

Just Gus: A Dog Love Story

New book chronicles the devotion of an adopted dog and a loving sister.

Maureen Kochan

To be sure, they both knew hard times.

Stephanie Williams was a writer living in New York City when she was diagnosed with breast cancer at 30. Gus was an abandoned dog who was rescued after being hit by a truck and left for dead. Serendipity brought the two together.

Gus brought her out of her troubles, says Stephanie's sister, Laurie, a writer who chronicles the love and devotion they shared in *Just Gus: A Rescued Dog and the Woman He Loved*. Seeing them together taught me about unconditional love.

Though Stephanie's illness worsened, Gus remained a constant bright spot in her difficult life. They shared morning walks together, and Stephanie proudly watched as Gus took his first swim at a nearby park. Gus also provided unyielding support as Stephanie finished her first novel, about a young woman with terminal breast cancer.

The novel, *Enter Sandman*, was published weeks before Stephanie's death in 2004. Laurie, inspired by Stephanie's courage, decided to complete her sister's unfinished book about Gus. Stephanie had a way of pushing you to do the things you wanted to do but were afraid of, says Laurie. She's still taking care of us.

Posted: April 17, 2006, 5 a.m. EST