

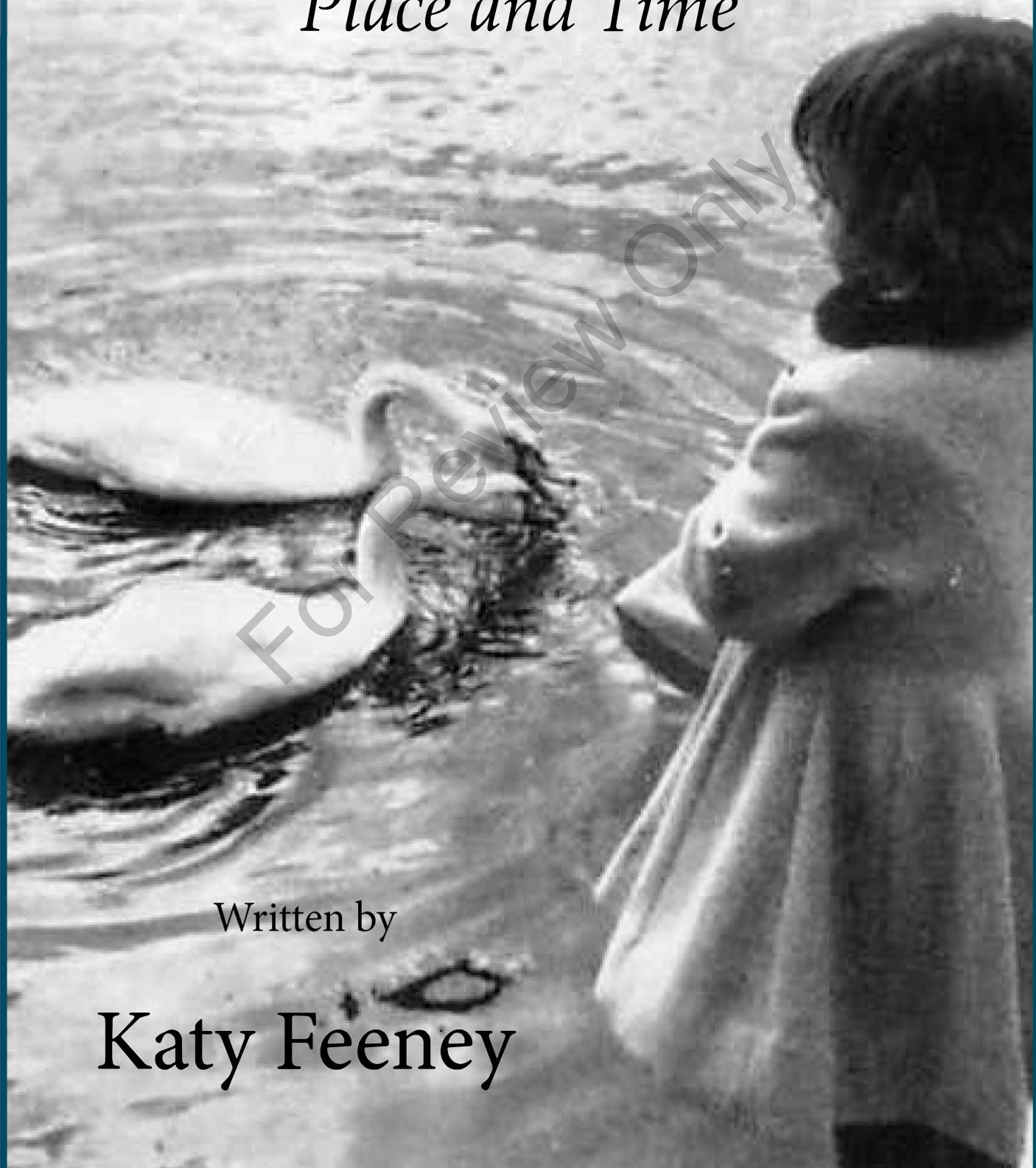
Three Fingers Cove

*Memories of a Beautiful
Place and Time*

Written by

Katy Feeney

For Review Only



Three Fingers Cove

Memories of a Beautiful Place and Time

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*For my family who shared in
these beautiful moments...*

For Review Only

Three Fingers Cove



It seems my life began when we moved to the Lake. But I remember that first day vividly.

