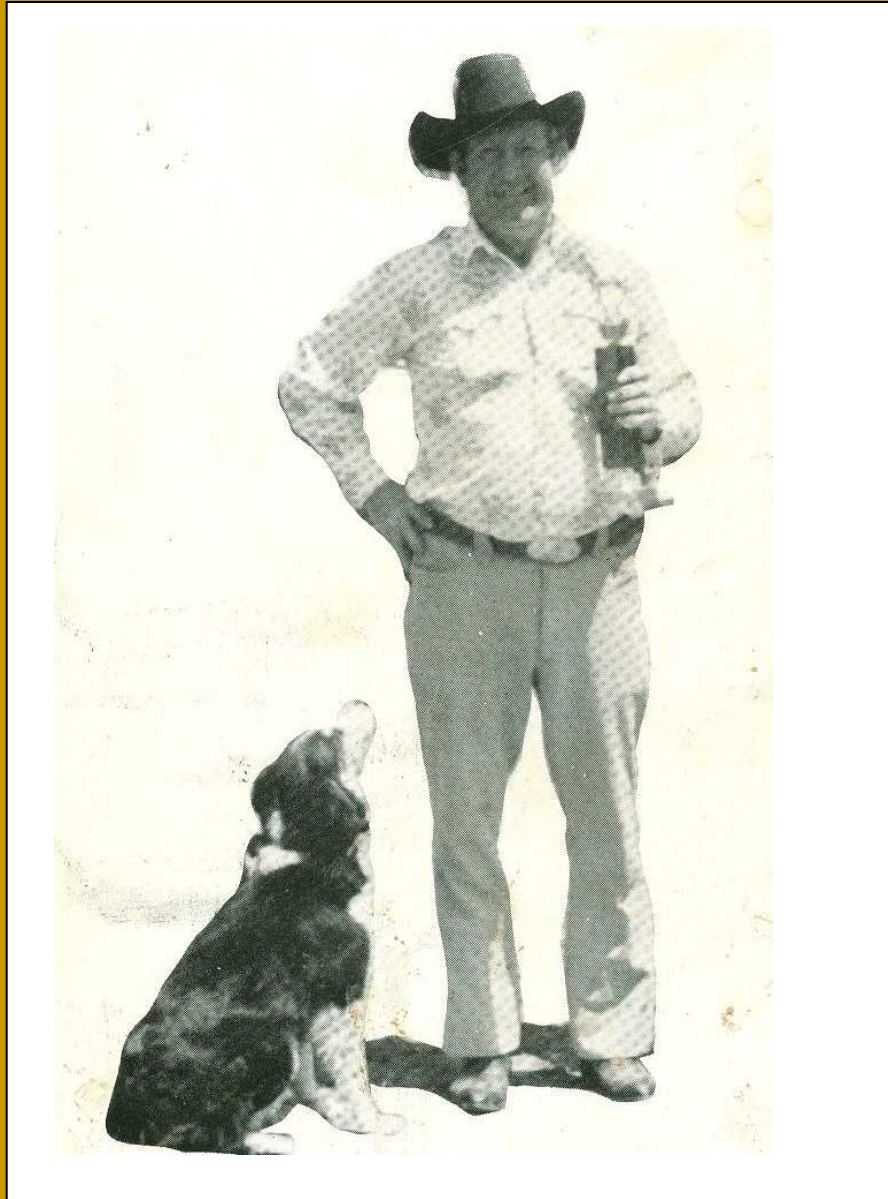


My Dog Rosie



By C.J. Greer

Simplified Training

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Preface

Mr. White and his ranch foreman, Robert Neil, were bent low over the squirming, squealing litter of Border Collie puppies using every knowledgeable key they possessed to pick out the best one. Eva Dee, my twelve-year-old daughter (not being able to stand the suspense any longer), reached into the pile of fur and lifted out a little tri-colored female she had named "Rosie" and said, "This is the best one, Mr. White. She will be the best dog of the litter." "What makes you think so?" asked Mr. White, owner and operator of the largest commercial and purebred Hereford operation in the state of Missouri.

