ForeWord Reviews
Clarion Review

AUTOBIOGRAPHY & MEMOIR

Purring Angels
Marguerite Vlielander
Trafford
978-1-4251-2202-7
Three Stars (out of Five)

Purring Angels is a tender and all-embracing book about cats—those mysterious, lovable, and furry felines who make life joyful and inspiring. The first part of the text is comprised of delightful stories profiling author Marguerite Vlielander's menagerie of adopted cats, including an inspiring account of how her "little angels" helped cure her thirty-year battle with anorexia. The second half is essentially a compilation of cat lore, facts, and behaviors, as well as information about feline diseases and their treatment.

Throughout this touching and celebratory book, the author includes inspiring poems, quotes from famous people, and testimonials from people responding to her televised broadcasts. Vlielander delves into what makes cats tick and explores their beguiling power over people. Her accounts of experiences with feline friends should succeed in educating, entertaining, and endearing animal lovers.

The style of expression employed in this collection, however, is likely to limit its appeal to a niche audience, namely the most serious of cat lovers. The author has established a lifetime relationship with cats, fulfilling the role of surrogate "pussy mother" to her "pussy children." Vlielander's intense relationship with her animal friends is clearly evidenced in her contrived letters from her cats and the stories narrated by them. Words such as "cute," "cuddly," and "fluffy" are ubiquitous and could drive away many readers. In addition, the author's personal interpretations about the mysteries of cat behavior are, for the most part, projections and anthropomorphizing. Can anyone really know whether or not a cat lives in fear of the unknown, or if cats live one day at a time?

That said, there is little doubt that the author's love and devotion to her cats makes her a credible narrator. Vlielander's account of the mysterious healing power of cats that helped her to conquer anorexia is touching. She credits their unconditional love, warm companionship, and sensitivity with aiding her in averting self-destruction. Perhaps, as she suggests, cats really do have souls.

Unfortunately, the book suffers from a lack of rigorous editing and proofreading; the citations and references are also confusing. Regardless of some of the flaws, readers will find the stories and facts about these charming and enigmatic felines a welcome addition to their library of animal books.

Gary Klinga