



Rescuing Sprite: A Dog Lover's Story of Joy and Anguish

Mark R. Levin

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In *Rescuing Sprite*, Mark Levin tells of the joy and anguish of life with a rescue dog: the intimate and powerful story of his family and the dog they have for too short a time.

Although Mark Levin is known as a constitutional lawyer and a nationally syndicated broadcaster, he is, first and foremost, a dog lover. In 1998, he and his family welcomed a half-Border Collie/half-Cocker Spaniel they named Pepsi into their lives. Six years later, his wife and son persuaded him to adopt a dog from the local shelter, a Spaniel mix. It turned out he was older than originally thought, and he was the most beautiful dog they'd ever seen. They named him Sprite. Their lives would never be the same.

Sprite and Pepsi became fast friends. They did everything together, from rummaging through the trash to loudly greeting the deliveryman. And the Levin family fell in love with him -- with his gentle nature, beautiful face and soft, huggable fur. But on Halloween night, shortly after joining their family, Sprite suddenly collapsed and was rushed to the animal hospital. It was the first of many such visits, and the start of a long journey for the Levin family, filled with much joy and anguish.

During the next two years, Sprite and Pepsi were inseparable. And Sprite's bond with the Levin family deepened. Friends, neighbors, and even Mark's radio audience came to know and love Sprite. As Mark's daughter turned eighteen and graduated from high school and Mark's son turned fifteen, Sprite's health deteriorated -- even as his spirits remained high and his beauty and grace continued to inspire. Between Thanksgiving and Christmas 2006, the Levin family said their emotional final goodbye. Crushed and consumed with grief, Mark turned to family, friends, and fans for help.

But new hope came when the Levins least expected it.

Rescuing Sprite is a stunningly intimate look at the love between a family and a dog, one that movingly shows, in Mark Levin's words, that "in the end, we humans are the lucky ones."

The author will donate a portion of his proceeds from the sale of this book to animal shelters.

Rescuing Sprite: A Dog Lover's Story of Joy and Anguish Details

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From Reader Review Rescuing Sprite: A Dog Lover's Story of Joy and Anguish for online ebook

Anne says

This book was really bad. I finished it because I wanted to like it. I wanted to feel a connection to this dog. And while he sounds like a sweet dog, he sounds just like any other dog too! There was nothing that made me laugh out loud or cry or anything like I did with Marley & Me. This author just wasn't good. I feel like he started writing about his experience with Sprite to get his own feelings out when the dog died - kind of a sense of therapy for him. Then he decided to turn it into a book, and I don't know how he got a published to agree to it. It reminded me of a child's classroom essay - similar to the papers my 5th grader currently writes. I did cry when Sprite was put to sleep, but geesh - who cares how badly written it is, of course I'm going to cry when a dog dies! This book was really, really bad. No matter how hard I tried, I just couldn't like it.

Bev Sykes says

Call me a curmudgeon, but I didn't like this book. I mean--what's not to like? It's about an abandoned dog who is rescued and adopted and the dog eventually dies. It has all the elements I would normally love - animals, pathos, tear-jerking finales.

But Mark R. Levin (radio talk show host and author of the best-selling book, "Men in Black: How the Supreme Court is Destroying America") gives it all the warmth of a book about the Supreme Court. "Marley" tells the same story, but John Grogan does it with such style that we love Marley and we weep at his demise.

Levin gives us nothing to love. It's a dog, everybody worshipped him, and he died. We don't get a feel for his quirks, for his personality. We get an overly long gut-wrenching treatise on the decision to end his suffering, and an overblown period of guilt that they didn't do more to save him.

I'm certainly not a heartless person. I've loved, and lost dogs (and a cat or two). I have buried children. I know the pain of loss, but Levin's problem is not making us care about Sprite the way we did about Marley. In the end the book seems overly maudlin and, quite frankly, self-serving. I'm not sure why it was a best seller except, perhaps, that people like me who gobble up books like this thought we might be discovering another "Marley."

We weren't.

Don't waste your time on this book.

