



**AN UNCONVENTIONAL JOURNEY
ON
FINDING MY LOST DOG**

BY
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IN CLOSING

DEAR READER

When I began to write this book, it was my intention to offer a message of hope to anyone victimized by pet theft. As a dog lover, I was devastated when I discovered that my dog had been stolen from my yard. I wanted to share a message of hope. It was the power of unconditional love that led me to take an unconventional approach in my search to find her. I had no idea that I was about to begin a journey that was one of divine intervention.

I wrote in the book that my experience was a lesson of the heart, and walking it was the test. I added most humbly, that I passed the test, because I won. In my search for my dog Sassy, I witnessed miracles, I was protected in dangerous situations, and I discovered that we are powerful spiritual beings, having a human experience.

It became very clear after the fact that my journey, as bizarre as it was at the time, was a necessary lesson for my growth. I know that there are no coincidences and all things happen for reasons.

With that said, I sincerely hope that you will find my experience through this journey to be an inspiration for you to discover and embrace your own power within.

Most of the names of those involved have been changed.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

First and foremost I want to express a most sincere appreciation to the Powers-That-Be, to my Creator that found me worthy enough to walk this journey, and the endless lessons that I was able to apply to my life. I cherish my gift and promise to share it with all that want to hear.

Gene, you are the love of my life and my best friend. I was particularly hard on you; I vented so much anger and frustration on you when you were hurting as badly as I was. Yet, throughout the whole time, you stood firm by me, and offered to be my anchor. I love you with all my heart.

My mother has always been there to support me. Even though she has since passed away, I know that she was next to me as I wrote this. She knows how much I love her for so many things. She allowed me to pull strength from her when I didn't think I could go on any more, and she still does today. Her life was an inspiration to so many people, and I am sure that she is very happy where ever she is.

My mother-in-law, Edna, has also passed over now. I am truly sorry that I didn't appreciate your strength, and your wisdom. I want you to know that I do now, and I realize now that if I had listened to you more, I probably could have saved myself a whole lot of grief. I thank you for your patience, and for not throwing me to the streets.

Loyd, my great brother-in-law that treats me more like his sister, witnessed many of my unpleasant behaviors. I know you were really worried about my sanity, and your concerns were correct. I will always appreciate your love and support that you continue to offer me. I thank you for all the printing, searching and support.

I thank John Keane, one of the pioneers to come up with the idea to offer his services as a pet detective. What a brilliant idea. Often times, when we lose our pet, we find ourselves in such an emotional state that we simply can't think clear enough to take the necessary steps to recover our pets. John empowered me with his knowledge, and our search started working. Had it not been for him, I might be still looking today.

The Arizona Basset Hound Rescue. These people are amazing. They have so much compassion for animals. When I contacted them about Sassy, they featured her on their website until we found her. They also called me every day to offer encouragement and support. They are real people to which I owe so much and have the deepest respect.

To the psychic and the medicine man, who I will not name for their privacy, I remain in awe just thinking about them. Our experience with them both made such a powerful impact on us and it stays with us today. Their sincerity and their help were appreciated more than any can know.

My family deserves a whole lot more than I gave. I owe them a big thank you for helping in many ways also. They could see that I was close to going over the edge, yet they were kind or smart enough, I'm not sure which, to stay out of my way. They helped me more than they knew by sending me their prayers.

I owe many thanks to Doug, our dear friend that resides on the property, and keeps it's beautifully manicured. He thought we were crazy beyond belief, and yet he still did anything we asked of him.

So many friends that made themselves available whenever we called on them as we went through what you are about to read. They knew I was crazy with grief and still came through.

There are so many more that I am thankful to. And I can't begin to say what it meant to Gene and me, that so many people were willing to step up because they cared. There are a lot of good people that live in Phoenix.

Last, but by far not least, my friend Jan Toomer. Without her, this would be completely unreadable.

(Photos of Sassy were taken by Liz Cook; photo of Liz Cook by Jan Toomer.)

