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Clarion Review

Picture Books

Golden Reflections
Carolee Nance Kolve
978-1-4490-4641-5
Four Stars (out of Five)

There is no shortage of books written about dogs—and lately, it seems, more and more books are being written by dogs. The dog is a beloved member of the American family, so it is not surprising that writers are putting words into dogs' mouths.

Golden Reflections: A Dog's Tale uses this technique to tell the story of Lady, who relates her life from puppyhood to adulthood. One of twelve golden retriever pups, Lady finds herself sold to a family with a young boy and girl.

In an autobiographical yet easy-to-understand writing style, Kolve manages to tell Lady's story as well as provide the canine with an engaging personality and a distinct sense of humor. Lady begins her memoir by informing readers that, "typing is no picnic for a dog. Our paws were made for important work (like digging!), and this keyboard could use a major new design for the canine customer."

Lady has many of the best qualities of a golden retriever—she is affectionate and likes chasing balls—but she isn't perfect. One of her bad habits is "consoling" herself with food, and she gets into trouble for stealing goodies from the kitchen. Readers can't help but laugh along with her when she describes her antics: "My favorite score was a wheel of brie cheese in puff pastry which Mom put on that nice, low table in the living room."

At the end of the story, Lady is approaching the end of her life. She describes growing old and moving on in a spiritual way, telling readers, "I've learned that once we love someone, they never really leave us. In your mind and your heart, where it matters most, they are always with you."

Golden Reflections is predictable and doesn't have much suspense or drama, but it does include some valuable lessons about love, life, and growing up. The author does a particularly good job of addressing Lady's spiritual thoughts about passing on in a gentle and peaceful way.

Children will likely find Lady an endearing character, and they will be charmed by the

color illustrations that give the story warmth and life. Golden Reflections: A Dog's Tale is not just a good story about a dog, it's a good story told by a dog.

Barry Silverstein