



If Only They Could Talk

James Herriot

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When the newly qualified vet, James Herriot, arrives in the small Yorkshire village of Darrowby, he has no idea of the new friends he will meet or adventures that lie ahead. From the author whose books inspired the BBC series "All Creatures Great and Small", this first volume of unforgettable memoirs chronicles James Herriot's first years as a country vet, with the signature storytelling magic that has made him a favourite the world over. Here is a book for all those who find laughter and joy in animals, and who know and understand the magic of wild places and beautiful countryside.

If Only They Could Talk Details

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Author : James Herriot

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From Reader Review If Only They Could Talk for online ebook

Anna says

A pretty funny account of the life of a young vet in Yorkshire, with interesting characters, both animal and human.

It was a really hard world, before antibiotics and modern medicines, out in the freezing countryside at all hours, but he was content with that life, and that comes through his writing.

Eileen Monroe says

I loved James Herriott's books when I was a kid... he was one of the reasons I always wanted to be a vet...

Sarah says

If Only They Could Talk is a memoir of sorts chronicling James Herriot's first year in a veterinarian practice in the small English town of Darrowby. Composed of short accounts of day-to-day life in the practice, each story draws you further into the lives of James Herriot, his employer Siegfried Farnon, and Siegfried's brother Tristan.

I still remember watching *All Creatures Great and Small* on VHS with my parents, and this book gives off the same sense of nostalgia. *If Only They Could Talk* is lighthearted, hilarious, and meaningful, and I can't wait to continue reading this series.

Caroline says

This had me guffawing with laughter in places. Such a warm and cosy read too - in spite of the often harsh life being described (it was freezing up on the Yorkshire moors in winter).

What an endearing bunch of characters. It was a bedtime read, and I realised that every night I was looking forward to going to bed, just so I could read some more....

Excellent.

Palsay says

Suka banget dengan cerita-ceritanya si James di buku ini...

Suka dengan penggambaran alam pedesaan dan orang-orangnya serta uniknya duo Farnon yang kadang bikin terpingkal-pingkal sendiri.

Dalam bayangan saya, si James ini menceritakan kejadian lucu yang dialaminya dengan muka lempeng, soalnya bahasanya juga lempeng aja sih...cuma pembaca yang membayangkan situasinya yang ga bisa menahan tawa.

Contohnya pas Sigfried menekankan pentingnya kebersihan dalam penanganan kasus hewan, malah jadi konyol karena ternyata kondisi di lapangan tidak berjalan sesuai harapan.

Buku ini benar-benar menghibur, sampai saya langsung ingin mengulang membacanya lagi setelah halaman terakhir ditutup.

Jonathan says

What it is:

A blue-collar charm autobiography by a guy who 'lucked out' by landing a veterinarian job straight out of school during the Great Depression.

Who should read it:

Lovers of Bill Bryson, for one. Really, if you love animals, or love the folksy narrator thing, this book is for you.

Strengths: Pacing, Variety of Tales, Humour/Gravity Balance, Characterization

Rating: 4 out of 5. This is a nice, quick, enjoyable read, though it will also have you looking to the dictionary often.

Ivan says

This book made me cry. I had a hard time catching my breath. It was so damn funny. It was also poignant. I love the time period - 1930s - and the locale - York. This took me forever to read. It's basically vignettes so I'd read one story and set the book down for a week. But I prefer to think of it as savoring. It was so good, and extremely well written. The humor sprung up naturally from the situations and never seemed forced. I really can't recommend this enough. I know, I know, I'm late to this party - this book has been out for 40 years and I'm just now discovering it - but that doesn't make it any less impressive. Enjoy.

Judith Johnson says

Ineffable joy! Beautifully-written, lots of laugh out loud moments, stories of the author's first year of practice as a newly-qualified vet in the Yorkshire Dales. Set in the late 1930s, dark times in many ways with the Second World War brewing, but greatly comforting in the humour and shared humanity shown. I was talking to someone yesterday and she told me she often went back to Herriot's books in difficult times. I see from my name and date bought on the flyleaf that I first read these 40 years ago. Wow! Times flies, indeed!

