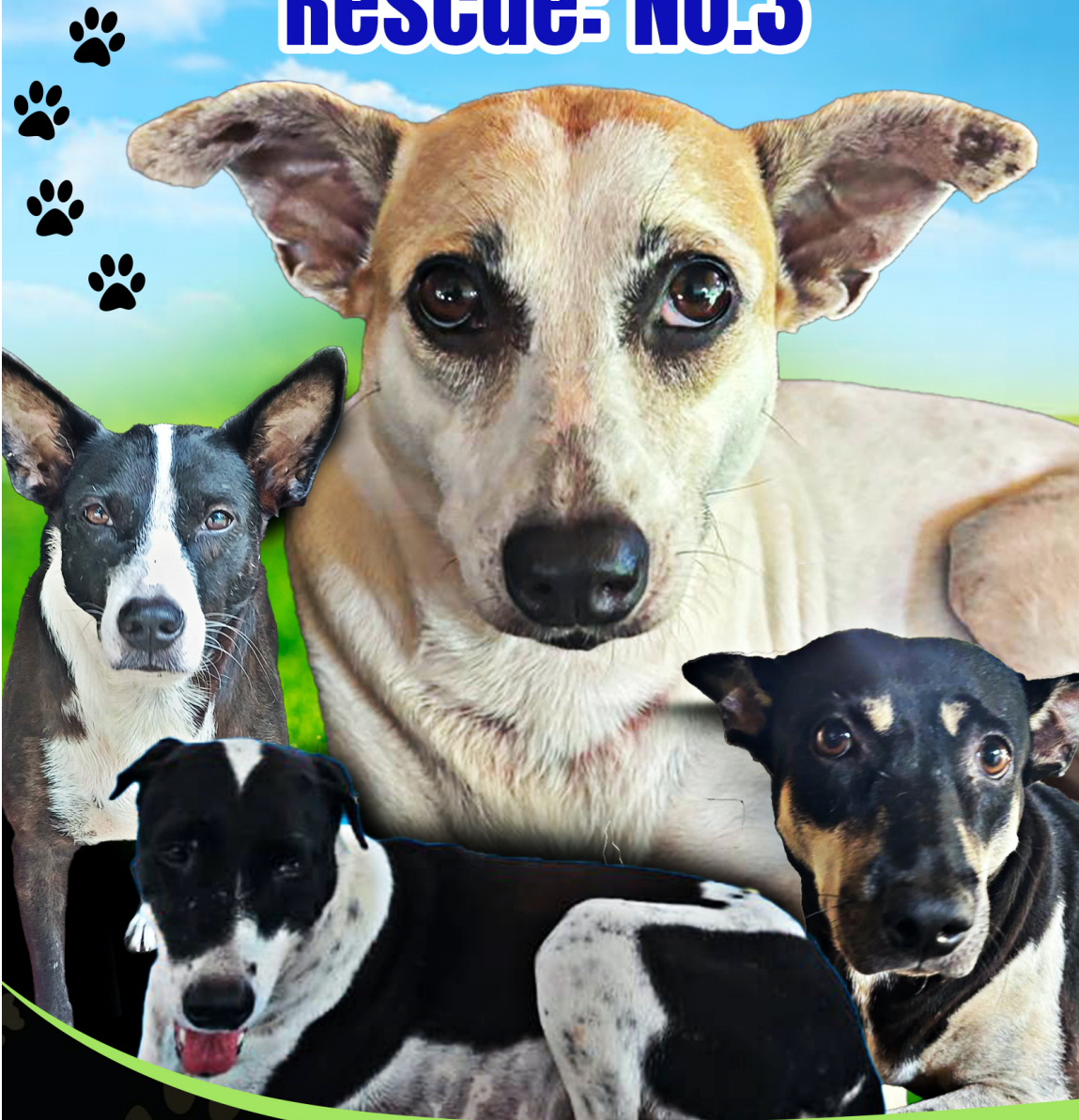


# **TALES ABOUT TAILS**

## **True Stories of Street Dog Rescue: No.3**



**ELSIE, BETTY, RAQUEL AND TITCH**

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## A short Introduction to “Tales About Tales”

Hello and Welcome.

I would like to point out one thing before we begin; the first four issues of Tales About Tails will focus entirely on the fifteen dogs who currently live with us in our home at the time of writing, as part of one big loving family. We will cover all of their stories in detail, such as their rescue, where we found them, their condition, and their life now. After that, starting in Issue No.5 we will delve into the missions and attempts of rescue for all the other dogs that we have helped dating back over eight years; some successful and some unfortunately not.

**Why We Tell These Stories:** You never set out to live with fifteen dogs, well, me and Ruth didn't, that's for sure. No one wakes up one morning and thinks, *'You know what would make life easier? A house full of barking, tail-chasing, furniture biting, fur-shedding four-legged bundles of fur'*. But somehow, that's exactly where we've ended up. And honestly? We wouldn't have it any other way.

