



The Dogs Who Found Me: What I've Learned From Pets Who Were Left Behind

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Disaster-prone writer and reluctant dog rescuer Ken Foster finds himself adopting an ever-growing collection of stray dogs, from a beagle abandoned in a New York City dog run to a pit bull in a Mississippi truck stop. Their circumstances offer a grounding counterpoint to his own misfortunes: the shock of New York City after 9/11, the evacuation of New Orleans during Hurricane Katrina, and the day his heart nearly stopped for good.

The Dogs Who Found Me: What I've Learned From Pets Who Were Left Behind Details

Date : Published March 1st 2006 by Lyons Press

ISBN : 9781592287499

Author : Ken Foster

Format : Paperback 194 pages

Genre : Nonfiction, Animals, Dogs, Autobiography, Memoir



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Kaylee Temple says

1: Summary

-The Dogs Who Found Me is all about Ken Foster and how rescuing dogs and being close to dogs every day affected him. Also he speaks about how to rescue animals. This book is basically a how to save homeless dogs. He also puts inspirational stories of how he has helped dogs in the past. In the back of the book he put organizations that help dogs and other animals and then put store both on line and off that helps with making a dog happy or in helping rescuing.

2: Opinion of Novel

-I loved this book mainly because of the touching stories about him rescuing animals. I wish I could rescue animals too. Pit bulls are one of my favorite dogs and i like how he talks about them some in the book. I also love how it isn't always serious and it seems more like a journal and that you are talking to a sincere person. I like how helpful this book is to people who want to rescue dogs. He puts a lot of how too stuff that comes in handy.

3: Authors Purpose

-the author's purpose is to inspire people to help animals. He understands how hard it is and he talks about that a lot in his book. He also uses pathos by sometimes using sad words while talking about homeless dogs. He talks about how animals can help a person. He even gives examples on how he does it so he makes it seem easier.

4: Theme

-The theme of this book is helping some might be hard but it's worth it in the end. In this case we are helping dogs instead or people. The book shows how rescuing a dog is very hard sometimes hard then other times. Ken talks about how it cost money and how u gets attached and then has to let the dog go. On the other side he does gives happy stories about how dogs have affected his life and could affect yours too. The Dogs Who Found Me also talks about the dangers and how to know if an animal is violent or not and how to approach a homeless dog. Ken Foster wrote this book to motivate you to help those animals who need it the most and he showed throughout the book how helping can be hard but is worth it.

Gwen says

I expected to like this book quite a lot, since it's about a guy rescuing dogs. But he works too hard at finding greater meaning in rescuing dogs--what it says about us as people, how having a dog changes us in ways that are really profound, and so on.

I fostered dogs for a year and I currently have two rescue dogs. I've picked up many abandoned dogs and found homes for them. I do it because I don't like to think of animals in pain--hit by a car, starving to death, etc. I love having dogs and my house would seem empty without them. But I don't have a really introspective, "staring into a dog's eyes, I realize they are everything humans aren't--kind, honest, and so on" type of feeling about rescuing dogs. I just can't stand passing by an abandoned dog, and I liked taking a scared animal and turning it into a pet for someone. So the tone of the book kind of got on my nerves and I didn't enjoy it as much as I thought I would.

Britt Maag says

This book has helped me a lot with dealing with my current foster dog and giving her up. Ken has good stories and really good tips on finding dogs and other rescue related stuff.

Jennifer (aka EM) says

Tells the story of dog rescuer Ken Foster from 9/11 to Hurricane Katrina in both a practical and a personal way. Low on sentiment and - remarkably, given some of the segments - anger. High on responsibility and love for dogs. Would have liked pictures of those he's rescued and his own dogs.

Eleanor, C. says

Even though I'm a cat lover, it restored me emotionally to read stories of one man's love letters to his dogs.

