

WHEN HARRY MET MINNIE



A True
Story of
Love
and
Friendship



MARTHA TEICHNER


CELADON
BOOKS
NEW YORK

WHEN HARRY MET MINNIE. Copyright © 2021 by Martha Teichner. All rights reserved. Printed in the United States of America. For information, address Celadon Books, a Division of Macmillan Publishers, 120 Broadway, New York, NY 10271.

www.celadonbooks.com

Designed by Kelly S. Too

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Teichner, Martha, author.

Title: When Harry met Minnie : a true story of love and friendship / Martha Teichner.

Description: First edition. | New York : Celadon Books, 2021.

Identifiers: LCCN 2020024952 | ISBN 9781250212535 (hardcover) | ISBN 9781250212511 (ebook)

Subjects: LCSH: Dog owners—United States—Biography. | Bull terrier—United States—Biography. | Human-animal relationships. | Dog walking.

Classification: LCC SF422.82.T45 A3 2021 | DDC 636.70092 [B]—dc23

LC record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2020024952>

Our books may be purchased in bulk for promotional, educational, or business use. Please contact your local bookseller or the Macmillan Corporate and Premium Sales Department at 1-800-221-7945, extension 5442, or by email at MacmillanSpecialMarkets@macmillan.com.

First Edition: 2021

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

For Minnie and Harry and, of course, Carol



one

CHANCE ENCOUNTER

On most Saturday mornings, I leave for the Union Square farmers market early, when Manhattan feels as if it belongs just to me. I need to go there every week I'm in town. That need has less to do with fruits and vegetables, cheese and flowers, more to do with a New York state of mind. I need the brightness of day, the emptiness of the streets, the license to look at the city, listen to it, when it's still sleepy, just waking up. I need the weather, season to season. And I need at least one dog walking along beside me, even better, two, as I push my grocery cart east, across town, and then back. Without a dog or two beside me, I feel incomplete. I catch myself talking to one or the other even if they're not there and then feel like an idiot.

I know the route so well I can walk it in my mind. I can conjure it up in winter when the light is thin and gray, the color of old stone buildings, or in the summer when the

morning sun blinds me as I head east on Twenty-second Street. In the spring, when cherry blossoms make the sidewalks look like natural parade floats arched in pink pom-poms, and in the fall, when West Chelsea brownstones dress up for Halloween.

As I walk, I love to look at the ornate facades of what passed for skyscrapers a century or so ago reflected as mocking, fun-house distortions of themselves on the new glass boxes around them. I wonder when I see the row of stone lion heads above the windows of the Old Navy store what sort of past lives the building had. I always stop and get out a dollar bill well before I reach, propped against his wall, the homeless man who likes dogs. He's there most Saturday mornings and has asked me to follow him on YouTube rapping.

On each block, there are a hundred things to notice: a man in a bright orange shirt riding a bike no-handed, slaloming down Broadway singing, a stretch of sidewalk laid with worn squares of slate shiny after being hosed down, giant blow-up soccer balls outside bars during the World Cup. For dogs: garbage and dropped pizza slices and little rivers to be sniffed and other dogs.

In my opinion, the Union Square farmers market is reason enough to live in New York City. On Saturdays in the summer, there are more than sixty stalls. Chefs, accompanied by helpers pushing giant wheelbarrows or carts, cruise for the best strawberries or exotic kale or the tastiest heirloom tomatoes to turn into somebody's birthday or date-night meal. The market is about possibility.

When I began going to the Union Square farmers market in 1994, not long after I moved to New York, Piggy went with me. My first bull terrier, he was a brindle, meaning he looked

like a white dog wearing a blackish-brownish striped jacket that was too small. I got him as a crazy puppy, while I was the CBS News correspondent in South Africa. I was transferred to London and eventually back to the United States. He came along. Making our way to and from the farmers market, a three-mile round-trip, was more like waterskiing or chariot driving than walking. I accompanied him. He didn't accompany me. We went his way, and the route was different every week. He considered the farmers market one vast treat opportunity. I'd buy him apples and pears, plums and peaches, whatever was in season, whatever was heaped high on tables or in crates on the ground.

• • •

GOING TO THE farmers market with Piggy, I always felt as if we were up to something together. It was fun. At some point, I couldn't say when, our weekly expeditions became important to me.