Our place isn't a rescue center. We're not running a shelter. We're just a family who kept saying “yes” every time a dog needed help—and the next thing we knew, they'd taken over our lives, our garden, our balcony, our sofa, and most definitely our bed.

The dogs we write about in these books are real. The stories are real. There's no exaggeration, no sugar-coating, and certainly no fairy tale endings. Some of these dogs came to us in terrible shape—injured, abandoned, or simply unwanted. Some were born into hard lives. Some were handed to us with little more than a shrug. But however they arrived, they stayed. And now, they are family.

These eBooks are our way of telling their stories. We aim to do a full series, but so far we have the following:

**Issue 1** introduced you to Lunar, Marlene, and Winnie—dogs with serious challenges who slowly found safety, comfort, and mischief in our home.

**Issue 2** told the tales of Emily, Ken, and Tim—dogs who each brought something unique to our lives (along with a fair bit of chaos).

And now, in **Issue 3**, we meet Elsie, Betty, Raquel, and Titch—four very different dogs who've all added their own little slice of joy, trouble, and unconditional love to our family.

What these stories have in common is simple: they are true!

They're not make-believe rescue missions or carefully scripted dramas. They're everyday moments, told as they happened; the messy parts, the funny parts, the heartbreaking parts, and the ordinary days that become extraordinary when you live alongside a dog who simply trusts you to be there for him.

As said, the first four issues will all focus on the fifteen dogs who currently live with us; one more issue to come after this one. These beautiful creatures are the daily soundtrack of our lives—they follow us around, make us laugh, sometimes drive us mad, but who remind us every day why we do this.

But there's more to come.

There are stories we've yet to tell—the ones about the beautiful dogs who shared our lives but have now passed away. And there are countless rescues that we've helped along the way—dogs we've fostered, treated, and passed on to trusted sanctuaries to start new chapters elsewhere. We're not writing these books to make ourselves look good. We're writing them because these dogs matter. Their stories matter. Every dog deserves to be seen, to be remembered, to have their story told.

So here we are: A home full of dogs. A life full of muddy pawprints, chewed slippers, scratched furniture, and the kind of love you can't buy for money.

Thanks for being here with us. Please stick with us as we've still got a lot more to share.

Steve and Ruth

So, let's get started:

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## **Elsie – The Mall Miracle**



We first met Elsie back in 2018 at our usual spot—the local shopping mall that had, over time, become a kind of second home to us. Not for shopping, mind you. No, we went there every day for the dogs. There was a little gang of them who lived around the mall, including Ken, a few

others, and Elsie herself. They were street dogs, but this was their territory, their patch, and they were always there waiting for us.

Elsie was something special from the very beginning. She was friendly, cheeky, and as soon as she laid eyes on us, she practically adopted us on the spot; there was no shyness or hesitation with her at all. But according to one of the guards, she'd actually had an owner once, but she'd run away and chosen life at the mall instead. Can't blame her really—Some of these dogs are either kept tied up or locked in a cage by their owners for some crazy reason. It is so common here in Palawan and I can never understand why – It's terrible. But anyway, even if she wasn't locked up at her previous home, she probably got better snacks and a lot more freedom at the mall, so it wasn't a bad move by her.

Apparently, her owner had spotted her there now and again but gave up chasing her when she heard that a foreign bloke—me—and his girlfriend – Ruth- were feeding her every day. That's how Elsie became ours, in a way. She decided we were her people.

She didn't just like us; it was almost as if she'd adopted us. She followed us everywhere. If we sat outside for a coffee, she'd park herself right next to us like our little bodyguard. If we went to the shops, she'd trail behind, tail wagging and big smile on her face, as if she was doing her rounds. But her absolute favourite trick—her party piece—was storming straight past the mall security guards who were positioned at every entrance door and running inside the mall itself.

It didn't matter how fast the guards moved to try and block her or how carefully they watched the doors. She was like lightning. The moment she saw us heading inside, Elsie would drop her shoulder like she was getting ready and then charge through the entrance, slipping past legs and bags, ears flapping, laughing and grinning, going faster than speeding bullet, as Superman used to say. It was like she had her own VIP pass.

I can't tell you how many times I had to scoop her up and carry her out, usually while laughing and apologizing to the guards, who by then had given up even pretending to be surprised. One of them even said to me, "See you tomorrow, Elsie," as she was wriggling in my arms on the way out.

But I think we all knew why she loved going inside so much—it wasn't just to stay close to us. It was the air-con. The sweet, glorious blast of cold air that felt like heaven after spending hours outside in the blistering heat. Smart girl. Can't blame her. I reckon if I'd been living on hot pavements all day, I'd be diving in there too.

It became part of the daily routine. The guards would shake their heads and laugh, Elsie would get her moment of cool air, and I'd be chasing her out like a parent collecting a runaway toddler. I think the whole mall secretly enjoyed the little show. She wasn't just another street dog. She was *Elsie*—the mall's resident speed-machine.

