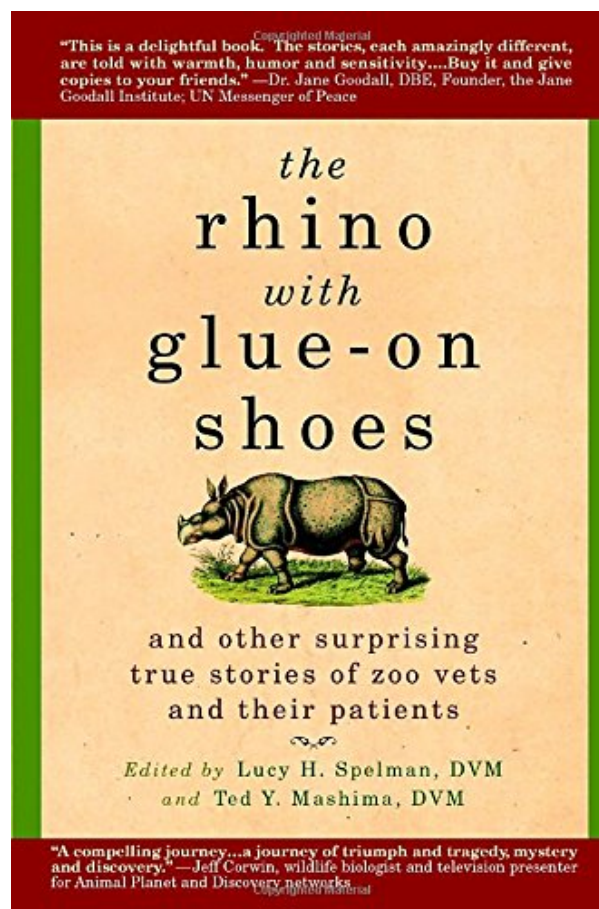


THE RHINO WITH GLUE-ON SHOES: AND OTHER SURPRISING TRUE STORIES OF ZOO VETS AND THEIR PATIENTS FROM LUCY H SPELMAN



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and other surprising
true stories of zoo vets
and their patients

Edited by Lucy H. Spelman, DVM
and Ted Y. Mashima, DVM

"A compelling journey...a journey of triumph and tragedy, mystery and discovery." —Jeff Corwin, wildlife biologist and television presenter for Animal Planet and Discovery networks
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A moray eel diagnosed with anorexia...A herd of bison whose only hope is a crusading female doctor from Paris...A vet desperately trying to save an orphaned whale by unraveling the mystery of her mother's death...This fascinating book offers a rare glimpse into the world of wild animals and the doctors who care for them. Here pioneering zoological veterinarians—men and women on the cutting edge of a new medical frontier—tell real-life tales of daring procedures for patients weighing tons or ounces, treating symptoms ranging from broken bones to a broken heart, and life-and-death dramas that will forever change the way you think about wild animals and the bonds we share with them. At once heart-quickenning and clinically fascinating, the stories in this remarkable collection represent some of the most moving and unusual cases ever taken on by zoological vets. A chronicle of discovery, compassion, and cutting-edge medicine, *The Rhino with Glue-on Shoes* is must reading for animal lovers, science buffs, and anyone who loves a well-told tale.

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- Think House patients cannot speak

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Heartwarming, Educational and Inspiring

By virginialawyer mom

This book made me laugh ... this book made me cry ... every single story in this book is touching and wonderful. My 7-year old son and I have been reading this together. He LOVES it - we read 2 stories per night. He is an advanced reader in the 2nd grade but the language was too technical for him so he asked me to read it to him. He understands it well when I do. Every now and then he asks me to explain a term (like

endoscopy) but once I do, we get right back to the story. The pictures in the book are fantastic - I am so glad that the book includes photos. After we finish a story, we look at the animal's picture - it helps us to connect with the stories even more. We liked this book so much that we bought it as birthday presents for a 8-year old girl who wants to be a vet when she grows up, and also for a 41-year old woman. It's a little advanced for my 5-year old daughter, but she has listened to some of the stories and enjoyed them. Mostly she likes the photos. This is such a wonderful, heartwarming and educational book (medicine, geography, empathy, etc.)

