



A Different Little Doggy

written by Heather Whittaker
illustrated by Scott Alberts

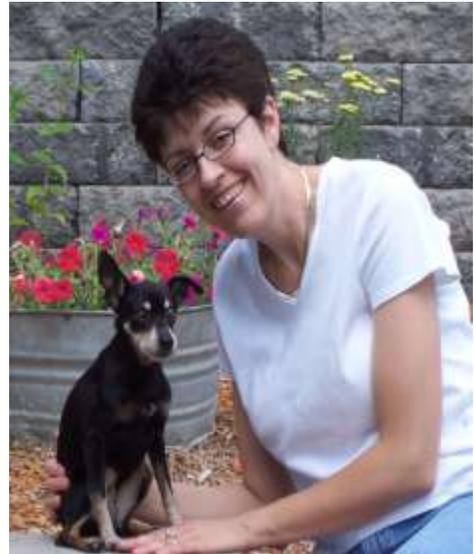


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Author and Motivational Speaker

Heather Whittaker is the author of *A Different Little Doggy*, *Everything You Need to Know About Life Can Be Learned From A Dog*, and *The Tazie Effect*; all books that teach various life lessons through combining stories of her love for animals with her own experiences to create memorable presentations and books.

A Different Little Doggy is a children's picture book focused on the lessons of tolerance and friendship. Acceptance of not just others who are different, but also our own differences as well. Fear of people and things which are different leads to diminished self esteem and bullying for children. As adults, however, that transforms into things like social anxiety disorder (SAD), depression, and panic; all things Ms. Whittaker struggled with for several years. Ultimately, it's learning to accept herself for who she is that helped overcome these challenges, and she hopes learning this lesson early on can help children avoid struggles with these disorders in their own adult lives.



In addition to writing, Ms. Whittaker is a motivational speaker with a background in operations management. She shares with groups and organizations of all sizes the amazing benefits of living your life 'Unleashed'! Combining 15 plus years of operations management experience, a Masters degree in Organizational Leadership, and a love of nature, wildlife, and animals, she inspires audiences to live the lives they deserve through principles of passion, people, and purpose.

Heather is available for classroom presentations and activities with elementary children as well as presentations for community organizations and businesses. You can learn more about Heather and her canine friends at www.heatherwhittaker.com.

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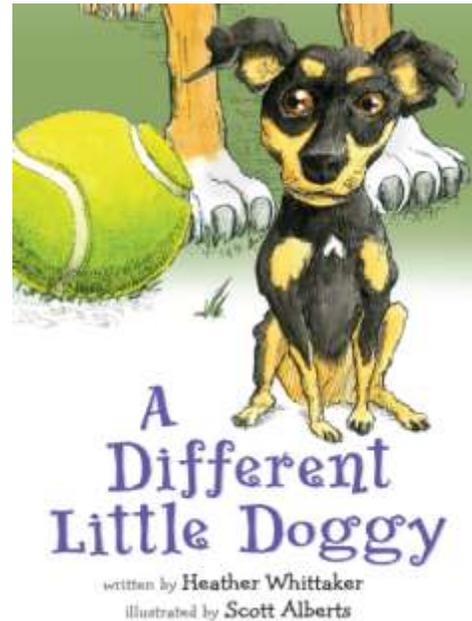
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A Different Little Doggy – Vital Information

Category: Children / Picture Book
Author: Heather Whittaker
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Sub-Title:
Publisher: Pen – Tech Professional LLC
PO Box 67 Greenville, WI 54942
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Audience: Children ages 4 – 8
Website: www.adifferentlittledoggy.com



Description of Book: *A Different Little Doggy* teaches children the importance of diversity, acceptance and friendship through the story of Taz, an adorable Miniature Pinscher who is different than other dogs.

Colorful, lively illustrations and a rhyming first person story line set the stage for the true, inspirational story of a disabled dog whose life started out like most others, but she was soon faced with health challenges, and one after another, she faced them again and again throughout her life.

Being different in life doesn't have to be an obstacle, and in *A Different Little Doggy*, the main character, Taz, teaches children being different is actually a good thing which makes life fun. A tiny little dog, Taz sees benefits to being small and is comfortable with who she is. As the story starts, Taz encounters a problem with her knees and has to go to the doggy doctor because she's in a lot of pain. The illustrations creatively depict Taz on crutches with pins being used to fix her knees. All fixed up now, the story continues with Taz at a birthday party and playing ball at the park pointing out other ways she is different from her friends; differences that do not matter to any of them. Without warning, as it did in real life, Taz then goes blind, and her life goes on, just in a bit different way. In the final pages of the story, Taz teaches us to be accepting of others who may be different. "Next time you meet someone different than you, walk right up and say 'How do you do?' I like to dance, skip, jump, and run. Would you like to play? It's sure to be fun!"

