

1

00:00:00,000 --> 00:00:22,560

Doctors believe this dog helped diagnose her owner's cancer.

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00:00:22,560 --> 00:00:27,080

Can animals bring unknown powers to medicine?

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00:00:27,080 --> 00:00:31,680

How did Beetle the cat find his way through city streets and country roads across southern

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00:00:31,680 --> 00:00:35,720

England to the home he loved?

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00:00:35,720 --> 00:00:39,160

What invisible lifeline links a man and this dog?

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00:00:39,160 --> 00:00:45,000

How did this rotifer foresee the heart attack which would have killed her master?

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00:00:45,000 --> 00:00:51,000

Mysteries from the files of Arthur C. Clarke, author of 2001 and inventor of the communications

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00:00:51,000 --> 00:00:52,000

satellite.

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00:00:52,000 --> 00:00:56,800

Now in retreat in Sri Lanka, he ponders the riddles of this and other worlds.

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00:01:22,000 --> 00:01:33,120

Come on.

11

00:01:33,120 --> 00:01:38,800

I've always been fond of animals, which is a good thing since it's impossible to avoid

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00:01:38,800 --> 00:01:40,840

them here in Sri Lanka.

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00:01:40,840 --> 00:01:47,440

Over the years, I've had many animal companions, usually dogs, but also a pair of mischievous

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00:01:47,440 --> 00:01:52,680

monkeys who did their best to take over my life.

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00:01:52,680 --> 00:01:58,480

All my pets have been lovable, but some have also surprised me with their intelligence and

16

00:01:58,480 --> 00:02:02,280

their ability to know what I'm thinking.

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00:02:02,280 --> 00:02:10,280

But what can we make of claims that some animals have extraordinary, even supernatural skills?

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00:02:10,280 --> 00:02:17,600

These include mathematical horses, dogs that can diagnose illnesses and domestic pets with

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00:02:17,600 --> 00:02:25,040

the navigational know-how to track down their owners over miles of unfamiliar countryside.

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00:02:25,040 --> 00:02:28,400

Benita Whitfield owes her life to her dog Boo.

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00:02:28,400 --> 00:02:32,560

She believes Boo alerted doctors to a disease that threatened her life.

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00:02:32,560 --> 00:02:35,080

Now Boo has a place in medical history.

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00:02:35,080 --> 00:02:39,640

Her extraordinary story is chronicled in a world famous doctor's journal.

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00:02:39,640 --> 00:02:41,960

Benita Whitfield has lived to tell the tale.

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00:02:41,960 --> 00:02:47,400

Well, I used to be standing at the sink and she'd come up behind me and start sniffing

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00:02:47,400 --> 00:02:48,400

my leg.

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00:02:48,400 --> 00:02:53,480

And I used to shoot her away because I thought, you know, it was just a dog sniffing.

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00:02:53,480 --> 00:02:58,320

And this went on for about four or five months.

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00:02:58,320 --> 00:03:01,360

And then one day I was at the sink washing up and I felt something on the back of my

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00:03:01,360 --> 00:03:05,520

leg and put my hand down, not realising it was Boo.

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00:03:05,520 --> 00:03:07,200

And I felt a little lump on the back of my leg.

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00:03:07,640 --> 00:03:10,800

That evening when I had a bath, I had a look at it and it was a mole.

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00:03:10,800 --> 00:03:13,960

I've never had a mole there before.

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00:03:13,960 --> 00:03:18,480

And then one day I was out in the summer and she actually went for the back of my leg where

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00:03:18,480 --> 00:03:22,440

this mole was and tried to nip it off.

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00:03:22,440 --> 00:03:25,080

And she did again try to bite it off.

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00:03:25,080 --> 00:03:29,400

She's not a dog that snaps or bites and it was just so out of character.

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00:03:29,400 --> 00:03:33,400

But I still really didn't dawn on me that there was anything wrong.

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00:03:33,400 --> 00:03:35,960

But Benita told a friend about the mole.

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00:03:35,960 --> 00:03:40,480

Her friend, a nurse, told her to see a doctor at once.

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00:03:40,480 --> 00:03:43,760

She said, promise me you will go to the doctors.

