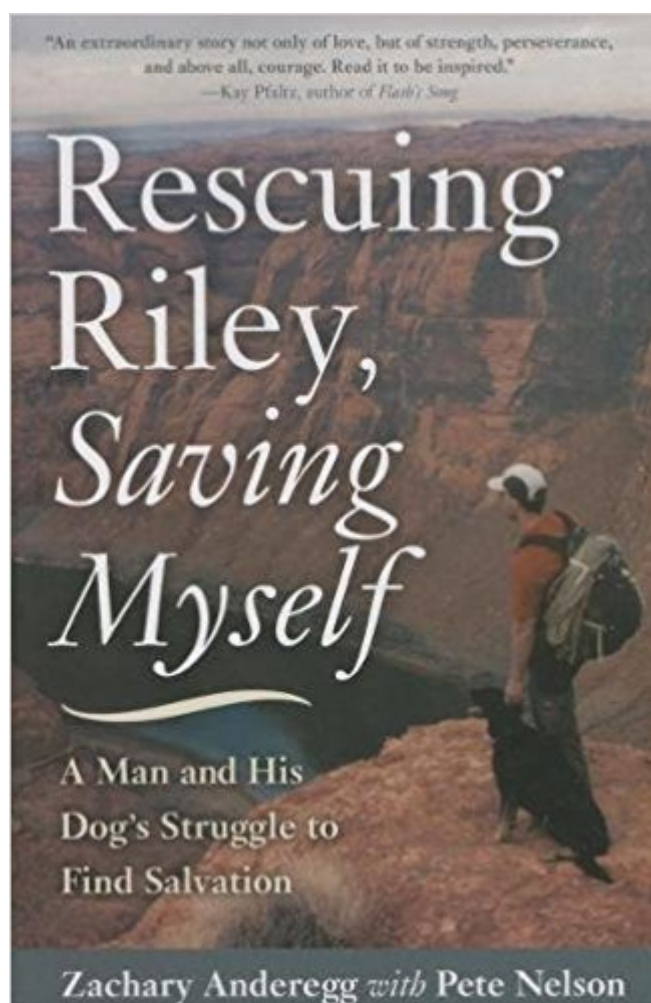


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Rescuing Riley, Saving Myself: A Man And His Dog's Struggle To Find Salvation



Synopsis

“This heartwarming book is for those who appreciate tales of adventure, overcoming adversity, and the strong relationships formed between dogs and their people.”
Library Journal, starred review

While hiking on a solo vacation in a remote, uninhabitable region of Arizona, Zachary Anderegg happened upon Riley, an emaciated puppy clinging to life at the bottom of a 350-foot canyon. In a daring act of humanity that trumped the deliberate savagery behind Riley’s presence in such a place, Zak single-handedly orchestrated a delicate rescue. Zak and Riley’s destinies were intertwined long before they improbably found each other. For much of Zak’s childhood, he was at the bottom of a veritable canyon himself; a canyon in which imprisoning depth and darkness were created by bullies who just wouldn’t quit and parents who weren’t capable of love. When Zak found Riley, the puppy’s condition bespoke his abusers’ handiwork; three shotgun pellets embedded beneath his skin and teeth turned permanently black from malnutrition. The meeting was one of a man and a dog singularly suited to save each other. As a former US Marine sergeant, Zak was one of only a few people with the mettle and physical wherewithal to get Riley out. And in rescuing him, Zak was also attempting to save himself, conquering the currents of cruelty that swelled beneath his early life and had always threatened to drown him.

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Customer Reviews

“This heartwarming book is for those who appreciate tales of adventure, overcoming

adversity, and the strong relationships formed between dogs and their people. —

Library Journal, starred review; Rescuing Riley, Saving Myself is for anyone who has ever thought of giving up. It is an extraordinary story not only of love, but of strength, perseverance, and above all, courage. Read it to be inspired. Read it if you love to see the underdog (human or dog) triumph! — Kay Pfaltz, author of Flash Song: How One Small Dog Turned Into One Big Miracle "Rescuing Riley, Saving Myself is a sobering reminder of the cruelty that is prevalent toward not only animals, but among people, as well. Anderegg served as an angel to Riley and, in turn, Riley did what dogs do best. . . . Help us to heal." Big Dogs Huge Paws, Inc.