Elizabeth? says

how easy was this book for me to read? essays about how dogs change our lives -- i'm all over it! foster writes about his dogs Brando, Zephyr and Sula with compassion and honesty. each of them has his/her own unique story of how they came to be in foster's home and heart. it reminds me of my many mutts that we've rescued and loved over the years. now that my dogs are getting older, it made me remember each of their rescue stories with fondness. it seems as if my dogs have always been in my life - even when they began their lives with someone else. eager to read more of his essays.

Vanessa says

I admit, this is not the literary accomplishment of the ages (thus the four stars), but it's near and dear to my heart. Last March (2007) I found a dog roaming outside around my house, and he had clearly been on the road for days. Long story short, I sent him to the pound, rescued him from the pound when no one came for him, nursed him back from a number of illnesses and diseases he had, and he lived in my garage for almost five months (my own dogs weren't exactly being nice to him, so the garage thing was for his own good) while I tried to find him a home. Anywho, during the beginning of this odyssey, I found this book in a Barnes and Noble in Alexandria, Virginia and - most likely as an attempt to justify my one-woman dog rescue and rehabilitation program - I bought it. It's a really touching story of a guy who ended up in NYC during 9/11 and moved down to New Orleans (just in time for Katrina) and rescues, finds homes for, and keeps some of the pups - mostly Pits - along the way. I'm not a big fan of emotional dog books that make me cry (Marley and Me, for example), but this one - despite a few tears - is inspirational and did capture what I felt about Smarty (who now has an excellent home - and is still named Smarty!).

The paragraph I would read to anyone who questioned my insane decision to keep this high-maintenance dog

and that got me through it in some sense, can be found on page 26: "There's a strange intimacy between a lost animal and the person who finds him. In terms of time, what you've shared is tiny and insignificant, but that moment is a vital pivot in the animal's life, the line between his old life, and a better, new one. In some cases, that fine line is the one between life and death. It's easy to get cheesy and sentimental about it, and the truth is that what transpires in that moment of finding a lost dog is really not that compelling. The person who saves a dog is not saving the world - so it is remarkable that more people don't make the effort. But the people with the longest list of reasons why they can't help - they are too busy, there are too many other causes that are more important than some animal - aren't really likely to appear on the volunteer lists of any charitable organization. It's not just the dogs they are too busy for."

Peregrine 12 says

This book was not what I expected. The chapters read more like a personal journal than a book - and it's not especially an uplifting book. The best thing about this book, in my view, is Foster's ability to describe our reluctance to help animals that clearly are starving before our eyes. He articulates his and others' fear and selfishness in a way that is realistic, albeit painful.

The writing is honest and not sappy-sentimental. But it's hard to follow sometimes, as Foster frequently seemed to leave out critical details - location, transition to a new location, people present, people no longer present - in a scene. A little maddening.

On the up side: the author delivers in the book exactly what the title indicates - it's about what he learned by interacting with neglected and homeless animals. On the down side: the author's self-described feelings of helplessness and anxiety, especially early in the book, left me very frustrated and several times I had to put the book down.

Foster expresses anxiety over things that, to me, seem like simple decisions: Yes, you should take the dog in; no, do not wait until tomorrow. Yes, you should help your friend's dog that's being punched in the face by a strange woman and is clearly in emotional distress; no, do not wait until she leaves the dog park and then complain about her to other silent witnesses. No, you should NOT give the starving, lost puppies back to their neglectful owner, etc, etc. Argh!

The stories are more sad than happy, but again this is the author's tone in the telling.

The back of the book has some excellent resources for people who live in the dog world, including web sites on training, quality dog foods and snacks, and sites devoted to pit bull rescue and providing reliable info about the breed.

Sharron says

Ken Foster writes about dogs he has found and those who have found him. Each chapter is a story about an individual dog as well as lists related to dogs. I inherently liked this book due to his focus which is rescue. I have worked in rescue as well as fostered dogs and cats myself. I continue to volunteer in this area but no longer foster. It takes a special person to do this type of work and Ken Foster is definitely that good hearted kind of person. He talks about seeing strays where other people do not notice them. He says it is because

they don't want to take responsibility. I see dogs (not dead people) as well on the side of the road and have stopped more than once.

