

BOOKER, THE DOG  
THAT WAS ALWAYS  
MEANT FOR ME

**By: Maya Gershtenson**



Booker was the greatest from the beginning to the end. But the end isn't where my story starts – that would be the beginning. Let's rewind so that you know the way it all started. Go to – oh, when did we get Booker?! – oh yes, 1997.



Now, one thing you must understand is that I didn't really choose Booker – he chose me. We were looking at the puppies in the first place because my mom was pregnant with my little brother. I just had to have a baby, too, because soon Mom and Dad would be busy with Sam and I'd need a playmate. Booker was that playmate throughout the years when Sam was just a baby and a toddler.



Okay – back to the story of how we ended up with Bookie. Well, he must have known he was meant for us – like a sixth sense of his or

something – because he left his brothers and sisters and ran right up to us. He immediately started licking my face like I was familiar and we'd known each other since before we were born. I fell in love with good ole Book right then and there, at that memorable moment.



“Why did you name him Booker? You have to agree, it’s a weird name, and it sounds a whole lot like ‘Booger’,” people always tell my family. “Yeah, but we call him Booker because he loves to run, despite his hip problems. So we

named him ‘Booker’ because he loves to ‘book’,” we always say back. Booker *does* love to run, or ‘book’ and that basically is the reason we named him what we did. It may sound weird to you, but he’s our Booker, and we love him.



For a little while we had a dog named Reggie at the same time as Booker. Reggie was older than Booker and he used to follow Reg around everywhere, doing everything he did. A short amount of time before our beloved, ten-year-old Cocker Spaniel died, we got Shadow, Booker’s best friend. He and Shads got along great, and still do. Then Reggie died. It was a sad moment for everybody, but especially Booker, Reggie’s canine pal. The year was

2002, and Booker had lost his greatest companion at a young age of five years old. Sure, he still had Shads, but he hadn't spent five years of his life with her like he had Reg.



After Reggie's life had passed, Booker became even closer to Shadow than ever. They were best buds and I don't know how well Book would have made it through without his slightly younger pal. Bookie always wanted Shadow to play with him. He never gave up. He would run around her and bark, snapping his jaw like he'd done with Reggie. Shadow was lazy, but she tried to please Booker. She would snap her jaw back and chase him around the backyard.



Booker had hip problems, so he got really stiff in the winter. He still loved to play with us outside, but other than that he wished to have nothing to do with winter weather. Marissa, a friend of mine, my sister Sophie, and I liked to get him to pull a sled like a sled dog. It hurt him, though, so we decided to stop doing it so much. Booker just couldn't stop himself from running, though – he loves it too much to hold back.



Booker's lifelong goal has always been to please us – at least that's the way it has forever seemed – and he would do anything . . . for anybody. He will always live on in me, in my heart, and I will carry his spirit everywhere with me. He will always live and thrive in the air around me. He will always be honored by those who have met him and those who haven't. Everyone has a friend who changes their life forever – Booker was mine.

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