

The Dog Days of Summer: July 3rd to August 11, 2023. These are the days when the hottest days of summer show their faces and we are all drenched in sweat, begging for a cool corner or an ice cold swimming pool. The ancient Romans called them "dies caniculares" or "days of the dog star." Depending on where you live, I am sure you prefer to call them something else. In South Georgia, I called them the Devil's armpit, because this was the time when the humidity reached its peak. If you mix that stickiness with 100 degree weather while running errands, doing yard work, or just being alive you wouldn't be able to come up with a better term.

Here in central New York, we are lucky enough to not have the gross humidity for the better part of the year. As a kid in Georgia, I remember being outside in early June doing yard work or playing baseball with the neighborhood kids, complaining about the heat, not knowing that it was only the beginning. Real summer in the south doesn't start until July and doesn't let up until November.

The dog star the Romans reference is Sirius, which translates to scorching or glowing. When the star first became visible, the Romans knew that their days were going to be "Sirius"-ly hot for a couple of months (cue sympathetic chuckles and eyerolls). In the modern day, the Dog Days of Summer are when the days become so hot that even our canine friends can't stand being outside. It's the time period when they pant more, become more lethargic, shed several coats of fur, and when we have to be wary of their paws on the hot asphalt. It's when the dogs of the world have it "ruff" (cue groan). To honor our furry companions, I invite you to beat the heat by spending some time in the Kirkland Town Library reading and checking out our vast collection of books about man's best friend.

You can start by reading Jack London's *The Call of the Wild*. Published in 1903, the adventure story it tells is suspenseful, heartwarming, and nothing short of gut wrenching. This tear jerker follows a St. Bernard-Scotch Shepherd mix named Buck on his journey from a pampered pet living in California to a sled dog in the Yukon in far north Canada. Although you may find your eyes growing damp, at least this pick lets you escape the year's hottest months with a ticket to somewhere colder.

Next we have a modern day classic that has earned its place on any list of dog books. *Marley & Me: Life and Love with the World's Worst Dog* (2005) is exactly what the title suggests. It is the memoir-style story of the author, John Grogan, and his uncontrollable and untrainable Labrador retriever named Marley. Grogan and his family, despite the chaos, fall deeply in love with Marley and you will too, reveling in his antics and reaching for the tissues several times. After you finish the book, you should spare some tissues for the movie adaptation starring Owen Wilson and Jennifer Aniston.

Growing up I was obsessed with Dav Pilkey's *Captain Underpants* series, with its appeal to elementary school aged kids everywhere. It wasn't until I started working at the library, however, that I realized that Pilkey has a vast number of other characters to choose from including Dog Man. No, this isn't about a man dressed up as a dog fighting crime. It's the story of crime

fighting Greg, who is actually part dog and part human. *Dog Man* is a graphic novel series that is hilarious, adventurous, and fun for everybody at any age.

To be honest, there are hundreds if not thousands of books about our furry friends. Dog books are universally adored and the genre is so vast that I can't possibly fit all of them in a single column. Some stories are sad and some heroic, while others are step by step training instructions to help you grow closer to your pet. Whether you're wanting to cry, laugh, or learn, the Kirkland Town Library has a dog book for anyone who is trying to survive the Dog Days of Summer.