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful.

The "Behind the Scenes" Heroes

By Eagle Vision

This book is a wonderful collection of short stories of Veterinarians and their patients. The challenges and rewards of being a doctor to the various animals in Zoos and Aquariums. Language is more clinically oriented and would have been better for the layperson with a glossary. However, each story is quite touching. At the conclusion of each story, a mini biography of each veterinarian follows. There are full color photos of the patients featured in the stories.

This is a great book for any aspiring veterinarian, biologist or just plain animal lover.

I highly recommend it.

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful.

You Think You Know Animals

By sazizmom

When I first read this book, I was a keeper at an animal sanctuary/zoo. I loved the stories so much I purchased copies for my zoo friends. The stories remind us that animals are not "just animals". They think and feel as we do or should think and feel. Ms Spelman's writing is entertaining and informative. I hope there are more of her stories coming.

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Review

"Spelman and Mashima's fascinating exploration of the mysterious and often exciting world of veterinary medicine within the confines of the zoological community is a rare opportunity for the reader to go behind the scenes where the stories of drama, discovery, and compassion have been waiting to be revealed. This book is a compelling journey of the often herculean efforts on behalf of dedicated zoo veterinarians and their charismatic patients..... it is a journey of triumph and tragedy, mystery and discovery, which will keep the reader glued to the pages like the prosthetic shoes glued to a rhino hoof." —Jeff Corwin, wildlife biologist and television presenter for Animal Planet and Discovery networks

"This is a delightful book. The stories, each amazingly different, are told with warmth, humor and sensitivity. They are sometimes sad, always captivating. It is a book you can dip into on a journey or read before sleep at night. Buy it and give copies to your friends."—Dr. Jane Goodall, DBE, Founder, the Jane Goodall Institute, UN Messenger of Peace

"Think House but with patients who cannot speak.... Mini life-and-death dramas told by vets who love their patients."—USA Today

"Lucy Spelman and Ted Mashima have put together a stunning array of stories from twenty-eight of the best wild animal veterinarians in all parts of the world. Whether it is the tale of bringing two whale sharks from Taiwan to the Atlanta Aquarium or the astonishing account of fitting shoes on a foot-sore Asian Rhinoceros, the reader is left with the undeniable conclusion that these vets are contributing indispensable knowledge to a world-wide effort to protect wild creatures threatened by human activity. My hat is off to these unsung heroes of the natural world."—Roger Sant, Chair of the Board of Regents, Smithsonian Institution

"This book went straight to my heart for emphasizing something that is often missed by the zoo-going public: the emotional commitment between those who care for zoo animals and their exotic charges. I have worked with the Los Angeles Zoo for almost forty years and, truly, these relationships are beautiful to behold."—Betty White, actress/author

"Expect to laugh, cry and read in astonishment about the lengths these vets must go to save their uncommon patients. From the hilarious and mad capped to the heartwarming and tragic, this wonderful collection of stories is sure to inspire a whole new generation of wildlife veterinarians. Dr. Spelman and her colleagues show amazing dedication to their work, but they're also cutting-edge scientists who must pioneer new techniques for their patients. They have enormous affection for all manner of incredible creatures and I admire these courageous professionals who routinely put themselves in danger to save the animals in their care." —W. Clark Bunting, President and General Manager, Discovery Emerging Networks

"In settings ranging from zoos to wildlife sanctuaries and from aquariums to the open ocean, and patients that run the gamut from goldfish to Gomek, the world's largest crocodile, these stories reveal the empathy, creativity, and daring of their veterinarian authors."—Booklist

"Entertaining.... Readers will be dazzled by stories of recapturing a fugitive herd of wild bison from the outskirts of Paris and medical marvels developed to treat especially small or sensitive patients."—Publishers Weekly

About the Author

Lucy H. Spelman, DVM, is the regional veterinary manager for the Mountain Gorilla Veterinary Project in Rwanda that Dian Fossey created. She is the former director of the Smithsonian National Zoo in Washington, D.C., and has been featured on Animal Planet and the Discovery Channel.