Dena says

I just finished reading this book and I was an emotional wreck for the last 50 or so pages. It was literally me reading and sobbing, tears flowing and just feeling the pain the family was going through. I really enjoyed the whole book because the man who wrote it was just very genuine and such a dog lover so I felt I could

really relate to him. Even though it's an emotional story, it was really good and nice to read about a normal American family and the true love they have for dogs. Every dog lover would appreciate this book!

Marie says

i just loved this book and couldn't put it down. i cried! i don't usually cry, but when it comes to pets, i have quite a spot in my heart for them.

In 1998, Mark Levin and his family welcomed a half-Border Collie/half-Cocker Spaniel they named Pepsi into their lives. Six years later, his wife and son persuaded him to adopt a dog from the local shelter, a Spaniel mix. It turned out he was older than originally thought, and he was the most beautiful dog they'd ever seen. They named him Sprite. Their lives would never be the same.

During the next two years, Sprite and Pepsi were inseparable. And Sprite's bond with the Levin family deepened. Friends, neighbors, and even Mark's radio audience came to know and love Sprite. But Sprite's health deteriorated -- even as his spirits remained high and his beauty and grace continued to inspire. Between Thanksgiving and Christmas 2006, the Levin family said their emotional final good-bye. Crushed and consumed with grief, Mark turned to family, friends, and fans for help. But new hope came when the Levins least expected it.

SJ says

This isn't my normal sort of book and I would never have picked it up on my own. My father is an avid dog lover, and NOT an avid reader at all. So the fact that he had read anything at all was worth noting. He gave me his copy of the book and insisted I give it a try.

The author is no dummy, but he waters down his own personality so much that I found myself irritated with his portrayal of himself and his family with constant perfection. Still, for all that it lacked in literary value, I admit to sobbing myself stupid at various points. If you've ever loved a pet with all your heart and soul, and then lost that dear friend, then you'll understand what this book is trying to explain. It might make a gift to someone who lost a dog to a particularly difficult illness as a comfort of the hope that time will bring.

Christina says

I thought I would like this book, but I really didn't. In fact, the first half was just awful. The story would be more touching without the details of his radio show and knowing that his best friends are Rush Limbaugh and Sean Hannity and hearing what great guys they both are and where they all go on vacation together.

The decisions and feelings during and after Sprite's passing were still touching. It seemed like his wife, son, and daughter were sort of left out and it was all on Mark, but I'm pretty sure that wasn't actually the case and is a result of the author's inability to write about feelings other than his own. I adopted a senior dog a few years ago, and I appreciate that this book exists and think it is a worthy story to tell. I just wish it was a better book.

Eva Leger says

I was a little surprised reading some of the other reviews. Quite a few mentioned that they felt the book wasn't written well and still more thought that Levin was plugging his other book and radio show throughout this book. I disagree with both of those opinions.

From what I remember, Levin mentioned his other book one, *maybe* twice. He mentioned his radio show several times but every time he had a reason. That show is a part of his life and his dogs were also, somewhat, involved. Being that this book is about his life, his family's life, and the dogs in their family, it's only "right" that his show be mentioned. It would be the same as a bank teller writing the book and mentioned coming home from the bank. Or the supermarket or the marketing firm in the city. I didn't see any shameless plugging at all.

What I *did* is a dog-lover in the truest sense. Most of the books like this that I've read I've liked. There was one that I hated because, in my opinion, the author wasn't a dog lover at all- I saw right through him and his book. But the ones I like the most are the very personal stories- the ones that let you in to more than the dogs lives alone, but the families as well. And this did that for me.

I think some people will feel it's written poorly because of the simple sentences. I don't agree with that either personally. I wouldn't argue that it's a literary masterpiece, it's not, but it *is* a good story about this man's dogs.

I fell in love with the dogs from the beginning of the book and I enjoyed reading about their day to day activities. I also liked the rest of Levin's family, as they were portrayed throughout the book.

There are way more negative and/or less than positive reviews than I expected to find so I would just like to urge anyone thinking about reading this and reading the reviews beforehand to try it for themselves.

I believe Levin and his whole family are true dog lovers and I enjoyed the book the whole time, very much actually. Don't let the other reviews stop you from reading- this can help a person who has lost a pet. Like Levin says, sometimes it helps just to know others have been, and made it through, the same thing.

