

Chapter One

Narrator

Let me take a moment and introduce myself to you. My name is Mollie, a canine of the miniature schnauzer breed. My coat is salt and pepper, and it wasn't too long ago that I could run like the wind. I want you to know that when I look back at my life, it's been quite extraordinary. As the saying goes, I've been a lucky, lucky dog. Way back when I was just a puppy, I was fortunate enough to be adopted by two loving people I affectionately call Yin and Yang. They are the loves of my life and deservedly so. They've put a roof over my head, given me two squares a day to keep me going, and provided me with an environment that has allowed me to thrive on so many different levels.

As you can well imagine, it would have been great to be adopted into a loving home anywhere, but as my story unfolds, you will see why I've been especially lucky. For the record, I've always felt loved despite my sometimes ornery behavior, my high-pitched signature shrieking bark, and my stubborn disposition that goes paw-in-paw with wanting things to go my way without fail.

Between you and me, I know quite clearly that I am nearing the end of my days. How do I know? Well, my energy level, or the '*chi*' that has always abundantly flowed throughout my rather small, bodily frame, is rapidly waning. (You may see the word *chi* spelled as '*Qi*'- pronounced 'chee'. Different spelling, same meaning.) I'm filled with arthritic aches and pains and have become prisoner to annoying physical afflictions that were once nonexistent in my life. Most living forms are conscious of being in the fourth quarter of their lives. But to be quite honest, it doesn't matter to me. I have always lived in the present moment, so the ongoing trials and tribulations of living or dying have never been a matter of great concern or worry for me. I think that may be a special blessing peculiar to animals. From what I have observed, humans tend to cling to life and have a much more difficult time letting go at the end.

So, before moving on with my rather unique story, I'd like to take a short literary detour to communicate some mind-blowing truths about my kind, and once and for all put the kibosh on some standard doggish misconceptions. First, and with personal pride, I'd like you to understand that we of the canine variety are much more astute and aware than we tend to look or act. If I must say so myself, I've known from early puppyhood how advanced we are on many levels. This has always been a bone of contention for me, and I'm regularly driven bonkers by those who trivialize what's real for me so they can feel superior within themselves.

Hey, I'm not trying to toot my horn, but I want you, the reader, to know that even though I have the utmost respect for the human race and feel great love for those who have sustained me, we live in two distinct and separate realities. Besides my intellectual abilities, which are clearly underestimated, my bodily senses are more acute and far-reaching than theirs. My two other canine stepsisters and I often find ourselves immersed in uncontrollable laughter—Yes, dogs do laugh—and I must

admit a bit of snobbishness, as we recount examples of this genuine dichotomy. (I live with two other female canine cohorts named Harpo and Daisy. But more about them later as I must maintain my current train of thought.)

Not long after entering this world, I realized my sensory apparatus was vastly superior to that of my caretakers. The difference is not even close or within the same earthly realm. I beg you not to think me too egotistical, as I do have somewhat of an ego, but my ability to smell is head over heels better than those walking vertically above me.

We dogs experience the world predominantly by our powerful sense of smell, whereas a human's experience of the world is experienced primarily by vision. Here's an interesting tidbit for you. While my brain is only about a tenth the size of that of my human counterparts, the aspect that controls smell is forty times larger. Incredibly, a dog's sense of smell is about a thousand to tens of million times more sensitive than a human's depending on the canine variety. Not only that, but a person has on average about 5 million scent glands, compared to a dog, who has anywhere between 125-300 million. Starting to get the picture? When I get a whiff of something, I'm not just registering a simple smell. I get the whole detailed aroma with each and every in-breath.

I can smell pheromones (chemical signals) and am conscious of these airborne compounds that emit complex signals and information about my and other species, including humans. These pheromones are not only present in the air but can also be found in urine or poop, as well as on skin and fur. While it is a known fact that many animal species can communicate through pheromones, there still remains a question as to whether humans can as effectively communicate this way.

As a result, I can tell a lot about another dog or human, including if they are male or female, what they've eaten, where they've been, what they've touched, if they are ready to mate, if they have recently given birth or had a false pregnancy, and what mood they're in. Hey, my kind can even detect cancerous tumors or detect an oncoming seizure, alerting a human to the danger and often saving their lives. I'm able to interpret a much broader aromatic narrative and not just an interesting and likable scent. While my human counterparts smell something like a stir-fried vegetable dish, I can smell each ingredient in the dish, every micro-bit of it.

Not only that, but I'm both a sniffer and a breather, two completely distinct and different doggie functions. My standard breathing allows me to ingest air and energy to keep me alive, but when I sniff with short repetitive breaths, I retain some of the scent which allows me to interpret anything of interest at an unparalleled level. And if you would allow me to boast a bit more, I can also readily move my nostrils independently, allowing me to know what direction various odors are coming from. If the art of the whiff were an Olympic sport, canines would undoubtedly be gold-medal winners, and humans would never even make it to the podium.

