keep us company, to save us like how Sammy saved Geoff and even to protect us just like Camille did to her close community.

With our knowledge of Sookie since he came to us, I don't ever remember when he seemed disrespectful to any of us. I don't ever remember him going out of his way to just annoy any of us – his barks meant something from the

start even though they started out as cute little whimpers.

It is funny to go back in time to his puppy stage – he was certainly very cute, and Our Mam was the first to really get to know him. He certainly loved her that's for sure. He was able to let her know instantly how he was feeling – whether he was sad or happy, whether he was hungry or just frustrated, whether he wanted to play or to just watch – his way of communicating was something special to each member of the family – he had a voice for each of

us.

There were even times when he just had to tell you something – something that he wanted to share, and he would get all quivery and excited as he yapped away telling us about what had happened.

He knew when someone in the house was sick. Oh yes, he knew when our Skye needed her kidney operation. He would just come and smother her with doggie hugs and kisses to try to keep the pain away both before and after the operation that she was forced to have because

one of her kidneys was in such poor health that it had to be removed.  
Poor Skye.

He knew when our Dad's father was in the house for a respite weekend when he was having his cancer explorations and surgery.

He knew when our Dad had to suddenly up and leave and go to his bedside to be there with him when he passed through the veil.

He knew when our cousin committed suicide and had to be brought back to our house in order for the family to come to say their



last goodbyes. That was very sad as she was so very young and had children of her own that she left without any good reason. Sookie mourned for her for many days afterwards. I guess, like all of us, dogs also try to come to grips with the reality of the situation and handle it the best way they can.

You must have noticed during your lifetime when bringing up your own children as to what stages they pass through.

They start out so small and defenceless, unable to do anything for themselves – very, very

dependent on their mothers.

Puppies are the same. They need their colostrum at the very beginning of life, their regular milk, their bottoms cleaned, their bodies washed and dried.

What is so very different with this list when you think of a human baby?

As they become aware of their surroundings in this strange new dry world, which in the case of a human baby is only a few seconds but in the case of a new puppy is a few minutes - they start to think,

“Hang on, someone who needs me is out there just waiting for me to arrive!”

So they go searching with their small voices. “Are you there? Do you hear me? I need something...”

Perhaps not the sound of a human child whimpering but the sound of a yap or a bark.

Naturally we respond.

As we humans grow, so do our voices. And as a child in desperate need of something – it can become very loud.

So when that person asked Our Mam about how did she understand Sookie so well, then I had to giggle as all of these thoughts rushed into my mind – memories of when the children and now great Grandchildren were small and then as they grew....

Sookie has been the same to all of us. As a puppy, he whimpered that he was lonely, that he was hungry, that he missed you when you were gone, that he loved you, that he needed to go outside quickly, that he hurt –

And so have each of the human babies in their turn done the same thing.

As time has gone by, they have got louder.

Now I know that not all dogs can be as good as we have been treated by our Sookie. Some dogs do have attitudes – just as some humans have attitudes. You wait till the teenage years if you haven't already gone through those times!

There are schools that will teach dogs manners. This period of time in your lives needs a lot of patience. And sometimes a refresher course

may just be the cure for a dog that perhaps is a non-stop barker. If you have taken the time to really get to know your dog, then you will know what is needed right now.

Perhaps if you check his surroundings and you can see his head never falters from being in one position accompanied by the non-stop bark – maybe you might spot what is the cause of his frustration right then.

Has something he loves rolled out of his reach and isn't able to be retrieved by him – for instance – has his favourite toy rolled under

the piano? Or perhaps out of the gate which restricts his movements to retrieve it himself?

Constant barking for no obvious apparent reason means something is up with him. Just like when a baby can't tell you something directly yet because he doesn't know how to write or say the words – that crying is incessant until you work it out in your mind what is bothering him or her.

If you are away from home a lot and the neighbours complain to you that your dog seems to be always barking – see to his comfort

first before you think of a punishment or an outside influence on his lifestyle. Dogs get lonely too you know. Just like those dogs in Chapter five of Mal Takes A Walk With Sookie – many of them do not have a lot of human contact – they are not truly content with their lives – so they resort to barking – whether you are a ready danger to them or not. They can and do need to be taught what is a danger, what is something that should be barked at and what is something that hardly requires any of this extra attention.



The secret is in getting to know your doggie friend. REALLY get to know them.

