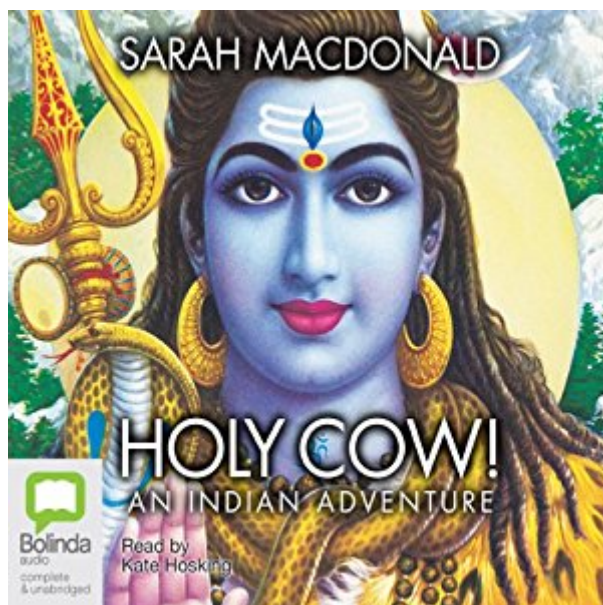


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Holy Cow!: An Indian Adventure



Synopsis

After backpacking her way around India, Sarah Macdonald decides she hates the country with a passion. When a beggar at the airport reads her palm and insists she will one day return and for love she screams 'Never!' and gives the country, and him, the finger. Eleven years later, the prophecy comes true. When the love of Sarah's life is posted to India, she quits her dream job as a national radio presenter to follow him to the most polluted city on earth, New Delhi. It seems like the ultimate sacrifice for love and it almost kills her literally. One dank, smoggy night, a naked Sadhu smeared in human ashes curses Sarah and she falls dangerously ill with double pneumonia. She defeats death, not before facing some serious questions about her own fragile mortality and inner spiritual void, not to mention some unsightly hair loss. It's enough to drive a rapidly balding atheist to drastic action in this case a wild journey of discovery through India in search of the meaning of life and death. And with the help of the Dalai Lama, a goddess of healing hugs and a couple of Bollywood stars among many, many others Sarah discovers a hell of a lot more. --This text refers to the Audio CD edition.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I had such fun reading this book - as I hope the author had writing it. She paints a colourful and engaging look at India and at her own exploration of her spirituality. I felt privileged to literally be an armchair traveler with her as she explores ins and outs of Indian life and many different facets of a variety of spiritual / religious paths she examined. This is neither a treatise on Indian Religions, nor

on Indian Culture but a very personal, honest discussion of her own time living in India. As such it is a times funny, at times heart felt, at times poignant and at ALL times, Captivating. It was a real "Page Turner" for me, not in the sense of being a thriller, but in the sense that I was entirely fascinated her her life.

Had some interesting parts but was a very slow read and was easy to put down. I finished it because I kept waiting for a payoff but it never came -- I was never able to get attached to the other characters since they were such a small part. It seems like you would get to know Jonathan more since it was because of him she went to India. It reads more like a journal. Three stars because the information about a lot of the places in India was interesting. Two stars for the actual story.

I picked up Holy Cow: An Indian Adventure after it was recommended to me by a fellow India traveler during my most recent trip to the country. I thought it was a great read: witty, lighthearted, and at times touching. Having traveled to many of the same places, and even attending some of the same spiritual retreats, I thought it gave a very honest look at India and spirituality. So when I logged on to after finishing it, I was really surprised to see so many negative reviews. But after skimming all the one stars, I realized that they were mostly written by Indians who felt the book insulted their country. Given that I'm not Indian and have never lived in India, I can only say that they are certainly entitled to their opinions. But I will note that many of the Indian reviewers said that they picked up the book to get a perspective on how western travelers view their country, and in that regard I think they got what they asked for. I recently spent several weeks in India, as have many of my friends, and I think the author provides an accurate description of the culture shock many of us feel when we arrive. Delhi is overcrowded, there is extreme poverty, the pollution is worse than anywhere else I've traveled, and there continues to be significant sexism. While there did seem to be some embellishment for the sake of the storyline (or maybe it seemed that way to me because her adventure began 10-15 years before mine), overall I could really relate to the author's experience. Moreover, critics should note that the author grows to love the country and all its eclectic religious practices, ultimately sobbing as she finally leaves for good. I would encourage readers to keep an open mind and try not to take it too seriously. This is just one women's perspective on her time in India, and like it or not many other western reviewers have indicated that they can relate to it.

This book was recommended to me by an Indian colleague as a way of introduction before my trip

to India. Holy Cow is part travelogue, part story of self discovery in a land of tremendous variety and a billion people looking for spiritual health through innumerable religious entry points. Her initial suspicious engagement with India to pursue a romantic relationship becomes a search for keys to her soul. This book only heightened my anticipation for my trip to encounter an ancient and modern country that apparently defies easy description.

A great read for anyone interested in understanding day to day life in India. I have read this before and now rereading 9 years later for a book club. It describes a person going not loving India and ending up in love with her after exploring all she has to offer - I have given it away 3 times and it is well worth a very satisfying read.

I was on a 26 day tour of India recently. What an amazing trip, at times overwhelming, shocking, beautiful . . . so different from the U.S. I knew I wasn't coming close to grasping what this country was all about. I was in a bookstore in new Delhi one day and heard a tourist ask for this book. The Indian shop owner said he was out of the English version but recommended it very highly. The tourist said her guide, also Indian, told her and her American friends that it would help them to understand their journey. I'm so happy I immediately ordered the book from . It filled in many of the blanks and I enjoyed Sarah Macdonald's style. My only complaint is the cover of the book - very weird and off-putting at first. I understand the meaning of it now but I think the book deserves a better cover.

First of all, this is not a travel guide. Get a Fodors or something like that if that's what you are looking for. Secondly, I think it is definitely more entertaining if you have been to India. A lot of the things and mannerisms she mentions (the head wag for instance), are pretty impossible to describe. Lastly I didn't think she was offensive to Indians in general. The country has so many incredible assets, and that extreme degree of history and beauty is countered with some extreme harshness and inefficiency. That would be known in Eastern philosophy as the 'Law of duality". I think she is more critical of other foreign tourists than Indians. She seems especially disdainful of America and Americans. But that's typical.

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