"I just know she will be," answered Eva Dee.

"Well, if that's a woman's intuition, I'll just take her," he replied. I breathed a sigh of relief. He had been fondling an almost all-white pup with a black head that I just knew he would pick and that was my choice pup of the litter. When Mr. White was following Eva's advice he was leaving me my choice and taking a little nondescript pup that would have been one of the last choices.

In a couple of weeks, Mr. White returned to the Elm Valley Goat Dairy in Springfield, Missouri, with the little tri-colored female. "She doesn't seem to be healthy and I'm afraid she will die. I want to trade her back for the white pup," he explained. Since I stand behind my dogs and have replaced several in such cases, I watched in consternation as he put the beautiful

white dog pup on the seat beside him in the big gold Cadillac and drove off with my prize.

I looked down at the pup he had left behind. I picked her up and looked into her eyes. All the other pups had been sold. She was all I had left. “Eva Dee, you had better be right! And maybe you are, there is just something about your eyes, Rosie that I like!”



Accepting trophy and ribbon for 1st Place in Cattle Class at Longmont, Colorado.

Foreword

Here's a book you will enjoy!

Typesetting this book has changed my whole opinion of work dogs. I used to think that only poodles, peek-a-poos, or cock-a-poos were worth having. The smaller, the furrer, the better.

This book is about a lot of dogs. But it is about *one* Border Collie in particular—Rosie. I hate to admit it, now, that I had begged Dad to get rid of Rosie. She always looked evil to me, the way she slunk around in the shadows of the carport as we would unload from the car.

I recall on a trip back to Missouri from Wyoming, I was at the wheel and Dad says, “Now when we get to Hutchinson, Kansas, stop at a phone booth. I have to call place. I am to pick up a Border Collie, *zzzzz*.”

When he awoke I was (purposely) 200 miles past Hutchinson, Kansas—too far to go back!

In a novel way, this book walks you through the commands used in training Border Collies. It is such interesting, persuasive material. Dad makes it sound so easy. However, it must be easier for Border Collies. My poodle just sets there like a bump on a cucumber when I command, “Way-to-me.” “Come-by.” Or, “Go get the cows.”

Twyla (Greer) Menzies

Special Thanks

Special thanks go to my lovely wife, Carrie, and to our five wonderful children, who have stood behind me in the ministry for over thirty years.

Carrie Ann Simmons, who is responsible for much of the western clothing I wear.

Glen Ray, who lets me use his cattle to train dogs.

Twyla Menzies and her husband Bruce, who did the typesetting and endless proofreading for this book.

Olen Lee, for his mental and physical support.

Eva Dee, who would never let me sell Rosie a second time.

And numerous other friends for their suggestions and moral support.

Rosie

From eight little “fluff balls” just two yet remained,
For six have been chosen my pick they’d not claimed.
Soon the choice of all choices was going to be made,
As our twelve-year-old Eva said, “Rosie’s first grade!”
So I stood by and waited for the men to decide,
Would they take her advice or the pup of my pride?
With the tri-colored pup they were soon out of sight,
Leaving me the white one--things have all turned out right!
But would you believe in a couple of weeks,
“Little Rosie” is back to be traded for keeps!
Can it be that my prize is now leaving my yard?
And it’s all up to Rosie to win my regard?
How common you look as you tuck in your tail.
Are you sorry you’re here or afraid you will fail?
Then I noticed her eyes as she looked up at me,
Little then did I know, she’s a champion to be!
If you’re choosing for looks then you may miss the mark,
She must know how to bite, much more than to bark!
Dog trainers, remember, beauty’s only skin deep.
For it’s far more important how she works cows and sheep!

By my wife, Carrie Greer

Chapter 1

“Rosie on the Nosie”

“Come out here to the pasture Gene. I want to show you something you won’t believe!” I was addressing a lanky, red-haired, steely blue-eyed friend of mine who operates a large dairy near Ozark, Missouri. Gene Estes not only raises fine Holstein cattle but has some of the best Border Collies in the area. His dog, Edgar, is the sire of the pup I was about to show him.