But as with many of the street dogs we cared for, things didn't stay light and funny forever.

One day, two of the regular dogs we fed disappeared. Just gone. No warning. It happens sometimes. They get taken, or they just decide to move on, or worse. It shook us. We realized we couldn't bear the thought of losing Elsie like that. Not her. So Ruth and I decided it was time to bring her home. At that point, we were still in our old rented house. Stinker was already living with us, and we were feeding four other street dogs in the area, including Claire, who would later become one of the family. It seemed the right thing to do—to bring Elsie home, where she'd be safe.

But the adjustment wasn't easy. After just a few days, Elsie got into a tussle with Claire over food. It's always about food with street dogs. Even when they're safe, that instinct never really leaves them; I see it all the time when there's a group of three or four dogs on a corner waiting to be fed. I put four helpings down, one each, but there's always one dog who goes from food to food, scaring the others away. But, anyway, I saw it happen, Claire and Elsie, but was just a second too late to stop it. Elsie bolted out the gate and vanished down the road.

I chased after her, calling her name, desperate to bring her back, but she just wouldn't stop. Maybe she panicked. Maybe she thought she didn't belong with us after all. Maybe she was scared of Claire and didn't want another fight. Who knows? But one thing was for sure, that she wouldn't wait for me to carry her back home; she'd already made her mind up about that.



The next day, we found her. Back at the mall. Somehow, she'd found her way back across town to the place she knew best. She looked at me as if to say, *This is my home. This is where I belong.* Ok, so we let her stay there if that's what she wanted. We kept feeding her every day, as usual, alongside Ken and the others. And just like that, life carried on.

For two more years, she was the mall's little star. She still tried to sneak inside for the air-con, still followed us around, and the guards still gave her that familiar shake of the head and a chuckle. It was almost like she had her own little fan club.

But then came the hardest part. Elsie caught distemper.

It's one of the worst things a dog can get. It's vicious. It attacks the nervous system and strips away their strength, piece by piece. It's painful, it's exhausting, and for most dogs, it's a death sentence. It happened so quickly. At first, she just looked under the weather, a bit shaky, and not eating as she normally did. But within a week she was in such a heartbreaking state. She couldn't stand properly. Her legs would buckle. Her body was shaking so badly she could barely hold herself up. And she'd stopped eating completely—always the most worrying sign. Seemed that the life was draining out of her.

Even the kind guards, the ones who'd always defended the dogs, said it might be time to show some mercy. They didn't want her to suffer any more. They gently suggested we take her to the vet and let him put her to sleep, let her go peacefully. It wasn't out of coldness. It was love, in a way. They cared enough to not want her to be in pain anymore and both Ruth and I agreed that putting her down might be the kindest act that we could do for her.

So, Ruth and I made that awful drive to the vets. I can still remember the silence in the car. The sadness. Elsie was in the back, so weak, looking at us as if silently asking what was happening; the same lovely dog, Elsie, but shaking so much and watering from her mouth – The poor thing looked in a terrible state.

We pulled up outside the vet's door, but I just couldn't do it. I couldn't take her in. Neither of us could. Something, natural instinct, just told us not to do it and to give her a second chance. Why not? We had nothing to lose and everything to gain.

So instead of asking the vet to give her the injection that would end her life, we drove straight to a lady we knew—a wonderful woman who runs a small dog sanctuary and has a gift for nursing sick animals back to health. We handed Elsie over to her care, and I promised I'd bring her home-cooked food every single day. And I did.

Elsie was put into a cage and kept in isolation from all the other dogs, some healthy, most not, and for a few days it didn't look good. But then, little by little, she started to fight back. She was always a little fighter, wasn't she? Even when life knocked her down, she refused to give up.

When she was strong enough, we brought her home—this time to our new house. We also put her in isolation straight away, in the laundry room, to make sure none of our other dogs caught distemper from her; that was the last thing we wanted. The vet was brilliant. He gave us expert advice and treatment, and slowly, carefully, Elsie clawed her way back to health.

The twitches and shakes never fully went away. They're part of her now. But she has no pain and no other symptoms. She's learned to live with the trembling shakes and twitches, but they are not so bad anymore, and that means that, thankfully, we don't need to give her medication for it anymore. She gets occasional skin problems—sore, itchy patches—but nothing that we or she can't handle.



She's strong now. Happy. She's fully part of the family. No more mall life. No more security guards chasing her out of the shops. Just home.

Elsie's story is one of those that sticks with you. When I watch her running around the garden these days, wagging her tail, jumping up and then rolling in the grass, or just playing with the others, I sometimes think about that moment at the vet's. The moment we almost gave up.

I'm so grateful we didn't. Because Elsie didn't just survive—she *lived*. And she still does.

Our cheeky, stubborn, mall-loving little miracle.  
Our Elsie.

