

OUTSIDE THE BOX

FEATURING JEN COLE, DVM

THE *TEXAS VETERINARIAN* HAS A FEATURE TO SHOWCASE VETERINARIANS AND VETERINARY PROFESSIONALS WHO PRODUCE ART IN THEIR TIME OUTSIDE OF THEIR WORK. IF YOU'RE AN ARTIST AND A VETERINARIAN OR VETERINARY PROFESSIONAL, PLEASE SEND AN EMAIL TO SONEILL@TVMA.ORG SO WE CAN FEATURE YOUR WORK IN FUTURE ISSUES!



THIS ARTICLE FEATURES THE WRITING OF JEN COLE, DVM, OF SPRING.

HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN IN PRACTICE AS A VETERINARIAN?

I graduated from the Texas A&M College of Veterinary Medicine in 1997 and have been in small animal practice for 28 years. My husband and I owned two veterinary hospitals in Spring, Texas, one of which won the dvm360 Hospital Design Grand Prize in 2022.

WHEN DID YOU FIRST BECOME INTERESTED IN WRITING?

We have always been big storytellers in my family, which is to say I can embellish a tale with the best of them! After selling our veterinary practices and retiring three



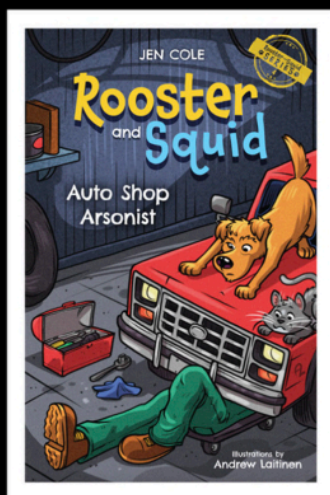
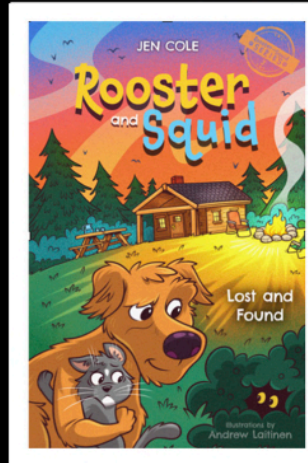
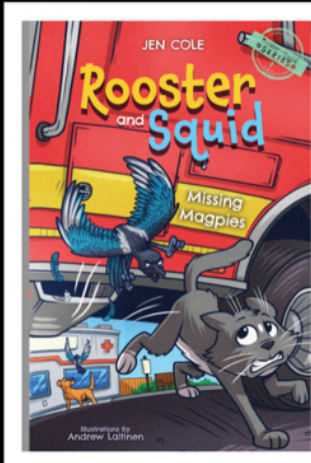
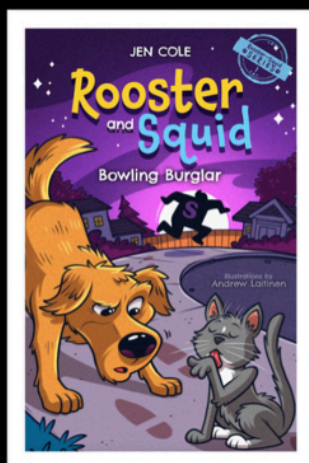
years ago, I craved a more creative outlet, and I still felt I had a lot of knowledge to share. When I tried my hand at writing, I realized I might be able to make a difference in the veterinary community in an out-of-the-box kind of way.

HOW DID YOU DECIDE ON WRITING CHILDREN'S BOOKS?

When my kids were little, I remember driving with them in the backseat and being bombarded with an endless stream of facts. "Hey, Mom. Did you know there are dinosaurs that are smaller than chickens?" "Hey, Mom. Did you know slugs have four noses?" "Hey, Mom..." You get the picture. It hit

me that, if given the right ammunition, children could be our pets' greatest advocates. After decades in veterinary practice, it became apparent to me that if animal owners were more educated on pet nutrition, husbandry and dangers in and out of the home, it would be beneficial for everyone, and who better to champion the cause than children! I imagined the car ride sounding more like, "Hey, Mom. Did you know chocolate can make dogs sick?" "Hey, Mom. Did you know horses can't burp?"

WHICH BOOK OR CHARACTER THAT YOU'VE WRITTEN IS YOUR FAVORITE?



Almost all the characters in the *Rooster and Squid* series are based on people in my life. Some are family. Some are friends. Some are previous clients whose names have been changed to protect the innocent. But hands down my favorite characters are Rooster and Squid. Rooster is a very handsome Golden Retriever who is loyal, protective and brave, while Squid is a grey disheveled cat who is sarcastic, aloof and a bit cantankerous—the perfect pair!

My favorite book in the series is *Angel Wings*, which is book No. 14. It tackles the most difficult part of our job as a veterinarian—euthanasia. One of the beloved side characters in the series reaches the end of his life, and Rooster and Squid are there to walk

alongside him. The book is written in a beautiful way, helping children understand the process of euthanasia and giving them tools to navigate through their grief.

WHEN DO YOU FIND TIME TO WORK ON YOUR WRITING?

It's not easy! Two of our children are in college, and the third is on his way this year. I imagine free time will become more readily available in the coming months, but in the meantime, I capitalize on every moment of quiet time I can get!

WHY DO YOU THINK IT'S IMPORTANT AS A VETERINARIAN TO HAVE A CREATIVE OUTLET?

A lot of what we deal with daily in veterinary medicine is mentally taxing—busy days, difficult clients, breaking the news of a bad prognosis, fielding emergency calls, working weekends and end-of-life care. It can take its toll if we don't find a way to decompress in some way. Some people exercise. Others have a skinny margarita. I have found that writing is my great escape.

WHERE CAN WE READ MORE OF YOUR WRITING?

The *Rooster and Squid* book series is available on Amazon, Barnes and Noble and through several other book retailers. Visit www.roosterandsquid.com for links. [TV](#)