



Chapter 1

Crossing Over

One day an English Bulldog named Russell had been feeling ill for a while. His dad was there with him. Telling him to head over the rainbow bridge and he wouldn't feel sick anymore. Russell gave his dad one last kiss and began the walk over the stone passage that reflected all the colors in the rainbow.

When he got across all the pain, he felt a moment ago was gone. Russell's legs felt like he was a pup again. He turned around to look for his dad on the other side of the bridge, but he was not there. Russ began to feel sad, but a small smiling Pug dressed in a business suit strode up to him and said, "Hi Fat Russell, I'm Spencer. Your dad sent me to help you out. You, pal, have gone over the rainbow bridge and into our town, we call it Spencerville..... Not my idea. This is where fur pals go to have adventures and wait to be reunited with their families."

Russell was a little anxious because he wasn't used to being without his dad.

Journey Over The Rainbow Bridge

"I know that look." Spencer spoke "You are nervous. I get it, that feeling is totally natural. It's ok buddy. That is why I am here. Let me tell you a little about your journey, our town, and what it's like living over here. How does that sound?" Russell nodded hesitantly.

Spencer pulled out a piece of paper from his pocket. He opened it up. Unfolding it many times. He was just a little guy, and this was a big piece of paper. He then handed it over to Russell.

"This is the brochure for Spencerville. I'll walk you through it. Let's start at the beginning. When you leave Earth to come to Spencerville you cross the Rainbow Bridge and all your pain disappears. You should feel light and energetic." Spencer poked his head around the brochure to see Russ' face," This is what just happened to you, pal."

Spencer continued, "After crossing over I'm going to bet you started missing your dad. You noticed he isn't anywhere to be found. That is when you are met by the mayor. That is me. My job is to help calm your nerves. Hope I'm doing a good job." Russell found himself feeling a little less afraid.

"Alright, Russell let me get to the good stuff and tell you about our town, Spencerville. This is a nearly perfect place. We say nearly perfect cause we know that without the rain how would you ever enjoy the sun....I digress. Next thing you should know, every one of your favorite things from back home will be here with you. If you had a favorite toy, blanket, bed, pillow... you name it we will get it for you over here. That sounds good, doesn't it?"

Russell finally spoke," It does, Mr. Mayor."

"Please call me Spencer.... Here are some more things you should know about our little hamlet. You get to live like a human. All the places you couldn't go to back home, well you can visit them over here.

So many activities that you wanted to do before but couldn't. Well, you can now. I know this is a lot to take in. I just want you to know you are in a fun place." Spencer exclaimed.

"Ok, buddy we are getting to the really important stuff. You have two major responsibilities in Spencerville. I can't stress this enough; you NEED to have as much fun and adventure as possible. After which you must send messages to your family about your hijinks. So that your dad knows you are happy while you are waiting for him. You see one day you will be reunited with your father. Until then he wants you to have the best time possible here in Spencerville." Spencer finished and he saw a little tiny smirk on Russell's face. He could tell the burly English Bulldog was switching from nervous to intrigued. "Oh, and you are going to need this." Spencer handed Russell a little electronic device. "That's your BarkPhone. It lets you send messages and pictures back home."

Russ didn't even notice that the two of them had started walking while they were talking. They had left the lush meadows, lakes, and rivers and were now making their way through a magical small town. Picturesque shops lined each side of the street. Dogs of all breeds populated the sidewalks and cobblestone roads.

"Russ, new arrival dogs like yourself need a place to stay. So we set you up with a room at my Bed and Breakfast and it is getting prepared as we speak. They will fill it with some of your favorite items. We will also get you a big picture of your family. A nice little touch we do is hanging all the pictures at dog eye level. No more of that having to bend your neck to see things high up on the wall. This town is built FOR dogs BY dogs." Spencer bantered as they continued through the streets of the town.

“Feeling better Russell?” Spencer asked, putting a paw on the big guy’s back.

