



## Finding Gobi: A Little Dog with a Very Big Heart

*Dion Leonard*

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**Finding Gobi: A Little Dog with a Very Big Heart** Dion Leonard  
*New York Times Bestseller List*

*“Leonard and Gobi’s story represents the power of people working together and the profound depth of feeling possible between a man and his dog.”--Publishers Weekly*

*A man, a dog, and the lengths to which love will go to sacrifice for its companion.*

*Finding Gobi is the miraculous tale of Dion Leonard, a seasoned ultramarathon runner who crosses paths with a stray dog while competing in a 155-mile race through the Gobi Desert in China. The lovable pup, who would later earn the name Gobi, proved that what she lacked in size, she more than made up for in heart, as she went step for step with Dion over the Tian Shan Mountains, across massive sand dunes, through yurt villages and the black sands of the Gobi Desert, keeping pace with him for 77 miles.*

*As Dion witnessed the incredible determination and heart of this small animal, he found his own heart undergoing a change as well. Whereas in the past these races were all about winning and being the best, his goal now was to make sure he and Gobi’s friendship continued well after the finish line. He found himself letting Gobi sleep in his tent at night, giving her food and water out of his own limited supply, and carrying her across numerous rivers, even when he knew it would mean putting him behind in the race, or worse, prevent him from finishing at all.*

*Although Dion did not cross the finish line first, he felt he had won something even greater – a new outlook on life and a new friend that he planned on bringing home as soon as arrangements were made. However, before he could take her home, Gobi went missing in the sprawling Chinese city where she was being kept. Dion, with the help of strangers and a viral outpouring of assistance on the internet, set out to track her down, and reunite forever with the amazing animal that changed his life and proved to him and the world that miracles are possible.*

## Finding Gobi: A Little Dog with a Very Big Heart Details

Date : Published June 13th 2017 by Thomas Nelson (first published June 1st 2017)

ISBN : 9780718098575

Author : Dion Leonard

Format : Paperback 272 pages

Genre : Nonfiction, Animals, Autobiography, Memoir, Dogs, Biography

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## From Reader Review Finding Gobi: A Little Dog with a Very Big Heart for online ebook

### Brenda says

Dion Leonard, an Australian living in Edinburgh, Scotland, was in China for the 155-mile race through the Gobi Desert when a small brown ball of fluff with big eyes attached herself to him. As he ran each leg of the race, the dog kept pace with him. At one stage they crossed a water course, and when she called to him from the bank, Dion turned and picked her up, carrying her across. When it was obvious the little dog would remain by his side, he named her Gobi – her courage and tenacity was outstanding. She cemented her place in his heart; it was a special friendship.

When Dion and his wife Lucja were working out how to get Gobi home to Scotland, she went missing from the city of Urumqi in China. As Dion and the volunteers searched for Gobi, he wondered how he would ever find her – the city was home to thousands of stray dogs; how to find one in the maze of the rest? But help came from everywhere – international media, the internet and even the locals were caught up in the story of the missing Gobi. Would Dion be reunited with the extraordinary little dog who had adopted him as he ran across the sands of the Gobi Desert?

*Finding Gobi* is a wonderful, heartwarming story written by Aussie ultramarathon runner and author Dion Leonard. I flew through the story in a matter of hours; beautifully written, filled with heartfelt emotion and always the little dog who takes everyone's hearts. An amazing true story about an incredible journey, and one I highly recommend. With thanks to my daughter from whom I borrowed the book after she recommended it to me.

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### MaryG2E says

5★s

Ex-pat Australian Dion Leonard is an ultra marathon runner, who takes part in 5 day races staged in extreme settings. Like the Sahara, Kalahari and Gobi Deserts. Early in the 2016 event his path crosses that of a cute, skinny little terrier, who then follows him through exceptionally harsh conditions. He names the appealing little stray 'Gobi' after the region in which he is competing. By the end of the race, he has decided that he will do his best to adopt Gobi and take her home to Edinburgh. He had no idea just how difficult that challenge would turn out to be. In the ensuing days, left in the care of a local family, Gobi goes missing in the remote city of Urumqi. Leonard begins a desperate search to find her somewhere in the enormous expanses of rural China.

