

# Billy's Journey



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Written and illustrated by  
Chris Cooper

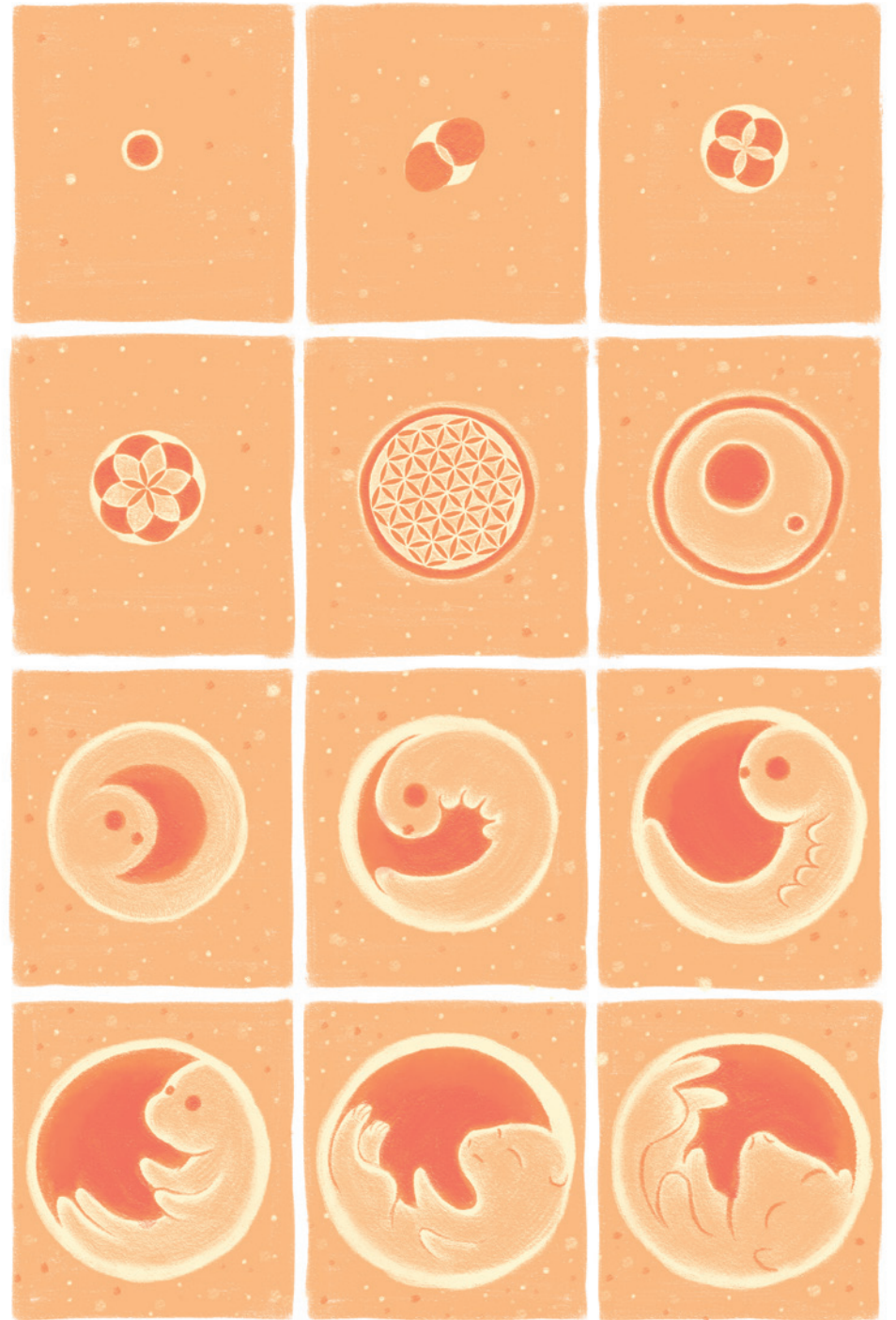
Billy's Journey

Promotional edition 2020

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# Chapter 1

## Billy's Journey



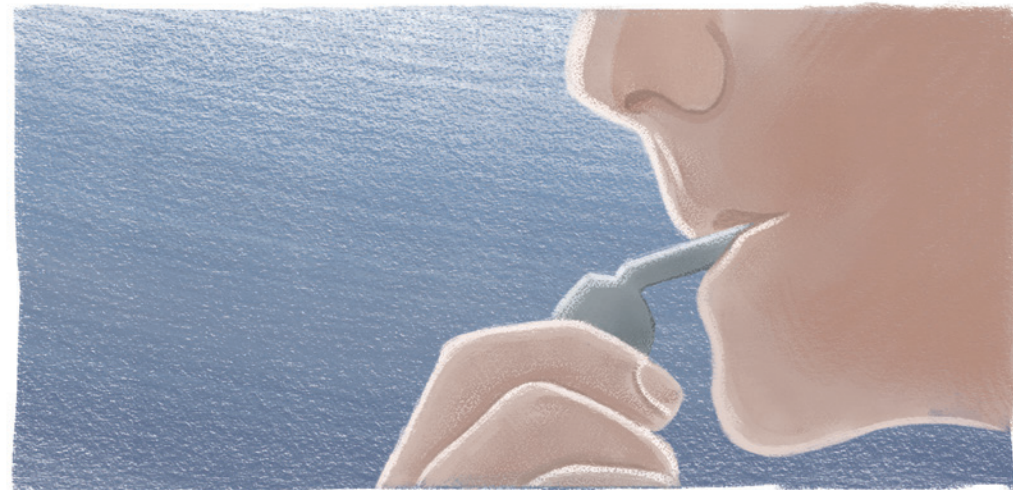
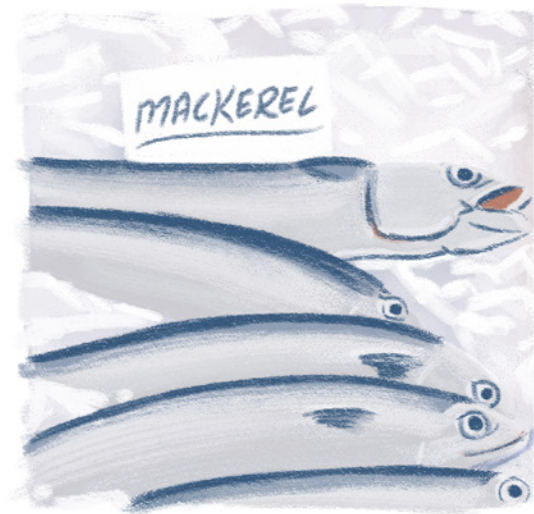