I picked up little three-month-old Rosie into my arms and we headed for the pasture. Rosie hasn’t had one bit of training. She is a little tri-colored thing, black with white trim, white running gears, with brown eyebrows and jowls. Her eyes are neither dark nor light, just in-between amber and has an uncanny trait, even as a pup, of looking directly into your eyes. That is...if she likes you. And, already as a puppy she saw few people that she liked. She quietly ignores the rest. Later on in life she bit several people. She is really anti-social. To an extent this has been embarrassing, but one thing I’ll never have to worry about is someone stealing her!

Now, back to the pasture.

It’s late in the evening. The wind is blowing and it’s not too conducive to being out. The calves (about 400 pounders) eye us suspiciously as we draw near. About 50 yards away from the herd I set the little pup down. With a dash she is off.

Around the calves she goes, full speed. The calves break for the corrals but the pup is too fast for them even at her early age. Whipping around them she jumps high, grabs the lead calf by the head and hangs on! Bawling and bucking the calf finally shakes her loose. Meanwhile the others have scattered, fleeing in every direction. Little Rosie sweeps around them, bunches them up and starts grabbing heads again. This time I am closing in on her and finally catch her up into my arms. I look at my friend expecting to see a look of amazement on his face and what do I see? A dead-pan expression!

“What do you think of that?” I asked.

“Pretty good,” he replied, never breaking his expression.

“Pretty good?” I echoed. “Did you ever see a pup like her?”

“Why I’ve only turned her loose a couple of times. I’ve never seen a pup that strong at her age in my life! Pretty good? That has to be the under-expression of the year! I’m telling you, Gene Estes, you are now looking at the dog that will make your Edgar famous for you because you are looking at the future champion of the world!”

His expression still remained. It was as if he never even heard me. I’m given to be a little over-expressive while on the other hand. Gene is the conservative type when it comes to bragging on either his own dogs or anyone else’s. In the years to come I am to learn that this quiet but short-fused dog-man with generations of pioneer farming and ranching blood in his

pedigree, has an unusual ability of detecting and knowing a good dog. The problem is to get it out of him!

“What do you think, Gene?” (I’m desperately trying to get a commitment out of him. Surely he would at least acknowledge he had just seen the impossible with so young a pup.)

“You’ll probably ruin her by getting her hurt bad while she is yet so young,” was his reply as he calmly turned and headed back for the house.

What he didn’t know was that she had already been hurt. The first time I turned her loose on the stock she got badly run over. She charged straight in, caught a calf by the nose and came down hard. She never has learned to bite easy! When she grips, whether head or heel, they know they’ve been gripped! I don’t call this all bad either. I have seen her move stock that 99% of the other dogs wouldn’t get done, all because cows couldn’t stand the pressure she can put on them, either front or back end.

The calf struck out with both front legs like a horse would do (most unusual for a cow). Catching the pup with both front feet, she was flattened like a pancake. Then the calf ran square over her. Rosie was hurt so bad. The poor little thing started crawling off. I was hurrying to pick her up, kicking myself for working her so young. She is gaining speed. I hurry faster. Now she is up and staggering in the direction of the calves. I run. I must catch her—it is her first time out and

she knows no commands at all. She will not stop, I have to catch her. I lunge to pick her up but she dodges me and is now getting her locomotion going. She is out running me and right in to the calves she charges. Again the lunge for the nose, again the bawling of the calf, again the running over and this time I catch her before she can get to her feet.

She gives me that “all-the-way-through” look with her eyes. They seem to be saying, “Dummy, if you would let me alone I’d teach that calf something.”

Well, go ahead Estes; be conservative with your opinions. You’ve seen and handled a lot of good cow dogs but one of these days you are going to admit you’ve never seen anything like Edgar’s Rosie.



Chapter 2

A Cornered Billy Goat

“Do you want to bet \$100, Don?” Don Day was the Secretary-Treasurer of our church and he knew I was only bantering him.

