



# Barks N Bits Bella

with our favorite Jack Russel Terrier...

## I'll Hold Down the Fort

I don't recall a time in recent history (in dog years, I suppose) that it has been this cold for this long. Maybe it's just that I am getting older and don't appreciate the "crispness" in the air...and maybe it's just been plain cold.

Either way you look at it, below freezing on the thermometer is no place for a short haired dog of 12 pounds. (OK, maybe I exaggerated a bit...I *might* weigh 13 pounds.) Even with me donning my stylish blue coat - slash- dog blanket, it doesn't take long for me to get my fill of the chill, if you know what I mean.

As a matter of fact, I'd just as soon stay inside while the people (and Freckles - she has a lot more hair than me...) head out to take care of the barn chores and the horses twice a day. I've made it clear that a quick trip out to "take care of business" is plenty for me. I can make that happen with a lap of barking around the yard - mostly for the people's benefit - and a couple deposits to Mother Earth. It isn't but a

few minutes and I'm jumping on the back porch steps waiting for the door to open and welcome me

back into the warmth and comfort of my life as Bella, Her Honorable Jack Russel Queen of the Ranch.

My people have figured out that I would rather "hold down the fort" while they bundle up in their layers upon layers of additional clothing to head outside. I mean, it really shouldn't take a rocket scientist to figure out that if the people need three layers of clothing, it's too cold for me to be out there for long.

I have to admit, they are pretty good about understanding "Bella talk," so when I hear them calling my name while they are all pulling on the coveralls and the Siberian Snow boots, I just give them the "I Ain't Goin'" stance. They get it.

There are those few times that I decide to tag along and ask them for my dog coat - slash - blanket. The littlest one likes to be the one to help dress me....go figure.

Anyway, on the occasions I decide to take part in the trip outside, I do like to help Freckles

and Duke with the mousing and the trailing of fresh rabbit tracks. It is a lot of fun. But, the fun doesn't last long.

When the pads of my feet go numb from cold, I have to go find the lady. She really understands "Bella talk" and knows when it's time to pick me up and warm the footsies. The only bad part about the warming of the footsies is that I have to ride around in the lady's coat to make it happen. That's when I have flashbacks of Princess Annabelle and her antics. She did a lot of riding around in coats in her day. I don't want to be stereotyped as one of *those* kind of dogs. (You know those lapdogs that people carry around in bags and purses....gag.)

For now, I'm spending most of these cold days holding down the fort and keeping the footsies warm on my own.

Later,

