



Woman's Best Friend: Women Writers on the Dogs in Their Lives

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They may be known as man's best friend, but as the writers in this poignant, funny, and dramatic collection know, there's no gender divide when it comes to canines. Whether walking down the street, gathering at the dog park, hitting the open road, or spending one too many nights together on the couch in front of the TV, a woman and her dog are an enduring pair. And there are many who consider their dogs to be members of their family and themselves to be full-fledged dog moms, even if they're single.

From the family dog who takes on the anxiety of a family as the writer's sister battles breast cancer, to the compelling tale of a woman searching for her furry friend in the aftermath of September 11th, to the blind and deaf dog who teaches everyone about keeping on truckin' no matter what predicaments she gets into, the essays in this anthology get at the heart of love — and yes, sometimes love-hate-relationships women have with the dogs in their lives.

Woman's Best Friend: Women Writers on the Dogs in Their Lives Details

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Rachael says

Must read for all dog lovers. This beautiful compilation of women's stories about the dogs of their lives sits close to my heart, not just because they are all relatable tales but because this book belonged to my grandma. This book fully embodies my grandma's love of dogs and I am sure she must have loved this book just as much as I do. I do not tend to reread books but this is a book that I think I will find myself flipping back to from time to time. I have to dedicate this to the two who I thought of continuously while reading this; my sweet, enormous yellow lab Kiki and my amazing, dog-loving grandma. I miss them both every day.

Lesley says

Good story that any dog lover can relate to many. Warning: this book provokes many emotions smiles happy and sad tears.

Natalie says

Like collections of short stories, collections of personal essays can do their contents a disservice -- I, at least, often wind up reading too many at one sitting, and then their flaws or similarities show too clearly. But read at longer intervals, in the odd little moments of extra time -- 5 minutes here or there -- these kinds of collections can be enjoyable. This is a book of short personal essays about women and the dogs in their lives -- most are love stories of one flavor or another, but not all. Some are beautiful and moving, others were like magazine columns. But easy to swallow little morsels. A few stick in my memory; others made me think about writing my own book. Neither of those responses is a bad thing.

Sharon says

Several good stories in the bunch, however, the book was ruined for me with a couple of stories. One where the dog is put down after biting their two yr old, even though it did not break the skin and they don't know what caused it. So what if the dog was protecting itself, because the 2 yr old bit it's ear or pulled its tail. Pretty harsh! There may be more to the story, but it isn't in the book. Lots of other options like finding it a new home, keep them separate, hiring a trainer..... The other one I disliked was about the old man and his pack of dogs which ran loose and terrorizing the neighborhood.

Amber Polo says

A mixed bag memoirs by women writers about their dogs. I loved the variety of emotions brought up as I read through the collection. And the little photos were a perfect addition.

Pam Houston and her Irish Wolfhounds have a special spot in my heart.

Cindy Dyson Eitelman says

A collection of short epistles on dogs, by women. Some I liked pretty much, like *Running With Trout* by Sarah Corbett, on Dog as running partner, motivator and role model. *Leaving our Chains* by Susan T. Lennon is a story of how she adopted a dog, left a corporate, high-stress job and learned that just as the dog didn't need collars and chains to be a loyal and happy companion, neither did she.

But in general, I think I'll steer clear of short collections by varied authors in the future. I can't be sure--well, I could probably be sure but I'm too lazy to research--but I think these people were asked to contribute an article for the collection and then their offerings were taken as is, without discernment. It reminded me of *Alone In the Kitchen With an Eggplant*--short, bland, and quickly digested, like a puffy roll. Tastes great but doesn't stick in the stomach like my mama's Sunday morning biscuits did.

Marsha says

Picked this older book (2006) up at a second hand book sale and really enjoyed most of the short stories that focus on the lives of women and the dogs they have loved. Some make you laugh, others cry, and all are very unique yet familiar to any dog owner. I really appreciated the women-oriented perspective (i.e., dogs are not just "man's best friend"). Some stories were a bit hard to take for those who are still grieving the loss of a pet, but you can skip ahead of those until ready to read them. Very engaging.

JuliaOrlando says

As a dog lover (I don't have one of my own YET), I really enjoyed this book. I enjoyed hearing stories from different women of different ages from different walks of life talking about their dogs, the different relationships they have with them.

There were a couple different stories that had me reaching for tissues, but for the most part I thought this was a very well written book and it did have quite a bit of humor in it.

I would read other books written by the women who put these collections together, and I would recommend this book to other dog-lovers.