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00:03:43,760 --> 00:03:52,600

So I went to the doctors and he sent me along to King's College and they inspected it.

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00:03:52,600 --> 00:03:54,960

They took it off.

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00:03:54,960 --> 00:03:59,640

They did a biopsy on it and found that it was a melanoma.

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00:04:00,640 --> 00:04:07,720

Dr. Hywel Williams, who was treating me at King's, said that another year and it would

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00:04:07,720 --> 00:04:12,960

have started to spread in the body.

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00:04:12,960 --> 00:04:14,040

So I was very lucky.

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00:04:14,040 --> 00:04:19,920

But I still didn't put the two together, the dog and the melanoma.

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00:04:19,920 --> 00:04:26,520

Dr. Hywel Williams was carrying out a survey of patients with melanoma skin cancers.

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00:04:26,520 --> 00:04:30,520

When I came to Mrs. Whitfield's notes I noticed that somebody had put a comment,

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00:04:30,520 --> 00:04:33,880

dog sniffed at a mole in exclamation marks.

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00:04:33,880 --> 00:04:37,760

And I had a laugh of it at the time but I thought, well, hang on, there may be something

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00:04:37,760 --> 00:04:38,760

in this.

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00:04:38,760 --> 00:04:44,040

And I rang up Mrs. Whitfield and indeed the dog had sniffed them all, not just once but

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00:04:44,040 --> 00:04:49,720

on repeated occasions, whilst ignoring other moles, just this particular one.

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00:04:49,720 --> 00:04:56,280

And I said to the doctor at the time, they must give off some type of an odour.

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00:04:56,280 --> 00:04:58,720

Because my dog could smell it.

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00:04:58,720 --> 00:05:00,240

Or I thought she could smell it.

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00:05:00,240 --> 00:05:03,400

It wasn't until I sort of thought about it, I thought she must have known it was really

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00:05:03,400 --> 00:05:04,800

bad as well.

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00:05:04,800 --> 00:05:10,160

I think this particular dog was instrumental in saving Mrs. Whitfield's life in that she

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00:05:10,160 --> 00:05:18,000

had the type of skin cancer, the melanoma skin cancer, removed at an early and curable stage.

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00:05:18,000 --> 00:05:23,440

Boo was awarded a gold medal for her diagnostic skills and the doctors hope that the rewards

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00:05:23,440 --> 00:05:26,600

to medicine may be even greater.

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00:05:26,600 --> 00:05:33,260

I think Mrs. Whitfield's story taught me to be open-minded as a scientist to the potential

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00:05:33,260 --> 00:05:37,200

diagnostic powers of so-called lower animals.

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00:05:37,200 --> 00:05:42,120

And I think compared to our sense of smell, a dog's sense of smell is infinitely more

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00:05:42,120 --> 00:05:52,800

powerful and they may well have beneficial actions for medicine in the future.

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00:05:52,800 --> 00:05:59,400

In Lorenzo Abanda's Californian home, his two rot-violers have pride of place.

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00:05:59,400 --> 00:06:02,160

Lorenzo believes he owes his life to one of them.

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00:06:02,160 --> 00:06:14,520

Her name is Cinder.

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00:06:14,520 --> 00:06:18,720

From their early morning call through wash and brush up, this dog's master cannot do

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00:06:18,720 --> 00:06:22,040

enough for his best friend.

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00:06:22,040 --> 00:06:27,160

Lorenzo, a firefighter, likes to hike high up in the Californian mountains.

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00:06:27,160 --> 00:06:30,560

Only there can he escape the stresses of his job.

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00:06:30,560 --> 00:06:35,320

You know, on this particular day, my wife was sitting at home in bed.

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00:06:35,320 --> 00:06:39,640

She couldn't go on a hike with us, so I just took Cinder and Reno and myself to go hiking.

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00:06:39,640 --> 00:06:40,640

Hey guys, go.

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00:06:40,640 --> 00:06:43,320

Cinder, Reno, come on.

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00:06:43,320 --> 00:06:45,240

Normally when we hike, Cinder likes to be the leader.