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## Betty – Born into Love



Betty's story is a little bit different to the others. She wasn't a street dog we rescued from danger. She wasn't found injured or abandoned. Betty has been with us from the very beginning—quite literally. We've known her since the very first breath she took.

She was born in our old house, right there in our lounge. We weren't expecting it to happen quite like that, but as with most things in life when you're surrounded by dogs, you just roll with it. It was a house that held many memories for us. It was where some of the earliest pieces of our little dog family started to come together.

Betty's mum, Claire, was a street dog we'd been feeding for over a year. She was one of the regulars, part of the gang that would greet us every day, especially at meal times, but in fact, once she'd known us for a few weeks, she never strayed far from our place. Over time, we built up her trust, and eventually, we took her in. Claire became part of the family properly—just a few weeks before she surprised us by giving birth.

There were three pups in that litter—Vardy, Kasper, and Betty. All of them were black and white, beautiful little bundles of fluff. Two boys and a girl. Of course, the boys were named after footballers from my home-town team back in England - something I just couldn't resist, however, since then we started naming the dogs, ours, and those in the street, after British TV soap opera stars. Betty, though—Betty was simply Betty. From the moment we saw her, we knew she would always be with us.

Those first few weeks were filled with joy. The pups were mischievous, playful, and full of life. They tumbled over each other, chased their own tails, gnawed at anything they could find, and generally brought absolute chaos to the house—but the best kind of chaos. Even Stinker, our

original resident mama dog warmed to them; she always welcomed new arrivals, especially little ones like these three.

Looking back, those were some of the happiest days. Watching Claire care for her pups, seeing Betty and her brothers grow stronger, their personalities beginning to show. Betty was cheeky from the start. Always first to the food bowl, always first to wriggle into someone's lap.

But life has a cruel habit of reminding you that joy and tragedy often walk side by side. After just one month, little Vardy became ill. It was the parva virus—It's a killer; a cruel, aggressive disease that sweeps through dogs, especially young pups like wildfire. We did everything we could, but he didn't make it. I still remember the weight of that day—the first time we had to dig a grave in the land we'd bought, the land where we would soon build our new house. It became the first resting place in what would sadly, over time, become a little graveyard for some of the dogs we've loved and lost.

Vardy's death hit us hard. It felt so unfair. He was just starting his life, full of energy one day, gone the next. I actually sat and cried at his grave. But we still had Betty and Kasper. The two of them stuck together, growing closer in the way only siblings can. They played, they wrestled, they shared their food, and they filled the house with laughter and muddy pawprints. It felt like maybe we'd come through the worst of it.

Then came another blow.

Kasper was about six months old, full of confidence and curiosity. He loved to play at the end of the road, always exploring, always on the lookout for new playmates. One day, he went out as usual. Just an ordinary day. But then two young boys came running to our house, shouting that a dog had been hit by a car. They knew that he belonged to us.

We dropped everything and sprinted down the road. I remember hoping, praying it wouldn't be Kasper. But deep down, I knew. When we got there, we found him lying at the side of the road. The car hadn't even stopped. A hit and run. No apology, no second thought.

We gently picked him up and carried him home, hoping—just hoping—there was something we could do. But within minutes, as we sat with him in the front of our house, he slowly slipped away in our arms; fortunately, Claire and Betty were inside and didn't see him go. We buried him next to his brother the following day. Two tiny graves side by side. The start of our dog's resting place, currently holding nine dearly beloved, dearly missed bodies

Losing both of them, Vardy and Kasper, left a hole in our hearts. It also meant that Betty was now the only one left. Just her, her mum Claire, and Stinker.



Betty grew up quickly after that. It's as if she somehow understood that she had to stay close, had to be careful. She became a little shadow, following us from room to room, never straying far. And when the time finally came to move into our new house—the home we'd built on that very same land where we had started the cemetery—Obviously she came with us. Along with Claire, Stinker, and our latest addition, Tim. She was part of the core group. The ones who had been there from the start.

Claire, her mum, lived happily with us for many more years. She loved the freedom of the new house with its open balcony and large space to roam around peacefully without any fear of trouble or traffic. She passed away peacefully in 2024, from nothing more than old age. She'd earned her rest. And Betty? Betty has carried on.



She's never been sick, never had any serious problems, and has grown into the most lovely, gentle dog you could wish for. She loves nothing more than a ride in the car. The moment I rattle the car keys or put my shoes on, she's there on the balcony, or running to the gate, tail wagging, eyes sparkling, ready for an outing—even if it's just a trip to the shop. She doesn't care where we go, as long as she's coming with us.

And when the day is done, her favourite place to sleep is, of course, our bed. She's an expert at claiming her spot, usually right in the middle, forcing Ruth and me to shuffle to the edges just so she can stretch out in comfort. Sometimes, I wonder if she knows exactly what she's doing—after all, she's the only one we've known since birth, the only one who's had us wrapped around her little paw from day one.

