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Tales from the Dog Listener: 28 Secrets to Being Your Dog's Best Friend
Jan Fennell
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This author is *Nanny 911* for dogs. After seeing the famous "Horse Whisperer" Monty Roberts in 1989, Fennell developed a positive approach to dog training based on a dog's natural desire to be part of a pack. Her first three books focused on the techniques she uses to transfer leadership from dog to owner; this book addresses the question of what makes a good dog owner in the first place, through anecdotes about exemplary relationships between dogs and humans.

As a child, Fennell often accompanied her great-uncle Jim while he sold vegetables from a small horse-drawn cart in the streets of West London. Back in those days, animals were seen as little more than property, but Jim had traveled with Buffalo Bill Cody's Wild West Show and adopted the attitude of companionship that he witnessed between the Native Americans and their animals. Jim and his pony, Kitty, had an intimate bond that left a deep impression on the young Fennell.

Jim's friend Albie reinforced this attitude with the way he treated his dog, Danny.

When someone suggested that a dog should be made to do what its owner wanted, Albie replied, "If I wanted young Janice here to do something, what do you think would be the best way to get her to do it? Ask her nicely or show her the back of my hand?" Hearing an adult put a dog on par with a human was a new experience that stuck with Fennel throughout her life.

The author explains that it's normal for dog owners, especially those with damaged rescue dogs, to want to smother them with love to make up for their past mistreatment, but Ruth, a kennel maid at an animal sanctuary, taught Fennell that focusing on the healing process first is necessary in creating a positive relationship. Dudley was a racing greyhound who had been found covered with fleas, suffering from mange, and so thin that his waist could be encircled by one hand. Because he had been so abused, it took months of hard work to bring Dudley back to a healthy state. It was over a year before he recovered emotionally, but Ruth possessed the patience to stick with him and let him come to trust her in his own time.

Each of the relationships explored in this volume helped Fennell develop her attitude toward training. A short summary of the author's theory and method would have strengthened

the book for those unfamiliar with her work, but the overall theme of what makes a good owner great is well illustrated by the stories she shares here. Fennell effectively shows that the main ingredient to a successful relationship with a dog is the same as for relationships with humans: respect.