Taz was different than other dogs in many ways, but the same in many others. Her story teaches children (and adults) it's OK to be themselves.

About the Author: Heather Whittaker is a Wisconsin based motivational speaker and author of several books that incorporate stories from the lives of her dogs together with her own experiences to motivate others. This one being her favorite, *A Different Little Doggy* teaches children the importance of embracing their own differences and accepting the differences of others. Connect with Heather and learn more about her canine friends at www.heatherwhittaker.com.



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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

To interview the author,

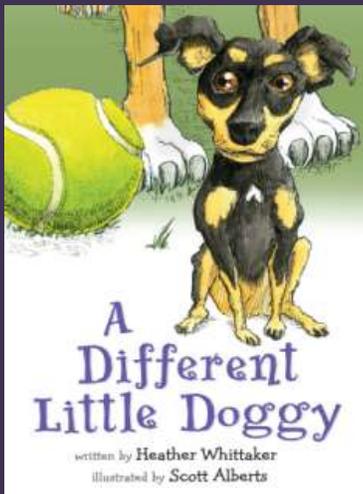
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A DIFFERENT LITTLE DOGGY IS FOUR TIME AWARD WINNER



Publisher:

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Author:

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Illustrator:

Scott Alberts

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July 2013

Price: \$9.99 (retail)

Page Count: 28

ISBN #: 978-0-9820962-1-5

Illustrations: 28 / full book

Audience: Children ages 4 - 8

APPLETON, WI – Local author and Motivational Speaker, Heather Whittaker, receives fourth award for her children’s book titled ***A Different Little Doggy***. A cooperative project with illustrator, Scott Alberts, ***A Different Little Doggy*** has received two Purple Dragonfly Awards for 2014; recognized with honorable mention awards for Best Children’s Book Age 6 & Up as well as Best Illustrations. ***A Different Little Doggy*** was also recognized earlier this year as a USA Book News Best Children’s Picture Book Finalist Award and an NABE Pinnacle Achievement Award.

Perfect for children ages 4 – 8, but a book loved by those of all ages, ***A Different Little Doggy*** teaches children the importance of diversity, acceptance and friendship through the life story of Whittaker’s dog, Taz, an adorable Miniature Pinscher who was different than other dogs. Her life teaches children it’s OK to be different.

It’s the author’s hope that her book will begin to change the conversation around diversity and help promote tolerance. “Children are typically presented messages telling them they are the same as other kids. Adults want them to recognize their similarities, but that’s not the reality of their world,” said Whittaker. “Fact is we are all different, and whether you’re adopted, part of a mixed family, disabled, tall, short, or different in any other way, this is a child’s normal. There’s a lot to be gained if children can learn to embrace the benefits in their differences.”

Filled with colorful, lively illustrations and a rhyming story line, this book truly touches the hearts of readers. Taz’s life started out like most others, but was soon filled with health challenges. Instead of giving up though, Taz maintained a spirit and zest for life every day. Her story teaches children (and adults) that if they can accept the differences between themselves and others, life can be fun!

In addition to the story, a portion of the net proceeds from all sales via the book’s website are being donated to non-profit agencies which support children and animal welfare. Visit www.adifferentlittledoggy.com to purchase an autographed copy.

A Different Little Doggy is available directly from the publisher at www.adifferentlittledoggy.com or through amazon.com.

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About the Author: Heather Whittaker is a Wisconsin based motivational speaker and author of several books that incorporate stories from the lives of her dogs together with her own experiences to motivate others. Connect with Heather and learn more about her canine friends at www.heatherwhittaker.com.

About the Illustrator: Scott Alberts loves to bring characters to life through illustration. His unique talents spring from a deep understanding of graphic design and fine arts necessary for fantastic realism in the publishing arena. Based in Appleton, WI, Scott has gained national recognition as an expert in illustrative arts. Learn more about him at www.scottalberts.com.

