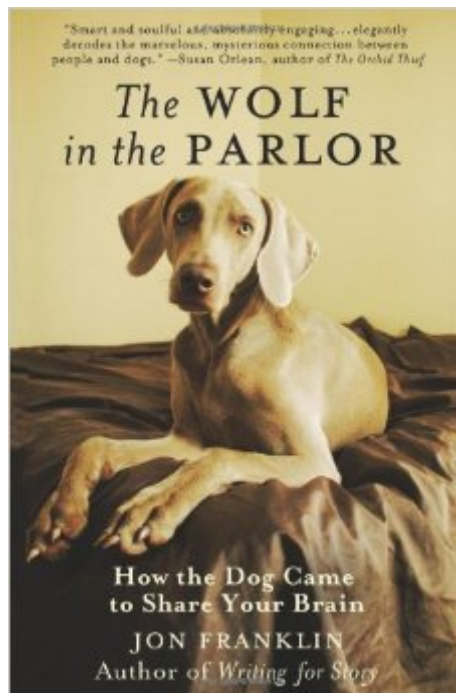


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The Wolf In The Parlor: The Eternal Connection Between Humans And Dogs



Synopsis

A man and puppy exhumed from a 12,000-year-old grave sends a two-time Pulitzer Prize-winning science writer on a journey to the dogs. Of all the things hidden in plain sight, dogs are one of the most enigmatic. They are everywhere but how much do we really know about where they came from and what the implications are of their place in our world? Jon Franklin set out to find out and ended up spending a decade studying the origins and significance of the dog and its peculiar attachment to humans. As the intellectual pursuit of his subject began to take over Franklin's life, he married a dog lover and was quickly introduced to the ancient and powerful law of nature, to wit: Love me, love my dog. Soon Franklin was sharing hearth and home with a soulful and clever poodle named Charlie. And so began one man's journey to the dogs, an odyssey that would take him from a 12,000-year-old grave to a conclusion so remarkable as to change our perception of ourselves. Building on evolutionary science, archaeology, behavioral science, and the firsthand experience of watching his own dog evolve from puppy to family member, Franklin posits that man and dog are more than just inseparable; they are part and parcel of the same creature. Along the way, *The Wolf in the Parlor* imparts a substantial yet painless education on subjects as far ranging as psychological evolution and neurochemistry. In this groundbreaking book, master storyteller Franklin shatters the lens through which we see the world and shows us an unexpected, enthralling picture of the human/canine relationship.

Book Information

Hardcover: 304 pages

Publisher: Henry Holt and Co.; 1 edition (September 1, 2009)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0805090770

ISBN-13: 978-0805090772

Product Dimensions: 6.4 x 1.2 x 9.6 inches

Shipping Weight: 1 pounds

Average Customer Review: 4.2 out of 5 stars [See all reviews](#) (58 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #807,767 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #97 in [Books > Science & Math > Biological Sciences > Animals > Dogs & Wolves](#) #3636 in [Books > Crafts, Hobbies & Home > Pets & Animal Care > Dogs](#) #5232 in [Books > Science & Math > Nature & Ecology > Fauna](#)

Customer Reviews

This book was a disappointment. I knew enough about the theme - the symbiotic relationship