Astrid says

I am always keen on reading about dogs (or cats or most any other animals, as well as the human-animal bond), so I read this book.

Though entertaining, it is not a volume that I would place among the timeless works on my bookshelves. The editor asked a number of acquaintances to submit an essay about a dog in their lives, and this is the compilation. Though most, if not all, of the contributors are professional writers, the tone is a bit casual, more like magazine articles. The first tip-off that the book might not suit me was the intro in which the editor said she did not want sentimental stories; a couple of stories were much too unsentimental for my taste, i.e.

the dogs were wronged and paid the ultimate price. This is not to say that any of the contributors didn't love and care for their own dogs, as they certainly did. The best chapter was by Caroline Knapp, who reflected on the intensity and depth of our bonds, their immense value. Hers was the closing chapter, which was fitting, as it provided a meaningful overview.

Jeannette M. Hartman says

A delightful collections of dog tales by writers as diverse as Rebecca Skloot, Susan Cheever and Caroline Knapp. Some are serious, like Skloot's report on an aggressive pack of dogs roaming New York sidewalks that the city refuses to deal with; some are hilarious, like Kathryn Renner's about the family dachshund, Murphy Brown, who took up residence in the family's '99 Mercedes 320E, after discovering its luxurious charms when she was kept in the car during a house remodeling project. The noise, the dust and the strangers were intolerable for the little dog. Once Murphy tasted the pleasures of leather seats, lumbar support and a sunroof, she never wanted to stay in the house again.

This book is like a Whitman sampler for literary dog lovers: a bite-sized joy every time you open the cover.

Jen says

One of my best friends, Brendan, gave me this for Christmas - I've finally gotten to read it now - and it was great. There was one story that I really disliked - a woman put to sleep a dog that she'd rescued - and I'm not sure I needed the article at the end of the book, but overall it was great and I really enjoyed it. An easy read - great for feeling good and not stressing yourself or taxing your reader's mind. :)

Nancy says

This is an uneven collection of essays on the dogs in women's lives. From corrupted cat-lovers, to life-long dog owners, these writers write about everything from neurotic dogs, to sanity-saving companions, from the role that dogs can play in opening one's social life, to the desire to just hang with your dog who will always (well, almost) be less complicated than human relationships. Not a must read, but it can be digested an essay or two at a time before bed.

Stephanie says

Ah, when life starts to dictate your reading habits. I just got a dog, so I'm on the hunt (sometimes quite unconsciously) for dog-related material to read. I grabbed this after about two seconds of thought in the Pet section of the library.

Overall, I really enjoyed this collection of real-life short stories about different female writers and the dogs that influenced them. There were some that were fairly inane (hey, we can't all have amazingly interesting lives) and some that were humorous. Others really touched me, as do most things that deal with loving pets/loved ones dying (oy, just get me a tissue box now).

One of the last stories was certainly more cerebral than some, discussing the impact dogs have on one's social life, or lack there-of. Do we use dogs to retreat from the world to salve a damaged life, or do we use dogs as an easy way to meet people on the street? I can already attest to the fact that I've met more people in my neighborhood in the last five days than I ever have in the last two and a half years of living there.

The story that really caught me and left me choking back tears and anger in the middle of the restaurant I was eating lunch and reading to myself was the one about the homeless man and his pack of dogs in NYC. I forgot the author/name of the story at the moment, but that one just resonated with me. It was truly terrifying to think about people being terrorized by an aggressive pack led by a homeless man in the city and having not ONE authority figure do a thing about it. I felt the righteous anger and incredible fear right alongside the author as she raced to rescue her poor dog from being eaten alive and then embarked on a fruitless quest to get the authorities, from any sector, to do something about it. Why have laws if the people we expect and elect to uphold them do nothing? And the fact that there was no solution, no wrap-up at the end because this is true story and not everything gets a happy ending...rough.

So all in all, I'd say go read this if you're a dog lover and like personal essays. I was sad to see it end.

Summer says

I enjoyed this book, but only a couple of the women I could relate with. I am a Dog Mom freak.

Rachel says

3.5/5

I really did enjoy this book but I love some stories more than others.

I found some pointless and not long enough to be able to get into a story line, while others I just found so touching and heartwarming.

Another flaw I found with this book is every women had to have a pure breed golden retriever or Labrador or Great Dane. While those dogs are sweet, what about the rescue dogs in shelters who are looking for their forever home ? I think making adoption your first option is the way to go. These dogs are your life.

Other than that I was touched but how dogs are a major impact of happiness on our lives. Where would we be without our furry, four legged, tail wagging, drooling friends ?