My family and I drove for two long hours, my parents in the front seat and my brother, three sisters and I in the back of the station wagon. "F.X." (short for Francis Xavier) was nine, Deidre seven, I was four, Adele was two and Jeanie was a newborn. In between squabbles we sang songs and played road games to ease the boredom.

The last part of the trip was through green mountains, and the last few miles we drove down a tiny road called West Shore Trail. On our left was the Lake and on our right were the rolling hills of a golf course in front of a rugged moun-

tain. Quaint houses with large, tree-filled yards lined the road. At that time I didn't know that road would become as familiar to me as the back of my hand, and the Lake, the golf course and the mountain would be the stage for so many adventures...

We arrived at the house and the first thing my big brother and sister did was to go out back to the Lake. Naturally, I followed them. Our house was situated on a cove off the main Lake. Actually, it was the first "finger" of "Three Fingers Cove". We had to walk through woods and over many rocks and down a steep hill to get to the water.

There was a fallen tree jutting out from the shore into the water. F.X. could not resist walking to the end of it, with Deidre right behind him. I took off my shoes and was screwing up my courage to follow them when a huge, hairy spider crawled out of a hole in the log! My brother lost his balance as he tried to squirm away from it and fell into the mucky water. My sister lost her balance too, but regained her footing with just one leg in the muck. FX swam to shore, emerging from the water like the creature from the deep, covered with black muck. Deidre's pants leg was covered in the black muck too.

I'll never forget my mother's face when she saw us come around the corner of the house. She shrieked and moaned. The first mucky mess at the Lake! I knew this was going to be a great place to live because even the shrieks and moans did not dim the fun of watching my brother come out of the muck like the Creature from the Deep.

The Swan Family



I looked down the hill to the Lake and saw them -- the Swan Family! They seemed to be waiting for us. We all grabbed whatever stale bread we could find and went running down to the water. They were so beautiful! And they looked right at us, almost as if they were expecting our "Ooos" and "Aah-hhs". We didn't disappoint them. And, of course, they were anxious for the bread. We couldn't throw it fast enough! Mom christened them "Mama Swan", "Papa Swan" and "the Baby Swans". We later found out when we studied swans that the babies are called "cygnets". As the bread hit the water, they raced each other to get to it and gobble it

up (although they even seemed to “gobble” gracefully!), so we had to aim very carefully to make sure everybody got at least some of the bread.

Finally, all the bread was gone, and we just stood and watched them. All of a sudden, Papa Swan started walking up the boat landing! It was an awesome sight! When swans are standing on land and upright, they can be over six feet tall. And their wing-span is also about six feet. We all backed away, unsure of what he was going to do and frightened at the unknown.

Mom stood in front of him (he towered over her), waved her arms and told him, “No!” He looked at her, turned around and walked into the water. Phew! They never tried to walk on land again. Even in later years when we wanted them to come up to the land, they wouldn't.

I believe swans have long memories.

“Here, Swans”

It was great having the swans around. I think they liked having us around, too. I remember seeing them out in the middle of the lake one afternoon (about 1/2 mile away). I asked my Mom if we had any bread for them. We did. So I opened the sliding glass door and yelled, “Here, Swans!” They immediately turned toward my voice and a few minutes later were feasting on the bread I brought to them. As we grew more comfortable with each other, they even took the bread out of our hands. What a thrill! But, they never seemed like pets. They still maintained a certain independence. So, when I fed them -- or just sat and watched them -- I touched a part of nature that was a gift, pure gift.



March 20



They came back to the Lake every year on the same day. We didn't notice it at first, but as we studied and read more about our friends, Mom discovered that they tend to keep to a yearly schedule. We also found out that swans are monogamous -- they mate for life -- and that they probably went to the same place every winter, just as they came to us in the spring. But sometimes the Lake was still frozen on March 20, and that was a problem for them. Swans have no

saliva glands and need the water to wash down the algae -- or bread or grain -- that they eat.