Russell smiled and wagged his tail just a little. “Yes, thank you, Spencer,” he said. “ It seems like a very nice place.”

“Great! So let’s get started showing you the town.” Spencer replied. “First, let’s head to Western Fawn Pug Palace. It’s one of the most popular spots.”

As they made their way to the palace, Russell couldn’t help but be amazed by how beautiful Spencerville was. The castle was made entirely of gold and had a huge fountain in the middle. It was filled with dozens of pugs playing and splashing around.

“Wow, this is incredible!” Russell exclaimed. “There wasn’t anything like this back home.”

“I know, right?” Spencer said. “The Pug Palace is one of my personal favorites. But there’s so much more to see!”

Next, they went to the Lower Silver Siberian Summit. This was a mountainous area overlooking the entire town. The ground at the summit was covered in snow and Russell loved the snow. He slammed his head into it to feel the coolness. Russ then slowly did a 360-degree turn to take in all of the town. It stretched as far as the eye could see. After spending some time at the summit, Russell and Spencer made their way to the Spotted Red Beagle Beach. This was a magnificent location with crystal-clear water and soft sand. The area was filled with dogs chasing each other, roughhousing, and playing fetch. As they walked along the shore, Russell



spotted a group of dogs digging in the sand.

“What are they doing?” Russell asked.

“They’re digging for buried treasure,” Spencer replied. “Sometimes, pawrents arrange to bury a dog’s favorite toy or treat here so they can find it when they arrive in Spencerville. It’s one of the many ways they show their love for us.”

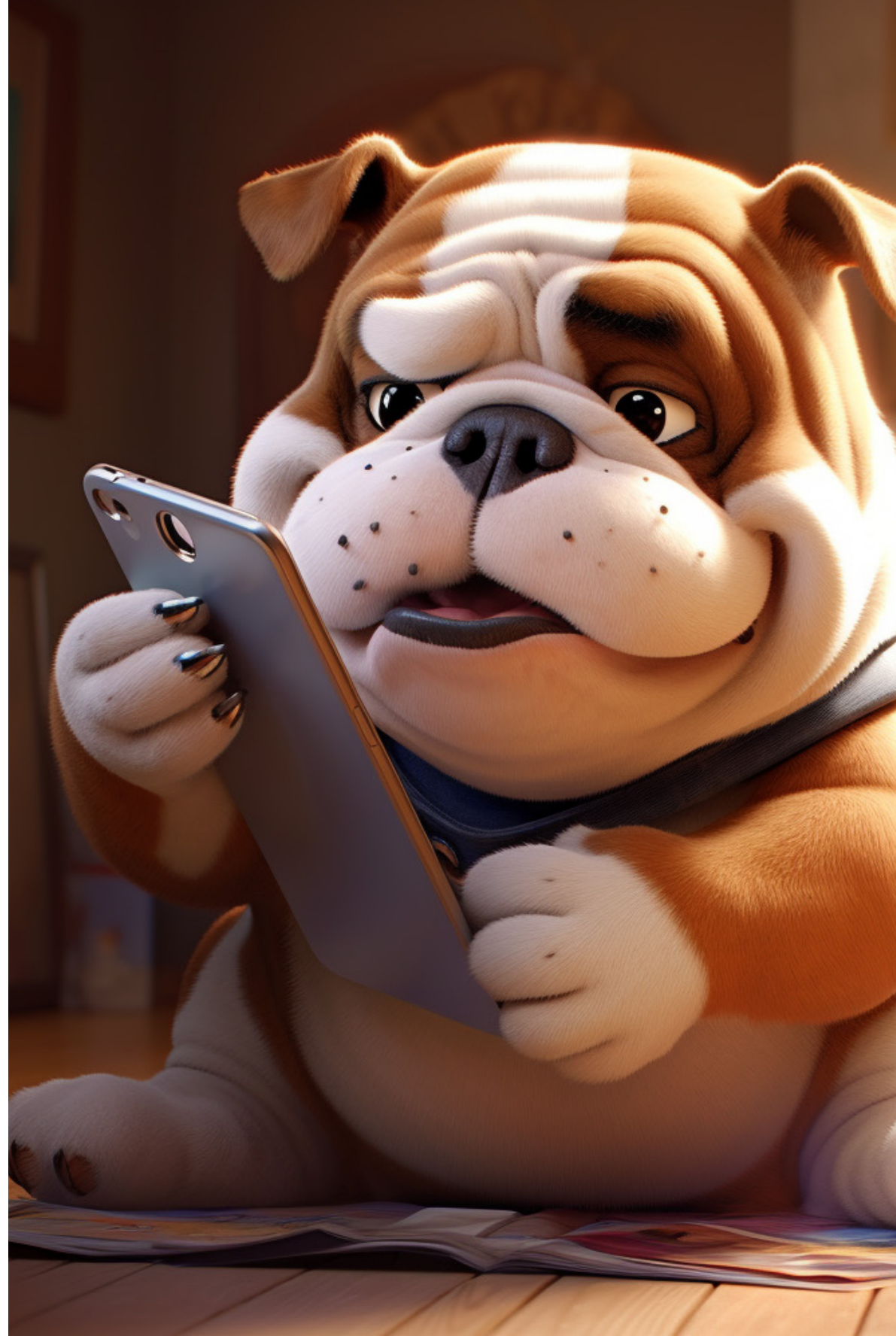
Somewhere buried in that sand had to be a blue Frisbee, his cherished toy. Russell thought about this for a moment and a warm feeling came over his heart. He realized that even though he couldn’t physically be with his dad anymore, he would always be loved and remembered.