The story which unfolded after the race is fascinating, and Leonard's easy writing style kept me glued to the pages, as I was desperate to find out what happened to the stray dog.

But this is a much more substantial story than that of a man and a dog. While the development of the bond between man and dog is central to the story, I was also greatly intrigued by the gradual revelations that Leonard makes about his own life, and the beliefs that drive him. Also fascinating is the insider information about the sometimes cut-throat world of competitive ultra-marathon racing. Leonard has a powerful competitive streak in his nature, something which drives him to push his body and mind to the utmost limits of existence. The book provided me with interesting insights into the mindset of an extreme sportsman,

something that I genuinely appreciated. The reading experience is enhanced by a goodly number of appealing colour plates, and I was particularly drawn to the photos of Gobi, with her adorable doggy visage.

*"Waiting around in the flat...I thought about why finding Gobi had been so significant for me. It wasn't hard to figure it out. It was about keeping my promise.*

*"I'd vowed to bring Gobi back, no matter what it took. Finding her, keeping her safe...meant that I had kept my word. After all the ups and downs, I'd been able to rescue her. I'd given her the safety and security I had been so desperate for when my life went wrong as a kid."*

I really enjoyed this book, read it in one 6 hour sitting, and think it is a worthwhile read for anyone, not just dedicated dog owners like myself.

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### **Lauren Blakely says**

Mad huge big extraordinary love for this story! A great book for all ages! A story of hope, love, kindness and generosity!!!! And dogs!!!!!!!

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### **Julie says**

It's 4am and I just finished this book. A beautiful story of doggy devotion and perseverance. Dion's determination to save his little friend and to give her a forever home is inspirational. If you love dogs you absolutely must read this.

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### **||Swaroop|| says**

"Finding Gobi" is a rollercoaster and thrilling ride. This book is well written and an interesting read. This is another example of how dogged determination and faith will always have a positive result and an outcome.

The heartwarming story of Dion Leonard and Gobi. It represents the amazing connection between a human being and a dog and also shows how things can be achieved and accomplished when people work together, with a common goal.

It does feel many a time, that the whole story is too good to be a true story. Maybe that's how all incredible stories, people and living beings are - they are too good to be true and are usually rare!

Don't miss this wonderful story. Thanks Dion Leonard, for the strong belief and also for not giving up...

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### **Anne ? says**

A feel-good true tale about an ultra-marathon runner (think 155 miles across the Gobi Desert) and his experience when a little stray dog starts hanging out with him throughout his desert race, and the two form a special bond. The book covers a wide timeline: from the author's troubled childhood in Australia - to

becoming an ultra-marathon runner and living and training in Scotland - to his Gobi Desert race, and the adventures around the little dog he named Gobi.

This book is a combination memoir and animal read. I loved the feel-good elements with Gobi, but it was also fascinating to get a peek into the crazy and grueling experience of ultra-marathon running. If you're like me, you'll be shaking your head with incredulity as you read the chapters on the desert race and learn of the extreme lengths these runners go, both physically and emotionally in attempting to complete these tortuous races.

The story benefits greatly from Leonard's willingness to share his difficult experiences in childhood and his emotional journey to arrive at a place where this type of training and racing fulfills an important need for him. And it makes the bonding of Gobi and Leonard that much more special.

An endearing read for animal lovers, athletes, or anyone enjoying an inspiring tale of overcoming challenges, finding your zone in sport and in life, and opening yourself up to special connections!

Check out the physical book for pictures!! I read this in paperback, and there were some wonderful color pictures in the middle that brought the story alive, pictures of his childhood, of racing, and of course Gobi! You can also search the internet to see lots more adorable pictures of the adorable Gobi, and there are some great interviews with the author both on radio/audio and tv/video.

I originally got this book from the library, but I'm planning to buy a copy so I can read it again, as it's such an inspiring and feel-good tale that never grows old, and the pictures are great to look at.

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### **Andrea says**

This book gave me a bit more than I expected. I remember when Dion and Gobi were in the news as an unlikely ultra-marathon running duo in the far west of China, but if I thought I knew the story, I was wrong! The book covers the race, a bit of Dion's backstory, and then a lot of the book is spent on what happened in between the finish of the Xinjiang race and Dion's arrival back in the UK with Gobi. Despite knowing there would be a happy ending, there were times I was feeling the stress and couldn't help cheering them on towards a positive resolution of all the hurdles along the way.

