TOWN DOG

Carolyn Bear

Illustrated by
Scoular Anderson

OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS
Contents

1 Clever Dog 5
2 Lou-Lou’s New Home 12
3 Lou-Lou in Disgrace 23
4 Lucky Escape 28
5 To the Rescue 34
6 Home Again 43

About the author 48
Chapter 1
Clever Dog

The Town Dog lived with a Little Old Lady.

The Little Old Lady loved her. She let her sleep on her bed and sit on her lap like a cat.
The Town Dog, whose name was Lou-Lou, had a coat to wear when it was cold.

And when it rained the Little Old Lady let her ride in her shopping trolley. Lou-Lou liked to hide in the trolley.
Then she would pop out from under the shopping and make people jump.

Lou-Lou was a very clever dog. She had some important jobs to do.
She had to bark when the Little Old Lady didn’t hear the doorbell.
She had to warn the Little Old Lady when something was burning in the kitchen.
And she had to clean up any food that fell on the floor.
When the Little Old Lady lost things, like her keys or her purse, all she had to do was say "keys" or "purse" and Lou-Lou would run and find them.

Then the Little Old Lady would give her treats.
Lou-Lou really was the happiest dog in the world.
One day something terrible happened. The Little Old Lady had a fall and broke her leg and was carried off to hospital. Lou-Lou wasn’t allowed to go in the ambulance with her.
She was left all alone in the house with a dish of food and a bowl of water. She couldn't sleep all night. And she didn't eat the food. She was very sad and very worried.

She thought she would never see the Little Old Lady again.
Chapter Two
Lou-Lou’s New Home

The next day, a man in uniform came and opened the front door without even ringing the doorbell. He had a cap with a badge with the letters R.S.P.C.A. on it.

Lou-Lou barked and barked. She even growled – which surprised her. It was something she didn’t know she could do.
He put Lou-Lou in a basket and carried her out to a van. She whined and scratched at the basket. Was she being kidnapped?

But the man took her to a train station. Then he put her on a train with lots of parcels and sacks and bicycles. Doors slammed and the train started off.
Lou-Lou's basket rocked in time with the train. *Dig-a-dig-rick,\ndig-a-dig-rick, rick-a-rick-rick-rick,\nduggedy-duggedy-duggedy.*

Lou-Lou whimpered miserably. But no one came. At last she dropped off to sleep.

The next thing she knew, the train had stopped.

Her basket was lifted up and carried out of the train.
She sniffed the air. It didn't smell at all like the town. There were interesting animal smells and strange, scary smells she'd never smelt before.

Her basket was handed to a man who was waiting on the platform. He was wearing wellies covered with mud. Lou-Lou crouched down in her basket with her ears back. Where was he taking her?
He put the basket in the back of a car. There was a woman in the front and a Terrible Child strapped into a baby-seat in the back.

The Terrible Child was screaming and the woman was trying to make it quiet by waving a toy at it.
Further back, behind bars, there were two huge and fierce-looking dogs. They barked at Lou-Lou with deep, hollow barks.

The Terrible Child stopped crying when he saw Lou-Lou. He poked his hand into her basket and tried to pull her tail.
After a long and bumpy journey, they arrived at a farm. The man and the woman climbed out of the car. They took the Terrible Child out of the baby-seat and opened the back of the car to let out the big dogs.

Then they opened Lou-Lou's basket and said, "Out you get."
Lou-Lou jumped out straight into a puddle. Rain was soaking through her fur and the wind was icy. She had to walk along a horrible, muddy track with the other dogs.

Lou-Lou walked on tip-toe and jumped over the puddles. The other dogs didn’t mind getting wet and dirty and they barked at Lou-Lou in a jeering way.
When they reached the house, all the dogs were taken into a back room with a cold stone floor and given bowls of dog food.

There were two cats there, too, and they came and sniffed Lou-Lou, to find out if she was a cat.

Lou-Lou barked to make sure they knew she was a dog. They backed away and Lou-Lou was glad.
Lou-Lou was very hungry, but she didn’t eat her dinner. She jumped back into her basket and tried to go to sleep.

It was a freezing night, and very dark outside. And animals she didn’t know made strange and frightening noises. The other two dogs slept on the stone floor and snored and didn’t seem to care.
Lou-Lou lay awake thinking of the saucer of hot cocoa and the biscuit that she used to have at home with the Little Old Lady.

When at last she fell asleep, she dreamed she was riding in a shopping trolley full of big, juicy bones.
Chapter Three
Lou-Lou in Disgrace

The next day, the man came in wearing his wellies. He took the other two dogs with him and went out into the fields.

That’s when Lou-Lou heard this terrible “BANG!” outside. It was followed by a lot more even louder BANGS!
Lou-Lou was so frightened she buried herself in a basket of washing. When the woman came to do the ironing, she found her. She was really angry.

So Lou-Lou was in disgrace. She sat quietly in a corner and watched the Terrible Child.
The Terrible Child threw a lot of food and toys around and then he went to sleep. When he woke up again, he threw a lot more food and then he started chasing Lou-Lou round the room.

That's when she discovered that she could jump out through the cat flap.
That night, the two dogs came back with the man. They had a big sack full of dead birds with them.