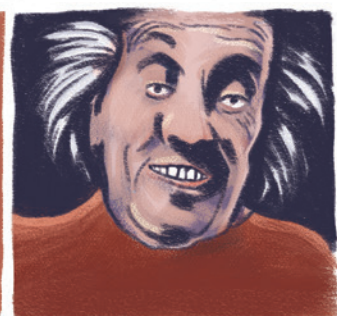




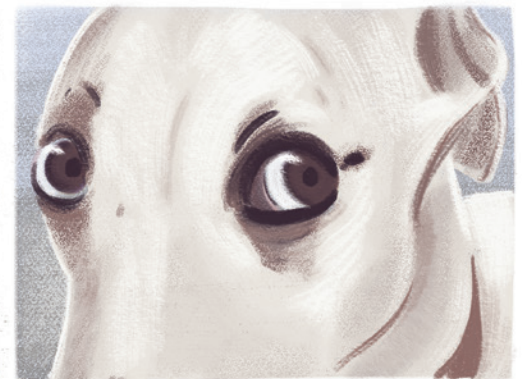
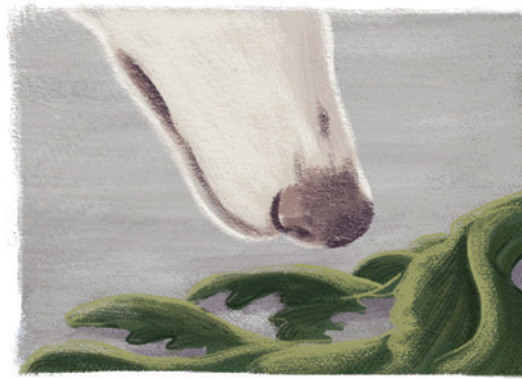












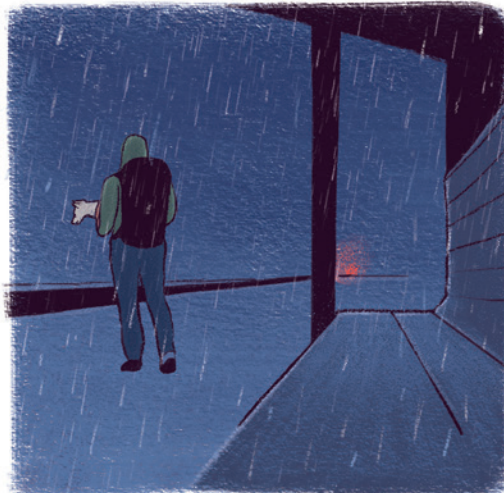








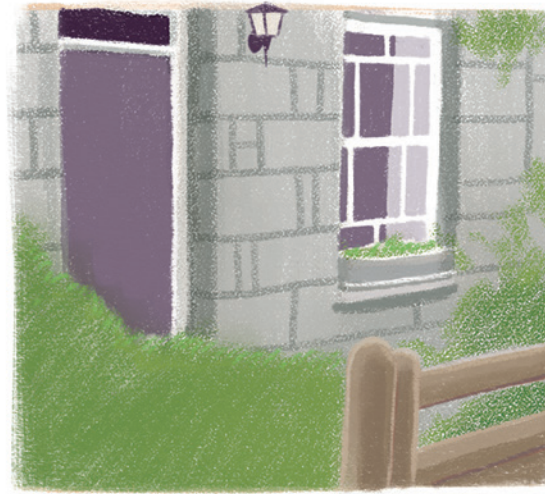














# Chapter 2

## Billy Gets Told Off



We've found a place to live

Paying the bills with graphic design





Everyone loves Billy



"RUN BILLY RUN!"



Dexter is his best buddy



Dexter to the rescue





He's well fed



Sleeps in my bed



St Ives across the bay



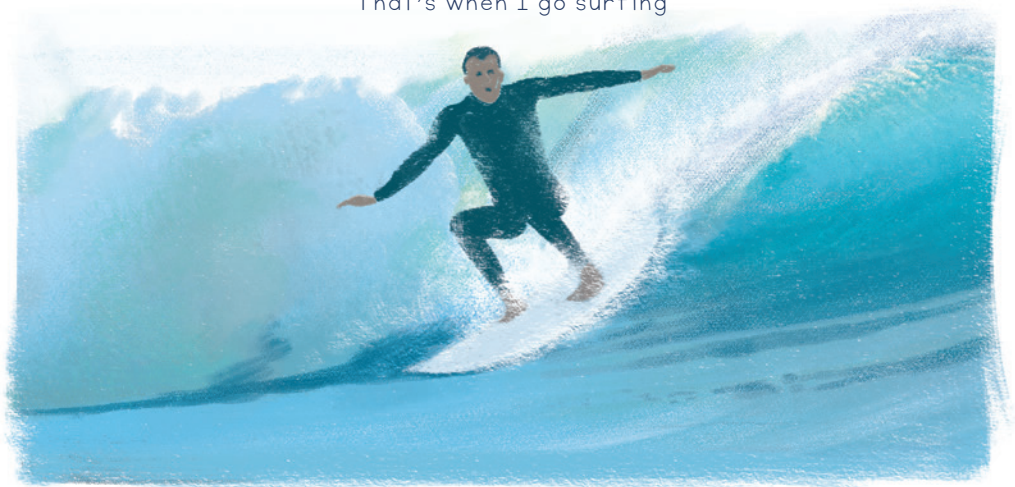
I'd love to have my own art gallery, one day