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00:06:45,240 --> 00:06:51,040

She stays ahead of us and she likes to mark her territory before Reno.

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00:06:52,040 --> 00:06:54,040

C'mon, Cinder, Cattle.

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00:06:59,040 --> 00:07:04,480

And on this particular day, she acted real strange and what I mean is that she started

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00:07:04,480 --> 00:07:08,720

turning around, going back down the trail, and I kept calling her, trying to bring her

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00:07:08,720 --> 00:07:10,480

on, come on, let's go, let's go.

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00:07:10,480 --> 00:07:14,920

So I wasn't in the hike about a half hour and I decided to cut it short and go back

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00:07:14,920 --> 00:07:17,360

home because I was thinking she was sick.

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00:07:17,360 --> 00:07:18,680

She never acted that way before.

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00:07:21,520 --> 00:07:25,120

As soon as I turned around and started heading back down the trail, she immediately became

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00:07:25,120 --> 00:07:26,840

the leader.

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00:07:26,840 --> 00:07:31,760

She wanted me to get back down to the car and go back home.

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00:07:31,760 --> 00:07:35,360

So Cinder's looking at me with this glazed look in her eye and I didn't want to take

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00:07:35,360 --> 00:07:39,320

any chances with her because I love her so much, so I decided to go ahead and call the

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00:07:39,320 --> 00:07:40,320

vet.

95

00:07:40,320 --> 00:07:45,800

So as soon as I got up, I felt this palpitation like in my neck and I felt it on my pulse,

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00:07:45,800 --> 00:07:49,720

and irregular pulse, it really started to scare me.

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00:07:49,720 --> 00:07:55,600

So then I got up to go get the phone and immediately I felt like something just grabbed my lungs

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00:07:55,600 --> 00:07:59,520

with all their might, just like two hands, just squeezing everything.

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00:08:01,520 --> 00:08:03,240

Next thing I know, I'd fall to the ground.

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00:08:03,240 --> 00:08:14,880

And Cinder's nudging me with her nose, her nose on my hand.

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00:08:14,880 --> 00:08:21,680

I could feel the phone there and I was very weak and I was able to dial 911 with my thumb.

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00:08:21,680 --> 00:08:25,560

I couldn't even bring it to my ear and I remember the operator had answered, I could

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00:08:25,560 --> 00:08:29,480

hear it and I said I was a firefighter and I felt I'm having a heart attack.

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00:08:29,480 --> 00:08:30,720

Please send somebody immediately.

105

00:08:34,240 --> 00:08:38,080

We received a 911 call to Lorenzo's house.

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00:08:38,080 --> 00:08:43,680

When we got there, we found Lorenzo lying on his back on the floor of his living room.

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00:08:43,680 --> 00:08:48,120

We found that his blood pressure was 270 over 130.

108

00:08:48,120 --> 00:08:51,720

He was in great danger of having a massive heart attack and I think he was on his way

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00:08:51,720 --> 00:08:55,360

to that when we got there.

110

00:08:55,360 --> 00:08:59,080

If I would have continued up on that hike on the hill, which is normally about three

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00:08:59,080 --> 00:09:02,800

and a half, four hours, I wouldn't be here today because if that incident would have

112

00:09:02,800 --> 00:09:06,480

happened up there in the high altitude, I would have died up there on that trail and

113

00:09:06,480 --> 00:09:08,360

there would have been nobody around.

114

00:09:12,360 --> 00:09:13,360

Lorenzo's a pretty lucky guy.

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00:09:13,360 --> 00:09:17,040

If we hadn't got there when he did, he probably would have died and I think he owes that all

116

00:09:17,040 --> 00:09:18,040

to his dogs.

117

00:09:23,040 --> 00:09:27,000

I think dogs in general have a special sense.

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00:09:27,000 --> 00:09:29,560

They can hear your heartbeat 20 feet away.

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00:09:29,560 --> 00:09:36,000

They have the ability that we just need to take time to listen to our animals.

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00:09:36,000 --> 00:09:39,360

Cinder has the ability to know the rhythm in my heart.

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00:09:39,360 --> 00:09:42,960

She probably can sense or smell the adrenaline in my body.

