



Perking the Pansies - Jack and Liam move to Turkey

Jack Scott

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Jack and Liam, fed up with kiss-my-arse bosses and nose-to-nipple commutes, quit their jobs and move to a small town in Turkey. Join the culture-curious gay couple on their bumpy rite of passage in a Muslim country. Meet the oddballs, VOMITs, vetpats, emigreys, semigreys, debauched waiters and middle England miseries. When bigotry and ignorance emerge from the crude underbelly of Turkey's expat life, Jack and Liam waver. Determined to stay the course, the happy hedonistas hitch up their skirts, move to the heart of liberal Bodrum and fall in love with their intoxicating foster land. Enter Jack's irreverent world for a right royal dose of misery and joy, bigotry and enlightenment, betrayal and loyalty, friendship, love, earthquakes, birth, adoption and a senseless murder. Perking the Pansies will make you laugh out loud one minute and sob into your crumpled tissue the next. "Scott pulls no punches. A good read and hopefully the first of many by new boy on the block." Jane Akatay, journalist "An insightful tale of life abroad - with a twist - from the pen of a serial people watcher. Expat Jack lays his characters bare along with his heart and soul, "Kym Ciftci, On the Ege Magazine, Ontheege.com" Jack and Liam bring a certain je ne sais quoi to the souks and heap a plate of dry British wit to their Ottoman misadventures, "Charles Ayres, author, Impossibly Glamorous Impossiblyglamorous.com..". hilarious, saucy, witty, heartwarming and incredibly moving, Perking the Pansies is chock full of odd characters and odder situations. Jack Scott has a way with words and proves that it is the relationships we surround ourselves with that matter most, "Linda A Janssens, Writer and Co-Author, Turning Points, Adventuresinexpatland.com

Perking the Pansies - Jack and Liam move to Turkey Details

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From Reader Review Perking the Pansies - Jack and Liam move to Turkey for online ebook

Andrew Critchley says

Absolutely delightful. I really enjoyed Perking the Pansies with its unique perspective and take on expat life in Turkey. The book is beautifully written and highly engaging - often humorous and, at times, genuinely touching. My only minor gripe was that, other than the central characters Jack and Liam, whose relationship is wonderfully captured both in terms of the clear love between them as well as well as its foibles and frailties, some of the characterisation is a tad 'Heroes and Villains' two dimensional. However, that minor gripe aside, I would highly recommend the book and will certainly be going in search of further work from Jack Scott.

Evelyn says

Jack's memoir of his an Liam's move to Turkey is a fantastic read. He captured the rollercoaster of emotions that comes with an international move beautifully. His descriptions of his fellow expats were vivid and funny, yet he didn't overlook the darker side of their personalities, their relationships and their lives. Expat or not, I'd recommend you read it.

Terry says

Excellent. Witty! Fast read - true stories that read like fiction!

Lou Kief says

A Must Read for anyone considering living outside the box they were born in!

Jack Scott did it. He managed to bring the "expat experience" to life. I've been one for over a decade and can say with all honesty: Anyone who wants to feel what it's like to live outside your home country, culture and native language couldn't find a more accurate and hilarious description. I applaud your courage to tell it like it really is and stand in awe of your ability to bring both Turks and their culture into the light of day. You magically bring to life the confusing and oh-so-quirky personalities of people who populate the often embarrassing world of expats. My sides still hurt from laughing. Kudos on writing a beautiful, tender and truly funny book that I can't wait to read again.

Linda A Janssen says

Many may dream of leaving the rat race behind for a new life in an exotic locale, but it is the rare few that actually follow through. When gay couple Jack and Liam choose breathtakingly beautiful Muslim Turkey in

which to make their fantasy life of leisure come true, you know you're in for an exciting ride. At turns hilarious, saucy, witty, heartwarming and incredibly moving, *Perking the Pansies* (pun fully intended) is chock full of odd characters and odder situations. Jack Scott has a way with words, deftly weaving images and accurately capturing the idiosyncrasies and foibles of this all too human lot. In doing so, he pulls back the curtain on prejudice and acceptance, the underlying thrills, frustrations and challenges that come with living in a different culture, and the conflicting emotions that tug at expatriates enjoying life far from family members and cherished friends. In the end, Jack proves that it is the relationships we surround ourselves with that matter most. All in all, a terrific read.

Lindsay Feliz says

This book will appeal to all types of people. Lovers of Turkey will enjoy the colourful description of the place and the people; gay men will empathise with the experiences and the feelings expressed; expats will smile and nod their heads sagely at the description of other expats and the description of the highs and lows of expatriate life.

Perking the pansies is an easy read, very descriptive, it will make you smile in places and bring a tear to your eyes in others. It is an accurate description of the culture shock experienced by most ex pats, when the dream becomes reality and the hassles and challenges of living overseas in a different culture, with a different language kick in.

I enjoyed this book, and it made me, as a fellow expat realise that I was not alone in my experiences and feelings.