On Saturday mornings, Piggy and I would get to the market just as it was opening, to avoid crowds, and in the summer, to avoid the heat. There, we would usually meet another bull terrier, Zeke, and his owners, Mike and Julia. More than twenty-five years later, I still see Mike and Julia every Saturday. After Zeke came Simon. After Simon came Sunny, a brindle like Piggy, but bigger and much, much better behaved. Likewise, after Piggy came Goose, a scoundrel and a thief if there ever was one, and then Minnie joined us. A sorry-looking rescue when I got her, she transformed into a sleek glamour-puss, full of attitude.

Bull terriers are not that common a breed. To see one is fairly unusual, but if you went to the Union Square farmers market on a Saturday morning leading up to the time the

events in this story took place, you might have seen as many as four. Sunny; Seamus, a wildly exuberant miniature who looked like a junior version of Sunny; Minnie and Goose, that is until Goose had to be put down. Then there were three.

The Saturday market is loaded with dogs, all kinds. But I have to say, tourists go crazy at the sight of a whole gathering of bull terriers standing together and have to take pictures. The jam ladies always smiled and waved as I went by with Minnie. So did the NYC rooftop-honey man. A woman with streaks of pink in her hair always knelt to pet her. We always seemed to run into her near the goat-cheese stall. Annie, a seventy-something-year-old psychologist who always wears a baseball cap, wanders the market feeding her favorite dogs fistfuls of treats, regaling their owners with stories about her various preoccupations, which include NASCAR races and how to be happy. Where I buy apples, the man in charge of the stand always used to laugh when Goose would help himself to a big juicy one from a crate on the ground. I'd offer to pay, but most of the time the man would wave me away. When Goose couldn't make it all the way to the market anymore, the man asked me where he was. If the weather was really bad, if it was too hot or too cold or raining or snowing, and Minnie refused to go with me, I felt invisible. I've been a correspondent with CBS News for more than forty years. Six million or more people watch *CBS Sunday Morning*, where I've worked since 1993. I get recognized every day no matter where I am, but the funny thing is, when I go to the Union Square market dogless, it's as if I don't exist, which has advantages, sometimes. I like being a bit player in the happy weekly street theater that takes place among the fruits and vegetables and flowers, in which the four-legged actors, not the two-legged ones, are the stars.

• • •

JULY 23, 2016, started out the way most summer Saturdays did. It was warm, sunny. Six months after Goose's death, Minnie still didn't want to go on walks. She still missed him, still looked for him, still seemed sad, so getting her to the market took some convincing. Bull terriers are exceptionally good at refusing. They're genetically wired to be stubborn, so we carried on our argument until I tugged and nudged her to the end of our block. We crossed the street, and she gave in.

• • •

SOMETIME IN EARLY 2007, Minnie was dumped to die. She wore no collar or anything else to identify her. She had just had puppies, so maybe a puppy mill had used her for breeding and then gotten rid of her. Who knows what happened to the puppies? It was cold, days around twenty degrees, nights around ten. How she survived is a miracle. She was picked up in a rough area east of East Flatbush in Brooklyn by New York's Animal Care & Control dogcatchers and taken to the big ACC shelter not far away. Thousands of animals are destroyed there every year.

On a Saturday early that February, a reporter from *Rolling Stone* magazine, Coco McPherson, embedded herself as a volunteer at the shelter hoping to write an article about how its kill policy worked and why it was so difficult to find out which animals were docketed to die and when. She'd adopted a succession of unwanted pit bulls and multiple cats from shelters. She was surprised to find a purebred bull terrier at such a place. The workers had named the dog Lil' Kim, after the rapper who went to prison for lying about her friends' involvement in a shooting. The poor thing was a wreck, so emaciated she looked

like a skeleton, all the bones in her tail showing, all her ribs. Underneath the filth, she was white. She'd had a bath, but this was grime that would have to grow out. A broad stripe of yellow fur ran down the middle of her back, the result of malnutrition. Because she had given birth so recently, her tits still hung down. After a week at the shelter living on borrowed time, she charmed Coco McPherson. "Spay her, and I'll pick her up next week. She's too cute to kill."

The same day, Coco went into the Barking Zoo, her neighborhood pet-accessory store in Chelsea, and mine. She asked the clerks if they knew anybody who might be willing to adopt a bull terrier. She had three dogs and two cats and couldn't manage another animal in her apartment. A woman behind the counter said, "Oh, we know a woman with a big, sweet bull terrier. Maybe she'd take her." On weekends, I typically walked Goose to the Barking Zoo and bought him a big jerky treat, like a mother taking her child for an ice cream. It was a bribe, a way to make him get some exercise, so he wouldn't just stand around refusing to move away from the front stoop. On Sunday, the day after Coco McPherson had been in, I convinced Goose it would be worth his while to make the trip. The woman who rang up his treat said, "Oh, am I glad to see you." Suspicious, I responded, "Why? I was in here yesterday." She told me about the bull terrier in the shelter and asked if I would consider taking her. I replied, "I don't want a second dog. One is enough." She asked me to think about it and said she would have Coco McPherson call me. I could discuss it with her.