122

00:09:42,960 --> 00:09:46,680

The body chemistry was changing and she knew I was going to go down.

123

00:09:46,680 --> 00:09:49,680

She knew that if I was going to go down, that I was going to need help.

124

00:09:49,680 --> 00:09:54,440

So she decided to try and get me to go back down and go back to the car and go back home

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00:09:54,440 --> 00:09:59,080

where I can get help.

126

00:09:59,080 --> 00:10:03,960

And I think she's learned that by the telephone there can be human contact.

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00:10:03,960 --> 00:10:05,520

So that's why she brought me the telephone.

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00:10:09,480 --> 00:10:13,640

Animals apparently as clever as humans have amused and amazed scientists and onlookers

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00:10:13,640 --> 00:10:15,140

for centuries.

130

00:10:15,140 --> 00:10:20,160

Some, or rather their owners, have made fortunes showing off their incredible talents.

131

00:10:20,160 --> 00:10:23,560

Porcupundits pack the playhouses of 18th century Europe.

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00:10:23,560 --> 00:10:28,320

They're pet subjects, mathematics, mind reading and spelling.

133

00:10:28,440 --> 00:10:33,320

Toby the sapient pig played cards, guessed the age of the audience and even told the

134

00:10:33,320 --> 00:10:34,800

time.

135

00:10:34,800 --> 00:10:38,920

Even more erudite animals followed in the 20th century.

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00:10:38,920 --> 00:10:43,080

Mathematical dogs like Chris the Rhode Island mongrel performed calculations worthy of a

137

00:10:43,080 --> 00:10:44,480

computer.

138

00:10:44,480 --> 00:10:50,000

In Germany, Wilhelm von Osten claimed he could train horses like clever hans to tap out the

139

00:10:50,000 --> 00:10:55,560

answers to complicated sums.

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00:10:55,560 --> 00:11:02,560

Scientists came from far afield to investigate these strange and controversial powers.

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00:11:07,880 --> 00:11:13,160

Later an American horse, Lady Wonder, was said to have learned secretarial skills.

142

00:11:13,160 --> 00:11:16,640

She typed words on a giant keyboard.

143

00:11:20,480 --> 00:11:24,240

I don't think we should take such stories too seriously.

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00:11:24,240 --> 00:11:30,880

The scientists who've investigated these mathematical and mind reading horses and dogs dismiss

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00:11:30,880 --> 00:11:37,640

them as brilliant circus acts where the trickery involved was too subtle for all but the most

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00:11:37,640 --> 00:11:39,920

vigilant to detect.

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00:11:39,920 --> 00:11:46,280

For example, it's virtually certain that clever hans learn to respond to tiny gestures or

148

00:11:46,280 --> 00:11:51,720

sounds made by his owner who gave him all the answers.

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00:11:51,720 --> 00:11:58,720

But there are other examples of animal powers that can't be dismissed so easily.

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00:11:59,840 --> 00:12:04,640

Today Blake the sheep dog shows little sign of the incredible journey he once made across

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00:12:04,640 --> 00:12:06,120

eastern Britain.

152

00:12:06,120 --> 00:12:11,400

His skills at driving hundreds of sheep into pens and fields pale by comparison with his

153

00:12:11,400 --> 00:12:15,080

navigational talent.

154

00:12:16,080 --> 00:12:22,080

The dog's odyssey began when his owner had parked his truck and trailer with Blake inside.

155

00:12:22,080 --> 00:12:28,080

When Tony Baldeston returned only minutes later thieves had struck.

156

00:12:28,080 --> 00:12:33,080

I was gone for about 20-25 minutes and when I come back I just can't believe me always.

157

00:12:33,080 --> 00:12:37,080

The land rover and trailer and dogs and everything had disappeared.

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00:12:37,080 --> 00:12:40,080

The thieves decided to dump the trailer.

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00:12:40,080 --> 00:12:45,080

It was found empty in a car park at Downham Market, a town far from Blake's home.

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00:12:45,080 --> 00:12:51,080

It was here a long way from the pastures he knew in the heart of a strange town that Blake's

161

00:12:51,080 --> 00:12:56,080

incredible journey began.