between people and dogs - to know that a very interesting and enlightening book could be written on the subject. In this one I was expecting a fairly thorough review and presentation of the scientific evidence and theories on the subject, but that is not what I found. If you are looking for nonfiction in the sense of a sober presentation and assessment of what scientific evidence there is on the subject, you will find informative writing of that sort only in relatively small snatches scattered here and there in the book. If you are looking for a personal story of the author's experience with his dog or other dogs, you will find writing of that sort only in relatively small snatches here and there. What the majority of the book consists of is the author's philosophical musings, and stories about his efforts to learn more about the origin of dogs. An example of the "how I found it" material: "Eventually I found an outfit at the University of Michigan that was pioneering the on-demand reproduction of rare books. I called them. We haggled, and I sent them a check. In due time my mailbox yielded up a very thin little volume of copied and bound pages. Olsen's book. Finally! I tore open the package like it was a Christmas present. It was just what I'd wanted; the book was packed full of detail." If you want to read this sort of personal-quest narrative, you will not be disappointed by the book. An example of the "philosophical musing" material, this one about how ancient humans invented religion: "The knowledge of death was depressing. Depression made us less able to cope. With the realization of death, the intellect ran full tilt into the emotions of paralysis. Paralysis was another form of death. We were trapped. ... How did we escape this psychological dilemma? We didn't, not totally. But nature, who is at least as smart as the average programmer, took the edge off it by evolving a workaround. Whenever we started dwelling too much on our own deaths, well ... voila! Suddenly we were thinking about God. God would make sense of it all. With apologies to Margaret Mitchell, we'd think about it tomorrow. Meanwhile, back to feeding our hungry children." If you want to read this sort of personal musings about what the world is all about, you will not be disappointed by the book. If what you are looking for is a book that provides a balanced and informative picture of modern scholarship's findings about the origins of dogs, there is one that Franklin mentions once and sounds like it would be a good choice, though I have not personally read it yet: *The Domestic Dog: Its Evolution, Behaviour and Interactions with People*. If you want thought-provoking stories about personal relationships with dogs that reveal in present reality the kind of symbiotic relationship that Franklin theorizes about, a few of the ones I have enjoyed are the following: *Merle's Door: Lessons from a Freethinking Dog*, *Marley & Me: Life and Love with the World's Worst Dog*, *My Life in Dog Years*. Franklin's theory is that around 12,000 years ago man and dog evolved into a symbiotic relationship in which dog supported some of man's emotional needs and man supported some of dog's rational needs. It is an interesting theory but based on an incredibly thin line of evidence, and it is

not really a scientific theory backed by evidence so much as it is the same class of "personal musings about the nature of the world" that so much of the rest of the book is devoted to. The end of the book goes into recommendations about how people should treat dogs. These too are the author's personal opinion. Many make sense, but I take exception to one of them. Franklin believes people are better off buying purebred dogs from breeders. In a world so full of dogs in shelters needing homes, dogs that would make wonderful friends for anyone, many of whom will face death if not adopted, I hope that anyone who reads this book and thinks about getting a dog will read other books that talk about the joys of mixed-breed dogs before making a decision about what kind to get.

As a librarian, I read tons of books; however, most of them tend to be either related to music, my specialty, or science fiction. I picked this up on a whim, because I love dogs and the author seems to have a fine pedigree (no pun intended!). After reading this, I am so thankful that I decided to go outside of my normal reading! Jon Franklin, a two-time Pulitzer Prize winning science writer, does an amazing job of exploring why humans and dogs have such an intense bond. Franklin takes us along on his personal journey as he changes from a man that doesn't particularly care about dogs to one where Charlie, his poodle, becomes an integral part of his life (thanks in large part to his wife). As time flows by and Charlie worms his way into the author's heart, Franklin, the ever curious science writer, tries to figure out exactly why humans and dogs seem to complete each other. What impressed me most about this book was the author's ability to deftly intertwine his own personal narrative, along with both scientific research and his own theories. He adds just enough of a personal voice that one doesn't feel like they are reading a text book, but it doesn't devolve into a rambling diary. Franklin does an excellent job of explaining advanced scientific concepts and ideas, although he does assume that the reader has about a high school level knowledge of science. I highly recommend this book to any dog people as it will definitely make them think a little (and hopefully appreciate even more) their relationship with man's (and woman's) best friend. Cat people, you should also pick this one up too and see how the other half of the world lives. To people who don't like any animals, read this and you might find yourself wanting to see what life would be like with your very own "Wolf in the Parlor."

This thoroughly enjoyable book shows the power and joy that can be had from well-written nonfiction. The author's search for answers to an enigma is as gripping as the "whodunits" that I like to read. Yet, truth is more fascinating than made-up stories. A photo of a 12,000-year-old skeleton reaching out to the skeleton of a small dog entices Franklin on a quest that takes him from ancient

caves guarded by wolf skulls to his own hearth where a Standard Poodle puppy named Charlie turns his world upside down. In this nonfiction mystery, Franklin sets out to discover why dogs are such an integral part of all societies, not only here in the U.S. This is more than a book about dogs; it is a book about what makes us human. It will appeal to anyone wanting to learn more about the world in which they live.

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