



Paw Prints In Oman: Dogs, Mogs and Me

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When Charlotte's husband is offered a job in Oman, he persuades her to leave comfortable, rural England and join him. But playing tennis, avoiding coffee mornings and being a perfect wife and mother in the Middle East is not enough.

Charlotte convinces a local veterinary clinic to employ her and throws herself into assisting the vets, overcoming her fear of birds and rehoming hundreds of stray cats and dogs. Cyclones, earthquakes, transvestites, unwanted paramours, cultural differences, tears and laughter follow as seven years flash by. Will Charlotte stay, or gather up the motley crew of pets she has collected and head for home?

Charlotte was born, raised and lived in West Sussex, UK, with her children, animals, Aga and husband until 2006. She dreamed of spending time with Colin Firth, or Gordon Ramsey, and couldn't wait for Christmas to come around for Love Actually to be on the TV. But then she was dragged off to live in Oman, in the heart of the Middle East, where coffee mornings and sets of tennis soon gave way to a life of animal rescue and re-homing. Her first book, Paw Prints in Oman, is full of wonderful stories and unique insights into her life in this mystical land.

Paw Prints In Oman: Dogs, Mogs and Me Details

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From Reader Review Paw Prints In Oman: Dogs, Mogs and Me for online ebook

Ralph says

This delightful and well-written memoir tells the story of a woman, English born and bred, never straying very far from her home village, who found herself suddenly uprooted and transported to the Sultanate of Oman. When Charlotte Smith agreed to follow her husband in the wake of a new job, she knew that she and her family would encounter a world radically different from the one they had always known, but she was not quite prepared for how different it would be. She did, however, know that it was a Muslim country, and that did concern her greatly, though not for reasons of religion or ideology. No, her concerns were much more practical—where was she going to buy wine, and, perhaps more importantly, as an animal lover, how was she possibly going to survive without pets? After all, the Quran requires all strict Muslims to abstain from alcohol and to revile dogs as unclean creatures.

Fortunately, when she arrives in Oman she discovers the Sultanate to be much more progressive than its backwards neighbors. Sure, homosexuality is still illegal (3 years in the pokey if you are not discreet, but better than death) and don't go around dissing either the Prophet or the Sultan, but it possible to get a permit to buy booze and no one minds if you responsibly keep a pet. After Smith receives her liquor-purchase permit from the government, she discovers that liquor stores in Muscat (the capital) are very much like sex shops used to be—windows shuttered against prying eyes and doors tightly closed, but inside containing a wonderland of adult pleasure. As for dogs and cats (mogs or moggy), she ends up not only owning wonderful companions, but actually working in a Muscat veterinarian's office and running a pet adoption service for trays and abandoned animals.

Once Smith moves beyond the confines of her own family and the problems of running a household in a foreign land and enters the world of dogs and mogs, we are presented with some of the most heart-warming, and heart-breaking, stories you'll ever read about our animal friends. At one point in the memoir, the veterinarian in charge declares angrily: "I love animals, it's people I can't stand!" It's something that I (along with Mark Twain and James Thurber) have known for a long time, but, through Smith's clear and impassioned writing, you, too, might find yourself drifting to that point of view.

Smith's memoir begins in the early 21st Century and concludes in the middle of 2013, a period of great change and turmoil in the Middle East and North Africa. Since some of the political and economic events do affect the lives of her family, they are referenced now and then, but only tangentially. She rightly keeps her focus on the small picture, the lives of her friends and family, and, especially, the dogs and mogs she meets and is sometimes able to help.

This book will appeal to those who enjoy biographies, memoirs or accounts of travel in foreign lands. But I think the real appeal will be for dog and cat fanciers, especially those who think that any effort made to make the lives of dogs and cats better is never a wasted effort.

Corgi says

I enjoyed reading Paw Prints in Oman. It is a book to read when you don't want to have to think too much.

The author did a good job of writing and telling her story.

I would recommend Paw Prints in Oman to readers who like: a memoir, stories about animals and living in Oman.

Frank Kusy says

Forget about seven years in Tibet, this is seven years in Oman! And what a fascinating seven years it is, author Charlotte Smith moving from the elevated ex-pat echelons of tennis and bridge playing high society to the down and dirty graft of co-running a vet's clinic along with her daughter. And this, in a country which is not only not friendly to animals, but often downright hostile. The earlier part of the book gave me laughs galore - especially Oman's censorship laws (44 people arrested for wearing red at Christmas? Really?) and the painted egg incident with the Dutch ambassador. Later on, as the book's tone turns more serious, we meet literally hundreds of our furry friends in terrible states of neglect, restored to happy tail-wagging and purring good health through the ministrations of the clinic and its dedicated workers. Constant companions like Billy, Frodo and Mr Frog are joined by a wonderful drop-in cast that includes Leo, the phobic cocker spaniel, the kitten who popped out an ATM machine, an obese chappati-gobbling Labrador, and of course Big Red, the gigantic 8kg mass of orange and white flab with a penchant for tuna. A delightful read, this, and not just for the mogs and dogs, but for anyone wishing to gain an insight into modern-day Omani customs, culture and religion. Thoroughly recommended.

