



Holy Cow: An Indian Adventure

By Sarah Macdonald

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In her twenties, journalist Sarah Macdonald backpacked around India and came away with a lasting impression of heat, pollution and poverty. So when an airport beggar read her palm and told her she would return to India—and for love—she screamed, “Never!” and gave the country, and him, the finger.

But eleven years later, the prophecy comes true. When the love of Sarah’s life is posted to India, she quits her dream job to move to the most polluted city on earth, New Delhi. For Sarah this seems like the ultimate sacrifice for love, and it almost kills her, literally. Just settled, she falls dangerously ill with double pneumonia, an experience that compels her to face some serious questions about her own fragile mortality and inner spiritual void. “I must find peace in the only place possible in India,” she concludes. “Within.” Thus begins her journey of discovery through India in search of the meaning of life and death.

Holy Cow is Macdonald’s often hilarious chronicle of her adventures in a land of chaos and contradiction, of encounters with Hinduism, Islam and Jainism, Sufis, Sikhs, Parsis and Christians and a kaleidoscope of yogis, swamis and Bollywood stars. From spiritual retreats and crumbling nirvanas to war zones and New Delhi nightclubs, it is a journey that only a woman on a mission to save her soul, her love life—and her sanity—can survive.

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Holy Cow: An Indian Adventure By Sarah Macdonald Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #183670 in eBooks
- Published on: 2004-04-13
- Released on: 2004-04-13
- Format: Kindle eBook

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Australian radio correspondent Macdonald's rollicking memoir recounts the two years she spent in India when her boyfriend, Jonathan, a TV news correspondent, was assigned to New Delhi. Leaving behind her own budding career, she spends her sabbatical traveling around the country, sampling India's "spiritual smorgasbord": attending a silent retreat for Vipassana meditation, seeking out a Sikh Ayurvedic "miracle healer," bathing in the Ganges with Hindus, studying Buddhism in Dharamsala, dabbling in Judaism with Israeli tourists, dipping into Parsi practices in Mumbai, visiting an ashram in Kerala, attending a Christian festival in Velangani and singing with Sufis. Paralleling Macdonald's spiritual journey is her evolution as a writer; she trades her sometimes glib remarks ("I've always thought it hilarious that Indian people chose the most boring, domesticated, compliant and stupidest animal on earth to adore") and 1980s song title references (e.g., "Karma Chameleon") for a more sensitive tone and a sober understanding that neither mocks nor romanticizes Indian culture and the Western visitors who embrace it. The book ends on a serious note, when September 11 shakes Macdonald's faith and Jonathan, now her husband, is sent to cover the war in Afghanistan. Macdonald is less compelling when writing about herself, her career and her relationship than when she is describing spiritual centers, New Delhi nightclubs and Bollywood cinema. Still, she brings a reporter's curiosity, interviewing skills and eye for detail to everything she encounters, and winningly captures "[t]he drama, the dharma, the innocent exuberance of the festivals, the intensity of the living, the piety in playfulness and the embrace of living day by day...the drama, the dharma, the innocent exuberance of the festivals, the intensity of the living, the piety in playfulness and the embrace of living day by day."

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From [Booklist](#)

Australian MacDonald didn't fall in love with India her first time there, at age 21. So when her boyfriend, Jonathan, a reporter for ABC, is sent there for work, she reluctantly follows after a year of separation. At first, life in India is as bad as she remembered it--overcrowded, smoggy, disturbing. A serious bout of pneumonia puts her in an Indian hospital, but as she recovers, she begins to make friends in India and to understand the culture. She finds herself attending lavish Indian weddings and trying to comfort her friend Padma, whose mother commits suicide after Padma marries without her permission. MacDonald makes an effort to understand the many diverse religions of the area, including taking a 10-day sojourn in a Buddhist temple and discussing religion with Hindus, Sikhs, Muslims, and even a group of visiting Israelis. With Jonathan, she takes a trip to war-torn Kashmir, an area that is at once achingly beautiful and devastatingly dangerous. A lively, snappy travelogue. *Kristine Huntley*

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Review

"A wonderfully honest and soul-searching book . . . Macdonald writes with clarity and humor about India and its many paths to enlightenment." —*Travel* (Australia)

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Jacqueline Gore:

Typically the book Holy Cow: An Indian Adventure has a lot details on it. So when you make sure to read

this book you can get a lot of benefit. The book was compiled by the very famous author. The writer makes some research just before write this book. This particular book very easy to read you can find the point easily after perusing this book.

Christopher Jones:

On this era which is the greater individual or who has ability in doing something more are more valuable than other. Do you want to become one of it? It is just simple strategy to have that. What you need to do is just spending your time almost no but quite enough to have a look at some books. One of several books in the top checklist in your reading list is usually Holy Cow: An Indian Adventure. This book which is qualified as The Hungry Inclines can get you closer in turning into precious person. By looking upward and review this guide you can get many advantages.

Helen Williams:

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Michael Major:

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