ONE: THE BEGINNING

Gene and I lived on the property where he grew up. His family bought the place when it was mostly local farms. Today, it's an oasis that sits in the heart of the west side of Phoenix. There are three acres of plush green grass and a variety of huge citrus trees that surround the two houses on the property. The fragrance from the orange blossoms and the honeysuckle will almost make you forget that you are in the middle of a metropolitan city. It really is a beautiful place and I am sure that anyone that lives in the area would love to live there.

However, I was never comfortable there. On the other side of our fence was a six lane street with a forty-five mph speed limit, and the traffic was heavy twenty-four hours a day. The area was known for high gang activity, and had become very transient, largely due to the increase in the number of illegal's coming over the border in recent years. As a result, the crime rate there had escalated tremendously.

I worried about my dog getting out of the yard and getting hit by a car. There was a public bus stop outside the driveway, and sometimes the people would stand there waiting for a half hour for a bus. That made me nervous.

Finally, the day came when my fears came crashing down on me. I got everything that I feared, and I was about to find out in a way that I would never forget. A man broke into our yard, and stole our two-year old Basset Hound named Sassy.

The kinds of people that steal pets have absolutely no regard of how devastating it is to both the owner and the pet. They are simply in it for their self gain. However, in my case, they underestimated the people they were taking her from. I was devastated and I was very mad. I became a Phoenix, rising up through the ashes, with unrelenting power and determination to get her back.

TWO: THE JOURNEY BEGINS

It was September, one of the nicer times to be in Phoenix.

Sassy loved to be outside. She would slip out her doggie door, in hope that she could sneak up on one or two feral cats to chase around the yard a couple times, which she then followed by barking at the people walking by, or maybe another dog in the next yard. Then she would make a trip to the water bowl, followed by finding a comfortable patch of grass, preferably in the direct sun where she would doze off for her first nap of the day. She had the same routine every day, and it didn't matter how hot or cold it was; and this day was no different.

Gene and I were busy finishing up a beautiful custom wooden display box; it was to be for my grandson, for his birthday, the next day.

Our sister-in-law, Naomi, stopped by. We were sitting around talking for several minutes, when we noticed that Sassy didn't come in to greet her. This was really strange, because Sassy was crazy about her Aunt Naomi. We went outside and looked all over the property, we walked along the fence, and checked all the gates, and there was no Sassy.

The family that lived to the north of us owned a boarding stable. They had been in business for years. The owner was a widow that was probably in her seventies at the time. She ran the stables with her two sons and her daughter-in-law. A chain link fence separated our property from theirs, and Sassy, found it fascinating to talk to the horses and people through the fence. She also liked to visit, and had been known to escape through the gate if one of us left it open, and every time, that is where we would find her.

We immediately went over to see if she was there. She was well known to all. One of the customers thought that they had seen her earlier, but couldn't be certain.

Naomi and I began walking the streets, and knocking on doors to ask if they had seen her. Gene got in the truck and drove, to cover more ground. It was as though she vanished into thin air. We searched until dark, finding nothing. By then, I was very upset, and scared. I couldn't imagine where she could have gone.

A few months prior to getting Sassy, I had had another Basset Hound that I loved just as dearly, and her name was Sally. Sally had to have a large tumor removed from her neck, and a few weeks after her surgery, she developed a bad infection and we had to put her down. She was a very unique soul also. I took her passing very hard and missed her terribly.

It took me several months, before I was ready to get another Basset Hound. We found Sassy, and, she captured our hearts and was every bit as spoiled as her successor. Our hearts could not take losing another one, especially with in the same year.

Gene and I decided to go back to the stables and talk to the people that may have been there earlier. The owner told us that it was her policy to have the customers come each day to feed their own horses; therefore, many of them that lived nearby would come in the morning and in the evening after work. She shared our concerns, and told us that we were welcome to talk to any of them anytime.

The people at the stables were sorry to hear about what had happened. Everyone was keeping an eye out for her, and some offered to search for her.