Zachary Anderegg joined the Marines after graduating high school and served from 1994–1998, achieving the rank of Sergeant E5. He has appeared with Riley and his wife, Michelle, on Inside Edition, The Today Show, and The Ellen DeGeneres Show. He resides in Renton, Washington. Pete Nelson received his MFA from the University of Iowa Writers Workshop and is the author of the novel I Thought You Were Dead and numerous nonfiction titles, including Left for Dead. He resides in Westchester, New York.

I've been following this story since Zak rescued Riley in 2010. The book is about that rescue, but it's more than that. Zak was physically and emotionally bullied through most of his childhood and into teenage years, and emotionally bullied by his parents, and Zak tells that story too. You should read this book for many reasons. If you're an animal lover, it's a no-brainer. The lengths Zak went to get this dog out of the canyon are pretty amazing. Those of us who are animal lovers understand why he did it. We know every time we do something to save just one dog, there are millions we can't help and it just seems endless. Read this book if you were a victim of bullying or know someone who is. Zak provides insight into the endless hell he endured, and he should be commended for telling such a personal story. Read this book if you want to learn something about confronting what seems like an impossible situation and solving it. Once I began reading I couldn't put it down. I can't recommend it highly enough.

...stopping only to sleep and staying in my pjs until noon the next day to finish. This is an intense and complicated story. I was continually reminded of the Florida 12-year old who recently was bullied to death by her peers as the author struggled to understand and communicate his own experiences to the reader. He did so expertly and it is easy to picture him as the strong and brave

and handsome Marine he became. I envy the special relationship he has with his wife and, of course, with the fulfillment of every dog lover's fantasies - sweet Riley. Thank you for sharing your lives with us. Already time for a sequel...I want to hear about The Ellen Show.

"Rescuing Riley, Saving Myself" arrived yesterday and picked it up to briefly skim through it. I started reading the introduction and the credits Zachary Adneregg noted. This intrigued me, so I read on! It wasn't the story I had expected, having followed Riley's Rescue on Facebook. It turned out to be so much more than I expected. It's a compelling and emotional read and should be a required reading for all junior and high school students, if not elementary students as well.

I'm a bit bias with this review because I worked with Zak when he and Michelle owned Dream Catcher Yachts. We all knew something was different about Zak. Not in a cruel way but just different. My boss and I had several conversations about Zak, and the way he was, but always concluded that he was just "different". Right from the start of reading this book it became quite evident why Zak was "different". It doesn't surprise me that Zak Rescued Riley. I have to admit that a few times I had tears in my eyes. I came from a very compassionate and loving family. Quite different from Zaks. I was never bullied. I never bullied anyone. I was the one who stood by and watched the bullying and never did anything about it. To this day, 50 years later, I remember watching the bullying happen and just standing by. The guilt. I have gained a much better understanding of bullying and the affect this has on all whom are the recipients of this brutal tactic. Thanks for sharing your story Zak and I will make sure my Grandaughters and all I can reach read this book. Very insightful. Billy Norton

First of all I want to thank the author for saving that puppy. People can be so cruel. As far as the story, I felt there was some detail that did not really matter. I usually would skip through parts that were of no interest to me. I do though, totally understand how debilitating bullying is and how it can affect the rest of your life. It goes hand in hand with being abused whether sexually or physically. So many of us need to fight through the wrongs that have been thrust upon us. I guess it is true, situations in life either make you stronger or break you. There was a part in the book where the author was giving a synopsis of how his personality was, wow was I shocked to realize I was exactly like that, it was like the author was describing me to a T. For the longest time I felt the reasons I kept people at a distance, not readily trusting anyone, was due to the abuse and ridicule (which was from family) I received growing up, reading that made me realize I had been right. I have

a shell that surrounds me, and it protects me. Overall the book was very enlightening. I recommend it especially to people who bully others plus the survivors of any kind of abuse!!

I highly recommend this book. Especially with the professional narration. I found out about Riley via Facebook and I am so happy I did. This book really touched me and goes to show that there are still people out there that are compassionate about animals and willing to risk their lives to help save them. I help rescuing dogs in sever high kill shelters in Southern California. Consequently, I see a lot of dogs, and other animals, that have been abused and/or abandoned and it's so heartbreaking when they can't be saved. Those that make it out of the shelter are remarkably resilient and it so wonderful to see how quickly they bounce back to being a happy dog. Just like Riley.

Hard to read about the abuse the author endured as a child and marveled at the man he became. His courage in rescuing Riley in the most dire of circumstances grabs your heart and won't let go. There is great depth of emotions both good and bad that defies my limited abilities to describe. Just know that bullying is a national epidemic that must be dealt with as the consequences can be lifelong and devastating. Riley and his savior were meant to be together!

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