

Coffee Break



What is your favorite (or least favorite) book or movie about animals, and why?

That was the question we asked you for this issue's Coffee Break. Some of you loved works that made you cry, while others disliked the same works for the same reason!

The movie, *Eight Below*, is incredible. Based on a true story [of] eight sled dogs who are stranded for nearly six months in Antarctica, the movie does a great job of demonstrating the determined survival spirit of dogs, as well as the tenacity some people have for helping them. Not all of the dogs survived—no different from real life—as all of us who work in shelters and rescues understand. Sadly, we're unable to save them all. I sobbed at the end of the movie for the dogs. But my friend reminded me, "It was a miracle that some were saved; focus on that." What a good lesson.

*Chris Shaughnessy, Dog Behavior Counselor/Trainer
Pet Therapy Services Inc.
West Chester, Pennsylvania*

We had so many problems after the movie *Cats & Dogs* came out. So many people wanted or actually purchased a beagle without any real idea of the "personality" of that breed—something we in the animal field know immediately. It naturally led to quite a few dogs ending up in our shelter and the tough job of finding the best homes for them.

*Lynn Smith, Animal Care & Education Manager
RSPCA of Western Australia
Perth, Australia*

The book about animals that is by far my favorite (but is not necessarily always a cheerful read!) is *Animal Liberation* by Peter Singer. The book is challenging and sometimes controversial, but it is a book that should be read by everyone. While *Animal Liberation* goes far beyond companion animals in its scope, reading it every couple of years gives me a burst of energy to continue to try and make the world a better place for the animals in our shelter and all animals.

*Simon J. Woodrup, Volunteer Coordinator/
Humane Education Liaison
Animal Protection Society of Durham
Durham, North Carolina*

Jon Katz is one of my favorite authors. His writing is so clear and down to earth, and is littered with satire and comical anecdotes. I have read and appreciated all of his books, but my favorite would have to be *The Dogs of Bedlam Farm*. This tells of his farm adventures and his giant leap of faith into a new time in his life. It makes you nod in agreement, cry and laugh all at the same time. What a great book!

*Holly Williams
Animal Rescue League of Iowa
Des Moines, Iowa*

My favorite book with a scene that always touches my heart is called *Coalwood Way*. It's a memoir. Homer Hickam, the author, grew up in a poor coal mining town. What made me cry is that they were having a very bad winter, and there wasn't enough food for the deer to survive. He and his friends witnessed one fawn die from starvation, and they kept seeing this group of incredibly skinny deer walking around their town. At the end of the book, they were having a Christmas pageant outside and using old hay bales as seats. While they were having the pageant, the deer came out of the woods and started eating the hay. The audience all got up off their seats to let the deer eat the hay.

*Laura Baker, Volunteer
Operation Sanctuary
Ogdensburg, New Jersey*

Recently my least favorite movie is *Eight Below*. I watched it once, since one of the dog "actors" came through our shelter; we placed him with a rescue group that eventually adopted him to a Hollywood trainer. I have a poster about the movie outside my office, but I cannot watch it again! It's just too sad.

*David Bolton, Executive Assistant
Young-Williams Animal Center
Knoxville, Tennessee*

My favorite book is *One at a Time: A Week in an American Animal Shelter*. The individual stories of pets adopted or euthanized were so touching. I made it through the entire book without crying until the last story of the cat named Surma. Upon adoption, the foster mom asked if she could say goodbye. Her words rang so true: "Good luck; be safe." To that I could relate. You loved them, hope for the best, and miss each and every one of them every single day.

*Susan Wise, President
Catnip & Carrots Animal Bunch
Huntington Beach, California*



The movie *Babe* is my all-time favorite movie—not just about animals but about any topic. This charming tale ... has inspired many people I know to a greater care and concern for all animals. The pure heart of Babe the pig epitomizes for me the innocence of all animals. The movie highlights the cruelty that is often inflicted upon animals and their essential nobility. And while [using characters] in the animal kingdom, it is modeling behaviors which, if exhibited by more humans, would help transform the planet to a more peaceful place.

*Theresa Zingery, Board Member
Red Door Animal Shelter
Chicago, Illinois*

The book *Where the Red Fern Grows* [by Wilson Rawls] was read to my class when I was in grade school. I remember hating weekends, because we had to wait for the next chapter! The story about a boy's love and dedication for his dogs, and their sacrifices for him, brings tears to my eyes still. I read it to my children, who also volunteer at the shelter now. This story has impressed upon them as well. They made a movie, but the book really captures your heart as you read it, every time! I recommend this book highly and frequently.

*Kirsten Weger, Volunteer
Fresh Start Animal Rescue, Inc.
Belvidere, Illinois*

***Animal Sheltering* congratulates Simon Woodrup of Durham, N.C., whose submission was selected in a random drawing from those published in this issue. The Animal Protection Society of Durham, where he works, will receive a free coffee break: a \$50 gift certificate to a local coffee shop. "Bone" appetit!**

What is your favorite service or program that your organization provides to the public? Why do you feel it's so important?

Please submit your responses (150 words or less) at animalsheltering.org/coffeebreak or send them to Editor, *Animal Sheltering*/HSUS, 2100 L St. NW, Washington, DC 20037. **Your answer may be printed in a future issue of *Animal Sheltering*.** If your response is chosen for publication, you will be entered into a drawing to win a **free coffee break (valued at \$50)** for your organization. Responses may be edited for length or clarity; no donation or purchase is necessary to win. See animalsheltering.org for contest rules, or send an e-mail or letter to the above addresses to request a printed copy.