Fans and Critics are 'Yelping' with Excitement for *A Different Little Doggy...*

Chosen as a reviewer's choice for Midwest Book Review's children's bookwatch in August 2013:

A Different Little Doggy is the heartwarming story about a Miniature Pinscher named Taz, a doggy who never loses cheer. Taz is small and different from other dogs in many ways, but she lives her life fully and enjoys it deeply. Taz encounters health obstacles, including joint replacement parts and loss of vision, but she cheerfully continues to work her way through life with special care and assistance. The bouncy verse narrative conveys a sense of Taz's optimism, and the story encourages children to see beyond differences, accepting them. Lively color illustrations present Taz in all her different glory, along with a gaggle of other dogs, all of whom look very different from Taz. This heartwarming dog story is ideal for children ages 4-7.

Also reviewed on Midwest Book Review's MBR on-line program in Shirley's bookshelf:

Being different in any area often times can rattle our world, whether it is with ourselves or others. However, if we realize that being different is not bad, merely a situation that simply needs understanding and tolerance. In this well written work by author, Heather Whittaker, we meet, Taz, a wonderful little dog. Taz shares her life with the reader from being small, to having pins put in to fix her knees, and even to going blind. Taz is not one to complain, feel sorry for herself, or blame others. No, she works to overcome and live her life to the fullest. What a gal and role model she is.

This is a wonderful book with top of the notch, colorful, and real to life illustrations that draw you right into the storyline. Using a love-able dog, our author shows how we should accept ourselves, and others for what and who we are. The story shows that just because someone may not be able to do all others can, does not make them less of a person (or doggy), nor would it make them less of a friend. It teaches acceptance and love in a warm and wonderful way. I enjoyed this read and feel it has a very important lesson for young and old, told in an upbeat and joyous manner, that will leave you feeling good inside. Well done! Recommended.

Additional Reviews and Recommendations:

Heather tells us about this little dog with a combination of love & humor that would encourage any child, or adult for that matter, who is 'different' to embrace that difference instead of fearing it. The illustrations are beautifully done making Taz come to life right there on the pages of the book. This true story will not only provide a wonderful opportunity for parents or teachers to speak to the subject of the diversity of people, but it is sure to capture the heart of any reader. It's a really sweet story.

- Kathy Passeno (Detroit, MI)

Delightful! The story of Taz is the perfect introduction for children to become sensitive to the differences, as well as the similarities, in all of us. Taz teaches us that despite physical imperfection, life is full of happiness and fun! The beautiful illustrations enhance the story, giving a whimsical touch to a very important lesson. This is a book for every child, young and old.

- Elizabeth Blackmon (Jackson, MS)

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Young children will love this story of a cute little doggy named Taz. For me, there were two messages here. The one that it's OK to be different, that's what makes us all unique in this world and we should celebrate our differences and be accepting of others. But, also the other message Taz had for us was that with perseverance and a positive attitude we can learn to overcome any obstacle in our lives and love ourselves the way we are! What a lucky little doggy. I enjoyed the rhythm of the words and the pictures were positively adorable. A good book for young children!

- Kathy Sekerak (Cleveland, OH)

The story of A Different Little Doggy carries such an important message told through the incredible eyes of one fearless little dog. Taz sets a great example of dealing with things that make us different. Not only is this book about accepting our own differences but even appreciating the differences in all of us.

The illustrations are incredible. Even if you are not a dog owner, you can appreciate the adorable ways the author and illustrator teamed up to portray the life adventures of Taz. It shares one truth in life summed up in a very relatable story for both young and old.

- Cathy Rutten (Fremont, WI)

I got one of the first copies and donated it to my granddaughter's grade school library. That way the message can be passed to many more than just one child. It is a great message.

- Patricia Armstrong (Manchester, MO)

My Miniature Pinscher, Isis, and I enjoyed this read - a beautiful little story of a courageous and loving Min Pin who reminds us that being different is 'fun'. The illustrations are cleverly presented and full of charm. I have already shared this book with my grandmother at her nursing home and she smiled intently inspecting every page. I know she will share it with others, as it's a story to be adored by the young and old.

- Kathy Cichon (Australia)

An absolutely beautiful story. A story of triumph over a handicap. Not only do humans have special needs, so to our beloved pets. I especially loved it as I, to, have a blind Bloodhound. This little book about Taz helped my 3 grandkids understand how my Dixie lives each day to the fullest. Not only is the story excellent, the illustrations are so cute and I love the type face. What a story!

- Trudy McElligott (Lee, IL)

I am a dog rescuer. It is my passion in life. I purchased this book for my two grandsons, ages five and one. The little one pointed at the illustrations, which are excellent while the older one asked questions. The story line is one that needs to be addressed in all households. Just because you are different doesn't mean you should be treated meanly or differently. It also shows you don't have to be big to have a big heart. Good story for all ages.

