



## All Creatures Great and Small

*James Herriot*

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**All Creatures Great and Small** James Herriot

**The classic multimillion copy bestseller**

Delve into the magical, unforgettable world of James Herriot, the world's most beloved veterinarian, and his menagerie of heartwarming, funny, and tragic animal patients.

For over forty years, generations of readers have thrilled to Herriot's marvelous tales, deep love of life, and extraordinary storytelling abilities. For decades, Herriot roamed the remote, beautiful Yorkshire Dales, treating every patient that came his way from smallest to largest, and observing animals and humans alike with his keen, loving eye.

In *All Creatures Great and Small*, we meet the young Herriot as he takes up his calling and discovers that the realities of veterinary practice in rural Yorkshire are very different from the sterile setting of veterinary school. Some visits are heart-wrenchingly difficult, such as one to an old man in the village whose very ill dog is his only friend and companion, some are lighthearted and fun, such as Herriot's periodic visits to the overfed and pampered Pekinese Tricky Woo who throws parties and has his own stationery, and yet others are inspirational and enlightening, such as Herriot's recollections of poor farmers who will scrape their meager earnings together to be able to get proper care for their working animals. From seeing to his patients in the depths of winter on the remotest homesteads to dealing with uncooperative owners and critically ill animals, Herriot discovers the wondrous variety and never-ending challenges of veterinary practice as his humor, compassion, and love of the animal world shine forth.

James Herriot's memoirs have sold 80 million copies worldwide, and continue to delight and entertain readers of all ages.

## All Creatures Great and Small Details

Date : Published May 6th 2014 by St. Martin's Griffin (first published 1972)

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Author : James Herriot

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## From Reader Review All Creatures Great and Small for online ebook

### Tracey says

James Herriot's books are, for me, the ultimate in comfort books. Which is odd, it occurred to me while listening to this audiobook; there's blood and gore and uterine explorations and knackerings and death and cruelty... There is casual mention of deeds and practices which would turn PETA's collective hair white. But I've been reading these books since I was about ten. (Which, considering the language, is surprising. Them Yorkshire farmers were salty, mind.) And then there was the wonderful tv series.

That last is what made the audiobook ideal: the reader is Christopher Timothy, who played James in the series (alongside my beloved Peter Davison as Tristan). I think he's one of those I'll follow anywhere, listen to anything he reads. He's perfect. Not just because I know him so well in the role already – he is a warm, funny, compassionate reader, wonderful at the accents and natural in his delivery.

Just like Alf Wight, better known as James Herriot. The things I mentioned before – well, they were simply a part of life on a Yorkshire farm, in a Yorkshire veterinary practice in the first half of the 20th century. It was as it was, there were no better treatments than some of the medieval remedies used, and for the most part animals were well kept because they were vital to the livelihood of their owners. There is a surprising lack of sentiment overall, whether the animal in question is a pig or a puppy, a horse or a heifer.

Which isn't to say the stories are strictly cool and clinical – not by a long mark. Tricki Woo is the perfect embodiment of the series as a whole. The pampered Pekingese "son" of a rich widow, he is a good-natured little furball whose ailments tend to stem mainly from that pampering. And when he goes flop-bott or shows other symptoms which alarm his Mrs. Pumphrey, "Uncle Herriot" is summoned on to the scene at once. The reward for James's promptitude is baskets from London at Christmas (I can't even fathom how expensive that would be, sent all the way to the Yorkshire Dales in the 1930's) along with other periodic delicacies – so James, naturally, has a mercenary fondness for the Peke. But he is also genuinely fond of the dog for his own self, as a personality, and of Mrs. Pumphrey as well. And balancing it all out like a splash of lemon juice is Mrs. Pumphrey's chauffeur, responsible for the spasmodic bouts of exercise she penitently orders, along with the role of body servant to the dog, and he loathes Tricki with a deep and burning passion. (And when the pig Nugent comes along, there is much hilarity.)

So, yes, there is some cringing as we visit the knacker's yard, or when some archaic remedy is brought out. But it merely acts in the same lemon juice fashion on the warmth found in the daily interactions with the farmers and peers and kids with their goldfish, the dogs and cats and horses and pigs and cows and sheep, the slowly disappearing way of life of the Dales farmers. The madness that is the Farnon brothers; the surely-hopeless love James has for a client's daughter – eccentric as it all can be, it still rings true, and that's the key. The book is, to co-opt what they might say about a particularly nice cob, as sound as a bell.