When we got home I began designing and printing flyers to post. I got on the internet and registered with every lost and found service in the valley. I wrote emails to all the animal rescues, asking them to contact me if they saw her, and sent copies of flyers to them. I faxed letters and flyers to every dog groomer, every vet and animal hospital in the valley. I figured that sooner or later, if she was in the area, she would eventually have to go to one of these places, and surely, *somebody* would see the flyers.

By three in the morning, I gave up trying to sleep and headed back out to look for Sassy. I drove slowly through the streets while calling Sassy's name. I posted five hundred flyers with spray glue. I put them everywhere. On street signs, light poles, in the intersections at the red lights, on the traffic signals, you name it. Later, I was told that it was illegal to put them on public signs and lights. I was determined, and I wanted my signs seen by all. By the time I finished, there were so many flyers up that no one could've missed seeing one.

As the sun began to come up, I decided returned home to make some coffee and begin again.

When faced with a crisis, I focus on the situation at hand, and I will do whatever is necessary to resolve it. I don't rest until it's over, and I am not flexible in my actions. I have been told by friends that if they were ever in trouble, they would want me on their side. However, during the process, nobody can stand to be near me.

I am very much like my mother was, she had always been my rock, but right then, I needed her. Mother and I spoke on the phone; and she listened to me crying. She reminded me that our thoughts, and the words that we speak, manifest our reality. I had been speaking my fears into reality, and now it was time to claim victory over them.

Inside, I was an emotional mess, but I was beginning to see what I was up against. I had allowed my emotions to take over, and the very next day, I put myself into a situation where I could easily have been killed. It was the dumbest thing I did - however, it taught me that we have protection from above when we need it.

THREE: STUPIDITY

It had become obvious that Sassy wasn't lost. She was a Basset Hound for God sake. It isn't like you see them in numbers wandering the streets. Somebody would have seen her. To this day, I may not know all my neighbors, but they all know Sassy.

I checked my emails daily, and had many kind responses from very awesome people. There were so many people on alert, and very happy to help in any way they could. The situation did not look good, however, I sensed Sassy was still close by.

During the daylight hours, I knocked on every door, for miles. I never understood why some people seem to feel the need to blatantly lie to you, and tell you that they "just saw her" going "that way". I can't begin to recall how many of those I heard. Do they not understand what that does to you? Don't they realize that you have to check out every lead, because you just never know which one might be the one that finds her? Frustrated, yet still hopeful, I checked out every lead.

I had driven down a street about three-thirty this particular morning; windows open in case I heard Sassy; and crying, when all of the sudden there were two young Hispanic guys on bicycles who had ridden up, one on each side of my car. Lost in my grief, I hadn't been paying attention to my surroundings so I never saw them coming.

They wanted to know what I was doing there. I told them that I was looking for my dog, and showed them a flyer. They told me I was pretty brave, it wasn't safe to be driving around there and told me to follow them to where they thought they had seen her. I locked my doors and followed them. We got to a road that was a dead end, and the two guys pointed to some houses in a cul-de-sac, but said they wouldn't go any farther.

There were about fifteen very hard looking guys in the middle of the street. Most of them only spoke in Spanish, but, a couple of them spoke very broken English. They were all over twenty years old, many covered in tattoos, and I recognized a few of the tattoos to be gang logos. They were smoking drugs and didn't seem to care that I saw them. I wasn't about to allow them to intimidate me.

I told them that I had been told that they had my dog, and I wanted her back now, and I wouldn't leave until they gave her back to me. I don't want to repeat what they called me, but they said that I had a lot of nerve coming in there and accusing them. Then they told me in no uncertain terms that I was crazy.

I told them if they didn't give me my dog, I would call the police and they would search their house, because I had already filed a report, and had reason to believe that she

was there.

I would love to think that they admired me for being brave, but in reality, they didn't want the police there, and about that time, a lady walked out to see what was going on. She told them to let me look, and then they took me around the property and allowed me inside to see that they didn't have Sassy. I apologized and thanked them for trying to help.