I'm a soft touch. I agreed to "foster" the dog. The following Saturday at noon, I arrived at the Barking Zoo with Goose. Coco brought the rescue dog. In the crowded, busy store, the two of them sized each other up. Goose was more

interested in treats than in this other animal, who seemed shell-shocked and too scared to be interested in anything at all. Coco bought her a sweater. We led the two dogs to my apartment, then decided to take the rescue dog to the vet, whose clinic was at the end of my block, a five-minute walk unless you're walking a bull terrier. After a week and a half of being fed in the shelter, she weighed just barely thirty-four pounds. Her appropriate weight is around fifty pounds. Her spaying had been botched, so she had a serious infection. A thousand dollars later, I took her home. I think I had already decided to keep her, rationalizing the decision by saying to myself that it would be unfair to put her through yet another rupture. She had suffered enough. I decided to rename her Minnie, not Mini like the car or because she was small, but Minnie, as in Mouse. She just seemed like a Minnie.

At first, she seemed terrified to eat. She would stand over her bowl rigid, staring at it. I found myself trying to imagine her story, to figure out the mystery of her past. Minnie immediately took over my laundry bin. It's tubular, maybe two and a half feet high, and is made out of stiffened canvas reinforced with wires. She tipped it over and burrowed inside with my dirty clothes. The first time, before I'd realized she was inside, I saw it convulse suddenly. I jumped and then saw her. Every time I ironed, she sat under the ironing board. She liked women but was afraid of some men. I could imagine a half dozen scenarios, given those clues.

Every day she tried to kill Goose. He was a generous, sweet boy who was happy to welcome a companion. Minnie would stare at him, and everybody else for that matter, with a wild, wary devil-dog look. She figured out quickly that I was the key to her well-being, to meals and warmth and attention. She would attack Goose whenever he tried to

get near me. When bull terriers fight, it can be dangerous. They're strong. After multiple bloody dogfights, I worried that I would have to give her up. I didn't want to think about shunting her off to someone else, but I didn't want a dead dog or to be seriously injured myself trying to separate the two of them.

It troubled me that Minnie never seemed to learn her name. No matter how many times I repeated it or how loudly I said it, she failed to react. She seemed to be startled and would instinctively snarl and lunge if anyone came up behind her. Soon I suspected she might be deaf and had her tested. Sure enough. It explained a lot about her behavior. Learning that she couldn't hear at all made me marvel again at how she'd managed to survive in a not-so-nice part of New York City before being picked up by the dogcatchers. How had she avoided getting hit by a car?

When the fights were at their worst, I was working on a *CBS Sunday Morning* story about a man named Bill Berloni, who trains shelter dogs for Broadway shows and is the behaviorist for the New York Humane Society. He evaluates new arrivals at the Humane Society shelter to determine whether they're ready for placement and what sort of home each needs. I told him about Minnie and how afraid I was I'd have to give her up. His advice: establish a hierarchy. In the Teichner pack, I had to be Number One, the Alpha. Then came Goose. Minnie came last. He suggested physically positioning Minnie behind Goose in the kitchen when treats were being given out or when they got their meals. When we headed out on walks, I had to arrange to go out the door first, then Goose, then Minnie. If she snarled at Goose, my instructions were to reprimand her and put her in her crate. If she looked at me

before picking a fight, I was supposed to praise her. With Bill Berloni's help, within a month, the fights stopped.

Minnie became devoted to Goose. He was her guide and eventually her sneaky partner in crime. When she arrived, she wasn't housebroken. Goose taught her to go outside. She wouldn't walk without him. Every day, when I got home, Goose would find a way to tip over my handbag on the floor. It didn't matter how high up I put it, he'd get it. With the contents spread out under my dining table, he'd carefully hunt for cough drops. He wasn't interested in the pens or my hairbrush or checkbook. He loved cough drops. Given my line of work, I always had cough drops in my bag. Broadcasters tend to need them. Minnie would appear, take some for herself, then disappear, leaving Goose to get in trouble for piracy. She usually hid in my bed. As soon as the bed is made, Minnie unmakes it. She snorts, paws at the sheets ferociously, tosses back the duvet with her nose, then buries herself underneath the covers. I find her wrapped up as if she were in a cocoon or else sleeping with her head on a pillow, looking innocent enough to suggest that she should be a saint. It took a year, but Skinny Minnie filled out and became very grand indeed in the jeweled collar I felt she had to have, convinced as she was that she was a glamorous movie star or maybe a princess.

