

GUYLO

By Mindy Drayer

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Chapter 1

THE ONE

There he was. In the corner of the pen surrounded by his littermates. For some reason, I was immediately drawn to this adorable, dark colored puppy with oversized ears. I noticed him right away and he noticed me. His eyes locked with mine as he tilted his head and let out a barely noticeable whimper. He seemed to be making a decision about me as well. Without hesitation, I knew in my heart he was the one. I picked him up and a warm sensation filled my entire body. My heart melted and I didn't want to let go. Just like that, I found what I was looking for.

Most people have their favorite breed of dogs. They choose that breed because of appearance, personality or personal experience. I have always loved German Shepherds. My passion for that specific breed developed when I was a young girl. There used to be a 1970's television show called Run Joe Run. It was about a German Shepherd named Joe that escaped from an army base. The dog was wrongfully accused of attacking his trainer and was supposed to be destroyed as punishment. Joe ran away from the base and met up with a man who befriended the dog. Together, the two traveled through various towns helping people they met along the way.

I loved that show and watched it whenever I could. Joe was so kind, smart, and strong. He was absolutely beautiful. I knew one day that I would have a German

Shepherd of my own. That day had finally come, and I couldn't wait!

Fortunately for me, my sister Molly had a friend named Jerry who raised and trained German Shepherds for various law enforcement agencies around the country. Some of the dogs were also sold to everyday people as devoted house pets. Because they were in such high demand, Jerry often had litters of puppies on his property.

There happened to be a family of pups ready for purchase. The timing couldn't have been better. In a few days, I was moving away from home. I was heading to the northwest region of Ohio for my new job. But, I didn't want to go alone. I figured a German Shepherd pup would be the perfect roommate. So, it was time for a road trip. Hopefully I'd return with a new bundle of fur.

Molly and I jumped in my car to pay a visit to her friend Jerry. My anticipation and excitement kept building as I drove to the location of the property. Finally, we arrived. It was a warm summer day and the sun was shining brightly. Jerry walked patiently to the car to greet us. He explained that his German Shepherds were working dogs that could handle heavy training and important responsibilities. Basically, his dogs needed jobs. I thought that was great, but I wondered if they could also handle hugs, kisses, and a lot of love and affection. The pup that I would choose was destined to get all that and more. I was so ready to be a dog mom!

We got out of my car and walked inside a long rectangular building. It was the kennel where the puppies were kept until they got old enough to train or to be purchased as pets.

That's where I found him. From that moment on, I was never alone. I told Jerry that I made my choice. He took the puppy out of my arms and looked him over.

He then handed the friendly pup back to me and said “you picked an outstanding dog. He will grow to be strong, reliable and very protective.” Jerry also reminded me to keep him busy by giving him certain jobs to do. Games like fetch and hide and seek would be fine. Dogs consider that work and German Shepherds love to work.

I hopped in my car with the best feeling in the world. My new friend snuggled comfortably in my lap the entire ride home. For the first time in my life, I had my very own puppy.

My family had pets before, dogs, cats, guinea pigs, parakeets, chickens, gerbils, and hermit crabs. But there is something so special about getting your very first dog that belongs to you and you alone.

The next challenge was picking out a name. For those of you who have had dogs, you know how important this part of the process can be. Some dogs are named after significant people or places. Others are based on the color or texture of the animal’s coat. The name I came up with had no significant meaning. In fact, I had never heard it before and never heard it again on any other dog or family pet. It came to me quite easily. I kept looking at my new found friend saying “hi little guy.” I took the word guy and added the first two letters of love. I guess you could say the name I chose was one of a kind. Guylo...the name fit perfectly. Throughout our time together, Guylo would prove over and over, he truly was one of a kind. Our adventure was about to begin.

Chapter 2.

ON MY OWN

Remember when you moved away from home for the very first time? For many of you, that moment most likely came when you went to college. You got to experience moving into a dorm, meeting new friends, and eating cafeteria food on a regular basis. You also learned what life was like living with people other than family and having to adjust your lifestyle to theirs. Sometimes, that obstacle was harder than it had to be.