For the record, I must say that this was not a safe course of action and do not recommend it for others to do!

As I was leaving, they told me that they were sorry that I lost my dog, and that they hoped that I would find her; however, they also told me that I better never come back again.

Why I decided to push it to that extreme so late at night, I really don't know. It was stupid. However, I left knowing one thing, once again, this awful situation was teaching me something about higher Powers-That-Be.

FOUR: GETTING HIGHER HELP

Gene and I went next door to the stables because the owner told us it would be fine to continue to talk with the people boarding horses.

It was nice that they took the time to speak with us. They couldn't tell us any more than they already had, but we were beginning to learn more about the different customers.

We had been there for about an hour, when my phone rang, and it was my mother. Having been kept in the loop on what we were doing, she had an idea. She began telling me about a television program that she had seen on the Public Broadcasting Station (PBS) a few months ago. She said that they were interviewing a Tucson woman that was a psychic. She had been working with the police department in solving criminal cases, and her accuracy was very impressive.

My mother, who had never gone to a psychic in her life, now felt compelled to drive across the city and see her. She drove across the city, found the building listed for the psychic, walked in and asked for her by name.

As fate would have it, she was sitting behind the desk. She told my mother that it had been her day off, and at the last minute, she was asked to come in because the person who had been scheduled to work had been called away because for an emergency.

My mother explained why she was there, and the psychic suggested I call her. Mom dialed my number and handed the phone to her. I got to talk with this wonderful lady for what seemed to be at least an hour.

She asked me to go outside and stand on the north side of the house and face west. She repeated this with the other three directions. She became very quiet for a moment, and told me that she was seeing what seemed like a wire fence that was going in all kinds of different directions to the north. She saw large animals and a few people and she saw vehicles coming and going, but she sensed they were temporary, or didn't live there. She said that these people knew something about Sassy's disappearance, and perhaps they had an active part in it. Last, she saw a light blue truck that was also involved.

I was happy to get the information, and I considered it to be credible. I had often witnessed my mother's accuracy when she was instructed or guided by spirit, and for Mom to have driven thirty miles across Tucson to see a psychic – of whom she knew next to nothing about – that told me to pay attention to the information. I had to check it out.

This meant that we had to get permission from the stable owner once again to question

the customers. I prayed that she wouldn't ask why; and if she did, I could only hope that she had a sense of humor when I had to tell her that my credible resource was a psychic.

Gene and I decided to just tell her exactly what we were told by the psychic that my mom went to see. I then began to explain what had transpired with the psychic. The stable owner had a strange look on her face as she listened.

About that time her daughter- in- law came in, and we filled her in on what was going on. She helped run the stables with her mom. She reminded her mother about a customer, Marina, who had a light blue truck, and had recently left the stables and moved her horse elsewhere. She didn't trust Marina; and both were relieved when Marina had terminated her contract. They also told us that Marina was close friends with Alys, another customer still there, and added that they wouldn't put it past either one of them to take Sassy.

Gene and I had a few conversations with Alys, who seemed genuinely concerned; she had lost her dog the month before, and she said it broke her heart.

Naturally, I wanted to check them out, however, the stable owner didn't feel comfortable giving us either woman's address because of liability issues; however, she was going to make some inquiries the next day, and welcomed me back to speak with Alys then. The stable owner told me that Alys would be there the next day, and that she usually came to feed around seven-thirty. It was going to be a long night and next day.

Gene and I were hopeful about this new information. We left for the night, and couldn't wait to get home to call the psychic and share this with her; perhaps, with what we had learned, it might allow her to see a little bit deeper.

FIVE: SHERLOCK BONES

When we change our perception on how we see things; the whole world takes on different meaning. Reality is nothing more than your perception. For many, especially under stress, only see what we want to because our perception won't allow us to expand our thinking.