Carrie Allen says

This is a really good book! There were some descriptions of situations with various animals that actually had me laughing out loud as I read. The drawback to this is that I was about 65 or 70 pages in before the animals really made to much of an appearance, and based off the cover and title, I had assumed that the whole book with be animal laden. It was still very fun to read and the animal stories included were worth the wait.

Pat Ellis says

Reading this Memoir was like reading a long-awaited letter from a good friend (I hope that makes sense) So, so brilliant the way you are able to just glide-along through Charlotte and her family's move to Oman and to be able to cover 7 years without 'losing' the reader is brilliant...

I am only too happy to review this wonderful Memoir Paw Prints in Oman - Dogs, Mogs and Me by Charlotte Smith... Charlotte's way of writing flows very easily - had me laughing out loud A LOT. It explains in an un-fussy way about moving from the UK to a different country and what that can entail - in this case to Oman - and whilst you're not given over-load information about Oman itself you definitely get the gist of how it can be eg in Muscat - the immense heat, the 'dangerous' roads, and alas a lack of caring for Animals - in this case Cats and Dogs... But also some of the great people different nationalities that the Author comes across/meets. Not being that/totally enamoured with the 'in' crowd Charlotte finds herself working at a Vetinary Clinic / come rehoming centre for Cats & Dogs - the 4 years spent there alone are covered brilliantly throughout this Memoir again laugh out loud moments together with some 'why' 'how could they' from me as a reader - in total agreement with Charlotte. Her co-workers at the Clinic were a treat to 'get to know' also. This Memoir covers approx 7 years that Charlotte, her husband, their youngest daughter & of

course Billy & Co spent in Oman... Whilst I was sad to finish this Memoir I am hoping that Charlotte's next one will be out soon - and I for one cannot wait. I highly recommend this Memoir.

Julie Haigh says

Amazing and wonderful.

This book has a beautiful cover image-with that, how can you resist the book?!! There are more lovely pictures inside. Charlotte's husband's job means the family going to live in Oman for the foreseeable future. Charlotte doesn't really want to go. There's a good concise opening chapter, yet it says plenty of info and there's even a bit of humour in there. Fast moving writing that easily keeps your interest. Funny and heart-warming stories; New Freckles' take on gardening! A short break to Dubai and a spot of skiing. Miniature red-eared turtles?-not an obvious choice of pet! You learn something about the different ways/cultures of this country-Charlotte buys an abaya-this is not just a plain black article of clothing-they tend to be beautifully tailored with beading and Swarovski crystals embellishing them. I do like the diary format used; months and a title indicating what she's going to talk about, yet still intriguing at the same time. Eh? How do you pack a shower for camping? Even a carpet? Tony and Janice brought a carpet FOR CAMPING???? So many smiles at the camping tales! There's a very powerful and well-written chapter about the freak weather and the devastation it caused. Some info about Ramadan, eg. who is exempt. I really like the writing style and the injections of humour now and then. Charlotte's sense of fun really shows through. A comical interlude where Billy gets a bit of a makeover. What a lovely picture you get in your mind when Charlotte mentions her dog in his little life jacket-adorable! Charlotte starts work at a vets/animal clinic. She loves her job and the chance to be able to do this as she would need qualifications in the UK to do the same job. Sadness, laughter and some disgusting things happening with the animals here. This book is sometimes heart-rending and sometimes heart-warming. You hear of some awful things-for instance-I've never heard of this happening before: Janus cats-it's a known phenomenon. I looked this up and there was even a pic of a chicken with this condition with two breaks and three eyes. I love animal stories, I have read the James Herriott books/Emma Milne's book from Vets In Practice but this puts a different slant on it. So much more, not just the animal stuff, but the animal stories are really different and engrossing, sometimes terrible and heart-breaking to read and leave a lump in your throat as you read. Such a varied book with humour and heartbreak. What a wonderful, wonderful book. I loved it. I really hope Charlotte writes more-and yes!-there is a sequel in the pipeline-Paw Prints In Spain!

