



Clever As a Fox : Animal Intelligence And What It Can Teach Us About Ourselves

Sonja Yoerg

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A lively, insightful look at the world of animal intelligence.

Recent evidence has dismissed the belief that animals are simply reflex machines, acting without thought or real consciousness. In response, there has been a rush to examine animal intelligence. Yet what, precisely, is intelligence? Is it the ability to learn, the ability to remember, or the ability to survive? What delineates instinct from intelligence? Why are dolphins smarter than eagles and bees smarter than worms? Are cats smarter than dogs?

Clever as a Fox explores the often-misconstrued world of animal intelligence. From B.F. Skinner's behaviorism to evolutionary biology, Dr. Sonja Yoerg examines the ways we have come to view motivation and intelligence in animals. By evaluating our complex relationships to animals-why we eat some animals while pampering others is often predicated on a commensurate belief in intelligence-Dr. Sonja Yoerg offers us a better understanding of our own way of thinking. Entertaining, and scrupulously researched, *Clever as a Fox* will challenge your previously held notions about animals and the measure of intelligence, both theirs and ours.

Clever As a Fox : Animal Intelligence And What It Can Teach Us About Ourselves Details

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Alan says

A wonderful read - it changed the way I thought about animals.

Natalie says

I guess this wasn't really what I expected. It was interesting, but slow to read and not very reader- friendly I thought. Maybe it was meant more for somebody studying animal intelligence, rather than just wanting to learn more about it for fun.

K.E. Lanning says

Sonja Yoerg's, *Clever as a Fox*, delves into one of the most fascinating aspects of animal behavior—intelligence. Armed with her prodigious writing skills and a PhD in Animal Behavior, Yoerg distills a host of scientific studies of animals into a readable and humorous book of animal brainpower. In an excerpt from the book, Yoerg displays her lovely prose: “Variability is the theme song of life. The fate of a leaf, the fate of a tree, the fate of a forest is spun by the hands of so many blind forces that we are still, even with our sciences and tools, mostly clueless as to how it all works . . .” This book is a wonderful addition to your library!

Shannon Hollinger says

I really enjoyed this book. Much like Jane Goodall, Sonja Yoerg writes in a way that both inspires confidence in the author's knowledge and creates a world of imagery for the reader to immerse themselves in. This book is reader friendly in that you don't have to be an animal behaviorist to enjoy, appreciate and understand the subject matter. That said, you will most likely learn something while reading this book. It entails a certain amount of effort. If you're looking for a story to entertain you while you've got one eye on the kids and the other on a pitcher of margaritas, you should probably opt for a fictional beach read and save this book for another day.

This book is written to make you think. It doesn't just discuss animal behaviors and their varying degrees of intelligence. It educates the reader on how intelligence tests are created, the history of methods used by different sects of behaviorists, the inherent flaws of each method - basically this book will challenge your very definition of the concept of intelligence. It made me think of my perceptions of the members of the animal kingdom in an entirely new way. It even made me consider that (gasp!) my Jack Russell might not be quite the genius I thought her to be. (But then she made it quite clear - she is indeed a genius - an evil genius ;)

Joking aside, this book has made a huge impact in the way I think about not just animal intelligence, but also

animal equality. As the author suggests, perhaps the Great Chain of Being is wrong. Perhaps an animal is not more intelligent (or worthy) simply because they are considered to have more human-like qualities than another creature. And when you start to consider the impact (or lack thereof) of intelligence on survival? Wow. I will be enjoying the information I learned from having read this book (and the private mental debates stemming from this new info) for a long time to come!

Petra CigareX says

Clever as a Fox is well-written, illuminating and very much a science-based book but for the ordinary reader - no science background, other than an interest and a little reading, required. If evolution isn't your thing, this book won't be either. I'd give the book six stars if I could.