David Gee says

Jack and Liam, two forty-something Londoners - "*a pair of poofy pioneers in the Wild East*" - moved to Turkey a few years ago, wondering how well their in-your-face lifestyle would go down in a Muslim country. Well, it went down pretty well. Maybe it helps that, as Jack observes, Turkey is a land where "*sexual ambiguity was an art form.*"

Unlike the majority of gay ex-pats, Jack and Liam are there for each other, not to carve a swathe through the beguiling natives. In their beach-side village they have to socialize with their fellow exiles: mismatched couples and a few unhappy singletons. As I discovered when I lived in the Persian Gulf, it's odd how some of the most bigoted of Brits choose to live or work in a land peopled by people they look down on. Jack and Liam's "live and let live" philosophy does not infect their neighbours. They move to a dinky old stone cottage in the heart of Old Bodrum which feels more like the real Turkey (a bit less so today, I'm pretty sure).

The repartee between Jack and Liam is rather reminiscent of *Round the Horne's* Julian and ('my friend') Sandy. Mr Scott has a nice way with a metaphor. An elderly closet-queen is "*mincing through Narnia.*" In winter their Anatolian retreat is "*an igloo with a view.*" But they get through arctic cold, blistering summers, infestations of flies and cockroaches, money worries and family health problems back in Blighty. The perils of adopting a Turkish baby for two of their friends seem greater than those of being a gay couple, but maybe not: a gay barman they are fond of is savagely murdered.

Safely ensconsed back in the UK (as are Jack and Liam), I enjoy reading about other people's experiences of post-colonial life in places where most ex-pats still behave like old colonials. **Perking the Pansies** is a

delicious addition to the tradition which, for me, began with Gerald Durrell.

McKerley & Schippers says

Diamonds are no longer a girl's best friend. After reading Perking the Pansies, I now know for sure it's gay men.

Sort of learned this earlier in life when I was living in Greece in the eighties, working as a tour leader, blonde, 20 and single.

To escape the relentless "kamaki" of the Greek men, I would spend much of my time with male, mostly gay, colleges from the tourist industry and as a direct result, mostly in gay bars.

In many of them I was the only woman, except for the one time when I got offered a drink by a female american tourleader, whom I thought was there for the same reason as I was. My gay friends slapped their knees and couldnt stop laughing and yet it was the most loving protective mockery. For gay guys know a lot about women. They understand why she says something else than she thinks.

What makes gay men 'different' is that they are often more observant, with an eye for a wide range of emotions ranging from suffering to humor (or a combination of the two)

Its this pleasure, I got out of reading "perking the pansies".

It's vulnerable, hilarious, insightful and made me feel at home to an extend where I felt I was on a holiday in Turkey staying with Jack and Liam.

Even the goodbye at the end of the book was tearful, for I could have read another volume of their adventures and stay on longer.

A unique book.

Matthew says

Jack Scott must be sitting on a goldmine. For apparently Perking the Pansies is his first book. I'm guessing he must have kept some diaries in the 20+years he spent in social care before relocating with husband Liam to Turkey.

Scott's definitely got an eye for the poetic. Here he is, describing seeing his future hometown for the first time: "As we breached the brow of the hill, we caught our first picture postcard glimpse of Yalikavak shimmering at the end of a lush valley below like randomly scattered sugar cubes on an overgrown lawn." E17, where the couple relocated from, it ain't.

There follows tales of expatlandia. Some of them comic, the characterization of some of the lower life almost Dickensian in detail. The rest tragic, including stories of abduction and, even, murder.

Jack and Liam play the expat game in Yalikavak. But by their own rules. Later, they immerse themselves in a more going-native-style adventure by upping sticks and moving to the largely expat-free Bodrum.

Born out of the blog of the same name, Perking the Pansies is an accessible read. Engaging in tone, it's like Scott's perpetually dipping into his wallet to buy the next round. Now how about those diaries, Jack?

Jae says

Perking the Pansies was my companion on a long and boring journey and boy did it perk me up! Loved the writing - easy flow and sharp, witty turns of phrase - and the story had me rivetted from the start. I enjoyed especially the way in which the author opened up the Turkish culture for us to see in to its morals, mores and

quirks. Richly painted and stylishly rendered.

My heart went out to these two guys doing battle with the locals and it was cheering to witness their victories, large and small, in a world which they surely knew would be potentially hostile to their gay-ness. How lovely to discover that at times it was precisely those locals who came to their rescue. The exploits of the other expats had me reaching for a tissue to wipe away the laughter tears - being admitted to the inner sanctum of expatland was delicious! How brave and how exciting to have plumped for such an adventure over quiet retirement - don't we all wish we had the gumption to do something bonkers?

Magi says

Having discovered Jack Scott's 'Perking the Pansies' blog through a friend, I fast became an avid fan of his vivacious vocabulary, and wonderfully wicked sense of humour.

So, when news of a book came out, it was quickly added to my 'must have' list for this year's winter reading. Perking the Pansies is like looking at life on the Bodrum Peninsula through the lens of an extremely candid camera. If you pick up the book expecting yet another tale of 'fun in the sun' from an expat point of view, then you'll be wrong. What you get is a laugh out loud narrative of a couple committed to each other, and others they meet along the way that maybe should have just been committed.