When I was looking at this in Wal-Mart the other day I was thinking about buying it. (I probably knew in my head that I already would but....) When I saw that part of the proceeds are going to animal shelters I was sold.

Tami says

After Mark Levin and family adopted this wonderful dog (thinking he was 3 - 6 years old) they find that Sprite is much older. Over the next two years, as his health fails, the Levin family takes wonderful care of Sprite and makes sure every day is a great day for him.

Sometimes I don't like these books, especially if the pet dies much sooner than they should. Sprite lives out the last few years of his life with the care and comfort he deserved to have all along. This book reinforces that I'm not the only one who takes care of my pet as if it were my child!

Sharron says

I wish I could give this just 1/2 a star because it was that bad. The book was just a promotional piece for the author. I can't tell you how many times he mentioned the other book he had written and his radio talk show. I do appreciate the fact he gave this dog a home, or rather his wife did, since I have rescue dogs myself. But the

writing was bad, the tone morbid, and the self-promotion unappreciated. Plus he really lost me once he mentioned he was close friends with Sean Hannity and Rush Limbaugh. I'm sure they're great guys in his inner circle but I can't agree with their politics or tactics. I love dogs and usually will read anything about them but I would definitely stay away from this book.

Rosemary Biggio says

Rescuing Sprite Saving Levin
By Rosemary Biggio

Mark R. Levin prominent radio talk show host, president of Landmark Legal Foundation, attorney, top advisor and administrator to President Reagan's cabinet, author of the New York Times bestseller *Men in Black: How the Supreme Court is Destroying America* and self proclaimed "dog lover" intentionally leaves the reader feeling that the bond between man and his best friend is more than mutual, "in the end, we humans are the lucky ones."

The publication of Levin's book (*Rescuing Sprite: A Dog Lover's Story of Joy and Anguish*. Pocket Books: N.Y. 2007.pp.216.) follows exactly one year on the heels of John Grogan's *Marley and Me*, which was released in movie theaters this holiday season. Grogan's humorous retelling of the adventures of his miscreant pup, Marley, fits the Disney tradition of *The Shaggy Dog*. Although *Rescuing Sprite* is less comic, it is more emotive.

I loved this dog. Writing this book was both painful and cathartic for me. Reading it may be emotional for you. I hope it brings you some smiles. I know it will bring you some tears. I hope, when you're done, that you are moved to hold your dog closer in your arms- or in your memories. (Levin,3)

Six years after adopting Pepsi, Levin's wife conspiring with his children cajole him into rescuing another mixed breed which they name Sprite. Pepsi and Sprite become inseparable brothers. Sprite is described as a beautiful, gentle tempered dog that always enjoyed sniffing a good breeze. After two years it was determined that Sprite was older and less healthy than originally thought. From the diagnosis of a nerve tumor to Sprite's passing, the joys and sorrows of the family are poignantly recounted. Although the disease disfigured and disabled Sprite's body, his spirit grew more graceful and beautiful. The book ends with a beginning as they welcome Griffen (father and son put the stopper on fizzy soda pop names) into the Levin clan.

Biggio Rescuing Sprite 2

Particularly notable in the book are the photos by daughter, Lauren, and sympathetic email from friends and fans. Mark Dean in an email recounts the following old American Indian legend:

In ancient times, when man and animals communicated as equals a crack in the earth erupted. Man was on one side

and the animals were on the other. The crevice grew wider and wider separating them and just before it became too large to traverse, the dog alone jumped over the chasm so that he could stay with man. (Levin,126)

Dogs are communicators and teachers. In their silence they offer us peace and understanding. In their behavior, they teach us life's most basic lesson of unconditional love. In their suffering they teach us what Hemingway called," grace under pressure". If there is a Rainbow Bridge, which this reader believes, Sprite and all of our beloved canines will be waiting for our leap of faith.

Mark R. Levin will donate a portion of the proceeds from this book to animal shelters.

Cayr says

I love books about dogs. Fiction, non-fiction; it doesn't matter.