*And let me mention here, that inflicting pain on any animal is totally unnecessary. Would you do that to your human baby or child if they constantly cried and couldn't let you know exactly what is wrong with them- where it hurts, etc? Of course you wouldn't. So please let me warn you away from collars that are designed to give an electric shock to an animal for any reason. Abuse and animal cruelty are not warranted at any time.*

*And I will leave it at that.*

Recently I have had the misfortune to experience a rebellious teenager who is only 15 and yet acts as though she should be treated as if she was 35 although that thought only exists in her mind and not at all in mine.

Back chatting is not very nice from anyone of any age. I don't like it myself and I certainly don't like hearing it from someone else. Being always on the defensive is not a good thing. Boundaries need to be set, and rules adhered to.

Otherwise, the well-known danger of stepping off the right path is far too easy a solution.

When you have a dog that you KNOW is arguing with you – then now is the time to step in and let them know who is in charge. All dogs have a pack instinct. And they have inner knowledge of who is the boss. There can't be more than one. Remember that!

Defiance has to be reigned in immediately. Otherwise both of your lives are going to just get more miserable. When you really KNOW your dog, do your best to find out

what is bothering him. Always show love and never resort to a whipping situation. Obedience schools and refresher courses are always available in your immediate neighbourhood – it wouldn't take too much to find out the timetables and whereabouts of these classes that are designed for YOU BOTH.

Do check if he has a thorn in his paw. Do check if there is something lodged in his throat. Do check all areas of his body to make sure nothing untoward is happening – there are no bones sticking out or there are no signs of any rashes, cuts or bruises.

It is not usual for a normally compliant pet to suddenly become the rogue from a nightmare.

So, do your homework.

Get to love your dog.

Get to really know him.

Then when something is out of character, you will be able to deal with it far quicker.

## Chapter Nine : Pippa the Shi Tzu Toy Poodle



One day Our Mam decided she would go out for lunch with her really good friend from Number 56. On the way they chatted about what they each needed to do in the way of shopping and Number 56 contributed to the conversation by saying that a trip to the pet store to replace her Black Moor Goldfish had to be the last thing she would do on her shopping list so as not to stress the new fish out by being too long in the car.

“Oh?” said Our Mam. “What happened to it?”

Apparently, her friend had woken up one morning a couple of days before to find it in the bottom of her fish tank.

“Of course, I was all that day cleaning out the tank and making sure the other three were okay and then yesterday I just sat there watching them all day to make sure nothing untoward had caught up with them in the way of disease or infection etc.”

Our Mam was very interested to know about this goldfish as the only goldfish she had known was



when she was young and her mother had inadvertently killed it when she put a borer bomb through the house and had forgotten to cover the fish bowl to protect it for the several hours the house had to be shut up. Our Mam had come home from school and there floated her beautiful goldfish on the top of the water. She remembered crying for days over that tragic episode in her life and of course as a result, Our Mam had never wanted to know about goldfish after that.

This, therefore was an introduction to an old memory that still hurt.

Our Mam decided that she would go with her friend on that last shopping list item to learn more about her friend's favourite pets.

Her friend didn't have a clue exactly what time this tragedy had happened as when she had turned off the lights before bed, all of the fish seemed to be quite healthy and playful. However, upon thinking back, one of them, which she now suspects could have been the dead one, was floating at the top of the tank. Naturally she thought nothing of it, as they all seemed to do that now and again.

They certainly were not underfed, and the tank was certainly far larger than they needed, and she was generally very careful when she changed the water.

“I wonder if fish get stressed?” she mused to Our Mam. They both laughed at this suggestion and carried on their chit chat as they headed off to town.

By the time they had been to some of the shops they each had on their lists and then met up at their favourite restaurant for lunch, the fate of the Black Moor had passed from their minds. But of course,

who would have thought? Terakihi was on the menu today which quickly brought back the topic of their earlier conversation so as soon as lunch was over, they quickly finished their remaining business and headed for the pet shop. It was a gigantic pet store – one of those franchise ones and by all accounts was a very successful branch in their town.

What a grand aquarium there was just in the front of the store next to the map of the layout of the shop. They stopped to survey the map and realised there would be several other smaller ones at the back and

along one of the sides. So off they went to explore the shop and sure enough in the smaller tanks were the precious Guppies, all the different brightly coloured Betta fishes, and the abundant Tetras. Our Mam stopped to admire the Glo Fish alongside their Neon Tetra cousins because they were so beautiful.

Today it seemed difficult to easily negotiate their way down the left-hand side of the shops' aisle as it was so packed with others looking for fish for their own aquarium needs. Afterwards they found out

that there was a gigantic several-dollars-off-price sale for some of the species swimming their way around the aquariums.