So, whether it should be a comfort book or not, it got me through a particularly bad night recently. The very definition of a comfort book. I love these stories.

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### Danielle The Book Huntress (Back to the Books) says

As a future veterinarian growing up, I was told by many people to read this book. It is apparently considered a rite of passage for those who want to enter the veterinary field. Finally I did read it when I was in my junior

year of college before vet school. It was wonderful. Herriot is a hilarious, heart-warming and talented author. He writes with an ease that is addictive to read. He manages to imbue every chapter with scenes that are laugh out loud funny, but also scenes that will bring tears to your eyes. He shows the foibles and flaws of human nature with a lovable grace that is endearing.

Although I didn't practice in Europe and I wasn't a mixed practitioner, he captured the first year out very well. You are clueless. You know just enough to know you need to learn more. You have to learn to deal with people before you can help animals. You have to learn to trust your abilities and your skills. You have learned to grieve for the ones you lose but keep fighting the good fight. Let me just say, looking back, I can totally identify with the young vet in this book.

You do not have to be a vet or wannabe vet to enjoy this book. If you like slice of life books, or books about people in everyday situations but approaching life with grace and humor, you will love this book. If you like animals, you will also enjoy this book. I have collected the others in the series to read because I want to read more about this character, patterned after Dr. Herriot himself.

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### **Mackey says**

Not a long review because it has been years since I read this book; however, it was and still is one of my favorite books. His love for all creatures enhanced my love for them and his stories are timeless. It is a must read for anyone who loves animals and a good read for those interested in a very well-told tale.

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### **Meg says**

I have this problem--an addiction, really--called BOOKS. I start reading one and I usually can't stop until I realize that awful smell is... ME!... or my kids do that incessant-tapping-on-my-shoulder thing to ask if dinnertime will be occurring before bedtime... (I know, I know. Probably shouldn't have put that in print. Now CPS is gonna come after me.)

Point being: This book was NOT like that. I could read one chapter each night, then put it down without my brain going all... twitchy (those of you fellow addicts know what I mean... you other better-adjusted readers, just take my word for it that "twitchy" is the perfect adjective). Could it be? A non-page-turner that I actually ENJOYED??? Why aren't there more books like this! I would be a much healthier person!

Herriot doesn't really have a through-plot (thus the non-page-turner quality), but each chapter presents a new, hilarious recollection from his young veterinary days in the Yorkshire countryside. You know, one of those "horses lifting you off the ground with their teeth, removing pig testicles, becoming the honorary uncle of a rich lady's spoiled pug" kind of reads. I must have laughed out loud at some point in every chapter. If you're looking for a fun little book that you can just pick up every once in a while that won't cause you to go all... twitchy... THIS IS IT! Just open the book and start reading anywhere! Read one chapter, five, the whole thing--doesn't matter. There's no real "story"... but you'll get a good laugh. Several, in fact.

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### **Tadiana ☆Night Owl? says**

4.5 stars. I adored this book and swallowed it whole when I first read it back in the day, and grabbed the

three sequels as soon as I could lay my hands on them. All four of these old paperback books still have a place of honor on my downstairs bookshelf, wherein reside all manner of classics, old SF and fantasy, ancient English lit textbooks, and other old books. It's quite the massive collection - a lifetime's worth of books that have been lovingly and thoughtfully - or sometimes not - collected and have survived the periodic purges.

Anyway, James Herriott (a pseudonym of James "Alf" Wight) was a Yorkshire veterinarian whose practice began in the 1940s (before many advances in modern medicine). He wrote this hugely successful series of semi-autobiographical books about his many years of veterinary practice amongst the farmers and people of Yorkshire. His tales are very episodic, often self-deprecating, sometimes poignant, sometimes silly, but always humorously told and heartwarming. Herriott affectionately sketches the old Yorkshire personalities so well, and his love for animals shines through on the pages.

A truly delightful read! These are lovely stories, especially if you're an animal lover.