Betty has a way of looking at you that melts your heart. She's got this soulful gaze, like she knows all the stories, all the losses, all the wins. She's lived through them. She's the link between the old house and the new, between the past and the present. And something else that grabs us, she is always coming close, pushing her face into ours, wanting a kiss. She's an angel.

What's so lovely about Betty is that despite everything—losing her brothers, losing her mum—she's so full of joy. She still plays, still loves her belly rubs, still jumps in the car with the excitement of a puppy. There's no sadness in her now. Just love.

She is a constant in our lives. We've watched her from the moment she entered this world, through every stage, every high and low, and she's never left our side. She's the only one we've had the privilege to know from the very beginning.



When I see her sleeping on our bed, sprawled out as if she owns the place (which she probably does), I sometimes think about her brothers—Vardy and Kasper—gone far too soon. I like to imagine they're still watching over her, proud of their sister, happy that she's had the life they didn't get to finish.

Betty's story isn't one of dramatic rescues or near-death recoveries. It's a quieter story. A story about family. About growing up. About the ones who stay and help to make our lives complete. She's a darling. She always has been. She always will be.

We love Betty to bits xxx.

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## Raquel – The Escape Artist



It was during the time of Covid when, in my humble opinion, the world had gone a bit mad, especially here in Palawan. The streets were less busy, people stayed indoors, and the usual buzz of life had softened; it was like living in a ghost town. We were still at the old house back then, just about to finish building our new place, though of course at the time, the new house was just another project dragging along with all the delays and frustrations that came with lockdowns.

I was upstairs that day, in what we had turned into a makeshift office. The room faced the road, a good spot to keep an eye on things, though I wasn't paying much attention to anything outside at the time. Rhea, our daughter, was with me, doing her schoolwork online, like most kids had to do then because of school closures; Ruth was busy somewhere else. At that time we had 5 dogs living with us; Stinker, the very first little darling we ever had, Claire and her three pups and Dickie who had recently wandered in and joined the clan. It was strange having the house so full all day, but nice in a way – made life interesting and kept me on my toes!

Rhea was the first to notice. "Dad," she said, peering out of the window, "the dogs are sniffing around under the car."

I didn't think much of it. Dogs sniffing around wasn't exactly headline news in our house. I probably mumbled something like, "Yeah, they'll be ok, let them be," and got back to whatever I was doing.

But they didn't stop. In fact, they seemed to be getting more and more excited.

A few minutes later, Rhea said it again, this time with a bit more urgency. "They're still at it, Dad. Look, they're really interested in something."

I sighed, put my things down and went downstairs. I wasn't expecting anything unusual. Probably just a scrap of food or a stray cat – the sort of thing that would have our dogs fascinated for no sensible reason.

When I stepped out into the road, I saw them – our pack gathered around the car. They weren't barking, which struck me as a bit odd, and they weren't chasing, weren't on alert – they were just gently shuffling, circling the car, especially Betty and Stinker, who seemed particularly curious. I crouched down and looked under the car, getting down on my knees for a better look, and that's when I saw her – a tiny little pup, huddled against the back wheel. She was thin, her ribs just about visible through her fur, and there was something else that caught my eye straight away. Around her neck, tight and digging into her skin, was a piece of string – a makeshift collar, but not the kind anyone who cared would use.

She backed away when I reached for her, her small body pressed into the dirt, her eyes wide with uncertainty. She wasn't aggressive, not snarling or snapping, just scared, as if she'd already learnt that people didn't always mean good things.

I spoke softly to her, trying to coax her out. It took a little time, but I managed to gently ease her from under the car. She was light in my hands, barely more than skin and bone. I brought her inside and took her up to the office where Rhea was still working.

I put her down on the floor and watched her. She didn't move or struggle or try to run off, in fact she seemed ok now that she was in a cool room and out of the heat. The other dogs were all crowding at the door so I told Rhea to close the door and go and fetch a bowl of clean water. Then I tore up a piece of bread from my lunch, which I had been just about to start, to offer her. The little pup gobbled it down without hesitation, eating from my hand which is quite unusual for first time feeding, but there again, she was probably starving and maybe that was the first decent food she'd had in ages. Whilst she was eating I managed to untie the string from around her neck, it must have been half choking her by the red mark it left in her skin. Why do these people do that? Tie their dogs up or put them in cages?