John Keane of Sherlock Bones, understands this completely

- ❖ *While driving along, and you're passing flyers along the way, how many do you notice?*

- ❖ *Of the ones you do see, how many do you read? If you are anything like me, if it is big enough for me to see and I recognize anything on the flyer, then I will pull over to get more information. In the past twelve months, this has happened one time, and I am a person that holds animals in higher regard than I do most people that I come into contact with.*

We were checking the pounds and shelters every day. I placed ads everywhere I could think, and when the people that I would meet offered suggestions, I would immediately do that too. I had printed over five hundred flyers, and personally knocked on doors handing them out. I was getting nowhere.

Our colorful eight by ten flyers needed to be seen. They needed to jump out at you to get your attention, and make you want to slam on those breaks, and stop to read more... I hadn't slept in days, nor could I eat. I drove the streets, researched more ways to search, and I was exhausted and heartbroken. We needed help. We needed a miracle.

His name was John Keane. This brilliant man is the owner of **Sherlock Bones**. When our family and friends found out that we hired a pet detective, they were sure that we had lost it. After all, we had already talked to a physic, and they wondered what was next.

I would like to believe that all people consider their pets an invaluable member of the family. To those of us that do, it is understandable that you would do anything to find them. It was clear that Sassy was stolen.

We weren't giving up. It was not an option, and John understood this and didn't expect to hear anything different from us. He understood our grief and the many mistakes you make out of fear. He knew our situation and what we were up against. His advice was sound and offered us hope in knowing, that we had a professional on our side. His experience was working for us.

One thing he told us was to think outside the box. Basically, if the people in our community were too busy to help us, then fine; we would pay them to care.

\$1000 REWARD

It definitely got their attention. I call it "money for your mouth". It works every time. It's the manna behind mans motivation:

We changed the flyers to show the reward, and increased the number of them. We recruited help from our friends and family, and managed to post all of them within five miles of our home. John told us to expand the distance, but we ran out of flyers after five miles. I thought we had posted a lot before, but now, there was no way that you could be on foot, or in a car, and not see one of these flyers.

The next day, we got a call from the Tucson psychic. We spoke about the information we got prior to meeting John. We were able to validate the woman in the blue truck that she had seen. She was certain that she could see more, if she had something of Sassy's that she could touch, and she wanted to see a map of our area. We agreed to meet her at three o'clock the next day, at her work place in Tucson.

I want to note that as I write this, eight years have passed. I felt it was important to include all of my experiences. I didn't know at that time, that years later I would write about it, therefore, I didn't keep my notes. It was too painful. I had to go online to find John Keane, and as fate would have it, he was the first one listed in the search engine, and I recognized him right away. Looking at his website, I found that he has added many new services since we needed him in 2000. I would recommend him highly if you have a lost pet. You cannot put a price tag on one of God's creation that you love so deeply.

SIX: THE MEDICINE MAN

On Monday, we completed the daily regimen of checking shelters, replacing torn down flyers, and trying frantically to finish so that we would be on time for our three o'clock appointment in Tucson with the psychic.

In the hour and a half ride to Tucson, I was on the phone calling to extend ads and touched base with some of the people that were so graciously helping us.

It was becoming very obvious to everyone close to us, that the heartbreak had passed the stage of overwhelming, and it began to really take a toll on us. Sassy was an important part of us and the thought of life without her was unbearable. I had cried so much that there was nothing left. It had been over two weeks now. We *really* needed a miracle.

We arrived for our appointment at three o'clock sharp, but the psychic wasn't there. We explained that we had spoken with her and had an appointment. Apparently, after we made the appointment, her schedule changed, and she forgot to re-schedule with us. One of the other people that worked with her tried calling her on the phone, but they got her answering machine.

We waited until almost four o'clock and I just couldn't wait any longer. In Phoenix, knowing Sassy was near, I knew that she could feel my energy, and she knew I was searching for her. I didn't want her to think I was giving up, so going out of town was on touchy waters to me. We decided to go back to Phoenix, and as we were walking out the phone rang. It was the psychic, and she felt really bad that she had missed us. She said that she lived right off the freeway and invited us to her house.