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00:12:56,080 --> 00:13:01,080

The distance between Downham Market where Blake was dumped and his home near Holt is about

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00:13:01,080 --> 00:13:07,080

50 miles as the crow flies but to complicate matters Blake took a roundabout route.

164

00:13:07,080 --> 00:13:10,080

Blake wasn't seen till the next morning.

165

00:13:10,080 --> 00:13:15,080

His son was going through Swatham and seeing him but Blake being a bit alone and his son

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00:13:15,080 --> 00:13:20,080

couldn't catch him and I thought he was coming directly home instead he went round by Little

167

00:13:20,080 --> 00:13:23,080

Franches and why we always sometimes run some sheep.

168

00:13:23,080 --> 00:13:28,080

Tony put the word out among Norfolk's farmers and Blake was spotted by Jenny Malham.

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00:13:28,080 --> 00:13:34,080

I saw Blake the day after having received a telephone call from Tony Baldeston but unbeknown

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00:13:34,080 --> 00:13:40,080

to me the dog I saw didn't really connect and he was in fact walking along the very,

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00:13:40,080 --> 00:13:43,080

very busy A47 early one morning.

172

00:13:43,080 --> 00:13:48,080

Blake was looking very, very sad with his tail down and I wished I'd known at the time

173

00:13:48,080 --> 00:13:51,080

that it was him but it just did not connect.

174

00:13:51,080 --> 00:13:54,080

By now Tony had contacted the local radio station.

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00:13:54,080 --> 00:13:56,080

He asked listeners to be on the lookout.

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00:13:56,080 --> 00:14:00,080

When I got phone calls with people because I went to where I had the call from and then

177

00:14:00,080 --> 00:14:05,080

I tried to take my bearings, think which way he was coming home but he always took a different road

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00:14:05,080 --> 00:14:07,080

than I did.

179

00:14:07,080 --> 00:14:14,080

Every time Tony tried to predict Blake's route the dog would turn up somewhere else.

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00:14:14,080 --> 00:14:19,080

And after he got to Goist we had phone calls in every little village.

181

00:14:19,080 --> 00:14:21,080

People had phone up and seen him go past.

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00:14:21,080 --> 00:14:26,080

But every time I went out to look for him I was about 20 minutes behind him and eventually

183

00:14:26,080 --> 00:14:32,080

he made his way back to where the sheep are down at Leathering Set and that's where he picked them up from.

184

00:14:32,080 --> 00:14:37,080

They were reunited at Leathering Set where Tony had once kept some sheep.

185

00:14:37,080 --> 00:14:39,080

Blake had decided to look there for Tony.

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00:14:39,080 --> 00:14:46,080

He'd been gone five days and travelled more than 60 miles to the village next to his home.

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00:14:46,080 --> 00:14:51,080

When he got back he was thin and dirty and really weak.

188

00:14:51,080 --> 00:14:55,080

His paws were roughed up, his limping.

189

00:14:55,080 --> 00:15:00,080

And he looked at me for a few seconds before he came up to me.

190

00:15:00,080 --> 00:15:03,080

I think he thought he's got to get wrong for being a waste of long.

191

00:15:03,080 --> 00:15:12,080

Scientists suggest Blake may have navigated by linking together the places across the county where Tony Baldurston had grazed his sheep.

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00:15:12,080 --> 00:15:17,080

By going from pasture to pasture he'd found his way home in stages.

193

00:15:17,080 --> 00:15:25,080

Two or three years ago Tony Baldurston used to graze his sheep here in the winter.

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00:15:25,080 --> 00:15:34,080

And one could only presume that where the thieves dropped him off he suddenly realised that he probably knew the area

195

00:15:34,080 --> 00:15:39,080

and actually came back to the ground that he knew you were several years ago.

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00:15:48,080 --> 00:15:55,080

Haverly Market in Devon is one of the west of England's busiest cattle markets.

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00:15:55,080 --> 00:16:00,080

Here cows, calves and bulls are traded between farmers.

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00:16:00,080 --> 00:16:08,080

But this was the starting point for one of the strangest stories in the annals of animal navigation.

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00:16:17,080 --> 00:16:22,080

It was here that Blackie, Ahepa and her calf came to auction.