Rhea came back with the water and I told her that the little one had just finished my lunch for me and probably would have eaten more, if I'd had more, but better to play safe and take things slowly. I didn't want her to gobble down too much, too quickly and then be sick. She took one look at the water and quickly got stuck into that, licking and splashing water everywhere until the bowl was almost empty. She looked contented now after the feast, and lay down and started to stretch out and close her eyes, slowly crawling under my desk. She was safe now, curled up in the office like she'd belonged there all along. It hadn't taken long for her nerves to settle; just a matter of a few minutes. I'm always amazed at how some dogs can adapt and settle so quickly, whilst others always seem to be on guard. But, somehow, I guess that she seemed to sense that she'd stumbled into the right house. And to be honest, so did I. Rhea got down and started to stroke her, which seemed to ease her even more, and pretty soon her eyes were half closed and a silly smile played on her face. I knew, or at least I strongly suspected, who she belonged to. There was a builder who lived out the back of us, one of the gang of four who lived, or should I say survived, in that makeshift tent that they had mackled together with tarpaulin tied to some trees – we called him Grandad. He

wasn't a bad guy, not mean or cruel in a deliberate way, but he wasn't much of a dog man either. He and his mates were usually more interested in booze than animals.

Later that evening, I saw Grandad walking past our house, so I called out to him. "Hey, is this your dog?" I asked. He glanced at her, now happily sitting on our porch, surrounded by the others. "Yeah," he said, as if it was nothing, then added, "But how did you get her? I always keep her tied to a tree so she won't run off when I'm working all day. What have you done?"

That didn't sit well with me. I didn't like the idea of her being tied up all day, especially with a piece of string so thin and so tight that it was cutting into her neck. No dog should be put into that kind of life. And also I didn't care too much for his semi-accusation of how did I get her? But I ignored that for a second because before I could reply and tell him how the pup got here Grandad spoke again, telling me he'd soon be leaving – going back to wherever he'd come from and taking her with him.

Like heck, he'd take her, not if I could help it, I thought, no way. I saw my chance. The idea of him leaving and taking that little pup with him and having her tied to a tree for the rest of her life or worse, blew my mind. I knew I had to do something.

So, I went up close to him, in a friendly way, and we got into a bit of a negotiation. It wasn't exactly a battle, no stress or bad-mouthing, how these things can go sometimes, just a bit of friendly back and forth, a bit of subtle pressure, and a bit of bartering. In the end, I bought her off him. I can't even remember how much I paid now, it was cash, but not much; I gave him just a few notes that I had in my pocket, but whatever it was, it was worth it.



We decided to name her Raquel, after a character from *Only Fools and Horses*, one of my favourite TV shows. It just suited her – a sweet, funny little thing who quickly found her place among the

others. And from that day on, she was ours and Grandad could take a running jump, as far as I was concerned.

Soon after, only a matter of weeks whilst the finishing touches were being carried out, we moved to the new house. It felt like a fresh start for all of us – and for Raquel, it was her first real home; a nice house with an open balcony to take a rest from the heat on, cool and shady, and a big open grassy space to run around in.

Raquel is, and always has been, a little beauty. She's one of the gentlest souls we've ever known. Every night, without fail, she's the first to head to bed. Not her own bed, mind you – our bed. She curls up in her usual spot and settles down like she's been doing it all her life. And she's another one, like Betty, who absolutely loves going out in the car. She knows when it's time. The moment we pick up the car keys she's there on the balcony, jumping up and down, making those funny little squealing sounds that she often does, her eyes wide with excitement. It's not just any car trip she loves – she's got a particular soft spot for our regular trips to Baywalk.

Baywalk is a lovely spot by the sea with cafes and restaurants, one of our favourite places to take the dogs. We usually take five at a time, a little convoy of excited wag-tails, and let them play and explore to their hearts' content. The open space, the fresh sea breeze, the chance to roam around in safety – to see them run and play surely means it's their version of doggy-paradise.



Raquel really shines on these trips. She runs with the others, but faster and further, only stopping to sniff at every corner, investigating every interesting smell, but always keeping half an eye on us, never wandering too far. There seems to be a kind of quiet gratitude in her, like in all the other rescued dogs that we house and feed, a sense that she knows life could have turned out very differently for her if Grandad had had his way.

She could have spent her days tied to a tree for the rest of her life, unfed and uncared for, forgotten and alone. But instead, she found her way to us – and I'm so glad and grateful that she did. She must have bitten her way through that string even though it would have taken her hours to do it with her puppy teeth, but she did it and she escaped. But anyway, as with each and every one of the other strays and street dogs, it feels like she was always meant to be part of our family.

Raquel's story is simple, but it's one of those that stays with you. She didn't arrive because of a dramatic rescue or being found left on the roadside with terrible injuries. She wasn't in the middle of a disaster. She just turned up one day under our car, hungry, scared, and quietly waiting for someone to notice her; and it was Betty and Stinker who sniffed her out, who came to the rescue! And I'm so glad they did.

She's not loud, not pushy. She doesn't demand attention the way some of the others do. But she's there, always there, with her sweet little face, her gentle ways, and her quiet loyalty. Sometimes, the smallest and most simple rescues have the biggest hearts.

