



# The Dog by the Cradle, the Serpent Beneath: Some Paradoxes of Human-Animal Relationships

*Erika Ritter*

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It is no secret that humans have a special relationship with the animal world. In a recent survey about attitudes, 70 percent of respondents identified the family pet as a “member of the family.” Dogs and cats are treated like royalty' horses are revered and stabled in quarters that make most condo owners green with envy. On the other hand, multiple millions of cows and chickens are unceremoniously slaughtered each year to feed our unappeasable lust for Whoppers and McNuggets. What gives? Why do pampered dogs eat steak? Why are cats coddled and chickens ground into paste? As Erika Ritter explores in this fresh, fascinating, and eye-opening book, the heart of this relationship is a paradox — a relationship that is almost schizophrenic in its absurdity. Through interviews conducted around the world, Ritter makes her way through this strange maze of human contractions about our animal brethren to produce a work that reveals as much about "us" as it does about "them."

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