Thankfully, part of the way down the aisle they came to a break between shelving. Gladly taking up the offer as it was such a hot afternoon and the air conditioning didn't seem to be doing it's 100% best at the time, Our Mam and Number 56 took a few steps out of the crowd to their right. They didn't get very far though as they were suddenly stopped by a pen with a couple of puppies excitedly watching the comings and goings

of all the humans.

Number 56 looked down and there was this sweetest face – a teddy bear face with real live legs and a cute little tongue that kept licking her leg through the bars of the pen - a little button nose with dark button eyes set back behind a fan of whiteish fur. Her hanging ears flopped down over her wide cheeks which were themselves partially hidden between two magnificent bows of fur protruding from each side of her nose. And the tail – that white fluffy tail: a magnificently manicured ponytail that looked like

it had just been combed into one similar to one of those My Little Pony toys – the scene before her was to just live for.

And Number 56 just fell for that wee puppy hook line and sinker.

\$2000 later, Our Mam carried the accessories to the car while Number 56 carried the precious crate that housed her new pet Pippa.

Our Mam was so excited when she got home a while later. She rushed in the door filled with the news of the new puppy down at Number 56. “Would we like to go meet her?”



“Would we!” woofed Sookie. Our Natalie scooped up her books putting them in a so-so neat pile in the corner of the sofa and away she went to get Sookie’s pink lead. As we were the only ones at home at the time, we were the privileged three who got to go view our new neighbour. And she was everything Our Mam described to us as we trotted down the pathway toward Number 56 letterbox.

Pippa was very happy to see us, although she eyed Sookie up and down for a few moments before actually approaching with a curious wiggle of her nose. A little yap here

and a return woof from Sookie and after a few moments, they seemed to have made their acquaintance. Next it was Our Natalie's turn and of course Pippa just licked and licked her – Our Natalie has a way with any animal and she was ecstatic at the attention she received from the newcomer.

Our Mam beamed.

Number 56 beamed.

Sookie grinned as only Sookie can grin.

And Pippa pranced around showing off her tail and doing a little dance with the occasional bow.

Sookie observed that she had the softest, longish hair without it being drapey. She only weighed a very few pounds as she hadn't yet achieved her teenage years. She was so great with Our Natalie and that's really all that Sookie cared about because to him Our Natalie was his charge and if you didn't like Our Natalie, then you were not considered a friend of Sookie's either.

And it was quite apparent that Pippa recognised their relationship as whatever she did to show off to Our Natalie, she made sure that she would cock her head Sookie's way just to see if he was also looking.

Everyone laughed at the performance and as soon as Mr Number 56 arrived home from work, Mrs Number 56 eagerly related the entire story to him punctuated by laughter and tears of joy.

"I went out to get a goldfish and I came home with Pippa," she said looking into his eyes. Of course,

whatever his wife did was no matter to him, as he adored her in every way, therefore in that moment it didn't matter that there were still only 3 Black Moor fish in the aquarium and massive amounts of new pet furniture in the living room – she was happy and so that made him happy. In fact, everyone in the room was happy – and that tiny little ball of fluff – that little dog being the source of all the laughter brought joy to him as well.

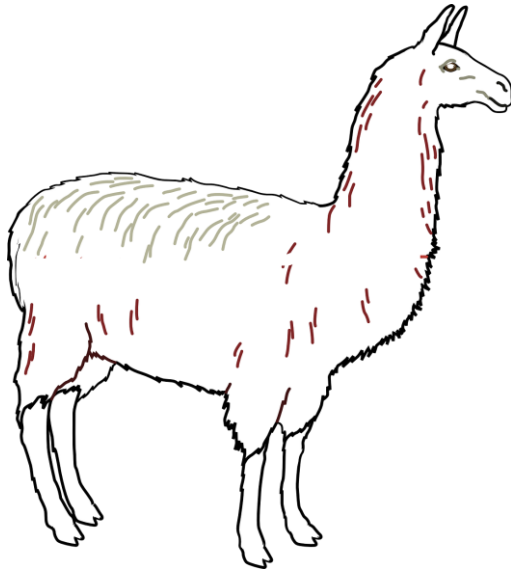
Sometimes Our Mam, Our Natalie and Number 56 with her Pippa went walking together. Sookie being the larger dog of course could

go further than Pippa at the beginning, so they often ended up at the park in the next street and during school hours the two dogs would be let off their leads and allowed to play together on the grass. Pippa loved those moments. All movement to her gave her an excuse to keep the weight off her wee body. Therefore, she would tease Sookie and run around behind him, so he would have to twist and turn to keep up with her. You could just imagine them laughing with each other by their small talk that the humans could hear every now and then.