She met us at the door with a warm greeting and invited us in. The smell of sweet sage filled the air, and danced to the sound of Native American Flutes playing. She told us that our coming there was no coincidence, because she wanted us to meet her husband, a medicine man, from an Oklahoma tribe, and he had arrived just ahead of us.

As he walked into the room, Gene and I were awed by the intensity of this man's eyes. We felt like we were in the presence of an angelic being. To look into his eyes, you got a glimpse of infinite love and compassion, with deep wisdom that you might expect to find in a true Native American Indian Chief. Immediately, you felt a reverence to greatness in a divine way. It wasn't the man standing before us; it was the spirit within the man. It was a though he could see into your soul. I had never seen anything like that in my life. I knew it was real, and I thought it was only for shamans and great spiritual teachers. I know now that this wonder state of being is available to each one of us if we choose to allow it to be.

He told us of his roots, and spoke of the way of a medicine man. He performed some kind of a prayer/ritual and then began to speak of Sassy. He circled the place on our map the he felt she had been taken to; he said it was a temporary holding place where an older couple took care of Sassy for four days. He then told us that the older couple could feel Sassy's pain and tried to talk the man that took her from our yard, into returning her to us.

This medicine man continued to tell us that Sassy had then been moved; she was within three miles from our house. The medicine man had the ability to see through Sassy's eyes, and describe what Sassy was seeing. He saw a balcony and bicycles through a low window. There were also kids there, and saw swing sets. He felt Sassy was being treated well, but wanted to come home very badly.

Gene and I both felt something very powerful indeed. The experience took us into another state of being, that lasted the hour and a half home and then some. It was truly awesome.

Neither Gene nor I could get over the impact that our visit with the medicine man had made on us. He was a powerful man, yet so gentle and kind. There was never a question about whether you believed him or not because there was an intense presence of pure spirit throughout the whole meeting, and you just knew. You could feel it was real.

SEVEN: GETTING CLOSER

We hardly spoke on the ride back. Perhaps, we were slain from the experience and words couldn't come close to describe any part of it. By the time that we got back into Phoenix it was well after midnight.

Gene and I decided that we would go the area that the medicine man had circled on the map, and saturate the whole area with flyers.

As we were walking up and down streets placing flyers on anything that would hold them, we began to hear a dog that sounded like a Basset Hound. It sounded as though the baying was coming from the backyard, only to find out it was actually coming from inside one of the houses. We crawled through private property, and tried to get to the back of the yard that we thought the baying had come from. We went through another yard next door. As fate would have it, Gene realized that we were in the yard the belonged to a friend of ours. This blew us away.

It was almost daylight, so we decided to wait until we saw lights go on inside; we knew our friend had to go to work at five. It seemed like we waited an eternity for him to get up.

When we spoke with our friend, we found out that there was a Basset Hound next door and the owners of the dog were older; but the dog wasn't Sassy. This was a sign for us, and both of us felt sure that we were close to finding her. I was glad that Gene was with me because I really needed his strength.

When we returned home, Gene asked Doug, a very close family friend if he would do him a big favor. Doug spent most of his time in the workshop restoring jeeps. The workshop shared a common fence with the boarding stable next door. By this time, we are well known from going there almost every day, and we needed someone else to watch for a light blue truck.

Doug reluctantly agreed to do it. We went inside our house at the front part of the property, where we wouldn't be seen, and waited. It wasn't very long when Doug called from the cell phone and told us that there was a light blue truck that had pulled into the stable. It was morning feeding time, and we knew the horse owners would return after work to feed their horse again before going home, and we made sure that we were in place and ready when they returned.

Sure enough, it was close to five when they got back to the stable. Doug continued to watch and informed us as the guy in the truck was leaving. The owner of the stables wouldn't give us the address, so we had to do the next best thing; to follow him home to see if he had Sassy.