Apart from the facts of Gobi's rescue, the author also takes us into his world of ultra-running. I'm a 'runner' too, but could never dream of experiencing this elite form of competition, so the insight was fascinating. Where our experience intersects is in our understanding that *For a lot of runners, the act of lacing up their shoes, heading out the door, and letting their lungs and their legs find their perfect rhythm as they run through nature is a beautiful thing. It's about freedom, peace, and the moment when all time seems to stop and the stresses of daily life fade.* Yeah!

Dion's a nice enough guy, but the real star of this story is little Gobi. She brought tears to my eyes a few times with her pluckiness and her unswerving love and loyalty.

*When I turned the final bend and saw the finish line, Gobi was there. She was sitting in the shade, on a rock,*

*scanning the horizon. For a moment she stayed motionless, and I wondered whether she'd recognize me. Then she was a blur of brown fur in motion. Leaping from the rock, she tore over the ground toward me, tail up, little tongue flapping. For the first time that day, I was smiling.*

Although more utilitarian than literary, the writing is fine - good enough to convey the highs and lows of emotion along with the facts. I was swept along and thoroughly enjoyed the ride.

*With thanks to NetGalley and the publisher for a digital copy to review.*

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### **Taylor B says**

Having followed Dion and Gobi's story since it broke last year, when it was announced that there was going to be a book about their journey, I knew I had to read it.

I will admit, I am not normally a fan of non-fiction books. However, the story was just so captivating that I had to know more. And boy, did I get it!

I was on the edge of my seat for most of the book. The twists, the turns, the sadness, the triumph... All of it utterly engrossed me, from the first page to the very last. I laughed, I cried (okay, I sobbed) and I cheered on this wonderful man and his little brown dog as they overcame insurmountable odds to be united forever.

This is a multi-faceted story which will appeal to a wide audience - runners, both professional and casual, animal lovers, young adults looking for some guidance in their lives, adults trying to overcome their own fears, fans of similar feel-good stories... The list is endless.

Overall, a well-written, easy-to-read book which leaves you feel warm and fuzzy inside. Simply wonderful.

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### **Pat says**

This true story was so heartwarming and a perfect antidote to the recent dark and bleak books I had read.

Dion Leonard, an Australian living in Edinburgh, had only been distance running for a few years when he went to China to compete in the Gobi ultra marathon - 155 miles over seven gruelling days (it makes me feel ill just thinking about it). In the desert the daytime temperatures got up to 130 degrees Fahrenheit or even higher so its a real test of endurance. On this race he encountered a little brown dog that seemed to latch onto him. The dog ran with Leonard for three of the stages, a distance of 77 miles. Think of those little legs going like the clappers! They named her Gobi because of where she was found. Leonard ran the longest and hottest stages without the dog because he thought the conditions would be too extreme for her so she was driven to the end of those stages. Nevertheless he missed the company and inspiration of his new little friend. After the race he vowed to do whatever it took to enable Gobi to come home to Edinburgh with him.

If he thought the ultra marathons were epic, they were nothing compared to the bureaucratic and logistical difficulties in getting one little dog from China to the UK. They finally did it but it was a long and difficult

road. Along the way Leonard met some wonderful people and made some amazing new friends. The help of strangers and the worldwide response to Gobi's plight blew him away. In these times of news about atrocities and hate and war it is refreshing to be reminded that the human spirit is indeed alive and well and that we have more in common with our fellow humans than we have differences.

If you need to pick yourself up or just want a 'feel good' book, read this and smile!

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### **Carol says**

#### **Gotta Love Gobi!**

**The story begins** when Dion Leonard takes a trip to China from Edinburgh to participate in a grueling 150 mile six-day seven-stage race in the excruciating heat of desert and dangerous mountain terrain...."the biggest race of his short running career." That unforgiving land is where Gobi appears out of the blue, looks Dion in the eyes and adopts him as her own....so cool.

**The first half** of the novel is pretty much dedicated to the race itself (*quite interesting*), its participants, and how winning is **not** always the main goal....surprising and gratifying to hear....and Yikes! What an accomplishment to just finish....in any position!

