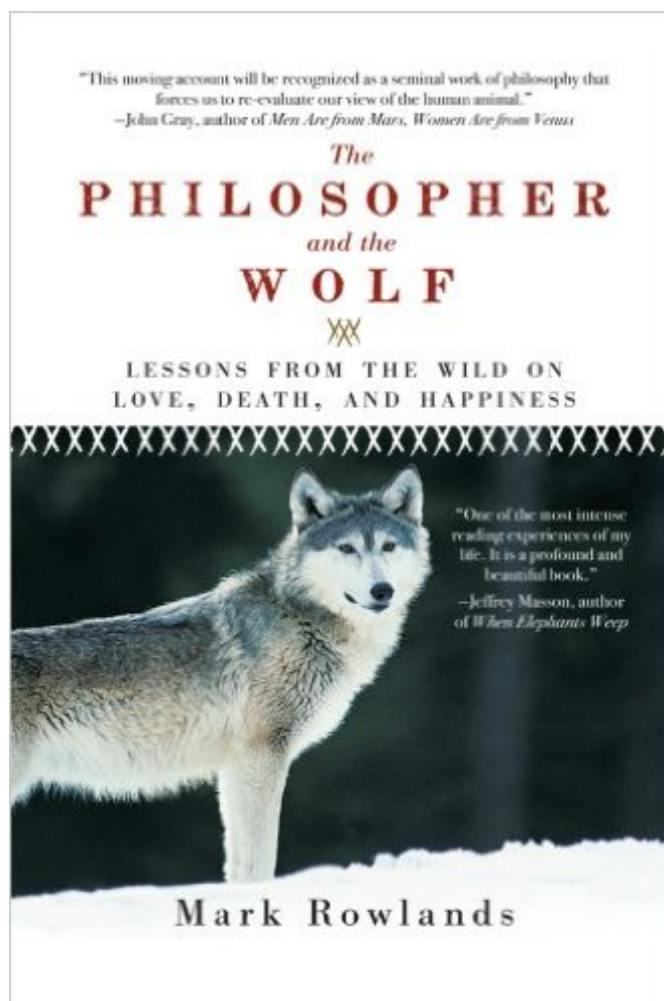


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The Philosopher And The Wolf: Lessons From The Wild On Love, Death, And Happiness



Synopsis

The charming and poignant story of the relationship between a philosophy professor and his pet wolf. Mark Rowlands was a young philosophy professor, rootless and searching for life's greater meaning. Shortly after arriving at the University of Alabama, he noticed a classified ad in the local paper advertising wolf cubs for sale, and decided he had to investigate, if only out of curiosity. It was love at first sight, and the bond that grew between philosopher and wolf reaffirms for us the incredible relationships that exist between man and animal. When Mark welcomed his new companion, Brenin, into his home, but more than just an exotic pet, Brenin exerted an immense influence on Rowlands both as a person, and, strangely enough, as a philosopher, leading him to reevaluate his attitude toward love, happiness, nature, death, and the true meaning of companionship.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I thought I was taking a big risk when I picked up this book. Judging by the cover, I thought it would be a giant hokey disappointment like so many other books I've picked up from the library. It's extremely hard to write about animals (or people) you love without the reader looking at you like you are a pathetic heap of sentimentality. I didn't expect an academic -- and still more, a *philosopher* -- to be able to pull off the near-impossible. Not only was the book not disappointing, it is one of the most influential books I've read. The problem with most philosophy is that its cold abstraction has no hope of reaching our nerve endings, and so no hope of touching us in any real or lasting way.

Rowlands understands this: "With the possible exception of the higher reaches of pure mathematics or theoretical physics, one can scarcely imagine anything more inhuman than philosophy. Its worship of logic in all its cold, crystalline purity; its determination to stride the bleak and icy mountaintops of theory and abstraction: to be a philosopher is to be existentially deracinated. Philosophers should be offered condolences rather than encouragement." Rowlands teaches -- really teaches, not just lectures -- philosophy's most important lessons through Brenin the wolf. What matters is not that Brenin was a wolf -- there is nothing particularly special about the qualities of a wolf that make this book meaningful. What matters is that Rowlands loved Brenin. And that is why I offer one caution: You probably need to have loved an animal for this book to work for you. I don't just mean had a pet that inhabited the same space; I mean had an animal that was less a pet and more a brother. It will be hard to relate to Rowlands's intense emotions unless you've felt this.

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