It was during these days that we tried to encourage the swans to come up on land so that we could put them in our pool or pond. But they never came up on land after that first day. Mom put grain in a big tub of water so they could eat. They flew to our shoreline and waited, and Mom brought the tub down to them.

Usually the Lake was at least partially melted in a week or so, but we used to worry about them freezing and wonder how they survived and why they insisted on coming back on the same day even if the Lake was frozen.

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Proud Parents

Several weeks after their arrival Papa Swan “made the rounds” of houses on the Lake by himself. This was the sign that Mama Swan was nesting. Not too long after that, the proud parents brought their babies (usually around five or six) out to show the neighbors. They stopped at every house on the Lake and waited for someone to come out and admire them. No one disappointed them.

For Review Only

The "Favorite"

Every year there was one cygnet who seemed to develop faster than the others -- its feathers began to turn white and its neck took on the graceful shape of its parents while the others still had their downy brown feathers and short stumpy necks. We nick-named this swan "Growing Boy", although we really had no way of knowing whether it was a boy or a girl. It was Growing Boy that Papa Swan tried to drive away each year. When we were feeding them, Papa Swan kept Growing Boy from getting any bread, sometimes grabbing it away from him! Papa Swan also nipped at him and seemed to look for opportunities to be mean to him, often chasing him down the Lake and making Growing Boy fly, though his wings could barely lift him off the water. When this happened, Mama Swan gracefully took to the air, flew in front of Growing Boy and brought him back to the family. Growing Boy became the "leader of the pack" every year, and when the other cygnets grew and started to follow Growing Boy when Papa chased him, we knew the summer was coming to a close. Soon Mama Swan would let them all fly away -- when they were ready -- so they could find their own lake and have their own swan families and Mama and Papa Swan could return the next year on March 20 and begin the cycle again.

The Separation



I knew something was wrong from the tone in my mother's voice as she spoke to her friend on the telephone. When she hung up, she was very upset. A family on the Lake had arranged for a game warden to come and take Papa Swan off the Lake, bring him somewhere else and clip his wings. They wouldn't take Mama Swan because she was nesting. Who was going to chase this year's Growing Boy down the Lake and into his own life? Would Mama and Papa Swan find each other again?

It was so upsetting, and there was nothing we could do about it. It had already been done without word to the rest of the families on the Lake who loved the Swan family. The boys in this family had started teasing Papa Swan from their boat, and the teasing grew to cruelty, beating and even whipping Papa Swan as he defended himself and his family.

Swans have hard knobs in their wings that are capable of breaking an attacker's bone.

And, it seems, swans have very long memories, and Papa Swan could recognize their boat and would chase it out of Three Fingers Cove.

That year Mama Swan raised her family by herself. We worried over the winter what would happen to them, but on March 20 the next year, Mama AND Papa Swan returned to the Lake. But the game warden took him away again...

For Review Only

The Divorce



For two years in a row Mama and Papa Swan met at their winter place and came back to the Lake. But after the second summer without Papa Swan, something terrible happened on March 20. Mama Swan came back without Papa Swan! We were heartbroken. We thought Papa Swan had been killed. But a few weeks later Papa Swan came back with a new mate! And Papa Swan started treating Mama Swan like he used to treat Growing Boy! He would chase her and nip her and be mean to her whenever she got too near to him and his new family. It was so sad. I remember feeding Mama Swan one day, and Papa Swan came around the bend in the Lake. When she saw him, she took off, and he also took off chasing her until she was a good distance away. I then fed the new family the rest of the bread. It is so ironic that once this happened the family didn't take Papa Swan off the Lake anymore. We went through about three summers with our hearts breaking while we watched the painful result of getting in the way of nature. On the third March 20, Mama Swan returned with a new mate. There are now two swan families on the Lake.

Nature, like its Creator, is very forgiving.

