



THREE-LEGGED HERO

A Military
Dog Story



by Spencer Brinker

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by Spencer Brinker

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BEARPORT
PUBLISHING

New York, New York

Credits

Cover photo, © Eric Isselée/Fotolia.

Publisher: Kenn Goin

Editor: Jessica Rudolph

Creative Director: Spencer Brinker

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data in process at time of publication (2017)

Library of Congress Control Number: 2016050048

ISBN-13: 978-1-68402-014-0

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For more information, write to Bearport Publishing Company, Inc., 45 West 21st Street, Suite 3B, New York, New York 10010. Printed in the United States of America.

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

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CHAPTER 1

Cali's Dog-Walking Service

An energetic white and brown dog raced around eleven-year-old Cali, barking happily. “Soon, Trixie, relax!” said Cali.

Dad was folding laundry into neat piles. As Cali shoved a stack of flyers into her backpack, one of the flyers fell out and landed near Dad’s feet. He picked it up and read aloud: “Cali’s Dog-Walking Service.

Professional Care. Reasonable Rates.’

Looks good, sweetheart. I’d trust you with my dog. In fact, I already *do* trust you with my dog. Isn’t that right, girl?” Dad reached down and scratched Trixie behind her floppy ears. The little dog gave two loud, excited barks.

“Our dog, Dad!” said Cali. “And Trixie’s easy—she practically walks me.” Cali threw a roll of tape into her backpack. “But I’m just not sure how my two new dog **clients** are going to behave. Have you seen Trixie’s leash?” she asked.

“It’s right there,” said Dad. He pointed to the leash hanging over the door handle. “Oh, and Cal, don’t forget these,” he said, handing





Cali several plastic bags tied into a bunch. “With your new business, you have to be sure to pick up and throw away any, um . . . *business* . . . that the dogs might leave on the sidewalk.”

“Oh, right. Thanks!” said Cali. She quickly shoved the bags into her backpack. After clipping Trixie’s leash to her collar, Cali gave Dad a quick kiss on the cheek and headed out the door.

When Cali and Trixie arrived at the house of a neighbor named Mr. London, Cali rang the bell. The door opened and next to Mr. London was a large, friendly looking Dalmatian. Trixie and the spotted dog started sniffing one another. "Hi there," said Mr. London. "Duke's all ready. He likes to explore the neighborhood a bit. That's okay, isn't it?" he asked.

Cali looked a bit unsure. "Oh, yes. That's fine," she said quickly. "Um, what do you mean by *explore*?"

"Oh, Duke just likes to have fun," he said. "Okay, see you later," Mr. London said as he handed the leash to Cali and closed the door.

Not quite sure what to think, Cali led Duke and Trixie to the sidewalk and headed toward a yellow house. When Duke stepped out ahead of Trixie, she barked loudly at him. Duke stopped and looked at her curiously. Cali smiled.



The blue door to the yellow house opened just as Cali arrived, and out stepped an elderly woman in a long flowing bathrobe trimmed with fluffy pink feathers. In her arms was a small Chihuahua. "Yoo-hoo! Hello!" the woman said in a loud, musical voice.

"Hi, Mrs. Baker," said Cali. She held tightly on to Duke's and Trixie's leashes as Mrs. Baker carefully set down her small dog.

"Cali! Mr. Chi-chi is absolutely ready for his walk. He's been so excited all morning. But you must promise to have him back within the hour—it's our grooming day you see, and we can't miss that! Oh, a Dalmatian. How *is* your father, dear?" Mrs. Baker said all of this very quickly.