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Tough Guy Hondo by Barb Wolfe, DVM, PhD

Chimps are a disgusting, violent society," advised my colleague as I contemplated the group of thirteen in front of me. This was early in my career and as the new veterinarian at the North Carolina Zoo in 1997, I didn't know much about chimpanzee behavior. I stood watching the peaceable group in silent disagreement. A two-year-old wobbled by with a towel on her head. Two juveniles were donning socks for fun, while others poked at bits of food with sticks or bulldozed piles of straw around in circles with their lanky arms. I was marveling at my good fortune. I had a great job—and my first task of the day was to meet the chimp keepers and learn about these amusing animals in their care.

Punctuating that thought, a low howl began in the room, growing rapidly into a crescendo of hoots and screams. The keeper beside me said softly, "Just hold still." I searched the group for the source of the noise. Hondo, the dominant male, was looking directly at me, bobbing up and down menacingly, while the rest of the group darted frantically about whooping the equivalent of a chimp-language emergency signal. Suddenly, Hondo bounded from the back of the enclosure, launched himself onto the mesh between us, and spat what felt like an ocean of water in my face. I didn't hold still. I reeled involuntarily backward, stumbled on a pile of hoses, and ended up propped against a wall—soaked, horrified, embarrassed, and not entirely sure that I couldn't catch Ebola virus from captive chimp spit.

It had never occurred to me that zoo animals would resent their vets. We are hardwired to love animals. We spend our whole lives plotting this career, scooping up clinic poop as kids, getting good grades even in the classes we hate, and volunteering our way through life long beyond the time when our childhood friends are having kids and buying houses. All to get to this glorious station: Zoo Vet. Then we find out that most animals can smell a vet coming before the truck rattles into the driveway, and will prepare their most

unwelcoming demeanor. If they have limbs capable of hurling something, they will find something to hurl. If they can emit a nasty smell, they will be at their smelliest when you get there. And those with teeth and loud voices? Well, despite the thickest steel bars between you, being four feet from a lion that has just received a dart and is standing full height and roaring at you can truly necessitate a wardrobe change.

Hondo was no exception, and he greeted me the same way every time I paid the chimps a visit during those first few years. The way to cure him, the keepers said, was to ignore the assault. Just the way we tell our kids to deal with bullies. So year after year, every time a chimp had a runny nose or a cut on its finger, I would approach the enclosure calmly and try to examine the patient with composure while the keeper rewarded it with fruit juice or yogurt through the mesh. Out of the corner of my eye, I would see Hondo filling his mouth at the water spigot. Then, inevitably, the warning hoots of the troop would begin, the patient would dart fearfully away, and Hondo would appear, like a flying King Kong, to give me a dousing. I'd quietly stand up, dripping spit from my eyelashes, issue suggestions for treatment of the patient, and retreat without even the solace of a threatening glare at him.

Reportedly, a previous vet used to wear bright yellow rain gear to protect himself when entering the chimp building. Hondo was delighted to see this costume change on his behalf, and ramped up the ferocity of his attack. He wasn't like Joey, the sneaky sea lion who would bite you when you weren't paying attention. You could stare Joey into submission, the way a border collie does with sheep. Making eye contact with Hondo only accelerated the strike. There was nothing I could do, and I began to regard him as the enemy.

The vets weren't his only target, though. Hondo also had a habit of throwing rocks at visitors from his grassy knoll in the center of the chimp enclosure. The zoo had to build an entirely new exhibit to protect the public from Hondo's expressions of hospitality.