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## **Jason Koivu says**

Oh dear heavens, a cow is having a difficult birth! A cat's sick! The local lord's thorough bred has skinned its knee! To live in a world where these are your most worrisome worries is to live in the world of James Herriot, the pen name of the real-life mid-20th century country vet of the Yorkshire Dales in northern England.

Loosely based on his experiences, these delightful tales ("drama cozies" I call them) take place in an idyllic setting: The Yorkshire Dales and the North York Moors...

Muker in Swaledale

Addingham, west of Harrogate

The Cleveland Way near Wainstones

The story begins with Herriot, a newly graduated vet, arriving at the home and veterinarian practice of Siegfried Farnon and his aloof, fun-loving brother Tristan, two eccentric fellows who provide a good deal of comic relief.

It's the 1930s and, although war is on the horizon, this first book in the series focuses on the not-so-tumultuous time prior, when the worst that could happen is that a farmer's flock of sheep contracts a contagious disease. Certainly a serious problem for the farmer, but in general the tension for these anecdotal stories, all cobbled together into one loose narrative, is on the light side...unless you're an animal lover, in which case you will feel your heart ripped out and replenished again and again.

Recent ads here on Goodreads for this book (must've been re-released?) have caused me to reflect again upon these books, and the tv version based on them, which I've enjoyed so very much over the years. I've come to realize that although the stars of the show are the vets and their animal patients, if you look deeper into this seeming bit of fluff, you'll find it's the Yorkshire folk who are the soul that truly breathes life into Herriot's writing. The people's connection to the land and their utter reliance upon their animals continual bonds the

reader to the *All Creatures...* books.

These stories will satisfy lovers of animals, animal husbandry, pre-WWII veterinarian practice (an industry in flux at the time), the English countryside and Yorkshire life specifically, as well as those looking for a light taste of pastoral humor. I liken reading Herriot to watching painter Bob "Happy Little Trees" Ross in action. It's soothing stuff.

PS: I enjoyed looking through pics of the Dales and Moors for this review so much that I'm going to add more. Let's call this the...

**\* \* \* PIX APPENDIX! \* \* \***

Upper Swaledale

23 Kirkgate, Thirsk (Home and practice of James Herriot)

Middleham Castle, home of King Richard III

Goatland Railroad Station (used in the first Harry Potter movie)

Whitby Abbey overlooking the bay (Dracula's temporary abode)

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### **Kellyn Roth says**

Nothing has ever been as charming, amusing, and almost magical as this series. The setting, the era, the writing style, the stories ... just lovely. I'd recommend it to any lover of animals, England, or the country.

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### **?Karen says**

I'm so glad to have discovered this classic on audio from OverDrive because its size may have scared me off otherwise. James Herriot is a wonderful story teller. A delightful true tale of James' beginnings as a veterinary surgeon in Yorkshire in the 1930s. His doubts about his early abilities, his probably bi-polar boss, and the antics of the boss' brother and the other citizens provide a lot of comic relief. The many farm animals he treated in addition to a few dogs were funny as well as heartwarming.

I would estimate that about 80% of these stories involved cows or horses giving birth, and what stories they

are. I never knew how complicated calving can be. Did James know during his studies how often his arms would be shoved up into a cow's hinter regions? Surely not.

The human, small town stories were insightful and warm. He had quite a way with both animals and people.

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### Debbie Zapata says

I've read this book so many times over the years, yet every single time I get to the last word on the last page I am ready to go back to chapter one and start all over. From the first day of Herriot's arrival at Skeldale House, being greeted by a tsunami of leaping, barking dogs, to the week of tuberculin testing that brings the book to a close, we share the moments of joy, laughter, tears, nerves, confidence, mix-ups and triumphs involved in his Yorkshire veterinary practice of the 1930's.

We meet the Farnon brothers and many interesting people around the Dales, not to mention wonderful animals that will live forever, just as the human characters will. Who could ever forget Tricki-Woo? Or that Labrador whose howling while coming out of the anesthetic drove poor Tristan half out of his mind? That huge farm horse that leaned so comfortably on Herriot while his foot was being examined...the list could go on and on.

It is always a pleasure to re-visit Darrowby, even when I know ahead of time how every crisis turns out. Herriot fills these pages with his love for his job, his joy for life, and his fascination with the people and animals around him. And if a story about any case makes Herriot appear a bit silly, it is still included, creating an even stronger sense of reality because we all have stories that *now* make us laugh but *then* made us cringe.