Pippa soon became adept in all things – she is a very intelligent, well-meaning individual. She didn't mind strangers so long as they kept their distance until she was given the time she needed to size them up before approaching. Most people got on with her within a few short minutes of their first meeting. And of course, that tail was always a talking point – something she soon caught on was the centre of attention.

And so that is how Pippa became another wonderful friend for Sookie to love and admire.

## Chapter Ten : The Llamas





At the back of Number 42 we have a neighbour on the adjoining street that has Llamas and sheep grazing together in the paddock.

We saw them come in via helicopter one day, I presume direct from some quarantine place.

In her younger days, Our Mam saw several Llamas being taken off a ship and flown by helicopter to Somes Island which used to be the quarantine island in the Wellington Harbour. They were up nearly all night watching the constant

transfer of these unusual animals. Back in those days, it was not a very usual sight to see Llamas as it is today on our farmlets along the sides of the road as we travel up and down each island.

Granddad got the scoop on the story during his work hours one day and rushed home for tea to tell Our Mam and her siblings that he was taking us all out to see something different that night.

That night they ate quickly and bundled themselves into warm clothes and settled into the sleek maroon Jaguar. Granddad raced

along the roads in this mighty power machine of which he was so fond, and it didn't seem very long before they were at the wharf watching huge crates being unloaded. They were told that inside the crates were the first lot of Llamas being brought into the country for farming but that they would have to spend several weeks on the quarantine island first before being allowed to be picked up by their owners to start an entirely new industry in our country.

Our Mam was so excited when she saw the helicopter arriving at the back of Number 42 having been

pre-warned by the neighbours that the Llamas would be arriving that day. It brought back so many memories of that first time they came to New Zealand all those years ago. As with all things important for us to know, Our Mam related her memories to us which made it all the more special an event for us to witness the arrival of our own particular Llamas into our neighbourhood.

According to Our Mam, Some Island had originally been used to quarantine humans when the Ship

called the Wellington came into Wellington Harbour displaying the yellow quarantine flag which in those days represented danger to the local communities.

It's long reputation of serving as an Animal Quarantine Station began over one hundred years ago in the early 1880's. Many different types of animals such as llamas, dogs, red deer, cattle and sheep were sent there for a period of some weeks, while health authorities explored what was and wasn't allowed onto the main islands of our country. Many of the buildings were purpose-built for just such a service.

In 1997, Somes Island became known as Matiu Somes Island once ownership by Taranaki Whanui was confirmed following their treaty settlement with the Government. Today, Matiu Somes Island is managed by the Department of Conservation and is governed by a Kaitiaki Board. Around the world it is classed as a Scientific Reserve which is predator-free.

As with much of our land here in our country, legends have long been the substance of our makeup, and Matiu is no different in that it takes its name from one of the

daughters of Kupe who was the very first person to have discovered Aotearoa which is the Maori name for New Zealand more than a thousand years ago.

European settlement gave the island its name as Somes Island in 1839 named for Joseph Somes, the Deputy Governor and well-known for his financing business acumen. In 1997, however, the island was renamed to take into account both factions of our Maori and European histories. In August 1995 the Department of Conservation took over the care of the island.

There were two Maori Pa on the island, one being a Pa of refuge, the other serving more as a Pa for defence. The first light for any harbour in the new country was built in 1866, a lighthouse that safely navigated ships around the southwestern end. Wartime had its impact on the island as well, and in 1942 the summit became home to heavy anti-aircraft guns although they were never actually used in any war activities. It's height was 17 metres higher than what can be seen today through the top being levelled flat to more easily accommodate these heavy guns.



During this time, it was found necessary to protect ships coming and going in the harbour from the effects of magnetic mines, therefore a degaussing station was built for this very purpose.

Today you will see the Little Blue Penguin, Shag, the Spotted Skink, the Silver Gull, Kakariki, Wetas, Gheko, Fluttering Shearwaters and other rare and endangered species of both animals as well as plant life forms.. Rats and mice have been successful eradicated.

It is now a popular tourist attraction along with a being a great

resource for educational purposes for our local schools.

Our Mam can provide for us many pastimes of history when she gets going. It has been very interesting learning about where the Llamas came to when they first were introduced to New Zealand.