Winter Wonderland



The Year of Black Ice



It may happen once in a lifetime -- if you're lucky. It happened one year for us at the Lake. The moment that the ice froze was a moment of perfect stillness, so the ice froze as smooth as glass. When it froze it froze quickly and it froze crystal clear. There was no snow for weeks, so we were able to skate on this wonderful ice for a long time! From a distance the ice looked black, so we christened it the "Year of the Black Ice". The entire Lake was as smooth and clear as an ice rink. You could see fish frozen in the ice several feet down! At first, we felt like we were going to break through this ice because it looked like water. Actually, black ice is stronger than white ice because it has less air in it.

We felt we had to mark this occasion with a unique event. A couple of the friars from our church who loved to skate came over and we decided to skate to the far end of the Lake to

the Boardwalk. By road it was four miles to the Boardwalk, but by ice, it was only about one mile. We had never done this before because other parts of the Lake had underwater springs and were unpredictable in how they froze, and that could be dangerous. After consultation, we decided that we had had such a long cold spell that it would be a safe adventure to mark the Year of the Black Ice.

Father Justin skated out in front, scouting out the unknown territory. Brother Douglas brought up the rear, armed with two hockey sticks in case he or someone else fell in. It was so much fun being with everyone and skating on the Black Ice! Thankfully, Dad picked us up with the car at the Boardwalk, so the trip was one-way and we were quickly home for hot chocolate and chili!

The Mile-Long Ice Rink

Shortly after the first freeze, we impatiently watched for the green flag to be raised at Tamarack Beach telling us it was safe to go ice skating. When that flag went up, we raced home to put on our skates and tested the ice for ourselves. We skated all afternoon, every day, and often put the spotlight on in the back yard so we could go skating at night too. After a week or so, we felt safe even in the very middle of the Lake (that was the last part to freeze). The Lake was 1 1/2 miles long and about 1/2 mile wide. We lived on the west shore and often in an afternoon we would skate back and forth to the east shore several times. It was a great feeling of freedom -- to glide across the ice in any direction, no roads to follow, no boundaries except the end of the Lake, and the cool, crisp air filling our lungs and making our noses red. Now, when I imagine a day in heaven, I think of a sunny winter afternoon at the Lake with nothing to do but glide wherever the wind blows me.



Ice Capades



One of our favorite games was “keep away”. Someone would grab a hat or glove and the game would begin. It was especially fun when we grabbed Brother Douglas’ hat or glove. He was a hockey player originally from Colorado. Boy, could he skate! Many times we would skate at night. I remember having Doug’s hat and skating outside the beam of our spotlight into the dark. His skates scraped against the ice making a deep “whoosh” sound, and I felt vibrations in the ice get stronger as he got closer. There was no contest. We usually threw the hat or glove at him before he reached us. The fun was in the chase.

A big event on the ice was when we got together for a whip. Everyone would gather and form a long line. We would skate as fast as we could, then, the “designated anchor” (usually someone big and strong) would stop and dig

in. The rest of the line would start going in a circle and the people on the end were “whipped” around faster than they could skate. When it was over, bodies would be strewn everywhere. What fun!

When it snowed, one of our neighbors always cleared a large area for the older boys to play hockey. When there wasn't a game going on, we would congregate there. On the ice behind our house we would take shovels and clear rooms and houses and a maze of roads. Yet, by the time we were through we were too tired to play with them! And the next day, more often than not, it would snow again! So, then we would go sleigh riding on the golf course!

One year we had two feet of snow, immediately followed by a warm spell, rain, and then followed by a cold spell. This resulted in a thick coating of ice on top of the snow on the golf course. The golf course was very hilly and great for sleigh riding. But this year we went ice skating up and down the hills! It was fast, scary, exhilarating, daring, wonderful and fun!

The Animal Kingdom

For Review Only

A Whistling Duet

I was sitting outside on the back porch enjoying the spring air when I heard it... A bird was whistling a melody from a TV commercial jingle! But it only had the first half of the phrase. After I determined that my brother and sisters weren't playing a joke on me from the bushes below the porch, I started whistling the bird's little melody, but added the rest of the jingle. The bird answered me with its half! I whistled again, and again it answered me. This went on for a long time. I started to hope that I could teach this bird the rest of the jingle! We had a whistling conversation that lasted a long time! By the end of the afternoon the bird had tacked on one more note to its own song -- the first note of the second half of the jingle!

