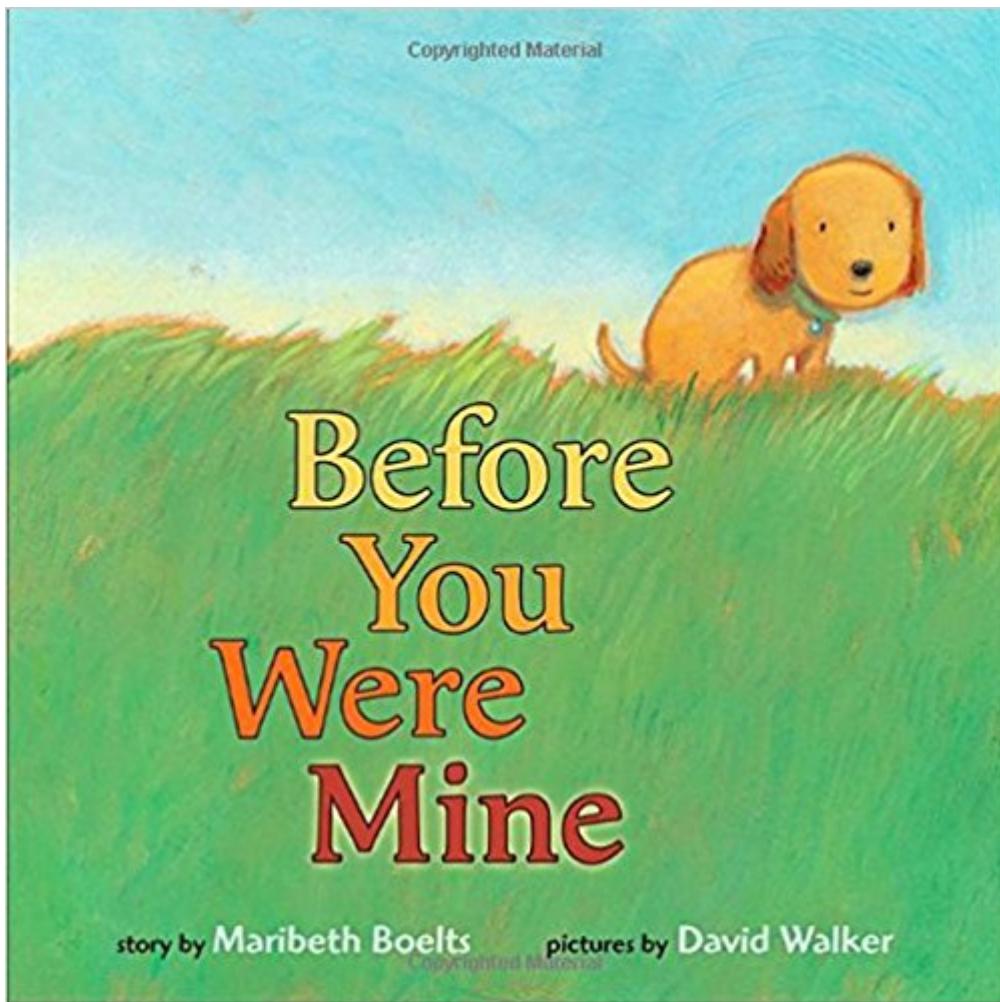


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# Before You Were Mine



## **Synopsis**

A little boy imagines what life was like for his new dog before he adopted him from a shelter. Maybe he had a boy who loved him, but the family had to move and couldn't keep him. Maybe he belonged to someone who didn't appreciate how mischievous puppies can be. Maybe he was treated badly, and now he can be shown all the love he's been missing. This boy wonders about all of these things, but maybe they don't matter. Because now, his dog is home. Winner of the Humane Society KIND Children's Picture Book Award and the ASPCA Henry Bergh Children's Book Award, this touching story celebrates all who support, care for, and adopt shelter dogs.

## **Book Information**

Lexile Measure: 690L (What's this?)

Hardcover: 32 pages

Publisher: G.P. Putnam's Sons Books for Young Readers (September 20, 2007)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 039924526X

ISBN-13: 978-0399245268

Product Dimensions: 9.3 x 0.3 x 9.4 inches

Shipping Weight: 11.2 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.8 out of 5 stars 38 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #341,825 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #143 in Children's Books > Children's Books > Growing Up & Facts of Life > Family Life > Adoption #756 in Books > Children's Books > Animals > Pets #1500 in Books > Children's Books > Animals > Dogs

Age Range: 4 - 8 years

Grade Level: Preschool - 3

## **Customer Reviews**

"Before you were mine . . ." wonders a little boy, "[d]id you live in a warm house with warm smells and a rug that was only yours? [Or were] you kept on a chain, with a dusty bowl and lonely sounds all around?" Never varying from this direct address, the little boy speculates about the life his dog may have led before being adopted from the shelter. He imagines happiness, cruelty, misfortune, neglect: "[Maybe] you ran away and they never heard that if your dog runs away, you look for him . . . until you find him." Softly framed pastel panels and vignettes depict a round, mustard-colored little mutt playing with an imagined boy, making puppy-mischief, alone and scared, before being taken to the shelter for "a meal, and a bath, and a bed of your own" before coming home with the narrator.