Leseparatist says

As charming as I remembered it, and very interesting. Warm and perfect for out-loud reading with family. Took us a good while to get to the end, but the time was well-spent.

Sharon says

Anyone who knows me, knows how much I love animals. What many may not know is how author James Herriot's books inspired me to be a veterinarian. As a child, the answer to "What do you want to be when you grow up" was always "a vet."

While that childhood dream did not come true, I have never lost the fondness for Herriot's work. So, when this book turned up on our office swap shelf, I nabbed it.

"If Only They Could Talk" is a UK-issued book consisting of selected stories from All Creatures Great And Small. I was glad to see some of my long-time favorites from Herriot's little Darrowby community, like Mrs. Pumphrey and her precious Tricky Woo, the selection of laconic farmers with their cows, and (of course) the irrepressible Farnon brothers with whom Herriot practices.

As I read this book, it felt like I was spending time with a dear old friend. Sure, all of the stories were known to me from previous reading; it didn't matter one bit, because I still smiled just as broadly as the first time I read them.

Wow says

4.5 stars

I originally picked this up because of the interesting blurb and the compact size of my edition.

I have never heard of this book or the author not have seen the inspired TV series by it.

Each chapter has the story of one of his Many adventures.

No matter how sad or heartbreaking the tale is , his tone is hilariously funny.

His depiction of the times at Yorkshire will leave the reader with warm feelings of nostalgia.

It was a book to read at hard times for pick me ups.

I will read his other books !

Bottom line is it's highly recommend !

Sharon says

Arriving in the small Yorkshire village of Darrowby newly qualified veterinary surgeon, James Herriot has no idea what is in store for him. Having only been qualified for the last seven months, James knew it wouldn't be easy, but he was up to the challenge or so he believed.

James quickly learnt that dealing with animals was sometimes easier than dealing with people, especially farming people who were used to doing things their own way. Unfortunately the textbooks never told you about the long hours, sleepless nights, freezing cold or the scorching heat. James went about his work each day doing what he loved and hoped in time that those who weren't too sure about him would come around and see what a great job he was performing.

I loved this book, absolutely loved it. A little book that had so much going on with laugh out loud moments as well as sad moments. If like me you love animals then I suggest you grab a copy of this book. A beautifully written story set in the 1930's that takes you along a journey unlike any other. Highly recommended.

Girl says

Lovely, funny and touching. And the sheep. Oh the sheep.

Amelia Handoko says

KIRIM SAYA KE DESANYA HERRIOT PLEASE.

Serius, saya gak heran sama sekali kenapa si Ikal bisa segitu terpananya sama Edensor (tapi kok saya gak merasa baca kata Edensor ya dibuku ini. Atau gara2 udah lupa mungkin). Ngomong2 ini reviewnya:

Ini mainstream banget, tapi saya gak punya pilihan lain selain ngomong "Jadi buku ini bercerita tentang James Herriot, dokter hewan yang lagi praktek di desa kecil di Inggris. Tentang pengalamannya." Tapi saya mencoba bikin review yang semoga bisa deskripsiin sisi lain dari buku ini. Let's try.

Seperti yang saya udah bilang tadi, emang sebenarnya buku ini tuh main plotnya si Herriot dan praktek saat menjadi dokter hewan di sebuah desa, tapi entah kenapa pas saya baca buku ini, saya melihat lebih, dan bahkan bukan itu secara utama. Malah saya melihat profesi dokter hewannya yang sampingan, latar desa dan cerita hidup diluar profesi dia yang utama. Padahal sebaliknya.

Kita mulai, pertama dari latar desa. Saya kasih jempol deh ke Herriot dan Om/Tante translator buat kata-kata indah yang dipilih untuk ada dibuku ini. Rasanya itu kata-kata bener2 berhasil bawa saya pergi dari kamar ke Yorkshire, di mobil Herriot, lagi liat kanan kiri. Bener-bener berasa indah banget, dan seakan-akan saya bener2 ada disana, kena hembusan angin dan didepan mata saya itu padang hijau terbentang luas. Dan perasaan saya yang bisa membayangkan, dan merasakan latarnya itu bener2 unforgettable banget. Jatuh cinta setengah mati sama hal ini. Mati! <3