“I’ll bet you \$200 she can’t do it,” he replied. We were speaking of Rosie who was only six months old at the time and still had no training to speak of. With operating the Elm Valley Goat Dairy, pastoring a small rural church (the Highway Assembly of God, 30 miles away) and working full-time in construction work as an iron worker, I was hard pressed to train any dog, let alone a six-month-old pup. Rosie would have to wait 3 or 4 months.

Don Day and I had been drenching the sheep and dairy goats. He was catching and holding for me. We had finished the sheep and all the dairy goats but not the bucks. Now he had to get in the buck runways and catch them. The buck barn has four stalls and from each stall runs a graveled runway 30 feet long and six feet wide. Each buck has his own stall and runway. Don was doing okay until he came to Senior Buck No. 1. This buck was the only fighter I had. He would back into a corner and really whack you. I had warned Don about him and told him to send in Nancy to get him out.

Elm Valley Nancy was my first registered Border Collie. Having been raised on a small sheep and cattle ranch near

Gillette, Wyoming, I was raised up with good stock dogs. When my wife Carrie and I answered the call of God to the ministry and sold our little ranch and headed for the Ozarks, I never dreamed of owning another stock dog. I had owned one of the best in the state of Wyoming named "Nancy." I will tell you more about her later but when I purchased my first Border Collie from Alden Duncan of Mountain View, Missouri, we named her after my Wyoming Nancy.

There was probably never a more intelligent canine than Elm Valley Nancy. I knew nothing about the International commands, nor the fine points of training you could put on a dog. I just used the same western lingo we trained our dogs to out west and Nancy responded beautifully. If some of the good trainers we have over the countryside today would have gotten hold of her, she would have been a champion without a doubt.

I will give you a couple of examples of her cunning. She knew my five children by name. When I told her to find them for me she would track them down like a bloodhound. The only difference being that she had a keener nose, sharper instincts, and tracking ability than most trail hounds. She could track when it was dry or wet, hot or cold.

One day an ex-policeman, a friend of mine by the name of Bill, was visiting our dairy. I was telling him how smart Nancy was and some of her feats. When I told him I could put her on the trail of either man or beast and she would track them down, he was little more than skeptical.

“Do you mean she could track me down if you told her to?” he asked.

“Easily,” I replied. “I guarantee you; you won’t be able to escape her if you don’t go in some building and shut the door.”

“If you don’t mind, I’d like to put her to the test. Would you let me try?”

“Sure,” I replied, calling Nancy over and having her smell his shoes and trouser leg. I shut her in the hallway of the barn and Bill ran off to hide. He went into a small pasture west of the house and barn and climbed a tree. Nancy found him in less than 60 seconds.

“I thought you were going to try and escape, that was so easy it was an insult to her! That was like asking Longfellow to quote nursery rhymes. Now try again and really see if you can elude the little dog.”

“All right. I see now you weren’t kidding about her ability. I’ll lay a trail a bloodhound couldn’t follow” Bill replied.

And lay a trail he did! Back through the same pasture, climbing every other tree, back-tracking, walking logs, climbing over the fence, across another small pasture and into a densely-wooded area on my neighbor’s place. He circled the adjoining farm and came into our place from the east, climbed the basketball goal post and sat down on top the backboard. He had a ring-side view of most the course he had run. It had taken him nearly an hour. He had really done his best to lay a trail so confusing it would have challenged the best trail

hound. It was a beautiful site to see the way that little Border Collie worked that trail. In less than ten minutes she was sitting underneath the basketball goal looking up at Bill!

Most Border Collies have a good nose. Nancy's was exceptional. Rosie can't smell her own tracks but by and large most of them have enough tracking ability they can track down your stock. This is a fine trait. When your collie doesn't find the stock he is after in the pasture, he will sometimes trail around until he finds where the stock has gotten through the fence and will track them down and bring them back. This is just another feather the Border Collie possesses that helps make them the best stock dogs in the world. I will give you another example of Nancy's abilities:

Late one night, my phone started ringing, rousing me from a deep sleep. Mr. Robert Campbell, my neighbor, one half mile to the east, was on the other end of the line.