Jessica Lipowski says

Overall, I really enjoyed reading Paw Prints in Oman! Every step of the way, I connected with Charlotte emotionally, from the moment she learned they were moving to Oman to the tearful goodbyes as family members flew back to England. The book was a rather quick read but kept me enthralled from beginning to end. Being an expat myself, I could relate to her ups and downs, especially leaving family behind, and as a lover of pets, loved what she did for all those creatures in Muscat. She did a wonderful job of telling her story, especially with the imagery (loved the description of the palm tree during the cyclone aftermath), explaining the cultural differences (I learned a lot about Oman and the Islam religion) and conveying her emotions. I would certainly recommend Charlotte's memoir to other readers. By the way, is there still a Facebook page for Mr. Frog?

Dorothy Timm says

Overall I'd give this a 3 1/2 star. It was fairly interesting near the beginning, but there wasn't really a central story line, I thought. More a collection of little occurrences. Just OK.

Dana says

It started out interesting but I got bored about a third of the way in. It got a little irritating hearing about how wealthy they are.

Beth Haslam says

Beautifully written - highly recommended.

Charlotte Smith is a naturally gifted story-teller. Her style of writing is clear, fluid and incredibly engaging. In Paw Prints in Oman she tells the story of her life as an expat wife and mum who lives for 7 years with her husband and youngest daughter in Oman.

After setting up home and sorting out school for their daughter, life settles down to a pace that Charlotte isn't keen on. As boredom threatens, she looks to fill her days in ways that don't involve endless games of tennis, or becoming a full-time 'lady who lunches'. In a moment of serendipity she manages to get herself a job in a busy veterinary clinic, which seems to lead a double life as a dumping ground for abandoned pets.

Charlotte throws herself into her new job with some trepidation coupled with enthusiasm at the idea of a new challenge. But it turns out to be pretty tough, emotionally and physically, and ends up impacting on the whole family in ways that none of them had anticipated!

As I read this book I was immediately drawn to the evident warmth of Charlotte and her lovely family. I admired Charlotte's gutsy approach in handling the difficulties that faced her, and in particular the amazing way in which she adapted to the often heart-rending work at the animal clinic. I was fascinated by her descriptions of Oman, and sympathised with her as she described her feelings of homesickness coupled with the complications of living in a foreign country, with a culture so different to her own.

Paw Prints in Oman is heart-warming, very funny, and also desperately sad in places. I thoroughly enjoyed reading every page, and by the end I was not at all surprised, and indeed felt proud, that the family had accumulated so many animals! Quite simply - I loved it.

Rebecca says

I really enjoyed this book. It's written in a diary format in which Charlotte Smith describes the seven years she spent in Oman with her husband and youngest daughter. It wasn't an easy decision to leave pets and family at home in England and relocate to a country where the culture and customs are so vastly different. I admired her resilience and adaptability as even driving in Oman is fraught with danger! Missing their dogs she acquires Billy the Shitzu who becomes a beloved member of the household. Anytime he has to go to the vet, Alka, the German 'boss lady' tried to persuade Charlotte to adopt a cat. Unable to resist the constant entreaties she adopts Goji. However, wanting something more than just the 'ex pat' social life Charlotte volunteers to work at the vet clinic. It's a testament to her strength of character that she stayed with it and learned so much about caring for the constant stream of animals frequently in terrible suffering. Along the way Frodo the kitten joins the household then Mr Frog, the cat with the blog! There are lots of stories some to make you laugh and some to make you cry. Overall it's a most interesting read not just for animal lovers but also for those wishing to learn a bit about Oman. Highly recommended. I take my hat off to you Charlotte.

Myra L Rice says

Charlotte's dogs and cats

Very well written account of seven years living in Oman! Charlotte takes on dogs and cats at a veterinary clinic with a vengeance! I could not put this book down and didn't want it to end! I hope she will write about her life in Spain!

Joann says

I thoroughly recommend this book to any and all of you animal lovers out there. I bought it because it is a true story and I gained so much in doing so. The memoir covers a period of the author's life when she was involved in a veterinary practice in Oman while her husband was working there. It engaged me from the beginning to the end and I also learned about some of the culture of the country. A funny, well written and very engaging read.

Kathy says

Interesting

Interesting and sentimental read. Easy to read and the animal lovers will enjoy every page. Caution though, you might be disgusted by some of the stories of treatment of stray animals.

Claudia says

This heart-warming book was written by an old school friend who I had lost touch with over the years. Reading this showed me that her humour and bubbly personality that I remember so well were undimmed

and she had thrown her energy into relieving the plight of the many animals encountered in her life as an expat wife in Oman. A lovely read that made me laugh out loud in places and makes you so grateful that there are people who are willing to set aside so much of their time and love to care for the abandoned and unloved animals discarded by humans across the world.