For nearly half his life, Goose had serious heart issues. By the time I had to have him put to sleep, at the beginning of 2016, he was taking half a dozen different medications. He could barely walk. We were in South Carolina when he collapsed. I took him to the vet, but she misdiagnosed or underestimated his condition.

I took him home. Seeing him suffer was terrible. Minnie

would sniff Goose from time to time and try to make me pay attention to her. She watched at the door as I struggled to get Goose into the car when I took him back to the vet. Only later, when I came home without him, when Minnie realized he was gone, did she react. She looked everywhere for him, not just in South Carolina but once we got back to New York. She checked under the stairs down to the garden, where he always went to pee, and in the kitchen by his water bowl. She sniffed his bed, his toys, his sweaters, not just once but every day, again and again. She seemed scared, vulnerable, the little deaf dog who had lost her companion of nine years, her protector, her good luck charm. Getting her to go for walks became an ordeal. She didn't want to eat. She stopped being a cheeky, joyful flirt. Goose died in January. Well into the summer, Minnie was still despondent. Dogs do mourn. I was afraid she would be permanently depressed. I decided I needed to find an older, male bull terrier to keep her company and kept checking all the rescue websites, but none materialized.

I told myself I was trying to help *her*, but the truth is, I was just as sad as Minnie. I missed my Goosey desperately. I got him from a breeder in North Carolina in the fall of 2002. On the day I picked him up, when he was three months old, my cousin went with me. She gave him a woolly fleece toy shaped rather like a gingerbread man. He immediately put it between his front paws and began kneading it and sucking one of its arms, as if he were nursing. Over time, the arm stretched out, so it looked a little grotesque. Goosey never outgrew sucking on his fleece man. He wore out many. He and Minnie played tug-of-war with a few and tore them to pieces. Often on Sunday mornings, while I watched *CBS Sunday Morning*, I sewed them up with whatever color thread

came in all the little hotel sewing kits I had collected in my travels, so most of Goose's fleece men had strange red or blue or gray Frankenstein scars. After he died, for months I took the last of his fleece men to bed with me and clung to him. I packed him in my suitcase when I traveled on assignment, just to have him with me in whatever unfamiliar hotel room I checked into late at night. I still have him on a bench near my bed.

. . .

SO, ON THAT July 23, as Minnie and I made our way to the Union Square market, some of the bright, Saturday-morning pleasure I always felt was dulled by how much we still missed Goose. We had no idea what we were about to walk into, that our lives were about to be transformed, that a chance encounter would soon set in motion a sad and wonderful New York story . . . this story.

It was eight-thirty, and that mattered, as it turned out. I had bought my flowers already. Minnie and I were standing at the northeast corner of the market, for anybody who knows the place, between the Stokes Farm stand and Cato Corner Cheese. I was talking to Mike and Julia, Sunny's people. Minnie was ignoring Sunny, as she usually did. A couple of other acquaintances had stopped to chat, too.

A stocky, bearded man with tattoos on his arms approached us. He had a large, fluffy golden retriever with him. I recognized them from walking with Goose and Minnie early in the morning in the park along the Hudson River at Chelsea Piers. Once, big steamships docked at Chelsea Piers. Now it's a big sports complex surrounded by grassy areas and bike paths. It had been a couple of years since I'd seen the man and his dog there. Goose could still make it to the

river then. For months this man and I had talked, carrying on long, meaty conversations some days, just saying hello other times. I'd go away on assignment. When I got back, he'd be there. I don't think he ever knew my name or I his, but we knew each other's dogs' names. Typical among New York dog-walking friends. Then, suddenly, he disappeared. Another Chelsea Piers dog-walking acquaintance told me he'd moved way uptown. Now here he was at the farmers market.

"Where's Goose?" he asked, pointing down at Minnie. I told him. I said that Goose's heart had failed and mine was broken, that Minnie was inconsolable, that I'd been looking for an older, male bull terrier to be Minnie's companion but so far hadn't found one to adopt.