The two dogs were covered with mud and smelled as if they had rolled in something horrible. They growled at Lou-Lou and she tried to get as far away from them as she could.
She jumped onto the woman's lap. The woman wasn't a bit like the Little Old Lady. She pushed Lou-Lou off.

Then the man said he was going to teach Lou-Lou how to behave like a proper dog.
Chapter Four
Lucky Escape

For the next week, Lou-Lou had a terrible time. She didn’t want to learn how to behave like a dog. For a start, she had to spend all day outside, even when it was raining. Her tail was down and her ears were back all the time.
The other dogs just laughed at her and showed off. They didn’t want to play with her.

There were some huge animals in the fields that she hadn’t seen before. At first, Lou-Lou thought they were dogs. But they didn’t smell like dogs and they didn’t bark.
She went to take a closer look. One of them was bigger than the others. When he saw Lou-Lou he rolled his eyes and snorted.

He had huge sharp horns. He lowered his head and pawed the ground. It was a bull.
Lou-Lou started backing away. Then she started running. She could hear the bull thundering after her. She ran as fast as her four legs would take her.

She shot through a gap in the hedge just as the bull was about to toss her in the air.
After that, Lou-Lou decided it would be best to play with smaller animals. She even tried to make friends with the cats. One of their favourite games was chasing each other round the house and garden in and out through the cat flap. Lou-Lou joined in.
The two big dogs looked on in disgust.

"A dog going through a cat flap," said one of them, and laughed in a nasty way. And the other dog sniggered. Lou-Lou felt very ashamed.
Chapter Five
To the Rescue

Then, early one morning, the woman took the man to catch the train. Lou-Lou was sitting in the back of the car. She wondered where he was going.

When the woman got back she started to clean the whole house.
When she had finished cleaning, she set the table with a tablecloth and the best china.

The dogs were told to stay outside so that they didn’t make muddy pawprints everywhere.

But Lou-Lou crept in through the cat flap. She hid under the table.
Lou-Lou watched as the woman got the Terrible Child ready in his outdoor clothes. Then the woman took a rug out to the car.

But the minute that she was outside, the Terrible Child toddled across the floor and slammed the front door shut. Lou-Lou was locked in – and so was the Terrible Child!
The Terrible Child then walked over to the table and pulled at the tablecloth.

All the tea cups and saucers and plates and spoons and jam and milk went sliding with a terrible crash onto the floor. Lou-Lou was shocked.
The woman was now peering through the letterbox.
She called out, "Don't do that! Come to Mummy."
But the Terrible Child took no notice. He went over to the fireplace and started throwing things into the fire.

A magazine slid out of the fire on to the rug. A thin wisp of flame started to dart across the floor.
The woman was screaming. She was desperate. She could see her keys on the table, but couldn’t get to them.

“Keys,” she shouted to the Terrible Child. “Bring the keys to Mummy.”

Lou-Lou pricked up her ears. “Keys!” The Terrible Child didn’t understand. The other two dogs stared through the window helplessly. The cats were trying to climb the curtains.
All the animals were terrified. They didn’t know what to do.

Lou-Lou spotted the keys lying on the table. Quick as a flash, she jumped up on a chair and grasped the keys in her mouth. Then she dashed out through the cat flap. She gave the keys to the woman.
The woman unlocked the door, raced into the room and threw the rug over the flames, and put them out. She picked up the Terrible Child and hugged him. She was crying. Then she turned to Lou-Lou.
“Oh, you good dog,” she said, blowing her nose.

“What a clever dog you are,” she said, wiping her eyes. And she lifted Lou-Lou up and hugged her too.

The other dogs looked at Lou-Lou with respect.

Lou-Lou felt so proud.
Chapter Six
Home Again

The woman made sure that the fire was well and truly out and cleared up the mess on the floor. Then she bundled the Terrible Child and Lou-Lou into the car and drove off at a very fast pace.

The Terrible Child was quiet for once. He stroked Lou-Lou nicely and said "Doc-Duc," which was the nearest he could get to "Good dog."
Soon they arrived at the train station. The woman got out of the car and she took the Terrible Child and Lou-Lou with her.

They went onto the platform and waited for the train to come. Lou-Lou expected they were waiting for the man.

And sure enough, as the train came in, there he was, waving through the window.
He climbed out of the train. And then a guard came and helped him carry something heavy out of the train. It was a wheelchair and sitting in it, who should it be but the Little Old Lady, with her leg all done up in a big plaster cast!
Lou-Lou went almost mad with joy. She leapt up and tried to lick the Little Old Lady’s face.

Then the woman told the man how clever Lou-Lou had been. After that, she was allowed to ride back home on the Little Old Lady’s lap.

Lou-Lou stayed in the country until the Little Old Lady’s leg got better.
While they were in the country, nobody tried to make her behave like a dog any more. They let her stay inside in the warm and sit with the Little Old Lady.

The other dogs didn't laugh or snigger at her, either. They looked up to her with respect.
About the author

The idea for writing this book came from a real dog. Her owner couldn't look after her any more in the city, so she came to live with us in the country.

The first time she saw a cow she came back through the hedge with her eyes as big as saucers. She wouldn't go out in the rain and used to tip-toe round the puddles. But she's a very intelligent dog. And, with time, she's got used to country life. She's sitting beside me now and looks as if she'd like to add a word or two herself if only she could type.
Lou-Lou loves her life in the town with the Little Old Lady. But when she has to move to the country, things are very different...