- Vicki Drown (Deltona, FL)

**** Numerous, additional reviews are available at www.adifferentlittledoggy.com/reviews ****



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AUTHOR INTERVIEW

SAMPLE Q & A

Tell us about the book – *A Different Little Doggy* is a children’s book delivering the messages of acceptance and friendship to children ages 4 – 8, but it’s a unique book in the fact that it’s a true story. Not some made up lesson with a cute animal character; Taz is a real dog who faced many challenges throughout her life, the most recent of which was blindness. *A Different Little Doggy* is her life story which makes the lessons all that much more real and relatable for readers.

Who would benefit from *A Different Little Doggy*? – The book is a children’s book, so the intended audience are those ranging in age from 4 – 8 years old. Adults are finding the book endearing as well, and the message to be one of importance for all. I actually had one woman buy a copy and tell me it was for her 47 year old husband. She said “He hasn’t learned this lesson in life. Maybe a simpler message in the form of a children’s book will get it through his head.” She laughed and I am sure it was intended as a joke, but the point being all can benefit from the message.

Why did you decide to write this book? – The project actually started out as a sort of personal challenge and just a fun project. The illustrator is a business acquaintance of mine, and he called one day asking if I might by chance have some unpublished manuscript for a children’s book that I was sitting on, but had never published. He wanted to do some illustrations for his portfolio, but wanted them to be part of an actual project so customers could see how his illustrations flowed and reinforced a story line. I had no such manuscript, but told him I was willing to try and write something. Not something I ever dreamed I was capable of doing, but at that point I figured ‘hey, why not try?’ That’s what life is about to me... challenging yourself. It’s the only way we grow. So, I started researching and writing.

As of today, the project has turned into so much more, however, and I am so thankful that the illustrator gave me this opportunity. Taz died about 6 – 8 months into the project, and we were devastated. Working on this project became a way to work through the grief and keep her memory alive. It has taught me a lot about grief and myself. As the project moved along, it then became something very personal for me because intolerance and bullying is something I faced as a child for a multitude of reasons which resulted in struggles with things like depression and anxiety as an adult. What I’ve learned in my journey is all of those struggles stemmed from just a few very specific events from my childhood, one of which was self-esteem related. I truly hope this book helps children learn about the importance of acceptance and feeling good about themselves. In strengthening their self-esteem, it can help them avoid some of the challenges I faced. Kids need to know that it’s OK to be different. It’s what makes us beautiful.

What did you learn in the process? – Simple answer; A LOT! I learned a lot about myself personally, but also a lot about the writing process. I don’t have children, so I wasn’t exactly sure what children would embrace. Basically, I really had no idea what I was doing or how to proceed, so there was a lot of research up front regarding the reader and the market. I had to figure out how long the book should be, what type of text appealed to children of different age groups, for what age group did I want my story to appeal, what subject matter, and on and on. I eventually nailed it down and knew I wanted the story to rhyme and would be writing for a younger audience.

What is the greatest lesson you hope to leave with children reading this book? – The greatest lesson for me is that of acceptance, so I sincerely want children to recognize that yes, we are different, and that is OK. It is our uniqueness that makes each of us great in our own way. At one point in the project, I was speaking with a fundraising coordinator for our local children’s hospital and when she read the book she said she didn’t think it was a good approach for children because of the emphasis on being different. She stated that their mission at the hospital is to help children feel the same as other children. They know they are different, and we want to remove that emphasis. They want children to feel that they are the same as any other child. The fact that they are sick has no bearing on who they are. Personally, I think that is incredibly short sighted, and

if anything, here is one woman who needs to learn the message within this book. The fact is they ARE different. We are ALL different. Why are we trying to hide that? Why are we teaching our children to ignore differences instead of embracing them? Think about your own childhood. When I saw someone different than myself, my parent's teaching was to look away. "Don't stare," they'd say. Well, just because a child may be disabled and thus take a different approach to something doesn't mean they are any less happy. Embracing differences is really about increasing understanding, and the more understanding we have, the more acceptance and overall peace in our lives. I find it a bit ironic. We spend our childhood learning to try and be the same as everyone else, but then as adults, we spend inordinate amounts of time learning how to be our authentic selves. How great would life be if we just learned to be authentic from the start embracing our differences as the asset they are?