There were parts of this book that made me cringe because I disagreed with things Ken had done or other people had done. But that is why I loved this book. Nobody in rescue does things the same way. And there are lots of disagreements about what "the right way" is. I was happy Ken is out there doing what he believes in. Many people, those who don't see the strays, might talk about the sad state of stray dogs and cats but will never stop to do anything.

I think this book will mainly resonate with those who have done rescue but everyone should read it and know what it is like for an animal to be left and abandoned by those he/she loves.

Maureen says

A sweetly-written heartfelt account from a man who sees the abandoned dogs that all of us other people ignore, *TDWFM* is well worth reading. He tracks life with first one dog, then two and so on from the aftermath of 9/11 to living through Hurricane Katrina. I wish his account of post-Katrina New Orleans had been longer, but since the focus of his book is the dogs instead of the people, that is probably just as well.

When one side of his heart stopped working, Foster's dogs tried to tell him that something was wrong, but he did not get the message until he passed out and ended up in surgery. He relates many such incidents of how living with dogs has changed his view of the world. There is also practical information at the end of this book about animal shelters, pet supplies, and what to do if you find a stray dog, which I feel that many more people are doing nowadays after reading this book.

Pam says

<http://iwriteinbooks.wordpress.com/20...>

"It is true that pit bulls grab and hold on. But what they most often grab and refuse to let go of is your heart, not your arm."

Vickie Hearne

When Ken Foster was growing up, he encountered dogs but didn't hold them (literally) as dear as he does, as an adult. Perhaps that's because, back then, he didn't carry the aura he does now. Seemingly everywhere he goes, there is a dog peaking around a corner, walking across a busy intersection or just generally in the wrong place at the right time, waiting to be rescued.

His collection of stories in *The Dogs Who Found Me* is an emotional whopper for dog lovers. Now, I think that's true but then, I can only speak as someone with two shelter dogs and a dog that we steered clear of heading to the death chambers at Fulton County. For those who have pure bred or store-bought dogs, this might not hit as close to home. However, for me, it was so clued in to how my dogs have ended up in my life that I couldn't help laughing, crying and reminiscing through the whole thing.

Foster's prose isn't what I'd call eloquent but it's about the level of trotting around that I have come to

expect from “dog writers”. For some reason, I think that this should be different as I connect complete passion with both writers and dogs. Together, that means that dog books and dog articles should be overflowing with flowery and amazing verbiage. I know that this isn’t true after reading myriad examples of dog stories, long and short. Who knows why it’s the case but it just is and something, I suppose, I have just learned to accept.

Acceptance is key, though, because once past the average word choice, the stories are simply to die for. Ken has a way of relating to the average dog experience though, brusquely tearing through 9/11, heart surgery and Katrina. Each disaster, personal or global, is both a major catastrophe and a literal walk in the park, according to Foster, simply because of his connection to his dogs.

I highly recommend this to all “dog people”. I’m also contemplating buying it as gifts for those people in my life who simply never seem to “get” my (or my husband or son’s) connection to dogs when they’re up or down and out.

One of the random perks of the book is a little frivolous but I think it’s worth noting. In the back, Foster lists a huge collection of links and addresses for shelters and organizations, in real life and on the web that helped him and can help others. Really, do check this out! Here are some of the links but see the book for more:

Animal Farm Foundation
Animal Rescue New Orleans
Bad Rap
Best Friends
Pit Bull Rescue Central
Sit Stay Dog Rescue Directory
The Louisiana SPCA
The Unexpected Pit Bull

(Also, this is a bit of a spoiler, post book, but he has set up a foundation for one of his beloved dogs and the site is worth checking out: <http://www.sulafoundation.org/>)

Lis Carey says

Ken Foster is a somewhat disaster-prone writer and academic who didn't set out to do dog rescue. After he adopted his own dog, Brando, though, it was just a matter of time. He loves dogs, especially pit bulls, and can't ignore the stray or abandoned dogs he's now seeing as he moves around New York City with Brando. At first he's just making sure someone (else) takes home dogs abandoned at the dog park. Then he's calling his friends in dog rescue to find foster homes.