He rummaged in his pocket and pulled out his phone. He swiped the screen, paused, then did it again, shaking his head, then again. "Wait," he said, as he found what he was looking for. He showed me a photograph of Goose and Minnie in their winter coats. The two dogs looked stubbornly uninterested, not just in having their pictures taken, but uninterested in walking, uninterested in anything, as only bull terriers can be. I laughed, thinking . . . unlike your big, eager golden. "Remind me what your dog's name is." "Teddy," he answered. "Remember, I took this picture to send to my friend Carol, who has a bull terrier?" By this time, he and I were by ourselves, our dogs at our feet. The others had drifted off to do their shopping. "Vaguely, it's coming back to me," I replied. I remembered weeks of standing in the cold dressed in so many layers of fleece and down, I felt as if I were wearing an extra person or could pass for the Michelin Man.

The chunky ring of keys hanging from a heavy chain in his back pocket, the tattoos, and the shaved head contradicted his careful speech, his resonant voice. His beard and

mustache were carefully trimmed, sculpted almost, very nineteenth-century gentleman. I'd known him for several years but didn't know him at all. Who was he? Who was his friend Carol with the bull terrier?

When I go to the market, I take my iPod, which has a built-in FM radio. I hang it around my neck on a lanyard and listen to NPR's *Weekend Edition* starting at eight o'clock. I'm a professional news junkie. I have to be. I stood there with an earbud stuck in one ear, the other one hanging down, half listening to the news, half speculating about this man I hadn't seen in a long time. I half heard him say, "Carol is dying of liver cancer. She's desperate to find a home for Harry, her dog. He's eleven and a half. She's more concerned about him than she is about herself. He's got some issues, but he's very sweet. Would you take him?"

"What?" Suddenly, I was paying attention. "Say that again." He repeated what he'd just told me, but this time added, "Nobody wants him. The vet has warned her she should be prepared to have him put down. Would you take him?"

"Well . . ." I felt startled and a little light-headed. I knew, I really did, that something big and important had just begun. "Well, maybe, if he and Minnie get along. Possibly." I suggested getting the two dogs together to meet. He said he had a car and could drive Harry and Carol to my apartment. In spite of the years we'd been acquainted, all those months we'd spent talking, we had to introduce ourselves. Stephen Miller Siegel . . . Martha Teichner. When I go to the market, I take my passport and all my credit cards out of my wallet and only carry the cash I need and one business card for identification. I handed it to him. He looked at it and took in that I work for CBS News, that I am a correspondent on a show he watches regularly. When I walk my dogs in the morning or

go to the farmers market, I look more like a bag lady than the person people see on television. I wear sloppy clothes and no makeup, but even so, people recognize me, often just because they know my voice. Evidently, walking our dogs at Chelsea Piers, Stephen never made the connection, which is fine with me. He gave me his card and said he would contact Carol.

We went our separate ways. It was a five-minute exchange. That's it. If I'd been standing somewhere else; if I'd been there at eight forty-five instead of eight-thirty; if it had been raining, and Minnie and I had stayed home, Stephen would not have seen us. In more than two decades of going to the Union Square market practically every Saturday morning, year-round, never, not once, had I ever seen him there before.

Chance had just made us characters in a remarkable story, a very New York story, about friendship and community . . . about Life and Death, as gloriously rich and funny as it inevitably turned out to be achingly sad.

All sorts of circumstances put us in the right place at the right time that July day, as if we'd been destined to be there, random circumstances that had all lined up just so.

Late that afternoon, I received an email from Carol Fertig telling me that Stephen had been in touch.

"I believe he told you a bit about my 'situation' and my beloved dog/child Harry. . . . Nothing would make me happier than knowing he would have a loving home to go to."

We agreed to meet the following Saturday.



two

INTELLIGENCE GATHERING

Suddenly, I was nervous. What was I getting myself into? Why was this beginning to remind me of online dating for dogs? Or two overly protective mothers trying to arrange a marriage?

A lot of emails went back and forth.

I sent a reply to Carol. I asked her to tell me about Harry, how old he was, whether he had health issues, if he got along with other dogs. She sent me this email the next morning:

From: Carol Fertig
To: Martha Teichner

M—So since last night I have been trying to figure out how I could succinctly describe Harry to you . . . an impossible task.

So, I thought I might as well get the “CONS” out of the way:

1. He takes meds; puppy Zoloft (he was a problem child apparently too much testosterone, he has now mellowed and is a big wooz) and Phenobarbital. He has taken these for years and have totally helped his “issues”-like going ballistic over skate boards and rolling suitcases. He takes Rymadyl for arthritis and Tynell (I think that’s the name) for colitis. Dr. Farber is always impressed with his blood work and what good shape he is in.
 2. I have trained Harry very well, he is a great listener but he does have a problem with large dogs. I have adjusted my own “radar” to keep an eye on this but I do have to be watching. Again, he is great with smaller dogs, always wagging his tail and wanting to engage-he especially loves those Frenchies.
 3. I don’t know if you have occasion to have a hose in your life, but if you do you can be sure he will destroy it as an act of protection of you. He also does this on the street if he sees someone using one in the street.
 4. He has a sensitive stomach so eats Dr. Hills special food. I order from Chewy.com every few weeks.
- All this to say he is on some level a money pit.