Trus ada cerita hidup dan pengalaman-pengalaman Herriot, pas dia ngobrol sama Siegfried, pas lagi jalan-jalan, pas dia lagi depresi, itu juga. Entah kenapa banyak yang bisa dipelajari. Pas dia lagi bertugas jadi dokter juga. Saya (lagi2) diingatkan tentang nilai-nilai hidup yang sederhana, yang mulai saya lupakan dari bacaan buku. Uuu :*

Dan itu dua poin positif dari buku ini. Ohiya buku ini page turner banget awal2nya. Ditengah2 ada boring

parts juga, cuma saya lupa sih apa aja. Negatif poinnya, hmm..mungkin cerita garis besar yang gak menarik dan gak mengundang sih buat dibaca. Entah itu bs digolongkan sebagai negative point atau nggak. Sisanya saya lupa dan buat saya kalau ada poin negatif pun itu cukup ketutupan sama Yorkshire dan keindahannya. Hehe. Jadi overall, buat latar yang sangat indah di buku ini, saya kasih.. *drumroll* 4,5 BINTANG! :D

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Ngomong2, tanggal 3 Agustus setelah saya beli buku ini dan input tanggal belinya ke Goodreads, saya bikin pre-review, dan ini isinya:

Merasa familiar banget sama judul ini dan authornya, Herriot.

Setelah diinget2 ini kayanya buku yang dalemnya ada Edensor, pelarian Ikal dr Laskar Pelanginya Andrea Hirata pas lagi stress. Jadi inget keinginan baca Edensor yang tertunda gara2 stoknya kosong di Gramedia gading :) I'll read the Edensor by Andrea Hirata soon enough, and I currently hoping for an extra spare time to go to another Gramedia, soon.

Pre-review sebelum baca buku ini, mungkin bukunya fantastis, soalnya sebegitu bisa menginspirasi Ikal, dan td sempat liat sekilas sama top reviewnya itu ratenya 5 stars semua. Semoga tidak mengecewakan :)

nur'aini tri wahyuni says

ketipu judul ini mah namanya, he he he. ada beberapa chapter yang ngebosenin, mungkin karena yang diceritain ga melulu soal hewanhewan, dan ini masih awalawal Mr. Herriot mulai bekerja. selebihnya seperti halnya bukubuku beliau yang lain, menyenangkan.

Koen says

Ini betul-betul salah satu buku yang mempengaruhi hidupku :). Alf Wight, seorang dokter hewan dari Yorkshire, menovelisasi hidupnya dan menggunakan nama samaran James Herriot.

James Herriot adalah anak muda yang pemalu tapi kreatif dan bersemangat tinggi. Lulus sebagai dokter hewan di Skotlandia, ia memperoleh tempat kerja di sebuah kota kecil bernama Darrowby di daerah Yorkshire di Inggris. Atasannya seorang dokter hewan Siegfried Farnon, yang cerdas namun eksentrik dan pelupa, dan hidupnya sering diwarnai dengan paradoks. Tak lama, bergabung pula Tristan Farnon, adik Siegfried yang memiliki sifat jauh berbeda — ia periang, ceroboh, namun selalu beruntung. Mereka membentuk persahabatan yang unik dan hangat, sambil bekerja keras (kadang siang malam) menyembuhkan bermacam hewan besar dan kecil, milik para petani dan peternak di Yorkshire, yang umumnya pekerja yang jujur, keras, namun tulus.

Ada kisah keberhasilan saat Herriot dan tim secara cerdas atau secara kebetulan dapat mendiagnosis penyakit dan menyembuhkannya. Ada kisah mengharukan saat Herriot harus memberikan penenang permanen kepada hewan yang terkena kanker untuk melepas penderitaannya. Ada banyak sekali kelucuan saat Siegfried yang sok efisien harus terperangkap prinsip-prinsipnya, atau sekedar oleh kepikunannya yang luar biasa. Dan banyak hiburan akibat keusilan Tristan yang tak pernah habis. Tapi yang tak pernah membosankan adalah komitmen Herriot untuk setiap saat membantu makhluk hidup yang menderita, biarpun kadang ia harus melampiaskan kekesalan dan kemarahan; dan selalu diakhiri oleh kembalinya kesadaran bahwa hidup itu

ajaib, lucu, agung, dan tak pernah membosankan.