Billy sleeps a lot



That's when I go surfing



Well, try to go surfing



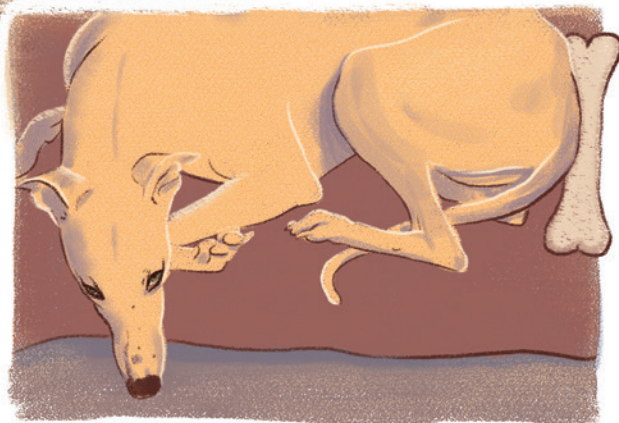




What have you done?



Look at  
this damage!



Get in your bed

I was angry at Billy for chewing the window frame.

Too angry.



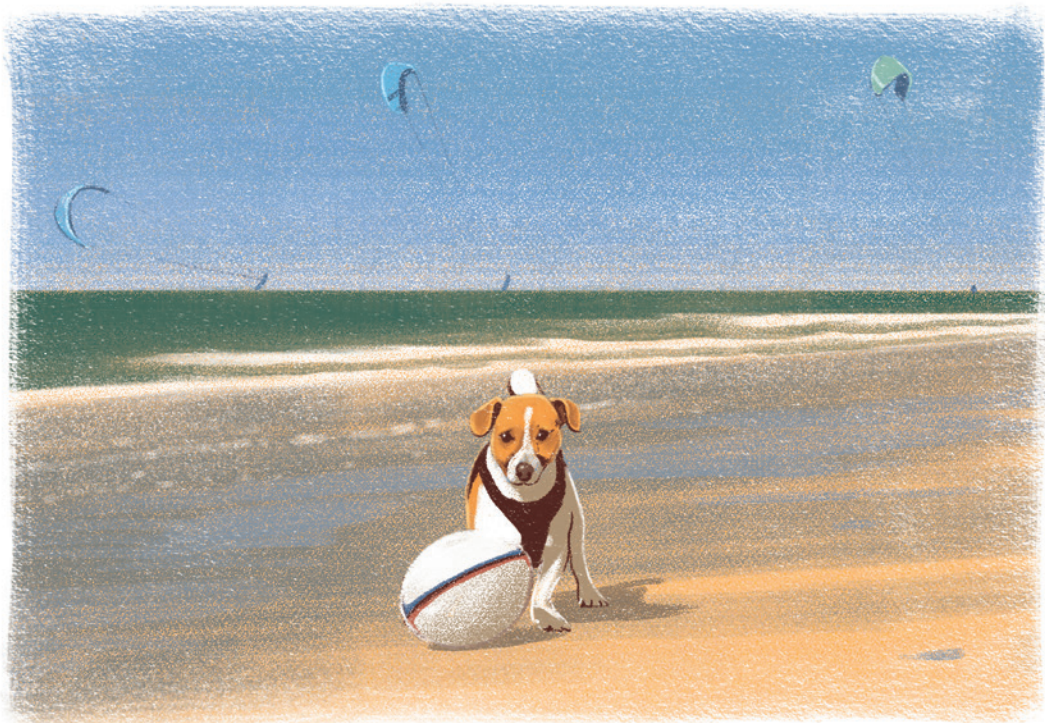
He doesn't need to be shouted at.  
He's so soft and gentle.  
He was upset.

I'm his whole world.  
Without me, he has no one.

I'm sorry Billy,  
I won't ever shout  
at you again.

He needs another friend.





Then who should come along? Little Dexter looking for a game of rugby.



We had so much fun  
and all was forgotten.





An illustration of a person and a dog on a cliff overlooking the ocean. The person, wearing a blue hoodie and dark pants, stands with hands on hips. A dog in a yellow raincoat sits to the left. A white surfboard lies on the grass in the foreground. Several white birds fly in the sky. In the distance, a lighthouse sits on a small island in the blue ocean under a clear sky.

# Chapter 3

Billy and  
The Dolphin













I should write a book about our adventures



Morning Billy



Are you waking up?



Almost lunch time



Looking good Bill



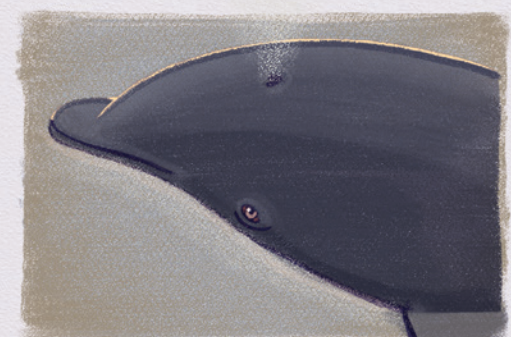
It's a stormy day



Hey what's that?

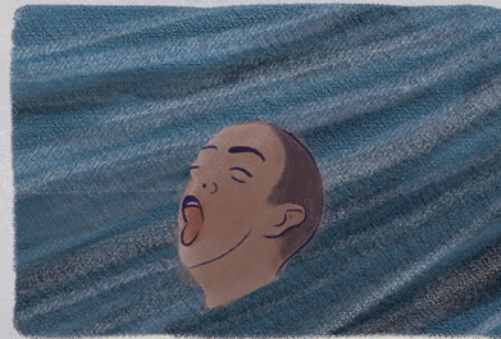


It's alive



Tide's going out





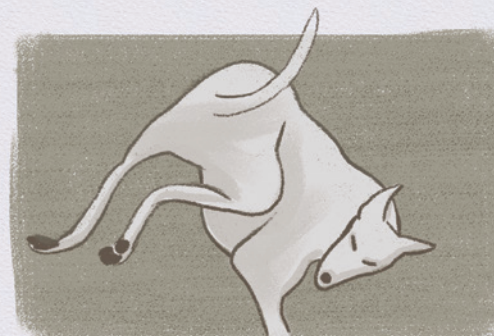
Let's go home and put the heater on



The next day  
brought sad news.



