

Memoirs of a Papillon: The Canine Guide to Living with Humans without Going Mad

Dennis Fried

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Humans usually narrate memoirs, and furthermore, humans usually author them. *Memoirs of a Papillon* deviates from this norm: Genevieve, a pure bred Papillon, narrates her puppyhood, her life with Katrina and Denny, and the advantages and disadvantages of living with humans.

Genevieve's memoirs of the first two and a half years of her life include a trip to obedience school, the terrors of the veterinarian, and her first birthday party. Her observations cover familiar territory, but are never cliché nor typical. Genevieve explains, for instance, why humans are wrong when they attach reasons to everything canines do: "Sometimes we chew on the curtains, not because we're bored, but because they're waving around, making fun of us."

Early in the book Genevieve tells the touching story of how Denny resisted when Katrina attempted to bring a pet into their lives. His first dog, Sardo, had been the family pet for fourteen years, and after he died, Denny had avoided committing to another one. Nonetheless, Katrina continued to look for the right dog should he change his mind. Only when Denny found the cute pet toys that Katrina had hidden away in their closet—just in case he changed his mind—did he give in: "The thought of poor Katrina wandering around the store, picking out toys for a dog that wasn't to be, melted his heart."

The Appendix provides a quick quiz to answer the question that many canines must have asked about their owners, titled, "How Intelligent Is Your Human?" Genevieve measures intelligence in humans by whether or not they possess the keen logic skills of a canine.

11. What does your human do when you lick his face?

- a) Jerks his head away. 0 points
- b) Closes his eyes and makes a face. 1 point
- c) Looks at you and smiles. 2 points
- d) Licks you back. 3 points

The higher you score, it seems, the closer you are to intelligence.

Genevieve has received the aid of Dennis Fried, Ph.D., or Denny, to put this narrative onto paper. *Memoirs of a Papillon* is well written and provides humorous insight into exactly what your pet is thinking. For non-pet owners, it should help clarify what they are missing by failing to bring a Papillon into their life. Genevieve has fashioned a book that will further lift the veil on the relationships between canines and humans.

RONALD D. LANKFORD, JR. (September / October 2000)

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