

## A Garden For All Seasons

by Jean and the Love Stories Ensemble

Based on a story by Jean (full text below song lyrics)

### CHORUS

Visit the gardens

Walk and remember

Get a garden fix

Enjoy the peace

Visit the gardens

Walk and remember

Get a garden fix

Enjoy the peace

### VERSE

Spotty dogs dalmatians

I couldn't live without them

We got him as a promise

Sam never let us down

## **CHORUS**

Visit the gardens

Walk and remember

Get a garden fix

Enjoy the peace

Visit the gardens

Walk and remember

Get a garden fix

Enjoy the peace

## **VERSE**

Someday we'll have to say goodbye

I'll plant a tree and remember

Even in the darkness of November

Somewhere to go and be in the green

## **CHORUS**

Visit the gardens

Walk and remember

Get a garden fix

Enjoy the peace

Visit the gardens

Walk and remember

Get a garden fix

Enjoy the peace

Forget me not, forget me not, forget me not, forget me not.

## **A Garden For All Seasons**

**By Jean**

Everybody who allows an animal into their lives knows they are setting themselves up for heartache, but then we never think of the hangover when we drink too much champagne.

They are constant, dogs. They love you no matter what. They are always there for you, no matter what life throws at you.

The dog I have now, he's the head of security, goes to the door baying like the Hound of the Baskervilles, he's the only dog I ever know who got thrown out of dog training.

I live in a new house now, it had no garden when we got it, just a tarmacked carpark.

Well as a frustrated gardener I had to have somewhere to go and be in the green, so after I'd dropped my son off at school, I'd go walking in South Cliff Gardens. My treat. Lovely to see the seasons turn. The spring bulbs and the remnants of winter bedding giving way to beautiful summer flowers after the gardeners had worked their magic.

I always kept a pair of gardening gloves in my car took them with me on my garden fixes, pulling up stray weeds and putting them in the bin, thinking to myself 'it looks like there's a bit of Japanese knotweed there, hope the council know about it' I used to wear a

dark green polo top over my jeans, people thought I was gardening staff.

He was my son's dog, Sam. We got him as a promise, when our old one passed away. A puppy promise.

Spotty dogs. Dalmatians. I couldn't live without them. They are wonderful, they are loyal and loving and faithful, stubborn, energetic. They are clowns.

Sam and my son were inseparable. They grew up together.

Until one very sad day, we knew that we would have to say goodbye to our beloved Sam, we thought that it would be best if our son were to be at school. It felt like the proper, grown-up thing to do to keep things as normal as possible, so my husband and I decided that I should take our son to school as usual. He had other ideas, and when he got me in the car, well, then he got to work on me. He wanted to spend his special dog's last day with him. We came here, to the gardens to talk.

We walked all around the gardens. It's easy to talk when you are walking. We talked about love and loss and were able to discuss things we hadn't touched upon before.

My lovely son was very unhappy, he didn't want to be excluded, he wanted to be with his Sam. And of course, he was right, that was the right thing to do, so after we'd had a weep together, we went home.

You just have to accept with Dalmatians, and indeed all companion animals, they just don't live as long as we do, it is truly heartbreaking but you simply have to enjoy them when they are with you.

It was me who hugged Sam to the very end. He went to sleep forever in the sunshine, on our patio, on his bed being fed biscuits.

Well, I've got my own garden now, we ripped up the car park tarmac that all had to be taken up, a layer of hardcore underneath the lawn, but the grass doesn't care, grass will grow anywhere you see. So will wildflowers, or what some will call weeds, we've got adder's tongue fern a really ancient plant, orchids all over our lawn.

One day whilst enjoying the gardens, I came upon the gardeners emptying a bed of beautiful forget me nots in pink and blue and white. It seemed such a shame, they were so very lovely. So I asked the men if they would please give me some seed heads so that I could enjoy them in my garden too (we had by now started to create our own garden) They gave me a huge bag of the plants that they'd pulled up. I was so excited – we still have forget -me - nots flowering all over our garden, in the cracks in our paving, accompanying plants in containers and the vegetable garden. Every time I see them I think of the generous gardeners at South Cliff Gardens. I think that I've learned a lot from these gardens and strangely have managed to incorporate many of the features in my own garden – the raised pond, they Cordylines, a boat and flowering shrubs in banks beside the steps.

We plant trees for our dogs. Sam's is a white beam.

I do continue to visit the gardens, walk and remember, do a little weeding, admire the planting and the view before returning home.

A garden is a place of joy, and a place to deal with sadness. We needed a place to sit and be quiet and talk, we need green in our lives. Green and Dalmatians, that's what I love.