Raquel is a reminder that not every story starts with a big crashing bang of dramatic energy. All rescues can come from different actions. Sometimes, like in this case, it's just a quiet shuffle coming from under our car, like it was with Winnie hiding under that tricycle, or a curious glance from the window and seeing a limping dog struggling along like it was with Dixie, or driving down a different street than we normally use, like the time when we found those three abandoned pups dumped into the roadside bin. And from that very first moment, the moment a rescue starts, a whole new life begins.

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## Titch – The Pup Who Came to Stay



Of all the dogs who have come into our lives, Titch was probably one of the easiest adoptions we've ever had. And I say adoption deliberately—because that's what it was. It wasn't a rescue in the usual sense. There was no danger, no injury, no dramatic backstory. It was simply a case of a little dog needing a home, and us having just enough space in our hearts to give him one more.

At the time, we'd only just moved into our newly built house. It wasn't even completely finished yet—there were still three or four workers milling around, putting the final touches together. But we were living there, settling in, and by then, we already had a growing crowd of dogs with us: Stinker, Claire, Tim, Marlene, Betty, and Boycie. It was starting to feel like home—a home filled with wag-tails, wet noses, and the constant background noise of happy, playful barking.

Then one day, Ricky turned up for work. Ricky's a good man, a familiar face in our stories. He was the same guy who'd helped us negotiate Marlene's escape from the man who was planning to kill, cook, and eat her. So, when Ricky turned up that day, holding something small and wriggling under his arm, I already knew what was coming.

He had this tiny black pup with him—barely bigger than his own hand—and he asked if we could take him. A silly question, really. Of course we'd take him. That's just how it works in our world. Ricky explained that his own dog had just given birth to six pups, but tragically, all of them had died apart from this one. He didn't know why—whether it was a virus, something in the environment, or just bad luck—but he didn't want to risk losing the last surviving pup. He wanted him to have a proper chance, somewhere safe.

And so, just like that, Titch joined our family.



From day one, he made us laugh. He was such a tiny little thing, all black fur and big feet, but it was his strange little habit that really caught our attention. Every time Titch went to the water bowl for a drink, instead of just leaning over like a normal dog, he would step into the bowl with his front feet and stand there paddling as he drank. It was as if he thought he needed to physically get in there to enjoy it properly. Of course, by the time he'd finished, the water would be muddy, full of little paw prints, and the other dogs would just give him a look of pure disbelief. But that was Titch—quirky, funny, and completely unaware of how daft he looked.

He settled in immediately. No dramas, no slow introductions. It was as if he'd always belonged here. He bonded quickly with Marlene and Boycie, who were both young pups themselves at the time, and the three of them became inseparable—always running, always playing, always causing a bit of mischief wherever they went.

That was February 2020 when Titch arrived, and he's been with us ever since, part of the family, part of the story. Thankfully, as he's grown up, he's stopped paddling in the water bowl—though the memory of those soggy little feet still makes us smile.

But if you ask me what really defines Titch, it's not the paddling or the playfulness—it's his absolute loyalty. Wherever I go—whether it's out onto the land to fetch something or do a job, into the house, or even to the bathroom—he's there, shadowing me. He doesn't miss a step. If I stop, he stops. If I move, he moves. He's like my little black shadow, always close, always watching, always there.

And at night? Every single night, without fail, he sleeps under our bed. His own chosen spot, tucked away in the safety of the space beneath us. That's not just comfort—that's love, that's trust, that's gratitude.

But Titch isn't just sweet—he's got a bit of cheek about him too. His favourite trick, and one he still hasn't quite grown out of, is to chase pushbikes. Whenever someone cycles past our place, Titch charges out into the road at full speed, tail wagging, barking as if he's taking his job as Head of Security very seriously. Luckily, the local cyclists know him now. They laugh as he darts alongside them, never really threatening, just playing his own version of "catch me if you can."



It's funny how some dogs just slide into your life so easily. No fuss, no drama. Just a quiet, perfect fit. Titch didn't arrive with a grand rescue story. He didn't need saving from a disaster or a dangerous situation. He just needed a place to belong—and we were lucky enough to be the ones who could give it to him.

Looking back now, I can't imagine our home without him. He's woven into the rhythm of our days, part of the morning walks, the afternoon chaos, the evening quiet. He's there when I'm working outside, there when I sit to rest, there in every little gap of my day.

It's easy to think that big stories only come from big moments. But sometimes, the simplest ones—the ones that begin with a man showing up holding a tiny pup under his arm—are the ones that leave the deepest mark.

That's Titch. Small in size, massive in heart. And ours forever

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## Final Thoughts – The Story So Far

And so, with the stories of Elsie, Betty, Raquel, and Titch, we bring Issue 3 to a close.

Each of these stories has its own little heartbeat—its own rhythm, its own set of twists and turns—but when you stand back and look at the bigger picture, you see that they are all part of something much larger. A family. A life spent alongside dogs who, in one way or another, simply needed a place to call home.