You also gained independence with a new sense of freedom. It was now up to you to make wise personal choices that could affect your well-being. Everything from choosing the right (or wrong) people to hang out with, what to eat and drink, when to sleep, where to sleep, and even what to wear. At times, you even forced yourself to study without mom or dad telling you to do so. It was a whole new world of trial and error. And, YOU were the person in charge!

That, however, wasn't the case for me. I attended The Ohio State University in Columbus, Ohio. Because I lived in a suburb nearby, I commuted. So, while all my friends were going off to college and gaining their much-anticipated independence, I stayed at home and continued to live with my parents. I know, I know, it doesn't sound very exciting. But I actually didn't mind commuting. I spent many nights sleeping at my friends' dorms after staying out late, dancing and bar hopping with my friends. I actually preferred college life that way. I could stay on campus when I

wanted but could always go back to the quiet and comfort of home. It was kind of like having the best of both worlds.

I did eventually move out on my own though. That unsettling time in my life came several years later than many of you. Instead of cutting the strings after high school graduation, my time for flight came after my fun filled years at Ohio State. It was time to find a job and start a new life away from everything that was familiar to me.



It was the summer of 1992. I was 24 years old and I was ready to explore the world, or at least Ohio. You see, I'm extremely close to my family and friends. I always have been. I never had plans to venture too far from where I grew up (Westerville, Ohio). I have lived in Westerville most of my life. It's a city with a population of nearly 40,000 and sits about 20 miles Northeast of Columbus. It's an absolutely perfect place to raise a family. I know that firsthand. One, from growing up there and two, from raising my own children in Westerville.

Like many of you, I wasn't sure what I wanted to be when I was young. There were several professions that interested me. I thought about becoming a teacher and a coach. In fact, I spent quite a bit of time volunteering as a Sunday school teacher at my church, I also was a little league softball coach and a cheerleading advisor at my old high school Westerville North. I realized that I could always work with kids in some way or another but that I didn't have to make a career out of it.

Another option, becoming a veterinarian. I have always had a life-long passion for animals. It didn't

matter if it was a dog or a frog, I always wanted to save, rescue and adopt as many animals as I could. Boy, is that the truth. When I was growing up in our family home on Debbie Drive, my sister Molly and I snuck in chickens, frogs, toads, turtles, birds and snakes. Yes, snakes! Once, we even hid a puppy in our bedroom closet. I can remember, as clear as day, my mom bringing clothes up from the basement and hanging them in our closet while the puppy was inside it. We didn't breathe. We just stood motionless hoping that pup would stay in there without making a sound. It did exactly that. Thank goodness!

But, when it came to making a career out of veterinary medicine, I couldn't do it. I thought it would be too heart-breaking seeing sick or injured animals every single day. What if I couldn't save or help them? That would kill me. Plus, I didn't think I was smart enough for all the medical classes I would have to take.

So, instead of concentrating on the things I couldn't do, I started to focus on what I could do. That was easy because I knew there was always one particular skill I seemed to master at a very early age...talking! I could talk to anyone, at any time. I was never shy and always loved meeting new people. Halfway through college, I figured it out. I wanted to be a TV news reporter and possibly an anchor.

TV broadcasting is an extremely competitive field. It always has been. But, I was willing to give it a try. Fortunately, a friend of mine knew the owners of a small cable TV station/AM radio station in Delaware, Ohio (WDLR). They were looking for a morning radio news anchor and TV reporter. It sounded like the perfect opportunity and I took the job almost immediately after graduating from Ohio State.

It was a fun job and I learned a lot about the business. I even had my own talk show! It was called "Access" With Mindy Drayer. I worked at WDLR a little

more than a year. But, I knew I couldn't do this forever. I needed more of a challenge. I really wanted to land a job at an affiliate in Ohio. It didn't matter if it was ABC, CBS, or NBC. But what did matter, was staying relatively close to home.

One day, while researching various job openings, I came across, what seemed to be, an outstanding opportunity at WLIO. It's a small market TV station in Lima, Ohio. Television news stations are assigned a market number. The lower the number, the bigger the city.

For example, there are 210 markets in the United States of America. The number one market is New York City with Los Angeles in second and Chicago third. Lima is market size 190. WLIO is an NBC affiliate about 90 minutes from Westerville. It was perfect. Now, all I had to do was get the job. And, just in case you're wondering ...the smallest market in the United States of America is Glendive, Montana.