From that day on I whenever I went to the back yard I would whistle for my buddy. I never saw it, and it never learned more than that one extra note, but I'll never forget the joy of hearing that bird's answer to my whistle or its call to me when I walked out on the porch.



The Herd of Deer

My mother didn't believe him at first. After all, it did sound a bit preposterous, and my brother did have a wonderful imagination. But our neighbor across the street saw it happen from her kitchen window! My brother and a friend were climbing the mountain across the street from our house and behind our neighbor's house when they heard what sounded like thunder and felt the earth shake! It wasn't an earthquake, but a herd of deer were teeming down the mountain and they were directly in its path! They didn't have time to move and thought they would be trampled, but all the deer just parted around the two boys as they passed them and closed ranks afterward, not harming them in the least.

I have always believed deer to be the gentlest of creatures.



The Snapping Turtle

We were playing a lively game of kickball in the front yard when we heard them -- SHOTS! from a GUN! We took off down the road in the direction of the sounds. There was an uninhabited piece of land near our house that separated two of the fingers of Three Fingers Cove. It was one of our favorite playgrounds. The cattails grew above six feet and we had a maze of paths throughout them. The dirt road that ran down the middle of the land made a great hideout and hangout!

We arrived at the cul-de-sac and there was a pickup truck parked there with some men around it. They had captured a HUGE snapping turtle and had shot it several times. This turtle filled the back of the pickup truck. It was still alive. We watched as they taunted it with big sticks. It easily bit off the ends of these sticks, and we imagined the horror of those "sticks" being one of our arms or legs caught in that big, snapping mouth. They eventually left with the turtle, assuring us that it was the last of its kind at the Lake.

The last of its kind... In later years as I reflected on this day, I couldn't help feeling a little sad that we couldn't share the Lake with this creature who had been here first, that it was either "them or us". Yet, when I waited in the water for the boat to pull me up to go skiing, I must confess that I sometimes murmured a silent "thank you" to those men. I could imagine that big snapping turtle swimming up to the surface of the Lake with his eyes on my behind and his mouth wide open!

Adele's Daring



One sunny summer day my sister Adele went out back to play on the swing set and slide. She climbed up the ladder and decided to go down headfirst just like her big brother and sisters. Adele had only done this a few times before and always with someone to catch at the bottom, but she decided to be daring. The slide was hot from the sun, but she dove down right away before fear could change her mind.

On the way down the slide she saw a snake sunning itself on the bottom in a round coil, but she couldn't stop. Adele bumped into the snake and it got very angry and lashed out and bit her on the top lip. As the snake slithered away, Adele ran inside to our mother who immediately brought her to the hospital. Adele described the snake that bit her, and my mother got very scared because she realized it was a copperhead snake, a poisonous variety of snakes that lived in our area. The doctor said it was very lucky that the snake bit her on the top lip where there are no major blood vessels to carry the poison quickly through her system. If she hadn't gone headfirst down the slide, the snake would have bitten her on the leg.

Adele's daring saved her life.

For Review Only

Water Lovers



The Right Incentive



I have found very few things as fun as water-skiing. To skim across the water at about 35 or 40 miles an hour jumping over waves and making a spray 20 feet tall is a thrilling experience.

It was even more satisfying for me because it took so long for me to get up at all! I remember the first time I got up on two skis. I had made many attempts and just couldn't seem to get the balance of pulling back against the pressure of the boat pulling me forward until I was out of the water.

My sister and a friend were in the boat, getting frustrated and told me this was my last try until next time. After that warning, they told me to look to my left. There, floating on top of the water, was a huge dead fish, coming in my direction. I screamed, "Get me out of here!" The boat started, and I pulled back with all my might. The next thing I knew I was standing on the skis on the water!

I guess I just needed the right incentive!

It wasn't long before I graduated to slalom (one ski), which is even harder to do. I tried to imagine a dead fish floating toward me whenever the boat started pulling away.

The Forbidden Trampoline

My parents put a built-in pool in our back yard. Actually, it was half in and half out of the ground because it hung over the rocky mountain looking down over the Lake. It was made of redwood and it fit right into the scenery. They had to blast rock to get it in and the blasting was felt in houses miles away! It was great to have a pool to play in because the cove tended to be too mucky to swim in even though it was dredged occasionally.