EXCENTRICITIES

When he was about 4 months old Harry discovered a metal bowl at the dog park. It has been in his life ever since. He is incredibly smart and after a time he figured out he could put a tennis ball (or 2) in the bowl and flip it out and catch it. He does this for hours and will entertain (or not) guests for hours with this “trick.” I am going to send you videos of Harry with his bowl under separate cover.

PROS

1. He is at heart a big wooz, a love bug, a big baby.
2. He is so great with kids. The kids in my building adore him, they sit on him, stroke him, kiss him etc.
3. He is outgoing to friends (am sure your BT’s the same, they are indeed clowns).

4. He is so smart. He will figure out ways to let you know exactly how he feels (if I try to get him to do a second poop on the street and he doesn't want to he will just lay down in the street and not move until I finally give in and take him home).

5. Like all BTs he is relentless, notice how I put this under pros, it is one of the things I love about the breed. Having said this, he can tell by your tone what he should and should not do and will abide by your wishes.

6. He has a gentle bite.

Again, I am going to send you a number of short videos so you can see some of this for yourself.

I hope this is helpful.

Also, I am going to call Dr. Farber tomorrow to get his take on all this.

Again, looking forward.

Xc and H

A weird coincidence on top of a weird chance encounter . . . Carol and I took our dogs to the same vet, Dr. Michael Farber. I asked her to give him permission to talk to me about Harry. I said I would allow her to discuss Minnie and me with him. A breach of doctor/patient confidentiality in the name of matchmaking . . . and to calm what I realized was our mutual uneasiness.

A money pit? An animal who was obsessive-compulsive, had arthritis and chronic colitis, and attacked bigger dogs? Oh, dear. Good with kids though. I don't have any kids. Who in their right mind would look at Harry's list of pros and cons and think he'd be a good candidate for adoption?

Only a bull terrier lover.

On Sunday, Carol sent me a cell phone video of Harry

putting multiple tennis balls into a metal bowl and waving it around, another of him attacking a hose on somebody's balcony, and a third of an unseen person (Carol) flinging his metal bowl like a Frisbee, the bowl clanging as it hits concrete, and Harry racing after it. I could see that he was mostly black and white. I sent her photos of a sleeping Minnie, white on white in my bathtub, where she likes to go when it's hot.

Carol replied:

OMG, those chunky little legs!!!! That Minnie!

Have put a call in to Dr. FARBER, will respond more fully once I have spoken with him.

Xc and H

On Monday, Dr. Farber reassured Carol that I am competent at dog care and would be a good dog stepmother for Harry. He admitted to me he'd advised Carol she had to come to terms with the likelihood she would have to have Harry put down, that it would be impossible to "rehome" him. Who would want an eleven-and-a-half-year-old dog with all those issues?

So, I thought, not only had Carol been told she had terminal cancer; if that wasn't nightmare enough, now she had to face the probability that the dog she loved more than anything would have to die, too, just because she was dying. What a horrible, double calamity. Dr. Farber didn't try to talk me into taking Harry. He did say Harry was sweet, his issues manageable, and that if we were careful about how we introduced Minnie and Harry, they would probably get along. He suggested short meetings, then longer visits, working up to sleepovers.

That night I dreamed Goose was alive. We were sitting in the back of a car. I was holding him. He was young, healthy, warm, his snuffly, sturdy, gentle self. When I woke up, and it wasn't true, I was desolate. I tried to wish the dream back, but it wouldn't come.

Carol and I decided to introduce the dogs the following Saturday.

In the meantime, I googled her. A bonanza. The first item to come up was from a website called New York Social Diary, dated January 2013, a long interview with all kinds of pictures. There was Carol sitting on a sofa with Harry draped across her lap. Harry with his metal bowl and tennis balls. Her Maine coon cat, Bruno. (A cat, too? Hmmm.) Objects Carol had designed. Objects Carol had collected. Her eclectic, stylish apartment. In her snug study, painted in a color called tangerine, a whole wall with photos and clippings pinned to it, pictures of fashionable people and clothing and furniture, castles, flowers, a Roman bust. *Vogue* magazine legend Diana Vreeland very much in evidence. Here and there snapshots of Carol dressed and made up to look like Vreeland, in Vreeland-like poses. The wall reminded me of storyboards I'd seen clothing designers use to inspire a look or a season, but covered with much, much more of everything, a thick clutter of ideas, overlapping like shingles on a roof. In the photographs, I saw shelves jam-packed with books surrounding an artfully arranged stack of a dozen or so orange Hermès boxes.