Boelts's restrained text and Walker's affecting illustrations combine to pack a small wallop directly to the hearts of dog-loving children who will almost certainly give their pets an extra hug afterwards. A note on adopting a shelter pet follows this unabashedly emotional offering. (Picture book. 4-8) -- Kirkus Reviews October, 2007 "A poignant, thought-provoking book." -- School Library Journal, 12/01/2007 "In this witty, wise picture book Boelts presents a kids-eye view of a consumer fad that rages through school at gale force." -- The Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books, starred review, 12/05/2007 "Whether children are on the shoe-owning or the shoe-envying side of the economic line, they can sympathize with Jeremy and rejoice in the way he eventually resolves his problem with his too-small shoes." -- The Horn Book, 11/01/2007 "Cozy, soft-edged pictures of an adorable dog characterize this warm-hearted book in which a boy, whose dog has died, gets another dog from a shelter. The young narrator, thrilled with his new pet, speculates about the dog's past in a series of questions. He imagines another boy loving the dog and playing with it: 'Was your boy proud when you learned a trick? Did he talk about you at recess?' He pictures the dog as a lively puppy whose owners were annoyed by his chewing and digging, and in a few imagined scenes, the dog appears neglected and unhappy. But the story comes full circle as the narrator welcomes the shivering stray into its friendly new home. The pastel illustrations use a variety of layouts to infuse the story with emotion, and the author's note speaks of the 'ripple of hope' created when someone adopts a dog. Children are likely to beg their parents for a trip to the shelter after reading this moving book." Kathleen Odean -- Booklist Dec. 2007 PreS-Gr 2 Boelts does an outstanding job of exploring the adoption of a rescued dog from a shelter. An unnamed boy whose family takes in this sweet-looking pet describes what the animal's life might have been like "before you were mine." The child wonders if his dog was loved, but too mischievous for the previous owners, or if they moved into a "no dogs allowed" apartment, or if he got lost, and "they never heard that...you look for him...until you find him." The boy also imagines how tough life must have been when the animal was on his own, and how frightened he might have been, even after being rescued. Walker's illustrations--some muted, others vibrantly colored--perfectly capture the misery and fear, the uncertainty, and ultimately the rapture of this pup because "you're home." The text and illustrations create moods that shift between poignant and blissful. A short essay about the "ripple of hope" created by a successful adoption of a dog from a shelter is appended. Pair this title with Marc Simont's *The Stray Dog* (HarperCollins, 2001) to drive home the joyous outcome when the right family meets up with the right dog.--Deborah Vose, Highlands Elementary School, Braintree, MA

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Maribeth Boelts and her family live in Cedar Falls, Iowa. Their second rescued dog, Dixie, lives happily with them. David Walker lives in Chapel Hill, North Carolina. Every dog he's had has been rescued, but he's always felt like the lucky one.

I was searching for the perfect book to introduce the issue of animal rescue for our service learning project and stumbled across *Before You Were Mine*. I cried the first time I read it to myself. As a preschool teacher it is very rare to find a book that is exactly what you need and want for a lesson. The questions the child in the story asks are perfect springboards for discussion. This was the best book to introduce our service learning project for our local animal shelter. It's not just for preschoolers, it would be the perfect book for almost any grade level because while the text is simple, the message is a big one.

I bought this book for my grandchildren and planned to keep it at my house so they all could get the story read to them. But I actually bought it for just one of them-- she was ours but we never met until she was 4. (sort of late to be a new grandbaby). I just wanted her and the others to know that altho we did not have her before, we had loved the idea of her since before she was ever born. This story is so sweet! The book arrived as promised and was in good shape. Thank you so much for writing this book. It would be great for families that have "blended" to accomodate children. And it teaches you can love someone you have never met. Oh. But here it's illustrated with dogs !

One of my daughters randomly selected this book from our library and as soon as we read it, I knew we had to have our own copy. It's a very, very sweet story and meant a lot to us since we recently adopted a dog from a shelter after saying goodbye to an older dog. I would recommend it for any family who loves dogs.

One of my favorite books. I feel like this was written for me, exactly the way I feel about my two rescue dogs and my late dog. Beautiful story and charming illustrations.

Wonderful read for adults and children alike. Heartfelt and insightful. Cannot go wrong.

Recommended dealer for swift delivery and communications and swift delivery and value. A+++

We used this book to teach our son about what our new rescue pet dog has possibly been through.

It's a beautiful story with a fantastic lesson at the end that might bring you to tears.

This is an adorable book, perfect to read to preschoolers to illustrate the concept of an animal shelter.

Purchased this for someone who rescued 2 dogs and it is a heartwarming touching story that is so relatable. I will be giving this as an extra special gift for a kind person.

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