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00:16:22,080 --> 00:16:25,080

The calf was bought by this man, farmer Arthur Sleeman.

201

00:16:25,080 --> 00:16:29,080

And its mother, Blackie, went to this man, Bob Woolercut.

202

00:16:29,080 --> 00:16:33,080

Both men set off for their farms with their new purchases.

203

00:16:33,080 --> 00:16:38,080

In Bob's cow shed, Blackie the mother seemed far from happy.

204

00:16:42,080 --> 00:16:46,080

When I bought her home and she was wild, she'd been taken away from her calf.

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00:16:46,080 --> 00:16:53,080

We did the best we could for her, we put her in the yard and bed her down, give her a hand in water and some meal.

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00:16:53,080 --> 00:16:59,080

And when we came down the next morning, cow was gone.

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00:16:59,080 --> 00:17:03,080

Early that morning a cow had been spotted loose in a village.

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00:17:03,080 --> 00:17:07,080

The postman wasn't the only person to have seen her trotting along the road.

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00:17:07,080 --> 00:17:11,080

Two of my neighbours saw this cow and it was going our way.

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00:17:11,080 --> 00:17:16,080

They'd had a market ticket on it but it wasn't there, a cow or anything.

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00:17:16,080 --> 00:17:19,080

And it came right down to our place.

212

00:17:19,080 --> 00:17:23,080

Arthur Sleeman woke up to discover a strange cow in his yard.

213

00:17:23,080 --> 00:17:27,080

His farm is more than seven miles from Bob Wooler's.

214

00:17:27,080 --> 00:17:30,080

This cow wanted to go in with the calf.

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00:17:30,080 --> 00:17:35,080

We let it in there with its calf on it immediately.

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00:17:35,080 --> 00:17:37,080

The calf went and suckled it.

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00:17:38,080 --> 00:17:43,080

Fortunately the strange cow still carried the auction lot number on her back.

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00:17:43,080 --> 00:17:47,080

Sleeman was able to call the market and find out who owned the mystery cow.

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00:17:47,080 --> 00:17:52,080

The market confirmed it was Blackie, the mother of the calf he had bought.

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00:17:52,080 --> 00:17:56,080

Bob Woolercut drove across to claim her.

221

00:17:56,080 --> 00:18:01,080

When I saw the cow and calf together I knew there was no good bringing the cow back on and so on

222

00:18:01,080 --> 00:18:03,080

because we'd all up my gang.

223

00:18:03,080 --> 00:18:10,080

We bartered a bit and one thing and another and eventually I came home with the cow and the calf.

224

00:18:10,080 --> 00:18:15,080

But how had Blackie found her way to a place she'd never seen over roads she'd never travelled?

225

00:18:15,080 --> 00:18:21,080

I think she could hear the calf calling and that's what took her in that direction.

226

00:18:21,080 --> 00:18:26,080

That's the only thing I think. Some people say that in the middle of the night

227

00:18:26,080 --> 00:18:31,080

when everything is still that she might have heard and the cry is coming up through the valley

228

00:18:32,080 --> 00:18:33,080

I mean it's a long way.

229

00:18:33,080 --> 00:18:38,080

Never seen anything like it before and never will again I don't expect.

230

00:18:38,080 --> 00:18:42,080

Being a sentimental sort of man I thought it was better to bring them back

231

00:18:42,080 --> 00:18:46,080

than them going together and that's what we did.

232

00:18:46,080 --> 00:18:51,080

After Blackie's maternal marathon Bob decided they'd never be parted again.

233

00:18:51,080 --> 00:18:56,080

Cow and calf spent the rest of their lives together on his farm.

234

00:19:02,080 --> 00:19:09,080

When Beetle the cat escaped from his owner's new apartment in the heart of London

235

00:19:09,080 --> 00:19:13,080

Robin Lafever was distraught. The cat had only been there for six months

236

00:19:13,080 --> 00:19:16,080

and had never been out of doors.

237

00:19:19,080 --> 00:19:23,080

We put up notices everywhere, hoping that people would spot him

238

00:19:23,080 --> 00:19:27,080

and it was dreadful that he didn't come back

239

00:19:27,080 --> 00:19:30,080

and we really didn't expect to see him again at all.