I clicked again and up came an article from 2012 in *Elle Decor* magazine about her apartment, a rental in what used to be the headquarters of JPMorgan, across the street from the New York Stock Exchange. Wow . . . no internationally

known decorating magazine would do a story on my apartment. I scrolled down and found a page with a red logo at the top that said THE MET and then, under the heading “All Collection Records,” a picture of a coat made out of pieced-together panels of rust and black wool. Date: early 1980s. Designer: Carol Fertig. Carol had a garment in the collection of the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Another wow.

I learned from my search that she’d designed clothing but also lots of other things: furniture, home accessories, even jewelry. She’d done brand strategy for a who’s who in the fashion world, a bunch of those glamorous names whose ads for clothes and fragrances you have to page through before getting to the table of contents in magazines such as *Vogue* or *Vanity Fair*. In one interview, she admitted to being “addicted to television.” In the mid-1980s, she was one of the founders of a magazine called *New York Woman*.

Peering at the pictures of Carol with her short, curly gray hair, in her big, owly glasses, I realized that I’d met her, long ago, sometime in the mid-to-late 1990s. Then, she had a different bull terrier, an all-white one. I was walking up Tenth Avenue one hot summer Sunday and came upon them at a restaurant with outdoor tables. I would tend to remember anyone with a bull terrier, but these two were singular. Carol was an imposing figure sitting there. She wore an extravagant, floppy-brimmed straw sun hat and giant dark glasses. The hazy snapshot in the back of my mind was of someone who looked slightly eccentric, flamboyant, wearing a dress that was ample and unconventional in some way. I explained to her that I, too, had a bull terrier, who was at home. His name was Piggy. She introduced the barrel-chested dog at her feet as Violet. Violet is not a name anyone would ever forget when attached to a bull terrier.

Bull terriers are odd dogs. With their egg-shaped heads, slitty eyes, and pointy ears, they're funny looking. Think Spuds MacKenzie or the Target dog. BTs are opinionated, exuberant, stubborn, extremely silly, and loving, but at times too smart for their own good. What does that say about bull terrier owners? Every BT person I've ever met admits liking that these animals are subversive by nature. So right away, I figured that I understood something about Carol and that we'd get along.

I felt a little sneaky looking her up on the internet, but not that sneaky. Just about every time now I do an interview, the interview subject arrives with the printed-out results of a Google search and knows as much about me as I do. I'm sure Carol looked me up, too. She would have found out that I started at CBS News in 1977, that I've reported from all over the world: Latin America, Europe, the Middle East, and southern Africa. For more than a dozen years I was sent practically everywhere there was a war. She might have turned up a black-and-white photograph of me in a helmet sitting cross-legged in the Saudi desert during the Persian Gulf War in 1991, a tank shadowy behind me as I write in a reporter's notebook, or another, taken in 1988 on my fortieth birthday. I'm facing a cameraman about to do an on-camera. We're surrounded by what look like walking skeletons, victims of a civil war in Mozambique that lasted more than twenty years. They'd silently appeared out of the bush, most of them naked, at a camp where the charity CARE was offering them food. I remember interviewing a woman that day who was so emaciated that I could see her pulse through her chest, her heart beating just under her skin. I've been at *CBS Sunday Morning* since the end of 1993. It's been much safer.

If Carol had googled “Martha Teichner bull terriers,” she would have seen a picture of me with Minnie and Goose, our heads together, all of us smiling.

. . .

AS SATURDAY APPROACHED, I realized how much I wanted it to work out between Harry and Minnie. There were good arguments, a lot of them, against taking Harry, even if the two dogs got along. But I heard myself trying to rationalize away his negatives, trying to discount the fact that I would have Harry for the sad years of his life, the even more expensive years. I would be the one, not Carol, who would have to make the decision someday to put him to sleep. I was sure I would love him enough to be torn to pieces . . . again, when I had to hold him in my arms as he died, just as I was shattered when that moment came for Goose. I tried to be realistic, to put the brakes on my excitement, but I couldn't.

Minnie, I knew, wouldn't accept a younger dog. She doesn't like puppies, so the right companion for her had to be older, a dog who, almost certainly, would have issues, just as Harry did.

And there was another reason I was fighting my better judgment. My mother's dog, Winkie.

