
LINES FROM LINDA

SEPTEMBER CELEBRATIONS

BY LINDA AYERS TURNER KNORR



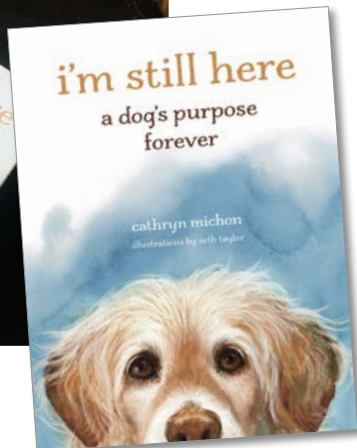
The month kicks off with **National Pet Memorial Day** on the 8th, followed by famed author Cathryn Michon's book release of *I'm Still Here: A Dog's Purpose Forever* on the 10th, our **American Kennel Club's 140th Anniversary** festivities in New York City on the 17th, and **National Dog Week September 24-30th**. What a WOWSOME (my Mother's word) time for all dog lovers!

Fifteen years ago, director, screenwriter, and actress **Cathryn Michon** was grieving over her beloved dog Ellie's passing when her husband, **W. Bruce Cameron**, created a story to comfort her. He described a dog soul who reincarnates and remembers all their lives with their humans. The message—animal and human souls are united in love forever, and death doesn't stand in the way. Cathryn was inspired to adopt her next dog, Tucker, and Cameron wrote *A Dog's Purpose*—a #1 *New York Times* bestseller that spent 63 weeks on the list, sold millions of copies, and was translated into 46 languages around the world. The film adaptation, written by Cameron and Michon and starring Dennis Quaid and K.J. Apa, is one of the most popular live action dog movies of all time.

Years later, with Tucker now a senior dog, Cathryn dreamed of a new way to comfort people devastated by loss. She imagined what it would be like to read a story about an angel dog who is joyful and free there in the great beyond, but also still here with their humans, loving them and wanting them to open their hearts to new dogs. Her belief in the eternal soul connection between people and dogs became her new book, *I'm Still Here: A Dog's Purpose Forever*, which Andrews McMeel Publishing will release on September 10, 2024 in hardcover.

Elegantly designed with warm and appealing watercolor illustrations by award-winning artist Seth Taylor, *I'm Still Here* is written in freeform verse, from the angel dog's perspective—one Cathryn has spent countless hours thinking about, having written three movies from a dog's point of view (*A Dog's Purpose*, *A Dog's Journey*, and *A Dog's Way Home*). While losing a beloved pet is one of the most difficult experiences we go through, this book offers consolation, good news, and hope to readers in a way not done before.

I'm Still Here is an exquisite gesture of compassion for anyone who has ever said goodbye to a dog (or person) gone too soon, because it's always too soon. It turns out that the best way to honor those we've loved and lost is to be present until we meet again, and as Bailey says in the film *A Dog's Purpose*, "Be. Here. Now." There is nothing to fear, because it is this dog's purpose to pull you (like a bad dog who doesn't know how to do "leash") toward joy, and to remind us to relish all the naps and treats life has to offer.



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I'm Still Here exemplifies the *A Dog's Purpose* philosophy: the dog you love may come back to you, or may even send a friend. The most important thing to know is that your dog can't imagine you without a dog pulling you towards joy—because that's a dog's purpose. The film *A Dog's Purpose* struck a chord with hearts and minds universally. It is the most successful live action dog movie of all time, having grossed, along with its sequel, \$284 million in the world theatrical box office.

I'm Still Here is told by an angel dog who is both *here* watching and loving you, and *there* with all the people and animals you have loved. There has been no other book available that offers the same kind of comfort and assurance to someone who has loved and lost a dog. The experience of reading the book is like getting a hug from a friend who understands that dogs are not just pets, they are family. And you are not alone in your sorrow.

The angel dog offers a message we all need now: the importance of spending more time focusing on the good stuff life has to offer, like taking naps, eating chicken, forgetting about capital letters, and of course, avoiding the dreaded "B" word (bath, oh, the horror!) at all costs. This book is now more essential than ever, because dog ownership increased 20 percent during the pandemic, and that means that many more people understand the comfort and joy a dog offers.

I'm Still Here is written for grown-ups, but it's also a book one could share with a child and talk about together as a family. Perhaps the greatest comfort the book provides is the dog's assurance of how grateful dogs are when we help them cross over the rainbow bridge. They understand that this is done with pure love, and they also hope that we will open our hearts to another dog after they go."

On September 17th, the Empire State Building, as well as the Hemsley Building, will be shining with blue lights in celebration of our American Kennel Club's 140th Anniversary. Six thousand radio stations nationwide will be running ads highlighting the achievements of our AKC, and **Dennis Sprung, AKC President and CEO**, will kick off the events at 3:00 pm live from the Empire State Building.

As **Cathryn Michon's** books reveal, loving a dog gifts us with great joy and many reasons to celebrate! ■



Illustrations by
award-winning artist
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