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Seriously Mum, What's An Alpaca?



Synopsis

****THE #1 BESTSELLER IN TRAVEL, ANIMAL & CAT BOOKS******Driving Over Lemons meets A Streetcat Named Bob**
"What a great read, I could not put it down until I finished it!"
"Absolutely delightful. Humorous, well written. Well done, Mr. Parks."
"So good - looking forward to the sequel!"
"A rollicking story of British ex-patriots in Spain."
"These books are hilarious, funny and entertaining. At the same time educative. Easy to read."
SERIOUSLY MUM, WHAT'S AN ALPACA?Could you give up everything you have worked for and do something completely different? Would you give up and go home if it all went wrong?'
"Seriously Mum, What's an Alpaca?" is the frank and charming story of a brave couple who move to Spain to breed alpacas. Their intention is to make a living, but first they must negotiate their way through the Spanish property market, local characters, rogue builders and the worst weather Andalucía has seen for 100 years. Alan and Lorna experience the joy, but also the heartbreak of alpaca breeding, picking up an assortment of stray animals on the way. Will they succeed, or will the challenges prove too much to bear?
"What an engrossing read! Leaving England and moving to Spain, I know from personal experience, is tough and certainly life-changing. But this brave couple, not only uprooted themselves, but set up an alpaca breeding farm in rural Andalucia. I laughed and cried, sharing their highs and lows, willing them to succeed. An inspiring and fascinating story" - Victoria Tweed, Author of NYT bestseller Two Old Fools on a Camel and the Old Fools series.

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Customer Reviews

I want to believe that I could make the leap that Alan and Lorna made, but I'm not sure I could. But I am so pleased that they did and that Alan has shared the details with us. When Alan proposes that they move to Spain and raise Alpacas, I laughed out loud! I suspect if they had waited until it all made sense, they would never have made the move, and that would have been unfortunate for them, and for those of us who are privileged to follow their story. Many chapters start with the current animal count on their farm and I smiled each time as the collection increased. It seems that in Spain a soft hearted person will never lack for dogs or cats as strays are abundant. But the project of learning to breed and raise Alpacas is the most entertaining. The sorrow of losing several of the babies was heartbreaking, but the joy of those who thrive seems to make it all worth it. I loved the scene when Rafa got the bucket stuck on his head and Alan ended up covered in green slimy spit from Rafa's mom doing her best to protect her baby from Alan's rescue efforts. Alan has done a nice job of sharing their lives without making it overly romantic, or desperate. His honesty in showing the trials as well as the joys keeps the reader from believing they could just pick up and make the same move. But for the truly adventurous, it all seems wonderful! I enjoyed the neighbors and their willingness to step in and help, and to include Alan and Lorna in social events. Even though Alan and Lorna arrived with very little Spanish language, the neighbors still accepted them, and having that connection proved crucial to surviving.

I was reading another book when I came across this and bought it. Had a quick glance and intended to read it after my current book. I couldn't! It engaged me right from the outset so I just had to keep on going. The book is about Alan and Lorna who live in Brighton. Lorna is a dance teacher but she has been suffering with ill-health and finding it hard to continue with her tuition. They decide to totally change their life and move to Spain and breed Alpacas. They are relatively young to do this sort of thing-I think Alan was about thirty-five/thirty-six?-so it's not the normal expat story where people sell up to retire, hence the idea for a business breeding Alpacas. Not a common choice of animal either so this book is really different, a breath of fresh air. Very well-told it is too. Alan and Lorna come across as really likeable people. Alan has the patience of a saint! There are many

tender moments in the book, unexpected happenings, heart-breaking moments, light humour, really makes you smile but doesn't try too hard to be funny, the humour isn't forced at all, just natural comedy flow. Contrast this with learning about the different ways of life with the locals and their customs and quirks and then some really 'tug-at your-heartstrings' moments with the animal episodes and you have a fantastic reading experience. I needed the tissues sometimes, it really got to my emotions, the sad bits about the animals, I could hardly bear to turn the pages near the end in case something had gone wrong again..... It is easy reading; nice short chapters. I like the chapter titles that give you an idea of the happenings to come, a very organised result, never rambling. Good descriptive detail, yet not longwinded . The descriptions of the landscape are beautiful.

Holy mackerel. The author says, in response to other reviews, that the book was edited before publishing. Not by very discerning editors, I would say. It's not a matter of typographical errors. And it is certainly NOT a UK vs US "translation" issue, as he suggests. There are just plain, ordinary, garden-variety errors of usage here. And not only in English! For goodness sake, if you do not speak a second language, have someone vet your use of it in your book! Good grief. And those asides in the alleged voices of the animals: how embarrassing. It's like hearing a grown-up speak baby talk to their pet. Aside from the jarring blunders of English usage (It certainly brings the reader to a full stop when the writer does not know to distinguish between the subject and object of a sentence: Me? I? Well, one or the other must be right, so just choose one...), the writing style is mediocre at best. I have survived mediocre writing in the past, and sometimes enjoyed a naively produced work. But, really, this one bears all the hallmarks of vanity publishing. Except in the mechanical sense, just knowing how to type out the events of the day does not make a writer. The story itself is of that genre of ex-patriot stories, where the bold, foolish protagonist/narrator rushes in without guidance to take on a decrepit property in a foreign land, relying on the kindness of wiser, native heads to survive. It was doubtless written in the belief that the inexperience of the family was humorous. It really wasn't. It was alarming. It made me think these people needed adult supervision before hoping to care for another species. Furthermore, they're not really very nice people, are they? The habit of belittling almost everyone this family encounters is tiresome, to say the least.

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