"No don't touch it"  
What a shame.



That was a nasty fall



Come here  
I'll carry you home





This is Billy



He's had a fall



Twisted awkwardly



On the table please



Nothing broken



Perhaps muscle damage



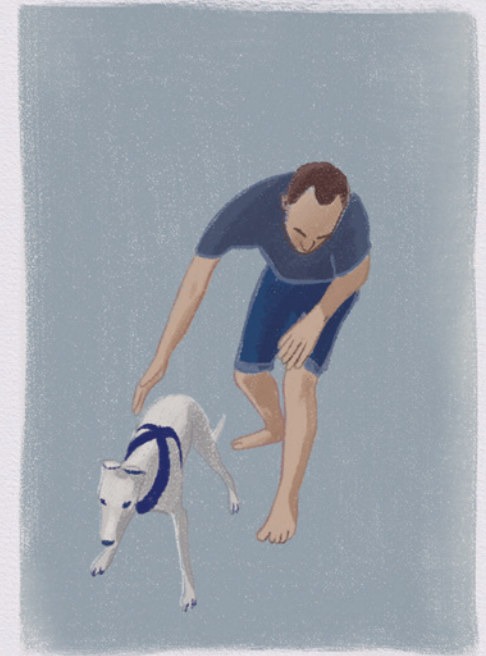
Give him lots of support



Up to 6 weeks to heal



Are you going to stand up?



You're OK



Oh no, you're not right



We need help



I brought him  
in three  
weeks ago  
with a limp.



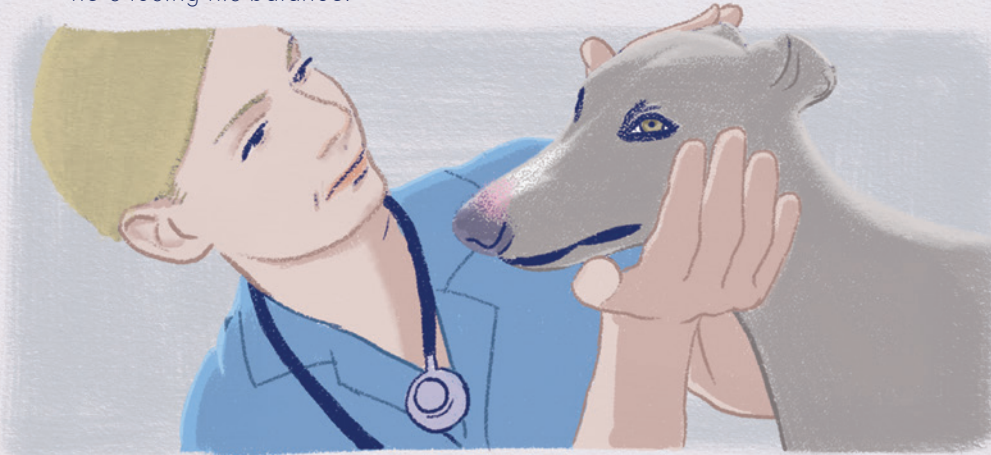
I think he's getting worse,  
he's losing his balance.



Nothing broken



Do you like it up there?  
You're in the  
Captain's chair



Did he hit his head?

He has brain damage



You may have to go on a journey



Not a lot you can do



Sorry







I'd like to make an appointment  
with the neurologist.

.....  
As soon as possible.

.....  
Tuesday, yes, see you then.



Billy are you awake?  
It's your mother.  
He's wagging his tail.



I didn't realise he  
was this bad.  
I don't think he'll be  
coming back home.





Do you need someone right away?



He's desperate



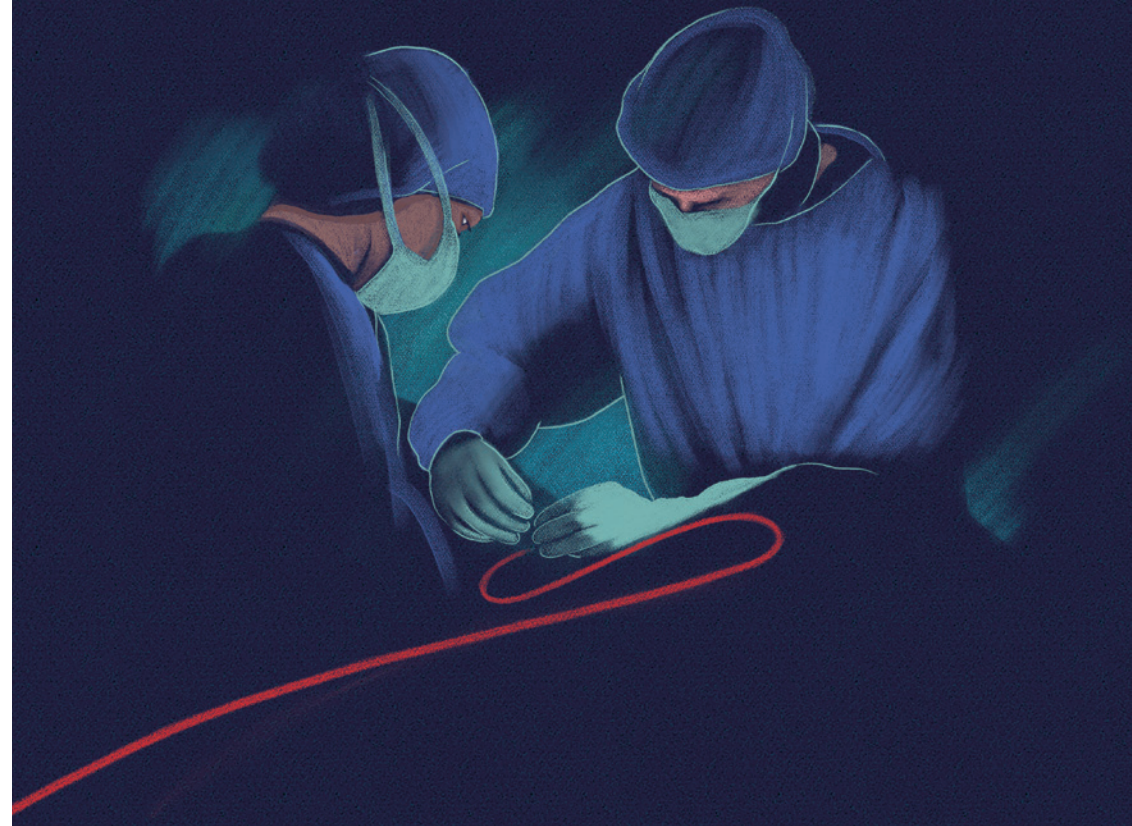
I've got you



You're OK

## Chapter 4

### The Vets





"The MRI scan has revealed inflammation of the layers of the cerebellum.

