



John Grogan

Marley
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Dear Reader,

When I wrote *Marley & Me* I had a clear audience in mind. And it did not include children. I wrote my book for adults and assumed only adults, and possibly teenagers, would be drawn to it.

But I was wrong. Very early on, I began to see a trend at my book readings around the country: Couples were coming and bringing their children. Children of all ages. The little ones sat around my feet and the older ones asked for my autograph and told me how much they enjoyed the book, even if it was not quite age appropriate for them. They giggled and laughed at my stories of Marley's antics, and regaled me with tales of their own mischievous dogs. All of them had been touched by my story of the irrepressibly naughty Marley.

Many parents have told me they read *Marley & Me* aloud to their children, editing out the more adult content and mature themes as they go. Others said they struggled with whether to allow their grade-school-age children to read the book. So much of it was perfect for them, they said, but then there were those scenes dealing with marriage and miscarriage and procreation and violent crime.

And so the decision to target Marley's story to young readers was an obvious one. For the little ones, ages 3-7, there is the picture book *Bad Dog, Marley!* It is the fictional tale of a typical family with a lovable but very naughty Labrador retriever, who in the end proves his worth and teaches the family what really matters. I had a lot of fun writing for this age group, and Richard Cowdrey's playful illustrations brought my vision to life.

For older children, ages 8-12, there is a young-reader edition of the adult book. I named it *Marley: A Dog Like No Other*, and I removed all the adult-themed content and rewrote and reshaped passages throughout the book to make them more kid-friendly.

I am very proud and excited to be able to bring Marley's universal story to readers of all ages. I would love to hear your feedback.

With warm regards,

John Grogan