Darrowby adalah nama samaran dari kota Thirsk di Yorkshire, tak jauh dari York. Buku Herriot yang penuh keajaiban ini akhirnya membawa aku di tahun 2010 ke kota Darrowby untuk mengikuti kembali jejak perjalanan James Herriot di kota kesayangannya itu. Thirsk masih jadi kota kecil yang tenang, dengan marketplace dan jam kota yang sama dengan yang digambarkan di buku ini, dikelilingi koperasi yang sudah modern, bar, bank, toko permen :).

Pramod Nair says

James Alfred Wight, the British veterinary surgeon and writer, is renowned for his *semi-autobiographical* works written under the name '*James Herriot*', which chronicle some of the most amusing moments from his life as a veterinarian. His reminiscences as a surgeon are pleasantly mild and warm to read and his style of narration that describe his adventures with the animals and their owners is of the most hilarious form that can make even the most serious of the reader burst out in a laugh. Apart from being incredibly entertaining, Herriot's books also offer a historical perspective at the practice of veterinary science that was followed in Britain during the time period.

In '**If Only They Could Talk**', the first book in a series of his semi-autobiographies, the reader gets acquainted with a young James Herriot, just out of veterinary college, taking up a rural practice in the town of *Thirsk*, Yorkshire during late 1930s. In the narrative he creates a fictional village called '*Darrowby*' based on the town of Thirsk and the surroundings rural areas, which act as the perfect setting for describing his amusing experiences about the early days of his veterinary career.

He joins as an assistant to the eccentric '*Siegfried Farnon*' – based on the actual veterinary surgeon 'Donald Sinclair' under which James Wight originally practiced in Thirsk - the veterinarian in '*Darrowby*' who is portrayed by Herriot as a *bombastic yet good-hearted character*. Herriot who was hoping for some tranquil life at the rural Darrowby soon finds himself literally *knee-deep* in highly amusing adventures in which the farmers, animals and a bunch of other characters - like '*Siegfried Farnon*' and his lazy brother '*Tristan Farnon*' - adding to the merry. In the very first chapter we initially meet Herriot while he is performing a *calving* right in the middle of a winter night, drenched in *sweat, blood, snow and mud*, and wondering about the situation he is in when compared to the squeaky clean picture of a veterinary surgeon performing a calving that was provided in his obstetrics book while training.

“My mind went back to that picture in the obstetrics book. A cow standing in the middle of a gleaming floor while a sleek veterinary surgeon in a spotless parturition overall inserted his arm to a polite distance. He was relaxed and smiling, the farmer and his helpers were smiling, *even the cow was smiling*.

That man in the picture had just finished an excellent lunch and had moved next door to do a bit of calving just for the sheer pleasure of it, as a kind of dessert.”

This observation, which lightens the mood along with some comical dialogs that ensues with cow's owner, sets the tone for the book. Even while at the end of his wits, we find a character who finds amusement from simple things from his surroundings which adds that extra bit of appeal even in his descriptions of surgeries and other animal medical conditions, which can be a bit squeamish if described in dry medical terms.

The imaginative power of James Herriot and his capacity as a storyteller are praiseworthy as these amusing stories are not dry descriptions of incidents from his days as a veterinary surgeon, but they are often spruced up by the author with smartly crafted elements of humor to evoke absolute joy and laughter in the reader. He is also a sharp observer of the people, animals and their association in an agrarian society as these stories offer a delightful insight born out of his observations into the country life of Yorkshire. The life of the farmers and the role of animals in their emotions of *happiness, accomplishment, sadness and even heartbreak* are all portrayed by Herriot with the flair of a master narrator.

'*If only they could talk*' undoubtedly is at its pinnacle when it comes to the descriptions of the landscape in which the book is set and is among one of the best countryside books I have ever read. These wonderful tales with their morsels of emotions like *elation, sorrow, and humiliation* all flamboyantly honeyed with humor can delight both the general reader and lovers of animal stories.