Because of the unique kind of pool we had, it had to have a unique cover during the winter. Half of the water was left in the pool and the cover was made out of rubber. Well, you can imagine what a great trampoline that made! You can also imagine that we were forbidden to jump on the pool cover because of the possible danger of falling through. It was still very tempting.

One day my parents were out, and the temptation became too strong for us. I don't know whose idea it was first, but suddenly all five of us were jumping on the pool cover and having a GREAT time. Thankfully none of us fell in. One of our neighbors told our parents when they got home, and we did get into trouble. I don't remember the punishment they gave us, but I do remember the fun we had while jumping on the pool cover together.



Marco Polo

During the summer at the Lake, we spent most of our time in the water. We were on the swim team at the Cruiser Club, "The Barracruisers," and spent the mornings doing laps in the olympic-sized pool at the end of the Lake. We went waterskiing every chance we could, and the rest of the time was spent in the pool in our backyard.

We played many different games, but one of our favorites was "Marco Polo". The person who was "it" closed their eyes and tried to tag someone. To help them find people, whenever they said "Marco!", everyone else yelled "Polo!" A rousing game of Marco Polo could last a couple of hours.

One day about seven of us were in the pool trying to decide what to play. We had just settled on Marco Polo when our neighbor's voice boomed out of her kitchen window that faced our pool. "Would you PLEASE play something else?" she asked. Ooops! We never realized how annoying that game must be to listen to and not play... Of course we played something else that day!

And whenever we played Marco Polo after that, we whispered "Marco" and "Polo!"



Mom's Splashy Dive

One very vivid memory I associate with summertime is the sound that awakened us every morning about 7:00 A.M.: a huge SPLASH as my mother dove into the pool followed by about one-half hour of steady splashing as she swam her laps. That's probably why I love the sound of rushing water.



Dog Heaven

For Review Only

A "Gift" for the Lady of the Manor



When we moved to the Lake we had two very ladylike white french poodles named "Cha Cha" and "Jolie". My mother swore that they must have felt they moved into "Dog Heaven" because of the beautiful golf course across the street where she would take them to walk with its seemingly endless rolling green hills. Between that and all the great things to sniff around our yard and the Lake, it really was Dog Heaven.

However, Cha Cha and Jolie had a peculiar habit of "dispatching" any muskrat or ground hog that came into our yard. They would work as a team to corner their victim and finally one of them would quickly snap its neck. It seemed to come to them naturally.

After a little research, my mother discovered that poodles were bred to be ratters! They would sit in the ladies' laps in the castle and when a rat came along, they would go into action!

One day in December my mother spotted what looked like a rat walking on the iced-over lake. While she was putting up Christmas lights later that evening, she thought she saw it on the side of our house. She hurried inside, bringing the dogs in with her.

Later, while she was on the telephone, Cha Cha asked to be let out, and my mother opened the door for her. After my mother's phone call, she opened the door for Cha Cha to come back in, and Cha Cha dropped the dead rat at her feet! Cha Cha sensed it bothered her, so she gave my mother an early Christmas present!

Waltz

My parents were out when Jeanie's teacher dropped him off -- "Just for the weekend" -- right! He was a very frisky silver poodle. My mother did not want another dog. But... it took about five minutes for everyone to fall in love with him. My mother named him "Waltz" at the suggestion of my brother. That quickly became "Waltzie", unless we were scolding him (which was very frequently in the first year!).

"Friskie" hardly describes the ball of energy that invaded our house that day. Had we known what was in store, we might not have allowed ourselves to fall in love with him, but loving him allowed us to view his pranks with a resigned smile -- and a chuckle.

My mother would walk Waltz on the golf course every morning before the golfers started their rounds. Because of that, Waltz thought that it was his territory. When he saw golfers ready to "tee off" across the street, he would bark and bark at them! Then he would chase their ball and carry it away. My father, a longstanding member and A-flight champion of the club, was mortified and pretended he didn't know who owned that pesky dog! We did eventually break Waltz of that habit so my father could remain in the club under his own name!

