

Luke Von Ah  
Dubuque IA Hoover Elementary

Dear Mr. Schoenherr,

I wasn't really at all interested in animals. I had two dogs and a cat at home, but I didn't have any favorites. I mean, whatever animal I saw was my favorite. I used to have a tree snake, but that was a long time ago and I don't remember much about it or how it died. I kind of liked armadillos, but they won't live in Iowa's cold climate. I never even saw one in a pet store. If I said I liked an animal, sometimes people made fun of me. That didn't make me want to tell anyone if I had a favorite or not. A lot changed after I read *Rascal*.

*Rascal* made me realize that I could have a favorite animal, but that it might not be a pet. The story was about a boy who had no pets and then found a raccoon. He kept his new friend a secret. He had a place in the woods where he could keep the raccoon. The boy visited the animal every day. At the end of the story, the boy releases the animal back into the woods. He found that keeping a pet was a lot of responsibility and more than he could handle.

Like Billy, I like raccoons. After reading this book, I decided that I could almost be like him. I will let the raccoons be where they belong. I can enjoy seeing them in the woods without hurting them by taking them away from their home. Having the animal nearby might distract me. Now I can learn about raccoons and I know I'll be happy I learned something. I approve of this book because it really inspired me to reach goals. I can have a "pet," even a wild one, if I let it free. My pet is not only in the forest; it is in my heart.

Now I want you to try to find your favorite animal like I did!

Sincerely,  
Luke Vonah

Copyright © The Center for the Book in the Library of Congress. Used by permission.