The new habitat that emerged amounted to an expansive chimpanzee resort, furnished with a thirty-foot-high climbing tree, hammocks, plenty of natural vegetation, logs for climbing, and even a fake African termite mound. Zoo visitors enjoyed a clear, close view of the animals, protected by fifteen-foot walls of thick rock-proof, spit-proof glass. You could walk right up to the chimps, who stood on the same level, crouch in front of them, look them in the eye, and even "touch" them by pressing your hand against the glass where they offered theirs. From the way the chimps flocked to the glass to view people up close, they were equally impressed. And on opening day, with a large group of VIPs attending the ribbon-cutting ceremony, Hondo celebrated by lobbing a square-foot slab of rock up and over the new glass wall at the crowd.

But as time went on, the new exhibit seemed to temper Hondo's animosity. On one visit, I bent down to indulge Jonathan, a homely youngster with car-door ears, who was pressing his face against the glass as if to kiss me. I saw Hondo tanking up at the spigot in the background, and started to steel myself for the deluge before I realized I was safe. Instead of submissively averting my gaze, I looked him in the eye. Hondo ambled up and sat in front of me, and we regarded each other coolly. He'd swallowed his mouthful of water—maybe experience had taught him that the glass, if not the vet, spits back. He just sat and watched me intently for a minute, then began alternately touching his bottom lip and then his chest, as if to say "Me" or "Feed me." I mimicked him, and he repeated the sequence back to me. I asked the keepers what this behavior meant, but no one knew. He just did that sometimes.

From time to time thereafter, when I went to the chimp building, I'd wander out to the exhibit first. Hondo often greeted me at the glass, sitting quietly in front of me and sometimes playing our version of charades. The visitors would all gather around excitedly and ask questions about what he was saying to me. I figured anything he really had to say to me probably couldn't be repeated, but smiled inwardly at the idea that they might harbor a belief that zoo vets were real-life Dr. Dolittles and could simply "ask" the animals what was

wrong with them. The truth is sometimes we wish we had a crystal ball.

One day, the keepers noted that Hondo had taken on a new habit: head-standing. I went to the exhibit and he came over to the glass for a visit. Rather than sit with me, though, he stood up and pressed the top of his head onto the grass as if looking backward between his legs. He kept this up for several minutes, stopping only to look up and see if anyone was still watching him. There are two primary causes of head-pressing in animals: head pain and liver disease. Knowing that Hondo had a cataract in one eye, we wondered if he might be developing glaucoma, a painful buildup of pressure within the eyeball.

Our consulting veterinary ophthalmologist kindly offered to donate his time for this interesting case, and we anesthetized Hondo for a complete examination. The general exam checked out well, but the ophthalmologic exam confirmed our suspicion: the long-standing cataract had caused severe, untreatable glaucoma, and the eye needed to be removed. After the diagnostic procedure, the ophthalmologist offered two options. We could remove the inner workings of the eye, leaving the outer shell in place and filling the space with a silicone rubber-ball prosthesis, or we could give him a false eye prosthesis used in human medicine—the kind that can be taken out and popped back in at will.

I looked up at this quiet, knowledgeable eye doctor and wondered why a veterinary ophthalmologist would ever offer the latter option. Ophthalmologists routinely perform amazing procedures that restore function to this complicated organ, but there are some tools in their tool belt that simply aren't practical in the animal world. They know so much about the eye, in fact, that they can identify a species by looking at the retina, inside the eye. We had to learn this skill in vet school ophthalmology class, as if at some point in our veterinary career we might come across an eyeball—rolling around on the ground, for instance—that needed to be treated and wasn't currently attached to the species to which it belonged. I momentarily contemplated the hours spent rummaging through the bushes to find the fake eyeball every time Hondo yanked it out to throw it at someone, and opted for the stay-in-the-socket prosthesis.

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