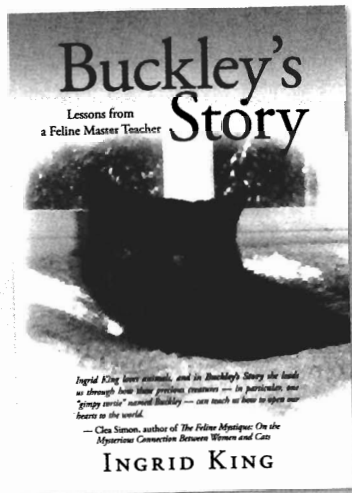


# Recent and recommended

By Sally Rosenthal



***Buckley's Story* by Ingrid King. iUniverse, Inc., 2009. Hardcover, 119 pages, \$24.95.**

If I took an informal survey among my animal-loving friends, I suspect I would discover each has had one very special animal companion who arrived just when needed. If we are honest, all of us will confess that, among a lifetime of loved animals, there is one creature who becomes, for a variety of reasons, our animal soulmate. For Ingrid King, author of *Buckley's Story*, that animal was a rescued tortoiseshell cat who took up residence during middle age in the veterinary practice King managed.

With a lifelong penchant for torties, King realized Buckley was special even among this type of feline. A former stray with medical concerns, Buckley displayed a zest for life and a willingness to trust that caused King to examine her values and begin an animal-related healing arts business.

It was when Buckley came home to live with the author and fellow tortie Amber, however, that she truly taught King life's most important lessons. Diagnosed with heart disease, Buckley taught the author about hope and love and how, when only love remains, to shepherd a beloved feline through her passage to another realm.

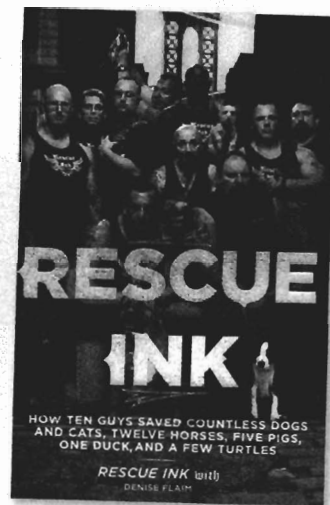
At first glance, this account isn't very different from thousands of other stories about losing an animal friend, and therein lies its worth. King, while honoring Buckley, has transformed the personal into the universal, making Buckley's tale one all readers will mirror in their hearts.

***Rescue Ink: How Ten Guys Saved Countless Dogs and Cats, Twelve Horses, Five Pigs, One Duck, and a Few Turtles* by Rescue Ink with Denise Flaim. Viking, 2009. Hardcover, 244 pages, \$25.95.**

The old adage "You can't judge a book by its cover" takes on new meaning when applied to *Rescue Ink*. However, I am not talking about the actual plot, which resembles any number of rescue tales in which the animals in question are saved by a group of committed animal lovers. In the case of *Rescue Ink*, the truth inherent in the proverb can be found in the rescuers themselves, who are perhaps the most unlikely heroes any animal in need could have.

Any reader harboring a stereotype of individuals involved in animal rescue will find it quickly and neatly demolished by the *Rescue Ink* organization, which comprises bikers from Long Island, New York, who wear their animal-loving hearts on their sleeves as proudly as they sport their tattoos.

In this compelling and heartwarming look at how a small group of men share loyalty to animal welfare and biker culture, the authors chronicle *Rescue Ink's* work on behalf of specific animals in need as well as the group's efforts to raise public awareness of puppy mills and other forms of cruelty. As a reviewer, I read lots of rescue-related books, but this one really made me stand up and cheer.



***Ask the Animals: A Vet's-Eye View of Pets and the People They Love* by Bruce Coston. Thomas Dunne Books, 2009. Hardcover, 336 pages, \$24.99.**

When beloved Yorkshire veterinarian James Herriot died a number of years ago, there was much discussion in the press about how "the Herriot factor" changed veterinary medicine, bringing an openness and awareness of the human/animal connection to vet schools and practices alike. In the years that followed, another aspect of Herriot's legacy has emerged: a new genre of veterinary memoirs such as those of Nicholas Dodman, Nick Trout, and now, with the publication of *Ask the Animals*, Bruce Coston.

Coston's musings on his nearly 25 years of professional practice, which had its beginning as a column in a small regional newspaper, are a welcome addition to the field. How Coston grew from the boy with an early desire to become a vet to the warm and caring practitioner portrayed in these stories makes for good reading and offers us a glimpse into the ever-expanding world of small-animal veterinary care.

Although the initial material focusing on the author's education and training is somewhat slow, Coston comes into his own when detailing the touching, humorous and, at times, sad relationships he has shared with his patients and their people. Herriot might be a hard act to follow, but Coston has proven himself up to the task. 🐾