My thanks to Herriot for sharing everything with us, not only here but in all the other books he wrote: each one is a treasure.

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### Manybooks says

I have absolutely loved James Herriot's (or should I perhaps say Alfred Wight's) All Creatures Great and Small ever since I first read this book (which is actually an omnibus and consists of If Only They Could Talk and It Shouldn't Happen to a Vet) at the age of twelve (in the autumn of 1978, and thus, All Creatures Great and Small was in fact one of the first longer novels I read entirely in English, with a dictionary in hand of course, and aside from my immense reading pleasure, I was also exceedingly proud of myself that in 1978, and therefore only two years after our family had immigrated to Canada from Germany, I was able to read a full-length English language novel and one not really conceptualised for children either entirely on my own). And yes indeed, I also have been reading and rereading All Creatures Great and Small, as well as the rest of James Herriot's veterinarian memoirs repeatedly and almost religiously over the past decades (at least twenty times, I think, and that is actually a more than conservative estimate at best, as sometimes, I would actually reread All Creatures Great and Small as soon as I had finished).

Now with regard to my multiple rereadings of All Creatures Great and Small and what I have tended to take with me at different times of my life, when I was first introduced to James Herriot at the age of twelve, my reading pleasure was almost entirely based on the engaging, often delightfully humorous but also at times sad and heartbreaking episodes of the author's experiences as a veterinarian (I laughed delightfully reading about Mrs. Prumphrey, her pampered and spoiled Pekinese Tricki Woo and later her piglet Nugent and how

she calls the office in a panic when she thinks that young Nugent has a prostrate condition only to be told by James that all healthy male pigs relieve themselves in said manner, but was most definitely crying at the episode where poverty-stricken Mr. Dean's fourteen year old canine companion has to be euthanised and how old and widowed Mr. Dean in appreciation of the kindness shown by James, who not only is gentle and caring but also does not bother to charge Mr. Dean, gives James a treasured relict of a bygone and remembered celebration, gives him a cigar). But then later, as an older teenager and young adult (as a university student), while the animal episodes were of course and indeed still of the utmost importance (and a main reading joy), I now also very much appreciated the nuanced characterisation of the author, of how James Herriot portrays not only himself (and always with self deprecation and even much satirisation) but ALL of the human personages depicted and shown (from Siegfried and Tristan Farnon to the many clients encountered, and for most of them, except perhaps for the truly and utterly always horrible and nasty Sidlow family, James Herriot has presented his human characters both with much love and with gentle criticism, with both tenderness and humour, including his entire courtship with his future wife Helen, where he certainly does not spare his verbal rod criticising himself and pointing out the many courtship mistakes and faux pas he makes).

And now, as an older adult with several advanced literature degrees under my belt, my appreciation of All Creatures Great and Small and its sequels has indeed come full circle, as aside from the delightful animal episodes and the generally astute and oh so wonderful and engaging character portrayals, I have been noticing how James Herriot has also and equally taken the entire countryside of the Yorkshire Dales, and so glowingly has he described the latter that the Dales, that Yorkshire, are as much a character in James Herriot's memoirs as the animal and human personages presented and featured (but truly, while I might have only recently become fully linguistically and philosophically aware of this aspect of James Herriot's writing, this has in fact I strongly believe been part of my reading experience and joy from day one, as ever since I first read the All Creatures Great and Small books, I have desperately wanted to travel to England and see the Yorkshire Dales in person, and yes, reading James Herriot's descriptions of Yorkshire cooking has also made me both try and absolutely love such delicacies as Yorkshire Pudding and Wensleydale Cheese, and especially Yorkshire Pudding, I would never have likely had the opportunity to encounter otherwise, as my family is German, and my mother especially has always had that stereotypical and in my opinion annoyingly silly attitude that ALL British cooking is by its very nature bland, over-cooked and tasteless).