The Chase

Life was a great game to Waltzie, and one of his greatest joys was to be chased by one of us. One day our next door neighbors' granddaughter was visiting. She had a little "dolly" that caught Waltzie's eye. He grabbed it and the chase was on! We spent about one-half hour chasing him around the neighborhood while the little girl kept calling for her "Dolly!"

Before Waltz came to us, we had a slight problem with Canadian Geese congregating on our back yard (by the Lake) and leaving it a mess. Well, one look at these geese in his territory and Waltz was off and running! They found another place to meet.

Squirrels were Waltzie's favorite playmates, and they seemed to enjoy his games, too. Whenever Waltz would see a squirrel on the ground, he would start stalking it (almost like a cat). The squirrel would stop moving and look at Waltz. Then, all of a sudden, Waltz would break out into a run and the squirrel would practically fly up the tree. He never caught one, but he also never gave up trying!

Let Me In!

It took awhile for Waltz to get used to his new home, especially the fact that not all the houses on the Lake were his! Early one Saturday morning I answered the telephone from a sound sleep to hear an irate man screaming on the other end of the line. Apparently, Waltzie was sitting outside his bedroom sliding-glass door (which was very much like my parents' bedroom sliding-glass door), barking and barking and barking. He didn't understand why they weren't letting him in!

Three-Legged Waltz

Because our neighborhood was rather secluded and the road didn't have much traffic, we were able to let Waltz out whenever he asked without having to worry. He usually didn't stray far. Still, my mother would take Waltz on traditional walks each day. They would usually meet Eric, an Alaskan Malamute, and his Mama-type Person, Doris. Eric was about five times Waltz' size, but Waltz was not intimidated in the least. He was so happy to see Eric, in fact, that he would put his two front paws around Eric's neck and lick his face. Eric never seemed to mind!

Waltz was out by himself one morning and got hit by a bicycle! His right front leg was broken. He had to have a cast on it for weeks, so he was walking on three legs! (My mother was afraid she had jinxed him by naming him "Waltz".) He was miserable because the cast stuck straight out in front of him as he walked. My mother was walking Waltzie with his cast when Eric and Doris strolled by. Waltzie went up to Eric and whined and whined while Eric seemed to listen intently. When Waltz finished, Eric leaned down and licked Waltz in the face!

Puddles

Waltz had a friend down the road named Puddles. We could only guess how she got her name! They would spend hours romping and playing every day. Waltzie would come home stinking to high heaven and would be put immediately into the tub! I think he liked that attention as much as the playing, especially being dried with the blow-dryer!

Puddles' "Mama-type Person" did not live with her family, and my mother was concerned that Puddles did not get enough attention at her house. So, every day my mother would give Waltzie and Puddles lunch. It became quite a habit. They would play all morning and promptly at 12:00 Noon they would show up for lunch. It wasn't until much later that my mother found out that Puddles had "lunch" in most of the houses in the neighborhood at various times during the day!

Summertime – The Living was Easy

For Review Only

“See you later, Mom!”

We enjoyed freedom and security in our community at the Lake. Every summer day was an adventure that often started out with us running out the door shouting, “See you later, Mom!” There wouldn’t be any more specifics as to where we were going or when we would return. If the adventure took us in the vicinity of a friend’s house at lunchtime, we would stop and eat there... Usually we went home by dark... unless there were some lightening bugs that needed to be caught!

For Review Only

Giggles

At one of the neighborhood birthday parties, we all got to ride on a pony for a couple of laps around a field. For some reason, I couldn't stop giggling the entire time. Ever after, Cindy's father, Mr. Rabe, always called me "Giggles." As life has gone on, I don't think anyone has ever thought to call me by that nickname – but as I reflect on it, I'm so glad someone did once upon a time.

For Review Only

The Story Continues...

So, these are some of the stories of Three Fingers Cove, but there are many more! Thank you for joining me on the journey. Please check back here for future volumes to be available for your future visits!

And... if you would... please leave a good review on Amazon – this will help spread the word to others who may want to visit Three Fingers Cove!