While working in Delaware, I really did gain some good experience. I became friends with very powerful people throughout the county like judges, detectives, police officers, politicians and other community leaders. Because of these friendships and the trust I gained along the way, I was often granted exclusive interviews and given choice opportunities like riding along with sheriff's deputies as they conducted undercover sting operations.

One experience after another allowed me to put together a pretty good resume tape of all the exciting stories I covered. I also included a sample of anchoring an evening newscast. After some fancy editing, I was happy with how my tape turned out. The question was, would the news director in Lima like it enough to offer me a job? I was about to find out.

Instead of just sending my resume tape in the mail, I wanted to personally deliver it and try my hardest to

get in the door of the newsroom for a face to face meeting. Life is all about taking chances. So, I needed to do just that. But, I wasn't about to do it alone. My mom made the road trip with me. Throughout my entire life, my mom has always been there for me. Her career was taking care of her children. We didn't fully appreciate it while growing up but as my siblings and I grew older, we realized the importance of being a stay at home mom. There truly is nothing more important. Anyway, my mom and I hopped in my car and started heading toward Allen County.

My plan worked like a charm. My mom and I pulled into the parking lot of WLIO. She waited in the car while I walked through the doors of the one-story brick building which looked a lot more like a house than a TV station. I asked if the news director was in. He was, and he actually had a free moment.

His name was George Dunster. He was a charming older man with a serious yet friendly personality. We had a great conversation about my goals and experience. I gave him my resume tape and hoped for the best.

A few days later, I was hired and thrilled! I couldn't believe things were working out so well and so quickly. I also came to the realization that I was about to leave the house I called home for nearly all my life.

I've always had my parents to take care of me and older siblings to look after me. I also had lifelong friends who stayed by my side through every obstacle that came my way. But, that was all about to change. For the first time in my life, I was going out on my own. I needed something. Something that I could take with me, be a part of me. However, I had no idea how that "something" was going to change my life forever.

That was the only reason I drove to Jerry's property on that warm summer day; to find Guylo. He was my something that eventually turned into my everything.

Chapter 3.

THE DEFINING MOMENT

The next major car ride came two days later. I packed up everything I needed for my move to Northwest Ohio. It seemed so strange to be moving away from Westerville. Saying goodbye to family and friends was undeniably painful. Sometimes in life, it's so easy to live in a comfort zone where we are familiar with everything around us. The people and places of Central Ohio were like second nature to me. But, it was time for a change, time to break out of that comfort zone. On the positive side, I wasn't going to experience this change alone. I had Guylo and within those first few days together, we immediately grew attached to one another. Right from the very beginning and without hesitation, Guylo clumsily followed me all around my parents' house and yard or wherever we went. He never let me walk alone. I had an instant shadow. I just had no idea how much I would depend on that shadow.

After one final and tearful embrace with my parents, we were ready to make the trip away from home. I can't tell you how difficult it was to say goodbye to my mom and dad. They've always been my biggest supporters. I relied on them both for so many things in my life. As I've stated before, we are a very close family. We're always there for one another no matter the situation. Because of that, Molly along with my brother Matt decided to follow me to Lima. They loaded up a truck with most of my belongings.

Guylo and I were in my car leading the way. Once again, Guylo sat in my lap, waiting for a pat on the head or a rub behind the ears. I was constantly reaching out to touch him. Just feeling Guylo's fur seemed to ease my anticipation.

With so many thoughts running through my mind, our drive quickly came to an end. We made it to my new home away from home and we tediously unloaded everything from my car and their truck. It was one long and drawn out day. When darkness fell, it was time for Molly and Matt to head home. I hugged them dearly and watched them drive off heading home to Westerville. And just like that, I was on my own.

I was separated from everyone in my life who knew me better than anyone and who I knew and loved more than anyone. That was the very first time I actually needed Guylo. I sat down on the floor. In an instant, Guylo crawled into my lap. I held him for what seemed like hours. Quickly, his fur was covered with tears and kisses. I was so thankful to have my four-legged friend for comfort.



Living independently was an extremely different situation for me. Everyone who I surrounded my life with was now nearly one hundred miles away. Luckily, I had Guylo to get me through the challenges I would face. In the next few months, Guylo and I had grown closer with each passing day. We were practically inseparable.

