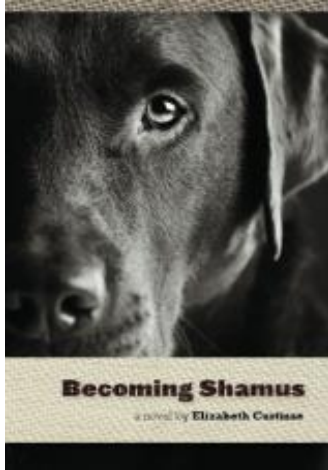


Becoming Shamus

by Elizabeth Curtsie



About the Book

Shamus hasn't had much luck with humans for reasons he can't understand. At ten-months old, he's adopted into his third home by a young family and their canine companion, Lela.

Playful, destructive and more than a little insecure, Shamus desperately seeks to find his place among them. But entering a new family is not easy, and Shamus quickly discovers that he has a lot to learn. He can't help feeling jealous of Lela, the family's favored dog, as he struggles to gain a paw-hold.

Wise and understanding, Lela patiently mentors Shamus on duty, loyalty and love. Jealousy turns to admiration amid Lela's failing health, and Shamus embraces new responsibilities during a tumultuous period when his family finds their lives in upheaval too. He bravely stands beside them as they trudge through the inherent challenges of daily life --- the loss of innocence, a job, a friend, one's self. Through financial woes and marital problems, he comes to understand that while it takes a lot to make a family, it takes even more to sustain one.

Beautifully written and warmly told from a dog's point of view, *Becoming Shamus* is a heartbreaking but humorous tale of friendship and family, loss and rediscovery. This insightful and ultimately uplifting story reminds us that we are all connected, and that we carry those we love forever in our hearts.

Discussion Guide

1. What is the significance of the book's title?
2. Why did the author choose Shamus to narrate the story? How would the book have been different if Gwen was the narrator? Lela?

3. Are the characters believable? Can you relate to their dilemmas?
4. How do the characters change or evolve throughout the course of the story?
5. What is the author's message about faith?
6. At what point did Shamus begin his succession? Can you identify specific examples that illustrate the gradual shift between Lela and Shamus? At what point do you think the transition was complete?
7. Did any part of the book make you uncomfortable? If so, why?
8. Why does Shamus refer to God as 'Grammy's God'?
9. Why did Lela not show herself to Gwen after her passing?
10. Did the book end as you expected?
11. What emotions did the story evoke in you as a reader?
12. Do you look at animals differently as a result of reading this book?
13. If you could ask the author to change something about the book, what would it be?

Author Bio

Elizabeth Curtisse, a practicing attorney in NYC, lives in Westchester, NY with her family and myriad of family pets. In her free time, she enjoys long walks, reading and gardening.

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