Sprite was a beautiful dog. I have no doubt that he was sweet and loving and that knowing him and loving him enriched the lives of the Levin family. Having lost dogs in my life that I loved dearly, I'm sure that writing about Sprite was very cathartic for the author. Mark Levin says in his acknowledgments that many people didn't think that he could tell Sprite's story, because it was so different from anything he'd ever written. Unfortunately, they were right.

Horribly written. Maybe I'm just a literature snob, but reading it was painful. I had to force myself to finish it, and not because of what was happening in the story, but because it was like reading a book that had been written by a 5th grader with no real life experience. Levin reports things as they happen with little personal insight and comes off as somebody who has lived a charmed and painless existence up until Sprite.

I didn't think it could get any worse, but then the author introduces us to his "best friends" Rush Limbaugh and Sean Hannity. Ugh. Up until that point, I had wondered how such a poorly written book had found a large traditional publisher.

I hate to give a book a bad review. Any time an author sits down to write, he/she is putting themselves all the way out there. But this is one book I wish I'd passed on. Mark, don't quit your day job.

Naomi says

Having just gone through the experience of adopting an older dog and losing him, I was very interested in reading this title. But this author was a TERRIBLE writer. If he's a radio personality, he should stick with it. I understand his desire to tell the story of adopting and losing his dog, but - wow - this is some awful writing.

I barely made it through to the end, and couldn't wait to get this book out of my house. It just left via Bookmooch and more power to Dana who is about to receive it.

Meg says

Did this "educated" Mr. Levin write this book for 6th graders?! I felt it was too drawn out, he was searching for sentiment where he felt it should have been (I agree, it had potential as a heart wrenching story) but fell short. Extremely short. Sentences were simple and without emotion or vocabulary that truly expressed what he was attempting to portray. He should have condensed this book into a short story complete with MANY more photographs. It would have been far more enjoyable! I still found myself tearing up, even shed a few tears despite the book's shortcomings and that I DIDN'T EVEN FINISH IT! I am not sure who I recommend this book to because I feel I would be calling that individual unintelligent.

Chana says

I appreciate that Mark Levin and his family loved their dog Sprite and suffered when the dog became ill and they made the decision to have him put to sleep.

As a book, it becomes somewhat repetitive as Mark tells us many times how much he loves Sprite and how he is suffering both the potential loss and then the actual loss, and how he second-guesses the decisions he made in regards to Sprite's health care and the decision to put the dog to sleep. Mark agonizes, I sympathize. That doesn't make it a great book. It is simplistic in its grammatical construction and short on substance. The substance is Mark Levin has a broken heart. As someone who has suffered a broken heart over the accidental death of one of my children, well I understand a broken heart and that it does not act logically nor respond to the dictates or logic of others. But there are only so many ways to say I am bereaved, and only so long that your heartbreak will hold the attention of the reader. So I sympathized but found my attention drifting as I wondered about his good friend Rush Limbaugh, and I pondered the ethical pros and cons of putting an animal to sleep.

I only caught a couple of Rush Limbaugh's shows back in the 1990's. I remember his slyly saying that there was a new dog in the White House and up came a picture of Chelsea Clinton who must have been about 13 at the time. I thought that was so cruel that I never watched another of his shows and I haven't liked him since, although I read another book where a good friend of his talks about how kind and thoughtful Rush Limbaugh was to him in his time of need. I can't remember who that was now. No matter. So I am willing to concede that Rush Limbaugh can be a good friend, despite his cruelty to a young teenage girl on National Television.

i felt the pain and guilt of Mr. Levin in putting Sprite to sleep. How easy we use that euphemism, "put to sleep". i can't judge, but i hope that decision will not be mine to make, ever. I'm pretty sure I would not choose to put to sleep. When I was a young child our cat was nearly cut in half by the fan belt of our car. My dad was going to shoot him but we all screamed so much that my mom rushed him to the vet. Eight hours of surgery and weeks of recovery saved his life. He lived until I was in college when he finally died a natural death from cancer. i just don't know that we have the wisdom to know when life should be ended.

These were some of my thoughts while reading about dear Sprite, his good friend Pepsi, and the Levin family who loves their dogs.

Allison Beall says

As a dog lover, I both enjoyed and hated this book. Translation: the sad parts really suck, but the rest was

great!