"Mr. Greer, your cows are back of my house in the garden," he said. "I think there are about four of them"

Man, was I relieved! I only owned two, a Jersey milk cow and a one-year-old Holstein beef steer.

"They must belong to someone else, Mr. Campbell; I only have a cow and a steer."

"Alright, sorry to bother you."

I jumped back in bed and was just dozing off again when once more the phone rang.

“There are only two Mr. Greer and they are your cow and steer.”

What do I do now? We both live on “M” Highway, a highway that is used for a bypass for south of Springfield, and one of the busiest state highways in all the area. My wife (while sitting in the swing on the front porch) has counted as many as 110 passing cars and trucks in 10 minutes on M Highway.

I slip on my shoes and walk out into the warm summer night in only my shorts. (I never sleep in pajamas except if we have company and only then because Carrie insists!) The stars are shining and the katydids are singing. Not one sign of a moon—only darkness. I go down to the cow corral and sure enough, the gate is open and the cows are gone. To get to Mr. Campbell’s, the cows would have to cross my unfenced yard and go up the highway.

With my flashlight I find their tracks crossing the lawn and a thought enters my mind. Put Nancy on their trail. But no! The highway is too dangerous. No more dangerous for a dog and two cows than it is for a man and two cows. There doesn’t seem to be much traffic and besides, I’m too tired to go myself. I unsnap her chain and holding her nose down to the tracks I say, “Go get the cows, Nancy.” She takes off in the darkness—right up the highway.

In about three minutes a car goes by and I breathe a prayer for my little dog. After an eternity of waiting, another

car goes by. Finally, I hear the unmistakable click of hoofs on the highway and out of the darkness comes the cow and calf with Nancy walking calmly behind them. Into the corral, the gate is shut, Nancy is re-chained and back to the sack I go for a good night's rest. How she ever managed to trail those cows over that highway, get them out of Mr. Campbell's garden, back on the road and safely home, I'll never know. A fabulous achievement. Like I said, no contest dog, but one of the best stock dogs to ever set foot in Missouri.

This book isn't about Elm Valley Nancy. It's about Rosie, the greatest dog I have ever seen.

When Don sent Nancy in to get the mean buck out, the buck had backed into the far corner of the runway and fought furiously. Nancy had been hurt by him before. She backed off and went to barking. She was giving up. A cornered Billy goat can be a very formidable opponent. Besides, the narrow runways don't afford a dog much of a chance to escape their rushes and Nancy had learned that all too well in previous encounters with him.

Don came after me but we weren't any braver than Nancy. We were both as cautious as and even more so than the dog. After a couple of charges we backed off and didn't even bark at him! That's when I thought of the pup, Rosie.

"Go untie that little pup and I'll show you a dog that will move that Billy goat." That is when Don laughed in my face and asked who I thought I was kidding. "Okay, I'll take you up

on that bet," he said. "There isn't a dog living that can get that goat out of there."

Don returned shortly and said, "If you want that dog you'll have to get her yourself. It's bad enough to be hit by that buck let alone getting bitten by that savage little pup on the same day!"

I hurried up to the kennels and untied little Rosie. She was still a small little thing. When I put her down in the buck pen, Don said, "Are you sure you've got \$100? It's a cinch I'm going to win it!"

"Get him Rosie," I commanded. Straight for the buck she flew. He bowled her over with a quick rush. She was all teeth. When he backed off he found her firmly anchored on his left foreleg. Dragging the pup along with him he continued to try and butt her. She hung on with the tenaciousness of a bulldog! He gave a great leap and succeeded in breaking her hold but as he went over her she grabbed a new mouthful. A most tender part!

The buck bounded into his stall, bawling at the top of his voice, dragging a very mad little bundle of fur and he will never forget how close he came to being a wether instead of a buck! Several stitches were required to close the wound. From then on to get Senior Buck No. 1 out of his runway all you had to do was just set Rosie down inside his pen. He either found the door quickly or started climbing the walls.

“Aren’t you glad neither one of us really believe in betting, Don?”



This is the judge's stand on Greer's 40 Acres