

If You Could Ask Your Dog One Question

Kim Messina

Nataliia Pavliuk, Illustrator

My Human "N" Me (Dec 24, 2020)

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If You Could Ask Your Dog One Question is an adorable picture book about the reciprocal love between a dog and her human.

Kim Messina and Nataliia Pavliuk's sweet picture book *If You Could Ask Your Dog One Question* focuses on the immovable bonds between humans and their pets.

Rhyming couplets follow a girl as she wonders what question she would ask her German Shepherd, if only her dog could answer her. She weighs the value of each question, from why the dog chews on sticks when they go outside, to what causes her zooming, to whether the dog has a sense of time, until she lands on the right one: "Do you love me as much as I love you?"

The girl's innocent inquiries build upon each other until a full image of her relationship with her dog forms. Their wholesome dynamic is one of friendship and mutual protection and care, as when the girl wonders why her dog plays with bees when she's aware that they sting, and whether the dog knows how safe the girl feels when she sleeps with her at night. With attention to detail, the book evokes the deep love people feel for their pets. It so answers the girl's ultimate question with an unspoken yet evident affirmative.

In the book's illustrations, the dog's facial expressions convey depth of feeling; her personality is endearing. Aside from a sly cat that looks more like a fox, the illustrations are realistic and cute; they capture the often humorous behaviors and expressions of well-taken-care-of dogs. Their muted color palette, combined with the layout of the questions on the page (which makes use of white space), results in a dreamy, sentimental atmosphere.

With a fun, lyrical style and adorable illustrations, *If You Could Ask Your Dog One Question* is a picture book about the reciprocal love between a dog and her human.

AIMEE JODOIN (February 15, 2021)

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