Suggestive of a parasite called Neospora.

I'm testing Billy's spinal fluid. There is evidence his liver is also involved.

This is a parasitic infection that can be picked up in the environment,  
common on farms and in cattle.

It's possible to treat but the prognosis remains guarded.

In similar cases half of dogs unfortunately don't respond to treatment while  
some others survive but can keep neurological defects, such as balance issues.

I recommend we try treating Billy for 2 months and review his case.

I will write up the report detailing the medication.

He's going to need a lot of care. Hand feeding, help going to the toilet,

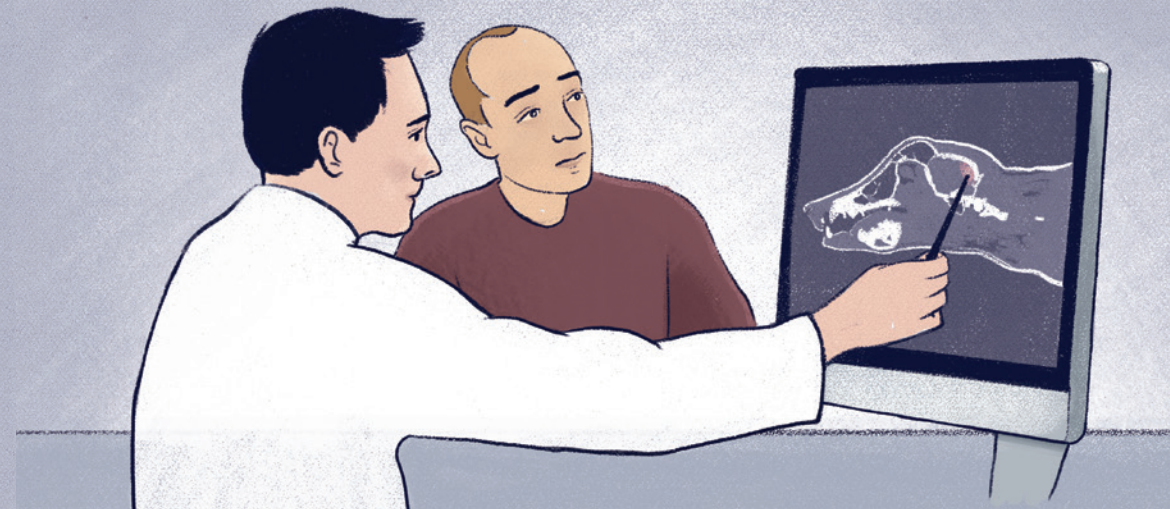
Plenty of rest with clean water offered regularly."

"Can I take him home?"

"Yes, the nurse will show you how to stimulate his bladder,  
how to massage him, making sure he doesn't get bedsores. "

"What are his chances?"

"He has a 50% chance at survival but be expecting of disabilities.  
See how he goes over the next 2 weeks. Take it day by day, any concerns or  
questions don't hesitate to call me."







Billy, oh Billy



We are here



Lots of soft brushing. Stroking with 2 hands from head to tail



When you turn him don't flip his head



My name is Vicky. I'll show you how to care for Billy



You can feel his bladder here. He's quite full from being on a drip, lots of fluids



Instead put one hand under his back legs and turn him like this



Turn him every couple of hours to stop him getting bedsores



Bring one hand under, then fingers on top, can you feel?



Slightly press, not too hard, it is possible to burst a bladder



Rotate his legs



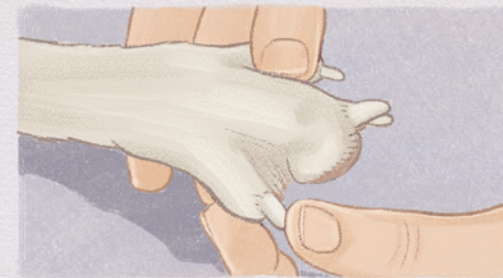
His feet



oooooooooooo



It's OK Billy



His toes



He's going to need a lot of care  
Good luck Billy



No mum he's not having that.  
No raw meat. No beef, no pork.  
That's where this disease comes from.

This doesn't have to be his last days.  
I'm not looking after him that way.  
Everything is for his recovery.

No of course not, I blame myself.  
I knew something was wrong.  
I should have seen the  
expert sooner.

Does it really matter?  
Just give him what he wants.  
Give him a good last few days.

You don't blame me do you?

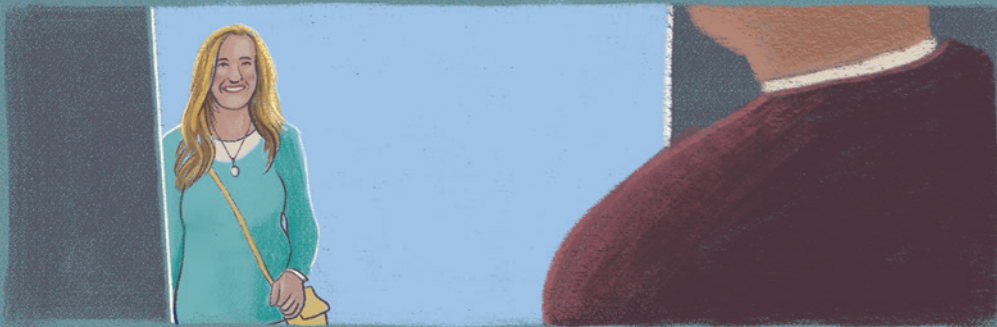
You weren't to know.  
I can't take seeing him like this.  
It's too difficult.



