

Stranger Than Fiction

ADORABLE ANIMAL FRIENDSHIPS



By Virginia Loh-Hagan

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By Virginia Loh-Hagan

Disclaimer: This series focuses on the strangest of the strange. Have fun reading about strange people and things! But please do not try any of the antics in this book. Be safe and smart!





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Table of Contents

Introduction	4
Chapter one	
Dog and Lion	6
Chapter two	
Cat and Crow	8
Chapter three	
Tiger Cubs and Chimpanzee	10
Chapter four	
Elephant and Sheep	14
Chapter five	
Hippo and Tortoise	16
Chapter six	
Giraffe and Ostrich	18
Chapter seven	
Bear, Lion, and Tiger	20
Chapter eight	
Kangaroo and Wombat	24
Chapter nine	
Puppies and Chicken	28
Chapter ten	
Snake and Hamster	30
Consider This!	32
Glossary	32
Index	32

Introduction

Animals are part of a food chain. **Predators** are hunters. They eat **prey**. Prey are hunted as food. Predators and prey shouldn't be friends. But some are. Some animals form unlikely friendships.

Interspecies friendships are bonds formed between animals of different **species**. Species are animal types. It's cute to see animals play. It's even cuter to see animals play with different animals.

But there are strange friendships. And then there are really strange friendships. Some animal friendships are really strange. They're animal odd couples. They're so strange that they're hard to believe. They sound like fiction. But these stories are all true!



Imagine being friends with someone who wants to eat you.

chapter one

Dog and Lion

Milo is a dachshund. He is 11 pounds (5 kilograms). Bonedigger is a lion. He is 500 pounds (227 kg). Milo and Bonedigger do everything together. They live in a wildlife park in Oklahoma.

Bonedigger has a bone sickness. He is disabled. Disabled means not being able to move well. Milo took care of him when he was a lion **cub**. Cubs are baby animals. Milo comforted him. He protected him.

Milo and Bonedigger hug. They eat raw meat together. They play together. Milo





Dachshunds are called weiner dogs.

tries to copy Bonedigger when he growls. Lions growl to talk to other lions.

chapter two

Cat and Crow

Cassie is a cat. She lives in Massachusetts. She showed up at Wally and Ann Collito's house in 1999. She was a **stray** kitten. Stray means not having a home or family. Cassie let the Collitos feed her. But she also let a crow feed her.

Moses was a crow. He fed Cassie worms and bugs. He protected her from other animals. He **cawed** when Cassie went toward the street. Caws are the sounds crows make.

He pecked on the door for Cassie every morning.

Moses and Cassie hung out together all the time. This lasted for 5 years.





American crows live only 7 to 8 years in the wild.

Then Moses stopped showing up. The Collitos think he died. Cats usually live longer than crows.

chapter ten

Snake and Hamster

There's a zoo in Tokyo, Japan. A snake named Aochan lives there. He's a rat snake. He's 3 feet (91.4 centimeters) long. He stopped eating frozen rats. Zookeepers put a hamster in his cage. They thought Aochan would eat it. But he didn't. He left it alone.

The hamster was 3.5 inches (9 cm) long. He wasn't afraid of Aochan. He often slept on top of Aochan. Zookeepers named the hamster Gohan. Gohan means meal in Japanese. He was believed to be lucky.

Zookeepers thought something was wrong with Aochan. But Aochan was





In many countries, it's illegal to feed live animals to other animals.

fine. He just wanted a friend. The two were friends for several months. Then zookeepers moved Gohan to his own cage. Just to be safe.

Consider This!

Take a Position! Some zookeepers think animals should share the same space. Do you think predators and prey should live together in zoos? Or do you think animals should have their own areas? Argue your point with reasons and evidence.

Say What? Do some research. Find another strange animal friendship. Describe the friendship. Explain why the friendship is strange.

Think About It! “Opposites attract.” This is a popular saying. Think about your own friendships. Are you friends with someone who is not like you? Describe your friendship. Explain why you two are friends.

Learn More!

- Holland, Jennifer S. *The Dog and the Piglet: And Four Other Stories of Animal Friendships*. New York: Workman Publishing Company, 2012.
- Quattlebaum, Mary. *Together Forever! True Stories of Amazing Animal Friendships*. Washington, DC: National Geographic, 2016.
- Spelman, Lucy. *National Geographic Animal Encyclopedia: 2,500 Animals with Photos, Maps, and More!* Washington, DC: National Geographic, 2012.

Glossary

abandoned (uh-BAN-duhd) left behind

cawed (KAWD) made a sound that a crow makes

chicks (CHIKS) baby chickens

cub (KUHB) baby animal

groomed (GROOMD) cleaned

herd (HURD) an animal group

hurricane (HUR-ih-kane) bad storm

interspecies (IN-tur-spee-sheez) animals from different species

orphans (OR-fuhnz) children without parents

predators (PRED-uh-turz) hunters

prey (PRAY) animals hunted as food

roosted (ROOST-id) sat or rested

species (SPEE-sheez) groups or types of animals

stray (STRAY) not having a home or family

stressed (STRESD) overly worried and tense

threat (THRET) danger

wallowed (WAH-lohd) made a hole in mud and hung out in it to cool off

Index

Antle, “Doc,” 23

bear, 20–22

cat, 8–9

chicken, 28–29

chimpanzee, 10–12

crow, 8–9

dog, 6–7

elephant, 14–15

giraffe, 18–19

hamster, 30–31

hippo, 16–17

kangaroo, 24–26

lion, 6–7, 20–22

ostrich, 18–19

puppies, 28–29

relationships, 13

sheep, 14–15

snake, 30–31

tiger, 20–22

tiger cubs, 10–12

TIGERS (The Institute for Greatly Endangered and Rare Species), 23

tortoise, 16–17

wombat, 24–26

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