What sets *A Different Little Doggy* apart from other children's books? – The main difference is that *A Different Little Doggy* is a true story. It is a story that encompasses all 15 years of Taz's life. In fact, several of the illustrations in the book are based on actual pictures of Taz. For example, there's a picture of her standing on her toes to eat. We have a picture of her doing this as a puppy. For some reason, she would back up and stand to eat upside down. I think it makes a difference for children to know Taz is a very real dog. It's not just a story. It's a character who actually did these things, so as the reader, I could do them too. The book is also different because it's written in the first person. It's very difficult to find children's books written in that voice, but the first person makes it a bit easier for children to relate.

How did caring for a disabled animal impact your life? – Whether animal or human, blindness impacts everyone. For Taz, routine became VERY important. She judged where she was by routine and she found her way around the house because of routine, so it became incredibly important that things remain the same. Everything from the location of furniture to the time we go to bed. For example, if Mary and I switch spots on the couch, Taz would try to jump off the back because in her world we were backwards. She would judge her location by show was on her right vs. her left. In the morning, when she would come in from outside, she would automatically walk into our Master bathroom because we would be in there getting ready for work. That routine wouldn't change on Saturday and Sunday. She didn't know it was the weekend. It was incredibly important to her level of comfort that we keep things as routine as possible.

Vacation travel was something that's almost out of the question. When away from home, she was out of her element and didn't know where she was, so it resulted in a certain level of anxiety.

We no longer needed a clock. Taz became exceptional at knowing exactly when it was dinner time and when it was time for bed. She would sit on our kitchen rug and bark until someone would give her either her food or a treat.

And then there's the furniture. When you have a blind dog, moving it isn't the best of ideas. For Taz (and us) it was fortunate that we liked it the way it was, so there was no need to change it.

Perhaps the biggest impact was the love we experienced though. When working with a special needs dog, you start to see things differently and really appreciate caring for another. Along with that you experience love from another. I can't explain in words how your heart opens.

What's one of your favorite illustrations or excerpts from the book? – I have several, but my favorite is the illustration and text of the birthday party.

"I look different than others. Their ears stand up straight. My ears are floppy, but that's a wonderful trait! My ears make me look oh so cute and so cuddly. No matter how old, I still look like a puppy."

The illustrator did a phenomenal job on the details throughout the book, but on this particular picture, he out did himself. The little details he included like the glasses, cane, and wrinkles on the dogs make the picture great. Even the decision to show Taz sitting on a stack of books illustrates so well the fact that she was small.

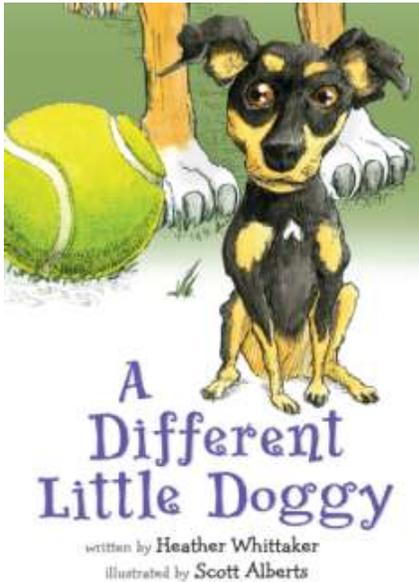
If Taz were a Super Hero which would she be? – To me, Taz IS a Super Hero. Her special powers were inspiration and love. If I had to pick one though, it would be the bionic woman. The pins in her knees made her super, super fast. She could beat any dog in a race.

Do you have advice for others who would like to write a children's book? – It sounds basic and simple; something you've probably heard multiple times before, but it's this: Write about what you know... and love. My dogs are my life and words cannot articulate the multiple, substantive, positive impacts they've had for my life. It's my love for them which makes writing enjoyable. Whatever your project, don't try to be something you're not. Don't try to write about something that's of no interest to you. I know this from both writing and being a motivational speaker; the absolute best stories are those of personal experience. The absolute best stories are those which are unique.

I would also recommend starting with marketing in mind. The children's book market is highly, highly competitive and success involves multiple approaches to sales and marketing. It helps to consider the end result and how you will not only sell the book, but multiple books, products, etc. Success in the market is about more than one story book. As is true with most things in life, it start with one, but takes multiple avenues to get where you're going.



To order 'A Different Little Doggy' you can order on-line at:



www.adifferentlittledoggy.com

or

www.amazon.com

\$9.99 usd

For wholesale, retail, and bulk orders contact the publisher directly at:

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