Maybe Rosie can stay?  
She might help his recovery.  
I will look after them both.







Thanks for coming



Cup of tea?



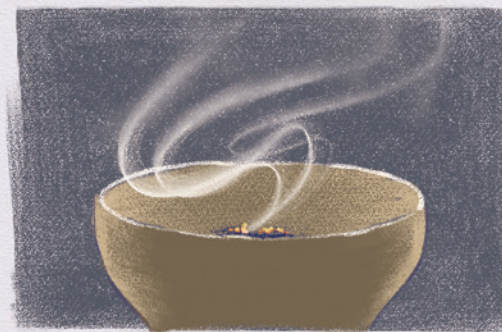
I've brought special tea bags



Reiki doesn't always heal



It can also ease passing



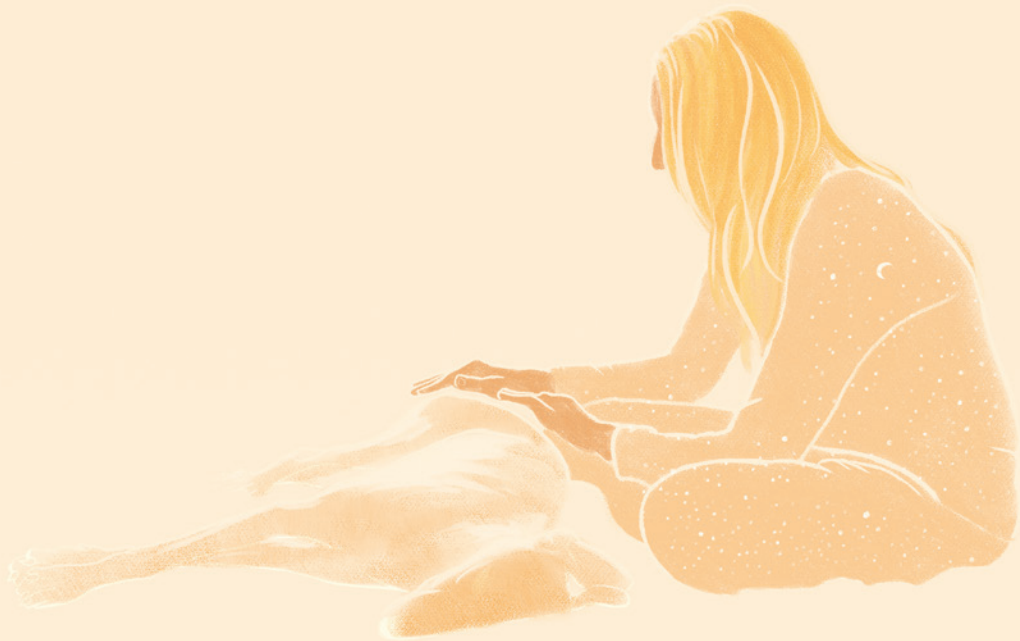
I just want to give him a chance



Time for reiki



To the divine physician.  
To the protection of sustenance.  
I bow humbly to you with prayers.  
I pray to increase energy.  
To improve vitality.



May healing come from unexpected places.





Wee wee



Good boy



Hey, what's that sound?

Oh look, bees, can you see?



# Chapter 5

## Billy's Medicine







Day by day turns to week by week





Come on Billy



You can do it



That's it



Owww



Don't worry, we'll get there



Week 6



Just a few steps



Well done



Good boy



That's enough



To keep our hopes up





Week 7



Is that Billy?  
I see you walk past every day



You met my daughter,  
she told me all about him



Bless you



Can we take him to Church?



Illness is not in God's plan.  
God loves animals.  
Let him heal.  
Let Jesus help him heal,  
A rapid healing that baffles vets.  
Gone with parasites,  
Gone with all brain damage,  
May he regain balance.  
May he walk,  
May he run,  
May he live to an old age,  
Bringing joy to all who see him.  
  
Thank you Jesus, thank you.





Come on Billy



You got it



Each



week



passing



brings



delicate



improvements.





It's been 2 months, how's he doing?



He's started to walk a few steps



He looks better



Sharper eyes



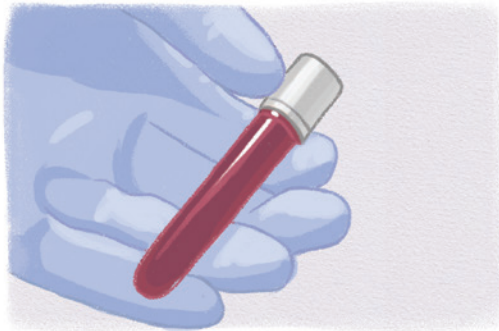
Standing



Let's do a blood test



Takes around 5 days



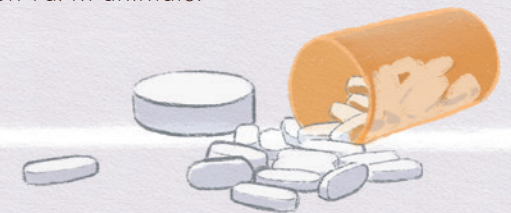
I will call you with the results

When Billy's blood results showed an increase of antibodies I was advised to keep him on antibiotics for another two months.

The same results came back 2 months later. It was suggested I keep him on medication for the rest of his life.



Billy hated the tablets. I'd wrap them in soft cheese but it felt wrong knowing the illness came from factory farming. I read about the dangers of long-term antibiotics and their overuse on farm animals.



He needed to come off medication and give his own immune system a chance. If the parasites came back I could take him to my mum's for a family goodbye. Her vet would help him sleep. I wouldn't let him suffer.





4 months after diagnosis I reduced his medication.  
Day by day, until he was on only natural foods.

I kept a close eye on him.