**The second half** explores the people of China, an adventurous, big spirited and loving little dog and the man who makes it his mission in life to bring her home....despite the many roadblocks....despite the frightening situations; and Wow! the support from **SO MANY** kindhearted people in the world that made it possible.

*(would be interesting to find out what **REALLY** happened to Gobi during her mysterious absence....don't you think?)*

Many thanks to St. Martin's Press and NetGalley for the complimentary ebook in exchange for review. Enjoyed the journey!

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### **Natalie Ward says**

So lucky to be able to read an advance copy of this book. I've followed the story from the very start and it is not just inspirational but heartwarming to know there are people that care this much. Beautiful story.

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### **Kirsti says**

Yep, here's another one! Most people who follow my reviews soon realize I read A LOT of animal memoir books. As soon as one becomes available, I must have it! They almost never fail to disappoint, and this one was no exception.

Dion Leonard is an extreme runner, after taking up the sport because his girlfriend/wife became interested in

running as a sport and encouraged him to join her. Not one to take things by halves, Dion found himself competing at an elite level, racing some top notch runners across harsh terrain and extreme temperatures. Along the way a little dog whom Dion called Gobi appeared beside him, and this book is not just the race, but the race to get Gobi back to the UK to join Dion and his family.

I love animals, and therefore I love animal books, especially if they have a happy ending. I hope that Dion and Gobi get many happy years together, and I know Gobi will be much happier with a family as opposed to on the streets of China. Excellent, personal writing too, Dion isn't afraid of confronting some personal demons. Adored this book, five stars!

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### **Sharon says**

Whilst competing in a 155 mile race through the Gobi desert in China Ultramarathon runner, Dion Leonard comes across a stray dog. Little did Deon know that this cute little stray would follow right beside him throughout his race. Over the course of the race Deon becomes very attached to the stray and ends up calling her, Gobi.

Once the race was completed, Dion and his wife knew they couldn't leave Gobi behind, but getting her out of the country would be a challenge. Whilst attempting to work out how they'd get her out of the country, Gobi disappears. With so many stray dogs in the region, it's seems near impossible that they will ever be able to find, Gobi again.

How could I not read about this adorable little dog. I must admit I am attracted to books that have dogs on the cover or any animal on the cover for that matter. And with such a cute face I just had to find out what her story was all about and I'm so happy I did. A fantastic, heartwarming true story about the strong bond between a man and a dog. I absolutely enjoyed this story and I have no hesitation in highly recommending it to anyone who enjoys a good story.

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### **Sean Peters says**

What Can I say.... I missed this story and the internet chaos the first time around...

But I am so happy with this book I know the story thankfully!

This his an incredible heart warming, touching, fantastic story, with warmth, humble that touches your heart, more so if like me you are an animal lover....

I understand fully how the love of an animal can touch your heart, so much and would have done exactly the same as Dion....

This is not only a story of an incredible dog, but of an incredible couple, who changed their lives for six months to bring back the lovely dog Gobi...

Dion writes this book from the heart, and his story explains his character, a story that shows the man he is, a man that I admire and respect for his heart and courage to battle through some hard times.

A story that touches you, how good mankind can be, how a story touches many people all around the world, especially one lady who followed the story from the start everyday...

The heartache and worry, I felt it so much, just loosing my cat from the garden for a couple of hours and I think my heart will break !

Loved this book, loved the story of greatness, support and touching humanity. Dion tells this story so well...

Dion thanks, and keep hold of that great wife that supported you 100% and a firm that you worked for that gave you such great support...

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### **Jennifer ~ TarHeelReader says**

#### **5 beautiful, determined stars to Finding Gobi! ? ? ? ? ?**

In 2016, Dion Leonard was participating in a race across the Gobi Desert, over 155 miles in fact, when he found a stray dog who kept up with him step for step, over 80 miles. That alone had me in tears just thinking about the determination of the dog to keep up with a human with whom she had quickly bonded.

Later, it was Leonard's determination to reunite with Gobi that made my heart ache and flutter. A story of love between humans and dogs, and filled with hope and strength, Finding Gobi is a must-read for any animal lover.

Thank you to Dion Leonard, Thomas Nelson/Harper Collins, and Netgalley for the ARC. Finding Gobi is available now!

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