

## STORIES ABOUT DOGS AND LOVE

By John F. Hall

The late Kentucky writer, Jesse Stuart, from eastern Kentucky, created 4,000 fictitious people in the 460 short fiction stories that he wrote. Unlike Jessie, I only write nonfiction life stories. In those stories, I tell about real people. In this story, I write about some dog owners. To make my stories interesting, I will weave in words from poems, and lyrics from songs that others have written, to enhance the themes of my stories. I usually have a melody spinning around in my mind when I give a title to my story. As in this story, I use an old song that was written by Dean Hall. He is the son of the late Singer, Tom T. Hall. The name of the song is, "I love." These are Dean's lyrics: "I love little baby ducks, old pick-up trucks, slow movin' trains and rain. I love little country streams, sleep without dreams, Sunday school in May and hay. And I love you too! I love leaves in the wind, pictures of my friends, birds of the world and squirrels. I love coffee in a cup, little fuzzy pups, bourbon in a glass and grass. And I love you too! I love honest open smiles, kisses from a child, tomatoes on the vine and onions. I love winners when they cry, losers when they try, music when it's good and life. And I love you."



As for baby ducks, someone gave me a cute baby duck, when I was growing up in Miami, Florida. That baby duck turned into a large domestic Pekin duck. It had pure white feathers, an orange bill, and orange legs. It loved to follow me where ever I walked. I called my male duck, "Duckie." Someone stole Duckie from its low wooden pen. I suspect that person had my duck for supper. As for an old pick-up truck, I have a 1989 Ford Ranger. I keep it parked on the Side of the bill by my driveway. Two years ago, the starter went out. Then one of the tires went flat as the valve stem dry rotted. I only keep the pick-up truck for sentimental reason. My wife's dad gave it to her, when his eye sight went bad. He let it sit for five years before he gave it to her. I may get it running before the winter weather sets in. I don't keep it licensed or insured. I just pay the few dollars of property taxes every year. It's the same pick-up that my oldest granddaughter, Andrea first learned how to drive, on Paula's dad's farm, when she was ten years old.

As for fuzzy pups, when my wife, Paula and I were first married, we had a small dog, of mixed breed. We called the dog P J, which stands for Paula and Johnny. We had the dog when we lived in Golden Pond, Kentucky, back in 1965. Then, one day, P J disappeared. We suspect that a coyote got it. My son, John Andrew has two Labrador Retriever dogs. They are a registered British breed of retriever gun dogs. His oldest dog, "Jalo" is a solid white female dog. His youngest dog "Johnny (Cash)" is a white male dog. He keeps a large cage for Jalo in his living room, and a large cage for Johnny in his utility room. Inside his cage, Johnny is calm and docile. But when you open his cage door, he will burst forth and become a wild dog. The best way to calm him down is to offer him a Lays potato chip. Jalo, on the other hand, is a well trained Labrador. Tell Jalo to sit, and she will sit. Tell Jalo to stay, and she will stay. She knows the command "No!" and she will freeze in place. My grandson, John John is 22 years old. He still lives with his parents, and he works the night-shift at Walmart. He has three Labrador dogs. Two dogs,

“Captain,” and “Reeo,” are outside dogs. The other dog, “Bailey,” stays in his room and Sleeps on a soft doggy pad.

The other day, John John was exercising his two outside dogs, before going to work. He throws two rubber, softball size balls, and his dogs run after them. The dogs bring them back to him, and he throws them again, and again. He forgot that he left a dog treat in his left rear pant’s pocket. His dog, Captain, decided that it wanted that treat. So the dog jumped up and ripped a hole in John John’s rear pocket to get to that treat. He brought the damaged jeans to my house to have my wife, Paula, to mend the pocket. She took an old pair of my son, John’s jeans, cut off the two pant’s pockets, and mended John John’s jeans. They are his favorite pants. Paula sewed the two repairs on his jeans, so no one could tell that any repairs were made.

Lola Cesini wrote a poem called, “Reach Out And Touch.” Dogs play an important role in people’s life. These are her words” “Thunder and Lightning outside, and the rain is pouring own. The sky is crying with me, the thunder is me sobbing. The raindrops are-my tears. Who shares my sadness? My faithful dog looks up at me. His sad old eyes stare at mine. He loves me and feels what I feel. He shares my sadness! He lays his head back down, yet keeps his eyes on me. A vigil, in case I should smile, and then his tail would wag, hoping to make me aware of him. Looking for a pat on the head, a scratch behind his ears. Signs of affection to canine eyes, are human needs that different? Bright eyes and bushy tails. Just wanting to be petted and loved, how difficult we make it. When it’s all so simple, to just reach out and touch.” Trish Cunningham owns a small dog Zac. In the mornings, before going to work, she will start her day by having a cup of coffee, and reading one of my stories, that she receives in the mail. She told that she would give Zac a few pats on the head, before going out the door.

I’ve written about many things, but not much about dogs. When my wife, Paula and I were first married, we had a small dog of mixed breed. We called the dog PJ, which stands for Paula and Johnny. We had the dog when we lived in Golden Pond. Then one day the dog just disappeared. I suspect that a coyote got it. It is true that dog owners are less prone to bouts of loneliness, anxiety, and depression. For some people, simply petting their dogs makes them feel less stressed. According to the Harvard Medical School, owning a dog can provide companionship, improve the lives of older individuals, make a person more social and less isolated, help make a person more calmer, more mindful in their life. Their research shows that dog owners have lower blood pressure and healthier cholesterol levels, and lower risk of heart disease, than non-dog owners.

Craig Perry, the corporate farmer who rents the farm from the widow lady, has one of his part-time workers using a track hoe and a bulldozer to clean out several old fence rows that are over grown with tall trees. That operator is doing a magnificent job making the farm look well-managed. My great nephew, Corey Harrison, lives about 800 feet from my house. He is trimming the low hanging branches on the cedar trees between our houses. He will soon fence in the pasture field, for two horses, for his daughters, Katie and Lilly. I saved those, now tall trees, 50 years ago. I have a saying that the land, for a

short period of time, belongs to those who care for it. In the end, the land will claim us, then, Christ will claim our souls from the land.

John F. Hall

\*Read other stories by John F. Hall and others at: <http://www.ajlambert.com>