Highly, highly recommended (and while I guess I should leave the caveat that both smoking and drinking are indeed rather heavily featured in All Creatures Great and Small and its sequels, frankly, there is at least in my opinion, nothing even remotely inappropriate about this, and yes, it would be a total and unforgivable affront to me, if the James Herriot books were ever deliberately censored, if the scenes of drinking and/or smoking were ever to be unilaterally removed, as especially the smoking scenes are simply a historical reflection of time and place, and while especially with regard to young Tristan Farnon and even James Herriot on occasion, there are indeed a few choice episodes of drunkenness and over-indulgence, the vast majority of the All Creatures Great and Small pub scenes actually show and present rather glowingly and positively the perhaps for some North Americans somewhat inconvenient truth that in much of Europe, people do very regularly frequent neighbourhood pubs, but often if not even generally only drink one to three small ales at most, often taking hours to finish their pints, visiting pubs more for social engagement, for conversation and human company than for the purpose of getting drunk).

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## Ana says

What would the world be like without animals?

I can't believe I've never heard of James Herriot before. He writes the most beautiful books. There's a lot I

could say about this book. But I won't. I'll just say one thing. Animals are awesome, both great and small.

Here are a few pictures of my babies.

I don't actually own this squirrel. She likes to sneak in, steal my vegetables, and tease my cats.

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### **Mike (the Paladin) says**

There are no negatives in this book. When I first read it (them as I read Herriot's vet stories one book after another) I would read them late at night in bed after my wife had gone to sleep. Frequently I'd be laughing silently, but laughing so hard I'd shake the bed. Now and again I'd look over and see her just looking at me having been awakened by my convulsions of mirth. Then I'd end up reading aloud for hours...costing us both much needed rest.

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### **Tom Mathews says**

I've read a lot of James Herriot's stories over my life but haven't read this first volume of his beloved series of memoirs. It is delightful, touching and often knee-slappingly funny. I highly recommend it. FYI: The audiorecording of the book is narrated by Christopher Timothy, the actor who played Herriot on the BBC series based on the books.

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### **Dale says**

It's semi-astonishing that I've been married to a veterinarian for a year and a half, which followed a year and nine months of dating/engagement, in which time I went on many emergency calls with her to treat sick horses (and the occasional goat), adopted a dog and a second cat to go with the first one my dearly beloved already owned, and various and other sundry proximity-to-a-vet type stuff has gone down AND YET only

now have I finally said to myself, "Hunh, I should read that James Herriot guy."

If I had to sum up All Creatures Great and Small in two words it would be "overwhelmingly pleasant", with a temptation to throw in a "delightful" as well. Herriot writes with charming self-effacement about his early days as a country veterinarian in England in the late 30's. He has a never-ending supply of anecdotes, most of them funny, the rest simply heartwarming. He learns the hard way that his years of book learning don't compare to the things you actually learn on the job; that you can't argue with the boss even when they completely contradict themselves because, hey, they're the boss; that losing track of how many pints of beer (or tumblers of whiskey) you've had on a first date (or a job interview) is a bad idea. (Obviously, bonus points in my estimation for the number of funny drunk stories along the way.) But the best thing the book has going for it is the way that it unfailingly reinforces the simple notion that life is good. Every story has a happy ending, whether it's the hours spent getting kicked and wearing himself out in the freezing cold middle of the night to help a cow deliver twin calves, or the last-minute acquisition of an experimental vaccine that saves a litter of kittens from an epidemic sweeping a farm, or even the vindication after putting a horse to sleep of knowing that it really was the best thing to end the animal's suffering. And every time Herriot feels like a fool for choosing the arduous, unrewarding life of a country vet he breathes the fresh air and feels the sun on his face or watches a mother animal lick its newborn baby clean or gets a fresh-baked pork pie from a grateful farmer's wife and he realizes it's all worth it. That's the main thing I want out of life - to never run out of those moments where, even though I can still recall and recount the difficult, frustrating, maddening things that happen all the time, I still revel in the sweet moments that make it all worthwhile. And for a book to sustain that exact feeling for 500 pages is quite a feat.

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## Anne says

Sale's over for this book, too. Boo.

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This book, the first in a series of memoirs by a Yorkshire country vet, is one of my favorite books ever. I read the whole set repeatedly throughout my childhood and, even now, I reread them every year or two. They are amazing, and this one is on sale for Kindle right now at \$1.99. If you've never read James Herriot, please, please get a copy and try it on. It's the perfect thing for any animal lover. Get a copy here.

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