What followed was to be another one of the dumbest things we had done so far, aside from me charging into the gang bangers meeting place. This time, Gene was driving.

The guy in the light blue truck pulled onto the street and we were on his tail. He headed for the freeway and went north during rush hour traffic. The best way to describe what transpired after that is that we made complete fools of ourselves. We were weaving in and out of traffic to keep up with him when he spotted us. Not realizing who we were, he decided to lose us by cutting in front of another car, just before his exit, and turning. We couldn't get over, and missed the turn. Under different circumstances, it would have made a great comedy.

Gene came to his senses and said, "Enough!" I had gone too far, and with that, he took me home. I was very angry and disappointed, to say the least.

After we returned home, we went over to the stables to take more flyers with our thousand dollar reward on the front in big numbers.

The owner didn't tell us at the time, but she was keeping a close watch on Alys. I guess rumors were going around that she was planning to leave suddenly like her friend did. At any rate, they knew she was up to something and kept it from us until they could be sure.

EIGHT: COMPLETION

For the past three weeks, we had refined our routine to find Sassy and were now completing them faster with fewer errors.

Also within those three weeks, we printed and posted, all within five miles of our home, four thousand flyers. You may ask why we did our own printing. It was because I couldn't wait the two days for the printer to do them.

On Friday morning, I went back to the office supply for the third time to again buy ink to print more flyers. Gene left to make the shelter runs as he had done each day with no success. We were walking out the door to post more flyers when a car pulled into the driveway. It was Alys, the customer from the stables.

Alys told us that she thought that she knew where Sassy was. She corrected herself and said that she was sure she knew where Sassy was. She reminded us about her dog that she lost, and said that she couldn't stand watching us hurt, and searching nonstop, day and night, like we had been for three long weeks.

Alys then told us that the person that had Sassy was Marina. She also said that Marina had been a customer at the stables, and that she had recently left and boarded her horse somewhere else.

Alys told us that we could follow her, and she would take us there, but that when we got there, Alys wanted to go in first to tell the Marina who we were and that we had come.

I was so excited, but there was no way that I was going to let her out of my sight, so I rode with Alys and Gene followed us.

We drove to an apartment complex that was two miles away from our house. There was a large gas station on the side of the entrance to these apartments that had at least fifty flyers glued to every pole, pump, and sign. You couldn't drive into the apartment complex without passing at least thirty more.

As we drove, Alys explained to me that Marina bought Sassy for one hundred dollars and that Sassy was a gift for Marina's eight year old daughter. The man that sold her the dog worked with her husband. Alys and her husband lived in the exact place that the medicine man had circled on the map – indicating where Sassy was first taken. Alys and her husband lived with her parents, an older couple.

Alys asked Gene and me to wait outside while she went in to tell Marina that we were there. As we were sitting on the grass, across from swing sets when we noticed the two bicycles that were hanging from clamps on their patio, just above the pots.

When Marina opened the door and Sassy ran out to us, it was the happiest day of our life...Sassy's too!

The little girl was hysterical and didn't want to give Sassy up. I went into the little girl's room and tried to calm her down, but nothing helped. I even offered to help her find another Basset Hound through the rescue, but she wanted Sassy.

Marina told us how Sassy slept with the little girl at night, and watched out the living room window during the day. I asked her how it was possible that she didn't see the flyers, and Marina played dumb and said she didn't. She did tell us that they took Sassy with them everywhere, in their light blue truck.

Gene and I were both so emotional that we weren't putting the pieces together. We were supposed to contact the police to meet us there and they would have been arrested on a felony count. We forgot to call. We were so happy to get Sassy back that we just didn't care.

We took Sassy home. She pranced through the house as if she was never gone. Our friends and family all told us that they didn't think that we would ever see her again. I would still be looking today if I had to. Never give up.

We ended up trading part of our stable, the one that was now the workshop, to the Ayls for her horse. Gene did all the welding and set her up. Our neighbors at the stables were correct to think Ayls was up to something, she was. Regardless, she was happy and we got what we wanted.