240

00:19:30,080 --> 00:19:34,080

With Beetle at large Robin Lafever was deeply concerned.

241

00:19:34,080 --> 00:19:36,080

The animal was adrift in the capital.

242

00:19:36,080 --> 00:19:40,080

All he'd known before coming to the city was the quiet countryside

243

00:19:40,080 --> 00:19:44,080

around the family's cottage near Canterbury, 70 miles away.

244

00:19:44,080 --> 00:19:48,080

Months passed and Lafever thought he'd never see Beetle again

245

00:19:48,080 --> 00:19:51,080

until one day that he'll never forget.

246

00:19:51,080 --> 00:19:55,080

Well I was at work and I got a call from my parents to say that

247

00:19:55,080 --> 00:19:59,080

they had some incredible news and that our neighbours had found Beetle.

248

00:19:59,080 --> 00:20:02,080

They turned up in their woodshed. I was absolutely amazed.

249

00:20:02,080 --> 00:20:05,080

It was several months later and when we brought him home again

250

00:20:05,080 --> 00:20:10,080

he was completely familiar in his surroundings and back in his usual spots.

251

00:20:11,080 --> 00:20:14,080

Back home in Kent the cat didn't even look thin.

252

00:20:14,080 --> 00:20:19,080

The family thought that somehow Beetle had been charming a few free lunches along the way

253

00:20:19,080 --> 00:20:23,080

but the real mystery was how on earth this cat could have found his way.

254

00:20:23,080 --> 00:20:26,080

His route must have taken him across Europe's busiest streets

255

00:20:26,080 --> 00:20:30,080

through menacing traffic and all of it along an unknown route.

256

00:20:30,080 --> 00:20:34,080

To get back here the incredible thing is that he would have come from North Kensington

257

00:20:34,080 --> 00:20:37,080

and he'd have to go right the way across London, across the Thames,

258

00:20:37,080 --> 00:20:40,080

right the way through South London, right the way down past Medway,

259

00:20:40,080 --> 00:20:44,080

probably went across it and he'd then have to travel right the way through Kent,

260

00:20:44,080 --> 00:20:47,080

right down to here past Canterbury.

261

00:20:52,080 --> 00:20:54,080

I can't explain how he did it at all.

262

00:20:54,080 --> 00:20:59,080

He was a brother from the same litter who was brought to a coastal town near here

263

00:20:59,080 --> 00:21:03,080

and that was some 30 miles away and he walked straight back here again as well

264

00:21:03,080 --> 00:21:07,080

and so I can only imagine that there's something particular to this area

265

00:21:07,080 --> 00:21:10,080

or maybe to that particular litter of cats that they're just sort of homing cats.

266

00:21:14,080 --> 00:21:20,080

Claims at animals can navigate enormous distances, present problems for scientists.

267

00:21:20,080 --> 00:21:25,080

It's so difficult to check all the facts that even experts can be fooled.

268

00:21:29,080 --> 00:21:35,080

In Washington DC, Dr. Michael Fox is one of America's best known veterinary surgeons.

269

00:21:35,080 --> 00:21:39,080

He writes in newspapers across the country and he also travels the world

270

00:21:39,080 --> 00:21:43,080

representing the United States in international animal welfare.

271

00:21:44,080 --> 00:21:48,080

His credentials and know-how in animal matters are impeccable,

272

00:21:48,080 --> 00:21:52,080

which makes it all the harder to understand how he was caught up

273

00:21:52,080 --> 00:21:55,080

in a classic case of mistaken identity.

274

00:21:56,080 --> 00:22:00,080

We were living in Galesburg, Illinois in a small apartment

275

00:22:00,080 --> 00:22:02,080

and decided to move into the countryside.

276

00:22:02,080 --> 00:22:07,080

It was about six miles away, a little cottage on the edge of some farmland.

277

00:22:07,080 --> 00:22:12,080

And Igor was a young male Simeys and we took Igor along with us.

278

00:22:12,080 --> 00:22:16,080

But after a few days he disappeared.