And now whenever we look over the back fence which is often in a day, we can enjoy these strange animals that are bred here in our country now for their wool which is very soft as well as lanolin-free.

I think the sheep love them as well!

## **Chapter Eleven : The Chocolate Labrador/ Cross Called Jandal**



Our Jandal is a special friend to me. She is of my breed – we are both Labrador Cross dogs – only she is a chocolate colour whereas I am black. She has a most interesting story to tell.

A long while ago, Jandal and her brother Cloppie were given up to the Animal Rescue Centre absolutely covered in fleas. They were underweight due to being starved by their previous owner and their condition was a sad sight indeed. Their owner was sorry they were in such a state, but he had come on bad times and the animals as well as himself were suffering. The last straw to break

the camel's back was that his home had been sold from under him due to a mortgage sale and now he was homeless and so were his dogs. He cried when he left them, but he knew that they would be better off without him and would be better cared for by the Centre as he no longer had any means to provide.

A few days later his body had been found in the local river – a suspected suicide. Someone who recognised a mock up photo in the newspaper arrived at the police station to tell them what he knew of the history of this person.

“Where are his two mates?” he asked the police?

“There was no one else in or around the river banks when he was found,” came the reply.

“No, his two dogs,” the old friend said. “He had two beautiful dogs that he kept in top notch condition. Where are they?”

With this statement, the Police made enquiries, and this is how Jandal and Cloppie were located and a background was provided for potential owners should it be required.

As it turned out, the Centre carers were devastated after three days of the two new dogs being in their

care. They both were found in their kennels completely paralysed.

The Vet was called in and after careful examinations she put them both on a course of steroids. Now everyone knows that steroids in humans can cause serious side effects. Well in Jandal and Cloppie's cases these were the worst. Steroids are supposed to help with pain, but Jandal as well as her brother Cloppie seemed to suffer even more pain after being medicated.

While Jandal did eventually recover and begin to walk again be it ever so slowly and at first quite unsteadily; it was Cloppie that was

the immediate problem. She was not responding at all well to the medication.

Fortunately for Cloppie and Jandal, the carers at the Animal Rescue Centre put a great deal of thought, hope and prayer into the care of their newest arrivals. It had been mentioned that due to Cloppie's severe downturn in health, that being put down would be the most humane thing to do, however, there were some on the team who did not agree with this solution. They didn't want to be seen as giving up on her.

Eventually it was decided to allow Cloppie to experience Canine



Hydrotherapy sessions once a week to see if that treatment would stimulate his legs even in some small way. It was a long way there and back and each trip would take anything up to five hours each way. It was felt by the majority on the team that Cloppie was deserving of at least trying the methods being used. They used a pool that was heated which benefitted Cloppie's muscles. While most pools have a ramp that enabled entry and exit to the pool, Cloppie was actually treated using a harness that kept her upright being that his legs were useless to him at the start of the treatment. He was manually let down into the warm water and held there in place to allow the

warmth to circulate around his useless muscles. After several treatments, his legs began to respond as the warm water jets massaged the strength back into each of her muscles. He would be hoisted out by manual means again and returned back to the Animal Rescue Centre after each session.

It took several months of therapy before Cloppie was able to stand again on his own. Walking and socialising with other dogs also took time. However, patience always being a virtue paid off and after four months, Cloppie and Jandal were soon available for adoption.

Fortunately, the Animal Rescue Service is also very discerning as to just who can adopt an animal and for what specific reason. In order for them to place him and Jandal in the right family, the new adoptee family members were asked to visit numerous times at least three times every week for six weeks. While the screening process took a long time, the Animal Rescue Carers were far more certain at the end of the day that the right family had been selected for both dogs rest-of-life care. The family who took them home were so happy the day that they were allowed to do so.

And soon at Number 13, Jandal and Cloppie arrived and we got to

know about their history and survival.

Sookie was thrilled to bits to meet them via Our Mam and her welcome-to-the-neighbourhood devices. It took a few more weeks before Cloppie could join Sookie and Jandal on their frequent walks around the block but once he was allowed to walk further, then the three of them would walk alongside Our Natalie and Our Mam with their heads held high – but also constantly sniffing the edges of the path to learn more about the world of other animals that shared the community with them.

## Chapter Twelve : Simba



Simba was left with the humans down at 92. I don't think he was originally intended to be left, but left he was and that is how I got to know another friend.

Simba was dark like me, had parentage like me, in fact we could have been brothers.

Our Mams Uncle – another Uncle – (it appears she has many!) served with the military and then with the police force. It was during the time when the wars overseas required highly skilled operators from New Zealand joining the forces in the war countries to make a formidable

team that would fight for what is right.

