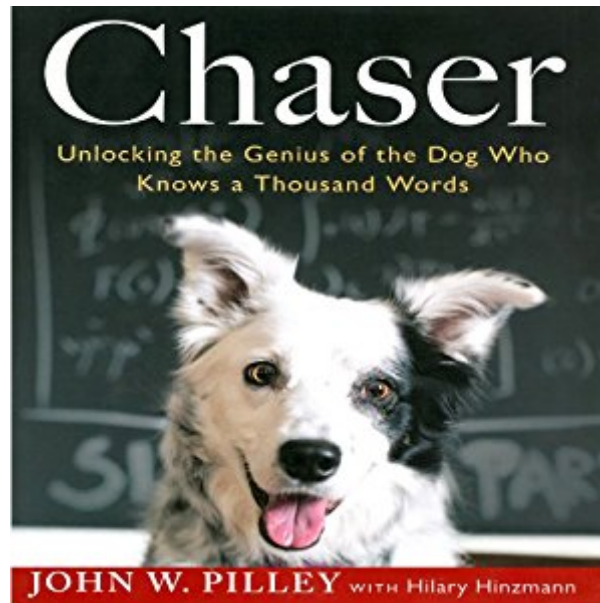


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Chaser: Unlocking The Genius Of The Dog Who Knows A Thousand Words



Synopsis

The amazing story of a very smart Border collie who is redefining animal intelligence. Chaser has a way with words. She knows over a thousand of them-more than any other animal of any species except humans. In addition to common nouns like house, ball, and tree, she has memorized the names of more than one thousand toys and can retrieve any of them on command. Based on that learning, she and her owner and trainer, retired psychologist John Pilley, have moved on to further impressive feats, demonstrating her ability to understand sentences with multiple elements of grammar and to learn new behaviors by imitation. John's ingenuity and tenacity as a researcher are as impressive as Chaser's accomplishments. His groundbreaking approach has opened the door to a new understanding of animal intelligence, one that requires us to reconsider what actually goes on in a dog's mind. Chaser's achievements reveal her use of deductive reasoning and complex problem-solving skills to address novel challenges. Yet astonishingly, Chaser isn't unique. John's training methods can be adopted by any dog lover. Through the poignant story of how he trained Chaser, raised her as a member of the Pilley family, and proved her abilities to the scientific community, he reveals the positive impact of incorporating learning into play and more effectively channeling a dog's natural drives. John's work with Chaser offers a fresh perspective on what's possible in the relationship between a dog and a human. His story points us toward a new way of relating to our canine companions that takes into account our evolving understanding of the way animals and humans learn.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I'd heard about Chaser, the Border Collie who learned over 1000 words, nouns, of course, but also verbs, prepositions and other parts of speech, as well as about her language-learning predecessor, Rico, in Germany. As a Border Collie person (my fifth, my constant companion and emotional support dog. is by my side as I write.) I'm interested in everything about them, and Chaser, the book, is wonderful! Chaser has definitely been noticed by scientists specializing in animal behavior (ethology), and author Pilley is, himself, a retired psychology professor who understands what he must prove to his colleagues.. He devoted many daily hours of training (work AND play) into puppy Chaser's education, and eventually gets help from a colleague to write a book which scientifically proves her accomplishments and their enormous significance.. Chaser, herself, has become a star who has appeared on many popular TV program since the book was published. Aside from her amazing language accomplishments and her learning by inference/deductive reasoning, Chaser is also a lovable and engaging dog. Work is play for Chaser, and she learns sheep herding -- the job she was bred to do both with a partner and independently-- as well as learning her backyard agility course, as well as basic training commands. She is a beloved part of the Pilley family, not just a prodigy, who proves that Border Collies learn language much the same way as human children do. She is a delightful dog, and her story, which this book details, is a delight, too.. Border Collies, for those who don't already know, were bred for sheep herding along the English-Scottish border. They are considered the most intelligent breed of dog, and there was huge protest when the AKC accepted BC's: BC lovers and handlers want them to continue to be bred for their intelligence and herding ability, NOT for a standard of appearance. The AKC is making the effort to comply. But Border Collies are not ideal dogs for anyone who doesn't understand/can't fulfill their needs for human companionship and WORK, i.e. plenty of exercise, both physical and mental. I loved this book. In addition, I've already given copies to several people and plan to "gift" it to others in the future!

This is a wonderful, heartwarming, and thoroughly enjoyable book. It nicely blends the life of Dr. Pilley with the science behind Chaser's amazing behavior and learning. Dog training is again at a crossroads, having crossed from outdated dominance theory to positive training via operant and classical conditioning over the past 20 years. Now, new science about our closest friend in the animal world has shown that we can go beyond simple click-treat to something much more complex, with Dr. Pilley's work with Chaser providing a roadmap. But it's also not just about the science - its about the personal journey of Dr. Pilley from his career change at the age of 35 from a minister to an

animal behavior psychologist, to his beloved dog Yasha, and how "Puppy" returned him from the depths of sadness to his love of people, science, and knowledge. If you want to know the science of Chaser, it's there as well. I would urge any dog 'teacher' (partner?) to read this book: We are at the tip of an exciting change in how we relate to, teach, and learn from what is increasingly becoming the most unique creature in the world, *Canis lupus familiaris*.

I'm not currently a dog owner, nor do I expect to be ever again. I do have a cat, cage birds, and horses, all of which require some training in order to be good companions and just for the fun of the interactions. Though there's a bit more daily history in the book than I would have liked, it's still a fascinating record of a top-notch animal behaviorist's approach to training. What he does with Chaser is truly exciting, and I found myself trying similar techniques on my animals as I read. I couldn't resist. If you're the kind of person who would read this book, you're probably going to find yourself equally fascinated and dying to try out the methods he describes in such vivid detail.

Pilley tells us exactly how he raised Chaser and began teaching her language. I loved learning about her accomplishments, his communication methods, the loving care she received as part of the family (definitely not a "lab subject") and entertaining incidents of day-to-day life. He is an informal and engaging writer that nevertheless explains the science behind his methods clearly. Lots of great ideas to use with my own dog. I also was inspired by the scientific contributions the author was able to make at an age when many retire to the Lazyboy in front of the TV. Inspiring on all levels.

I got this to help me understand my border collies brain!! It is not only a good story but it has helped me train him and our relationship overall!! He is super smart and after reading your book I feel better equipped to really tap into his full learning potential! And I considered myself a very good dog trainer before!

LOVED THIS BOOK! It is an easy read. Extremely worth reading for anyone interested in communicating w/ their dog. Dr. Pilley is the BEST of The BEST...We are so lucky to have his BRILLIANT MIND & KIND HEART dedicated to teaching & communicating w/ dogs! CHASER the border Collie is pure GENIUS! So happy to read how Dr. Pilley trained her! I have successfully used many of his methods...my bond w/ my dog couldn't be stronger! After reading book...check out Utube to watch these two remarkable souls work together...PURE GENIUS!

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