You like these don't you guys



Oops, missed



There you go



Is that Billy?



I haven't seen you for months



Bless you Billy Whippet



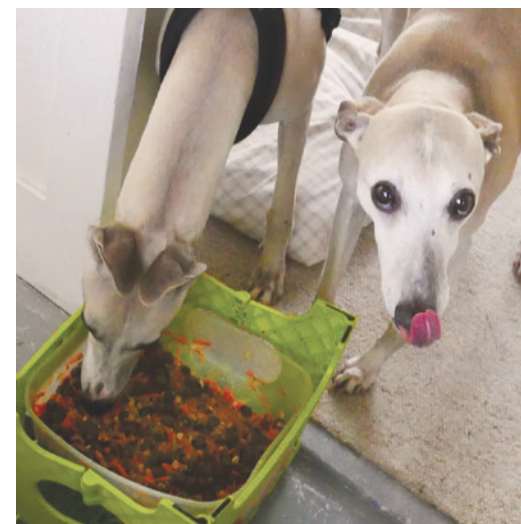
Thank goodness I've seen you



You look tired Bill

I'll carry you home and make a big dinner

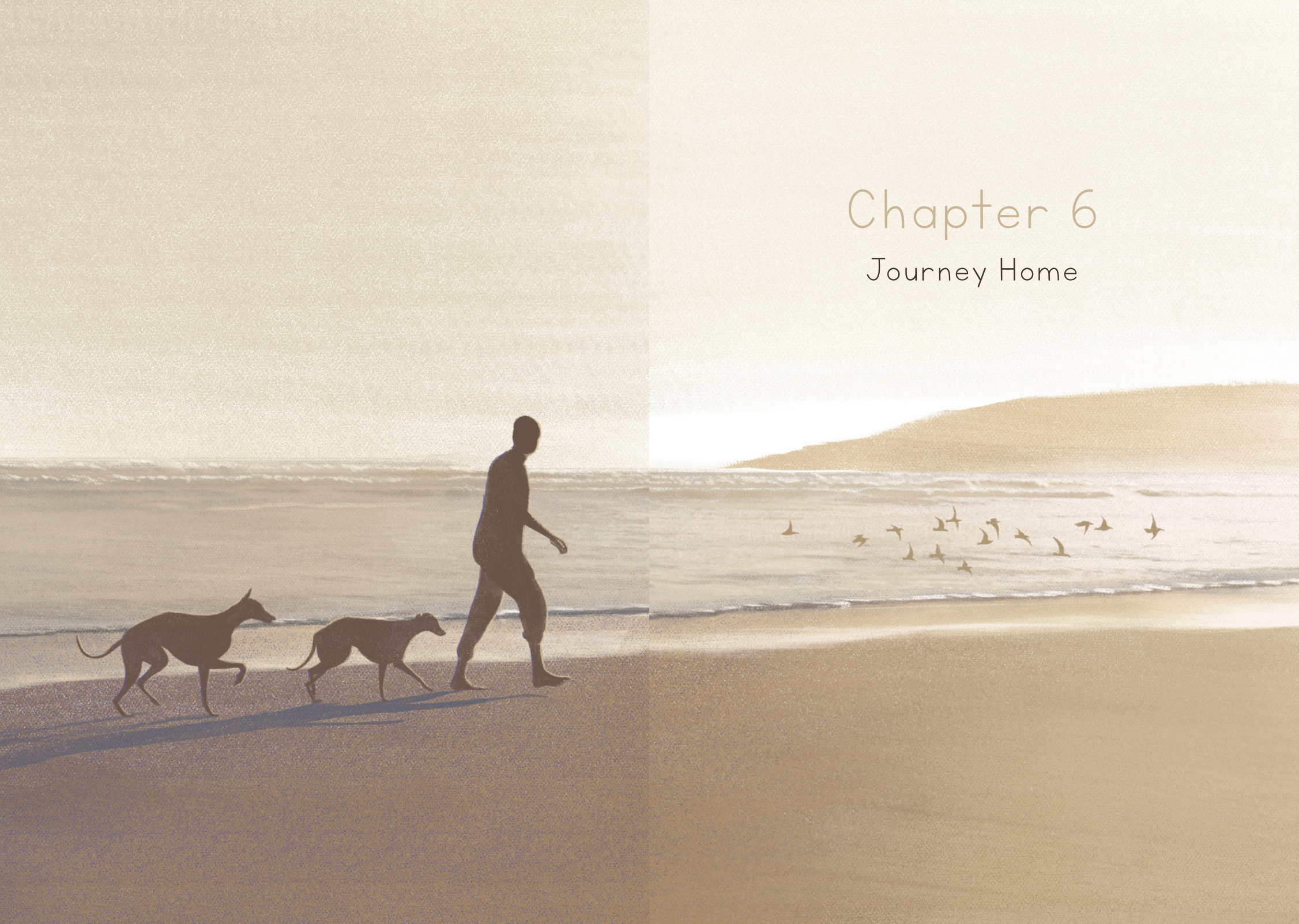






# Chapter 6

## Journey Home







You're going to need your jacket on



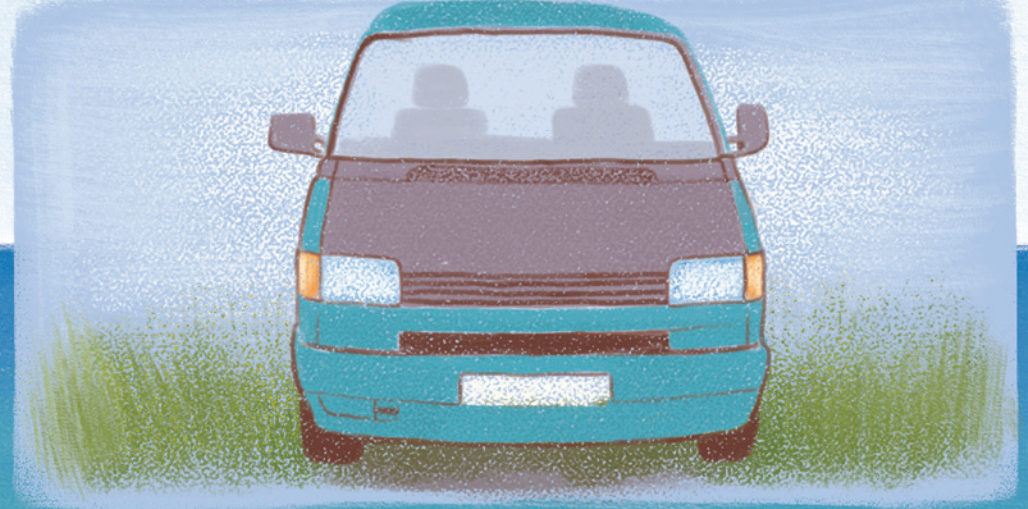
And your harness



Yes you're coming too Rosie



Walking well Billy



A bit wobbly but that's OK



Not much further

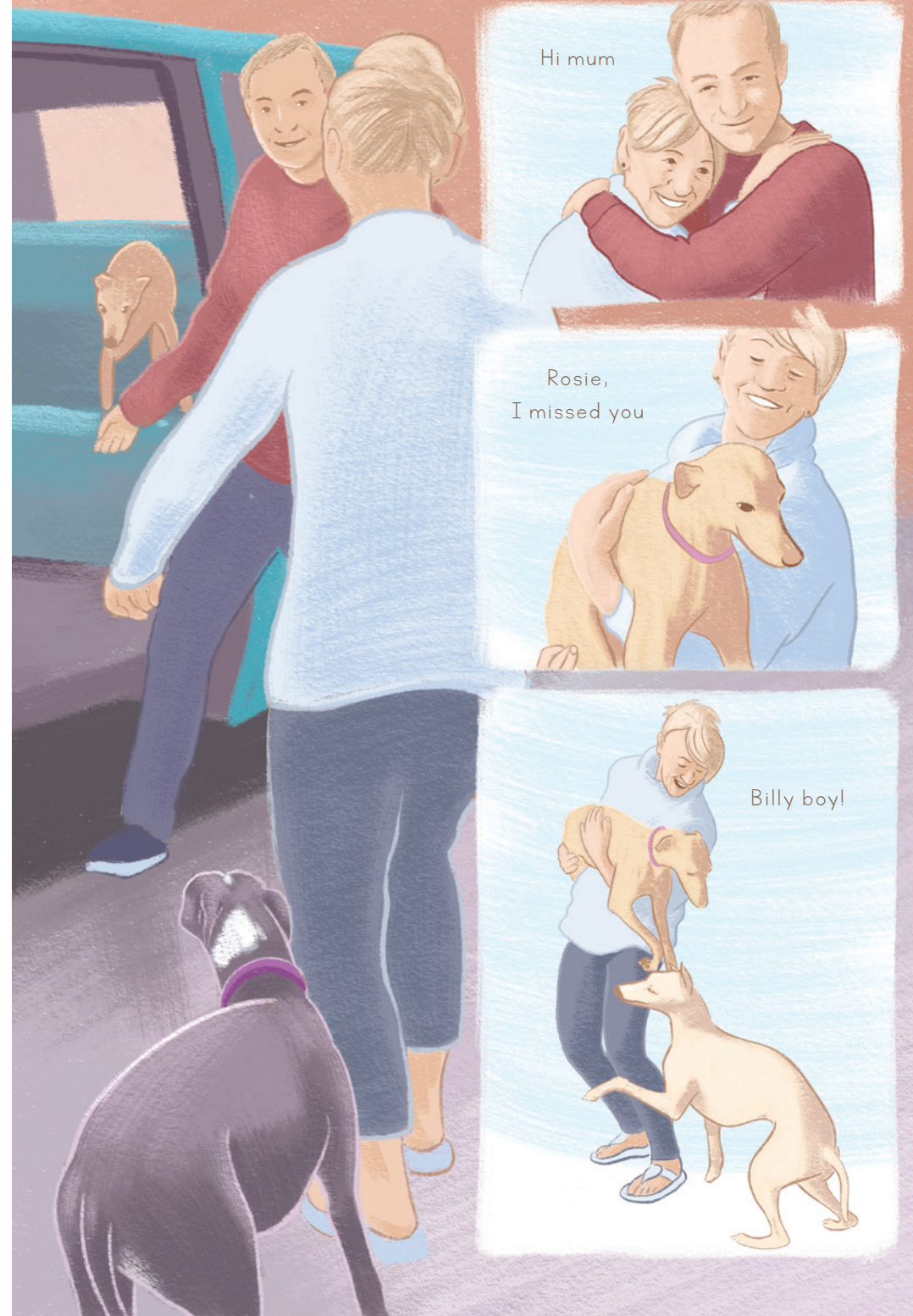


Do you like the van?  
Shall we get it?





Alright guys? Where do you want to go?



Hi mum

Rosie,  
I missed you

Billy boy!









I'm delighted with his progress.  
He's a happy dog who loves sniffing around,  
he communicates, remembers places and faces.  
He's accepting of his disabilities and so am I.  
Always in the present moment.  
Kept on a super-food diet to aid neurological development.  
I massage him and look into every suggestion.  
We do balance exercises, walking backwards while I hold his front paws.  
Walking up and down sand dunes. Gentle steps.  
Other dogs teach him the most.

I can accept saying goodbye and when the time comes  
I hope it will be clear.  
But while he's happy and wants to live I will give him a good life.  
He wants to please, and for all his needs, Billy has given me so much.  
A good life for him turns into a good life for me.  
The lessons I have learned about patience and commitment have led me  
to find a truer and more contented way of life, for which I am eternally  
grateful to this little pooch.

You can follow Billy's progress online:  
[billywhippet.com](http://billywhippet.com)











Billy the whippet had an idyllic lifestyle which most dogs would envy.

Until one day a minor accident on the beach turned out to be something far more serious.



This beautifully illustrated book tells the true and heart-warming story of how he and his owner Chris embarked on a journey of mind, body and soul in a battle against a devastating and life-threatening illness.