My hearing is also razor-sharp. No brag, just fact! I'm often puzzled as to why

various sounds are crystal clear to me but are not heard by others. Once, a gardener doing work on the perimeter of our property slipped, fell into a deep hole, and broke his ankle. No way could he climb out, and he was calling frantically for help. Even though there were several people in close proximity to the accident, they couldn't hear him, but I clearly could. Playing the role of Lassie, a TV hero of mine, I was able to get someone's attention and have them follow me to rescue the injured individual.

It sounds like I may be stretching the truth regarding my auditory abilities, but there is a remarkable difference between dog and man. By the time my sense of hearing was completely developed, I could hear about four times the distance of a human. For example, I regularly hear higher-pitched sounds that humans cannot hear. This can be oh-so-irritating to me, but over the years I've accepted it as part of my life. The reason why I sometimes bark at vacuums, for example, is that I hear a very loud, annoying, high-pitched sound that hurts my ears and causes my entire body to vibrate uncontrollably. Impulsively, it causes me to bark as I try to get any human around me to acknowledge this painful sound and make it stop. Yet no one seems to hear it. They continue to vacuum, annoyed by my bark, while having no idea of the cause of my irritation. But in the larger scheme of things, this is no longer a biggie for me. I've learned over the years to anticipate such annoying activities and calmly change my locale.

There are two additional points I'd like you to know. First, depending on the breed, dogs detect sounds in the frequency range of approximately 67,000-45,000 Hertz, compared to humans with the approximate range of 64,000-23,000 Hertz. We also have eighteen or more muscles in our ears, allowing our unique listening apparatus to be more highly developed, whereas a human has only six and can only move their ears slightly, if at all. It's a known fact that dogs with perked ears can usually hear better than dogs with hanging ears, especially if they can move their ears in the direction of the sound. Well, even though my ears are of the floppy kind, I live in an infinite wide-angle, worldly soundscape. Sometimes this advantage can be thought of as a gift, while at other times a nuisance. That's the yin and yang of it!

Now that I'm on a roll, stay tuned to what I consider to be the most exceptional sensory asset we canines have. It's our innate ability to perceive both energy and emotion in people. Let me share something with you. I feel most alive and energetically high when sensing emotion in others because it allows me to learn about what makes my human counterparts tick. I plan to embellish this fact a bit later, but I currently live in a large manor with about forty residents, all of who come in contact with me regularly. For the most part, all treat my canine sisters and me well while underestimating our advanced intuitive nature and spirit.

We encounter people who either ignore us as if we were totally invisible or communicate with us in a way that sounds like inarticulate childish dribble. Hearing the cornball phrase: *You're such a good little doggie*, over and over again, as if I were an inept lower life-form, makes me want to climb the walls, if my paws would allow it. Being the recipient of such uninspiring discourse, I can feel the

erratic inner emotional world of those around me such as worry, self-hate, fear, anxiety, anger and pity. But the opposite also holds true for me when emotions such as love, joy, happiness and compassion are being manifest, and I'm lucky enough to be near to experience these feelings.

After many years of being a canine lightning rod for this kind of emotional dualism existing in the lives of others, I'm proud to announce that I've become awake to a very important truth: The emotional life of the average human is so much more negative than positive. Having a front-row seat to such phenomena has always been problematic for me, sometimes forcing me to find a neutral hiding space away from it all. From my vantage point, I understand how such suffering is a mainstay in the lives of humans.

But please don't think me judgmental when recounting such heavy truths. After being here for most of my life, I realize that human beings are very special, born into this world with an inherent seed of God Consciousness. That's right. Membership within the human race provides each card-carrying member the potential of realizing God Consciousness, but sadly most remain unaware of their innate potential. Even those who are mindful of this possibility rarely make the consistent effort required to directly experience this reality. Instead, people from all walks of life remain tragically bound to a mediocre and mostly pain-ridden existence, or if I may put it another way, they live in their own private hells.

With all the advantages my kind holds over humanity, I still fall amazingly short in comparison. For no matter how astute and developed I've become in my lifetime, I lack this intrinsic seed of higher consciousness and so have been limited to my God-given boundaries as a dog. I am fixed in my current level of being and will remain so during my present lifetime. Let's just say that this special potential is not part of my DNA. I hope that in future lifetimes, I will have the opportunity to break free from my current limitations and work to know God. Until then, I understand that *'it is what it is'* for me, while also knowing that the *'what it is'* part is really nothing to dismiss.

In summary, I have been blessed with smarts that dwarf the average canine capacity. Yes, I am man's best friend, but not just because of my endless love, but because of my near intellectual and emotional parity with humanity and other evolved life-forms. It would behoove you to read on so you may better understand my claim and join me on my incredible journey. The writer Jonathan Carroll said,

*"Dogs are minor angels, and I don't mean that facetiously. They love unconditionally, forgive immediately, and are the truest of friends, willing to do anything that makes us happy, etcetera. If we attributed some of those qualities to a person we would say they are special. If they had ALL of them, we would call them angelic. But because it's 'only' a dog, we dismiss them as sweet or funny but little more. However, when you think about it, what are the things that we most like in another human being? Many times, those qualities are seen in our dogs every single day—we're just so used to them that we pay no attention."*¹