

# Book Review: The Sit! Stay! Read! Series

BY STEPHANIE SHAIN

I recently had the pleasure of reading five books written for children, all part of the Sit! Stay! Read! series from the Gryphon Press. My reading partner and co-reviewer was a discriminating 3-and-a-half-year-old, whose comment at the end of each book was the same: "I love that book." I had to agree: Even those dealing with more difficult subject matter are books that a wide range of ages will enjoy and learn from.

*At the Dog Park with Sam and Lucy* is wonderfully simple, detailing the delights of the dog park.

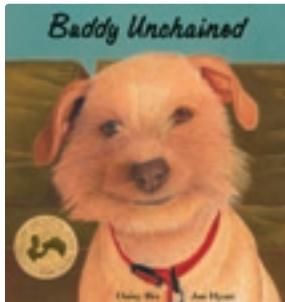
From the Newfoundland and Yorkie exchanging greetings to the big black dog, Frisbee in mouth, running ahead of the others, this book will keep young readers interested with its active pictures.

*Max Talks to Me* is about a young boy and his shepherd mix. The boy explains how he can tell when Max is hungry or thirsty and when he is excited to go on a walk. The bond of friendship comes through loud and clear.

Basic pet care is a difficult topic to make exciting for kids, and I found *Are You Ready for Me?* the driest read of the series. But the message about animal needs is an important one, and my co-reviewer liked this book as much as the others.

*Buddy Unchained* is one of two books in the series that venture into less pleasant issues. Buddy is a chained dog who ultimately finds a loving home. The author handles a troubling issue well, showing the loneliness of life on a chain without shocking young readers.

*A Home for Dakota* tackles the puppy mill issue; while the words "puppy mill" aren't used, the conditions the dogs are kept in and Dakota's explanation get the



point across. The dogs are rescued, and Dakota is taken into a foster home, where she learns to trust and feel better about herself. The family who ultimately adopts her is initially put off by her appearance—she is nearly hairless on her back, and her skin is aggravated and red, a result of her poor treatment. The illustrations in this book are more disturbing than the others, but it is well worth the read—it carries an important message about puppy mills, and reminds readers not to judge a dog (or a person) simply by appearance.

Each book has information for adults in the back with further explanation of the issues raised. The Gryphon Press obviously has an eye on the needs of humane educators.

The company is offering *Animal Sheltering* readers 50 percent off the cover price for all orders placed through January 2009. Visit [theyryphonpress.com](http://theyryphonpress.com) for more information on the books; e-mail [ebgryphonpress@yahoo.com](mailto:ebgryphonpress@yahoo.com) to order at the discounted price. AS

Stephanie Shain is director of outreach for the Companion Animals section of The HSUS.

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