He was a Cairn Terrier, gray, like Toto in *The Wizard of Oz*, the last in a succession of Cairns my mother had over decades. When she retired to a house I'd bought her near Charleston, South Carolina, Winkie developed allergies so severe, his sides had nothing but patchy wisps of hair, more scabby skin than fur. He was only allowed outside on a fenced wooden deck that was always swept clean, so he wouldn't come in contact with grass or pine straw, which would make his allergies worse. Walks were forbidden. Nothing helped,

not his weekly medicated baths, not the prednisone, which made him incontinent.

Winkie was timid. He trusted my mother but practically no one else. Even when he was a puppy, it took coaxing before he allowed me to pet him or play with him. He liked it when I put him in a shoulder bag and carried him around under my arm. He felt secure and would lick my face.

My mother lived a solitary life. She and Winkie had each other. It was enough, until my mother was diagnosed with colon cancer in 1990. I was living in London. I flew to Charleston and stayed with her for her surgery and as long as I could afterward. I was back for her second surgery a year later, when the colon cancer had spread to her liver, and for almost all the other times she was in the hospital. I was there, taking care of Winkie, and then I wasn't. An aunt also came and went, but too many times Winkie was alone in the house with a couple of lights left on for hours and hours and sometimes all night. When the person paid to come in and care for him arrived to feed him or let him out, he would hide under my mother's bed.

Her cancer was terminal, and she knew it. She said she wanted Winkie put down after her death, his ashes buried with hers. In addition to his skin problems, he was ten and had cataracts. He was another dog with "issues." No one wanted him either. I couldn't take him. I already had a dog, and I wasn't sure Winkie, with so many health concerns, would even survive the mandatory six-month quarantine England required then before admitting pets.

I was with my mother when she died and then stayed on in South Carolina for a few weeks to clear up her affairs. Winkie and I spent time together. Having him near me was a comfort. I think he was glad to have company. I cuddled

him and tried to make him feel loved. I made calls, lots of them, trying, hoping, somehow to find a home for him, but my mother had been right. No one wanted him. I put off following her wishes until I couldn't anymore. I had to go back to work, back to London. Time was up.

On the morning of the appointment with the vet, I fed Winkie a whole meal of ground sirloin and took him to the beach to play, something he hadn't been allowed to do for years because of his allergies. We spent hours there. I didn't want to leave because I knew what was next. I stood over him sobbing, my eyes blurred as I watched him. Was I crying for him, for my mother, or for myself? He poked his little nose in the sand and then sneezed. He ran and sniffed and peed and seemed surprised to find out that the ocean was wet and was delighted to be outside and free.

And then I had him killed. The vet wouldn't let me hold him. She said, "No, I'm taking him to the back." I begged, but she was firm. I stood at the receptionist's desk waiting, imagining, knowing exactly what was happening behind the door that was closed to me. Maybe five minutes later, the receptionist's phone rang. She answered it, listened, then looked up at me. "It's done," she said. I paid and left. How could it be that ending his life would appear as an entry on my credit card statement?

My next stop was a travel agency, to arrange taking my mother's ashes and Winkie's to northern Michigan, to be buried next to my father, not far from where I'd lived as a child. When the travel agent greeted me, I tried to speak but couldn't. My jaws hurt, I'd been clenching them so hard.

Nearly thirty years later, I still cry when I think about what I did to that poor, sad little dog. I know that's why I

hoped with all my heart that Minnie and Harry would get along, no matter what happened then.

I asked myself whether I should tell Carol about Winkie when she came over with Harry and then decided . . . no, too soon. It might upset her, or she might assume I would automatically take Harry out of guilt.

As the day of the meeting approached, I found myself wondering how time seemed to Carol. Her days had become a measurable countdown to the end. When I saw her, would she look and act like a dying woman?

. . .

AND THEN IT was Saturday . . . Saturday, July 30, 2016, the big day. I took Minnie to the farmers market as usual, feeling giddy, excited. I came home to emails from Carol, logistics mainly. One o'clock at my front door. Stephen set to arrive at her building at 12:30 p.m. The drive shouldn't take long, but Carol pointed out that Stephen was notorious for being late. Did she feel giddy and excited, too? When you know you'll be dead in a few months, is it possible to get excited about anything? I found out the answer was yes.

About noon, I emailed Carol that I'd given Minnie a bath so she would be shiny and white, alluring for her "blind date." Carol replied that she offered to put some Eau Sauvage behind Harry's ears, but he'd refused. Not only excited, I thought, but capable of being silly. We were two hopeless romantics, matchmaking.