279

00:22:17,080 --> 00:22:22,080

We searched all over the fields and around the ponds and the wood lot and so on.

280

00:22:22,080 --> 00:22:27,080

Calling his name we went out at night with a flashlight hoping to find him hunting or something.

281

00:22:27,080 --> 00:22:31,080

He had a very loud voice, but no Igor.

282

00:22:32,080 --> 00:22:37,080

It was probably after a couple of weeks I'd say.

283

00:22:38,080 --> 00:22:42,080

First of all we heard a meowing and a scratching noise and there was a Simeys cat

284

00:22:42,080 --> 00:22:46,080

looking at us through the kitchen window.

285

00:22:46,080 --> 00:22:49,080

And I said, good Lord, it's Igor come back.

286

00:22:49,080 --> 00:22:56,080

He was skinny, emaciated, so we opened the door and this cat walked in as though he'd lived there forever.

287

00:22:56,080 --> 00:23:00,080

And we thought, well, that's it.

288

00:23:01,080 --> 00:23:06,080

But six weeks later came a dramatic and confusing development.

289

00:23:07,080 --> 00:23:15,080

We had a call from neighbors saying that there was a Simeys cat in terrible condition,

290

00:23:15,080 --> 00:23:19,080

wandering around where you used to live.

291

00:23:19,080 --> 00:23:27,080

Perhaps you ought to come over and have a look at this animal because we did hear that your Simeys cat had disappeared.

292

00:23:27,080 --> 00:23:30,080

Well, of course, we simply couldn't believe this.

293

00:23:30,080 --> 00:23:36,080

What we were doing, we had whom we thought was Igor the second here, this couldn't be Igor.

294

00:23:38,080 --> 00:23:40,080

It's an impossible journey.

295

00:23:40,080 --> 00:23:43,080

Back into town we were living in a rural area.

296

00:23:43,080 --> 00:23:50,080

Igor had never made that journey on foot and he certainly couldn't have seen much when we drove out to the country place

297

00:23:50,080 --> 00:23:57,080

because we were piled with boxes and everything else and he was in a small cat cage, more or less on the floor of the car.

298

00:23:58,080 --> 00:24:02,080

But we were both shocked when we saw this cat. It was Igor.

299

00:24:02,080 --> 00:24:08,080

But if this was the real Igor, how had he found his way back to the fox's original home?

300

00:24:08,080 --> 00:24:13,080

Michael Fox believes animals can somehow tune into the minds of humans.

301

00:24:13,080 --> 00:24:20,080

My interpretation is that the animals are tuned into an emotional realm that I call the empathosphere.

302

00:24:20,080 --> 00:24:25,080

They're able to, through empathy, sense where their loved ones are.

303

00:24:25,080 --> 00:24:30,080

It's like the loved ones are an emotional antenna and the animal can home in on it.

304

00:24:33,080 --> 00:24:38,080

It's part of the great mystery of which we are a relatively insignificant part

305

00:24:38,080 --> 00:24:46,080

and I like to think that our animals can keep us in touch with this mystery with an aspect of the sacred and the unknown.

306

00:24:47,080 --> 00:24:51,080

Boma Studi

307

00:24:51,080 --> 00:24:56,080

These stories certainly make me wonder.

308

00:24:56,080 --> 00:25:00,080

Although mistaken identity can never be ruled out,

309

00:25:00,080 --> 00:25:06,080

the sheer volume of cases where animals seem to have found their way home over great distances

310

00:25:06,080 --> 00:25:10,080

suggests we have much to learn about their powers.

311

00:25:10,080 --> 00:25:16,080

If you could understand what's really going on when dogs apparently diagnose illness,

312

00:25:16,080 --> 00:25:20,080

perhaps a whole new branch of medicine could be opened up

313

00:25:20,080 --> 00:25:27,080

and I'll certainly never again think of my own non-human companions as dumb animals.

314

00:25:40,080 --> 00:25:45,080

Boma Studi

315

00:25:45,080 --> 00:25:50,080

Boma Studi

316

00:25:50,080 --> 00:25:55,080

Boma Studi

317

00:25:55,080 --> 00:26:00,080