Our Mams Uncle was very highly skilled. He had been a bodyguard for our Prime Minister at one stage – he was so highly regarded within the ranks of protection agencies for many years. Much of his work was unknown to the family – probably none of the family would have known anything about him, except Our Mam was out playing one day in a local playground and she recognised her Uncle over in the distance.

She immediately ran over to him to say hello, having not seen him for a long while – she was not welcomed on the scene at all and was sent away quite hurt and crying from the unexpected words and actions that took place as she came up to him.

She couldn't understand it.

She was so sure it was her Uncle.

He looked very different though, so maybe he wasn't her Uncle after all. He didn't sound like him and he most certainly didn't act like him



towards her either. Her Uncle and she had a bond between them. This person was mean and ugly to her – so perhaps he wasn't her Uncle after all.

Our Mam left the playground that day quite bewildered as to what had happened. She never said anything to her mum or to anyone – as she was afraid that perhaps she had come upon a stranger and she was not allowed to talk to strangers.

The next day after school, she was wandering up the hill to her home, when she suddenly felt a hug from

behind by someone she smelled  
was her Uncle.

She turned around and there he  
was all wonderful and handsome  
just like she knew him as.

He walked home with her,  
constantly checking around him as  
they walked.

Inside the house he sat down and  
sat her beside him.

Our Mam looked at him very  
carefully. He looked very tired.

“Now dear, I know you saw me  
yesterday. Yes, that was me you

saw yesterday. But you must always keep that a secret okay?

I work undercover nowadays and so no one is allowed to know me wherever I am. It is amazing that you recognised me though – you are such a clever little girl.

I am sorry I had to be mean to you and say those horrible things to you – do you forgive me?”

Our Mam was so relieved that she had not imagined their meeting. She nodded and gave him a hug. She always liked the smell of him – he always smelled nice.

“Now I have to leave again. If you should perhaps see me again, don’t come after me like yesterday again will you? It is very important that you are never in danger because of my job. I love you and your sister and young brother very much. You are my older sister’s children. She is a very good person and I love her very much. And I would never like to see any of you be in danger from anything to do with me. Do you understand honey?”

Our Mam said she could remember

that day vividly. And could remember every word he said.

She never saw him much after that – only at family gatherings and he would just give her a wink and she would smile back and get on with playing with her cousins.

Many years later, she got a phone call.

“Hey sweetheart, how are things going with you and your family? Are you all well?”

It was her uncle on the phone.

After a bit of chit chat, he said,

“I haven’t told anyone yet,” Uncle continued, “but soon I will be going away overseas and I will probably have to leave Simba with someone. Do you know anyone who would look after him until I get back?”

“How long will you be away?” she said. “Only six months – have you been reading the newspapers?”

“Yes,” she said.

“Well, that was me they are talking about – I have been selected to go with the first Police Unit but I will be back after six months duty. Do

you know anyone who will look after Simba for me?"

"Let me ask my friends. I can't have him because we already have Sookie and one dog in the house is enough for me."

"That's okay, I understand – Simba is a very big dog after all, and I am not finding it very easy to get someone to have him for such a long time."

"Ring me back in two days," Our Mam said. "I'll ask around."

And ask around she did.

The people at Number 92 were only too happy to take him – they had just lost their own Chocolate Brown Labrador and would be very pleased to have someone come and replace him even if it was just for a little while.

When Uncle rang back in a couple of days, he was so happy to get the news.

“Okay I’ll drive up in the weekend and introduce everyone. Will your kids be home? I would love to see them again as it’s been a while.”

And arrangements were made.



Simba came to stay at Number 92.

After six months, our Mam was watching television and it was announced on the news that the Special Police Force Unit was coming home. She was excited.

“But I bet Number 92 might not be,” she mused. “Never mind, I’ll meet that battle when it arrives.”

A few days after the Special Force Unit had arrived home there was a phone call. It looked like a very strange number on her phone.

“Hey, it’s me!”

“Hey Uncle, how are you? When are we going to see you again? Simba loves where he is, and they just love him too. I think it might be a battle to get him out of there, but they know it was only for six months.”

“Well that’s what I’m ringing you about. I am still over in Afghanistan. You might have noticed from the number I’m calling from. I had to go out and get a temporary phone to make this call to you. I’m not coming back for

a while yet. Not sure how long. I've been head hunted for the Security Department with the United Nations. They've made me a very nice offer that I just can't refuse. Let's face it, I've no other commitments back down there except my sisters, their kids and their grandies. No one really needs me back there at the moment. Do you think those people will mind if Simba stays with them? I can't even tell you how long it'll be this time....."

