

BOW WOW

A BOWSER AND BIRDIE NOVEL

SPENCER QUINN



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A

CAR BEEPED OUTSIDE OUR HOUSE AT 19

Gentilly Lane. *Beep beep.* The *beep beep* of a horn hurts my ears in a way you probably wouldn't understand, since my sense of hearing is a lot different from yours. I didn't say *better* than yours, so don't be upset. But just between you and me, it is better! I hear sounds humans don't hear all the time! For example, that *drip drip drip*, right now, under the kitchen sink? Down in the cupboard with all the cleaning supplies, including some tasty sponges? But never mind the sponges. The point is someone should do something to stop that *drip drip drip*—except they won't because they don't even hear it. There's going to be a big puddly mess, and soon!

The humans in our family all turned to me: Birdie, Mama, Grammy. "What the heck is that blasted barking about?" Grammy said.

Someone was barking? I listened my hardest, heard no barking. This was a strange day already, and it had hardly even started.

“Maybe he’s upset you’re leaving, Mama,” Birdie said. Mama bent down, gave me a pat. “Is that it, Bowser? Upset that I’m leaving?”

“Bull pucky,” said Grammy. “How would he even know you’re leaving?”

Whoa! Mistakes were going by so fast I could hardly keep up. Why wouldn’t I know Mama was leaving? Wasn’t that her suitcase, the sturdy metal kind with straps, all packed and standing by the door, her hard hat perched on top? But that wasn’t why I was upset. Not that you could call me upset. I’m known as a pretty steady customer around these parts—these parts being the little bayou town of St. Roch, the nicest little bayou town you’ll ever see, and if you happen to be passing through, stop by! And maybe bring a treat, chewies always welcome if nothing else comes to mind. Although here are some hints: steak tips, sausages, hamburger patties. No cooking necessary—I’m not fussy.

But where were we? Something about . . . being upset? Me? Why would I—

Beep beep.

That was it! The beeping! My ears! I was just about to let everyone know how I felt about that beeping in no uncertain terms when Mama said, “Well, kiddo,” and wrapped her arms around Birdie, holding her close. “My chariot awaits.”