

The Lost History of the Canine Race: Our 15,000-Year Love Affair With Dogs

By Mary Elizabeth Thurston


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Discover here why some American Indians ate the dogs they loved, how one stray Victorian puppy saved three million canine lives, and how ten thousand more soldiers' names might have been added to the Vietnam Memorial Wall had it not been for dogs. Anthropologist Mary Elizabeth Thurston will revolutionize how we perceive "man's best friend" and empower anyone who loves dogs with a new sense of wonder and appreciation. in full color.

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Editorial Review

From Kirkus Reviews

Early on in this sprightly study, one thing becomes clear: Canines have been good for us, but we haven't always repaid the kindness. Thurston, an anthropologist, was spurred to write this history when she discovered that artifacts and documents relating to our life with dogs were fast disappearing. She believes that dogs are an important facet in the spiritual and emotional evolution of humans: They give us a sense of the other, foster the deep pleasure of empathy, even serve as four-footed therapists. And, sadly, for many of us ``canines are our one and only link to the natural world that has shaped the human psyche for eons." So she set out to gather as much evidence regarding the dog-human nexus as she could. Thurston rakes over archaeological finds that hint at an early date for dog-human bonding (as hunting confederates?) and stresses that domestication led to arrested canine development, with dogs becoming physically and emotionally dependent on humans after puppyhood. In Egypt she finds a gold mine of evidence on domestication, including canine mummies, and at Pompeii she discovers mosaic beware of dog warnings. She outlines feudal cults of the hunt and lavish Renaissance breeding schemes. Dog uses and abuses are surveyed--the animals served as ancient and modern warriors, as turnspits (hitched to a treadmill to turn the hearth spit). They also serve as a market for affluent material trappings--haircuts, dog food, pet cemeteries, and the market for purebreds are critiqued. Thurston's affection for dogs is everywhere evident: Readers will sense her outrage at their mistreatment and exploitation, her approval of societies that give dogs respect. A fascinating slice of cultural history, and a sterling tribute to dogs through the centuries. (color and b&w illustrations, not seen) (Book-of-the-Month Club and Quality Paperback Book Club selection) -- *Copyright ©1996, Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved.*

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