And so the conversation stretched on and on.

And that is how Simba got to come to Number 92 – Our Mam’s Uncle never came home again except for short visits. He is now married and raising a family in a country somewhere in the middle of a war zone.

He is happy.

Simba is happy.

We are happy, although Our Mam misses him. We can tell when she gets out the family photo album.

# Acknowledgments

See Our Favourite Links and  
Keywords Pages

Also, Very Special Thanks

**For Artwork**



[Gordon Wilson](#)

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[Video for llamas](#)

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Llamas



[WholsDebbieNicholson10 months ago](#)

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REPLY

Hide replies



[Ratt Fink10 months ago](#)

Hey, no problem, your welcome. :- )

## **For Reviews**

Courtney Hill

Manu Aupaau

# Our Favourite Links and Keywords

Chapter 4

[Dogs on the road](#)

Chapter 6

[Dog Escapade](#)

[Sookie's Most Loyal Friend](#)

[Camille](#)

Chapter 7

[Geoff and Sammy](#)

Chapter 8

[Sookie's Barking friend](#)

Chapter 9

[Pippa](#)

[Pet Shop](#)

Chapter 10

[Video for llamas](#)

[Matiu Somes Island](#)

Chapter 11

[Chocolate Labrador Cross](#)

[Steroids](#)

[Paralysis](#)

[Paralysed Dogs](#)

[Canine Hydrotherapy](#)

Chapter 12

[Special Forces unit](#)



# Keywords

Dogs  
Sookie  
Cat  
Labrador  
Chocolate Labrador Cross  
Black Labrador  
Animal Rescue Centre  
SPCA  
puppy  
Great Pyrenees  
Jack Daniels  
Neurologist  
Ambulance  
Mal Takes A Walk With Sookie  
Mal  
Earth  
human  
Shi Tzu Toy Poodle  
Llama  
Matiu Somes Island  
Matiu  
Somes Island  
Wellington Harbour  
New Zealand  
Animal Quarantine Station  
Taranaki Whanui

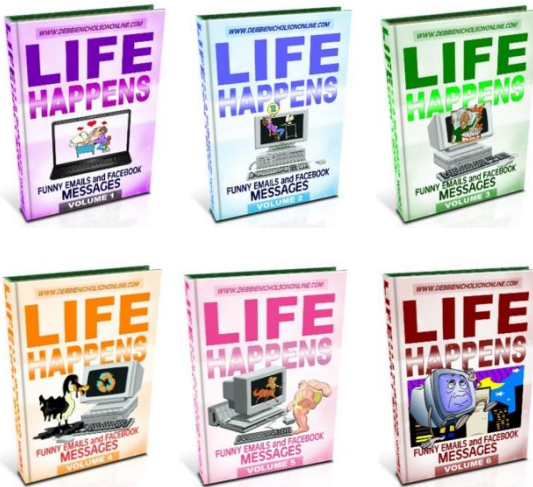
DOC - Department of Conservation  
Kaitiaki Board  
Scientific Reserve  
Kupe  
Joseph Somes  
Deputy Governor  
WWII  
Maori  
Pa  
Lighthouse  
Little Blue Penguin  
Shag  
Spotted Skink  
Silver Gull  
Kakariki  
Weta  
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Fluttering Shearwaters  
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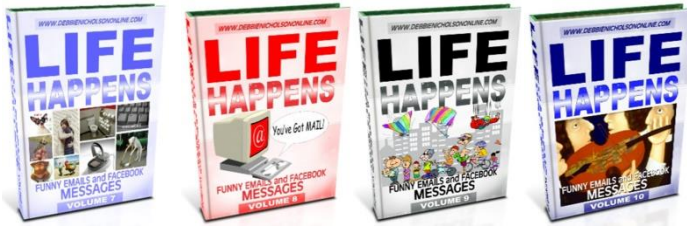
## Other Books By Debbie Nicholson

Email [stories4debbie@gmail.com](mailto:stories4debbie@gmail.com)

**\*\*\* Please take the time to hover over my books to get their URLs \*\*\***

### Life Happens Series





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## The Pink Book Series



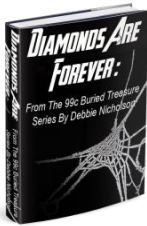
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## Health Series