Elsie, with her quiet dignity, reminded us of the strength in starting over, the power of giving trust a second chance. Betty, who's been with us since the day she was born, showed us what it means to grow up together, how a bond can stretch across years and still feel fresh and full of life. Raquel, full of spirit and mischief, brought laughter into our lives and taught us to find joy in the everyday chaos. And Titch—the tiniest of them all—proved that love doesn't always arrive with sirens and drama. Sometimes it tiptoes in, quietly, and stays forever.

These aren't just dog stories. They're stories about family. About commitment. About what happens when you open your door, your heart, and your life to animals who, through no fault of their own, find themselves needing someone to stand up for them.

When we started putting these eBooks together, beginning with Issue 1, the aim was simple—to share true stories. Real moments, real dogs, real life. These aren't polished fairy tales. They are not made up stories, they are all 100% true. There are hard days, funny days, heartbreaking days. There are setbacks, triumphs, and everything in between. But what runs through all of them is that deep, unshakable belief that every life matters.

In **Issue 1**, we introduced you to some of the very special dogs who've shaped our journey so far—Lunar, Marlene, and Winnie. Dogs who arrived in desperate situations and slowly, gently, became part of our family. In **Issue 2**, we told the stories of Emily, Ken, and Tim—more remarkable souls who each came with their own battles, their own quirks, and their own ways of making life that bit richer.

And now, here in **Issue 3**, we've spent time with Elsie, Betty, Raquel, and Titch—each one a part of the whole picture of our home.

All of these stories, so far, have focused on the fifteen dogs who currently live with us. They're the heartbeat of our home—the ones who share our mornings, our walks, our evenings on the balcony, and our nights when they sneak onto the bed. They're our pack. Our family. And it's been a privilege to introduce you to them, one by one.

But there's more.

There are the stories we've yet to tell—the ones about the dogs who shared our lives but who have since passed away. They are gone, but never forgotten. Each one left paw prints on our hearts, and their stories deserve to be told, too. We will tell them.

And then there are the rescues—those countless dogs we’ve crossed paths with over the years. Some we fostered, some we treated, some we simply found a way to move to a better place. Many of them found loving homes or were taken in by sanctuaries where they could get the required treatments, be cured, and live out their days safely. Their stories might not always have been as long as the ones who stayed with us, but they matter just as much.

So, as we close this issue, we’re really only part-way through the full story.

This isn’t the end—it’s just where we are right now. A snapshot of life with the fifteen dogs who currently share our home. There are more stories coming. More memories to share. More dogs to honor, so please stay with us – Thank you!

And we’re so grateful to have you here with us for the journey.

God Bless

Steve, Ruth and Rhea.

P.S. Please forgive any grammar, spelling or any other writing issues as I’m no professional writer – as anyone can tell – being an ordinary working man in my former life.

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Please be sure to check back regularly as more true stories of Street Dog Rescue are always on the way – Thank You

## Support Our Mission

If you've enjoyed this book and want to help us feed, care for, and rescue more street dogs here in Palawan, you can support us via Ko-fi.

Every bit of time spent with them, every meal given, every bit of treatment, that we are able to give these dogs only happens because of kind people like you.

If you'd like to help us with the street dogs here in the Philippines, could you please make a small donation? Every cent collected all goes straight to the dogs, no middlemen, no nonsense and definitely no wastage....

Thank you for being part of their story.

 [Click here to support us on Ko-fi](#)

\*It may be hard to believe but even just \$1 buys two days of cooked meals for a street dog\*

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## Our Recommended Product for Your Dog:

Kindly note that the following recommended product is an affiliate link. This means that if you click through and decide to make a purchase, we at *Tales About Tails* will receive a small commission from the seller — at no extra cost to you.

Every bit of financial support that we receive goes directly towards helping us feed, care for, and help more street dogs here in Palawan.

We only promote products that have been personally recommended to us from trusted friends who do the same as us, but in other countries; street dog support. Living where we do, it would be impossible for us to buy.

**But NHV Natural Pet Products** are high on the list of natural and safe, dog-related products and have made a real difference to so many dogs in those other countries. Take a look and see what you think....

Thank you from all of us — and from the dogs!

 [Click here to visit NHV Natural Dog Products](#)

Thank you for supporting the work we do — and for helping more dogs to finally live happy, healthy lives!

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### **Please Read My Disclaimer**

I am not a veterinarian, or qualified in any medical way, and the information I give in this book is based purely on my own experiences gained from caring for rescue dogs here in the Philippines. Everything shared in my books — from natural remedies to feeding methods — has worked for my own dogs, but every dog is different, and I always urge you to test carefully before jumping right in to any new healing method. What worked for me and my dogs may not necessarily work for you or your dogs.

Always use your own judgement and, if you're unsure, consult a qualified vet before trying anything new. These natural methods are meant to support your dog's health, not always to replace professional care.

The aim of this book is simple: To help people care for their dogs safely, naturally, and affordably — especially when a trip to the vet isn't always possible or affordable.