Many dog owners believe in using crates. They can be wonderful to housebreak puppies or to keep them from chewing items to pieces when you're gone. But I decided against using a crate for Guylo. Instead,

he slept right by my side, as if keeping guard. When I left for work, Guylo had the run of our apartment.

I would often come home to find several pairs of shoes all chewed up. I made the mistake of giving him an old shoe to chew on. The problem was, Guylo didn't know the difference between an old shoe and a new one. I quickly learned to shut my closet door. But, it wasn't just shoes. Guylo would find something else to get into. I think he did it on purpose to make me mad, as a way of getting back at me for being gone. It was clear, Guylo did not want me to leave him. He would much rather have me stay with him and not work a day in my life. But, that was obviously impossible. Eventually, he got used to the idea that I had to temporarily leave him. But, I always came home.

I've often heard that dogs do not have a sense of time. For example, you could be gone five hours or five minutes. Within that time, dogs miss you, period. They are just as happy to see you walk through the door after any length of time.

We lived in the upstairs area of a two-story house in Cridersville, a tiny village just south of Lima. It sits in Auglaize County and has a population of nearly two thousand people. Stacey Myers, who was a videographer at WLIO, owned the home. I rented the upstairs apartment from her.

Funny story about Stacey, when I was originally trying to decide where I would live while working at the TV station, I asked her if it would be ok for me to have a dog. She had no problem with it whatsoever. Stacey thought I looked like the type of person who would have a tiny lap dog like a Teacup Maltese or a Yorkie or something like that. Boy, was she wrong. The first time Stacey saw Guylo, she couldn't believe the size of his paws. I think she instantly regretted giving me the green light to keep a dog in her house. However, a part of her had to feel a sense of security. After all, a

big, strong, fearless German Shepherd would be living under her roof. That's not a bad thing!

As time went on, it got to the point that I took Guylo almost everywhere. He loved riding in my car. Looking back at it now, I don't think it was the car that he loved. It was probably just the idea of him and I being together. Just us two alone, heading down the open road.

Not only did I choose not to keep Guylo in a crate, I also rarely needed a leash. He always stayed next to me, walking side by side. If he was a few steps in front of me, he constantly turned around just to make sure I was still there. I always was. As our relationship continued to grow, I soon realized that having Guylo in my life was the best decision I ever made. I absolutely loved my pup. He was so well behaved, obedient and so loving. I never needed dog training classes, a leash or a crate. I guess all I really needed was to show Guylo how much I cared.



One day, Guylo and I were on one of our regular walks. We always went on different walking paths or parks because I never wanted him to get bored with the same scenery. The months were colder now and ice was forming on puddles and ponds. Like most dogs, if Guylo saw a squirrel, groundhog or rabbit, he would chase it and then quickly come back to me. But, it would be a goose that nearly ended the wonderful relationship Guylo and I had already formed in such a short amount of time.

We were walking around a nearly frozen pond about a mile from our apartment when all at once, Guylo saw that particular goose land on the pond. No one was near the area. It was just us two. He acted

instinctively and ran after it. Problem was, the pond was not completely frozen. The ice around Guylo's paws started to give way and just like that, Guylo was going under the bitterly cold water.

I couldn't believe it. How could this be happening? I couldn't help but come to the realization that this was the end of my new best friend. He was drowning. No one else was in sight. No one was around to help in anyway.

I've heard before how people react in certain situations, not really thinking about the complications or the end result. Well, on that cold winter day, my instincts took over and I trudged into the frigid water to save my dog. Without thinking, I wrapped my arms around his neck and chest and pulled him safely to dry land. We were both out of breath and in shock from what had just happened. I knew that Guylo was most likely freezing and that I should be freezing as well. But, the cold didn't bother me. My body was running on pure adrenilation.

We managed to leave the pond area as soon as we could and went straight home. I hurried out of my wet clothes and changed into a cozy warm robe. I also wrapped my pup into a comfortable blanket. We sat by one another for a long while. From that moment on, I swear Guylo knew exactly what I did. I truly believe he understood that I saved his life.

We were close before the pond incident. But afterwards, an undeniable bond of trust and compassion emerged within Guylo's heart. I became the center of his world. No one or nothing would ever come between Guylo and his savior.