I later decided I couldn't be a part in helping Marina to locate another dog for her daughter. I wrote her the following letter instead:

Marina,

"My animals are like my children. I thank God for getting Sassy home. We were devastated and broken hearted, and so was Sassy. It took her three days to get back to herself. You need to understand that animals have feelings just as much or more than people and she wanted to be home with her family.

I mentioned to you that I filed a police report and was told that the person that took her would be facing a class 6 felony, because of the amount of money that we have invested in her.

This brings me to the main reason for this letter.

I will help you get a Basset Hound for your daughter, IF you will disclose the name, and address of the man you supposedly bought Sassy from, and you must be willing to testify in court if necessary. Otherwise, I have to assume that you were in on it. I have no respect for people that steal dogs. I have even less respect for people that

steal dogs and give them to little girls.

So, that's my deal. You have my number.

Liz”

We never heard from her again.

NINE: AFTER THOUGHTS

Sassy was gone from us for just under three weeks. There were many people around us that lost hope after the first week. However, from a distance, they watched in wonder as we continued on. It's a story that many who were there, still tell today, and it still seems unbelievable, but it is true.

Even though Gene and I had been emotionally distraught, we persevered and did what we had to do. I knew all along that she was close by and I couldn't rest until I found her. The tools that were sent our way and the information we received had been accurate, though they were nothing more than confirmations to give us the will and strength to keep going.

Animals live in perfect obedience to a specific purpose within their own kind. They offer us the keys to life lessons that can teach us to live in harmony with all of God's creation and Mother Earth. They humbly offer this invaluable service to anyone that has eyes to see, and the desire to attain a higher quality of living and purpose in their life.

Can you imagine what life would be like if we used our free will to our greatest advantage by appreciating the lessons these wonderful animals came here to empower us with?

I have a deep respect and admiration for all the people that give so selflessly to protect and honor all the animals on this earth. There is no doubt that they are truly blessed.

On the other hand, it's very sad, and I feel sorry for people that have little or no regard for animals, or their purpose and who they are in the scope of things. It would appear they feel as though they are above them and don't realize that we need them more than they need us. These people are missing out on the true essence of what life is meant to be. Instead, they are blindly creating their own living hell on earth. They choose a negative path of emptiness. How tragic for them to be so lost.

As for me, I am thankful everyday for my pets. They freely give unconditional love; and through them, I have learned forgiveness, patience, a sense of worthiness, and a respect for all life. I am able to recognize and use my intuition and I know how to communicate without words. I can see into others dimensions of reality, and I am in awe over the perfection of divine creation in the making. I am rich, and my life is blessed, which I contribute largely to my pets and the all of the animal kingdom.

When we were finally able to settle down, we realized that we had just finished a test that took us to core of our being. Sassy's role in it was to get us on the path. The Powers-That-Be knew that she and I shared unconditional love; so that's where I was tested. Furthermore, it had to be extreme to get me to step away from fear, so that I

could clearly see my potential. There are no words to express the full impact when I tell you that we are POWERFUL spiritual beings.

It is my sincere wish that these words will touch your heart and that you may come to realize that each one of us has the power within, to change the entire world and beyond.



IN CLOSING

It is estimated that two million pets are forcibly taken every year, and only ten percent are returned to their homes. What happens to the majority of these pets is horrifying. There are far too many people that fall victim to this kind of criminal behavior every day. I want people to know that you can get your pet back, and I highly encourage you to try.

I was looking for the pet detective, John Keane, recently. I wanted to contact him for permission to include him in this book by name. I found that he has added many new services since we needed him. I would recommend him highly if you have a lost pet. You cannot put a price tag on one of God's creation that you love so deeply.

As for the medicine man and psychic we spoke with them one more time, to thank them again, and tell them we found Sassy. They were delighted.

When I tried to contact them while writing this, we discovered they had moved and no one was able to tell us where they went.

I will close this now in honor to all the animals, both living and in spirit.

