Non-cat people frequently describe cats as selfish, unfriendly, and frustratingly independent, while a true cat lover can see these same traits and wax poetic. The Nine Emotional Lives of Cats is truly an ode to the wonderful and mysterious behavior of our furry friends—even when the behavior at hand is narcissism or jealousy. Author Jeffery Moussaieff Masson (Dogs Never Lie About Love) explores the lives of his five cats as they relate to his family, each other, and the world around them, filled as it is with such interesting creatures as butterflies, automobiles, and visiting humans. Each chapter is devoted to a study of a particular emotion, ranging from love to playfulness to anger. While there are interesting tidbits of animal science, such as cats look away or blink when feeling friendly, the majority of the book revolves around the authors observations of his own pets. When he suggests answers for mysterious behavior like the grooming that instantly turns into a bloodthirsty brawl, he is never absolute, but merely offers one among many possible explanations. Kind and thoughtful, Massons entertaining tales and wise musings will be appreciated by any cat fancier. --Jill Lightner

My Personal Review:
The plus side.... I found it an engaging read, and it did make me study my three cats more than I normally do. I like his assessments that there are more to cats then what we see on a surface view, and I agreed with most of the emotions listed and how they manifest themselves. The writing style was well done, and I liked the contemplative style of his prose.
The negative side... The author does not seem to realize that most of us do not live in rural beaches and rain forests, and for the vast majority of cats out there, the environment outside is hostile to small domestic animals. I am a volunteer in a cat shelter, and have been the unfortunate witness to many a bad situation caused by owners wanting their cats to be able to run free. I found it surprising that someone who was so anti-
declawing (which I applaud) could be so naive as to the perils outside. Cats and toddlers alike may yearn to run into the street, but it doesn’t mean those who are responsible for them should allow them to do so. I suppose it is not surprising; after all, it came from an author who was willing to give away a cat who had gotten somewhat cranky in middle age, as well as one who seems nonchalant at the end that his wandering cats were no longer spending their nights at home. But for someone who is truly concerned about their cats’ welfare, the casual attitude was a bit hard to swallow. I am hoping that his current cats do not end up getting squished by a car like he admits the rest of them had in California.

Buy the book? No. But it might be worth checking out at the library.

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