Then he starts taking in dogs himself. Even if he has to cut across traffic and, once, nearly hit a pedestrian, to do it.

He and Brando (a Great Dane mix) survive 9/11, but are driven out by increasingly restrictive dog laws and enforcement that goes after easy and obvious minor violations, targeting mostly responsible dog owners, rather than pursuing dog fighters or other real cruelty violations. They move to Florida, and eventually New Orleans. By the time they reach New Orleans, they are a household of four; Ken has adopted first Zephyr, and then Sula--both pit bulls.

They're in New Orleans when Katrina targets the city, and evacuate to a friend's house outside the city. Then they need to evacuate from there, after the storm, when conditions are so bad as to be basically unlivable.

It's Zephyr, one of his pit bulls, who first identifies the heart problem that nearly kills him. (I did mention "disaster-prone", right?)

Through all of this, Ken keeps rescuing dogs--a border collie in a shopping district while he's on vacation, a pit bull by the highway on his way home to Florida from a visit to New Orleans, a corgi in his still mostly abandoned neighborhood in New Orleans when he returns there after Katrina. Ken tells his story and theirs in a gentle, sometimes self-mocking way, and makes every single dog memorable.

Highly recommended.

Danielle Louise says

It is proving very difficult for me to review this book. I purchased it in March 2006 when our bookstore reopened post-Katrina, but then I let it sit on my shelf for five and a half years because I wasn't sure I was ready to read it. Sure enough, even now, the chapter about the storm hit me hard. (He mentions a man and woman evacuating in two separate vehicles with dogs and birds. I met them while evacuating, too, and that memory hit me vividly when I read that part.)

So, the end of the book was very emotional for me and is clouding my ability to write a coherent review.

But. It's a good book, especially if you're a dog lover. Maybe even if you're not a dog lover. It's not a typical "dog book." It is, as the subtitle says, a book about the things Ken Foster has learned along the way. It is about his journey from not-really-a-dog-person to being the kind of person who evacuates for a hurricane with dog food but no personal documents.

The story is bookended by 9/11 and Hurricane Katrina, but it's also not a book about either of those events. It's a book about a man and his (sometimes complicated) relationships with the dogs who come in and out of his life. It is by turns funny, sad, heart-warming, and even brutal. Foster's writing style may not be for everyone, but it felt very real to me.

Christie says

If you're looking for a heart warming, feel good book (similar to something like *Chicken Soup for the Dog Lovers Soul*), this book is not it. I found the writing to be very unemotional, and while the author talks about several dogs he found, he seems to have no connection to them. I fall in love with every dog I meet so I cannot relate to the indifferent and apathetic approach to both the dogs he owns and the ones he finds.

I also found the tone to be arrogant and patronizing. For example, he scolds owners who's dogs get out of the yard and suggests that they are unfit pet parents. He then almost immediately discusses how he encountered times when he couldn't afford to feed his three dogs and that one of his dogs was an escape artist and got out regularly. I found him to be critical of everyone but himself.

But more importantly, I wasn't looking for any criticism at all! I was looking for a story of growth and love, and I'm really disappointed that this book included none of this. I would not recommend this book.

Rachel says

This book made me angry. The author is soooo superior the entire time (or at least the first half that I read), looking down openly on those that can't make animal rescue their entire lives. He writes like he is God's gift to dogs, but then suddenly about halfway through the book he talks about PUTTING DOWN A DOG BECAUSE IT GOT INTO A FIGHT WITH HIS DOG. What the actual fuck. He goes so far as to say that that particular pit bull was "not the dog he deserved." You, sir, are gross and disgusting. You want to save animals but only if they don't have any problems.

I had to get this book out of my life.