Even though the names are different, from the old school Clement (who headed for the hills), to Tar?q of the 'new teeth, there are people among the paragraphs that expats the world over will swear they have met before. The 'almost adoption' of Adalet will have those hard of heart reaching for the tissue box.

From beginning to end, the desire to find out what happens next has you turning the pages at breakneck speed, much the same pace as the story moves itself. I can't wait for the next installment...

Hilary Fullberry says

This book rather surprised me and I wasn't expecting to like it as much as I did (it was recommended to me by a friend who holidays in Turkey). It starts with the writer and his partner selling up and moving to Turkey and describes the people (mainly English) they meet when they arrive. Fine. Turkey is the backdrop to the story, and a gay couple in a Muslim country is an interesting context, but what saved this book for me was that it didn't fall into the trap of so many moving abroad books. It doesn't drone on about the countryside and picking fruit in orchards etc (a genre that's been done to death in my opinion) nor does it overdress the story in a rose-coloured view of Turkish culture etc. Sure, I really enjoyed the Peter Mayle Provence books and found the Chris Stewart series entertaining, but we don't really need any more in my humble opinion. This book is more about how they cope with the expat community they get sucked into, and I found the honesty and satirical writing quite refreshing and really funny. It's a kind of grown up and better written version of Benidorm through the eyes of a gay Londoner.

I think what impressed me most was the tautness of the writing and the plot and that's something a lot of travel memoirs fail to deliver. I didn't have time to get bored, Maybe it was all a bit too fast in places. Without me realising it, as the story unfolded I got gently drawn in. Again, unlike many living abroad books, this one has an interesting story and it's put together with some skill. The book is peppered with references to the writer's family and there are some touching references to an ex lover, including a sensitively handled scene in a cemetery. There are other themes interwoven into the book, including an adoption which goes horribly wrong (I did find it frustrating to not have this concluded by the end of the book) and a rather disturbing murder. Along the way, there are some really funny moments (check out the description of France

in the opening chapters!). The ending is great. It may not be War and Peace but I don't understand other comments about the book lacking a cohesive story. If anything, I would slow the story down a little.

At the end of the book, there's a glossary of Turkish phrases, a nice touch (I've already memorised a few) and there's also a breakdown of expat types which I think would translate to most countries.

All in all, it's difficult to categorize this book. I wouldn't say it's about being a homosexual or being in Turkey, although both of those feature. It's just a really funny and well put together account of trying life in a different country. I'm more curious about Turkey now and would consider a visit (armed with my elementary Turkish!). It's full on satire and maybe not everyone will get that or like that style, but having read many many books in this genre, this stands out for all the right reasons. I read it in two days and was disappointed when it came to an end, and that says it all really. I gather the writer writes a blog. I'm afraid I'm not a lover of blogs at all and I hope he concentrates his efforts instead on writing more books. It's nice to see someone writing with a unique style in the travel genre.

Michael Nayper says

I read the Kindle version, was impressed, so bought the paperback, which is what I tend to do if a book grabs me. Fast, funny and in places very touching. It's quite biting in places but I like this kind of writing; crisp, fast-moving and without too much fill-in. The relationship between the two main characters is touching and helps the book's balance. I've never lived abroad, so couldn't identify with everything (and I'm not sure Turkey would be my first choice) but the book kept my attention throughout.

Backtobodrum says

A funny, perceptive take on Turkey. You'll enjoy this book even if you have never set foot in the country. If you have, get set for several hours of joy. My only complaint is that the sequel isn't out yet and I'm wanting more of Jack Scott's astute observations.

Lenora says

I loved this book, I don't know where time went when I was reading it! I knew that the book had been written off the back of a blog and I was curious to see how the blog format would transfer into a novel or whether it would seem like a disjointed series of posts. I was not disappointed, Jack's sparkling prose, and fast paced style was treat to read. Where he really excelled, was in drawing acidic pen portraits of the oddballs, bigots and grotesques inhabiting the expat bubble, I laughed so much and could almost see these people (I think anyone who has travelled will recognise more than a few of them - just hope you don't see yourself in any of those portraits!).

Perking the Pansies is not just a hilarious swipe at Daily Mail readers abroad, it also presents some genuinely warm and affectionate portraits of those that Jack and Liam became close too. Their respect for both the Turkey and the Turkish people also shines through. In places it was very moving, yet any mawkish sentimentality was deftly avoided by a wry comment or amusingly acerbic put down in just the right place.

At times the novel seems to coast along on the effervescent surface of things, despite breaking out of the expat bubble and finding more like-minded emigrays and locals to befriend, it seemed initially that some of the deeper conflicts of being homosexual in a very traditional country might be glossed over. However this was not the case and Jack did meditate on the contradictions of the ambiguity of sexuality in Turkey and the consequences of being to openly gay.

This is not a deep or profound book - it's not trying to be. It's a wonderfully good read - funny, acerbic, generous, moving and highly entertaining and I loved the expat glossary at the back - it could easily be the basis of an ethnographic study of Brits (and others) abroad! I can't wait for more from this very witty writer.