Actual rating: 4.5/5

Meg says

So where do I start?

James Herriot, or in truth, James Alfred Wright, is a master storyteller, whose ability to paint scenes and emotions with only his words is truly astounding. How anyone can write so elegantly, and truthfully, is a rare and astonishing thing. His memoirs should truly be cherished, this first book setting an excellent scene for many humorous and poignant works.

However, when asked what i was reading by the many people who always strive for conversation when you are quite content in silence reading your novel, all convinced you surely could not be doing so by sheer delight you have actually found time in an increasingly busy day, but rather through your lack of social skills, and therefor, friends, i was astounded of how unknown these amazing works are. It is an increasingly sore spot for me, to find people who don't know such great work. Not for their ignorance; i too am unaware of the overall plots of many famous works, but rather my own inability to describe something great.

I am not really sure how it happens. My ability to describe works has always been lacking, though only in a spoken sense. Sure, i can write my feelings after a minute or so meditation how to phrase my emotions, but in a conversation, this moment is taken away. I am left, standing there, knowing if i respond too slowly, the asker will label me completely stupid, or an inability to speak, no doubt explaining their previous views of my (!INTENTIONAL!) solitude. So i sort of blab about how good it is, in a vague way because

a) my head is still in the book

and

b) I get a bit ahead of myself.

Example. A teacher asks what i am reading. '1984' i reply, a classic, well known work, and one of George Orwell's greatest pieces. Instead, i vaguely describe of how 'it was his oppinion during the late 40's how he thought England would turn out if it went down the path of communism'.

Nothing on the masterpiece of words, the thought out plot, the detail that Orwell describes extensively, not even mentioning the main characters. Or the ending....

And i have a similar problem with this book. It is so well written, technically memoirs, but reads much more like a story. As we know, the characters are real, but renamed, and all events actually happened, though on

some research, the order of which are most likely changed, to create the flow i was talking about. We begin by looking at James Herriot, a recently qualified vet struggling to make it in pre-WW2 England, where his trade is rather dwindling due to the invention of the tractor, and therefor, the downsizing of the work horse, and lack of household pets during a time when animals truly (and mostly) earned their keep. It is here a magical tale begins, as his life's work unfolds before us.

If you are even slightly interested in animals, stories, people, romance, England, and Vets, this is the book for you. I should mention that you will COMPLETELY fall in love with the settings, and if you do enjoy the books, they made a rather good, and very accurate, series of it. Of course, the books are better, but a noble effort to do justice to a magnificent piece.

Happy Reading!!!

-M

Tim Orfanos says

να απ? τα λ?γα χιουμοριστικ? best sellers των εκδ?σεων 'Bell' που, κυριολεκτικ?, 'τα σπ?ει'. Ο Herriot εμπν?εται απ? την ζω? του και την εργασιακ? του εμπειρ?α ως κτην?ατρος και μ?ς μεταφ?ρει στην επαρχιακ? Αγγλ?α της δεκαετ?ας του '30 'χτ?ζοντας' σταδιακ? μια ξεκαρδιστικ? ιστορ?α γεμ?τη ηθογραφικ? στοιχε?α και αστε?α περιστατικ? με κατοικ?δια ζ?α. Το βιβλ?ο ?χει ζωντ?νια, πρωτοτυπ?α, πολλ?ς 'εικ?νες' απ? τη φ?ση της αγγλικ?ς υπα?θρου σε σημε?ο που ο αναγ?στης να ε?χεται αυτ? τα ζ?α να μπορο?σαν.... να μιλ?σουν.

Αρχικ?, το βιβλ?ο ε?χε γνωρ?σει μεγαλ?τερη εμπορικ? επιτυχ?α στις Η.Π.Α. απ? τη Μεγ?λη Βρεταν?α, εν? βασ?στηκε στο βιβλ?ο και η αντ?στοιχη αγγλικ? τηλεοπτικ? σειρ?.

Βαθμολογ?α: 4,5/5 ? 9/10.

Υ.Γ.: ?να βιβλ?ο που αξ?ζει να επανεκδοθε?!

Brenda says

Such a nice read. Good for reading aloud, though some of the different accents can be challenging!
