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Nota di contenuto	Frontmatter -- ACKNOWLEDGMENTS -- CONTENTS -- Introduction -- 1. Animals and the Study of Children -- 2. Reaching across the Divide -- 3. Love on Four Legs -- 4. Learning from Animals -- 5. The Healing Lick -- 6. Animal Selves -- 7. Victims and Objects -- 8. Deepening the Animal Connection -- NOTES -- INDEX
Sommario/riassunto	Whether they see themselves as King of the Wild Things or protector of Toto, children live in a world filled with animals--both real and imaginary. From Black Beauty to Barney, animal characters romp through children's books, cartoons, videos, and computer games. As Gail Melson tells us, more than three-quarters of all children in America live with pets and are now more likely to grow up with a pet than with both parents. She explores not only the therapeutic power of pet-owning for children with emotional or physical handicaps but also the ways in which zoo and farm animals, and even certain purple television characters, become confidants or teachers for children--and sometimes, tragically, their victims. Yet perhaps because animals are ubiquitous, what they really mean to children, for better and for worse, has been unexplored territory. Why the Wild Things Are is the first book

to examine children's many connections to animals and to explore their developmental significance. What does it mean that children's earliest dreams are of animals? What is the unique gift that a puppy can give to a boy? Drawing on psychological research, history, and children's media, *Why the Wild Things Are* explores the growth of the human-animal connection. In chapters on children's emotional ties to their pets, the cognitive challenges of animal contacts, animal symbols as building blocks of the self, and pointless cruelty to animals, Melson shows how children's innate interest in animals is shaped by their families and their social worlds, and may in turn shape the kind of people they will become.