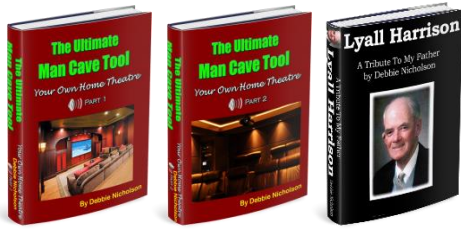
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## 99c Buried Treasure Series



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## General Books



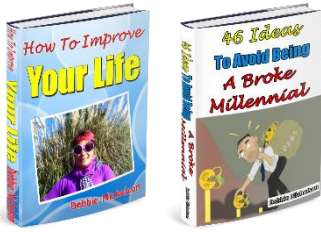
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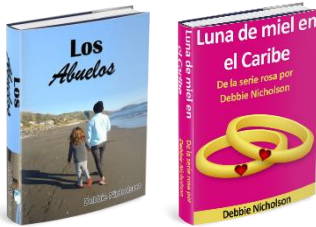
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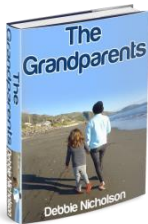
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## Spanish



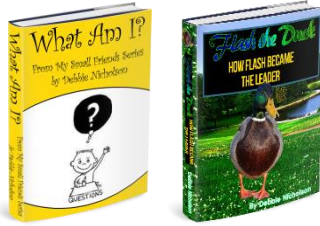
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## 1<sup>st</sup> Book of The Grandparents Trilogy



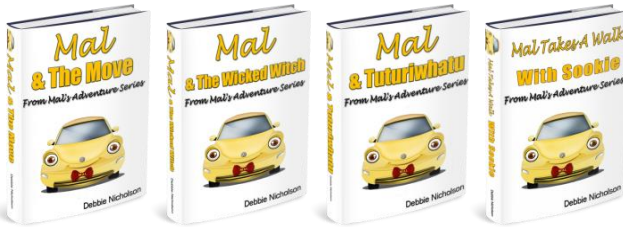
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## My Small Friends Series



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## Mal's Adventure Series



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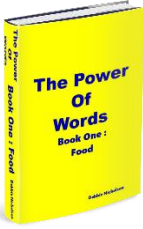
## My Free Book Library



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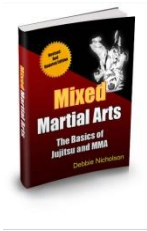
## Marketing Series





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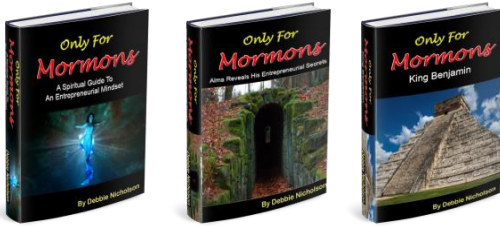
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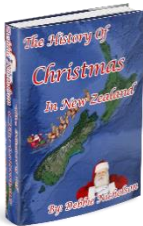
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## Only For Members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints



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## History



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# Book Links If The Hyperlinks Don't Show Up On Your Device

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Life Happens Vol 1

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Life Happens Vol 2

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Life Happens Vol 10

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<http://www.amazon.com/dp/B007U06WUA>

Keeping Up Your Horse's Health

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The Ultimate Guide to Equine Welfare

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<http://www.amazon.com/dp/B0085P1272>

Get Organized In How To Scrapbook

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Benefits Of Good Health And Regular Exercise Book

[1http://www.amazon.com/dp/B07DQFMVX4](http://www.amazon.com/dp/B07DQFMVX4)

Benefits Of Good Health And Regular Exercise Book 3

<http://www.amazon.com/dp/B07F2CHKWY>

Body Odour & How to control It Naturally

<http://www.amazon.com/dp/B07KTKSZJ8>

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Diamonds Are Forever

<http://www.amazon.com/dp/B008CI7CQ2>

### **General Books**

The Ultimate Man Cave Tool Book 1

<http://www.amazon.com/dp/B00H54V4B8>

The Ultimate Man Cave Tool Book 2

<http://www.amazon.com/dp/B00HE6153Y>

Lyall Harrison : A Tribute to My Father

<http://www.amazon.com/dp/B07KPZJH9B>

### **Cats Series**

How to Care For Cats

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Amis de Chat Book 1

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Mal & The Move

<http://www.amazon.com/dp/B00ANYVHSM>

Mal & The Wicked Witch

<http://www.amazon.com/dp/B00AVLTEK0>

Mal & Tuturiwhatu

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