As the sun started to set, Russell and Spencer made their way back to the bed and breakfast. Russell was exhausted, but content. Back home with his dad, Russ like all bulldogs slept a lot His whole life he had slept with a stuffed animal bulldog named Mugsy. Russell would sleep with his front paws and head out of his bed and the rest of his body in it. Mugsy would be tucked under his chin.

As Spencer and Russ entered the bed and breakfast, they were greeted by the welcoming committee, a Golden Retriever named Max and a Labrador named Bella. They jumped up and down, wagging their tails in excitement. “Russell’s here!” Max exclaimed. “We’ve been waiting for you!”

Bella chimed in, “Come on, let’s go show him his room!”

Russell followed his new friends down the hall to his room, where Spen-



cer's staff had already made his bed and placed his favorite toys in a basket.

"Wow, this is perfect!" Russell said, looking around the room. "Thank you." Max and Bella's tails wagged knowing they had done a good job.

"Anytime, pal," Spencer added. "Now, I know you're used to sleeping in your favorite spots on the other side, but here in Spencerville, you can sleep wherever you want. We have plenty of cozy places for you to choose from. Just let us know if there is anything we can do to help you feel at home." With that Spencer shut the door and left Russ to allow him to get some rest.

He was alone for the first time. Russ knew his dad wasn't there with him, but it was somehow ok. It was then he remembered he had to send his dad a message about what he had done that day.

He began to type on his BarkPhone. "Hey Dad, I made it to Spencerville. Thanks for sending Spencer to meet me. He took me to see the Pug Palace, and Siberian Summit. I even played in the snow. I'm ok here. I miss you, but I know we'll be reunited someday. Love, Russell." He felt much better after sending the note to his dad. Russ knew his Old Man would be happy to hear how he was doing in his new home.

Russell looked around the room and spotted a soft, fluffy bed in the corner and plopped down. It didn't feel quite right. He couldn't place what was missing. This is when Russ saw something in his toy box, a stuffed animal. It was Mugsy! Russ grabbed him by the ear and pulled him into the bed. He rested his head on top of his trusty stuffed bulldog and dozed right off. Minutes later a loud snore began to emanate from Russell, he was sleeping better than he had in a very long time.